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**FROM TALKING SOFTLY TO CARRYING A BIG SHTICK: JEWISH MASCULINITY
IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA**

by

MIRIAM EVE MORA

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2019

HISTORY: IMMIGRATION AND ETHNICITY

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

For Daniel -- Who makes the world a little better every day.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aliyah: Hebrew, literally translated as “going up.” Aliyah refers to the immigration of Jews from diaspora communities to the land of Israel/Palestine.

Aliyah Bet: The code name given to the illegal immigration of Jews to Palestine under the British Mandate, mostly comprised of Holocaust survivors and refugees fleeing Nazi Europe.

Chutzpah: Yiddish term for audacity, used both pejoratively and positively, as in the cases of the English “cheekiness” or “irreverence.”

Edelkayt: According to Daniel Boyarin, this is a rabbinic model of manhood established thousands of years ago, recognizable for its gentle, timid, non-phallogentric nature. As it resisted gentile assumptions about masculinity, Edelkayt helped to confirm Western stereotypes of the feminized Jewish man. See also: mensch.

Eretz Israel: The traditional Jewish name for the pre-statehood Land of Israel. Because it is the identification for the ancestral homeland, it had no definable geographical boundaries.

First Aliyah: The first wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine between 1882-1903. Also called the Agricultural Aliyah.

Galut: The Hebrew name given for life in the Jewish diaspora or exile. It at times refers to the spaces which diaspora Jews occupy, but can also be used to indicate the condition of Jews in the diaspora, uprooted and persecuted.

Gentile: Any person who is not Jewish

Goldene Medine: Yiddish phrase meaning “golden land” or “land of gold.”

Goy/Goyim: Often pejorative Jewish term for a non-Jew.

Halutz/halutzim: A Jewish immigrant to pre-state Palestine, usually represented as a farmer or pioneer, creating and building Jewish settlements in Palestine.

Kibbutz(im): A collective community in Israel (or in pre-state Palestine), typically an agriculturally based commune. Kibbutznik is a name for a member of the kibbutz.

Mauschel: A derogatory term with antisemitic overtones, meaning to talk like a Jewish peddler. The term was also used by Theodore Herzl to describe a type of Jew which he categorized as “crooked, ‘low and repugnant,’ frightened, unresponsive to beauty, passive, queer, effeminate.”

Mensch: A person of honor or one with integrity.

Momzer/Momzerim: A pejorative term coming from the Greek, mamzer, meaning “son of a prostitute.” In Yiddish, the term has come to mean “bastard” and has a connotation of contemptibility or deception.

Moshav(im): A cooperative community of farmers in Israel. Unlike a kibbutz, a moshav is not a commune but a cooperative agricultural community comprised of several farms.

Naches (and Goyim Naches): Pleasure, satisfaction, delight; proud enjoyment. *Goyim naches* is a term used by Daniel Boyarin in his 1999 book, *Unheroic Conduct*, which he defines as “games goyim play.”

Olim: New immigrants to Israel.

Sabra: A Jew born in Israel or in pre-state Palestine. They were named for a thorny prickly pear found in Palestine, one with a harsh exterior, but containing sustenance and sweetness inside.

Sheygetz: A Yiddish term for a Gentile boy or man, often derogatory.

Shiksa: A Yiddish term for a Gentile woman or girl, often derogatory.

Shande: An embarrassment, shame, disgrace, or scandal. The term is usually used to describe the actions of a Jew in front of an audience of non-Jews, bringing shame on the Jewish people.

Shomer/Shomrim: Hebrew word for “guard,” used in this work to describe those members of pre-state Palestine who acted as guards over the Jewish settlements to protect them from potential attack.

Yishuv: Hebrew for “settlement,” refers to the Jewish entity in Palestine from the Ottoman period through the British Mandate. The Yishuv had reached about 650,000 members before the end of the British Mandate.

“The great bulk of the Jewish population, especially immigrants from Russia or Poland, are of weak physique, and have not yet gotten far enough away from their centuries of oppression and degradation ... I made up my mind it would be a particularly good thing for men of the Jewish race to develop that side of them which I might call the Maccabee or fighting Jewish type.”

– Theodore Roosevelt, 1918

We're the sons appalled by violence, with no capacity for inflicting physical pain, useless at beating and clubbing, unfit to pulverize even the most deserving enemy, though not necessarily without turbulence, temper, even ferocity. We have teeth as the cannibals do, but there they are, embedded in our jaws, the better to help us articulate. When we lay waste, when we efface, it isn't with raging fists or ruthless schemes or insane sprawling violence but with our words, our brains, with mentality.

– Phillip Roth¹

INTRODUCTION

There is no single example of Jewish manhood, real or perceived, but there have been recognizable dominant images of Jewish men throughout history. Though there are always counter examples, Jewish men have routinely been depicted in literature, film, television, and other forms of media as emasculated: physically weak, bookish, and timid. Interestingly, the rhetoric of antisemitism, though prominent in creating and perpetuating this emasculation of Jewish men, is not fully responsible for its continued survival. Within the Jewish community, men and women have historically embraced, even pushed, popularizing images which held Jewish gender outside of mainstream American gender norms. Ever the outsiders, the Jewish male stereotype is unfixed and evolving, particularly over the course of the twentieth century.

¹ Phillip Roth, *Patrimony* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 159.

The Subject

Before beginning this study, I must clarify a few definitions and terms, and explain the methodology of *From Talking Softly to Carrying a Big Shtick*. The demographic I examine in this work is modern Jewish American men. Every word in that description can be picked apart and defined quite differently depending on the scholar dealing with the issue: modern, Jewish, American, man. I would like to break down these terms and identify exactly the subjects which I examine in the following chapters.

Modern. Though the definition of modern (to which I generally adhere) is far longer, I limit the course of this study to a short twentieth century. My period begins at the turn of the century and ends in the early nineteen seventies, in the years leading up to the 1973 Arab-Israeli War (also known as the Yom Kippur War, Ramadan War, or October War). I determined this period for a variety of reasons, one for each of the other qualifiers of our subject (Jewish, American, man). For Jews, American and otherwise, 1967 was a defining moment and the years immediately following showed how much change the events of 1967 effected. The great anxiety and then relief surrounding the Six-Day War in Israel changed the way that Jews thought of themselves in relation not only to Israel, but also to the Holocaust and Judaism writ large. As several of the changes to American Jewry discussed in the following chapters were reactions to and reflections of events in and surrounding Palestine, this seems a good place to round off this study in relation to the Jewishness of the subject. There was a nearly simultaneous rupture in American life in the watershed year of 1968, which redefined Americans' relationship to their nation. The war in Vietnam and the resulting antiwar protests, the Civil Rights Movement, and the mayhem of the Chicago Democratic National Convention all complicated Americans' relationship to their nation. The same can be said of notions of gender in the United States. The feminist movement, antiwar

protest, rise of counterculture, and ethnic revival all severely complicate gender in the United States in the aftermath of 1968. For this reason, I took 1973 as a rough stopping point, only going beyond and into the seventies to conclude narratives which began in the period discussed.

Jewish. Determining who constitutes a Jew is a timeless and difficult problem. I have not determined the group of men I examine by grouping up the rosters of Jewish organizations and synagogues to highlight the participating majority of Jews in America. Nor do I highlight surnames on massive lists ending in -stein, -berg, or other traditionally Jewish names. Instead, I use the simplest of definitions of American Jews, that of self-ascription. This is the same identification that Jacob Rader Marcus used, identifying American Jews as “anyone ... who says he or she is and who works closely with the Jews ... religionists, secularists, the rootless, and ideological nothingarians.”² For the purposes of studying cultural gender identity, this breadth of subject is imperative. I include religious Jews, but only as they appear as actors in a Jewish American story which is largely secular. The Orthodox community is a world apart from the turning points in the narrative I draw in this study. The focus here is the desire of middle class, upwardly mobile Jews to assimilate, to take equal and full part in American life and society with their non-Jewish neighbors.³ Overall, orthodox Jews have avoided taking part in mainstream

² Jacob Rader Marcus, *The American Jew, 1585-1990: A History* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, Inc, 1995), 336.

³ The terminology here is complex. The term *assimilation* has been debated and its usage altered many times over in the past century (particularly since ethnic studies came about in the fifties and sixties). In contemporary issues I prefer to use the term *integration*, which more accurately represents the idyllic outcome of immigration (new migrants being accepted into American society as equals, and enabling them to maintain their cultures). Throughout this study, however, I will be using the term *assimilation* for nearly all discussion of cultural adaptation of Jewish immigrants. I do so for several reasons. Firstly, I do in deference to Jews who created (and are the actors in) my primary research materials, who not only use the term *assimilation*, but hold it as the goal and mark of their success as immigrants. Secondly, I do so because even according to current debates on immigration terminology, *assimilation* remains the most accurate term for the goals of the Jewish American community. Lastly, I do so with the caveat that full

American secular issues, content to live their lives as a community which remained distinct and apart. Though they are present in some of the dialogues examined throughout this study (as leaders, board members, supporters, or patrons of the organizations, clubs, societies, and schools discussed), they are in the minority and at times present an exception to issues of masculinity and Jewish life which I examine.

This group of both religious and secular (but self-identifying) Jews is as inclusive a representation of Jews in the United States as possible. The diversity is important as I examine my subject not as a religious group, but as popular disseminators of Jewish cultural archetypes through entertainment, journalism, and how they present themselves as public figures. The non-practicing Jews in this context are every bit as important as the religious. Who, after all, has been more influential in creating and perpetuating the image of the Jewish male nebbish than Woody Allen or Phillip Roth, both self-proclaimed atheist Jews? I also shy away from the terms

assimilation is non-existent, but that Jews experienced a form of *blocked assimilation*. Integration or incorporation assumes a model of acceptance of outside cultures that was non-existent in the early twentieth century. I argue, instead, that Jews have experienced what Susan Brown and Frank Bean called a blocked assimilation model, in which they are blocked from full entry into American society based on a discriminating factor, in this case, their religious and ethnic identity as Jews. This also fits Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy's theory of three melting pots: Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish (though she was looking primarily at intermarriage). Within the Jewish melting pot, we see partially assimilated/blocked American Jews working to assimilate new Jewish immigrants into their own American melting pot, in which they were highly acculturated Jews (meaning they had adapted elements of American culture while maintaining their Jewish identities and culture). I do also use the term acculturation, to refer to the degree to which figures have elements of mainstream American culture. For explanations of these definitions see Susan K. Brown, Frank D. Bean, "Assimilation Models, Old and New: Explaining a Long-Term Process," Migration Policy Institute, accessed September 22, 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/assimilation-models-old-and-new-explaining-long-term-process>, Matt O'Brien, "The Important Difference Between Assimilation and Integration," ImmigrationReform.com, accessed September 22, 2018, <https://immigrationreform.com/2016/09/29/the-important-difference-between-assimilation-and-integration/>, Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting-Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870-1940," *American Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 4 (January 1944): 331-339.

“Israelites” and “Hebrews” as identifying terms, unless they are used in excerpted original texts. I have seen scholars use these terms interchangeably with Jew, at times because they believe there is a negative, pejorative connotation to the word *Jew*. There is much scholarship and discussion on the uses of the term as both positive and negative descriptors. Interestingly, these discussions themselves often gender the term *Jew* as either masculine or feminine. For many Zionists (particularly those I discuss in the context of Muscular Zionism in Chapter I) *Jews* are unhealthy or degraded figures of the diaspora, especially compared with early Zionists in Palestine, and eventually tough Israelis defending their homeland.⁴ By contrast, American Jews have long defended the term *Jew* as one that reclaims strength and self-determination. One particularly defensive letter to the editor to the *Jewish Messenger* in 1866 wrote that using the terms *Hebrew*, *Israelite*, or *Mosaist* in response to their own fear of the pejorative connotation of the term *Jew* “displays a deplorable want of manliness, and argues that the one who resorts to it is willing to deceive, but afraid to tell a lie.”⁵ I do not, personally or for the purposes of this study, accept that the term is pejorative, and so use it exclusively when possible.

Given the focus of this research on upwardly-mobile Jewish men, I have largely limited my sources to those written in English. There are some exceptions throughout the dissertation, and in these cases I have translated specific phrases or expressions from either Hebrew or Yiddish for authenticity and accurate depiction of the source. However, the key demographic of Jewish Americans under examination are those who cherished ambitions to absorb dominant, and therefore largely Protestant, male gender norms. Along with those gender norms, many of these ambitious Jewish men also absorbed some of the negative attitudes held by White Anglo-Saxon

⁴ Cynthia Baker, *Jew* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017), Introduction, e-book.

⁵ “Improvements Needed,” *The Jewish Messenger*, March 23, 1866.

Protestants about Europeans, new American immigrants, and Jewish uniqueness. For this reason, the sources they produce were generally written in English, as they considered Russian, German, Polish, and Yiddish to be the languages of recent arrival, not aspirational assimilation. This distinction, therefore, is one not only of language, but of socio-economic status, as English was the language of choice for American Jews who wanted to identify with assimilated Americans and rapid acculturation.⁶

Because I draw this distinction and try to reign in the focus of my study on those Jewish men who strive towards Americanization (even Protestantization), I do not claim that my conclusions apply to all Jewish American men. Indeed, they are not intended to do so. Entire swaths of Jewish men in America are unexamined, though they enter into our story as actors and help to complicate the narrative of the group on which I do focus. By focusing on one segment of American Jewish men, I have attempted to highlight their specific stream of continuous attempts to attain American masculinity, their successes and failures, and, at times, their interactions with other segments of Jewish America who did not follow the same path or share their desires for homogeneity.

American. Jewish men cannot be examined in a vacuum. They must be considered alongside American men of the non-Jewish variety. The dominant masculine ideal in America, as it has formed, ruptured, and reformed over time, is reflective of larger American society, but

⁶ Melissa Klapper explains, in her examination of young Jewish women and girls during the mass migration period, that learning and reading English language books and periodicals became a means of Americanization, providing a gateway to other communities. Klapper made clear that subscriptions to periodicals in German or Yiddish affiliated American Jews and Jewish immigrants with other movements or groups (regional, political, and religious), and so were not the choices of those wishing to quickly assimilate and Americanize. Melissa R. Klapper, *Jewish Girls Coming of Age in America, 1860-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 206-207.

provides us a necessary landscape on which to discuss Jewish manhood. How Jewish men have been included or excluded in the ideal of American manhood is a persistent theme which drove Jewish American change throughout the twentieth century. A particularly American obstacle in outlining the historical subject of this study is that there has never been a Jewish leadership which universally speaks for American Jews. Several leaders and organizations have claimed to do so, of course, and have tried to publicize themselves as representative of the majority of American Jewry.⁷ However, such an assertion recalls the old Jewish joke which tells of two Jews stranded on a desert island. Planning for the future, the two decide to build three synagogues; one for each of them to suit their own beliefs and one in which both refused to set foot.

Men. I am using the binary categories of men and women which prevailed during the period covered in this study. This means that I will not be examining the alternate masculinities embraced within the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) Jewish community in any depth. This is a huge subject which would constitute an entirely separate study (around which I believe queer studies scholars have begun to form a very important and interesting field). For the case of Jewish masculinity as I am examining it, Jewish homosexuality and the image of homosexual men in America is not insignificant and is at times mentioned. However, I do not examine the realities of homosexual Jewish men and their lives, but merely recognize the linked stereotypes of both Jewish and gay men, or specifically of the attributes applied from one to another in a negative capacity. To historian Daniel Boyarin, the two are inseparable. He has

⁷ The American Jewish Committee, one of the first organizations created to defend Jewish rights in 1906, tried to claim that it was the unified communal body of American Jewry, when in fact there was no such consensus. Assimilated, elite Jews of German origin, like Jacob Schiff, Oscar Straus, Cyrus Adler, and Louis Marshall founded the Committee, but did not speak for all American Jewry and did much of their work through high-level influence. The Anti-Defamation League (1913) and American Jewish Congress (1918), by contrast, did attempt to defend Jewish rights through the legal system and in the public eye.

argued that the movement to remasculinize Jewish men was also a process of heterosexualizing or “straightening” of a “queered Jewish society.” I myself do not adhere to this hypothesis, nor do I comment on it at length. His 1997 book, *Unheroic Conduct*, made several assertions about Jewish masculinity, many of which I agree with and most of which I recognize as valuable contributions to my understanding of Jewish masculinity, especially his recasting of the Zionist revolution as a gendered movement. Israeli and Hebrew literature scholar Yaron Peleg argued that the connection between weakness, effeminacy, and passivity with homosexuality is anachronistic, as homosexuality at the end of the nineteenth century was often linked with hypermasculinity.⁸ I agree that the link is spurious, as stereotypes about both Jews and homosexuals, though both continuously containing negative attributes, have not been consistent in which attributes they ascribe to either group. For that reason, it is difficult to study one as dependent on the other, and I do not attempt to do so.

All these qualifiers are necessary to explain a seemingly simple but quite hard to define group: the visible Jews of America. It is just as important to clarify the second element of this dissertation’s construction: masculinity. There are varying and contradictory masculinities at any given time and in any group. As the foundation of this study is the *image*, or aesthetic, of Jewish men in America, I will be examining performative aspects of masculinity. *Performativity* means that there is no actual “reality/truth” of femininity and masculinity, only the reality created by performing these gender identities. Because they are social and cultural constructs, gender identities are variable, changeable, and are defined by the appearance and behaviors of the men

⁸ Yaron Peleg, “Heroic Conduct: Homoeroticism and the Creation of Modern, Jewish Masculinities,” *Jewish Social Studies* 13, no. 1 (Autumn, 2006), 31-58.

and women performing them.⁹ As Michael Kimmel put it, “Manhood is neither static nor timeless; it is historical.”¹⁰

The term *emasculat*ion is also one which needs unpacking, as it is literally defined as the removal of male sex organs. When I use the term *emasculated* or *emasculating*, I am referring to the perception or intention of impugning the masculinity of the subject in question. This does not imply any physical alteration (surgical, chemical, or otherwise), merely the perception of one’s masculinity/manhood. I also refer periodically to *hegemonic masculinity*, so it behooves me here to explain the meaning of this phrase and how it is applied. The term *hegemonic masculinity*, indeed the concept of its existence and necessity for historical and gender-based research has been debated since its introduction to the field in the eighties.¹¹ Loosely agreeing with a theory advocated by Robert Connell, I believe that merely recognizing the diversity within masculinity is hardly useful without also examining the relationships between masculinity’s alternate forms.¹² By identifying and recognizing the importance of a hegemonic masculinity, we can better evaluate the gender politics taking place within varying forms of masculinity, through inclusion and exclusion of more peripheral masculinities from the hegemon.

⁹ Such gender identities as *masculinity* cannot be defined by one’s genitals, as that is not what is on display to the public. Thus, the performative gender identity is the observable, traceable historical construct, not the sex of historical actors. Terrell Carver, “Men and Masculinities in International Relations Research,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (Fall 2014): 113-126.

¹⁰ Michael Kimmel, “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity,” in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, ed. Paula S. Rothenberg (New York: Worth Publishers, 2004), 82.

¹¹ For a particularly interesting critique of the use of the term in the work of R. W. Connell, see Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, “Connell’s Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique,” *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (June 2001): 337-61.

¹² R. W. Connell, *Masculinities, Second edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 37.

Through these gender politics, we can detect the motives for some changes (both intentional and otherwise) experienced within peripheral masculinities. Using this theory to examine a specific peripheral group (physically disabled men), Thomas Gerschick and Adam Miller outlined how peripheral men can reconstruct their masculinities based on (and when rejected from) hegemonic masculinity. They outlined three methods of reaction and reconstruction to their exclusion, which (highly simplified) are: trying ever harder to meet the expectations of the prevalent masculine hegemony; redefining masculinity with new additions and omissions; and rejecting the idea of a large masculine hegemonic standard as a necessity.¹³ All these are reactions which help us to understand masculinity in terms of disability by examining its relationship to the hegemon.

Further complicating our definition is the connection between manhood and nation, a connection which is well established in gender literature. Scholars have taken keen interest in the connections between gender and the nation, using masculinity as a lens through which we can better understand the process of nation-building and the gendered realities of nationalism. George Mosse's *Image of Man* explained how European society characterized the masculine ideal as the embodiment of the nation. Those who were nationals and members of the dominant group inherited measures of respectability and the honorable attributes of the masculine ideal, while those outside the favored group were stripped of such basic human sexual classifications.¹⁴ The other side of this process was the feminization of "orientalism" as un-European, which included Jews, who were thus left out of European manliness entirely.

¹³ Cited in Connell, *Masculinities*, 54-55. Thomas J. Gerschick and Adam Stephen Miller, "Coming to Terms: Masculinity and Physical Disability," American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Miami, 1993.

¹⁴ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), 133.

Simon Wendt and Pablo Dominguez Andersen edited a volume in 2015, the essays of which examined the role of masculinity in the national identity of several states at numerous times. One of the valuable contributions of this volume to the understanding of hegemonic masculinity is the use of marginal or oppressed masculinities to identify the hegemon (instead of using relationship to the hegemon to study a peripheral masculinity). Interestingly, though the introduction from the editors use the experiences of Jewish men and the formation of Jewish nationalism as the “best-known example of marginalized men’s agency,” they have no chapter contributing an analysis of that particular example.¹⁵ The reality of Jewish nationalism, Zionism, and its impact on Jewish male identity complicate the relationship between Jews and the masculine hegemon.¹⁶ I deal with this issue in two stages: the creation of Zionism in Europe as a masculine nationalist movement and the popularization of Zionism in America. The latter is where issues of nationhood and loyalty become complex, as Jews were routinely accused of maintaining dual loyalties.

In short, manhood is the subject of my study, Americans of Jewish ancestry the actors, with social and cultural history as my driving methodologies. This is a history of masculinity, in that the research question is gender driven, but the methodology is cultural and social (examining sources produced by the actors themselves and those around them). My intention is to show that there have been several simultaneous, contradictory, and interweaving Jewish masculinities over

¹⁵ “Introduction,” in *Masculinities and the Nation in the Modern World: Between Hegemony and Marginalization*, ed. Simon Wendt and Pablo Dominguez Andersen (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 7.

¹⁶ Though other Jewish territorial movements did exist and are important elements of Jewish history, for the purposes of American Jews, I am limiting the scope to Zionism, which gained far more traction than did the competing movements. For information on said movements see Gur Alroey's *Zionism without Zion*, Adam Rovner's *In the Shadow of Zion*, and Laura Almagor's “Beyond Nation and Exile: The Jewish Territorialist Movement: 1905-1965” [work in progress, prospected completion date: 2019].

the twentieth century, some traditional, others rapidly changing to assimilate more successfully. Jews in America at times perceived manhood as their ticket into American society, and at others, it was precisely what barred them from entry.

The Literature

The role of men in Jewish life always has been significant in studies of Jewish gender in America and elsewhere, but traditionally as a counterweight to the lives and experiences of Jewish women. Works examining the history of Jewish women in America provide the groundwork for my study, as Jewish gender historians have explored the nature of gender division in the Jewish community and how that division has influenced the relationship between Jews and the rest of American society. Only recently has masculinity emerged as an area deemed worthy of new historical study, though literary and religious scholars have considered the issue of Jewish masculinity for some time.

The field of Jewish gender history is indebted to the foundational works of Paula Hyman, an early pioneer in the subject. Though she wrote extensively on French Jewry and Jewish feminism, she examined American Jewish life as well, co-authoring *The Jewish Woman in America* (1976) with Charlotte Baum and Sonya Michel, and, in 1995, writing *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women*. Her work aimed to incorporate women fully into the narrative of Jewish history, to change the method of examination to surpass the methods which merely insert female sources and characters into an otherwise male narrative. Historical work on immigration, acculturation, and assimilation have particularly benefitted by incorporating gender and thus complicating the narrative of Jewish

history in America. Though it never focused dedicatedly on issues of Jewish masculinity or male identity, Hyman's work touched relevant issues as she stressed the importance of Jewish male identity not only for its own sake, but for how it informs the relationships between Jewish men and women.¹⁷

Indeed, gender has become a necessary aspect of Jewish history. In her 1991 book, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany*, Marion Kaplan suggests that Jewish identities are implicitly gendered and therefore Jewish assimilation (applicable to any new environment) can be evaluated only by examining the private and public aspects of gendered Jewish life. Together with Deborah Dash Moore in their 2011 volume, *Gender and Jewish History*, Kaplan co-edited a series of essays which added to scholarship on Jewish religious practice, assimilation, occupation, politics, and community. This collection, two decades after *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*, showcases the influence of feminist scholarship on the Jewish narrative. Though the essays nearly all focus on Jewish women, the last essay in the volume (by Beth Wenger) is devoted to the subject of Jewish manhood in America.¹⁸

Riv-Ellen Prell's 1999 book, *Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men* (an examination of Jewish gender division and assimilation in the United States), is an excellent example of a study of gender identity across the Jewish community (dealing with issues of both gender and socioeconomic position), but still focuses primarily on Jewish women. *Fighting to Become Americans* does address both men and women, but is built predominantly on a series of articles which Prell published in the nineteen

¹⁷ Paula Hyman, "Gender and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identities," *Jewish Social Studies* 8 (2002): 157.

¹⁸ Beth S. Wegner, "Constructing Manhood in American Jewish Culture," in *Gender and Jewish history*, ed. Marion A. Kaplan and Deborah Dash Moore. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 350-66.

nineties dealing with stereotypes of Jewish women in the twentieth century.¹⁹ From her background in anthropology, Prell uses the representation of Jews in popular media to define and scrutinize Jewish stereotypes and characters. Similarly, as scholars began to explore the subject of Jewish manhood in America, they have also generally started with popular representation as a jumping off point.

While Prell was writing about Jewish mothers and daughters, Paul Breines wrote expressly about a new and highly masculine Jewish image in his 1990 book, *Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry*. He explains that the image of the strong Israeli warrior, as depicted in American culture starting in the early nineteen seventies, was altering the self-image of American Jews for the worse. He argues that the “tough Jew” image created in postwar literature filled a psychic void for diaspora (and particularly American) Jews, egged on by the existence of a successful national Jewish military after the Six-Day War. Though *Tough Jews* received mixed reviews (it was harshly criticized by some scholars as biased and historically inaccurate), it provides an opportunity, even a necessity, to thoroughly examine the shift in Jewish American male identity from a historical perspective.²⁰ Breines, though a historian, wrote *Tough Jews* not as a historical study, but as the analysis of dozens of novels in which he identified “tough Jews,” and as such he did draw some spurious connections and conclusions, for example, the importance he attributed to novels with “tough Jews” which may not have ever gained popularity or wide readership, and the assertion that one trope (tough Jews) would replace another (gentle Jewishness).

¹⁹ For Prell’s many publications on the subject see bibliography.

²⁰ See Allan Arkush’s review of *Tough Jews* in *Modern Judaism* 12 (1992): 219-22.

In his 1997 book, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Daniel Boyarin posits that Judaism (through the rabbinic tradition) has always supported a “feminized” Jewish male, excelling intellectually more than through physical endeavors. He provides a religious history of the development of Jewish male identity, and argues that Judaism has a long tradition of gentle maleness created through religious learning and teaching, which is a uniquely Jewish form of masculinity. Like Breines, Boyarin asserts that this masculinity is threatened by the development of muscular Judaism (he particularly blames the creation of Herzlian Zionism), which promotes a more typically European masculine ideal. It was, the author stated, a goal of the book to revive and support Jewish difference against assimilation, and to defend the Jewish “sissy.” Though it contains much insight into gender and the culture of the rabbinic tradition (as opposed to studying film and literature exclusively), *Unheroic Conduct* is still limited in its historical gender narrative, and for this reason has been criticized by scholars of religion and gender.²¹

In the decades since *Tough Jews* was published, new and starker developments in Jewish representation and the study of men in popular media have eclipsed Breines’s foundational work. Expanding on both Boyarin’s and Breines’s work in 2001, literature scholar Warren Rosenberg wrote his analysis of Jewish masculinity, *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture*. In this work, he adds biblical and modern Jewish violence into Boyarin’s religious

²¹His religious considerations are admittedly (he closes the monograph on this note) not a historical representation of the past, but a construction of a historical-theoretical scenario. Judith R. Baskin (herself a scholar of religion and gender) criticized his work as ahistorical and utopian in its considerations, “Boyarin denies the views of scholars like myself who believe that [the exclusion of women from Jewish culture] have to do with rabbinic convictions that women are essentially different from and lesser than men in their natures or qualities.”

Judith R. Baskin, “Review: *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* by Daniel Boyarin,” *Criticism* 41, no. 1 (1999): 126.

historical narrative. By incorporating the violence in Hebrew scriptures into his discussion of Jewish violence in popular entertainment, he makes the case for a more diverse Jewish religious masculinity than Boyarin had done in *Heroic Conduct*. Rosenberg argues that it was the backlash of Jewish *repression* of violence (contained within Boyarin's Jewish gentle tradition) that created tension in Jewish culture which erupts in occasional violent outburst. "Jewish men," he explains, "have a uniquely strong prohibition against violence as well as an American prescription toward toughness," which results in a tension between passivity and action which explodes into violence.²² Though his analyses of fictional work was fascinating, the book lacks similarly strong analysis and conclusions from a historical perspective, about how Jewish American manhood reached this point of unique tension.

All these works scrutinize the image propagated by Hollywood and popular media, but without firm grounding in historical analysis. The degree to which these works are art reflecting life is left a mystery. The subject of Jewish manhood and tension in Jewish identity was being studied *as it appeared in film*. The social history supporting these cultural analyses has yet to be written. *Brother Keepers: New Perspectives on Jewish Masculinity* (co-edited in 2010 by Harry Brod and Shawn Israel Zevit) offers a prime example of the extent to which the subject had been treated at the time of its publication, with essays by secularists and religious readers focusing primarily on religion and gender and/or representation in film and literature. Harry Brod is one of the first scholars to write in the emerging area of Men's Studies (or Masculinity Studies), first editing *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* (1987), and later returning to the issue of specifically Jewish masculinity in *Brothers Keepers*. *Brothers Keepers* is a collection of

²² Warren Rosenberg, *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 30.

articles comprised of some history, some sociology, and a number which focus on a more personal examination of the Jewish male experience. It is less conclusive than exploratory, but provides an eclectic sense of issues specific to Jewish American men.²³

David Moscovitz's 2015 book, *A Culture of Tough Jews: Rhetorical Regeneration and the Politics of Identity*, continues in this tradition, but brings the twenty-first century into his study. He examines the tough Jew as a post-Holocaust phenomenon, and argues that through a process of rhetorical regeneration, Jews (Israeli and American) have reclaimed their toughness and masculinity through a broadening of masculine Jewish tropes. Moscovitz argues that this regeneration was carried out by several Jewish types, not one monolithic Jewish strongman, but three main subcategories: the defier, the gangster/gangsta, and the hero. Within these categories, he also differentiates two types: tough Jews and vital Jews. The latter is his great addition to the field. The *vital Jew*, he explains, is more elastic, able to negotiate the Holocaust victim image of Jews, the 'nice Jewish boy' trope, and the tough Jew. This new terminology is helpful in that it complicates Jewish male identity in archetypal representation, more accurately reflecting the complex nature of actual Jewish identity.

The tough Jew as a post-Holocaust phenomenon must also be considered through the lens of scholarship dealing with American Jews and the Holocaust. Though this subject rarely confronts directly the issue of masculinity in Jewish America, it provides a necessary groundwork in American Jewish interactions with the Holocaust and the State of Israel. In this subject, scholars (prominent among them Peter Novick and Norman Finkelstein) argued through the 1990s and early 2000s that Jewish America, previously avoiding frank discussion of the Holocaust, was

²³ Though it is limited in its scope, focusing primarily on heterosexual American Jews of Eastern European background.

awakened by the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 and the events of the Six-Day War in Israel. These events, Novick argued, pushed American Jews to make the Holocaust and the Jewish state pillars of American Jewish life. In her 2009 work, *We Remember with Reverence and Love*, Hasia Diner published a rebuke of these assumptions, aimed to break the “myth of silence” of Jews after the Holocaust. In this *We Remember* was very effective, showing that the Holocaust figured into American Jewish life and publications (prayers, histories, novels, art, articles, songs, published discussions, and sermons). I argue, when dealing with the tail end of the period this study examines, that though there was not silence about the Holocaust, the Six-Day War did indeed serve as a turning point for American Jews, though not in the exact or universal ways in that Novick implied in *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999). I do agree with Novick on some particular influences that the war had on American Jews, such as the changing image of Israel and Israelis in American Jewish life and education. However, my focus is on the masculine image that emerged from Israel and the effect it had on American Jewish men.

There are several scholars who have examined Jewish masculinity in Europe, mainly dealing with the creation and evolution of Muscular Zionism, as defined by Max Nordau in the late nineteenth century. Useful case studies of German and Viennese Jews, such as the edited volume *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender and History* (2012), focus specifically on the Jews of Germany and their attempts to change their masculine image. The various authors examine religious practice, sexuality, honor, and the body. One of the contributors to this volume, literary historian Sander Gilman, worked extensively on the Jewish image, ideology, and physical body.²⁴ Gilman’s 1993 book, *Freud, Race, and Gender*, examines what he believed to be the foundation

²⁴ Including contributing a chapter, “Whose Body is it Anyway?: Hermaphrodites, Gays, and Jews in N.O. Body’s Germany,” to the recent edited volume, *Jewish Masculinities*.

of the Jewish physical image in his examination of Freud's Jewishness and writings about the Jewish people. Gilman uses both Freud's ideas as well as his own identity to theorize about gender difference and Jewish Europe. Surrounding *Freud, Race, and Gender*, Gilman published several works dealing with Germany, Jews, gender, the body, and medicine. His work examines the intersection of medical, social, and political discourse in modern history, often focusing on the visual components of cultural norms.²⁵ Several of his publications are controversial and have been criticized for their speculative nature, as well as for the marginalization of Jewish women in his discourse.²⁶ However, Gilman contributes a great deal of insight and inspiration to recent academic discussions of Jewish identity, gender, and self-image.

This work also draws from scholarship on the history of American Zionism, as the process of Americanization, acculturation, and secularization all intersect with strains and variants of Zionist history in the United States. Zionism in America developed with different goals and motivations than in Europe, as American Jews faced such different realities from their European brethren. Ben Halpern, in his 1979 article "The Americanization of Zionism, 1880–1930," explained that the problems of competing Zionist factions in Europe became insignificant in America, and he identified in their place two competing strands of American Zionism: One political and secular, and one spiritual and cultural. Halpern explained that the spiritual form of

²⁵ Gilman's relevant publications include but are not limited to *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (1986), *The Jew's Body* (1991), *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence* (1996), *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* (1999), *Jewish Frontiers: Essays on Bodies, Histories, and Identities* (2003), and *FAT BOYS: A Slim Book* (2004).

²⁶ Ann Pellegrini made this point in her 1997 essay, "Whiteface Performances: Race, Gender, and Jewish Bodies," in *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, ed. Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 109-110. Sarah Abrevaya Stein also criticized Gilman's essentializing of "the Jew" as well as drawing spurious conclusions. Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "Sander Smarts: Gilman's 'Smart Jews,'" *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 2 (Winter, 1998): 182-83.

American Zionism was the more American type of Zionism, which Arthur Goren further explored in his 1995 article “Spiritual Zionists and Jewish Sovereignty.”²⁷ Goren showed that the spiritual Zionists believed that relocation may have been necessary for diaspora Jews elsewhere, but not in the United States, where Jews could and should remain permanently. In 2003, Naomi Wiener Cohen published a book by the same name as Halpern’s classic essay, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, which examined the ways in which American life reshaped Zionism for an American context. As American Jews created an American Zionism, they negotiated many avenues of Zionist thought, including debates over socialist Zionism, Revisionism, and the General Zionist platform (a prime example of historiographical debate over American leaders and their place in these movements can be found in the discourse between contributors to the 2012 edited volume, *Abba Hillel Silver and American Zionism*).²⁸ In the late nineteen nineties, more diverse Zionist histories began to emerge, examining the less influential minority factions such as the Labor Zionists, Revisionists, and the anti-Zionists of the American Council for Judaism.²⁹ Though these examinations of Zionism in America rarely touch on masculinity directly, their sources and findings provide a wealth of resources on the view of Jewish manhood in the twentieth century.

²⁷ Arthur Goren, “Spiritual Zionists and Jewish Sovereignty,” in *The Americanization of the Jews*, eds. Robert M. Seltzer and Norman J. Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 165-192.

²⁸ Mark A. Raider, Jonathan D. Sarna, Ronald W. Zweig, editors. *Abba Hillel Silver and American Zionism* (New York: Frank Cass Publishers, 1997).

²⁹ This dissertation includes examinations of elements of both Revisionist Zionism and the American Council for Judaism and other anti-Zionists, but gives only a little attention to the Labor Zionists in the United States, as it was a less influential movement among the group of Jewish Americans on whom this work focuses. Though recent historians (Mark Raider, in particular) have argued that Labor Zionists made themselves relevant on the American scene by their Eastern European (and more radical) practices, their significance to the American Jews in our examination is minimal.

Scholars also have examined issues of masculinity within the State of Israel itself, building on a wealth of resources on gender difference in Israel which provide insight into issues of masculinity, though until recently it has not been a primary focus. Scholars working in the larger field of gender difference in Israel, such as Tamar Mayer (author of *Women and the Israeli Occupation*, 1994), have written relevant articles on the manifestation of Muscular Zionism in Israel and the changes to Jewish male identity that have followed. Examinations of modern Israel, such as Oz Almog's *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew*, also approach the subject of masculinity in some detail, though not as the exclusive interest or target of the work. Similarly, studies of the Israeli military frequently touch on issues of masculinity, often through the relationships of men and women in the military. These works, in addition to the routine mention of Israeli influence in more general explorations of Jewish masculinity, provide a good deal of insight into the development of the male ideal in the Jewish state. In 2007, Todd Presner argued that the concept of physical regeneration was a key component of Zionist discourse before the creation of the state of Israel and helped create the still-present martial attitudes in the State by legitimizing modern Jewish biopolitics.³⁰ The male Jewish body, according to Presner, provided an opportunity to enact change in Jewish European society (and create the modern Jewish man) by employing the fin-de-siècle movements of eugenics, nationalism, and Zionism.

In the years that have elapsed since I began this project, Sarah Imhoff wrote the first manuscript in what I hope will become the subfield that fills the gap of missing masculinity within the expansive field of Jewish history. Imhoff's 2017 book, *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism*, is a historical addition to the literature on Jewish identity which explored the

³⁰ Todd Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (New York: Routledge Press, 2007).

diversity of Jewish masculinities in the United States. She showed that American Jewish masculinity is not monolithic, nor is it an imitation of (or a counterbalance to) normative American manhood. In the years she examined (1900 to 1924), she explored several intentional Jewish constructions of manhood in the United States. She focused on the Americanization of the Jewish religion as the driver of change to American Jewish masculine identity and gave several examples of change enacted through the process of becoming an American religion.³¹ The first is a philosophical change which took place among the Jewish American thinkers of the early twentieth century. Imhoff argued that by focusing on the rational and universal elements of the Jewish religion, American Judaism redefined itself in the early twentieth century as an unemotional (and thus a more masculine) “good” American religion. This argument is based on the assumption that in Western philosophical traditions, reason and universalism were both coded as masculine.³² She argued less that any changes were made to Jewish behavior or body, than that a redefinition took place philosophically, redefining how Jews perceived Judaism *as a religion* in the United States.³³ Secondly, Imhoff provided a section on “The Healthy Body and the Land,” which is where our work has the most common ground (and which will be discussed at length in the body of this

³¹ I engage with the more physical aspects of her study, the second section of the book, in Chapter III in the section titled: The City Jew and the Jew Outdoors.

³² See Imhoff’s chapter, “The Reasonableness of Judaism: An American Theology,” in *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017). Also see Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 40.

³³ She argues, for example, that by focusing on the Bible and downplaying the Talmud in public life, Jews would be perceived as more rational to their Protestant neighbors, who might not view the Talmud as universal enough, or enlightened enough, to coexist with American ideals. Some Jewish scholars, she pointed out, identified Judaism as a “just” religion, and Christianity as a religion of “love.” This is a very interesting aspect of Jewish gender identity which I find both convincing and thorough. In this section she primarily examined assimilated communities, which are often neglected in Jewish histories which focus on migration and the process of assimilation.

dissertation).³⁴ Lastly, she examined “The Abnormal and the Criminal,” her main argument in the chapters within this issue was that one could read Jewish masculinity in Jewish crime, as both Jews and non-Jews agreed that when Jews were criminal, they were not committing “manly crimes.”³⁵ Our studies differ in periodization, as Imhoff covers twenty-four years, and delves into more specific case studies (such as her chapters on Leo Frank or the school at Woodbine). Having chosen a much longer period allows me to make longer claims about change over time, and to use arguments from pre-existing scholarship (including some from Imhoff) to contribute to larger claims about that change. The largest difference in both our methods and conclusions is in my focus on the persistently evolving emasculating stereotypes about Jewish men, and the ways in which upwardly mobile, middle-class Jewish Americans responded to them in an effort to assimilate into and be accepted by mainstream American society. My focus therefore is on the continued presence of these stereotypes and the equally persistent attempts by Jewish men to break them. Imhoff also focused more on religious life in the United States and the structure of the Jewish religion, and I study mostly secular Jews as they presented to the American public. I hope to add to her narrative and expand the historical examination of Jewish attempts to alter their own masculine image throughout the short twentieth century.

³⁴ The crossover in this dissertation is in the first section of the third chapter, in the section “The City Jew and the Jew Outdoors.” This section covers both Jewish agriculture and Jewish crime, the second and third sections of her manuscript, but with different foci, characters, periodization, and conclusions.

³⁵ On this point we diverge in my section on Jewish crime in the period of mass migration, “Bad Boys from Big Cities.” Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 266.

The Method

My goal in this project is not to identify one specific or dominant kind of Jewish masculinity, which would be overly determinist and lead me only to spurious conclusions and cherry-picked sources. Nor do I attempt to identify and examine all sorts of Jewish masculinity in the United States, though I believe such a survey would prove an interesting and challenging study. I do not attempt to identify a *real* Jewish masculinity of any sort, but rather examine the struggle (mostly public, but at times private as well) with which Jewish men wrestled to attain hegemonic American masculinity. The struggle began in Europe, long before the United States was founded and continues to this day. It is my goal to show the ongoing and intentional path which Jewish men trod to stand with their peers as American men.

Much of what I have studied for this dissertation is not unexamined material. Historians have written extensively on Jews in sports, Jewish gangsters, muscular Zionism, Jewish fraternities, Jews in the military, and nearly every other aspect of the present study. My goal was to re-examine those histories through a lens focusing on Jewish masculine self-image. This meant consulting some of the same sources that were used in other studies, but examining and using them differently. It also meant following the leads in those sources to new and exciting places, and recognizing new contributors to Jewish manhood that I had not foreseen.

As my intention is to provide a historical underpinning for the cultural studies dealing with Jewish masculinity, I focus on the visible, the public. I try to answer the question: If Jews on television and in film are performing masculinity, how have real Jews been performing masculinity? For that reason, I do far less in terms of gender theory than do some other historians in this field, turning instead to social history. I do not consider this a history of “great men,” though men are my subject and many influential figures are considered. Instead I have attempted

to write a balanced analysis considering what the most visible Jews (at times famous ones, at times masses of migrants, at times those on the fringes of society) were *saying* about masculinity and how they were *performing* masculinity. These two threads of Jewish male presentation entwine and encircle one another through the sources, at times matching flawlessly, and at times actions diverging dramatically from ideals, all the while considering the uniqueness of Jews' position in America and their level of acculturation.

The Sources

As a social and cultural historian, I searched out evidence created by and about the subject in question. This meant searching out social commentary, quantitative materials collected by and about American Jews, the materials of significant institutions and organizations, and the writing of (and about) American Jewish men. Sources useful for the study of this change include the institutional records of Jewish social, religious, political, and athletic organizations; numerical data relating to Jews in certain careers and activities; commentary from Jews themselves and contemporary observers; news, recruitment materials, and journalism emerging from the state of Israel; and testimony, both written and oral, of those who lived in the times and places I observe.

It is very difficult, often impossible, to track Jewish participation numerically in non-Jewish movements, as any Jews participating would have to self-identify in some sort of trackable manner. This is true of the American military, social movements, athletics, agriculture, etc. When it comes to movements within Jewish American life, I focus on leadership more than on the members/masses/followers. By focusing on publicly visible Jewish leaders (whether of Jewish or non-Jewish movements) I highlight those Jews who are in the public eye, and therefore most

pressured to meet the standards of American manhood which is expected of public leadership. When I examine non-Jewish movements in which Jews are prominent (such as the Civil Rights Movement or antiwar protest of the sixties), where no numerical data are possible, I rely on the commentary and recollections of those who participated and observed.

A sticking point to making claims about the American Jewish community is that there truly is no clear definition of such a community. Several American Jewish organizations which I rely on as historical sources claim to speak for the American Jewish community, but as such a group is not homogeneous, none of these claims can be truly accurate. Such groups and organizations are particularly interesting as their leadership, laypeople, and even mission tend to shift over time. They were often set up to serve as defensive bodies for the image of the Jewish people (fighting antisemitism with rhetoric). Because these bodies were never in full agreement about means or strategy, they were forced to move along crisis to crisis, improvising with each new problem as it arose. In the process, they conducted research, reorganized, and stored information hoping to be more prepared for the next event. For that reason, the key players also tend to shift, at times including prominent non-Jews, as Jewish leadership often relied on well-intentioned gentile leadership to speak to the public on their behalf, so as not to arouse suspicion of Jewish conspiracy, which was never buried deeply, forcing even Jews with power to tread lightly.

I will, to a limited extent, be examining popular representation, but more importantly the reactions of Jewish Americans to such media at the time of its release. As should be evident from my review of the field, I feel that such analysis is well-trod territory. My goal is to seek out the story of actual Jewish men, not those characters who appear on the screen as fully formed “new Jews” or Jewish toughs. In telling the story of Jewish men in America, I hope to determine whether

the underlying truth behind these characters was drawn from actual Jewish men or from what they desired to become.

The Structure

I have broken down the body of this work both thematically and chronologically. Though it flows in a roughly straight temporal line, some chapters intersect chronologically while dealing with different themes. For example, the mass migration period and the First World War are chronologically one, but I chose to include the First World War in a chapter dealing with both World Wars to maintain continuity in my arguments and narrative.

The first chapter sets the stage by reviewing historical constructions of emasculated Jewry, and Jewish reactions to those constructs. It reviews antisemitic notions of Jewish gender and popular images of Jewish manhood which had become established in Europe by the start of the twentieth century. Clearly presenting these views of Jewish gender across Western Europe is necessary to understand the perspectives imported to the United States by European immigrants, both Jewish and non-Jewish, as it was largely life in European society that determined the nature of such views. After establishing the notions of Jewish gender in Europe, I present the Jewish reaction to those negative images in the form of muscular Zionism in Europe. As nationalist movements manifested in Europe, manhood became linked with the idea of the nation state. Jews, largely rejected from both nationalism and European manhood, strove to attain their desired national masculine identity. They did so, in part, by creating a muscular movement which urged Jewish men to leave their own nations in search for a new home that might grant them the access

they sought, creating a muscular Zionist movement which urged migration to Palestine as an alternative to aspirational assimilation.

The second chapter introduces Jewish American manhood by first identifying and examining American hegemonic manhood at the turn of the century as personified by Theodore Roosevelt (and his “strenuous life”), and Jewish access to this ideal. Roosevelt set a standard for masculinity in the United States, one which was attainable to any man through exerted effort and good character. This ideal manhood provided American Jews (and all other men) with a pathway to masculinity, however, it never took for granted that for a Jewish man to reach it, he would have to shed his naturally weak Jewish character. This chapter scrutinizes this assumption of weakness, not only among non-Jews, but within the American Jewish community. The clearest path to building manly character in the Rooseveltian style was through military service and outdoorsmanship. Jews fought in all early American wars, with little to no restriction on their participation. However, at the turn of the century, those native-born American Jews struggling to attain American manliness saw an incompatibility between their masculine goal and traditional Jewish life and religion. For this reason, this chapter examines the ways in which Jews in America took a gendered approach to assimilation and “becoming American,” and the extent to which they internalized and accepted notions of Jewish weakness. Though individual Jews made headway towards American masculinity, the waves of new immigrants coming from Southern and Eastern Europe necessitated that greater measures be taken to Americanize, largely through masculine endeavors.

Chapter III, therefore, is about Jewish men and the age of mass migration. The theme of the chapter is assimilation, a process presented largely through tension between the native-born and immigrant American Jews. This chapter reviews the ways in which Jewish American men

attempted to alter themselves to become “American Men” in the lead up to (and immediately after) the First World War. Native-born Jews used manhood as a tool to assimilate, a path to passing in American society through what they believed were American paths to masculinity: Jewish agriculture, crime, athletics, and institutions of manhood (fraternities and men’s organizations). They also imposed these methods on the large numbers of new Jewish immigrants in the hopes of maintaining their hard-won recognition as Americans. Displaying the increase in American Jewish desire for a more masculine image, the last section of this chapter explains the response of American Jews to the progress of the *Yishuv* (the Jewish entity in Palestine under the British Mandate) and uses it to explain the masculine forms of Zionism embraced in the United States.

The fourth chapter observes Jewish participation in the world wars, and Jewish American efforts to strengthen the image of Jewish men through military service. I survey gendered language surrounding the American military and military recruiting, the progress Jews made in this process, their setbacks, and tension in the American Jewish community over the wars. This chapter evaluates Jewish efforts in the wars, fighting in the Jewish legion, fighting for the creation of a Jewish army, and eventually for the creation of a Jewish state to relocate war refugees. American Jews fought in the American military, volunteered to fight in and for Palestine, and contributed to the war effort from home. Men serving in the United States Armed Forces made great strides, at times, in negating the assumption of Jewish weakness and cowardice which had been so prevalent in the years leading up to the war. The major setback to their success came with the new dominant Jewish image emerging from Europe at the close of the war, that of Holocaust victim/survivor, which this chapter also scrutinizes, along with the emerging image of the *sabra* (a new Jewish Palestinian hero). This chapter explores how these two new Jewish images complicated the

construction of Jewish manhood throughout and at the close of the Second World War, as well as the way in which Jews in America regard Palestine and the *Yishuv*.

The fifth chapter discusses the creation of the Jewish state in Israel, and questions the ways that the new state and contributing to its existence affected Jews in America and their self-image. Even among those in full support of a Jewish state, American Jews reacted on a spectrum to the possibility of a Jewish state. There were more militant supporters, who harshly criticized American Jewish men, attempting to shake out of complacency and into more manly and aggressive action, and there were those who supported gradual Israeli independence and recognized that the strengths of Jewish American businessmen were not physical or heroic, and so appealed to their sense of pride in their success, rather than their sense of shame in not being “tough” themselves. Contributing support to those manly Jews fighting for statehood abroad allowed all of these contributors to feel as though they were underwriting the fight to improve the image of Jews everywhere. Both, by different means, held American Jewish men as weak counterparts to the heroes of Palestine. And both saw, in the generation which followed, resentment of Jewish complacency and pride in Israeli strength.

The sixth chapter attempts to deal with Jewish American postwar affluence, reactions to the Vietnam and Six-Day wars, and the activism and counterculture of Jews in the sixties. The rupture of Jewish (and American) life in these years lead to a multitude of divergent masculinities. In postwar Jewish America, three Jewish types interacted and competed in a constant reevaluation of Jewish manhood: the tough Israeli (the halutz or the sabra); the suburban Jew of American affluence; and the traditional bookish Jewish intellectual. Max Nordau’s critique of European Jews in the mid-nineteenth century as degenerate, weak, and disconnected from their stronger ancestors reemerged in light of the Israeli state, demonstrated by unfavorable comparison to the

Jews of Israel. In response to the War in Vietnam, unlike in previous examples, Jewish men did not show up in disproportionate numbers to prove their manhood. They instead attempted to prove it elsewhere, by entirely different means, and introduced new masculinities to the Jewish American character in the process. The antiwar movement of the sixties contained a distinctly Jewish dimension which manifested as a highly gendered phenomenon. Jewish men reclaimed their masculinity through activism, protest, and rebellion.

As Israel exemplified pride in masculine Jewishness, it provided a platform for a new, hypermasculine, American Jewish manhood. Uniting under a call to protect American Jewry, a small movement, the most extreme manifestation of “tough Jews” (with elements of Black Power, Israeli pride, and even American militancy) emerged in a militant Jewish defense movement. These militant Jews encouraged tough Jewishness through physical training, intimidation, openly carrying firearms, even forming biker gangs. They took on an inarguably American flavor by modelling themselves on the aesthetics of the non-Jewish American toughs whom they sought to emulate. This chapter demonstrates that in postwar America, Jewish men reevaluated their position as Jewish world citizens and as men. This reevaluation did not follow any clear trajectory, but can be traced through the fracturing and reconfiguring of Jewish male identities in the United States, and is particularly identifiable by looking to the fringes of Jewish America, where Jewish men rebelled against Jewish American norms.

This dissertation is not a complete survey or analysis of Jewish masculinities by any stretch. The research has taken me to different sources and conclusions which I could not have predicted, but have tried my best to embrace and incorporate into my narrative. My goal is to provide the historical foundation on which future histories and continuing literary analyses dealing with issues of Jewish masculinity can build. By limiting myself to performative manhood visible in the Jewish

community, I hope I have developed an actionable (if simplified) narrative on which to build and incorporate the divergent masculinities which I was unable to research.

Our character has been corrupted by oppression, and it must be restored through some other kind of pressure ... All these sufferings rendered us ugly and transformed our character which had in earlier times been proud and magnificent. After all, we once were men who knew how to defend the state in time of war.

-Theodor Herzl¹

CHAPTER I THE ARROW AIMED AT THE MAUSCHEL'S HEART: GENDERED ANTISEMITISM AND THE MUSCLE JEW

Much of the story of Jewish manhood emerged as a result of the treatment of Jews by the European nations in which the majority of them dwelled. The growing tension between Jews and Europeans, and particularly between Jewish and hegemonic masculinity, was largely a consequence of a solidifying ideal of manhood manifested by European nationalism. By the turn of the twentieth century, nationalist movements existed across Europe and had become inseparable from concepts of ideal manhood performed through behavior and virtue. The modern West (the United States included) defined bravery and manliness through honor, devotion to nation, and by individual physical prowess. Jews, often viewed as residents but not as national brethren, held a unique place in European and American society regarding these qualifiers for manhood. Non-Jews often suspected that Jews maintained dual national loyalties, and subsequently rarely granted them full acceptance into nationalist movements and ideologies. In addition, Jewish performative cultural differences often contradicted modern European and American concepts of ideal family structure and proper gendered behavior. For this reason, members of the hegemon viewed Jewish men and women as outside of this ideal—separated by customs, values, and by their lack of modern

¹ Herzl, *Complete Diaries*, 9.

statehood. As manliness became linked to the nation, rejection from the national ideal frequently manifested as rejection from masculinity.

Gendered Antisemitism and Historical Conceptualizations of Jewish Manhood

Before diving into the long and storied history of antisemitic accusations of Jewish weakness, femininity, and cowardice, let us examine the pervasive and continually accepted view of Jewish manhood. The role of masculinity in Jewish culture, at least in the rabbinic culture of the last two millennia, historically differed from the dominant European societies in which most Jews resided for the past thousand years. In nearly all commentary on Jewish men and manhood, the same value statement appears concerning intentional Jewish masculine difference: Jews value mind over muscle. The belief in this statement as a fundamental truth of Jewish life is so real, so pervasive, that academic scholars of Jewish history and culture do not feel the need to justify it.² By looking at Jewish leaders and publications of the early twentieth century, however, we can see how prevalent Jewish attitudes towards different sorts of masculinity had become. In the German-

² This is prevalent in literary analysis but can also be seen in historical publications. I will provide a short example of each. In “Neither ‘Sissy’ Boy Nor Patrician Man: New York Intellectuals and the Construction of American Jewish Masculinity,” Ronnie A. Grinberg claims “Whereas elite Protestant constructions of masculinity stressed traits like strength and athleticism, Jewish masculinity emphasized intellect and combative debate,” with no explanation as to the history of that emphasis. Literature scholars begin from this fact and build on it to make arguments about changing masculinity, much as I do in this study (though in the case of this work, I attempt to focus on social history rather than literature). For example, Yaron Peleg explains that to masculinize a Jewish character, the author Moshe Smilansky endowed them with “non-Jewish” traits, and “construct[ed] him in the image of a goy. The desired change from a weak and diminutive Torah scholar to a strong and courageous farmer and soldier is achieved here by internalizing traditionally *non-Jewish values*. [emphasis added]” Grinberg, Ronnie A. “Neither ‘Sissy’ Boy Nor Patrician Man: New York Intellectuals and the Construction of American Jewish Masculinity,” *American Jewish History* 98, no. 3 (July 2014): 128. Peleg, “Heroic Conduct,” 39-40.

Jewish magazine *Ost und West*, for example, Jewish authors of fiction and commentary grappled with different views of Jewish manhood. In the pages of *Ost und West*, authors attempted to salvage those qualities of more traditional Jewish male behavior (piety, honor, solidarity, charity, etc.) while promoting the idea that Jewish men were good German nationalists, strong soldiers, and honorable fighters.³

Even accepting the reality of a real diversity in Jewish masculinities, we must acknowledge that the dominant images of Jews often conflicted with those of the societies in which Jews lived. It was largely from antisemitism, however, that several of the negative stereotypes against Jews emerged, much more so than by Jewish practice. What was the dominant image of Jewish men in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? The pervasive stereotype of Jewish weakness provides a constant point of reference throughout contemporary commentary, literature, modern scholarship, and even Jewish attitudes and assumptions in America today.⁴ According to the dominant stereotype, the Jewish man was physically weak, stooped and feeble, cowardly or meek, averse to physical exertion and violence, incapable at sports and athletics, and more inclined to stay in with his texts than to get outside to the fresh air. Stereotypes are not always completely accurate, and this is no exception, of course. However, considering the support of this idea within the Jewish community, and acknowledging the determination of some Jewish men to alter this perception of their nature, we must consider that the stereotype contains some measure of historical reality

³ For a thorough and interesting account of the use of manhood and the First World war in *Ost und West*, see the fifth chapter (“Antisemitism and the German-Jewish Male”) of David A. Brenner’s *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost und West* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 159-182.

⁴ Sarah Imhoff recounts her dialogue with a Jewish men’s group about Jewish manhood, and their conviction that Jews were less violent, gentler, and distinct in their American religious identity. Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 1.

(whether the reality created the stereotype or vice versa) and that some Jews themselves embraced it as accurate.

Antisemitism has been a gendered prejudice for as long as it has existed. This is unsurprising as, to an extent, Jewish life has always been gendered. Some aspects of Jewish life became gendered through cultural practice while the rabbinic tradition created others, such as the passing of Jewish identity through the mother. Even the most basic Jewish covenant, male circumcision, made Jewish men physically distinct in almost any land they dwelt. Antisemites believed Jews to possess a number of unique attributes dating back to the Middle Ages: horns, tails, devilish odor, dark skin, and even the belief in Jewish male menstruation.⁵ Though even the last of these can be dismissed as another absurdity of anti-Jewish prejudice (like the belief that Jews had actual horns), it remains a significant allegation, as it often surfaced to justify blood libel accusations. The belief supporting this connection maintained that Jewish men needed to acquire Christian or virgin blood in order to cure such distinctly Jewish diseases as male menstruation.⁶ This misconception continued well into the nineteenth century, as Freud believed in male menstruation (believing that he had identified it in his own natural cycle), though he believed that it remained an unrecognized process in *all* men, not merely in Jews.⁷ Years later in Nazi Germany,

⁵ Sander Gilman dates this belief to Thomas de Cantimpré's *Miraculorum et exemplorum memorabilium sui temporis libro duo* (Duaci: Baltazris Belleri, 1605), and we see it again in Thomas Calvert's 1648 book, *The Blessed Jew of Marocco: or, A Blackmoor made White*. (Quoted in David S. Katz, "Shylock's Gender: Jewish Male Menstruation in Early Modern England," *The Review of English Studies* 50, no. 200 (November 1999): 440-62.)

⁶ Sander L. Gilman, "Whose Body Is It Anyway? Hermaphrodites, Gays, and Jews in N. O. Body's Germany," in *German Jews, Gender, and History*, ed. Benjamin Maria Baader (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 148.

⁷ Katz, "Shylock's Gender," 456.

Theodor Fritsch published a counter-argument, once again presenting male menstruation as evidence of a separate and unique Jewish sexuality.⁸

Although non-Jews often propagated antisemitic notions of Jewish gender, Jews also played a role in spreading some of the least flattering stereotypes about themselves. The most notable and oft-cited and studied of these Jewish influencers of antisemitism was Otto Weininger, a Jewish-born philosopher of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His prominence, and the amount of scholarly work examining his influence on notions of Jewish gender, is particularly astounding given his very short career, as he committed suicide at the age of twenty-three.⁹ As there is so much work on the life and writings of Weininger, I limit myself here to a brief commentary on his influence on antisemitic images of Jewish men through the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁰ In his magnum opus, *Sex and Character* (1903), Weininger devoted an entire chapter to the topic of Jewishness. Weininger, himself born a Jew, made a clear distinction in his

⁸ Ibid., 457.

⁹ For the sake of clarity, it is worth noting that though born a Jew, Otto Weininger grew up in a Jewish family, but became baptized as a Protestant on the day of his doctoral graduation in 1902, the year before his suicide. For this reason, his Jewishness (whether to call him a Jewish or non-Jewish antisemite) can be questioned. However, by my own definition of Jewishness, as laid out in the introduction, he certainly qualifies. For more biographical information on Weininger, see Daniel Steuer's preface to the 2005 English translation of *Geschlecht und Charakter*, titled "A Book That Won't Go Away: Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*." Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*, trans. Ladislaus Löb (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ For more on Otto Weininger and Jewish gender, aside from his own 1903 book, *Sex and Character*, see Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger: Sex, Science, and Self in Imperial Vienna* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000); *Jews & Gender* (Harrowitz and Hyams); Susan C. Anderson, "Otto Weininger's Masculine Utopia," *German Studies Review*, 19, no. 3 (October 1996), 433-53; and Christina Von Braun's "Sexual Images in Racist Anti-Semitism." For more specifically on Jewish self-hatred see Sander Gilman's work, particularly *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Allan Janick, "Viennese Culture and the Jewish Self-Hatred Hypothesis: A Critique," in *Jews, Assimilation, and Culture in Vienna*, ed. Ivar Oxaal et al. (New York: Routledge, 1987): 75-88; Paul Reitter, "The Jewish Self-Hatred Octopus," *The German Quarterly* 82, no. 3, German-Jewish and Jewish-German Studies (Summer 2009): 356-72.

attack on Jewishness; it was not a racial failing, he speculated, but a flaw in the Jewish mental process: “Judaism must be regarded as a cast of mind, a psychic constitution, which is a *possibility* for *all* human beings and which has only found its most magnificent *realization* in historical Judaism. [emphasis original]”¹¹

It is worth noting, of course, that despite his disparaging language about Jewish men, he still held them in higher esteem than women, reminding the reader that “the most superior woman is still infinitely inferior to the most inferior man.”¹² However, his disparaging views on women provided a jumping off point for his chapter on Judaism, in which he clearly impugned the manhood of the Jew, “Just as in reality there is no such thing as the “dignity of women,” it is equally impossible to imagine a Jewish “gentleman.”¹³ Weininger used the existing beliefs about Jews to further his gender theories around them, for example, in the belief that Jews commit fewer serious crimes. He did not attribute this quality to a higher morality, but to the fact that like women, Jews lacked greatness, a quality necessary in all passionate acts, both of good and of evil.¹⁴ Great men, he claimed, required a depth that both Jews and women lack.¹⁵ He also employed the idea that Jews focused on family life and connection as another means to equate them to women. He wrote that the entire idea of family itself is maternal in origin and female in construction.¹⁶ Though he perpetuated and even created some antisemitic conceptions of Jewish gender, Weininger’s commentary also shows the degree of influence these notions of Jewish gender exerted in his time, not only in Christian circles, but among Jews themselves. Or, in his harsher assessment, “The

¹¹ Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 274.

¹² *Ibid.*, 272.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 278.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 279.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 280.

antisemitism of the Jew ... proves that nobody who knows the Jew regards him as lovable—not even the Jew himself.”¹⁷ Though Weininger is an extreme example, even those far less antisemitic showed degrees of this self-loathing.

Jewish sexuality, and the way antisemitic rhetoric presented it, exemplifies the ways in which antisemitic notions about Jews became gendered, in the cases of both Jewish men and women. One of the most frequent faulty assumptions about gendered antisemitism which I encounter is that the representation of Jewish men as seducers of Aryan women depicted Jews as masculine, even aggressively so.¹⁸ In truth, the qualities of hypersexuality, sensuality, and seduction (in the nineteenth century and into the mid-twentieth) more often pertained to women and were considered feminine characteristics which Jewish men shared. European society saw such qualities (more recently perceived as admirable masculinity through conquest or show of virility) as a despicable aspect of sexual femininity.¹⁹ As Otto Weininger wrote of female sexuality, “To put it bluntly: Man has the penis, but the vagina has Woman.”²⁰ Sex, he claimed, drives the actions and behaviors of women, and the same, he believed, applied to Jewish men. He wrote, “The Jew is always more lecherous, more lustful, than the Aryan man, although, strangely

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

¹⁸ That representations of Jewish men as such is not faulty, only the assumption that it cast a masculine light on those in question. Such claims against Jews were actually quite common. Those assumptions behind the Nuremberg Laws in Nazi Germany, for example, dealing with Jewish gender show that this was indeed a pervasive accusation, as it assumed that Aryan women were unsafe working in Jewish homes and among Jewish men. According to Patricia Szobar, Jewish men consistently found themselves accused by Germans of hyperactive sex drives, described as deviant and animalistic, and as exploiters of Aryan women for their own sexual gratification. Patricia Szobar, “Telling Sexual Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law: Race Defilement in Germany, 1933-1945,” in *Sexuality and German Fascism*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 147.

¹⁹ There is much written on this subject. For historical examples see Weininger or Havelock Ellis, and for historiographical references see Gilman, Von Braun, Bederman, and Anderson.

²⁰ Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 81.

enough and possibly in connection with the fact that he is not really of an anti-moral disposition, he is less sexually potent and certainly less capable of any great lust than the latter.”²¹

According to Daniel Boyarin, the relation of Jewish men to women applied in a far more physical way than merely their degree of lustfulness. Jewish men, he posited, view the act of circumcision as a crippling one, lessening a man by turning him into a Jew, no longer a true possessor of a penis.²² This argument, based in Freud’s psychoanalysis, had roots in popular Viennese society, as Sander Gilman observed:

The clitoris was seen as a “truncated penis.” Within the turn-of-the-century understanding of sexual homology, this truncated penis was seen as an analogy not to the body of the idealized male, with his large, intact penis, but to the circumcised (“truncated”) penis of the Jewish male. This is reflected in the popular fin de siècle Viennese view of the relationship between the body of the male Jew and the body of the woman. The clitoris was known in the Viennese slang of the time simply as the “Jew” (*Jud*). The phrase for female masturbation was “playing with the Jew.”²³

Gendered antisemitism swung both ways, targeting both Jewish men and women, men as feminine and women as overly masculine. Otto Hauser’s 1921 essay *Juden und Deutsche* (Jews and Germans) shows how German men perceived Jewish gender as manifesting in both the behavior and the body of Jewish men and women:

In no other ethnicity does one find so many feminine men and masculine women as among the Jews. For this reason, so many Jewesses race to enter professions of men: studying every subject imaginable from law and medicine to theology and becoming representatives of groups and of the people. If one observes these Jewish women on the basis of secondary sexual characteristics, then one can determine this ambiguity among two-thirds of them. The pronounced hint of a beard is extremely common; in contrast, the breasts remain undeveloped and the hair short.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., 281.

²² Daniel Boyarin, “What Does a Jew Want?; or, The Political Meaning of the Phallus,” *Discourse* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 26.

²³ Sander Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 38-39.

²⁴ Hauser Quoted in Von Braun, “Sexual Images,” 12-13.

Jewish scholars, whether historical, religious, literary, or cultural, have long connected the uniqueness of perceived Jewish gender to Jewish religious practice, texts, and exclusion from dominant societies. According to Barbara Breitman, antisemitism totally debased and oppressed Jewish men, forcing them to construct a Jewish masculinity which valued piety over brute strength. Through this ideal, Jewish men could repress their rage and hold submission to suffering as a masculine quality.²⁵ This last point frequently crops up in non-religious Jewish discussions of manliness and Jewry, in terms of military participation, sports, and public image. Theodore Herzl believed that centuries of oppression of Jews had rendered them not only weak, but ugly as well.²⁶ In the attempts of Jewish men and women to assimilate into larger society, there is a perceptible shift for Jewish men which altered their position and character comparatively more than that of Jewish women.

Like Jewish men, Jewish women held different roles than those of the dominant cultures around them, though still relegated primarily to the home. The role of women in Jewish life proved more adaptable to Western culture, as middle-class gender norms supported elements of traditional Jewish women's behavior in the home while adapting to the so-called "cult of domesticity."²⁷ Women took on more dominant roles as transmitters of Jewish religion and identity to the children, a role which previously fell under male responsibility in traditional Jewish culture. While women

²⁵ Barbara Breitman, "Lifting up the Shadow of Antisemitism: Jewish Masculinity in a New Light," in *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*, edited by Harry Brod, 101-117 (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1988), 106-07.

²⁶ As quoted in the epigraph at the start of this chapter, Herzl wrote, "All these sufferings rendered us ugly and transformed our character which had in earlier times been proud and magnificent." Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, Volume 1* ed. Raphael Patai (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), 9.

²⁷ This is true of Jewish women attempting to assimilate in both European and American culture, where the middle-class domestic role for women dominated. Paula Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 25-32.

adapted to bourgeois society and their roles as women in this new environment, Jewish men found more dramatic changes affecting their conceptions of manhood. Women, for example, found it possible to remain traditionally Jewish in the home, which fell under their jurisdiction. Jewish men, however, living more public work-lives, struggled to maintain religious lifestyles while fulfilling the travel and business obligations of the modern world, making it more difficult to perform religious duties.²⁸

As a result of these differences unique to Jewish life, manhood in Jewish culture is also an inimitable phenomenon. Attitudes towards this unique Jewish position varied, not universally negative, positive, or even in favor of change. In mid-nineteenth-century Germany, several Jewish leaders lauded the behavior of Jewish men as particularly feminine, advocating the idea that Jewish men embodied the most positive characteristics generally attributed to women, such as devotion to family and home, and compassionate dispositions.²⁹ Such views also appear in some Jewish representation of muscular or performatively masculine Jews as shamefully assimilated and Europeanized.³⁰ In *Unheroic Conduct*, Daniel Boyarin recounted growing up as a “sissy,” more a girl than a boy, but he identified the difference between himself and other boys as not one of gender but of culture. “I didn’t think of myself so much as girlish but rather as Jewish.”³¹ Boyarin

²⁸ Marion Kaplan, “Tradition and Transition: Jewish Women in Imperial Germany,” in *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Judith R. Baskin (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 231-32.

²⁹ This article spoke primarily of Rabbi Adolf Jellinek and Samson Raphael Hirsch. Benjamin Maria Baader, “Jewish Difference and the Feminine Spirit of Judaism in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Germany,” in *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender and History*, ed. Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman and Paul Lerner (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 50-71.

³⁰ Boyarin shows images taken from a Passover Haggadah, in which the “Evil Son” is represented as a “Muscle Jew” in contemporary European dress. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 77-78.

³¹ Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, Prologue.

explained that his gender identity was so linked to his Jewish identity as to make him feel even more connected to his Jewishness and disdainful of mainstream masculinity. Indeed, Boyarin clarified that he penned his 1999 book to reclaim the feminine Jewish man as a tradition dating back to the Babylonian Talmud, and in doing so he thoroughly examined the origins of that character. As the counterweight to those attempts at masculinizing Jewish men (which took the form of acculturating to European non-Jewish society), the religious community began to embrace this alternate and uniquely Jewish “gentle” masculinity, emphasizing traditional Jewish life and religion.³²

As popular concepts of admirable manly behavior coalesced in Europe, the visual image of masculinity also, quite literally, began to take shape. Several events and trends set this ideal in motion including the revival of Greek art and form, the German fraternity and gymnastics movements, growing nationalist movements and the heroism of military success (which both gained momentum during the Napoleonic wars), as well as the medieval ideals of knighthood. The popular perception of the ideal man became lithe, fit, muscular and angular.³³ As this ideal man solidified in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Jewish men found themselves in the odd position of not belonging to the classification of the stereotypical man in Western society. They instead fell into a separate category, more analogous to the position of women than men (as previously discussed in terms of antisemitism).³⁴ The generally accepted

³² In the case of Boyarin, his connection to the texts and the embrace of his “gentle” masculinity which he found in study of the Talmud resulted in his own conversion to Orthodoxy. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, Prologue.

³³ Leading up to the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, Art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) helped to revive and popularize this image, believing that the classic Greek male ideal exemplified through physical form all the attributes from medieval times that defined ideal masculinity and morality. George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 29.

³⁴ Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender*, 9.

distinctive difference between Jews and Christians precipitated and supported this distinction. According to popular notions of religion and manhood, Christians exemplified the aforementioned masculine qualities of goodness and European delicacy. Christians were masculine, and Jews effeminate.³⁵

Those who used this feminine stereotype for antisemitic purposes attempted to emasculate Jews by attributing female qualities to them, but some also used the fact of their male gender to dehumanize them. Andrea Dworkin wrote that traditional antisemitism often portrayed Jews as rapists of Christian women. The sexual nature of this act, she argued, did not make Jewish men more masculine, but dehumanized them—implying that they must be castrated or imprisoned.³⁶ The idea that a Jewish man could become dehumanized and dangerous and need to be fixed by physical removal of male organs contributes an interesting perspective to the discussion of masculinity in antisemitic rhetoric. It implies that excluding Jews from Christian society resulted not only in their emasculation and comparison to women by antisemitic rhetoric, but in their exclusion from manhood all together.

Exclusion of Jewish men from mainstream concepts of accepted masculinity extended far beyond and outside of Western Europe. The Ottoman Empire also considered those Jews living in its territory outsiders, and so held them to a different standard of behavior and honor than the Muslim subjects of the empire. The Ottomans categorized both Jews and Christians as *dhimmis* (legally protected non-Muslims living in an Islamic state), granting them legal protection while

³⁵ This distinction is especially significant when examining the motivations of some Jewish to Christian Converts, as Sarah Imhoff does in *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism*. This issue as well as the work which Imhoff conducted is covered in the final section of this chapter titled “Accepting Jewish Weakness.”

³⁶ Andrea Dworkin, “The Sexual Mythology of Anti-Semitism,” in *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*, ed. Harry Brod (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1988), 119.

determining their inferior status.³⁷ Yaron Ben-Naeh noted a distinction in the nature of Jewish and Muslim codes of honor in his examination of Ottoman Jews, explaining that the concept of honor in Hebrew (*kavod*) meant either an internal value or personal virtue or could be manifested as an external gesture towards another worthy person. Islamic interpretations of honor (*sheref*), by contrast, though they also recognized two kinds of honor, included separate ideals for male honor (earned through acceptable masculine behavior like courage and generosity) and female honor (referring to sexual behavior, primarily modesty and limiting their exposure to the company of men).³⁸ Within this gendered definition and the law of the state, one must be Muslim to have honor, and so Jews were denied such recognition and sought it among their own people instead of larger Ottoman society. Therefore, within Ottoman Jewish communities, elements of masculine honor resembled those in much of Jewish Europe (religious piety, morality, humility, modesty, etc.).³⁹

A difference worth noting between the Jews of Western Europe (the primary focus of this chapter) and the Jews of the Ottoman Empire is evident in their image, and how they present masculinity to the rest of society. Because adult Jewish men did, in a way separate from the Ottoman definition, assert their own masculine codes of conduct and honor, they considered the beard a visual representation of Jewish manhood, one which, according to Yaron Ben Naeh, was an indispensable component of Jewish male honor in the Muslim Orient.⁴⁰ By the start of the

³⁷ They were subject to special taxes and restrictions meant to degrade and visually distinguish them from Muslim subjects. Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Urban Encounters: The Muslim-Jewish Case in the Ottoman Empire," in *The Ottoman Middle East: Studies in Honor of Amnon Cohen*, eds. Eyal Ginio and Elie Podeh (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 178.

³⁸ Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Honor and Its Meaning among Ottoman Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 2 (Winter, 2005): 22.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ So much so, he explains, that damage to a man's beard could be viewed as an insult to his masculinity. *Ibid.*, 25.

twentieth century, the trimming of a man's beard, though more accepted, became a mark of secularism among Ottoman Jews.⁴¹

Muscular Zionism in Europe: Rejecting Emasculation

For Jews in Europe, the way gender determined one's place within or outside of the mainstream developed simultaneously with nationalism. As nationalism rose in popularity, European society characterized the masculine ideal as embodying the nation. Members of the dominant national group inherited measures of respectability and honorable attributes of the masculine ideal, while stripping those outside the favored group of such basic human sexual classifications.⁴² The inclusion or exclusion of marginal groups in national martial pursuits and common practice both show this division. Jews were key among marginalized groups, belittled by Western European society as particularly cowardly and effeminate.⁴³

The Jewish answer to the question of nationalism came in the form of Zionism in the late nineteenth century. The Zionist movement gained momentum among European Jews and provided a framework to reconstruct Jewish nationalism, hand in hand with Jewish manhood, to more closely identify with contemporary non-Jewish movements and their masculine ideal. The Zionist movement, as the following chapters will examine, became a tool for constructing manhood

⁴¹ See Sarah Abrevaya Stein on images of Jewish men and women in advertisements in Yiddish and Ladino presses. Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 183-185.

⁴² Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 133.

⁴³ Simon Wendt and Pablo Dominguez Andersen used this position of Jews as the perfect example of a male group marginalized from the hegemonic masculine ideal in Europe, in their introduction to a more global analysis of other masculinities and their roles in nation building. "Introduction," in *Masculinities and the Nation* Wendt and Andersen, 7.

through multiple channels in the United States as well. Zionism emerged as a reaction to European nationalism, and to Jewish oppression and exclusion. This last area, I argue, is one largely enacted by a gendered process of rejection of Jews from hegemonic masculinity.

A hegemonic masculine ideal in European mainstream culture did not truly coalesce until after the end of the eighteenth century, following the decline of the aristocracy and the subsequent appropriation of their ideals by the middle class.⁴⁴ The bourgeoisie adopted this general belief in dueling as a valid measure and mark of honor (and proof of masculine vigor) and maintained it for decades into the twentieth century.⁴⁵ This idyllic or stereotypical image of masculinity developed from several attributes standardized by the image of knighthood and from medieval times. The court-related traditions of the time exemplified qualities such as chivalry, loyalty, perseverance, and physical courage (most notably the act of dueling) which came to epitomize manliness both physically and morally.⁴⁶

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Europeans often denied Jews full acceptance to the middle class (despite their having gained legal equality) by refusing them the satisfaction of a duel. This denial continued long after dueling gained popularity and continued in Germany as recently as the nineteen twenties. Dueling presented yet another hurdle for middle-class Jewish men to overcome in their long run for acceptance in European society. Merely granting an individual the opportunity to duel gave the dueler a mark of status, even if they lost

⁴⁴ Mosse, *Image of Man*, 19.

⁴⁵ Robert A. Nye referred to this process as the "embourgeoisement" of the duel in *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 132-33. Also see Steven A. Riess, "Antisemitism and Sport in Central Europe and the United States," in *Jews in the Gym: Judaism, Sports, and Athletics*, ed. Leonard Greenspoon (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2012), 99-100.

⁴⁶ Kevin McAleer, *Dueling: The Cult of Honor in Fin-de-Siècle Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 143. Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 22.

the bout and ended up with the traditional facial scar of the defeated. For this reason, Europeans often accused Jewish men of marking themselves on the face with fake dueling wounds—as society considered men more respectable and honorable if they had been scarred in a duel.⁴⁷ Being a product of the university setting, bearing scars from duels also indicated high academic rank and social privilege.⁴⁸

Several famous Jewish leaders and thinkers advocated dueling as a means of achieving social status for individuals seeking equality and recognition and to improve the dominant population’s perception of the entire Jewish people. Theodor Herzl experienced much of this exclusion and denial first hand and cited it as formative to his worldview. Herzl advocated Jewish participation in dueling, believing that it would both raise Jewish status and advance the fight against antisemitism. Herzl was, in his own words, “exceedingly captivated by knightliness and manliness,” and so sought to engage in this manliest of actions to the best of his ability.⁴⁹ In 1881, while attending the University of Vienna, he joined a German nationalist dueling fraternity, *Albia*, one of the few that allowed Jewish participants with the caveat that the Jew joining must shed the “Jewish spirit” and loyalty to the Jewish faith, acquiring a “manly German hardness” in its place.⁵⁰

However, he hardly managed to participate in the performative manliness he sought, as he was never in ideal physical condition. The Austrian military rejected him from enlisting for being

⁴⁷ Sander L. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 124.

⁴⁸ Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 71.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁰ Jacques Kornberg, “Theodor Herzl: Zionism as Personal Liberation,” in *Theodor Herzl: From Europe to Zion*, ed. Mark H. Gelber and Vivian Liska (Tubingen, Germany: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2007), 50-51. For more on *Albia* and Herzl’s entry into the fraternity, see Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, 42.

“physically unfit” and in his time at *Albia*, he fought only one duel.⁵¹ This did not stop him from challenging other men who had offended him to duels in the following years (which he did three times), but none came to fruition. In the first two challenges, his and his opponent’s selected “seconds” resolved the issue without combat, and he withdrew himself from the last duel due to his father’s illness (though it rankled him for years and made him evermore defensive about his perceived cowardice).⁵² According to Jacques Kornberg, Herzl’s writing (particularly his play, *The New Ghetto*) proved that he saw his loathsome traits of cowardice (whether real or perceived) as distinctly Jewish, and dueling as their natural antithesis and remedy.⁵³

Refusing Jews the satisfaction of duels not only was a point of pride and access to the upper echelons of Viennese society, it also had repercussions for the place of Jews outside of the university. The idea that Jews lacked honor affected Jewish access to the Austrian military as well. In 1896, Herzl wrote in his diary,

Great excitement at Vienna University. The 'dueling', 'Aryan' fraternities have decided to refuse satisfaction to Jews, whatever the weapons, because every Jew is supposed to be cowardly and without honour. My young friend Pollak and another Jew have challenged two antisemites who are officers in the reserve. And when they declined to fight, the two Jews laid information against them with the General Command, which referred them to the Regional Command. On its decision depends a great deal - in fact, the future position of Jews in the Austrian Army.⁵⁴

For this reason, Herzl and other Jews on university campuses, those breeding grounds of prestige and masculinity, formed entirely Jewish groups of their own to combat the feminized Jewish stereotype and strengthen their self-confidence. Jews founded entirely Jewish fraternities in late nineteenth-century Germany which embraced the Jewishness of the members while

⁵¹ Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, 68.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 69-70.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵⁴ Quote cited in Julius H. Schoeps, “Modern Heirs of the Maccabees: The Beginning of the Vienna Kadimah, 1882-1897,” *LBIYB* 27 (1982): 167.

simultaneously stressing their “German spirit,” mimicking the manly behaviors of German fraternities.⁵⁵ According to Marion Kaplan, the numerous Jewish student groups which cropped up to combat antisemitism (fraternities, non-fraternal Jewish clubs, and Zionist groups) were meant as a temporary measure, to allow Jews to participate in campus life. They would cease to exist when Jews took their place among German students, but their situation did not improve enough to reach that goal.⁵⁶ Herzl himself resigned from *Albia* in 1883, in protest of recent statements released by the fraternity, in which they endorsed antisemitic views.⁵⁷

That same fall, Jewish students at the University of Vienna funded the first Jewish-nationalist student organization in Western Europe, *Kadimah*, and in their periodical, according to historian Julius H. Schoeps, the foundations of Jewish nationalism would provide the structure for Theodore Herzl to construct the ideology of political Zionism. Though the organization began as an academic society, *Kadimah* changed in the early eighteen nineties to become a Jewish dueling society, full of Jewish men who wanted to fight back actively against accusations of Jewish cowardice.⁵⁸ Until the founding of the Zionist Organization in 1896, only the Jewish student body

⁵⁵ Marion A. Kaplan, “As Germans and as Jews in Imperial Germany,” in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*, ed. Marion A. Kaplan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 213-14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁵⁷ Antisemitism in hypermasculine German and Austrian dueling societies was not a passing fancy. To this day, in Austria particularly, there are dueling societies on college campuses which promote nationalist exclusivism and far right extremism. They are secret societies, but they continue the traditions of dueling and even earn prestige by gaining facial scars. The remaining dueling clubs are generally associated with the white-nationalist far-right or identarian movement. Roc Morin, “Fighting for Facial Scars in Germany’s Secret Fencing Frats: The secret duels, conducted by a small number of university fraternities in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, are all that remain of a once widespread practice called *Mensur*,” *Vice.com*, March 19, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/av4bp4/frauleins-dig-them-0000573-v22n2. Reference to Herzl’s resignation can be found in Marianne R. Sanua, *Going Greek: Jewish College Fraternities in the United States, 1895-1945* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 32.

⁵⁸ Schoeps, “Modern Heirs of the Maccabees,” 164.

championed the Zionist movement, and several of the manly members of *Kadimah* became some of its most active leaders and supporters.⁵⁹

Herzl frequently spoke and wrote about his goals to rebuild Jews into the strong and healthy Hebrew nation of biblical times. However, he focused less explicitly on the physical rebuilding of the Jewish body, concerning himself and his brand of Zionism with the national manifestation of the Jewish body, through the political construction of a Jewish state. One of Herzl's contemporaries, first Zionist converts, and arguably the second most significant name in early Zionist history, was Max Nordau, a Hungarian physician and writer, notable for his leadership in the Zionist Congress. In his 1892 book, *Degeneration*, Nordau clearly identified a degenerated type of man found in the modern world and based on current medical theories of neurosis, particularly with the recently coined condition *neurasthenia* (defined as nervous system exhaustion).⁶⁰ He gave several causes for the degenerated condition of afflicted modern men, linking industrialism (the increasing speed of the modern world) and dehumanization (cramped conditions of urban centers) with the shattering of men's nerves, creating degenerated, nervous, and broken-down men.⁶¹ This industrial setting dictated that such degeneration afflicted members of the industrial proletariat and other city-dwellers (a group including the majority of Western European Jews), not the peasants remaining in the countryside.⁶² Though a creation of the modern world, these degenerated men could not possibly compete with men of hard muscles; the

⁵⁹ In fact, the first *Kadimah* student to engage in a duel was Siegmund Werner, who later became Theodor Herzl's close associate and Editor-in-Chief of the Zionist central organ, *Die Welt*. Schoeps, "Modern Heirs of the Maccabees," 170.

⁶⁰ A term coined in 1869 by an American neurologist, Dr. George Miller Beard. He defined it as a negative condition of modern society, exhibited with fatigue, anxiety, headache, impotence, neuralgia and depression.

⁶¹ Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1968), 40-41.

⁶² George L. Mosse, "Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, no. 4 (October 1992): 566-67.

comparison was so outrageous, Nordau wrote, that it “will provoke our laughter.”⁶³ As city-dwellers and intellectuals, Nordau saw Jews as particularly vulnerable to the symptoms of urban degeneration, especially given the belief in a Jewish predisposition to such symptoms based on their race (the assertion that Jews suffered disproportionately from the diseases of modernity and degeneration was not an uncommon belief, nor was it short-lived).⁶⁴

Both Theodore Herzl and Max Nordau envisioned the reality of a Jewish state not only as a future for Jewish life and nationalism, but as a means of redeeming Jewish manhood and vigor. Zionism offered one of many methods by which Jews attempted to change their effeminate image, including the Jewish presence in various European armies (where allowed to enlist), the German gymnastics movement, and other attempts at masculine assimilation. Zionism, however, provided a name, a unifying goal, and served as a battle cry for Jewish redemption. In Nordau’s speech to the Second Zionist Congress in 1898 (often cited as the conceptual moment of Muscular Zionism), he made this connection more firmly and blatantly, identifying Jewish weakness and demonstrating the internalized stereotype of Jewish emasculation.⁶⁵ The language he used to speak

⁶³ Nordau, *Degeneration*, 541.

⁶⁴ An entry in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* in 1906 clearly stated, “In general it may be summarized that the Jews suffer chiefly from the functional nervous diseases, particularly from hysteria and neurasthenia, and that the organic nervous degenerations, such as locomotor ataxia, progressive paralysis of the insane, etc., are uncommon, commensurate with the infrequency of alcoholism and syphilis among them. Wherever the proportion of Jews affected with syphilis and alcoholism is larger, the number of persons affected with organic nervous diseases increases to a similar extent. This may be observed in the large cities of Western Europe and in America.”

“Nervous Diseases,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, accessed July 9, 2018

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11446-nervous-diseases>

⁶⁵ Interestingly, though sources attribute the call for the Muscle Jew to this speech, but the quotes pulled in most sources are inaccurate. The 1898 speech did not mention the term or elaborate on the idea of the physical rebuilding of the Jewish people, it only gave an overview of the suffering of Jews across Europe. Nordau did not actually introduce the concept of the Muscle Jew at the Zionist Congress but published it in the *Jewish Gymnastics Journal* in a 1900 article, “Muskeljudentum.” The only English translation of the article is excerpted in Todd Presner’s

about Jewish suffering mirrored his published concept of degeneration, but here he spoke of redemption from the symptoms of degeneration (a product of their mistreatment and suffering). George Mosse explained that Nordau's projection for regeneration was one based entirely on manliness and contemporary beliefs about masculinity and dignity:

The Jew must acquire a solid stomach and hard muscles, not just to overcome his stereotype - though this was important for Nordau - but also to compete, to find his place in the world. Nordau built upon the widespread assumption that the healthiness and vigour of the body determined that of the mind as well Men who were robust and stalwart would embrace the work ethic in contrast to those whose lack of will or lack of energy made them shy away from work or any form of activity.⁶⁶

Nordau saw the solution for Jewish redemption in the gymnastics movement (not as much in participation of sports), in the retraining of Jewish bodies to repair the Jewish condition. He advocated physical exertion not only to improve the lives of those Jews immediately practicing, but also to revive the Jewish race.

In an article in the second issue of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (*The Jewish Gymnastics Journal* published by "Bar Kochba" Gymnastics Association), Nordau published his full idea of the Muscle Jew in 1900. The idea of the Muscle Jew was not a "sudden eruption" in ideology, as portrayed in past scholarship, but a continuation of the same process which led Nordau to write *Degeneration* in 1892.⁶⁷ Nordau saw the Jewish race not as degenerate in the way that he had described others, because they could improve themselves through work and rebuilding. Jews only lost their heroic and muscular stature through years of persecution, but could regain it with effort, whereas a truly degenerated race could never be redeemed.

"'Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles': Max Nordau and the Aesthetics of Jewish Regeneration," *Modernism/modernity* 10, no. 2 (April 2003): 269-96.

⁶⁶ Mosse, "Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew," 568.

⁶⁷ Todd Presner argues this in this article on Max Nordau from 2003 and does so very convincingly. I work on the same belief of continuity of thought and ideology. Presner, "Clear Heads," 275-76.

Muscular Judaism was not merely a dream of Jewish leaders, it became manifest in Zionist art and culture, which depicted Jewish men as masculine and heroic, while Jewish women stood supportively at their sides. The image of “new Jews” (men) and the physical movement for regeneration frequently appeared in materials and films emerging from Jewish settlements in Palestine, in Jewish art created in Europe reflecting life in the Yishuv, and in material disseminated in Zionist circles.⁶⁸ Zionists created sports and gymnastics clubs in which Jews would cultivate their new manhood, and saw those who participated as living examples of Nordau’s Muscular Zionism. Demonstrations of Jewish athleticism at each Zionist congress meeting inspired attendees in their hopes of the new Jewish man, as one attendee of the 1914 Zionist Congress remarked, “They cast from us the reproach that the Jewish race is a race of physical weaklings.”⁶⁹ Nordau’s view of the muscular Jewish movement, though he did not entirely neglect women, still promoted a phallogentric undertaking specifically aimed at male redemption. He wrote in the *Jewish Gymnastics Journal*:

Our new muscle Jews have not yet regained the heroism of their forefathers . . . to take part in battles and compete with the trained Hellenic athletes and strong northern barbarians. But morally speaking, we are better off today than yesterday, for the old Jewish circus performers of yore were ashamed of their Judaism and sought, by way of a surgical pinch, to hide the sign of their religious affiliation . . . while today, the members of Bar Kochba proudly and freely proclaim their Jewishness.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ For an excellent analysis of distributed material among Zionists presenting Jewish rejuvenation in Palestine see Michael Berkowitz chapter “Art and Zionist popular culture,” in *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 119-42.

⁶⁹ The account of Judith Solis Cohen in 1914 explains her feeling witnessing the displays of Jewish athletes at the Zionist conference of 1914 in Vienna, quoted in the following chapter when discussing Muscular Zionism and America. “Womankind: A Woman's Impression of the Zionist Congress, Edited by Sarah Kassy,” *The Jewish Exponent* (1887-1990); January 9, 1914; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Jewish Exponent*, 5

⁷⁰ *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* 2, no. 11 (1900). English translation from Presner, “Clear Heads,” 283.

The statement makes clear that the ideal of Muscle Jewry remained unattained, but that the movement was underway, and that Jewish men no longer felt (or resigned themselves to feel) ashamed of their circumcised penises, but manifested pride in their identifiable, visible Jewishness.

Some of Max Nordau's concept of Muscular Judaism had precedent, as nearly all of what he advocated clearly reflected the pre-existing Muscular Christian movement of the mid-nineteenth century and elements of the valor-based heroism of the Germanic tradition to which Herzl felt so drawn. The concept driving Muscular Christianity is perhaps best expressed by Thomas Hughes in his 1868 novel, *Tom Brown at Oxford: A Sequel to School Days at Rugby*, Volume 2, in which he writes,

The least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man's body is given to him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men.⁷¹

The similarities are undeniable, both movements calling for physical training, protection of people and promotion of good, and working towards a cause. The difference is in the Zionist call for redemption through developing the physical.

Muscular Judaism and political Zionism often appear in historical discourse as two different phenomena, the first associated with Max Nordau, the latter with Theodore Herzl. However, this distinction is misleading, as it fails to get at the core motivation of Theodore Herzl's experiences which drove him to Zionism. An oft-repeated narrative of Herzl's path to Zionism cited his coverage as a journalist of the Dreyfus Affair as his turning point. The mythology around his "conversion" to Zionism states that the Dreyfus affair jolted him out of his assimilationist delusions, seeing a high ranking assimilated Jew destroyed by persistent antisemitic notions of

⁷¹ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford: A Sequel to School Days at Rugby*, Volume 2 (Boston, MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), 170.

Jewish loyalty.⁷² However, as we have seen, by the time the Dreyfus affair began in 1894, Herzl's determination to overcome his own struggles as an assimilationist Jew already manifested in attempts to defend Jewish honor and manhood.⁷³ His earlier history also tells us that although Nordau coined and popularized the term "muscular Judaism," Herzl long maintained that the redemption of the Jewish people would be achieved by rebuilding their physical and moral character. He adopted the stereotypes about Jews from Austrian culture, and believed that they were not merely stereotypes, that Jews were (alongside their good qualities) cowardly, inferior, effeminate, and money-grubbing.⁷⁴ He, like Nordau, envisioned a new Jew, built physically stronger, more heroic and masculine, and with a nationalism of his own to rival his Austrian countrymen.

Whether Herzl's belief in antisemitic notions of Jewish men was accurate or merely antisemitic is a worthwhile ongoing debate. Though Herzl is still hailed as one of the great heroes of modern Jewish history, particularly among Zionists, others maintain that his determination to re-masculinize Jewish men did more harm than good. Daniel Boyarin identifies Herzl's criticism of Jewish weakness as a mentality which "triumphs over antisemitism by becoming the perpetrator of antisemitism."⁷⁵ Herzl believed in two types of Jews, as Boyarin explains, "the 'true Jews,' the manly, honorable, dueling, fighting Jacob Samuels, were the Zionists. The others were the tribe of *Mauschel*, crooked, 'low and repugnant,' frightened, unresponsive to beauty, passive, queer,

⁷² Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*, 1-4.

⁷³ Jacques Kornberg made this argument and supported it clearly in his chapter "The Dreyfus Legend," in *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁵ An idea which, oddly, fits very well in Otto Weininger's assertion that "The Jews would have to overcome Judaism before they could be ripe for Zionism." Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 311. Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 282.

effeminate.”⁷⁶ Boyarin’s interpretation of Herzl’s writings as antisemitic for the purpose of defeating antisemitism, is supported in Herzl’s own words, “Zionism’s second arrow is aimed at Mauschel’s heart.”⁷⁷

Regardless of the positive or negative effects of the Zionist movement on Jewish life overall, it gave Jewish men an outlet to exercise their muscles, change their image, and provide an alternative to aspirational assimilation to other nations in the creation of a purely Jewish one.⁷⁸ The movement affected Jews throughout the diaspora, and met with diverse responses, both inside and outside of Jewish communities. Jews in the United States were the diaspora community least interested in the relocation aspect of political Zionism. Their lives in America gave them unprecedented freedom and access to all levels of society. They found their home in the United States, and only a small minority of them were interested in migration. They *did* take interest in other aspects of the Zionist movement. Jewish pride, the rescue of persecuted Jews across Europe (particularly in the Pale of Settlement), and the rejuvenation of a virile (and in many ways, more American) Jewishness which could alter their image (and perhaps themselves) for the better.

⁷⁶ Mauscheln is a derogatory term, referring to a Jewish way of speaking. Sander Gilman has written about the term in several of his works, in the context of Freud and Jewish self-hatred. He stresses that the term is highly significant in modern antisemitism, as modern assimilated Jews accepted elements of antisemitic stereotypes, and believed that unassimilated, marginal Jews *mauscheln*. Gilman, *Freud, Race, and Gender*, 34, 89. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 308.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 312.

⁷⁸ One which, ironically, meant leaving the nations to which they had so aspired to engage in national and masculine movements to create their own nation, in which they would be fully accepted.

We do not admire the man of timid peace. We admire the man who embodies victorious effort; the man who never wrongs his neighbor, who is prompt to help a friend, but who has those virile qualities necessary to win the stern strife of actual life.

-Theodore Roosevelt, 1899¹

CHAPTER II

JEWS OF “WEAK PHYSIQUE”: MASCULINITY, THE STRENUOUS LIFE, AND JEWS IN AMERICA AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Jews in the United States did not replicate the muscular Zionist movement, the European Jewish response to emasculation. American Jews, whether native-born or those arriving in great numbers from Europe at the turn of the century, believed in the promise of the American dream. They believed that America would grant them full acceptance because of the freedoms that the young nation allowed for them. As more Jews arrived from Europe and crowded into cities with other new immigrants and native-born Americans, they encountered racialist and antisemitic attitudes and stereotypes. Some of these antisemitic notions migrated with contemporary Europeans, and some were long-established with earlier waves of immigrants. Jews fought back against these images in several ways, most notably they refuted them by improving their own masculine image. At the turn of the century, a dominant image of American manhood came to the fore, provided by Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt served not only as an example of manhood, he also demonstrated how a man could rebuild himself in the public eye, and shake their previously emasculated image.

Theodore Roosevelt, American Masculinity, and Fighting Jews

¹ Theodore Roosevelt, *Works: The Strenuous Life* (New York City: The Century Company, 1901), 4.

Theodore Roosevelt's name remains synonymous with American rugged manhood. He worked diligently to create that image, after accusations of femininity, dandyism, and weakness plagued his early days in public service.² In his youth, Roosevelt was a "sickly and delicate boy," who suffered from physical ailments as well as timidity; a "wimpy" sort of fellow.³ And once he began a career in the public eye, local presses "gay-baited" him, calling him "Jane Dandy" and mocking his timid and effeminate demeanor.⁴ Roosevelt came to believe that America had a unique power to reform and toughen weak men by allowing them to experience life on the western frontier, and he presented himself as a shining example of this transformation.⁵ Roosevelt never spoke at length or advocated aggressively for American Jewish men to rebuild themselves *as Jews*, but his references to Jews throughout his career and correspondence demonstrate his belief that Jewish men could mirror his own experiences in becoming "self-made men."

² Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: a Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 170-71.

³ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 132.

⁴ When elected to the New York State Assembly in 1881, he had already begun his lifelong project to reconstruct himself as hyper-masculine, an image which became a pillar of his legacy. In 1885, he purchased a ranch in the Dakota territories where he overcame the emasculated "milk-and-water" moralities of the east coast and the upper class. Democratic papers, like the *Sun* and the *World*, mocked him ruthlessly, calling him names and remarking on his mental and physical character. David McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback: The Story of an Extraordinary Family, a Vanished Way of Life and the Unique Child Who Became Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 256. Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 132. Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 148.

⁵ He wrote *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885) and *The Wilderness Hunter* (1893) at his Dakota ranch, where his love of the American West and his firm belief in the frontier as a cure for the problem of effeminate white men developed. Roosevelt believed that building physical character required more than mere presence in the wilderness; one had to endure the trials of the rugged outdoors and build physical character. He maintained that he owed more than he could express to the West, to the people he met and the life he lived on the land, which eventually accepted and embraced him and enabled his transformation. Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 119.

Roosevelt valued heroics and praised America's ability to create heroes that young men could emulate. In a letter to Lyman Abbott in 1908, he pointed to Oscar Solomon Straus, his Secretary of Commerce and Labor (the first Jewish United States Cabinet Secretary), as a shining example of Jewish success. He did so, however, by comparing Straus favorably with other successful Jews in business or finance, "I want the Jewish young man who is born in this country to feel that Straus stands for his ideal of the successful man rather than some crooked Jew money-maker."⁶ While praising Straus as an "ideal successful man" Roosevelt maintained a dislike of Jews in commerce, and lamented his obligation to socialize with them. In a letter to his sister Anna Roosevelt Cowles, he described a lunch he attended in New York City that "at least half the guests were Jew bankers; I felt as if I was personally realizing all of Brooks Adams' gloomiest anticipations of our gold-ridden, capitalist-bestridden, usurer-mastered future."⁷

In this vein, he urged men of Jewish descent to embrace those qualities which might recover their own manhood, arguing that such men "have not yet gotten far enough away from their centuries of oppression and degradation."⁸ Putting it into Jewish historical context, he told Israel Zangwill (the author of the 1908 play, *The Melting Pot*, dedicated in its printed version to Roosevelt), "I made up my mind it would be a particularly good thing for men of the Jewish race to develop that side of them which I might call the Maccabee or fighting Jewish type."⁹

⁶ Theodore Roosevelt in a letter to Lyman Abbott, May 29, 1908, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 1043.

⁷ Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles. Theodore Roosevelt Collection. MS Am 1834 (532). Harvard College Library. <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o283837>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

⁸ Letter to George Briggs Alton, May 15, 1901, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 78.

⁹ Not only did Zangwill dedicate the play to Roosevelt, he actually attempted to change the title to match Roosevelt's own language, *The Crucible*, but met with publishing complications under that name. From Edna Nahshon, ed., *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 214. Quote is from Theodore

Interestingly, Roosevelt urged Jewish men not to precisely emulate those white Americans of the western frontier. He maintained a distinction between weak Jews and Jewish heroes on the one hand, and weak white men and their masculine counterparts on the other. Upon examination, Roosevelt's manly ideal was very racial in nature. He saw manhood as a means to dominate and control inferior races, a strategy which he and others demonstrated on the American frontier.¹⁰

Like so many of his contemporaries, Roosevelt accepted Jewish weakness as a reality, while also embracing the more positive stereotypes that accompanied it. While he spoke disparagingly about Jewish businessmen (both American and abroad) and the unpleasantness or garishness of Jews in general, he also believed in the superior intelligence of Jews over other immigrants and remarked that they raised bright, promising children.¹¹ Roosevelt assumed two dichotomous positions about the Jewish people; he wanted Jewish men accepted for being just as American as any other group (native-born or immigrant) yet also maintained that they were inherently different, separate from other Americans. Just as he suggested that they access that manly part of their *own* history which would enable them to attain greatness and toughness (maintaining their distinctiveness among Americans), he also defended them from prejudice in the public eye. Responding to a story by Arthur Train published in *McClure's Magazine* in August of 1913, Roosevelt wrote to the author with concern about the representation of the Jewish people.

In this story there is a native American scoundrel, which is all right. There is also a meaner Jew scoundrel, which is also all right. But there are native American representatives of manliness and decency; and there ought also to be a Jew among them! It is very important that we shall not give the impression that we are attacking all foreigners qua foreigners.

Roosevelt in a letter to George Briggs Alton, May 15, 1901, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 78.

¹⁰ Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization*, 171.

¹¹ One of the common negative stereotypes about Jews in the nineteenth century was that they were gaudy, often donning exuberant and unattractive clothing to appear wealthy or assimilated. Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 124-25.

There are exceedingly bad Jews, and exceedingly bad old stock native Americans. There are exceedingly good men who are Jews, and other exceedingly good men who are native old stock Americans.¹²

Though he urged Train to also include good Jews, Roosevelt made no mention of the terribly unpleasant characteristics ascribed to the Jew in the story. Train depicted his Jewish character, Mr. Abie Rosen, as a man of “globulous” countenance with suspected connections to communism. Throughout the story, Rosen maintained shameless worry about his finances over the fate of his country.¹³ Roosevelt never urged Train to reconsider these negative Jewish characteristics, as he also believed they were based in truth, just as he believed that Jews were highly intelligent and naturally dominant in higher education.

Though scholarship and outdoorsmanship may seem dichotomous, to Roosevelt the pairing constituted the ideal formula for masculine life. This view conflicted with that of Roosevelt’s contemporaries, who argued that scholarly education had a detrimental effect on American male youth and masculinity. G. Stanley Hall, writing in the decades surrounding the turn of the century, admonished the temperance taught to school boys by their educators, fearing that education was threatening American manhood. Too much education, Hall argued, led to neurasthenia and weakened American masculinity. He found the solution to this problem in teaching young boys “savagery” and “primitive” behaviors. Roosevelt, by contrast, saw education as a necessity in the creation of the ideal man.¹⁴ He considered education essential, but also theorized that the issue

¹² Letter to Arthur Train, August 13, 1918, SC-10293, American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹³ Arthur Train, “The Flag of His Country,” *McClure’s Magazine* 50, no. 10 (August 1918): 9-11, 45-46.

¹⁴ For a more thorough discussion of this reconstruction of American manhood, see Gail Bederman’s chapter “‘Teaching Our Sons to Do What We Have Been Teaching the Savages to Avoid’: G. Stanley Hall, Racial Recapitulation, and the Neurasthenic Paradox,” in *Manliness & Civilization*.

with “modern life” included a “tendency to forget ... the rugged virtues which lie at the back of manhood.”¹⁵ Therefore, an ideal manly education not only involved intellectual endeavors but manual labor and training, to shake the idea that in order to rise in the world, men must get themselves “into a position where they do no hard manual work whatever; where their hands will grow soft, and their working clothes will be kept clean.”¹⁶

When he commanded the “Rough Riders,” he chose his men based on their backgrounds and merit, a combination of Ivy Leaguers and frontier ranchers, comprising an ideal masculine army. Roosevelt recruited Jewish men into his unit, who he explained (when prompted to explain his relations with Jews) had enlisted and performed well alongside their comrades, one even rose to the rank of lieutenant for acts of gallantry.¹⁷ Critics of ethnically and regionally mixed military units in particular faced Roosevelt’s ardent defense of the practice. During his first term as president, he even wrote to the surgeon general on behalf of at least one Jewish man attempting to enlist in the armed service, who believed he was rejected because of his Jewish background.¹⁸ He prided himself on embracing the melting-pot theory and celebrating the stew of American citizenship. When a man argued racial superiority among the enlisted men, Roosevelt called him an “addlepated ass” who “ignorantly prattles slander” about the American melting-pot.¹⁹ Despite

¹⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, *American Problems* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 155.

¹⁶ Roosevelt, *American Problems*, 131.

¹⁷ Not eager to discuss his relationship with Jews or other ethnic groups as such, Roosevelt asked that George Briggs Alton (to whom he wrote this high praise of Jewish Americans and soldiers) keep in mind that he “prefer not to have it coming from me,” if shared, as he “should promptly be flooded by requests for similar information from all kinds of people.” Roosevelt in a letter to George Briggs Alton, May 15, 1901, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 79.

¹⁸ Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Robert M. O’Reilly. Theodore Roosevelt Papers. Library of Congress Manuscript Division. <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o183334>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

¹⁹ Theodore Roosevelt in a letter to Madison Grant, December 30, 1918, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 1419.

his belief in the melting pot, however, his biases about unassimilated Jews remained in place. In a very telling correspondence with James Andrew Drain, the head of the National Rifle Association, the two men discuss the desirability of Jews in the military and in social life. Drain expressed to Roosevelt that,

Wherever a Jew is a decent, respectable, law-abiding man he is entitled to exactly the same treatment as any other white man, no more no less. I will give that to him and you will give it to him, regardless of any consideration of incidents which occurred almost two thousand years ago ... but with respect to the question of whether a Jew is or is not socially pleasant to us or every American, there can be but one opinion. Generally Jews are no desirable social companions. The occasional exceptions prove the rule.²⁰

Though Roosevelt defended Jewish men's right to enter into the military, he abstained from commenting on Jewish sociability on paper, explaining, "I do not want to write about it," but he then invited Drain to a more frank and intimate discussion in person upon Drain's next visit to New York. In the military, however, he believed that Jews should be able to prove themselves "by the scale we use with Christians." However, he also took it for granted that "a large proportion of the Jews who go into Annapolis and West Point fail, a larger proportion than that of Christians."²¹

While working for the police in New York, Roosevelt admired his Jewish colleagues in the force, and used melting-pot inspired language when he discussed diversity in police work. He spoke of the power of a fighting force, like the New York Police, to "weld" men of all nations (Germans, Jews, Slavs, Italians, Scandinavians, and others) into a "physically fine lot All that

²⁰ *Letter from James Andrew Drain to Theodore Roosevelt*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o68930>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson

²¹ *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to James Andrew Drain*, <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o292410>. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University.

they need is to be given the chance to prove themselves honest, brave, and self-respecting.”²² He reasoned that Americans fighting for entry to all professions and the American ideal needed only for others to “treat them so as to appeal to their self-respect and make it easy for them to become enthusiastically loyal Americans as well as good citizens.”²³ Indeed, when an anti-Jewish evangelist, Rector Alward, visited New York, Roosevelt assigned him forty Jewish policemen for protection, seeing the protection by the race he was denouncing as “the most effective answer to that denunciation.”²⁴ Roosevelt wrote frequently about the diverse nature of his police force, which accepted Catholics, Protestants, and Jews alike. However, despite hiring Jews and praising the prowess of his Jewish officers, the New York Police Department remained very minimally Jewish.²⁵

That Roosevelt set Jews apart from American men overall cannot be taken for granted. Though Jewish leaders enjoyed the high praise he bestowed on certain successful Jews in his acquaintance, he still maintained his prejudices about Jews in everyday life. It was in service to the nation that he believed there could be equity among all men, regardless of ethnicity. He resolved that the battlefield made Americans of all men, and Jews participated eagerly. Those Jewish soldiers who fought alongside Theodore Roosevelt, and earned his praise for their actions as Rough Riders, continued in a long history of Jews serving in the American Armed Forces, dating back to the Revolutionary War (as both soldiers in the Continental Army and Jewish Tories

²² Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 186.

²³ Theodore Roosevelt in a letter to Lyman Abbott, May 29, 1908, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 1042.

²⁴ The numbers vary a bit across Roosevelt’s recollections. In his autobiography he cites “a score or two” (p. 187) but this quote and number come from his letter to George Briggs Alton, May 15, 1901, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 78.

²⁵ In his 2006 book, *Jews in Blue*, Jack Kitaeff features only thirteen notable NYPD Jews as notable in his profile of high-ranking NYPD Officers.

fighting for the British). Few enough Jews enlisted in early American wars that, unlike the armed forces of other nations with substantial Jewish populations, it was not worth the bother to bar them from service or determine separate Jewish status as some European nations had done.²⁶ Had there been more Jews present and able to enlist, such status may have been determined to control the minority of Jewish soldiers, who were often viewed as a threat to military security.²⁷

European nations with historically large Jewish populations excluded Jews from national service, which is perhaps one contributing reason that they actively, even eagerly, enlisted in the United States Armed Forces. As many as 120,000 American soldiers fought for the Continental Army out of a population of roughly 2,418,000, accounting for 4.96% of the total population.²⁸ According to an 1895 study, forty-six of these soldiers were Jews.²⁹ This seemingly small number, however, is a much greater percentage of the American Jewish population, estimated at 2,500.³⁰ Assuming the legitimacy of the 1895 statistics, this shows 8.69% of American Jews enlisted to

²⁶ Within the Roman Empire, Jews were banned from military service on multiple occasions under Emperors Honorius and Theodosius. Leading up to the First World War, the German military lifted a long-standing unofficial ban on Jewish officers. Jews were similarly barred from becoming military officers in the Russian military under the May Laws of 1882. Carsten Schapkow, *Role Model and Countermodel: The Golden Age of Iberian Jewry and German Jewish Culture during the Era of Emancipation* (London, UK: Lexington Books, 2016), 42. Brian E. Crim, *Antisemitism in the German Military Community and the Jewish Response, 1914–1938* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 8.

²⁷ For a more thorough examination of U.S. military concerns on “International Jewry” see Joseph W. Bendersky, *The “Jewish Threat”: Anti-Semitic Politics of the U.S. Army* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

²⁸ Estimate of soldiers in the Continental Army from John Whiteclay Chambers, editor, *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 187. Total population from Evarts Boutell Greene and Virginia Draper Harrington, *American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790* (Baltimore, MD: Columbia University Press, 1932), 7.

²⁹ Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* (Philadelphia, PA: The Levytype Company, 1895), 424.

³⁰ Solomon Grayzel, *A History of the Jews: From the Babylonian Exile to the Present, 5728-1968*, (New York: Meridian, 1984), 483.

fight against the British, showing disproportionately high levels of Jews serving in this earliest of American wars.

Jews enlisted to serve in American military units on both sides of the Civil War. A total of 7038 Jewish soldiers fought in the war, on both sides combined, though the majority of these Jewish soldiers served with northern states and the Union Army.³¹ These high numbers in the North manifested, in part, due to the fact that the majority of Jews in America lived in the North.³² Jewish soldiers formed specifically Jewish companies in the armies of both the North and the South, though the majority chose to serve in regular army units, alongside their other, non-Jewish, countrymen.³³ It was not until the midst of the Civil War that the Army allowed the first Jewish Chaplains to be appointed. Prior to the Civil War, the Army regulations stated, “None but regularly ordained ministers of some Christian denomination ... shall be eligible to appointment.”³⁴

Under pressure from the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, President Lincoln rescinded the order and appointed the first official Jewish military chaplain, Rabbi Jacob Frankel of the Philadelphia Congregation Rodeph Shalom, on September 18, 1862.³⁵ Persuading the sitting president to grant Jewish soldiers’ access to chaplains of their own faith did not, however, reflect the attitudes of all American leadership, nor did it put an end to discriminatory practices. Just a

³¹ Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, 424.

³² In addition, a contributing factor may also have been played by the participation of Jews in the movement to abolish slavery. This number came from Wolf (425-26), though numbers ranging by up to 800 can be found in varying sources, including the number 7884, listed by the *New York Post* on the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Jews in the United States proceedings publication appendices in 1905, pages 213-14.

³³ Jonathan D. Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn, ed., *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 29.

³⁴ United States War Department, *Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1863), 36.

³⁵ Historical Note, Board of Delegates of American Israelites Records, February-April 2003; I-2; finding guide; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

few months later, in December, 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant released a general order expelling all Jews from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi based on his belief that they operated disproportionately in the black market cotton trade.³⁶ The Board of Delegates used Jewish military participation as the defense against this outright discrimination, which they explained was “peculiarly painful to the Israelites of the United States, who have freely tendered their blood and treasure in defence [*sic*] of the Union they love.”³⁷

The growing nativist movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ensured that the officer core consisted primarily of established upper- or middle-class white Anglo-Saxon Protestants.³⁸ The “scientific” racial theory accepted at the time argued that the American nation was a product of the purity of spirit found only in the racially unadulterated and dignified descendants of Anglo-Saxons, and assumed the racial inferiority of other groups. Immigrants imported a great deal of antisemitic theory and beliefs to the New World from Europe, where such beliefs held since the Middle Ages. Joseph W. Bendersky calls American attitudes towards Jews, both in and out of the military, an “insecure ambivalence.” Patriotic sentiment of the time hailed the power of assimilation and believed in the power of the American melting pot to absorb Jewish distinctiveness. This assumption led to a sharp distinction in the American mind (just as it did in Theodore Roosevelt’s) between “good” westernized Jews and “bad” uncivilized new immigrants.³⁹ This view, tinged with old antisemitic wariness, meant that the American military accepted Jews into the military but limited their access to higher level positions.

³⁶ Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York: Schocken, 2012), 6-20.

³⁷ Board of Delegates of the American Israelites resolutions, January 9, 1863; Board of Delegates of American Israelites Records; I-2; box 4; folder 8; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

³⁸ Bendersky, *The Jewish Threat*, 2-6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

American Jewish Conceptions of Manhood

In America at the turn of the twentieth century, norms concerning masculinity fluctuated dramatically and quickly (part of the previously examined and contested “crisis of masculinity”) in what Amy Kaplan described as a redefinition of “white middle-class masculinity from a republican quality of character based on self-control and social responsibility to a corporeal essence identified with the vigor and prowess of the individual male body.”⁴⁰ This meant that as in Europe, the primary feature of manhood became the physique, a far more performative, visible, and even racial quality than social responsibility. The change posed a problem for groups like Jews, African Americans, and Native Americans, who the American mainstream held apart from white manhood by presumably identifiable phenotypical features and behavioral qualities.

American Jews formed a unique case among Jewish communities, as unlike their brethren in Europe, the Jewish population in the United States grew so quickly through mass migration that one in two Jews in America was an immigrant (the overwhelming majority of whom were Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe).⁴¹ Therefore, the Jewish American story of the early twentieth century is as much an immigrant story as it is about established Jewish communities. In fact, as there was a well-established Jewish community (largely middle class and urban), the narrative hinges on the interactions between the established and newly immigrated Jewish

⁴⁰ Kaplan, Amy. "Romancing the Empire. The Embodiment of American Masculinity in the Popular Historical Novel of the 1890s," *American Literary History* 2, no. 4 (Winter, 1990): 662.

⁴¹ According to Steven J. Gold, “In 1927, the American Jewish population was 4,228,029. Of these, 54 percent or 2,302,378 entered the country between 1881-1927. The remainder included Jews present in the United States prior to 1881 and children born to established or recently arrived parents.” From “‘The Jazz Singer’ to ‘What a Country!’ a Comparison of Jewish Migration to the United States, 1880-1930 and 1965-1998,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18, no. 3, The Classical and Contemporary Mass Migration Periods: Similarities and Differences (Spring, 1999): 117.

communities. Those who recently immigrated had a great adjustment to make in acculturating to the United States, a process largely facilitated by the pre-existing Jewish community. The experience of adjusting to American life differed between men and women. For example, Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe still saw the transmission of Jewish knowledge as a male responsibility, but acculturating to the United States altered that perception as American institutions gave women and girls more formal education (religious and otherwise).⁴² Not only were they formally educated, but informally the American ideal stressed the innate religious and spiritual superiority of women. In an 1895 contribution to the Jewish women's magazine *The American Jewess*, Rev. Dr. Henry Berkowitz explained, "Physical inferiority gives [women] a moral and spiritual superiority over man. This is an established fact, and so recognized in American manhood. Woman's is the intenser [*sic*] nature, the tenderer susceptibility. Religion is innate in her heart."⁴³ So internalized was this American ideal of gender roles in this case that the author also wrote that Jewish women should learn more about economy, about the best use and spending of what men bring home. In Europe, of course, Jewish women often provided for their families as breadwinners and continued to work out of the house as immigrants after coming to America. Narrowing the women's domain to the home shifted Jewish women's daily life, and served as a mark of successful Jewish assimilation to American gender roles.

An entirely different set of issues concerned young men looking to make themselves into Americans in the most visible sense. At the turn of the century, it was not only important that a man be robust and healthy, but also that he ascribe to American ideas of propriety. Some young

⁴² Ellen M. Umansky, "Spiritual Expressions: Jewish Women's Religious Lives in the United States in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Judith R. Baskin (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 343.

⁴³ Rev. Dr. Henry Berkowitz, "Woman's Part in the Drama of Life," *The American Jewess* 1, no. 2, May 1895, 66.

Jewish men feared that Judaism, in its more traditional religious forms, remained incompatible with the generally accepted standards of American decorum. When lamenting the loss of young Jewish men in the synagogues, a contributor to *The American Hebrew* explained:

“Propriety” demands of the young man that he dress stylishly, that he be seen often in the society of young women, that he be able to dance. Above all it demands that he do nothing anomalous, nothing that is not “American.” Overt respect for foreign-looking parents is anomalous, observance of the dietary laws is anomalous, attendance at a synagogue filled with a strange un-American congregation, a synagogue where an unintelligible and un-American language is used in the service—this above all is anomalous. And so the young man, in obedience to the laws of propriety, gives up overt filial affection, and the dietary laws and the synagogue—the last, not because Americanism disapproves of worship, but because it disapproves of the place of worship.⁴⁴

This placed the burden of successful assimilation on the synagogues and Jewish communities, to change themselves and the way they presented Judaism to American society in order to maintain their own young membership.

This focus on the need to modernize or Americanize Judaism to keep members (not unique to the mass migration period) continued to concern some American Jewish men who hoped to improve on the lack of American manhood in the Jewish community. As far back as the mid-nineteenth century, Jewish critics of the synagogue claimed that Jewish religious leaders “are not true to themselves ... they do not exhibit the requisite energy in asserting their manhood.”⁴⁵ In an 1866 cover article of *The Jewish Messenger*, one such critic argued that the space for Jewish manhood existed outside of the synagogue, by developing an organization of young Jewish men for the purpose of “developing the manhood of the New York Hebrews.”⁴⁶

“If we desire to create a flattering impression upon the minds of our neighbors,” the article suggested, “it would seem that the picture we might thus present of our ‘rising generation,’

⁴⁴ Meyer Cohn, “The Young Man and the Synagogue,” *The American Hebrew and Jewish Messenger*, November 13, 1914, 1.

⁴⁵ “Improvements Needed,” *The Jewish Messenger*, March 23, 1866.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

engaged in rational relaxation, mental culture, the development of artistic taste and the formation of sound opinions, would contribute to effect [*sic*] our object.”

Here the issue of manhood is not about the body, but suggests a lack of American behaviors, reparable through culture, appreciation of the arts, and exercise of the mind. And it is a failing of Jewish adulthood and coming of age, “Our ‘*boys*’ are anxious enough to display their powers of mind; but when they attain manhood and have responsibilities and cares of business thrown upon them, they appear to lose ambition for higher aims than pleasing of flattering schoolgirls. [emphasis added]”⁴⁷ Once these “boys” attained manhood, the young man would look back at his older coreligionists, and from an Americanized perspective, see that when “judged by ‘American’ standards of propriety, all this is strange, unpardonably strange. The young man feels that he must show his superiority to this anomalous worship of his fathers, and the best declaration of superiority he can think of is to abandon the old conditions entirely.” This author genuinely fears that the lack of manhood among Jews actively drove away their youth. Before the crisis of masculinity, before the shift in hegemonic manhood to be so focused on the physical, Jews already worried that they were not accessing proper manliness. Through their innate difference as Jews, whether American or otherwise, Jewish men struggled to be manly, by the dominant standards of the day.

These men attempted to refit Judaism to meet American standards of manhood and prestige. They believed this necessary, having accepted that Judaism was not a wholly *American* religion. Sarah Imhoff hypothesized that through very intentional (and at times successful) attempts to claim American manhood, American Jews made a new Judaism through a multi-directional process of masculinization and Americanization. Imhoff argued that religion (both

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Jewish and Christian) influenced the way in which Jewish masculinity developed, which, by turn, influenced the American Jewish religion.⁴⁸ This view of Jewish masculinity (all gender identity, really) as dependent on the reality of the Jewish religion, life, and practice, is reflected in both Orthodox and non-Orthodox examinations of Jewish gender. However, it is through the reform movement, which was more able to mimic Protestant life in the United States, that we see the most active change in ideal masculinity which Imhoff identifies (showing a very different process of the evolution of Jewish manhood than we see in Daniel Boyarin's work on the Orthodox).⁴⁹ A perfect example of an American Jewish reevaluation of manhood in America can be found in a sermon by Rabbi Max Heller, who attempted to blend the intellectual manliness of Jews with the courageous manliness of Christians in his sermon on American manhood:

It was a Christian hymn that braced me with courage ...

‘Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose strong, dare to make it known.’

There is a saying of ancient Rabbi Hillel, a man famous for meek patience, yet unafraid to speak bold words in a generation of much violence, a saying which perhaps compresses into one sentence the spirit of the hymn I have quoted;

‘In a place where there are no men, strive thou to be a man.’⁵⁰

⁴⁸ This is one of her larger overarching arguments in the first third of the book, “An American Religion.” Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 31-92.

⁴⁹ The American Jewish reform movement allowed for Jews to alter their practices and shift the image they transmitted to the rest of American society. Methods of prayer, music, behaviors, changed in the United States to mimic Protestantism and Protestant decorum. Synagogues adopted the use of choirs, sometimes, organs, so their Protestant neighbors would hear the similarities in their practices and find them less threatening. The orthodox, by contrast, as Boyarin explains, embraced the difference (not fully, but far more than the reform Jews of Germany and the United States). More importantly, Orthodox Jews were not nearly as prevalent in the United States during the period of Jewish Protestant-style assimilation in the United States, arriving primarily from Eastern Europe during the mass migration period (a shift in Jewish demographics examined in detail in Chapter III). David Kaufman, “Temples in the American Athens: A History of the Synagogues of Boston,” in *The Jews of Boston*, ed. Jonathan D. Sarna et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 181.

⁵⁰ Max Heller, “Moral Courage,” 7.

But still the gendered image of traditional Jewish life, and the traditional stereotypes so prevalent in Europe, persisted in the United States. As Christina Von Braun explained, successful assimilation of Jews into larger society failed to alleviate the aspect of antisemitism which focused on the hate of the foreign or alien as difference disappeared. As Jews incorporated into both European and American societies, stereotypes of the Jew became more biological than cultural, and thus inescapable.⁵¹

Other aspects of Jewish life, particularly among immigrants, held them apart and identifiable as Jews. Jews grew dominant, or at least prevalent, in several trades and professions; garment work and operating general stores became part of the Jewish image in America. Professional interactions between non-Jews and Jewish men conducting their business, particularly in sales, defined much of the Jewish male interface with the public. Within the import, export, and sale of goods, peddling was a prominent profession (and became one of the dominant images) of Jewish migrants during the nineteenth century. Many Jewish men engaged in peddling, and Jewish peddlers acted as foundational architects of Jewish life in the United States.⁵² They served as the channels through which many Americans first encountered Jews and Jewishness, as they traveled across the country to enter the homes of customers, many of whom had never seen or met a Jew. These Jewish men occupied a unique place in American society, and as negligibly few women became peddlers, it was an experience nearly exclusive to men.⁵³

⁵¹ Von Braun, "Sexual Images in Racist Anti-Semitism," 1-15.

⁵² Hasia Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁵³ Though female peddlers existed, there is little evidence that they were at all common. Though Carolyn Eastwood, and Beatrice Shapiro mention the presence of female peddlers in their study of Chicago, they provide no more evidence than hearsay, and outside of the major cities in America, there seems to be even less reference. Jewish female peddlers are traceable within the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere, though still with scant references. Nor were Jews entirely alone in their profession of peddling, but the participation of other groups was negligible by

Travelling alone to sell their goods on the road, the life of a peddler was full of hardships; they carried great loads, traversed long distances, endured financial and bodily insecurity and miserable climates, and explored areas, languages, and cultures (at times) completely alien to their own. One might believe, given the hard life involved in the profession, that Americans considered peddling quite the manly endeavor. However, many Americans considered Jewish men outside of the rules for male behavior, which, surprisingly, included the access they granted Jewish peddlers to married women while their husbands and fathers were away. Jewish men who worked as peddlers in nineteenth-century America received unique access to homes and formed intimate relationships with the women to whom they sold their goods. They visited the women of the household, entering while husbands worked and traveled, and often even slept in the homes of the women to whom they sold their goods.⁵⁴ Although there were instances of Jewish peddlers falling in love with, and even marrying, the daughters of some of their patrons, customers generally did not perceive a threat to the women who purchased from Jewish men. In her 2015 book, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way*, Hasia Diner shows that Americans gave Jewish peddlers remarkable access to women and their homes, bringing modernity and consumerism into their lives, and dealing in what might be considered particularly intimate goods (apparel, undergarments, jewelry, etc.). This intimate allowance of Jewish men into the lives and homes of non-Jewish women says as much about the male identity of these peddlers as it does about their lives, and more than it does about their Jewish identity. Because they were excluded from hegemonic American manhood, mainstream

comparison, making it a highly Jewish experience. For more on the existence of female Jewish peddlers see Carolyn Eastwood and Beatrice Michaels Chapiro, *Chicago's Jewish street peddlers* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 1991), 21.

⁵⁴ See *Roads Taken* for several references to Jewish peddlers sleeping in customer's homes throughout the book.

Americans did not fully regard Jews as men, and therefore did not hold them to the same rules and standards of propriety.

Accepting Jewish Weakness

If one trend maintains the belief in Jewish particularity within American masculinity, regardless of locale or demographic, it is the tacit acceptance of Jewish weakness which Jews themselves display. This does not mean that all Jews believed themselves physically inferior, genetically different, or that any such difference should be cast in a negative light. What we see time and again is that the fact of Jewish male difference often goes unquestioned. Even in the cases in which Jewish men believed that they were physically weak as a group, they also believed that their condition could be remedied through training and performative strength and manliness. Todd Presner argued that Jews who believed in the legitimacy of this difference had internalized antisemitic notions through violent mechanisms of Jewish self-hatred.⁵⁵ Perhaps more important than Jewish self-hatred, however, is that Jews internalized the ideals of their dominant cultures, and, as Paul Breines wrote, “In doing so [Jews] forget that, far from being self-evident cultural universals, those ideals are predicated on a series of exclusions and erasures.”⁵⁶ In some cases, of course, Jews recognized that others merely *perceived* Jews as weak, but even those Jews argued that it fell to Jews to remedy the situation themselves, to improve the appearance of the Jew in public life through physical strengthening and masculinizing. This phenomenon reappears in

⁵⁵ Todd Presner, “Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles,” 270.

⁵⁶ Paul Breines, *Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 167.

every chapter of this work and reexamined in the specific condition of each context, as Jews accepted their distinctiveness and alternate masculinities.⁵⁷

The ideal American man (a rugged, tough, self-made man) emerged not on its own, but often by negative comparison. Roosevelt provided a model for this type of masculinity and promoted several methods to manifest his style of American manhood. Some Jewish men adapted as Roosevelt suggested, by joining his Rough Riders or otherwise learning to balance their intellectual pursuits with those “rugged virtues which lie at the back of manhood.”⁵⁸ Though some Jews in Europe already embraced an ideal of muscular Zionism and manly Jewish virtue, we also know that the (generally antisemitic) perception of Jews as weak and enfeebled, so popular in Europe, prevailed in the United States as well. Along with muscular Jewish movements there must be (by definition), a simultaneous acceptance of Jewish deficits in manly virtue.

Among American Jewish leaders of the early twentieth century, we can see how prevalent Jewish attitudes towards different sorts of masculinity had become. In a speech to an interfaith audience at the University of Michigan in 1915, Rabbi Max Heller recognized traditional Jewish male intellectualism while acknowledging the value of the dominant physical form of masculinity as the American hegemon. He suggested that despite the appeals of muscle and courageous behavior, men should aim for “a higher form of courage ... the manly vigor of intellectual

⁵⁷ It is worth pointing out that I am not weighing in on the reality of Jewish physical manliness in the early twentieth century. Boyarin argues in *Unheroic Conduct* that the whole idea of the “new Jew” in Zionism is the influence of the outside world, as Jews submitted to a *false reality* of Jewish weaknesses. I am not claiming that Jews were or were not any specific type of manly, but instead examining the ways in which they describe themselves and are described by others. As masculinity is itself a social construct of gender norms, I do not claim that anyone does or does not “possess” it.

⁵⁸ Roosevelt, *American Problems*, 155.

independence.”⁵⁹ Of course, Rabbi Heller delivered his speech to a university audience, who clearly valued education regardless of their Jewishness. Despite his emphasis on education, he still used biblical Jewish heroes who had fought physical battles to showcase manliness, for “there is no more truly magnificent picture of sublime courage, of spiritual manliness.”⁶⁰ So Jewish men, he insinuated, had the capacity for physical strength, but recognized the supremacy of intellectual independence.

Marcus Eli Ravage, a Jewish American immigrant, believed in the inherent difference of Jewish men from the hegemon in America. Attempting to fit into America’s ideal of manhood, he recounted his journey in his 1917 memoir, *An American in the Making*. His experiences clearly depict an America in which the backbone of the prevalent culture is masculine and aggressive, identified and proven by negative comparison to weak or soft men. Though Jewish, Ravage’s memoir focused less on his Jewishness and more on his inability to fit into mainstream manly life. He wrote that “The genuine American recognized but one distinction in human society—the vital distinction between the strong, effectual, ‘real’ man and the soft, pleasure-loving, unreliable [*sic*] failure.”⁶¹ Attending university in Missouri, he learned that his background in Jewish New York left him unprepared for life in much of American society, and that his peers spurned him. He depicted himself as a stranger in the strange land of American universities, though he made it clear that despite his own rejection by his peers, he “had to admire the heartiness, and the clean-cut

⁵⁹ Max Heller, “Moral Courage: The Test of American Manhood: Sermon,” Preached at the Jewish Union Service, Hill Auditorium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich., February 21, 1915, 4.

⁶⁰ Max Heller, “Moral Courage,” 6.

⁶¹ Marcus Eli Ravage, *An American in the Making* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 142.

For more detail and analysis of Marcus Eli Ravage’s *An American in the Making*, see Dana Mihailescu’s “Jewish Men and the Early Twentieth-Century American Code of Masculinity Through Ethnic Lenses,” *Atenea* 28 (June 2008): 87-102.

manliness of it.”⁶² For Ravage, Jewishness precipitated, but did not comprise, his primary issue, as his colleagues remained unaware of his heritage for the first three years after his arrival at the university. His Jewishness, however, manifested his real issue: his *maleness*. Though he tried to train himself in sports to fit in with his classmates (not because he had any personal interest), he remained inept and frustrated.⁶³ He concluded that the deficits lie with him, not with the men more interested in sports than in academic discussion:

It was not [their] fault that I had been sewing sleeves when I ought to have been playing ball, and that I had gone to the wrong kind of school for my secondary training, where I had been made into a grind and a bore and a disputatious fanatic when I could just as well have learned to be a level-headed man among men. It was not yet too late, fortunately. The opportunities for rounding out my education were ample enough. I had but to bring my will into play.⁶⁴

Here Ravage makes clear that no physical deficits or genetic failures made him incompetent at sports, but his Jewish upbringing had turned him into a “grind and a bore and a disputatious fanatic.” He believed himself less of a “man among men,” but hoped that through training and practice he could fix himself and become a real American man.⁶⁵

Some Jewish religious and lay leaders also took it for granted that the Jewish man differed from that ideal American man emerging from the American melting-pot which Roosevelt and Zangwill had praised and promoted. The most recognizable (even celebrated) image of unique Jewish manhood in the early twentieth century remained that of the scholar, whose time was better spent on intellectual pursuits (particularly the study of Jewish religious texts) than attempting to

⁶² Ravage, *An American in the Making*, 139.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 143-46.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁶⁵ Marcus Eli Ravage, it is worth noting, also published a satirical article in *Century Magazine* in 1928 titled “A Real Case Against the Jews,” which mocked antisemites for hating Jews for all the wrong reasons. This article is still being used by antisemites to prove Jewish treachery in the United States, and is reprinted and illegally published for purchase on countless antisemitic conspiracy sites on the internet.

join in what Daniel Boyarin refers to as *goyim naches* (a contemptuous term meaning “the games goyim play,” indicating those characteristics goyim use to describe a man as manly).⁶⁶ However, the landscape of Jewish masculinities in America presented a far more complex scene than a simple dichotomy of those who did and did not conform to American manhood. Many Jews acknowledged that they maintained a separate form of masculinity which celebrated gentleness as a manly virtue but not one which made Jewish men “feminine” at all.⁶⁷ Alternate masculinities developed in myriad fashions, and scholars have explored that progress through several methodologies, primarily dealing with the modernization and Americanization of the Jewish religion.

In *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism*, Sarah Imhoff argues that American Judaism redefined itself in the early twentieth century as an unemotional (and thus a more masculine) “good” American religion. To support her argument, she provides contemporary Jewish leaders and thinkers who justify Judaism as an American religion by arguing its rationality and universalism, but, she asserts, never by mimicking muscular Christianity and its focus on the healthy body.⁶⁸ The religious element of Jewish immigrant life, however, is but one aspect of Americanization, as Eli Lederhendler explained in his 1994 book, *Jewish Responses to Modernity: New Voices in America and Eastern Europe*. He argues not that the *religion* underwent massive change through the Americanization process, but that its adherents, by way of becoming acculturated to American *secular* life, were “becoming men.”⁶⁹ According to Lederhendler, the

⁶⁶ Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 88-91.

⁶⁷ We have seen similar arguments in Daniel Boyarin’s work, in which he has argued that a gentle form of Jewish masculinity can be traced to the Talmud and the rabbinic tradition, and that such tradition provided alternatives to dominant male gender norms.

⁶⁸ Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 58.

⁶⁹ Eli Lederhendler, *Jewish Responses to Modernity: New Voices in America and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 113-15.

process of becoming free Americans granted Jewish men dignity, pride, and access to a more Western notion of manhood. He uses some of the same Jewish leaders that Imhoff cites to come to a broader conclusion, that the sense of liberation (real or perceived) obtained upon immigrating to the United States allowed for a manlier American Jewish manhood, whether religiously or secularly identified with Judaism.

The process of becoming masculine through Americanization is not vague or elusive enough that it must be inferred through tangential writings of contemporary Jewish leaders, however, as commentators provided quite explicit criticisms and solutions for the issues of Jewish immigrants. This is particularly true of American Jewish philanthropic efforts to assimilate newly immigrated Jews during the mass migration period. In the periodical published by the United Hebrew Charities (the official organ of the National Conference of Jewish Charities), the process of Americanizing new Jewish immigrants through physical strengthening is a common theme. David Blaustein, a Jewish charity worker (and himself an immigrant from Poland) devoted his life and career to the project of Americanizing Jewish immigrants, and he wrote of the new immigrants that in their home countries,

The necessity of military service created a philosophy of unfitness as a means of escape. In America, where it is the ‘survival of the fittest,’ physical culture plays an important part, and when we are striving to make an American we strive to make a physically strong American, and our physical culture is by no means one of the minor branches of our work.⁷⁰

One of the ways which Sarah Imhoff’s study is most successful is how she identified those on the margins of Jewish culture to illustrate departures from masculine norms (including gentle Jewish masculinity). In the interactions between Jews on the margins (those flitting in and out of

⁷⁰ Jesse Isidor Straus, “David Blaustein,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 22 (1914): 206-11. David Blaustein, “The Making of Americans,” *Jewish Charity III*, no. 3 (December 1903): 70.

the Jewish mainstream, like converts to Christianity, agriculturalists, and criminals) and the outside world, a number of Jews attempted to escape the alternative masculinity prevalent in Jewish culture to access a more normative American masculinity. Jewish converts to Christianity often accepted Jewish weakness as well, and found it a motivating factor to seek a more masculine self-image outside of the Jewish faith. Imhoff's examination of this margin of Jewish life shows an interesting intersection of muscular Christianity and Jewish American identity, and she demonstrates how (though only a small element of Jewish life in the early twentieth century) conversion by Christian missionaries particularly affected Jewish men. Imhoff argues that the attraction, at least to an extent, grew from the desire to gain access to a more typically American Protestant sort of manliness or toughness.⁷¹ At least one of her subjects recognized that, had he known of its existence, muscular Zionism may have provided him a similar outlet without leaving the faith of his birth. According to Yaakov Ariel, Jewish men lacking father figures found parental figures in the missionaries who gave them such dedicated attention during the conversion process, and became some of the most successful conversions of Jews by Protestant missionaries.⁷² Though Ariel identifies a different cause for conversion, it comes down to the same issue: manhood. Converts from Judaism to Christianity, uncomfortable with their masculinity as Jews, exemplify the idea that this group subscribed particularly strongly to the idea of Jews as weak and inferior. Whether because they lacked father figures, because they lacked toughness to "pass" in America, or because they loathed the Jewish male gentleness, depended on the individual. Perhaps the most oft-questioned of these converts is Otto Weininger, who, though he insisted that a Jew could

⁷¹ Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 77.

⁷² Yaakov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880–2000* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), see chapter "The Converts."

overcome his Jewish masculinity to become a “real man,” still decided to end his life shortly after his own conversion.⁷³

For the majority of American Jewry, who remained in the Jewish community and faith, American society allowed for a specific sort of gentle manhood to flourish which found less acceptance elsewhere in the Diaspora.⁷⁴ Though not all American Jewish men embraced this view of themselves as bearers of a soft masculinity based on suffering and quiet dignity, they largely accepted its veracity. However, the difference between Jewish attitudes towards this kinder depiction of Jewish manhood and the antisemitic image of weak enfeebled Jewish men cannot be understated. Jewish men fought back against what they saw as unrealistic and insulting images of effeminate Jews. They accepted, however, that to some degree they differed in character from the American masculine norm; that they had “exalted not men of blood and iron but men of compassion.”⁷⁵ It is this acceptance of their outsider status that allowed them to actively work to change not only their image, but their reality as men.

The relationship between Jewish men and women is also significant in the way Jewish men are perceived, and in how they see themselves. In Riv-Ellen Prell's *Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men*, she explains how Jewish men ascribed negative gender stereotypes to Jewish women, thus complicating their feminine identity while they strove to assimilate into mainstream American culture.⁷⁶ This judgement

⁷³ For an in-depth discussion of Weininger's view of masculinity and the Jewish body, see Anderson, “Weininger's Masculine Utopia,” 433-53.

⁷⁴ Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 74.

⁷⁵ Newman, Louis I., “Where Jews Succeed.” *Forum and Century (1930-1940)*, XCVIII, no. 6 (December 1937): 273.

⁷⁶ For a succinct explanation see the introduction to this work, though several examples are scattered throughout, including archetypes like the “devouring Jewish mother” and the “Jewish American Princess.” *Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1999).

operated as a two-way process, as Ted Merwin explains in his work on Jews in pop culture in the Jazz Age, that Jewish women in turn viewed Jewish men as “indecisive, unmanly, and unable to provide for their women. If Jewish men were not '100 percent American' according to the mainstream culture, then to Jewish women they were often less than 100 percent men.”⁷⁷

The tension between the sexes in Jewish life in America stands out in the words of women, who, relegated to the household in the United States, also depended on the masculinity of the men in their families and communities to assimilate. A Detroit rabbi, Dr. Louis Grossmann, relayed a conversation with a woman in his congregation who became concerned about the negative effect that traditional Jewish life imposed on Jewish American men. He described their conversation and the concerns that she voiced:

“You Rabbis have changed things in Judaism a good deal,” a young woman said to me the other day. I confess I straightened up. I have heard the cheap remark before, though mostly from men, not from women. From men, it meant either [r]ant or fight. Neither of these fit women.⁷⁸

The change the woman referenced regarded the extent to which rabbis allowed others in the congregation to question them, to speak out of turn, and to dominate discussion and practice. The fact that the rabbi’s reaction was to be leery of a confrontation with a man, assuming he may want to rant or argue, is a sign of how real this change to congregation life truly was. The woman continued:

It is quite suave and nice for you to be meek and patient and affable on all occasions; but it is not wise, and it is not manly. The business of leadership demands wisdom and manliness. If I were a man, and if I had on my shoulders the weight of public interests, I would not take my pattern for leadership from the morbid saints of Christendom, nor even from our own beautiful Hillel. The bold fellows have it all their own way, now, and are harassing us, and they are disturbing us from the confidence we had in the grand integrity

⁷⁷ Ted Merwin, *In their Own Image: New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 50-51.

⁷⁸ Louis Grossmann, “The Opinion of an Individual,” *The American Israelite*, January 17, 1895, 4.

of our people; this mild hot-house virtue and humble deference to every one [*sic*] who has tongue has done it. You Rabbis have the blame.

Though another congregant interrupted their conversation before Grossmann could respond to the woman, he explained:

To my regret, some sociable fellow came up and broke into the conversation and snatched away any further opportunity for more of the sagacious talk. Well, perhaps it is better so. The suggestion was enough. Women are brilliant talkers; but they cannot keep up a long conversation. They scintillate for a few moments, and the brightest woman relapses into the implicit weakness of her sex.

Despite her implicit weakness, he saw value in their brief conversation (though it is clear he did not find value in her words, only in the “suggestion” she had given him as inspiration). He mused on Jewish male temperament:

We know something of the pathetic cost at which Power was purchased over life and conscience; and we know also that much precious blood was shed on the altar of unflinching manhood. But, just because conviction is sacred, it must be tempered with caution ... I have seen polite gentleman made martyrs to their courteousness, and I know garrulous brain-drums, who rattle riot to logic and sense ... I verily believe that it is a virtue sometimes to be intolerant, and, conversely it is a vice sometimes to be overscrupulously meek.

In the op-ed he wrote on the encounter, Grossmann struggled with his role as an American Jew and his responsibility as a leader in a tradition that advocated more democratic practice, perhaps, than American manhood would allow. We can see from this interaction that both Jewish men and women believed that it was necessary to adhere to, and be accepted into, mainstream American masculine identity in order to successfully assimilate.

Jewish literature of the time immortalized such beliefs, much of it depicting the struggle of Jewish Americans to navigate American manhood, particularly Eastern European immigrants and their children. The novelist Anzia Yeziarska provides an excellent resource for fictional representations of commonly held images of Jewish migrants in her time. Literature scholar Dana Mihăilescu highlights Yeziarska’s novels as particularly helpful in assessing Jewish masculine

identity in the early decades of the twentieth century. Yeziarska, a Jewish woman, wrote increasingly independent female characters, highly critical of their overly emotional male counterparts. The men in her novels tended to be prone to weakness and clung to Jewish tradition. Yeziarska's works represented Jewish men as performatively masculine only after they successfully distanced themselves from religious tradition and Jewish life, which she depicted as culpable for their continued weakness. One of her most popular novels, *Bread Givers* (1925), provides a perfect example of this tension.⁷⁹ The heroin of the novel, Sara Smolinsky, fights to escape her controlling father, a devout Jew, whose insistence on devoting his life to the Torah results in his inability to work and provide for his family. She gains her independence by distancing herself from her household and traditional culture, and falls in love with an assimilated, respectable, more masculine Jewish Polish American. By the end of the book, Sara finds her father destitute in a gutter and resumes responsibility for his care, as he still cannot care for himself.

This story is not merely a tale of the hardship and assimilation of Jewish immigrants, it also reflects a much larger process, the interaction between migrants and native-born, more acculturated Jews. This image of the Jewish Eastern European immigrant is a common trope of the mass migration period, maintained across gender lines, both men and women contributed to its longevity and pervasiveness. The story leaves us with a hint at the relationships between acculturated Jews and new immigrants. As Jewish immigrants crowded in cities, struggled to assimilate and to survive in a world quite different from their own, they seemed, as a group, much like Sara's father; clinging to the past and unable to care for themselves through the process of Americanization. That group, visible on the streets of America's cities, threatened to set back the image that established American Jews had worked towards for generations. For this reason, the

⁷⁹Anzia Yeziarska, *Bread Givers* (New York: Persea Books, Inc., 2003).

mass migration period contained some of the most aggressive attempts to Americanize (and thus masculinize) Jews in America through physical activity, masculine institutions, and male camaraderie.

Jewish American did make progress in the process of masculinizing their image through Americanization. As Sarah Imhoff's work shows, the Jewish religion itself changed to become a more American and masculine religion. Individual Jewish men strove to attain a manlier identity by accessing the manhood promoted by Roosevelt, through military enlistment and outdoorsmanship. Despite any progress made by individual Jewish men, however, both Jews and non-Jews still believed that something in Jewish heritage, culture, or physicality held them apart and necessitated active effort to become men. Those individuals, like the men Theodore Roosevelt highlighted as Jewish manly successes, were only a small portion of American Jewish men. Their success made little impact on the general acceptance of Jewish weakness as reality. It was those men, however, who would make the most active efforts to assimilate new waves of Jewish immigrants, like those in Yeziarska's novels, through an Americanization process which used masculinity as a tool for Americanization.

The Jews 'are beginning to feel their oats.' I do not believe in the bullying spirit, nor in undue assertiveness, but manly defense of their rights as men will do the Jews more good than the cringing, fawning sycophantic attitude ... [I]n these democratic days, when a man is a man for a' that, the more sturdy the Jews are in the insistence on their right to the same treatment as all other men receive, the more likely will they be to take their proper place in the world.

-Rabbi David Philipson, 1905¹

CHAPTER III: JEWISH MEN IN THE AGE OF MASS MIGRATION

The massive influx of both Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants to the United States from 1880 to 1920 sent with it preexisting European perceptions of Jewish masculinity, which continually viewed Jews as outsiders, irreconcilable with mainstream notions of masculine culture. Jews perceived gender differently from those of their countries of origin as well as of mainstream America upon their arrival.² Unlike traditional European definitions of gender, in which men carry the economic burden of the family and women remain in the domestic sphere as caregivers and educators, the way Jews enacted masculine gender (valuing study and prayer among men) often positioned women in breadwinning or financially contributing roles, running family businesses in addition to caring for children. Jewish men held the responsibility of religious education in the home. Though Jewish male immigrants to the United States pursued religious learning less than their more traditional European counterparts, they still remained at odds with the larger society.

¹ Diary entry, Rabbi David Philipson, September 25, 1905, MS-35, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

² For a discussion of Jewish gender roles focusing on men in modern Europe, see Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*. For a discussion of Jewish immigrant women see Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

Did all these Jews (some new Americans and some native-born) see themselves, as Rabbi Philipson claimed in the above excerpt from his Diary, as prospective paragons of manly virtue? In what ways did Jewish men enact their “insistence on their right to the same treatment as all other men?” Rabbi Philipson illustrates well the balance that *American* Jewish men felt they must maintain between “undue assertiveness” and “manly defense.” For those native-born elite Jewish Americans (usually of German Jewish background), who felt well-accepted and acculturated in American society, this attitude is understandable. They accepted the image of manliness which dominated fin-de-siècle America, but also recognized that Jews had not and did not necessarily share this image with the rest of American manhood. This position, as Rabbi Philipson wrote, had to be claimed by Jewish men themselves.

The established American Jewish community encountered new problems as European Jewish immigrants arrived on American shores in unprecedented numbers during the period of mass migration. Even those Americans (Jewish and otherwise) who had no clear nativist tendencies had reason to be concerned about changes taking place in major American cities where so many immigrants arrived and most remained. Urban overcrowding led to unhealthy living conditions, unemployment, poverty, poor education among the second generation (those born into squalid urban living conditions), and a rise in street-level urban crime. Jews, like their non-Jewish American neighbors, worried about the new influx of immigrants, but for a particularly Jewish reason: new Jews from Europe living in the cities tarnished the image of American Jews on the whole. They threatened to undo the hard-won acceptance that many elite Jewish (mostly German origin) Americans enjoyed. The Jewish immigrant became a prime concern for Jewish organizers, leaders, philanthropists, and communities.

This period of flux in American society spanned from the turn of the century through the interwar period. Immigrant communities and their children grappled with unique issues of gender and assimilation and the native-born American Jewish community worked to construct and maintain a firmly American masculinity. Several distinct archetypes emerged among Jewish immigrants and the second generation, for example, the image of the religious scholar (a trope that rejects the necessity of making Jewish masculinity consistent with mainstream America), the Jewish rebel (a more aggressively masculine Jewish type which emulates the harsher aspects of mainstream masculinity), and the acculturated Jewish philanthropist (who took an active role in Americanizing Jewish immigrants for their own sakes). Such archetypes demonstrate that Jews acknowledged Jewish weakness or femininity when contrasted with their Protestant and Catholic American counterparts. Our concern, however, is not as much the longevity of these archetypes as it is the intentional changes which Jewish men carried out by creating institutions and movements in which they could actively reform their masculine identities to claim a more American manly image.

The City Jew and the Jew Outdoors

Acculturated American Jews felt obligated to intervene in the Americanization process for a number of reasons, both philanthropic and self-serving. The behavior of new Jewish immigrants reflected on the pre-existing Jewish communities in the U.S., who had (to their minds) won a place of acceptance in American culture.³ Though issues arose regarding new immigrants (nativism,

³ This is not unique to the Mass Migration period Jewish American population, the attitude is similar to that held by assimilated German Jews when encountering newly arrived populations of Ostjuden, who they felt also threatened their own assimilated positions in German society. Nor

antisemitism, religious difference, etc.), the two issues examined in this section are those of urban crime and Jewish agriculture. These apparently disparate issues are linked through acculturated Jewish American intervention in the process of acculturation. The native-born American Jewish community identified both crime and agriculturalism as male-gendered phenomena. The former was a product of mass migration and over-crowding, while the latter provided the masculine solution. Through farming and a return to the outdoors, Jewish men weakened or criminalized by urban life could engage in a sort of masculine resocializing to rehabilitate and fully Americanize.

The sources for this analysis are primarily from the commentary and organizational records of contemporary acculturated American Jewish men. This is because the focus is not on Jewish immigrants and their children, but on the actions taken by American Jewish leadership and charity to remedy the problems created by mass immigration of Eastern European Jews. Prominent Jewish men developed the solution of masculine reprogramming (though they did not call it this so bluntly) and, at times, put it into practice. Established middle-class Jewish men feared for the reputation of Jewish America, as popular opinion could be swayed by stories of criminal and unsanitary Jews in crowded centers of immigration. Not only that, they believed that new Jewish immigrants *were* a real problem, not merely a perceived one.⁴ They believed that by Americanizing these new American Jews, they could help them to be successful in their new country, solve the public relations issues caused by Jewish immigrants, and set a positive example as an American ethnic community helping their foreign brethren to assimilate. Though they

is it unique to the Jewish experience, it is a common trope among immigrant and ethnic minorities in America, recently popularized by the sitcom series *Fresh Off the Boat* by the American Broadcasting Company, depicting a Taiwanese-American family and the process of acculturation. For a full examination of German-Jewish interactions with Ostjuden, see Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

⁴ A belief that will be made clear in the statements of Jewish authors in the following pages.

focused on both men and women, of course, one of their main and most interesting strategies, particularly for this study, was through masculine reprogramming.

New Jewish immigrants, according to Jewish philanthropic leaders of the time, came in too great a volume to be integrated with the same successful methods of the past. New immigrants (in this period primarily those from Eastern Europe) adjusted slowly and ineffectively, unable to fit the standards of acculturated American Jewish life. The massive increase in immigration created a new set of urban problems which the American government, communal, and charitable organizations attempted to address. In his highly influential 1890 book, *How the Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis publicized the severity of the unique urban issues of overcrowding, tenement slums, prostitution, drunkenness, and crime. He wrote that life in the tenements bred evil:

...because they are the hot-beds of the epidemics that carry death to rich and poor alike; the nurseries of pauperism and crime that fill our jails and police courts; that throw off a scum of forty thousand human wrecks to the island asylums and workhouses year by year; that turned out in the last eight years a round half million beggars to prey upon our charities; that maintain a standing army of ten thousand tramps with all that that implies; because, above all, they touch the family life with deadly moral contagion.⁵

Though not a uniquely or exclusively Jewish problem, Jews immigrated to New York in unprecedentedly large numbers, and the pre-existing Jewish community (primarily of German origin) recognized that problems of urban life had become Jewish problems. The newspaper *The American Hebrew* published several articles in the early years of the twentieth century regarding Jewish poverty, crime, and charitable solutions. By 1902, *The American Hebrew* informed its readers that Jews inhabited some of the most congested parts of the city, and that half of those Jews were young children.⁶

⁵ Jacob August Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1914), 3.

⁶ According to a Jewish census taken in 1890, with the assumption by the author that there was "no reason to think that the percentage of children has decreased since." Boris D. Bogen, "The

Criminal behavior grew in Jewish urban communities, among both adults and children. The charitable community concerned themselves particularly with the children. Several organizations and leaders believed that relocating these Jewish boys to the countryside would help diminish the increasingly criminal urban effects on their character and provide a perfect venue for Americanizing Jewish boys and instilling in them a sense of Jewish manhood unique to the Jewish American experience. Some proposed a similar remedy for Jewish adults suffering the effects of city life; embarking on a new life and career as farmers and agriculturists.

Bad Boys from Big Cities

Though often waved aside as a marginal component of Jewish life and behavior in the United States, criminality comprised a significant aspect of Jewish life in major cities during the first decades of the twentieth century. Until the late nineteenth century, scholars of Jewish history paid little attention to Jewish criminality as an area of historical interest. However, through levels of criminality varying from juvenile delinquency to organized crime on a national scale, poor Jews from the city made their way in America through illicit means. The Jewish underworld is a particularly fascinating area in terms of Jewish masculinity, as it is an area dominated by men. Women participated in crime as prostitutes, madams, pickpockets (or *gun-mols*), fences, or as the wives and mistresses of gangsters, but always in association with men, even when criminals themselves.⁷ Early twentieth-century crime in Jewish neighborhoods was a markedly male

Children of the Jewish Poor," *The American Hebrew* (1879-1902); September 12, 1902; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 461.

⁷ These relationships and roles of women are elaborately described by Abraham Shoenfeld in his investigation for Judah Magnes beginning in 1912, which is well summarized and quoted in Albert Fried's *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Gangster in America*, as well as in Jenna

experience, and organized crime a near purely male one. Due to the prominence of men in Jewish criminal activity, a particularly masculine language surrounded crime and its proposed solutions, even considering that masculine language was generally prevalent in the period.

By examining the actions of Jewish men involved in crime (street-level or organized), we see at times a direct rebellion against the image of Jewish men as weak, gentle, or even studious. To understand that departure from (or rebellion against) the dominant Jewish male types of the early twentieth century (and through the interwar period), we first examine the generational and experiential tension between the roles of Jewish immigrants and their native-born children. Jewish ideals of masculinity differed greatly between the generations, reflecting the differences in their life experiences and places in American society. Not until later, after both of the world wars, do we encounter the highly pervasive and long-lasting image of the “nice Jewish boy,” but Jewish gentleness was the norm and expectation of Jewish migrants and especially of the religious. This image of Jews as gentle, non-aggressive scholars was a common trope against which Jewish boys and men could rebel through performative toughness, and often did directly, with street brawling against rival ethnic gangs.⁸

Though the positive trope of the Jew as quiet scholar pervaded images of American Jews, it generally applied to those born in the United States. The archetypes ascribed to foreign-born Jewish men stood quite apart and were far less flattering. The Jewish immigrant community was often accused of being responsible for most Jewish crime, a sign of their unassimilated nature.

Weissman Joselit's *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900-1940*, though the originals are in the Judah L. Magnes Collection in The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) in Jerusalem.

⁸ “Club Revelation: An Experiment with Delinquent Boys” report; American Jewish Congress, records; I-77; box 391; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA. Oral History Transcript, 1965, 1974 (1 of 2); Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5a; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

These elements of Jewish American life are important indicators of American Jewish manhood, as they relate to male acceptance, rebellion, and Jewish dialogue about what a good man ought to be. Some Jewish boys broke with the behavior expected of them, openly defying the image of gentleness by becoming street-brawling juvenile delinquents. Though cases of Jewish crimes of a sexual nature did occur, the focus of this section is not to evaluate the sexual nature of Jewish criminals, but to focus on the role that gender played in larger scale Jewish criminal behavior and its perceived remedies.⁹

As ever, the issue of Jewish physicality, or the Jewish body, is present in both Jewish and non-Jewish commentary on rising crime among American Jews during this period. Morris Lazaron in a 1921 article on the problem of Jewish immigrants, described a physical change which he asserted took place in those Jews who, in the course of adapting to a free American landscape, descended into the un-Jewish behavior of street criminals. Taking into account the attitudes of Jews towards the Jewish body, as discussed in the previous chapter, physical changes ascribed to the criminal Jew were not in becoming weaker or less attractive. In fact, according to Lazaron, the Jew is not made uglier by his descent, on the contrary, he may actually lose those less masculine features that associate him with the Jewish people in the first place. “The physical characteristics

⁹ There were a few particularly famous cases of Jewish sexual criminality in the early twentieth century (such as the cases of Leopold and Loeb or Leo Frank), which have been dealt with at length by excellent scholars in the field and need not be further examined in this study. In her recent work on Jewish manhood in America, Sarah Imhoff demonstrated the benefit of looking to the margins of Jewish behavior to understand activities and behaviors which deviated from popular concepts of Jewish manhood, or the way Jewish men ought to behave. She examined Jewish crime in the last third of her book by outlining three case studies of Jewish criminality in the section “The Abnormal and the Criminal.” In the three chapters of this section, Imhoff focuses on the responses from both Jewish and non-Jewish leaders, publishers, and public to Jewish deviance, sexuality, and violence. It is a very interesting study but is indeed quite a peripheral one, and here I aim to examine more widespread trends of Jewish criminality and delinquency, not Jewish sexual deviance.

of the Jew may be lost as he reacts to the environment of freedom. The back may be straightened, the form heightened, the face lose [sic] its rugged, crude, and elemental strength.” Undergoing these changes, new American Jews “would not be themselves.”¹⁰

Of the socially damaging criminal behaviors of American Jews in the early twentieth century, prostitution played no small part in tarnishing the image of the Jewish community. And here women played an important role and highlight the differences between the predicting factors of men and women involved in crime. A substantial number of Jewish female immigrants became prostitutes, their numbers in New York City equal to their percentage of the population.¹¹ Female immigrants often willingly entered a life of prostitution to escape the miserable factory life which immigrants from so many nations and ethnicities seemed doomed to endure upon arrival in New York City.¹² Historian Albert Fried asserted that Jewish participation in prostitution outstripped that of their non-Jewish counterparts, speculating that the reason Jewish women tended to escape in this fashion more than other immigrant groups was that Jewish women had a stronger sense of

¹⁰ Lazaron, like Bogen, calls for a closer connection to traditional Jewish life to save the American Jewish community from a life of degeneracy, and to keep at bay disdain from the rest of American society. Morris S. Lazaron, “The American Jew: His Problems and His Psychology,” *Journal of Religion* 1, no. 4 (July 1921): 388.

¹¹ Though numbers vary depending on the study, the 1913 study conducted at Bedford Hills Reformatory by George J. Kneeland (superintendent of the New York State Reformatory for Women) found the percentage of Jewish women in custody equal to their percentage of the city’s population, at about nineteen percent. George Jackson Kneeland, *Commercialized Prostitution in New York City* (New York: The Twentieth Century Co., 1913), 215. Edward J. Bristow cites Kneeland’s data as one of the most dependable of such studies. However, Bristow also makes clear that in certain areas of the city Jewish women were more prominent, particularly those numbers gathered by Abraham Shoenfeld. Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1870-1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), 162.

¹² As was the case for Pinzer, the subject of Ruth Rosen’s 1977 edited volume, *The Maimie Papers*. Maimie, a former prostitute, wrote in her correspondence with Fanny Quincy Howe that she refused to engage in factory or domestic work, which were beneath her intellectually and went at odds with her desire for respectability and upward mobility. Maimie Pinzer, *The Maimie Papers* (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1977), xxvii.

autonomy, acted more independently, and less passively.¹³ It is also worth noting that women comprised a higher percentage of Jewish immigrants than of other immigrant groups, on the whole.¹⁴ Though some Jewish male immigrants engaged prostitutes as clients, it tended not to be the generation of Jewish men who actively engaged in crime, this fell to their American-born children (which will be discussed at length in the following pages). This is not to say that Jewish male immigrants never became involved in crime, they certainly did, often in the role of cadets (pimps), who tended to be young male immigrants preying on newly arrived women.¹⁵

Jewish participation in New York's criminal underworld came dramatically to the fore of social commentary in New York City in 1908, when the then Police Commissioner, Theodore A. Bingham, published an article titled "Foreign Criminals in New York," in which he claimed that roughly one-half of the criminals in New York City were of Hebrew origin.¹⁶ This drew a fast and energetic response from the Jewish community, resulting in mass meetings and indignation, a response which Judah Magnes argued was how "every healthy and manly people" expresses their resentment to being so insulted.¹⁷ The indignation of New York Jews (particularly the Jewish elite) did result in an apology from the commissioner, admitting his incorrect statistics. He apologized for publishing information which reflected so poorly on the respectable Jewish community. This satisfied several leaders of the Jewish community, Louis Marshall called his admission a 'manly and courageous' act which should be accepted by the Jewish community with

¹³ He added that this also accounted for their entry into militant union organizing as well as prostitution. Albert Fried, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Gangster in America, Revised Edition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 10.

¹⁴ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 151.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14-19.

¹⁶ Theodore A. Bingham, "Foreign Criminals in New York," *The North American Review* 188, no. 634 (September 1908): 383-94.

¹⁷ Judah Leon Magnes, *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes*, ed. Arthur A. Goren (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 94-95.

‘the same frank and manly spirit.’¹⁸ However, the energetic response to his initial statements also resulted in a great movement for remedying the Jewish criminal situation, including the formation of the New York Kehillah, a Jewish communal organization meant to unify New York Jews socially and culturally.¹⁹

The Bingham incident acted as fuel to incite those interested in a unifying organization to create the Kehillah, using a combination of Jewish communal leadership and the democratic method inspired by the American ethos.²⁰ They hoped that it would act as a means for the acculturated, elite German-descended uptown community to exert a “conservative restraining influence” on the “downtown element,” a substantial majority comprising eighty to ninety percent of the New York City Jewish population.²¹ The Kehillah responded in a fairly unique way to

¹⁸ “Wrong about Jews, Bingham admits: Statement That They Supplied Half New York Criminals Was an Error. His Statistics were bad. Didn't Collect Them Himself for His North American Review Article -- Jewish Citizens Satisfied,” *New York Times (1857-1922)*; New York, NY, 17 September 1908, 16.

¹⁹ This group itself drew much criticism, seen as an Americanization and Jewish homogenization program which ignored the particular needs of varying Jewish religious communities. It was also criticized for focusing on crime as a Jewish social problem, instead of a problem of American cities, which should be dealt with by municipal authorities. Jonathan B. Krasner, *The Benderly Boys and American Jewish Education* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 38-40. “The New York “KEHILLAH”: The New Jewish Federation in New York Useless and Dangerous,” *The American Israelite (1874-2000)*; Cincinnati, Ohio, 18 March 1909, 3. Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900-1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 81.

²⁰ Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 246.

²¹ It is worth noting that across the country, the movement to organize Jewish communities with Kehillahs was a controversial one. Rabbi David Philipson, for example, was very outspoken against the Kehillah structure as inherently un-American. He believed that by forming Kehillahs, Jews “stamp themselves as a separate community distinguished from the remainder of the population ... Kehillaism is a pendant of Zionism. Both spell a distinctive Jewish nationalism as a thing apart.” Though he was stretched too thin to join the Executive Committee when asked to do so, Jacob Schiff was supportive of the Kehillah’s work. “The American Jew,” Box #4, Folder #1. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. Letter from Jacob Schiff explaining the necessity of the New York ‘Jewish Community’ (Kehillah),

crime, due mainly to the actions of their first chairman and prominent reform rabbi, Dr. Judah Magnes. Crime in the city garnered several responses from the wealthier and acculturated uptown Jewish community, though the most typical attempts to remedy urban social issues manifested in philanthropic support. Magnes took a less common, clandestine approach in his role as Kehillah chair, made possible by working closely with members of the downtown Jewish community.

In 1912, Magnes enlisted the help of Abraham Shoenfeld to build a team of undercover investigators to gather information on Jewish crime in the city.²² Shoenfeld, a Jewish private investigator, had previous experience in investigating prostitution for the Rockefellers. He also had access to the Jewish underworld, having grown up on the Lower East Side, speaking Yiddish, and knowing most of the neighborhood toughs. His (unpublished) memoir and oral testimony provide some of the most candid reflections of the seedy underworld of Jewish New York in the first decades of the twentieth century. Shoenfeld's investigation demonstrated that though Jews may not have comprised a full half of the criminals in the city, in certain areas they did dominate, such as stuss houses, of which thirty-four of the forty-six he located were Jewish, and prostitution.²³ He investigated Jewish brothels, election corruption, and illegal "can-can clubs" and gangs. Of the characters of the underworld, Shoenfeld made clear that the gangsters (several of whom ran gambling and illegal drinking establishments) epitomized 'toughness' and that the

forwarded to Dr. Philipson, June 10, 1909, Box #1, Folder #20. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²² Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community*, 162-63.

²³ A stuss house was a gambling club which had limits. For example, Shoenfeld describes several in which bets could not top \$25, unlike a 'hangout joint' in which there were no such limits. New York Crime Buster, unpublished, undated, unnumbered pages, Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5b; folder 6; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

prostitution business may have been criminal, but it was not manly.²⁴ In fact, some Jewish gangsters made pimps who lured East Side girls into the business one of their main targets for fighting and “rolling,” along with those who had just struck big gambling.²⁵ When pimps committed acts of violence or intimidation it always surprised other members of the Jewish underworld, for their presumed weakness or cowardice.²⁶

Abraham Shoenfeld’s account provides an intimate view into a very masculine underworld and the response of New York Jewish leadership. The men in his narrative are all engaged, on one side or the other, in a battle for the soul of the old neighborhoods. The Kehillah hoped to be the unifying body for Jewish New York, and Magnes, chairman of the new organization and well-respected young rabbi, waged a war against the underworld, and very determinedly “manned up” to get the job done.²⁷ He invited the public to an open meeting in the David Kessler (Jewish)

²⁴ This conclusion seems to be primarily because the men involved in running prostitution business were perceived as more slimy than tough, they exercised their control over women not other men, which Shoenfeld clearly did not see as a show of strength as intimidating or impressive and gangsters.

²⁵ “Rolling” in this context mean robbery by violent mugging. It is also interesting to note that although the neighborhood was often relieved when gangsters were caught, killed, or disappeared, some Jewish gangsters (like Big Jack Zelig) made it a point never to “shake down” Jewish store keepers. New York Crime Buster, unpublished, undated, unnumbered pages, Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5b; folder 6; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

²⁶ Once describing a specific pimp as “a pretty tough man, something unusual for a pimping whore-master.” The entire underworld was shocked when Big Jack Zelig (notorious gang leader) was killed by a pimp (and fagin) named Red Phil Davidson, asking “How would a pimp dare do it?” and “Red Phil is not in a gang; who ever heard of him?” True to his non-gangster status, he had been tricked by a rival gangster with promises of high status. New York Crime Buster, unpublished, undated, unnumbered pages, Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5b; folder 6; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

²⁷ He convinced the Kehillah to organize a “vigilance committee” to deal with Jewish criminality, enlisting East Siders to bring more of the Downtown Jews into the project. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community*, 160.

Theater and launched an attack on the Jewish underworld.²⁸ He presented the findings of the Kehillah on the Jewish underworld to the public, on the advice of Shoenfeld, who urged him to assume an air of toughness, not to pull his punches, but to face the toughs on their own terms. He called several gangsters out by name, and the rest he threatened more broadly, “You pimps, you thieves, you fixing lawyers, you rats, you weasels, we will root you out, out into the gutters and into the sewers where you belong; we know you, everyone of you; we will drive you rats out of your holes and hideaways; your days are numbered and over; we know you, everyone of you [sic].”²⁹ Shoenfeld described him as “an angered man, hurling defiance at a Jezebel and a King Ahab.” Officials collected opinions after the speech, and even among the thugs in attendance, reactions included both threats “we’ll get to them,” and reverence, “The man’s got guts.”³⁰

A mutual respect of toughness existed between the criminals and those fighting against them. Despite the consistent name-calling in his recollections, Shoenfeld described the gangsters with reverence. Bad men, certainly, but impressively brazen, daring, and tough. When describing one murderous criminal, he recalled that not only was he “the most fearless man I have ever met in all my life,” but also noted proudly that the same man once said to him, “you’re the toughest man I ever knew.”³¹ He also describes them as impressive specimens of manhood, one particularly

²⁸ New York Crime Buster, unpublished, undated, unnumbered pages; Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5b; folder 6; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

²⁹ As recalled in Shoenfeld’s memoir.

³⁰ This image of Magnes as a fierce crime-fighter is particularly surprising given his well-known leadership in the pacifist movement during the First World War. For Magnes’s own writing on pacifism and commentary on his pacifist activities leading up to, during, and following the First World War, see the chapter “Dissenter: Pacifist and Radical, 1917-1922,” in *Dissenter in Zion*, 157-200.

³¹ Oral History Transcript, page 33, 1965, 1974 (1 of 2); Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5a; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

as “a handsome bastard, built like an Adonis.”³² Attitudes towards Jewish crime had changed over the past two decades; certainly the law-abiding community was still ashamed, but it had become commonplace enough that they had ceased mass demonstrations of shame, such as the shuttering of all Jewish homes when a Jew was executed for murder.³³

Jewish organized crime, in many ways, resulted from the living conditions of mass-migration period Jewish immigrants in large urban centers, but particularly in New York City. Robert Rockaway argued that the Jewish gangster existed as an interwar period phenomenon, truly beginning with the introduction of 18th Amendment, which banned the manufacture, transportation and sale of intoxicating alcohol in the United States and began the period of Prohibition.³⁴ Though it is true that Prohibition was tremendously important in exacerbating the problem of Jewish organized crime, the Jewish community worried about rising gang activity (and the effect it had on the image of Jews in America) for years before Prohibition. By the start of the Great War, Jewish newspapers already wrote regularly about the rise in Jewish criminality and gang activity. They wrote often and defensively about Jewish gangsters, but could not deny their growing presence. Instead, they tended to argue that the criminals may be Jewish in name, but aside from that, there was “nothing particularly Jewish about them.”³⁵

³² Oral History Transcript, page 49, 1965, 1974 (1 of 2); Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5a; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

³³ New York Crime Buster, unpublished, undated, unnumbered pages, Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5b; folder 6; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

³⁴ Robert A. Rockaway, “The Rise of the Jewish Gangster in America,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1980): 31-44.

³⁵ “The Problem of the Gangster,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); January 15, 1915; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 300.

The public desire for illegal alcohol opened a vast market for organized crime, and Jews took part along with their criminal countrymen. They participated in bootlegging, extortion, murder, gambling, and drug dealing. The question of why these Jews appeared disproportionately in organized crime can be answered, at least in part, by looking to the common elements of their backgrounds. For the most part, Jewish gangsters were second-generation urban-dwelling Americans, born of Eastern European, Jewish practicing (but not Orthodox), working-class parents.³⁶ The majority of them were either in New York City or were transplants from New York to more western cities and markets (such as Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel in California and Las Vegas, Meyer Lansky in Vegas and Miami, or the leaders of the Purple Gang in Detroit).

By the early nineteen thirties, gang bosses from several major cities (many of them New York Jews) joined together to form the National Crime Syndicate, connecting mob business across America for smoother operations. Some of the most recognizable and notorious names in the syndicate belonged to Jewish gangsters.³⁷ Lepke created a group of assassins available to the entire operation, which operated as the enforcement arm to keep the peace within the syndicate. These men became known as Murder, Inc., an intimidating group made up predominantly of New York Jewish thugs.³⁸ The neighborhoods they frequented feared them, but in some cases they were also

³⁶ This is drawn from the composite “portrait” of a typical Jewish gangster presented by Robert Rockaway, though I have neglected to include the elements he included about familial and educational patterns, given the varying sources I have read which seem contrary to those assertions. Rockaway, “The Rise of the Jewish Gangster in America,” 31-44.

³⁷ Including Meyer Lansky, ‘Bugsy’ Siegel, Louis “Lepke” Buchalter, and Abner “Longie” Zwillman, who, according to another former gangster, Myron Sugarman, he got the nickname Longie because as he was the most athletic and the tallest of his teenage gang, whenever the Irish gangs would attack Jewish peddlers, they would call out “Reef der Langer!” (Yiddish for “get the long/tall one”). Lecture by Myron Sugarman, “The History of the Jews and the Mob.” Jewish Historical Society of New York.

³⁸ Nicholas Gage, *The Mafia is not an Equal Opportunity Employer* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 59. Rockaway, “The Rise of the Jewish Gangster in America,” 34.

seen as folk heroes, recalled as a sort of “holy” bit of Jewish New York history by men from the neighborhood who remembered them and by children who grew up hearing stories of their exploits.³⁹ Not only the inhabitants of the Jewish communities that the gangsters called home saw them as heroes. Fighting against this, one *Washington Post* contributor, John J. Daly, suggested that the government subsidize one gang in the elimination of another as a solution to the problem of gangsters becoming the new “glamorous” national heroes. Even in his recrimination, however, Daly raised them to an honorable and traditionally masculine status, claiming that they could eliminate one another “as in the days of knighthood ... each foeman worthy of his steel.”⁴⁰

Jewish gangsters also got involved on multiple occasions in the Jewish community to offer protection or support. Although the Jewish community often did not approve of these actions, gangsters often took them anyway.⁴¹ In one particularly interesting movement (short-lived in New York, but eight-years long in Newark, New Jersey) a group of Jewish toughs banded together to oppose antisemitic provocation in light of growing Nazi activity in the city. They called themselves the Minutemen (after those American heroes of the Revolutionary War) and included in their ranks some notorious gangsters as well as Jewish prize fighters. The Jewish War Veterans

³⁹ In a 1932 article, a Jewish paper in Boston interviewed a seven-year-old boy whose greatest ambition is to be a gangster when he grows up. Years after the Jewish gang heyday, when asked why the gangster Zelig had such an enormous turnout at his (Jewish) funeral on Broom Street, Shoenfeld explains that he was a bit of a hero, not so much for his action for the community (which amounted to doing more damage to non-Jews than Jews, really), but for the image. He was well-liked by “sight-seers,” who could appreciate his cool tough image without betraying their community. Oral History Transcript, page 54, 1965, 1974 (1 of 2); Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5a; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

“At 7, Boy Wants To Be a Gangster,” *Jewish Advocate* (1909-1990); October 14, 1932; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Jewish Advocate*, A.

⁴⁰ John J. Daly, “‘Gangster Eat Gangster,’ Might Prove Best Policy,” *The Washington Post* (1923-1954); July 23, 1931; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Washington Post*, 2.

⁴¹ In Chapter IV I will discuss Jewish gangsters giving money to support the creation of a Jewish army in Palestine before statehood, funding the Haganah.

(JWV) sponsored the creation of the New York City branch of the Minutemen to break up Nazi gatherings.⁴² Notorious gangster Meyer Lansky organized the group and arranged the training of Jewish men to fight using their fists, weapons, stones, and stink bombs to break up rallies.⁴³ According to journalist Tim Newark, Rabbi Stephen Wise and Judge Nathan Perlman recruited Meyer Lansky to the task (though Minutemen historian Warren Grover is not convinced of the validity of the claim for Rabbi Wise). Judge Perlman asked for Lansky's help in 1935, saying "We Jews should be more militant. Meyer, we want to take action against these Nazi sympathizers."⁴⁴

The Newark Minutemen received much of their funding from the gang boss Longie Zwillman who supported them through his own private fortune. Although he remained behind the scenes, it was common knowledge that Zwillman was involved, and this knowledge helped add to their air of menace.⁴⁵ Their leader, Nat Arno, was a professional prizefighter from Newark.⁴⁶ The Minutemen appeared at Nazi gatherings and broke up or intimidated the Nazis into dispersing. Max Hinkes, a Jewish thug and associate of Zwillman and Arno recalled one of these events fondly,

The Nazi scumbags were meeting one night on the second floor. Nat Arno and I went upstairs and threw stink bombs into the room where the creeps were. As they came out of the room, running from the horrible odor of the stink bombs and running down the steps to go into the street to escape, our boys were waiting with bats and iron bars. It was like running a gauntlet. Our boys were lined up on both sides and we started hitting, aiming for

⁴² Warren Grover, *Nazis in Newark* (Piscataway Township, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 54.

⁴³ "Nazi Armed with Lead Pipe Arrested As Newark Police Break Up Anti-Nazi Riot," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 18, 1933. And Grover, *Nazis in Newark*, 54.

⁴⁴ Tim Newark, *The Mafia at War: The Shocking True Story of America's Wartime Pact with Organized Crime* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012), 72-73.

⁴⁵ Grover, *Nazis in Newark*, Chapter: "The New Minutemen."

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

their heads or any other part of their bodies, with our bats and irons. The Nazis were screaming blue murder. This was one of the most happy moments of my life.⁴⁷

Though the Minutemen had decriers, they also had their supporters in the Jewish community.

According to historian Warren Grover,

Physical prowess as exhibited against the Newark Nazis ... was a matter of pride for the Eastern European Jews who came because of the pogroms in Russia in the 1880s ... They took pride in it because they saw the newsreels coming from Germany [showing] how the Jews in Germany were being treated and all the different anti-Jewish legislation.”⁴⁸

Even if some Jews felt pride with the actions of the Minutemen, the Jewish community overall disapproved of Jewish gangsters. It is true, however, that several of them (like Zwillman) garnered respect from the Jewish community for their philanthropic contributions.

Robert Rockaway explained that just as with the rest of American society, though the gangster was intimidating and deplorable, he was also a sort of folk hero.⁴⁹ He was, after all, a Jew with a gun, reminiscent of the more acceptable frontiersman/cowboy type. And he appealed to the youth, as he was himself the grown-up delinquent child, disobeying societal conventions and doing as he pleased, for pleasure and for profit. There are other cultural signs of the folk hero status of these murderous tough Jews. Despite regular recriminations of the gangsters, men performing tough behavior still embraced their image. For example, in 1943, German forces downed an American flying fortress over Germany and captured the pilot as a POW. On his plane and his flight jacket were the words “Murder Inc.,” which the Nazis used in much propaganda about “typical American gangsters.”⁵⁰ And of the influence gangsters had over the

⁴⁷ Newark, *The Mafia at War*, 75.

⁴⁸ Quoted in “When American Jews fought Nazis — in New Jersey,” *The Times of Israel*, accessed June 3, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/when-american-jews-fought-nazis-in-new-jersey/#comments>

⁴⁹ Rockaway, “The Rise of the Jewish Gangster in America,” 39.

⁵⁰ Though the POW, Kenneth D. Williams was not a Jew, he also had not inscribed his plane and jacket with those words, their origin is unknown.

youth of America, John Daly wrote, “The boys of the Nation, where once Diamond Dick and Nick Carter were their models ... have now gone gangster themselves. The new slogan of boyhood is: “Stick ‘Em Up!”⁵¹ If there is one place in which the Jewish community felt they could step in to halt the growing influence of organized crime among Jews, it was at the level of juvenile delinquent.

At the turn of the century, juvenile delinquency rose in major cities, New York key among them. Though the Jewish population comprised less than twenty percent of the New York City population, Jews made up one third of all of the complaints drawn in the Children’s Court of the City of New York in 1904 (a rise from the one quarter estimate by Judge Julius M. Mayer of the previous year).⁵² Of those Jewish youths, only about seven percent were native-born American

Kenneth Daniel Williams, “The Saga of Murder, Inc.: A German Propaganda Victory,” accessed May 1, 2018, <http://www.merkki.com/murderinc.htm>.

Nazis Name U.S. Flier A ‘Typical’ Gangster: Downed Man's Fortress Bore Title: 'Murder Inc.' *New York Times (1923-Current file)*; New York, NY, 22 Dec 1943, 4.

⁵¹ John J. Daly, “‘Gangster Eat Gangster,’ Might Prove Best Policy,” *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*; July 23, 1931; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Washington Post*, 2.

⁵² The numbers of Jews in NYC are impossible to know with complete certainty before 1916, as only nation of origin, not religion, was taken into account in the national census. After 1916, Jewish intellectuals began compiling Jewish statistical data on the city. However, according to Paul Ritterband’s 1997 essay on Jewish demography and the Jews of New York, the 1900 estimates presented by Walter Laidlaw (associated with the Census Committee of the Federation of Churches and Christian Organizations of New York City), and the revisions to his demographics made in the following years by Joseph Jacobs (editor of the English section of the Yiddish newspaper *Jewish World*), the number of Jews in New York City in the first year of the twentieth century ranged from 490,000 to 598,000, and grew to 1,212,000 by 1910. That presents, according to census findings from 1901 and 1910, a Jewish population comprising (at its highest estimates) 17.39 to 25.42 percent of the New York City population, the latter representing far more growth than would have been present by 1904.

Estimates of Jewish delinquency from Hon. Julius M. Mayer, “The Problem of the Delinquent Child,” *Jewish Charity III*, no. 4 (January 1904): 89. Boris D. Bogen, “The Jewish Boy Criminal,” *Jewish Charity IV*, no. 4 (January 1905): 126.

For more specifically Jewish demographic information, see Paul Ritterband, “Counting the Jews of New York, 1900-1991: An Essay in Substance and Method,” in *Papers in Jewish Demography 1997; Selected Proceedings of the Demographic: Sessions Held at the 12th World*

children.⁵³ Even non-Jewish organizations that meant to reform delinquent boys (or potential delinquents) recognized the Jew as a problem.⁵⁴ The prime targets of these reforms were recently immigrated Eastern Jews (primarily those fleeing from Russia after the creation of the May Laws affecting Jews of the Pale) who American Jews identified as the most difficult to handle and assimilate into American life.⁵⁵

As previously mentioned, Jewish immigrants did not generally become criminals themselves, but some of their children, first-generation Americans, became delinquent. According to a breakdown of Jewish boy criminality by Boris D. Bogen (the head of United Hebrew Charities of Cincinnati) in 1905, the male children of immigrants veered towards a life of crime due to separation from exactly those elements that define the gentle Jewish boy. Separated from their fatherly male role models by distinct difference in language, religious upbringing, and lifestyle, the father's authority over the child diminished, as did the boys' appreciation of a mother's love.⁵⁶ An all but unbridgeable chasm separated immigrant fathers and their American sons, and if it could

Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1997, ed. Sergio Della Pergola and Judith Even (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2001), 199-228.

New York City census demographics from the Official Website of the City of New York, "Total and Foreign-born Population: New York Metropolitan Region by Subregion and County, 1900–2000," [nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/census/nny_table_5_3.pdf), accessed March 4, 2016, http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/census/nny_table_5_3.pdf.

⁵³ Out of the 1978 Jewish cases in the Children's Court of the City of New York in these years, only 148 of the criminal boys were native-born Americans.

⁵⁴ In the case of the New York City Boy's Club, leadership recognized that the work of reforming city children was as necessary as ever (even more so perhaps) now that the neighborhoods were full of Eastern Europeans, mostly Jews. "The Boy's Club Work," *Outlook* (1893-1924); Feb 16, 1916; *American Periodicals*, 381.

⁵⁵ In 1921 article published in the *Journal of Religion*, Morris Lazaron identified these Eastern Jews and their overwhelming numbers as the cause of much of the trouble facing American Jews. They were more clannish and exclusive, they were not participating in traditional Jewish life, but most troublingly, their presence brought "a tragic disregard for law, [filling] the courts of our crowded centers with transgressors and the papers with Jewish names associated with crime." Lazaron, "The American Jew," 380.

⁵⁶ Bogen, "The Jewish Boy Criminal," 126-29.

not be bridged, the responsibility of fatherhood, or raising good Jewish men, fell to the Jewish community on the whole.⁵⁷ In Bogen's evaluation (which one can certainly see reflected in other commentary of the time), the issue was a purely male one. Aside from the dwindling "appreciation of a mother's love," in fact, women are basically left out of the picture of Jewish criminality all together.

Other observers felt similarly about the issue of boyhood delinquency and gangs, within and outside of the Jewish community. In a 1929, Dr. Frederick Thrasher (a professor of sociology at Illinois Wesleyan University) explained that all boys are inclined to gangdom, but whether those gangs turn to crime is dependent on positive male role models and father figures. He explained that boys form gangs to seek the society of other men, to engage in male play, and to revel in "masculine importance" away from girls.⁵⁸ Forming gangs, he clarified is an inevitable eventuality, however, the turn to crime is only inevitable if the gang is left with no law-abiding adult male role models. The trajectory of boys who turned to crime is recited in myriad articles, public statements, and reports: boys begin this life of crime by robbing fruit stands, then picking pockets and rolling drunks, after which they graduate to robbing small stores, stealing cars, and eventually, violent and perhaps more organized crime.

This view was not universal, of course, as can be seen in a 1916 interview with Mary Antin, author of the 1912 book, *The Promised Land*, who suggested that the rising criminality among Jewish boys (and the subsequent growth in numbers of Jewish gangsters) could be blamed not on

⁵⁷ "The Jewish Press: Jewish Boy Criminals," *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); February 10, 1905; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 348.

⁵⁸ "Science Studies the Origin of the Gangster: Professor Thrasher's Praiseworthy Effort to Find Out Why the Gangs Which It Is So Natural for Boys to Form Often Become Nurseries of Crime," *The Washington Post* (1923-1954); Washington, DC, 13 Mar 1927: SM6.

a lack of father figures, but on the neglect of the immigrant mother. Immigration and Americanization programs, she argued, focused on the masses of migrant men, and the Americanization of young boys and girls, leaving the immigrant mother confined to her tenement. By neglecting the immigrant mother, the Jewish community removed her authority in the home, made her dependent on her Americanized children, and left them open to make their own way by whatever means appealed to them. Only by strengthening the mother's influence, she argued, could Jewish criminality be stamped out.⁵⁹ By contrast, according to historian Gil Ribak, the Yiddish and immigrant press blamed the rise of criminal behavior in the New York Jewish community on the process of Americanization itself.⁶⁰ Like both Jews and non-Jews, the presses explained that, by their nature, Jews had always been a non-violent "race," and that the turn towards violent crime signified the negative effects of American life on new immigrants.

This problem grew so rapidly in New York City over the turn of the twentieth century that by 1902 Judge Julius M. Mayer (after years of attempting to solve the problem of delinquent Jewish boys) founded the Jewish Protectory and Aid Society, an organization specifically created to reform Jewish boys, as such. He created it, in part, because Jewish boys passing through the New York Children's Court would be sent to similar reformatories run by other faiths (Protestant, Catholic, and non-sectarian). By the spring of 1907, the Jewish Protectory opened the Hawthorne School in Westchester County and quickly reached capacity with delinquent Jewish boys.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Marion Weinstein, "Woman and Her Interests: Consider the Immigrant Mother Our Neglect of Her the Root of Social Evils," *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); June 16, 1916; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 184.

⁶⁰ Gil Ribak, "The Jew Usually Left Those Crimes To Esau": The Jewish Responses to Accusations About Jewish Criminality in New York, 1908–1913," *AJS Review* 38, no. 1 (April 2014): 1-28.

⁶¹ Jewish Protectory and Aid Society, "Annual Report of the Jewish Protectory And Aid Society," accessed May 2, 2018, catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011474686

If life in the city made menaces of Jewish boyhood, what then was the solution? How did contemporary Jews attempt to reform the Jewish delinquents of the urban landscape? Some leading Jews promoted, much like Teddy Roosevelt, a return to the land to reconnect young boys to the great outdoors. Jewish delinquency symptomized the social diseases unique to city life. Jewish boys on the street became the wrong sort of rough and rehabilitating them required not only the religious influence of a strong Jewish community, but physical training as well. According to Boris Bogen, explaining the Jewish boy criminal, “His muscles need development, he has to get used to endure physical labor.”⁶² To grow into manhood, a Jewish boy needed to train physically, to keep away from the city, to develop a sense of duty and pride in the Jewish people, and to train agriculturally. And indeed, the leaders at the Hawthorne School agreed that employing these changes saw fast and rewarding results. In his first annual report, the school’s superintendent explained that the “physical imperfections” of the boys contributed to their so-called “delinquency.” To improve and cultivate these boys to grow into good Jewish American men, physical improvement was key. Military drills, outdoor exercise, cleanliness, and good habits, in combination with Jewish religious practice and “house-parents” replacing the absent father figures in their lives, would manifest positive improvement in the boys.⁶³

In truth, the period of notable Jewish gang and criminal activity during the interwar years, particularly in New York City, is a time which we might accurately label the days when American Jews really were “tough.” Though the trope of the tough Jew really emerged in the post-World War II period, it did so largely through the glorification of *this* period, the nineteen twenties and

⁶² “The Jewish Boy Criminal,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); January 20, 1905; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 263.

⁶³ Jewish Protectory and Aid Society, “Annual Report of the Jewish Protectory And Aid Society,” accessed May 2, 2018, catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011474686

thirties, when Jewish gangsters were real and Jewish boys brawled in the streets. The films and novels so many Jewish researchers have pointed to as evidence of American tough Jews in recent years have been a revival of this trope in a newly positive light, as contemporary Jews saw Jewish criminality as a huge problem for Jewish acceptance in American culture.⁶⁴ It is not until much more recently that larger portions of the American Jewish community began to idolize and glorify Jewish criminality as showcasing Jewish manly strength.⁶⁵

Jewish Agriculturalism and Outdoorsmanship

Far larger than a reformatory system for juvenile delinquents, the Jewish agricultural movement affected Jews all over the United States and incoming migrants, as a part of a Jewish Americanization process. The role of boys, however, was no less important. Endeavors that focused on rehabilitating Jewish youth aimed to bring Jews from the city to the country and change their lifestyles and habits to become more masculine and more American. Even to those ardent proponents of Jewish agriculture, it seemed a far worthier effort to convert the young to country life than those who had grown to maturity with preconceived notions of city life and Jewish pursuits. Adult Jewish men, already too set in their ways and too damaged by city life, could not

⁶⁴ See Moscovitz, Breines, Cohen, Rockaway, and especially Bergoffen on this phenomenon of revival of the image to transform Jewish past. According to David Moscovitz, the Jewish gangster of the past was more tough than the Jewish “gangsta” of the late twentieth century. He argues that each is seeking acceptance via assimilation, the former into white culture, the latter into black culture. However, the Jewish criminality explored in this chapter (during the interwar period) seems much less a desire to seem white as it does a determination to seem masculine.

⁶⁵ The glorification of these Jewish antiheroes, and popularization of their manliness and bravado, would not be extolled by the American Jewish community until the nineteen seventies, when American Jewish men began fighting for their toughness and manhood to stand alongside the muscle Jews of the new Jewish State. This is discussed further in Chapter V: The Tough Jew.

fully adjust.⁶⁶ Therefore, the *boys*, not the men, would benefit from the agricultural movement of the early twentieth century.

Jewish settlements in rural America already existed before early twentieth century, there had been several Jewish agricultural experiments in the nineteenth century, beginning with Jewish playwright Manual Mordecai Noah's effort to settle Jews on Grand Island in the Niagara River. He abandoned his plan for the settlement (which he called Ararat) before any colonists even settled the land in 1820.⁶⁷ Sholam (named by its settlers) became the site of the first definite attempt to establish a Jewish agrarian society in the United States, located in Wawarsing, New York. According to the author of the *Olde Ulster* (a non-Jewish historical and genealogical magazine) in a retrospective on the experiment, those Jews who settled in the area of Sholam were not farmers and made no attempt to be such. They had, the magazine explained, an "aversion to manual labor peculiar to their race," making their relocation to Wawarsing "one of the facts that are stranger than fiction."⁶⁸ The writers in the *Olde Ulster* clearly demonstrate typical preconceptions about Jewish agriculture when they wrote, "It seems to have been the intention of the Jews to live by their wits and develop their lands by means of Gentile labor."⁶⁹

Jewish agriculturalists of the nineteen twenties recounted the failures of the settlement quite differently, referring to it as a "heroic undertaking, idealistically conceived but doomed to

⁶⁶ According to H. L. Sabsovich, a Jewish agronomist and superintendent at the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural School, to be discussed at length in the following pages, H. L. Sabsovich, "Farming and Farm Schools for Jewish Immigrants," *Jewish Charities III*, no. 8 (May 1904): 183-86.

⁶⁷ Though a very brief and unfulfilled dream, Noah was not without support. A Galician poet, Eliezer Kirschbaum, wrote that if 35,000 Jewish newcomers (half of them agriculturalists) were to relocate and settle the Island, that the United States government would be sure to give it to them as a Jewish state. Uri D. Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias in America, 1880-1910* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 29.

⁶⁸ "Establishing a New Jerusalem in Sholam," *Olde Ulster IX*, no. 8 (August 1913): 226.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 228.

failure,” due not to a Jewish refusal to work the land, but to the barren soil, short growing season, lack of farming experience, and cold mountainous terrain.⁷⁰ These factors forced them to engage in “merchandising at home and peddling abroad,” the same work which *Olde Ulster* had described as their preferred alternative to farming.⁷¹ In truth, the story of Sholam is still mysterious, as are its intentions. Though the examples of Jewish agriculture which follow have clear motives directly connecting Jewish immigration, Americanization, and masculinity, Sholam is far less documented and less understood. The farmers varied in their countries of origin, professions, ages, and religious beliefs. The unifying factor was their Jewishness, making it even more interesting that their experiment, in many ways, turned out to be a surprisingly un-Jewish one. It is surprising, for example, that education was not only meagre but often entirely neglected, as children raised in Sholam (before they abandoned the settlement) had to work to help support their families, and many of them not only did not study holy books, they remained illiterate into adulthood.⁷² Religion, though a unifying factor, was also not the focus of the Sholam settlers, and they abandoned their small synagogue quickly as every member of the family attempted to eke out a living between the minor gains of their farms and home production.⁷³

The initiative for a large, organized movement of Jews into an agrarian lifestyle came as a direct result of mass migration, primarily the arriving Jews fleeing from pogroms in Tsarist Russia starting in the early eighteen eighties.⁷⁴ At this time, Jewish agricultural colonies sprang up across

⁷⁰ Gabriel Davidson, “The Tragedy of Sholam,” *Jewish Tribune* (June 16 and 23, 1922): 3, 5.

⁷¹ “Establishing a New Jerusalem in Sholam,” *Olde Ulster* IX, no. 8 (August 1913): 228-29.

⁷² Of the individuals interviewed by Gabriel Davidson for his 1922 article on Sholam, at least two were illiterate. Davidson, “The Tragedy of Sholam.”

⁷³ The children of Sholam recalled holding their dances and parties in the abandoned synagogue. Some families were Orthodox, but there was no consistency in the devotion of the Sholam settlers. Davidson, “The Tragedy of Sholam,” 6.

⁷⁴ Leonard G. Robinson, *The Agricultural Activities of the Jews in America* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1912), 39.

the country in an unorganized manner. Though they spread nationwide, they were short-lived and ill-conceived. Some were built by families of means (like the Crémieux settlement in South Dakota), some funded by benefactors (like the Louisiana colony, initially funded by Herman Rosenthal), and still more supported through American Jewish organizations (like the Colorado settlement in Cotopaxi, created by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society).⁷⁵ Settlements failed due to natural disasters (crop failures, droughts, floods, etc.) and some due to human developments beyond their control (such as the completion of the railroad being built through the Jewish colony in Oregon, the construction of which had supported the businesses of Jewish settlers there).⁷⁶

After the turn of the century, the Jewish agricultural movement began in a much more organized and well-funded fashion, and, by all accounts became far more successful than the failed colonies of the nineteenth century. Acculturated American Jewish philanthropists and organizers assessed the failures of the colonies as the result of injudicious selections of land, inadequate financing, lack of agricultural education, and lack of transportation. This is also the explanation for the survival of the Jewish colonies in New Jersey, which resided near enough to Philadelphia and New York to overcome several of the obstacles that fell their counterparts.

The initial unifying force for the resurrection of the Jewish agricultural movement in the twentieth century came from the German-Jewish philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch, an immigrant himself, who made it his mission to help resettle downtrodden Eastern European Jews,

⁷⁵ Accounts of each of these settlements, their benefactors, and their failures can be found in several publications and records held by the American Jewish Committee, the Baron de Hirsch Foundation, the Jewish Agricultural Society. For more thorough accounts, one can also consult Uri D. Herscher's *Jewish Agricultural Utopias*, Leonard G. Robinson, *Agricultural Activities*, and Gabriel Davidson, *Our Jewish Farmers: The Story of the Jewish Agricultural Society*.

⁷⁶ Robinson, *Agricultural Activities*, 43.

but to help integrate them into their new country.⁷⁷ He initially founded two organizations, the Jewish Colonization Association (to assist in emigration and resettlement from Tsarist Russia) and the Baron de Hirsch Fund (with a starting contribution of \$2,400,000 to assist those who had made it to America on their own steam, but needed help equipping themselves as new Americans).⁷⁸ The Baron de Hirsch Fund provided personal loans, training in English language, funding for transportation, training for trades, education in American citizenship, and assistance in agricultural resettlement. The emergence of the fund injected new life into the Jewish agricultural movement. Leaders discovered quickly, however, that settling Jewish immigrants on the soil and training them to be farmers comprised a far larger organizational task than the Baron de Hirsch Fund could handle, so in 1900, the fund chartered the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society in New York, funded by both above organizations.

The Baron de Hirsch Fund immediately delegated all agricultural matters which had been under their care to the society, which would become the main mover of Jewish agriculturalism in the United States. Though the Society originally focused on industry as well, industrial aid became secondary to agricultural developments. Primarily, the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society gave financial assistance to individual farmers. They did not focus on creating new Jewish colonies, which had proven so disastrous in the previous decades. The Baron de Hirsch fund created and sustained only one colony, in Woodbine, New York.⁷⁹ The fund and the Society

⁷⁷ Gabriel Davidson, *Our Jewish Farmers: The Story of the Jewish Agricultural Society* (New York: L. B. Fischer Publishing Corp., 1943), 8-11.

⁷⁸ United States. Commission on Industrial Relations, *Industrial relations: final report and testimony, Volume 8* (Washington, DC, Washington Government Printing Office, 1916), 7526.

⁷⁹ Founded in 1891 in Woodbine (a borough in Cape May County, New Jersey), the Woodbine colony was not a purely agricultural colony, as they set up industrial pursuits there as well. The history of Woodbine is a particularly interesting vignette in Jewish American history, as it separated legally from the township of Dennis and became its own borough in 1903, making it, for a time, an American municipality in which every position was filled by Jews. The school

focused primarily on agricultural education, establishing a bureau of education in 1901 and the first and only agricultural paper to be printed in Yiddish in 1908, *The Jewish Farmer*, a product of the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society.⁸⁰

The agricultural movement received its funding from the American Jewish elite, the philanthropists who worried at the rising numbers of Jewish immigrants in overcrowded tenements who resorted to a life of crime in the cities. They viewed the task of pioneering as an undeniably manly one, one which could remedy both the issue of immigrant masses in the city and the depleted Jewish physique, also an unfortunate result of life in urban environments.⁸¹ They did not move to the countryside themselves to pick up hoes and trowels and get their hands dirty. They did, as Sarah Imhoff explained of the acculturated Jews funding the Galveston Movement, feel that masculinizing new immigrants and changing their physique would reflect positively on the acculturated Jews themselves.⁸² Furthermore, the leaders of the organizations behind the Jewish agricultural movement attempted to present Jewish farming as being driven not by charity, but by the initiative of Jews anxious to take up farming. In 1912, the general manager of the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society wrote that the common assumption that “the Jewish farmer of to-day is a hothouse plant carefully nurtured by the money and efforts of his philanthropic coreligionists,” was a faulty one, though this does seem like an accurate assessment based on the programs and successes of the aid societies of the time.⁸³ In nearly every available account written

system, fire house, and all other public works were run entirely by Jews. Though originally conceived as an agricultural settlement, the number of Jews living there who engaged in and depended on agricultural pursuits for survival dwindled.

Robinson, *Agricultural Activities*, 69-71.

⁸⁰ Robinson, *Agricultural Activities*, 67.

⁸¹ Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 114-21.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸³ Robinson, *Agricultural Activities*, 4.

by a philanthropist or organizer associated with the movement, the same introduction is offered, that Jews had been denied access to agriculture for centuries, weakening their bodies and depriving them of their ancient farming history, and now that America had given them access, they sprinted towards farm life with eager enthusiasm.⁸⁴

The Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society built and sustained the Jewish agricultural movement with continued (though not massive) growth over the first few decades of its existence, at least until the Depression hit and expansion halted.⁸⁵ They did not only send Jewish immigrants to the countryside with funds to start farms. They saw early on the ineffective nature of this plan, as relocation was also very expensive, so the Society made several attempts to train immigrants closer to home. For example, they purchased five hundred acres of land on Long Island to train farmers before moving them and their families to the countryside to fend for themselves. They called this experiment the Test Farm.⁸⁶ This program fixated entirely on men, as heads of household, who would be hired and paid as farm hands until ready to bring their families to farms outside of the city. This focus on the men is very telling, as even in their admittance that farm work requires the willingness and participation of the wife and children, they identify changing the Jewish *man* as the task necessary before putting a Jewish family on a farm. We see the same focus on Jewish boys and men when evaluating the connection of Jewish agriculturalism and juvenile delinquency.

⁸⁴ Indeed, Morris Loeb wrote in 1912 that Jews were on the threshold of a new era, “wherein the ratio between city and country-dwellers among the Jews will be that imposed by nature rather than by restrictive tyranny.” The century since this proclamation has provided evidence that, if this be the case, perhaps farming is not truly the profession that a large proportion of Jews desire. Robinson, *Agricultural Activities*, 95.

⁸⁵ The number of Jewish farmers in the United States grew from about 1,000 in 1900 to nearly 100,000 by the end of the Second World War, according to Gabriel Davidson.

⁸⁶ Davidson, *Our Jewish Farmers*, 28-29.

To promote Jewish agriculturalism and save delinquent Jewish youth from the city, Jewish organizations created several agricultural programs to bring criminally inclined Jewish urbanites out of the cities to retrain them as agriculturalists. In Philadelphia, for example, Jewish leaders sent delinquent boys to live with Jewish farmers in surviving Jewish agricultural colonies in New Jersey.⁸⁷ Unlike the reformatory schools examined in the previous section, agricultural schools were not necessarily created for reforming delinquent boys, but welcomed all Jewish boys willing to consider a life of agricultural pursuits. The first of these schools was the Baron de Hirsch Agricultural school established in the Woodbine colony in 1894. Originally founded as a small operation for the benefit of the Woodbine farmers and their sons, soon the school also took on several boys from the New York Orphan Asylum as resident pupils. Shortly thereafter, it erected several buildings to further their work, including a dormitory prepared to house eighty boys.⁸⁸ The Agricultural School hoped to reform Jewish boys and create Jewish men, but expected slow progress.

A Jewish agronomist, H. L. Sabsovich, helped to plan, oversee, and administer the town and school at Woodbine, serving as both the first superintendent of the school, and as the first mayor of the Jewish municipality.⁸⁹ Sabsovich echoed earlier statements about the weakness of Jewish men from their shared history of persecution, in explaining that the process of turning Jews into American farmers would be a long and difficult one.

Taking into consideration that the Jew was for centuries prevented from tilling the soil, and that centuries of physical persecution, crowding in narrow quarters, and depriving him of the advantages of a life in the open air, have weakened his body, we must not look too pessimistically on the results of the attempts of the Jew to become a farmer. We must not

⁸⁷ “The Jewish Boy Criminal,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); January 20, 1905; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 263.

⁸⁸ Robinson, *Agricultural Activities*, 86.

⁸⁹ Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias*, 84-107.

lose patience and become disappointed, because only a few of the Jews become farmers. The difficulties are not only innate and particularly Jewish, but they are American and European as well. I refer to the city-ward tendency of the present day. The question is not how successful are Jewish farmers and Jewish farming, but can we, so to say, ruralize the Jew; settle him in thinly populated districts; develop in him a love for nature; strengthen his body, and then let him select farming as a life occupation.⁹⁰

According to Sabsovich's theory, to make a farmer of the Jew, the Jewish agricultural movement must first relocate adult Jewish men to the farm, even though this method seemed largely unsuccessful. Either they would take to it or they would not, but regardless of their feeling towards the farm itself, some of these men would never return to the city, choosing to take up occupations in more rural settings. In the cases of the young, and the "boy immigrant" particularly, they needed a second method, and this is where Woodbine set the example by developing farm schools.⁹¹ As particularly Jewish institutions, farm schools like Woodbine had several goals in reforming Jewish men. They aimed to develop the muscles and physique of a new outdoorsman Jew while continuously promoting a life of the mind. Sabsovich argued that if the farms schools neglected regular education, the Jewish boy would begin to feel intellectually inferior to his city dwelling brother and would "turn his back on the very idea of agriculture." The flexibility of Woodbine (both the settlement and the school) allowed them to branch out from an agricultural utopia, incorporating elements of industry which help to account for their success. Though they could not thrive as a purely agricultural settlement, they became quite successful as an agro-

⁹⁰ Though it seems easy to draw a direct line from this way of thinking to the kibbutzim in the Yishuv, it is important to keep in mind the particular differences in ideology driving Sabsovitch and Jewish settlers of Palestine. Sabsovitch is using these methods of relocation, training, and agriculturalism to help immigrants attain the American dream, which is one of self-sufficiency, independence, and capitalism. Kibbutzniks were drawing from an Eastern European socialism-based ideology of cooperation, communal living, and collectivism. Sabsovich, "Farming and Farm Schools," 183-86.

⁹¹ Sabsovich, "Farming and Farm Schools," 183-86.

industrial colony.⁹² Other Jewish agricultural schools formed, such as the National Farm School outside of Philadelphia in 1897, aimed at preparing young men to enter state agricultural colleges.

It is important to note that even among American Jews who settled in the country or smaller rural towns, Jewish people did not unanimously agree that they were well-suited to a life of farming. In an early report on an attempt to relocate Jews from the city to more rustic areas (in this case Warren, Pennsylvania), local Jewish leadership explained that Jews who relocated to small towns needed to be trained as artisans, as Jews were simply ill-suited to farm life. Jewish men were too intent on profitable enterprise, and Jewish women not content to the isolated life that agriculture provided.⁹³ After the business which had brought about sixty Jewish men to Warren closed permanently, only three remaining employees attempted to become farmers, but even in these cases, they gave it up quickly.

Programs intended to bring Jewish city boys out to the country and make men of them did not limit their scope to delinquent boys from working-class homes. In the interwar years particularly, summer camps opened for business which exclusively invited Jewish boys. They were founded and operated through the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), local congregations, Jewish philanthropic organizations, and even some under fully private ownership. In large part, their records, advertisements, and other ephemera read like any other summer camp, stressing the camaraderie, sports, crafts, and song that children will enjoy during their stay. Between 1910 and 1933, the camping movement in the United States expanded tremendously, as over one hundred summer camps (of all sorts) existed in the United States in 1910, and by 1933

⁹² Herscher, *Jewish Agricultural Utopias*, 106.

⁹³ M. V. Ball, "The Dispersion of the Immigrant," *Jewish Charity III*, no. 7 (April 1904): 168-69.

that number had grown to almost thirty-five hundred.⁹⁴ Not all of these camps admitted only boys, some focused on girls as well, and they had various missions, but for the most part they all embraced the theory of the ‘strenuous life’ which Theodore Roosevelt made popular in the early twentieth century. They stressed outdoorsmanship and health, and they all sought the restorative qualities of experiencing the great outdoors. Most of the camps focused exclusively on Jewish boys, stressing an overarching agenda of making men of Jewish city boys.

A few Jews from Philadelphia opened a private camp in Maine, Camp Kennebec, with the express goal of implementing the ideals of the strenuous life, and the secondary goal of working to overcome antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish weakness by promoting manly Americanization.⁹⁵ At Camp Kennebec, camper experiences did not focus primarily on Jewishness. According to Jonathan Sarna, the camp downplayed Jewish activities for a more American experience, to “breathe in the ‘pure sweet air of American mountains, lakes and forests’ and to exhale any residual foreign traits.”⁹⁶ Camp Wah-Kon-Dah in Rocky Mount, Missouri exemplified this, with practically no Jewishness in the programming, though parents clearly thought of it as a Jewish experience.⁹⁷ Not all Jewish camps operated this way, of course, some focused more on combining

⁹⁴ Though the non-denominational, private Jewish camps had their boom and heyday in the forties and the years of prosperity after the Second World War, the goals of these camps were different. It is the anti-modernist, return to nature, strenuous life style camps, aimed specifically at Jewish boys, which are of interest in this chapter.

Jonathan D. Sarna, “The Crucial Decade in Jewish Camping,” in *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*, edited by Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 29.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁹⁷ Judging by the materials I have located, the name Wah-Hon-Dah has no actual meaning, but is meant to sound like an Indian name or tribe. Though no longer in existence, the camp re-opened under new management in 1970 as “Camp Sabra,” a term which will receive a good deal of focus in Chapter IV. Marcie Cohen Ferris, “‘God First, You Second, Me Third’ An Exploration of ‘Quiet Jewishness’ at Camp Wah-Kon-Dah,” *Southern Cultures* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 58-70.

a Jewish male experience (including study of Jewish texts and prayer) with an American experience in the great outdoors. In 1915, Bernard C. Ehrenreich, a popular rabbi from Alabama, bought a large plot of land in the Northwoods of Wisconsin and opened his own camp for Jewish boys, Camp Kawaga.⁹⁸ Ehrenreich believed that not only could manhood be attained in the great outdoors, but that God resided in nature. By combining Jewish life with the strenuous life, Jewish boys could blossom into full Jewish American manhood. The early promotional material for the camp shows this in its language and stated goals (even hinting at the goal of attaining “whiteness”).

One flyer contains a poem with the stanza:

“Four great tall pines lived ages thru
 And saw pines die and others grew
 To shelter man again.
 The white man’s child comes here to grow
 In health and strength and learns to know
 The life of now and then.
 In play and work and campfire song
 The pines—they watch for eight weeks long
 The boys grow into men.”⁹⁹

And another:

“In the hush a boy’s voice falters, uttering an evening prayer.
 Stars and lakes and woods his altars, God is very near him there.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Like Wah-Kon-Dah, there is similarly little information about the name Kawaga. The current website for Camp Kawaga gives no origin, only that the word Kawaga is “about being your best and being proud of who you are, where you are, and what you do. It’s being part of a special family at a special place. It’s what Kawaga campers, staff, and alumni think about, talk about, and dream about.” “About Kawaga,” Camp Kawaga, accessed October 19, 2018, <https://kawaga.com/about-camp-kawaga/>.

⁹⁹ Kawaga was one of the first 25 camps in the country (according to their current promotional material) and still maintain the restriction of girls, and the mission of “helping boys develop meaningfully into manhood.” Camp Kawaga flier, undated; Bernard C. Ehrenreich Papers; P-26; box 1; folder 4; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA. “Kawaga Heritage,” Camp Kawaga, accessed June 3, 2018, <https://kawaga.com/heritage>.

¹⁰⁰ Camp Kawaga door hanger, undated; Bernard C. Ehrenreich Papers; P-26; box 1; folder 4; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

In 1923, the YMHA of Philadelphia opened a camp an hour outside of the city, in Betzwood, Pennsylvania, called Camp Port Indian. Camp Port Indian invited only Jewish boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen years for a summer of manly pursuits.¹⁰¹ Their marketing materials make the masculinizing mission of the camp quite explicit. They topped their newspaper advertisements for the camp with the words, “Health. Recreation. Manliness.”¹⁰² The camp mission statement clearly defines their purpose to “inculcate through the medium of a wonderfully wholesome recreation, the finest traits of manhood,” and includes deliberate mention of the weakness and physical frailties of Jewish boys, “A feature of the camp will be the special attention paid to boys whose constitutions need upbuilding. Special exercises and weight gaining play will be prescribed for those boys who need such special attention.”¹⁰³ “Manliness,” according to the opening statement of a camp brochure, “is developed, not invented or inherited. Camp life offers every opportunity for developing courage, sportsmanship and a rugged constitution, under excellent supervision ... It is just the place to send your son.”¹⁰⁴

These Jewish boys’ camps did not use only the physical rebuilding of the Jewish boys into men to promote a masculine image, they also played into a popular embrace of Indian identity (as is clear from the rhetoric and even the names of the camps) to connect to their own Americanness. The use of Indian names and imagery (as in the above poem) was a way of claiming a deep-rooted

¹⁰¹ Though newspaper mentions in local Jewish press tend to list the ages of campers as twelve to eighteen, the promotional material released by the camp itself allows boys of “about 10 years of age to 18.” Camp Port Indian brochure, Box 2, Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia: Nearprint Collection. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁰² Advertisement, *The Jewish Exponent* (1887-1990); May 30, 1924; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Jewish Exponent*, 13.

¹⁰³ Camp Port Indian brochure, Box 2, Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia: Nearprint Collection. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

American manliness associated with natives and the idea of noble savagery. In *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism*, Sarah Imhoff examines the ways in which Jewish men linked Jews to Indians through their relationship to the land, Christianity, and the mythology that Native Americans were descended from one of the ten lost tribes of Israel.¹⁰⁵ In these camps, however, though the names sound Indian, the campers are not compared to Indians, but identified as *white*, as in the poem from Kawaga, “The white man’s child comes here to grow, in health and strength and learns to know.”¹⁰⁶ Identifying the campers as white, while painting a picture in which they are surrounded by native land and spirit, does not actually serve to connect Jews to Native Americans. It connects them to the American frontier experience, mimicking Roosevelt’s beliefs about the frontier making Americans and making men.

Camps Indian Port, Kawaga, Kennebec, Wah-Kon-Dah, and others of their ilk meant to supplement urban or suburban lives with outdoorsmanship. They were, after all, summer programs only, not life-altering changes or relocations. For the problems of urban overcrowding, new immigrants, and the image of Jewish America, the prospective solutions were both more permanent and more philanthropic, as we saw in the endeavor to create large Jewish agricultural

¹⁰⁵ There is certainly an established connection of American men proving themselves by donning red-face and feathers, particularly in terms of American mascots. For an examination of white men appropriating Indian appearances as a masculine act, see Michael Taylor, *Contesting Constructed Indian-ness: The Intersection of the Frontier, Masculinity, and Whiteness in Native American Mascot Representations* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 18-19. Imhoff’s larger argument (that Jews used a link to Native American identity to prove themselves as a manly community) is not entirely convincing, as such a minute number of Jewish authors and scholars were engaged in the comparison. In addition, though Indians were often considered savagely masculine, they were not considered the height of manhood, white men were still considered far more masculine by their creation and embrace of modern civilization. Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 128-147.

¹⁰⁶ Camp Kawaga flier, undated; Bernard C. Ehrenreich Papers; P-26; box 1; folder 4; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA. “Kawaga Heritage,” Camp Kawaga, accessed June 3, 2018, <https://kawaga.com/heritage>.

ventures. Camping presented a solution for the middle class, those who could afford to send their sons to summer camps (although some camp leaders, like Rabbi Ehrenreich did provide scholarships for underprivileged boys). Though adult Jewish men from the city did not engage themselves in the same sort of summer camp masculinity building exercises during this period, they did attempt to become more active in other strenuous or masculine activities, notably in men's groups, clubs, and athletics.

No Jews Allowed: Jewish Rejection and the Building of Jewish Institutions

Jewish Athleticism

For Jewish men who accepted some notions of Jewish weakness as a reality but believed themselves capable of change through masculine endeavors, entry into masculine institutions of the time seemed an attainable method of altering both themselves and their public image. However, a number of institutions of the time that promoted male camaraderie and athletics among affluent men barred Jews from entry. In response, Jewish men constructed institutions of exclusively Jewish clientele and leadership to provide such venues for themselves. Some publicized their Jewishness, with the intention of changing the image non-Jews had about Jewish men in America, and others made no mention of their Jewish origins, hoping to improve the actual deficits in Jewish manhood through action, not to alter an incorrect perception of Jewish weakness.

Along with the great waves of migrants from Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came European attitudes (among both Jews and non-Jews) about Jewish physicality and sportsmanship. Across Europe, Jews had tried to prove their mettle as fighters and

athletes.¹⁰⁷ Dueling, for example, became so popular among students in Germany as to be the primary activity of fraternities at German universities. Having fought in duels proved a degree of manliness, strength, and courage on the part of the participants.¹⁰⁸ Dueling never became popular in the same fashion in the United States as in Germany, nor did it elicit the same Jewish backlash against antisemitism (discussed in the first chapter). Most American duels, for example, involved pistols, not swords, the intention of the duels being far less a fraternal “hazing” tool than a means to settle grievances, even if it ended in death. German students wore protective padding with full coverage, aside from their cheeks and chins, making the facial scars both prized and public. Given the American propensity to duel with firearms, however, the facial marks or scars of having fought a duel were not prized as a symbol of masculine status.¹⁰⁹

The second generation, more American and more accustomed to city street life, saw fighting as their opportunity to become American through performance, to protect themselves from other scrappy immigrant boys in the slums, and to disprove the accusations that those other boys made against Jews for their cowardice and meek nature.¹¹⁰ Tension between ethnic groups among children on the streets persisted as a part of everyday life in immigrant neighborhoods in the city, and was not limited to boys on the street. In his study of the death of a young Jewish girl in 1918,

¹⁰⁷ As discussed at some length (particularly the issue of dueling) in Chapter I in the section titled, “The Muscle Jew in Europe: A Rejection of Emasculation.”

¹⁰⁸ Lisa Fetheringill Zwicker, “Performing Masculinity: Jewish Students and the Honor Code at German Universities,” in *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender and History*, ed. Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman and Paul Lerner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 117-19.

¹⁰⁹ Don C. Seitz, *Famous American Duels: With Some Account of the Causes That Led to Them* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1929), ebook.

¹¹⁰ The same accusations from earlier sections apply here, that the fathers of this generation who had come from the Old World had not been manly at all, as they had fled oppression in Europe, and had not been farmers or laborers, as much as merchants and traders. Many of those Jewish men who immigrated then became peddlers, another occupation viewed as distinctly unmanly, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Gil Ribak demonstrated how much these ethnic tensions solidified (and how much of the Jewish attitude towards other immigrant groups grew from deep-rooted attitudes towards Gentiles in Europe). Jews in the girl's neighborhood quickly sensationalized the tragedy with accusations against Irish "hooligans" and "murderers" for her death, despite the ample evidence of her suicide.¹¹¹ Negative though some of their attitudes and presumptions about the Irish were, Jewish immigrants also tended to commend them as "straight-thinking people who could defend their group's honor."¹¹² At times emulating the Irish and Italian toughs with whom they tussled, Jewish boys learned to fight and prove themselves, and several notable Jewish pugilists emerged as heroes of the neighborhood gangs.

In the early twentieth century, boxing was both the most masculine sport of the day (as it was generally illegal, rough, and often associated with gambling and gang activity) and the most Jewish sport of its time. Jews entered the ring, shaking the perception of Jews as weak and cowardly by becoming the leading prizefighters of the day. According to Steven Riess, the majority of Jewish prizefighters in the United States came from the poor sons of eastern European immigrants, living in slums and trying to earn their way.¹¹³ They differed from their parents, who kept to more Old-World practices and avoided *goyim naches*. To protect their parents from the potentially devastating reality that their nice Jewish boys fought in the streets (and for money!), Jewish boxers often fought under aliases, hoping to avoid disappointing their immigrant mothers.

¹¹¹ Gil Ribak, "'Beaten to Death by Irish Murderers': The Death of Sadie Dellon (1918) and Jewish Images of the Irish," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 41-74.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 63.

¹¹³ Though some of these fighters were from New York, there were champions from San Francisco and from Chicago as well. Steven, A. Riess, "Tough Jews: The Jewish American Boxing Experience, 1890-1950," in *Sports and the American Jew*, ed. Steven Riess (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 64-66.

In fact, one of the all-time great Jewish boxers, Benny Leonard, left his chosen profession “for the love of my mother, who has begged me not to fight again.”¹¹⁴

Jewish boxers often received praise not only for their skill in the ring, but also for their character. Benny Leonard was flattered by Theodore Roosevelt, who admired him for “fighting clean,” and by the mayor of Philadelphia for his “gentlemanly conduct.”¹¹⁵ The dominance of Jewish pugilists, as a product of the struggles faced by second-generation Jewish immigrants, was not built to last. The generations which followed acculturated more successfully, had access to better education, and faced less urgent need to escape the slums than their fathers. The social and economic mobility that they gained as second-generation immigrants provided their children with better routes for success.¹¹⁶

The stereotypes that Jewish fighters struggled against affected Jews more widely than just famous athletes, it affected regular Jewish men who otherwise occupied themselves in business, academics, professions, etc. For those men, becoming a famous professional boxer was not an option or particularly desirable. At this moment in time, however, American institutions already existed for the purpose of masculinizing American men (and male camaraderie) through social and physical training. In New York City, where the largest population of American Jews resided during the mass migration period, several of these athletic and social institutions rejected Jewish participation. In such cases of institutions which fostered male camaraderie and masculine disciplines, acceptance was not only necessary for Jewish men to achieve American manhood, but for comfortable acculturation into mainstream American culture. Of particular interest to this

¹¹⁴ Mike Silver, *Stars in the Ring: Jewish Champions in the Golden Age of Boxing* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2016), 10-11, 60.

¹¹⁵ Stephen H. Norwood, “‘American Jewish Muscle’: Forging a New Masculinity in the Streets and in the Ring, 1890–1940,” *Modern Judaism* 29, no. 2 (May 2009): 179-80.

¹¹⁶ Riess, “Tough Jews,” 103.

study is those institutions which were not only predominantly male, but exclusively so, like athletic, sporting, or country clubs and organizations.

In response to being denied entry in non-Jewish athletic clubs, Jewish men could have responded in a number of ways, as they have historically when excluded from groups, clubs, and institutions of all sorts. It is particularly interesting that in the case of athletics, Jews responded not by fighting for entry (as they had in many other areas of discrimination), or to create parallel Jewish institutions to showcase Jewish capabilities and adequacy for participation in similar activities. Instead, at least in the case of New York City Jews, Jews created gyms and athletic clubs which largely avoided mention of their Jewishness nearly entirely. The goal was not to change the way that outsiders viewed Jews, but to change the nature of Jewish sportsmanship and encourage behaviors more in line with American mainstream masculinity. In other words, some of these clubs were not created to prove the manliness of Jews, but to *improve* their manliness by providing a venue in which they could participate at all.

In 1906, a group of male Jewish New Yorkers founded the City Athletic Club in response to discriminatory policies and practices which barred them from participating in non-Jewish clubs which offered access to American manhood through physical training. They intended to “give to the Jewish young man of character a club which will fill a long-felt want.”¹¹⁷ Shortly after its founding, the secretary for the club interviewed with *The American Hebrew and Jewish Messenger*, which quoted him as saying:

We have had this project under consideration for some time. Many of us, all Jewish young men, have long felt the difficulties that the Jew has experienced when he endeavored to gain admittance to any of the leading clubs in the city. The objections usually were two-fold. Either the club was entirely social, card parties being the predominant feature, or else

¹¹⁷ “The City Athletic Club,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); November 20, 1908; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 74.

the doors of the organization were closed to the Jew, if not by direct legislation, then through such discrimination that no self-respecting Jew could care to be enrolled. Recognizing these difficulties, a committee ... started this movement to combine physical development with social activity.¹¹⁸

The organization was not founded to give athletes a venue in which to thrive and compete (the goal of other leading athletic clubs of the time), but to make athletic men out of the Jewish membership. “Our sole object in organizing this club,” the secretary continued, “is to draw as fine a line of distinction as possible between an organization which supports ‘The Athlete’ and one which is organized for the athletic welfare of its members.” The City Athletic Club supported a variety of activities to promote their goal of athletic welfare, including both team sports (like basketball, baseball) and individual sports (handball, tennis, squash, swimming, etc.).¹¹⁹

One of the fascinating elements of the City Athletic Club is that despite its undeniably Jewish nature, it did not publicly (or even within its own internal institutional documents) discuss Jewishness or publicize the successes of its members as Jews. The previous quotes came from the pages of a Jewish paper. The *New York Times*, by contrast, reported on the opening, development, membership, controversies, and expansion of the club over the years, but never mentioned their Jewishness.¹²⁰ Within a few months the *Times* reported that with full membership so quickly achieved, the organization was sure to rival the New York Athletic Club and the Irish American

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 74.

¹¹⁹ References to members activities and successes in these sports are references throughout the City Athletic Club records, particularly their monthly journal, *The Arrow*. City Athletic Club Records; I-533; Box 173-75; American Jewish Historical Society, Boston, MA and New York, NY.

¹²⁰ One instance of controversy in which the Times might have been expected to mention the Jewish nature of the club was in 1968, when their alleged discriminatory practices led to a “boycott by Negro athletics” at one of their track meets at Madison Square Gardens, at which point City Athletic Club opened membership to “all persons regardless of race, creed, color or national origin.” From “City Athletic Club Agrees to Open Membership to All,” *New York Times* (1923-Current file); March 26, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The New York Times*, 25.

Athletic Club, but did not mention the fact that the organization, and all these members, were Jewish.¹²¹

Though prosperous New York Jews formed the club for Jewish athletics, an examination of the records of the City Athletic Club shows no mention of the organization's (or its members') Jewish identity.¹²² The word *Jew*, in fact, does not make a single appearance in either institutional records or club newsletters, though other ethnic groups are discussed. Omitting the Jewishness of members seems especially intentional when examining the Temple Bulletin Collections, which show how the Club was involved in Jewish activities and philanthropy in New York City.¹²³ That this organization aimed to promote masculinity is evident in their own original constitution, which states, "The objects of this organization shall be: to encourage all manly sports and to promote physical culture; to maintain a club house and athletic grounds for the use of its members, and generally to add to their comfort and entertainment."¹²⁴ And it inarguably succeeded at meeting these objects. Jewish presses hailed the successes of the club as a sign of the virility of club members, "one of the results of clean athletics."¹²⁵

Similar movements emerged for the younger generation of New York Jews to get them involved in strength building athletic activities. And several did include the added goal of larger

¹²¹ "Full Membership Reached," *New York Times (1857-1922)*; January 24, 1909; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The New York Times*, S3.

¹²² Board of Governors Minutes, multiple books, 1908-1929; City Athletic Club Records; I-533; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹²³ Multiple mentions in the Temple Bulletin Collection, MS-882d, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹²⁴ "Objects," Constitution and Bylaws of the City Athletic Club, circa 1909. From the Board of Governors minutes, August 1908-October 1910. City Athletic Club Records; I-533; Box 177; Box 1; American Jewish Historical Society, Boston, MA and New York, NY.

¹²⁵ "City Athletic Club to Build: President Guggenheim Reports a Membership of More Than 1,000," *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger (1903-1922)*; April 2, 1920; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 622.

inclusivity to their missions. The Grand Street Boy's Club, for example, founded in 1916, originally began as a reunion of men who had grown up in the neighborhood of the Lower East Side.¹²⁶ Although not their initial intention, the club got involved in athletics because other athletic clubs in the city discriminated against Jewish boys.¹²⁷ Addressing the issues of urban life and trying to positively alter the image of Jews among their non-Jewish neighbors, several Jewish organizations encouraged Jewish inner-city children, particularly the children of immigrants, to engage in athletic activities to address the negative press about Jewish physicality. "The children of the poor," one commentator explains, "are often consecrated to a noble cause; they are to be the pioneers of a new life for their race ... Thus, physical culture is taught, not because it is to benefit the physique of the individual, but for the sake of the argument that the Jews are able to become athletes."¹²⁸

While Jewish men trained in the gyms and track of the City Athletic Club and others like it, Jewish commentators refuted preconceived notions of Jews as unathletic. Even some of these excited supporters of Jewish athleticism accepted a physical disadvantage of brute strength (compared with, say, their Irish neighbors in the slums) when they highlighted the advantages of the Jew in certain sports based on those same stereotypes about Jewish physicality and intellect.

¹²⁶ Interestingly, it served as a hangout for men from the neighborhood from all walks of life, as members included Judges, pickpockets, thugs, politicians, every type of Downtown kid, according to Abraham Shoenfeld. Oral History Transcript, page 80, 1965, 1974 (1 of 2); Abraham Shoenfeld Papers; P-884; box 5a; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹²⁷ By the end of the Second World War, the club was also advocating Civil Rights and boycotting associations with groups in the Jim Crow South who discriminated against African American athletes. The Club refused to participate in the funding or selection of American athletes for the Maccabia Games in Israel because they included only Jewish Americans, going against the complete non-discrimination policy the club had adopted. Multiple letters, 1939-1955; Grand Street Boys' Association Records; I-312; box 1; folder 2; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹²⁸ Bogen, "The Children of the Jewish Poor," 461.

“It is a well established fact,” the *American Hebrew and Jewish Messenger* claims, “that in basketball the Jew has no superior. This game requires a good deal of quick thinking, lightning like rapidity of movement, and endurance; it does not call for brutality and brute strength, and this is why the Jews excel in it.”¹²⁹ In his excitement to extoll the virtue of Jewish basketball players, the author buttressed elements of a stereotype often used as a negative portrayal of Jews, that they are historically cunning and clever (“quick thinking”).

These clubs participated in a larger movement, according to one contemporary commentator, that of expanding athletics in Jewish life to extend beyond athletes to everyday Jewish men:

The Jew is not content with having only stars, but is endeavoring to encourage and develop athletics. As a result, we have witnessed within the last few years the wonderful growth of the country club and the Y.M.H.A ... the Jewish business man is learning to engage in athletics as well as support it, while the Jewish youth is participating actively. This wonderful result has been that with these two forces cooperating, the Jew as an athlete and as a supporter and developer of athletics has made a prominent showing, and it is no overburst of exuberance which leads one to predict that the position of the Jew in this branch of American life is due for still greater progress.¹³⁰

The phrase “this branch of American life,” as supporters and developers of athletics, is a telling one, as it indicates not only that being athletic is American, but that Jews have to make this active effort to change their position, as they had previously not met the standard of American athleticism. It was an intentional change to what the Jewish community believed was a very real deficit, but one which they were confident they could overcome. Perhaps more difficult than the athletics, was the social standing of Jews in America. As the secretary of the City Athletic Club

¹²⁹ “Activity of the Jews in Athletics,” by Morris J. Frank in *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); September 18, 1908; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 477.

¹³⁰ Sidney Cohen “The Jew as Athlete,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); September 10, 1920; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 438.

explained, however, the final goal necessitated that they “combine physical development with social activity.”¹³¹ In many ways, this second demand presented a more difficult goal, as it necessitated not merely exercise and training, but acceptance in American society.

Jewish Fraternalism

In 1908, a Brooklyn rabbi explained of discrimination, “The leading manifestations of anti-Judaism are social—the fraternal societies particularly—societies whose very foundation sentiment is the promotion of universal brotherhood, make use of all sorts of excuses to keep out Jews.”¹³² The veracity of this claim is evident in the response it generated, “Admit Jews into your club or fraternity and you will find that they are not content with a modest place. They must lead. They push their way forward indefatigable, and if repulsed or rebuffed cry out, ‘Race prejudice! We are persecuted on account of our Religion.’”¹³³ In reality, Jews rejected from fraternal societies *did* feel wronged by what they saw as racial prejudice and religious persecution. However, they saw participation in these groups as a necessary component of American college life, and so fought for acceptance.

Dating to before the Civil War, Greek letter societies in America served as a training ground for masculinity, reflecting the practices and methods used by their European counterparts. Most of these fraternities had the goal of promoting male bonding through rough play, Christian values and service, and the maintenance of the American male elite. Excluding or involving Jews

¹³¹ “The City Athletic Club,” 74.

¹³² Rabbi quoted in “Because You’re a Jew” by Sydney Reid, *The Independent*, November 26, 1908; ProQuest Historical Newspapers, American Periodicals, 1212.

¹³³ Capitalization from original. Reid, “Because You’re a Jew,” 1212.

in these societies followed the same trajectories as many of the Jewish struggles for manhood we began to examine in the progress of Muscular Zionism in Chapter I.¹³⁴ American fraternal organizations, though in existence from the early nineteenth century, got their great push in its last decades, as fears of loss of homosocial white camaraderie grew in light of new and diverse populations seeking admission to universities during the period of mass migration. The fear of diversity extended to include women, African Americans, and new immigrants, including Jews. Fraternal organizations grew more popular, particularly in state schools (which were required to admit all state-residents and so rapidly became more diverse), because social clubs could maintain their focused membership and exclusivity without breaking any rules of codes of conduct.

After being excluded from these Greek organizations, Jews responded by forming their own fraternities, many of which had the same stringent admission policies, only allowing Jews to pledge.¹³⁵ Though all founded for similar reasons (primarily having been excluded from others), Jewish fraternities differed in their attitudes about the public nature of their Jewishness. Some, like the athletic organizations discussed in the previous section, desired only to participate; to have access to Greek campus life and the benefits that such activities bestowed upon their members, without any mention or publicizing of their Jewish heritage. Others, mimicking their white counterparts in the universities, focused on camaraderie and brotherhood through mutually shared characteristics, and in this vein, they had a very different mission regarding their Jewishness. This

¹³⁴ Theodor Herzl, as previously discussed, had been a member of dueling fraternity at the University of Vienna, but resigned when the group began endorsing increasingly popular antisemitic views. Marianne R. Sanua, *Going Greek: Jewish College Fraternities in the United States, 1895-1945* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 32.

¹³⁵ Interestingly, some of these Jewish groups were the last hold-outs for their discriminatory admission practices in the fifties and sixties when policy shifted to restrict discrimination based on ethnicity or religion, which we will return to in Chapter IV.

second type tended to be more open about their Jewish identity, their purpose in instilling Jewish values and culture, and their pride in Jewish heritage.¹³⁶

The difference in attitudes of Jewish fraternities and their missions shows a change over the turn of the century. The first Jewish fraternity, Pi Lambda Phi (founded at Yale University in 1885), had no goal of promoting Jewish values or publicizing Jewish participation. In fact, much like the City Athletic Club in New York, they either willfully forgot or refused to admit that all their founders and early members had been Jews and had created the institution so that they could participate in fraternity life despite being initially excluded. In the decades following the founding of Pi Lambda Phi and its subsequent chapters at several additional universities, the foundation mythology changed, and the three original Jewish founders (Frederick Manfred Werner, Louis Samter Levy and Henry Mark Fisher) ceased to be acknowledged as Jews, and came to be identified as “a Protestant, a Catholic, and a Jew.”¹³⁷ Still in existence today, the Pi Lambda Phi defines itself as a nonsectarian fraternity with no mention whatsoever of its Jewish foundation, just the claim that “the early period of Pi Lambda Phi is wrapped in a veil of mystery and has, thus far, defied efforts to research thoroughly.”¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Even this professed Jewish pride did not guarantee entry to all Jewish students, however, as some of the Jewish fraternity brothers had internalized antisemitic notions of Jewish unsuitability to fraternal life. According to Marianne Sanua, the leadership of these Jewish fraternities was often careful in their selection to avoid diminishing the prestige of their group by admitting only those “as far as possible from negative Jewish stereotypes.”

Marianne R. Sanua, “Jewish College Fraternities in the United States, 1895-1968: An Overview,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 19, no. 2 (2000): 5.

¹³⁷ In her notes on the fraternity referring to entries in the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, her own research at the American Jewish Archives, and in Yale University Records, Marianne Sanua conclusively identifies two of the three founders’ Jewish identities, and presents very convincing evidence to reach the conclusion that the third founder was Jewish as well.

Sanua, *Going Greek*, 47-48.

¹³⁸ Certainly inaccurate at the time of this writing, as Sanua’s *Going Greek* was released fifteen years ago in 2003. “Pi Lambda Phi History,” Pi Lambda Phi Website, accessed March 8, 2018, http://www.pilambdaphi.org/site/c.plKXL7MPIqG/b.3609919/k.A021/Pi_Lam_History.htm

It should come as no surprise that the first college fraternity exclusively for Jewish men, Zeta Beta Tau, began not in a public university but at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1898. Originally named for the acronym Z.B.T., for their Hebrew motto, "Zion Be-mishpat Tipadeh," (Isaiah 1:27, "Zion shall with judgment be redeemed"), they began not as a Greek fraternity, but as a Zionist organization to be modeled after the Viennese student group "Kadimah," a club formed as a Jewish alternative to the dueling clubs in Vienna which barred Jewish membership.¹³⁹ Z.B.T. quickly evolved into a national Jewish fraternity, aiming to cater to all Jewish men on campus, not only to those who had already taken a Zionist stance. Once they could take all these diverse Jewish students into the brotherhood, they had more potential members awaiting the opportunity to participate in Greek campus life. Once the group formally became a college fraternity, they chose the Greek letters Zeta Beta Tau as a stand-in to maintain the original acronym for *Zion Be-mishpat Tipadeh*.

The goals of this openly Jewish fraternity differed from those of Pi Lambda Phi. They did not only wish to quietly participate without showcasing their Jewish identities but recognized among their leadership that Jews possessed deficits which could be remedied by the social niceties which would help the Jewish man on campus who was "inferior to his colleagues in his social training."¹⁴⁰ Not only would Jewish men be redeemed on a personal level through the vigor and

¹³⁹ Clarence K. Weil's *Z B T 1898, 1923: The First 25 Years*, a history of the organization compiled for their Silver Jubilee Convention. Published by Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity (New York City, 1923), 14.

¹⁴⁰ This attitude is reflected in the ideals and aims of other Jewish fraternal organizations as well, such as Pi Tau Pi, to whom the National Vice President said in a 1914 address that they were, in terms of their place in the Jewish community, "banded together to improve our 'social' condition ... 'social' in the economic meaning of the term; that is to say from the point of view of human society in general." Bulletin, August 1914, Box 2, Folder 1. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. Quote from Sanau, *Going Greek*, 55.

excellence of Jewish manhood, but their position on campus and in the public eye would reflect this redemption. The primary mission of the fraternity in its first few decades exemplified this goal, “an experiment of pro-Semitism.” Elucidating their mission, the organization explained:

From every section of the land young men come to the Universities bringing with them all manner of prejudices, preferences, and pre-dispositions. Many of these relate to the Jew. Rarely perhaps, but too often, in a mind poisoned by a slander, or a tale that is told, is the conception of the Jew painted in the colors of physical and moral cowardice, greed, ostentation, unsociability and anti-social proclivity.

It is interesting to note that the author categorizes the conception of Jews as greedy cowards as *either* slander (false information) *or* tales (which could be either a fictitious or true narrative).

From the universities, young men go to every section of the land—young men who will one day lead the thought in their local communities. What impression do they carry back of the Jew? Much depends upon the kind of Jew they meet in college.

The fraternity insinuates here that the “kind of Jew” which a college student meets is the remediable situation. They accept the unpleasant, socially untrained Jew as a very real figure which needed to be addressed, not a falsehood to be disproved. In fact, they explained,

One does not dissipate a prejudice by denying, however vigorously, its soundness or justice. A prejudice knows but one mortal enemy—a series of demonstrated facts that are obviously wholly inconsistent with the prejudice.

Whether it be true or false is less the concern than that it be disproved through “demonstration.”

Theirs was a proselytizing mission, to change the minds of non-Jewish students through action, by putting the best foot of Jewish manhood forward.

Accordingly, it is the mission of the Jewish student to have contact with his non-Jewish comrades on the athletic field, in journalism, debate, dramatics, and in every field of campus activity which affords expression to that moral and physical courage, that capacity for sportsmanship, generosity, sociability and social conscience which form part and parcel of the Jewish racial heritage. To stimulate this missionary effort, to tide the individual over the depression of temporary defeat, to launch him anew into the combat to ultimate victory as a Jew, this is a labor that distinguishes from the others this Zeta Beta Tau—this group of socially congenial Jewish collegemen banded together to demonstrate by their every

word and deed in public and in private the best of which Jewish manhood is capable and the inherent excellence of the Jewish character.¹⁴¹

In addition to concerns over antisemitism on campuses, the issue of assimilation and the disappearance of Jewish men into non-Jewish life never left the minds of fraternity leadership. The more accepted the fraternity became and the closer its behaviors drifted towards other non-Jewish Greek societies, the more likely it would be that “the average college man [would be] apt to forget that the successful Jew is a Jew.”¹⁴² Those Jewish collegemen who had proven their mettle might forget their Jewishness, as might the rest of the college population in looking at their successes. They needed to show to the rest of the student body that Jews could participate *as Jews* and be successful in college campus life, not to lose their Jewishness or to show so much of it as to make other people uncomfortable. “It is enough,” an editorial in a Z.B.T. bulletin reads, “if we make them realize that we are Jews: we need not accentuate our Jewishness.”¹⁴³

Unfortunately for Z.B.T., their openly Jewish nature did not merely make others aware of their Jewishness but had negative repercussions which made some members of the larger Jewish community uncomfortable. *The American Israelite* took an actively anti-Jewish fraternity stance. In an article on the issue, Bernard M.L. Ernst wrote that after the “exceedingly ill-advised” founding of Pi Lambda Phi (which Ernst argued inflamed latent antisemitism in every institution in which it opened a chapter), the founding of Zeta Beta Tau had “been noted by the Greek press, and a movement is now on foot to withdraw the charters of the several prominent organization chapters at this institution, thus removing the possibility of the initiation of Hebrews in these

¹⁴¹ Quote is from the forward of Clarence K. Weil’s *Z B T 1898, 1923: The First 25 Years*, a history of the organization compiled for their Silver Jubilee Convention. Published by Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity (New York City, 1923). Inconsistent capitalization original.

¹⁴² “Fundamentals,” editorial in *ZBTQ* 4, 4, (May 1920): 28-30, quoted in Sanau, *Going Greek*, 61.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

societies at this institution ... Whatever the objects of Zeta Beta Tau may be,” he continued, “its methods are to be deplored and its members are simply inviting another wave of anti-Semitism in the colleges which will affect Jewish students throughout the East.”¹⁴⁴

Hyperbolic though this may seem, it does reflect some very real reactions from non-Jews on campus. The president of Harvard said that Jews “are hardly justified in complaining as they do that they are discriminated against if they attempt by the forming of associations to keep themselves apart.”¹⁴⁵ As more Jewish fraternities began cropping up all over the country, Jews inside of the fledgling organizations debated the divisive nature of Jewish fraternities as well. In the pages of the *Octagonian* (the publication of the exclusively Jewish fraternity Sigma Alpha Mu), a debate took place about the advisability of creating “artificial castes” in collegiate life by growing a separate Jewish fraternal system in an American landscape where Jews already faced scrutiny for their exclusivity.¹⁴⁶

Though the first, Z.B.T. was not the only proudly Jewish fraternity (or the only one that concerned the Jewish community); Hai Resh presents another example of resolute honor in Jewish manhood. Hai Resh shared at least part of the mission of Z.B.T., in that they aimed to actively change the image of Jews in America. This is partially shown through their determination to use Hebrew letters (Hai Resh) instead of Greek, while participating in Greek life on campuses.¹⁴⁷ They debated the issue over decades of fraternity leadership, as some members repeatedly called for a

¹⁴⁴ Bernard M.L. Ernst, “The Greek Letter Societies and the Jew,” *The American Israelite* (1874-2000); November 3, 1904; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Israelite*, 1.

¹⁴⁵ “Say Fraternities are Unamerican,” *New York Times* (1857-1922); May 22, 1910; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The New York Times*, 10.

¹⁴⁶ Jacob Turchinsky, “The Case Against Jewish Fraternities,” *Octagonian* 2, 5 (May 1913), 1. Quoted in Sanua, *Going Greek*, 91.

¹⁴⁷ Though they also pledged members from high school contingents since their founding in 1907.

change of name to better blend into larger university Greek life. In fact, during the First World War, nearly every issue of the *Hai Resh bulletin* included letters from various members questioning the necessity of keeping the Hebrew name, suggesting that if they adopted Greek letters, they might stand out less starkly among other campus organizations and show unity with their Gentile friends. The same argument always won out; that Jews would earn more respect and admiration as Jews by sticking “to what is rightfully ours,” than by behaving as if ashamed of their Jewishness.¹⁴⁸ One poem written by a founder of the fraternity in a 1917 issue of the *Hai Resh Bulletin* showcases the Jewish pride that Hai Resh leadership felt necessary to the groups survival, and the spiteful rebuttal to the suggestion of a name change:¹⁴⁹

Aye, change our honored symbol!
 Too long has it stood the test
 And held its place in Fratdom,
 Along with all the best.
 Cast to the winds, without remorse,
 The work of ten long years,
 And start anew to build a Frat
 The brave need have no fears.

Forget your age. Tho' growing old,
 You've many years to live,
 And to your New Fraternity
 Your close attention give.
 Throw up your jobs, you'll need the time
 As you have much to do,
 For now the much-esteemed Greek Frat
 Supplants the spurned Jew.

Go! Your Gentile friends await you,
 Their arms outstretched in 'Love,'
 They're pleased at your desertion,
 While God Supreme, above,
 Looks down with gentle pity

¹⁴⁸ Bulletin (page 7), July 1917, Box 1, Folder 2. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁴⁹ Bulletin (page 8), July 1917, Box 1, Folder 2. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

That you so weak should be,
To put a moment's favor
Above Eternity."

The entrance of the United States into the First World War shifted the focus of those brothers remaining in the United States from reaching that "coveted position" of equality without separateness to that of disproving accusations of Jewish cowardice and meekness. Honor rolls of servicemen from each fraternity appeared in every publication during the war, and the praise of their heroism, volunteerism, and self-sacrifice is ever-present in the pages of fraternity wartime publications. During the war, however, fraternities saw a drop in their numbers as a great number of their members (both Jewish and non-Jewish) served in the armed forces.¹⁵⁰

By 1937, another Jewish fraternity, Pi Tau Pi, absorbed Hai Resh, and along with the loss of Hai Resh's Jewish letters, came the loss of their particular determined Jewish public presence. The two fraternities joined together, only using the name Hai Resh as a subline on official documents, not in campus life, which all fell under the fraternity letters of Pi Tau Pi. The Pi Tau Pi publications, as well as those published after the two fraternities merged, do not ignore their Jewishness. In fact, during the Second World War it is again a point of pride, the number of members, and Jews overall, in service to the country. However, the determination to change the *image* of Jews in America seems less important, and certainly less discussed from their merging until the collapse of the organization in the sixties. Until its last days, members of Pi Tau Pi continued to debate dropping the "Hai Resh" byline, some arguing that the organization was a

¹⁵⁰ Definitely the case for Hai Resh, who saw such a drop in their leadership (who were of military age) that there were talks of suspending all frat activity until the war was over. *Hai Resh* 6, no. 6, July 1917, Box 1, Folder 2. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

thing of the past, while remaining old Hai Reshers insisted the Hebrew letters remain to show their history.¹⁵¹

The Jewish fraternal system relied heavily on American Jewish professional and lay leaders for organizational and experiential leadership. They gathered honorary members, advisors, and local rabbis and congregations to support the growth and maintenance of the fraternities. For the older generation, who had passed through college life before the creation of a Jewish fraternal system, Greek campus life did not necessarily bring fond memories. For many of this generation, news of budding Jewish fraternities in their communities proved an unwelcome or uncomfortable addition, as Greek life left impressions of snobbery and undemocratic practices in their own memories which, according to Rabbi Sol. L. Kory, “went against my Jewish grain.”¹⁵² In Rabbi Kory’s case, his mind was eased by the fact that the members of Pi Tau Pi (the Jewish fraternity opening in his community of Vicksburg, Mississippi) obligated themselves to proclaim themselves publicly as Jews, and to indeed *be* Jews, safeguarding against assimilation of the best and brightest of Jewish manhood. Indeed, the members appealed to new recruits explaining that “to enlist in the ranks of this fraternity is to ... afford your manliness and character a broad and stimulating field in which to assert themselves ... Our weaknesses are reduced, as our virtues encouraged.”¹⁵³

Though not generally mentioned in the materials of the early Jewish fraternities, simultaneous movements within the Jewish community also worked to improve the Jewish image of reduced weakness and improved virtues. These fraternities and athletic organizations focused

¹⁵¹ Continued discussions appear in the pages of the *Pitaupian* and the *Bulletin of Pi Tau Pi*, Box 2, various folders. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁵² *The Pitaupian* (Honorary Member Edition), August 1919, Box 2, Folder 2. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁵³ Alvin Austin Silverman, *Bulletin*, August 1914, Box 2, Folder 1. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

on remaining Jewish while improving their standing as American men. As they fought to be recognized as American men, however, other Jews (in America and elsewhere) began participating with unprecedented support in Zionist endeavors. Though it was never the dedicated intent of Zionists to alienate American Jews from the rest of America, it was a point of contention for the American Jewish population, who were often torn between their desire that Jews of the world have their self-determination and their own attempts to become American.

We'll take Your Rejection and Raise You One Nationalism: American Jews and Zionism

Zionism can and has meant several things over the past century and a half, therefore it seems necessary to define the term for the present study. There is no universal definition, as Zionists differ in their assertions of what a Zionist is or should be. We will be defining Zionists in very inclusive terms, as people who support the idea of a modern Jewish state. This includes those who believe that a Jewish state *in the land of Palestine* is a necessity for the survival and happiness of the Jewish people, but is not exclusive to that belief, as some diaspora Zionists did not see it as such (a particularly prominent attitude among American Jews). This definition does not preclude non-Jews or any religious denominations, ethnic identities, or regional affiliations. Some Zionists residing in Israel, both in the mass migration period and now, believe that being a Zionist requires an individual relocate to Israel themselves, however, we will not limit the definition to this requirement. Because the attitudes of the historical characters we examine below are not only different from one another but also go through massive changes individually, this inclusive definition will have to do, as we examine the attitudes of various groups and individuals as unique perspectives on the Zionist enterprise.

The attitudes of Jewish Americans towards Zionism followed several non-linear, weaving paths. Like other issues in Jewish religious and communal life, Jews reached no consensus and created a great number of both cooperative and contradictory Zionist organizations to promote their various interpretations of the ideology. There are, however, a few large and traceable shifts and events that Jewish historians have highlighted as significant turning points in Jewish American Zionism. Several of these directly responded to the efforts already under way to construct the *Yishuv*, primarily by Eastern European Jews, and often with funds provided by wealthy American Jews. Regardless of their support or opposition to Jewish statehood, the developing Jewish community in Eretz Israel (traditional Jewish name for the pre-statehood Land of Israel) and the image it sent back across the globe affected Jewish Americans and their self-image.

Masculinity in the Early Years of the Yishuv

By the turn of the twentieth century, as political Zionism firmly took hold of the imagination of the international Jewish community, it began to manifest physically as European Jews made their way to Palestine and started constructing their utopia.¹⁵⁴ The international Jewish community witnessed a new breed of Jews emerging as they created and improved the *Yishuv*. They lived lifestyles previously denied them in their old countries, settling the land and engaging in agriculture and communal living. Jews raised in Palestinian settlements presented themselves (and their supporters presented them) as harder, tougher, more muscular, and connected to the

¹⁵⁴ Often built with socialist ideals prevalent in their countries of origin.

soil.¹⁵⁵ In 1933, the Jewish author William Schack wrote of the first generation of Jews born in Palestine:

Although few have reached their teens, they already reveal a certain cast of character, the more positively indicated by contrast with the children of the orthodox ... compared to them, the youngsters of the professional and working classes are as those born outside a ghetto must have been to those within. They are stronger physically, being better fed and more active. They are freer mentally, as a result of both their freer bodies and their more varied educational fare.¹⁵⁶

The “new Jew” conceived and promoted by Max Nordau started emerging as a reality and was consistently presented as evidence of the success and necessity of Palestinian settlement and the Zionist cause.¹⁵⁷ Some American Jews saw these Jewish pioneers as kindred to themselves, not only as heroes of the Jewish people, but also as a people whose ideals were related to their own American principles of pioneering, progress, and self-reliance.¹⁵⁸

In the praises Jewish leaders sung about the Jews in Palestine, we see also a hint at the idea that in Palestine there may be a corrective element to some of the issues plaguing American Jews themselves. For example, in the first few decades of the century, we know that Jewish crime in the United States was a principal concern for Jewish American leadership. But despite the lack of police forces, army, or formal government in Palestine, American Jewish leaders pointed out that in the Yishuv, there was no Jewish crime. Louis Brandeis wrote in 1915 that no Jews committed crimes in the Palestinian colonies because every Jew there was “led to feel the glory of his people

¹⁵⁵ Presented, as will be demonstrated below, by World Zionist leadership.

¹⁵⁶ William Schack, “The Jews thrive on Persecution,” *Forum and Century* XC, no. 1 (July 1933): 56.

¹⁵⁷ See Michael Berkowitz chapter, “Zionist heroes and new men,” in *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 99-118.

¹⁵⁸ Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 44.

and his obligation to carry forward its ideals.”¹⁵⁹ In reality there was, naturally, crime committed by Jews and other inhabitants of pre-state Israel and were even books published on the subject within a decade of this statement by Brandeis. One such book was *Crime and Criminals in Eretz Yisrael*, written by David Tidhar, a law officer under the British Mandate and himself a personification of the manly hero of the Yishuv. He was a native-born Palestinian Jew (the seventh of his parents children, but the first to survive), a soldier (serving in the Jewish Legion of WWI), an athlete, police officer, private eye, writer, and community leader.¹⁶⁰ Though not every member of the Yishuv was a model citizen, the pervasive images of pioneers in the United States were of the Palestinian equivalent of cowboys and farmers, the *shomrim* and *halutzim* (guards and pioneers). Though debates fumed among European Zionists about the ideal manifestation of the halutz (clashes between the right and left over the best methods for construction of the settlement of Jews in Palestine), Jews in the United States did not engage in the discussion, which was distant both by distance and language (the European discussion taking place in Yiddish and Hebrew).¹⁶¹ Instead, American Jews embraced the image of the halutz as the idyllic Zionist pioneer.

The *halutzim* in Palestine provided a visual remedy to the stereotypes with which American Jews had been afflicted, and against which they fought through American Jewish agriculturalism. The image of the Zionist pioneer proved far more effective, however, as the Jewish farming enterprise in the United States never made such headway. The image of the halutz became part of the American Jewish self-image. In materials created in Palestine as well as in the United States,

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 79-80.

¹⁶⁰ More information about David Tidhar is available online, provided by the Tidhar family and Touro College, including the monumental 19-volume *Encyclopedia of the Founders and Builders of Israel* which David Tidhar compiled and published over the 23 years from 1947 until his death. <http://www.tidhar.tourolib.org/>

¹⁶¹ Arthur A. Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 166.

Jewish pioneers (draining swamps or working fields) seemed not only heroic and strong, but very gendered. This is especially observable in material related for young children learning about life in the Yishuv. Zionism remained a contentious subject in the years before the First World War, so did not make its way into American Jewish schoolbooks until the interwar period.¹⁶² When it did, however, they adopted an interesting reverence of the halutz. The image of a Jewish farmer making the desert bloom strongly counteracted the American antisemitic projection of Jews as overly urbanized and unable to connect to the land. Thus, the halutz allowed American Jews to identify the Jewish people with popular American cowboy fantasies of the time. For this reason, authors of Jewish schoolbooks in the twenties began to tell the story of Palestine as one of brave frontiersmen, mimicking the American West.¹⁶³ In his analysis of two prominent publishers of Jewish schoolbooks of the time, Jonathan Krasner found that:

Both Bloch and Behrman House included multiple photographs of halutzim in their books. The photographs typically depicted individuals involved in physical labor, mostly agricultural in nature. Men, in particular, were shown irrigating, plowing and carrying heavy bundles, while both men and women were photographed harvesting fruit. Both books also included photographs of Jews engaged in other occupations that defied

¹⁶² Jewish Americans did not only praise their brawn, but their intellect as well, depicting them as educated men of Europe who had left their studies and high-minded professions to take part in the great rebuilding project of the Yishuv. One visiting American Zionist recalled the pioneers of Palestine in this way, explaining, “You can see men crushing the rocks or digging the soil, and talking about Nietzsche, Wagner or Weininger, Strindberg or Ibsen, Maeterlinck or Anatol France, Wagner or Beethoven.” Quoted in Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (169), original source cited as Eva Leon, “With the Chalutzim,” *New Palestine* 6, no. 16 (April 18, 1924): 324.

¹⁶³ For a thorough and very interesting analysis of the representation of the halutz in American Jewish schoolbooks, see Jonathan Krasner’s “‘New Jews’ in an Old-New Land.” It is also worth noting that he mentions a difference in the American frontiersman and the way Jewish texts presented the Jewish pioneer, which was that the scout on the Western frontier had always been a solitary hero, and American ideals had valorized rugged individualism. In Palestine, as they depicted it to American children, Jews were working in cooperation, looking out for one another and the collective. Jonathan Krasner, “‘New Jews’ in an Old-New Land: Images in American Jewish Textbooks Prior to 1948,” *Journal of Jewish Education* 69, no. 2, (2003): 7-22.

conventional stereotypes, including merchant mariners, fishermen and longshoremen. The vast majority of the non-scenic photographs depicted young men.¹⁶⁴

He also found that the depiction of the Jewish male body was unprecedentedly eroticized in the photographs chosen for the books, often obscuring the face of a man to emphasize his musculature and perspiration as he toiled in the Palestinian sun.¹⁶⁵ The Jewish woman, by contrast, had various images; mother and caretaker, modestly clad harvester, or sporting anachronistically revealing clothes in the hot sun.¹⁶⁶

A romantic ideology emerged surrounding not just those Jewish pioneers of the Yishuv, but also the fighters who protected them, the Jewish defense groups of the Yishuv. Young American Jews often applied American mythology to their commentary venerating Palestinian Jewish groups like the *shomrim* (Hebrew watchmen of the Palestinian settlements). In one such case, they even labeled the *shomrim* “Jewish Minute Men” and explained that by their “fearlessness, by undying devotion and loyalty to duty, [the Jewish protectors] finally won the admiration of everyone.”¹⁶⁷ As Mark Raider observed, such praise of the *shomrim* and *halutzim* often mixed symbolism and mythology from Jewish and American pasts, functionally “Americanizing” the image of the *shomer*. He explains, “Like the patriots of the American

¹⁶⁴ Krasner, “New Jews,” 12.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶⁶ Outside of Jewish schoolbooks, and within Zionist circles, female *halutzim* were represented in more various ways, at times as strong and muscular, like the men working in the Yishuv. Arthur Goren explained the representation of the sexes in American Zionist circles, noting that women were admired for their serving alongside their male comrades. He also found, however, that American Zionist women commenting on these female pioneers often believed the workload would be too much for most women, including themselves. *Ibid.*, 16. Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews*, 170-171.

¹⁶⁷ There are several cases of the use of the term “minute men” to describe Jewish defenders, reminiscent of the American Revolutionary War. Jewish heroes were described as such, and later, Jewish groups self-identified using the term, as in the case of the Jewish thugs breaking up American Nazi rallies on the east coast. “Jewish Minute Men,” *Young Judean*, October 1912, 20, I-61, Jewish Student Organizations, American Jewish Historical Society.

Revolution and the cowboys of the Wild West, the shomrim ride horses, protect the frontier, and defy the ‘half-savage’ and ‘lawless’ indigenous inhabitants.”¹⁶⁸ Regardless of their actual resemblance to American cowboys, American Jewish men used the image of the shomer and halutz to lessen their anxiety about their own masculinity.

In Jewish periodicals of the early twentieth century, the physical rebuilding of the Jewish people was attributed not only to political Zionism and the Yishuv, but also to Jewish American nationalism. In 1904, a contributor to *The Jewish Exponent* explained that historically athletics were little known to European Jews, and it fell to America “to teach the Jew the value of bodily exercise,” the success of which was visible if not yet ideal, in that “now we frequently meet with Jewish names in the lists of the athletic societies, although not as frequently as in the lists of the debating teams.”¹⁶⁹ He continued, however, giving credit to the Yishuv, that Zionism “may justly claim priority in inculcating a desire for physical culture among the Jewish people.”¹⁷⁰ And that priority was not only for Jews of faraway lands facing persecution, but for Jews in America as well. Zionism inspired Americans (both Jewish and non-Jewish) to assess the physical condition of Jews anew. Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University from 1869–1909, was a particularly interesting and visible non-Jewish convert to Zionism and adherent of its desire to rebuild the Jewish people physically. Though not a Jew, he saw in the American Jewish body a

¹⁶⁸ Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 78-79.

¹⁶⁹ “About Men and Things: Physical Culture Among Jews,” *The Jewish Exponent* (1887-1990); May 6, 1904; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Jewish Exponent*, 4.

¹⁷⁰ And that claim is evident in the solicitation of international Zionist leaders of the time, working to resettle Jews in Palestine, or open the gates to further migrants. One British Zionist leader explained the hope of Zionists that Palestine “may become a place where the brain and the muscle should have free scope to develop.” In-text quote from “About Men and Things: Physical Culture Among Jews,” *The Jewish Exponent* (1887-1990); May 6, 1904; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Jewish Exponent*, 4. Footnote quote from “Dr. Gaster on Zionism,” *The American Hebrew* (1879-1902); April 27, 1900; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 758.

people with “no courage or bearing,” through no fault of their own. They were, he explained, victims of millennia of torment, even those Jews living in the United States. “I didn’t understand the physical condition to which thousands of American Jews had been reduced by the sufferings of their ancestors,” he lamented after seeing a procession of Jews, heads bowed, knees bent, “crouching along” their route.¹⁷¹ He encouraged the Jews of Boston to train physically for combat, “what I thought they needed most was to send all their young men into the militia of Massachusetts, where they could learn to bear arms, to fight in the defense of their rights and their people’s rights.”¹⁷² Eliot is particularly interesting in this assertion as such militarism was not his *modus operandi*, having famously fought to end football at Harvard University, explaining that the sport had the “barbarous ethics of warfare.”¹⁷³ In the case of Jews, however, the physical rebuilding must be done through such barbarism, as was successfully being carried out in Palestine.

American Jewish leaders and rabbis, as we have seen, did not uniformly believe that political Zionism provided the best possible solution to Jewish problems in the modern world. However, it does seem to be a consistent attitude among Jewish Americans that regardless of the advisability of a Jewish state, the work done in the Yishuv provided an effective remedy to the stereotype of Jews as physically weak, unable or unwilling to work the land, or meek in nature. One visiting rabbi’s report from Palestine in 1913 shows the enthusiasm of this experience at the Passover gathering of Jewish Palestinian agriculturalists:

What a happy, healthy, sturdy, vigorous, well dressed crowd they were—the boys muscular, brown and straight as a mountain ash, the girls fresh-looking ruddy-faced and right of eye—farmer boys and farmer girls that it did one good to look upon. I challenge the most vicious and rabid Anti-semite [*sic*] to look upon scenes like these and to repeat

¹⁷¹ “Dr. Eliot’s Remarkable Address: Verbatim Report of Noted Educator’s Talk Before the Harvard Zionist Society,” *The Jewish Exponent* (1887-1990); January 2, 1925; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Jewish Exponent*, 8.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ “President Eliot on Football.” *The School Journal* 70, (February 18, 1905): 188-89.

the lie that the Jew has an ingrained disinclination to handle the plow, to scatter the seed, to break the sod and to woo and win the treasures of the earth.

Though this exultant praise of Jewish pioneers might sound like the words of an ardent Zionist, the rabbi continues:

I am not a Zionist. I do not agree with the despairing voices that tell us that the Jew can never gain the fullest recognition in other lands and must go back to Palestine to realize his fondest dreams. But as the pleasant pictures of those smiling fields and spreading orchards rise again in memory and as I see again the sturdy, healthy, broad-chested, large limbed generation growing up upon the sacred soil and when I compare those pictures with the sombre [*sic*] scenes in the ghettos of the world that I have visited ... the cramped and stunted life, the bent and stooping narrow-chested figures, the poor physiques, the evils physical and moral to which these dreadfully congested quarters are exposed—I raise my voice in unstinted praise of those Jews who have disproved the charge[s] of the Antisemites ... I glory in the work of these sturdy sons of Israel.¹⁷⁴

Though not a Zionist, it was the bodies of the halutzim that he gloried in, not the pride of financial contribution or Zionist ideals. Louis Marshall, then serving as the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, also wrote that he was “not a Zionist, and probably will never become a Zionist,” largely due to his complete disbelief that the exercise of political Zionism could be successful, or result in anything more than “bitter disappointment.”

¹⁷⁵ However, among the qualities which Zionism had contributed to Jewish life, Marshall noted that it had “given birth to a manly Jewish consciousness, in refreshing contrast with the apologetic attitude which precedes it.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Inconsistent spelling, grammar, and punctuation original. Rabbi Max J. Merritt, “Palestine's Agricultural Colleges: What Jewish Farmers are Doing to Regenerate the Holy Land,” *The American Israelite* (1874-2000); November 6, 1913; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Israelite*, 1.

¹⁷⁵ “The Jewish Theological Seminary and Zionism: Letter from Louis Marshall,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); September 20, 1907; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 488.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Both Zionists and non- or even anti-Zionists used the exact same language to describe these changes in Jewish manhood. However, they did not all agree on (or perhaps did not all hazard to comment on) the cause. Muscular Zionism may not have appealed to anti-Zionists like Rabbi David Philipson, for example, but that did not mean that muscular *Judaism* and this change in Jewish attitudes did not appear in his life and congregation. He wrote in his diary in 1905 of an “amusing experience ... which showed me that ‘muscular Judaism’ is not non-existent.” This experience occurred after a Christian preacher made antisemitic attacks on Rabbi Philipson about his attitudes on teaching the Bible in public schools. In response to these attacks, a Jewish athletics teacher wrote to the preacher telling him that he “would be glad to meet him anywhere and at any time and would encounter him, as he might choose, ‘with or without gloves.’” Philipson added, “this incident is characteristic of the spirit now largely pervading Jewry. The apologetic attitude is giving way to an attitude of self-respect and even aggressiveness.”¹⁷⁷

American-Made: Muscular Zionism in the States

The Zionist promise, the idea of a Jewish nation state allowing for full participation in society, religious and cultural pride, and physical rejuvenation indeed appealed to many American Jews. They found, in the international Zionist movement, an answer to some of the exclusion they felt in American society. For the most part they did not, as previously discussed, feel the need to migrate to Palestine themselves, but instead saw an opportunity in the political manifestation of a Zionist state for equity among their American peers by possessing a homeland to link to their

¹⁷⁷ Diary entry, Rabbi David Philipson, September 25, 1905, MS-35, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

ethnicity (a link that most American ethnic enclaves had maintained for generations after immigrating to the United States). Louis Marshall (though he never considered himself a Zionist) saw the desirability of such a connection, writing that the Zionist spirit was in no way unpatriotic to American ideals, as it mimicked the feelings of so many other “good citizens [of the United States] whose love for their land and its institutions does not militate against their American citizenship,” despite the “love and most ardent attachment” to their ancestral homes and mythologies.¹⁷⁸

Zionism, very much a product of the *Galut* (the diaspora or exile), discovered its foundational ideas as a product of Jewish life in Europe, not in America. As Evyatar Friesel explains, American Zionism, if wholly dependent on the experiences of those suffering from life in the *Galut*, would have been a hopeless proposition.¹⁷⁹ Those foundational ideas of Herzlian Zionism previously discussed are by their nature products of the conditions of diaspora Jews living in Europe, and had little to no bearing on American Jewish life (aside from connection to relatives

¹⁷⁸ According to Ørm Øverland, immigrant groups create homemaking myths unique to their group which help migrant communities to become part of the American landscape. According to Øverland, there are three genres of homemaking myths: foundational, sacrificial, and ideological. The foundational genre portrays an early presence of members of the group on the continent, before or simultaneous with the British (which we have already seen in the previous chapter). With the claim of early arrival, immigrants declare their right to an American identity and equality with the Anglo-Saxons as discoverers and founders of the American nation. Mythology around blood sacrifice for America in times of war made evident American Jewish willingness to fight for American ideals. Lastly, the ideological claim to have an inherent connection to American ideals—which is traditionally presented as having originated in their own home country. Zionism is a sort of inverse ideological connection. The State could be built with ideals similar to those of the United States and supported by Jewish communities in America. “The Jewish Theological Seminary and Zionism: Letter from Louis Marshall,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); September 20, 1907; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, 488.

Ørm Øverland, *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870-1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

¹⁷⁹ Evyatar Friesel, “American Zionism and American Jewry: An Ideological and Communal Encounter,” *American Jewish Archives* 40, no. 1 (1988): 5-7.

and communities abroad). Participating Jewish leaders, pillars of the acculturated Jewish community, led the process of Americanizing Zionism to fit into a distinctly American Jewish ideology, just as they had taken it upon themselves to support the Americanization of new Jewish immigrants. Not all Jewish American leadership (religious or laypersons) became Zionists or attempted to create an American Zionism. In fact, the debate over the ideological principles of Jewish America, Zionist and Americanist (largely in opposition to one another), formed one of the great tensions of Jewish leadership in the first half of the twentieth century. They held conferences, developed schisms, and tested loyalties in the debate over the coexistence of Zionism and Americanism.¹⁸⁰

It is also important to recall that as American Jews were debating the necessity and advisability of American Jewish support for the Zionist cause, there was no single unified Zionist cause on which to base all decisions. Zionists across Europe and in Palestine were not ever in agreement about best practices or even guiding Zionist ideologies. As different Zionist movements and perspectives among Jews in Europe solidified, small (and often weak) branches of those movements would organize in the United States as well. The religious Zionist Mizrahi and the socialist Zionist Poalei-Zion, for example, both had weak branches of supportive American Jewish organizations. Though the foundational groups in Europe quarreled with one another, regional and religious affiliations and differences died out in American Zionist discussions, as European concerns were no longer central to the issues concerning Zionists in the United States.¹⁸¹ One

¹⁸⁰ Several of which will be discussed in the following pages, most notably, Dr. Philipson's conference of 1918.

¹⁸¹ Ben Halpern, "The Americanization of Zionism, 1880–1930," *American Jewish History* 69, no. 1 (September 1979): 17.

group which becomes particularly important to this study in the following chapters is the emergence of the Revisionist Zionists, led by Vladimir Jabotinsky.

The Revisionists movement (which would eventually reform into the non-religious Right in the Israeli state) promoted a modern form of political Zionism which they believed was more faithful to the original ideas of Theodore Herzl. The group emerged from a commitment to revising the official policies of the World Zionist Organization to emphasize the goal of establishing a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River through massive Jewish settlement and the creation of a Jewish army in Palestine.¹⁸² In 1933, the Revisionists broke away from the World Zionist Organization, forming instead the New Zionist Organization in London, which aggressively petitioned the British government for free Jewish migration to Palestine. Even within the Yishuv, the Revisionists remained often at odds with Labor Movement who did not agree with their aggressive tactics.¹⁸³ The Revisionist's militant brand of Zionism appealed to some Americans, growing in support through the thirties in response to international Jewish crisis, though never becoming a very large movement in America.¹⁸⁴

For Jewish men supporting the Zionist cause in America, the movement was highly masculine, both in its imagery and its intention. Mary McCune argued in a 1998 article on gender and Hadassah in *American Jewish History* that Jewish men used hyper-masculine imagery and

¹⁸² More specifically about the revisionist concept of a Jewish Army in Chapters IV and V. Leslie Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled: The Rise of Modern Israel* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 200.

¹⁸³ The Irgun, a Jewish underground organization founded by members of the Haganah (Jewish paramilitary in British Mandate Palestine, eventually the core of the Israel Defense Forces), split away from the main body in 1937. Disagreeing with the Haganah's policy of restraint, the Irgun followed the Revisionist movement and their leader Jabotinsky, carrying out armed attacks on local Arabs.

¹⁸⁴ Rafael Medoff, *Militant Zionism in America: The Rise and Impact of the Jabotinsky Movement in the United States, 1926-1948* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 16-19.

language to show that Jewish men could “normalize” themselves on the world stage of competing nationalisms by attaining a nation-state in Palestine. McCune identified this gendered difference in her research into the relief activities of Jewish women during the First World War, but the flip-side of her study of Zionist women highlights a masculine agenda in the enterprise which is valuable as well. American Zionist leaders saw the movement as one of male redemption, a remedy to the lack of understanding among diaspora Jews that “life [is not] worth the sacrifice of manhood.”¹⁸⁵ These men echoed much of the masculine rhetoric of the muscular Zionists in Europe. Many attended the Zionist Congresses and were in close communication with European Zionist leaders. American Zionism was a manly enterprise on two counts as it aimed to physically redeem Jews worldwide, and because it gave them the opportunity to show their strength through support of the settlements in Palestine.

Contributing in the form of political clout, financial support, and providing social service provided an opportunity for Jewish men to be manly as both Jews and as Americans. “We in America now have the good fortune,” Shmaryahu Levin wrote in the *Maccabean* in 1914, “to show our manhood in this emergency, and it is our duty to meet it with earnestness, willingness and optimism.”¹⁸⁶ This is an example of what Sarah Imhoff identified as a manifestation of manliness through philanthropy. It showed, she explained, that:

Courage need not be located in the body, and manly bodies need not be located in Palestine. Instead, [American Zionist men] abstracted courage and manliness into the political realm, where they focused on forming political bodies more than fleshy ones. Building and

¹⁸⁵ Louis Lipsky quote from Deborah Esther Lipstadt, “The Zionist Career of Louis Lipsky, 1900–1921” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1976). Mary McCune, “Social Workers in the Muskeljudentum: ‘Hadassah Ladies,’ ‘Manly Men’ and the Significance of Gender in the American Zionist Movement, 1912–1928,” *American Jewish History* 86, no. 2 (June 1998): 143.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 151.

securing a society for the vulnerable was the central task of American Zionist masculinity—not bodybuilding, but society-building.¹⁸⁷

However, I see this as but one side of a many-faceted and complex masculinity which emerged in light of the Zionist project in Palestine, which *did* include upbuilding the body. It is certainly true to an extent; elite acculturated Jewish men (both in American and elsewhere) contributed financially while basking in the physical improvement of the Jews of Palestine, and not necessarily attending a gym themselves. Their statements about progress in Palestine, the meeting minutes and missions of philanthropic organizations, and the correspondence between Jewish philanthropists and the halutzim show the importance of philanthropy to the American Zionist enterprise, but also highlight the significance of the body in the image of Jewish settlements. Thanking the Jewish Colonization Association for their financial contributions, pioneers wrote of their efforts to build in Palestine:

We bring to it will-power, patience, muscle, and ability to execute. We want to stand up to our necks in the swamps ... for us no labor is too hard: we have no fear of death. To create and to upbuild is our task ... if [it] demands human sacrifices from us, it shall have them. Even so, we shall have far more courage and far more vigor than if others were to fall on our field of honor.¹⁸⁸

The reflected glory felt by those contributing monetarily to the ‘heroic’ work of the Yishuv provided the sort of philanthropic and political muscle of which Imhoff spoke. However, American Jewish men were not only contributing financially, they were themselves participating in physical manly endeavors. They were building athletic institutions, becoming prize-fighters and gangsters, they fought Nazis, and they worked to prove themselves in Greek life on college campuses. Men from each of these categories venerated the physical rebuilding of the Jewish people in Eretz Israel, but their participation in the masculine project was more diverse than mere

¹⁸⁷ Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 182.

¹⁸⁸ Meyer W. Weisgal, "The Land of Israel," *The American Israelite* (1874-2000); July 29, 1926, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Israelite*, 1.

praise and philanthropy. Those who closely watched the manly progress of the Yishuv celebrated their manhood as a physical manifestation which benefited all Jews, including themselves. And philanthropy was only an aspect of this, and it was not seen as the manliest aspect either, as it was used to dismiss the work of Zionist women who engaged primarily in charitable contributions. In a 1917 bulletin, women of Hadassah (Women's Zionist Organization of America) expressed their frustration at their being excluded from a masculine movement:

Even when [our detractors] concede our claims to the Zionist heritage, they dub us lachrymose, whining sisters of a brotherhood that stands for staunch manhood and dignified self-assertion, and looks upon charity as a necessary evil at best, and the need for exercising it as a blot upon civilization's escutcheon.¹⁸⁹

Note that the manly detractors of female Zionism loathe charity, they do not consider it a masculine and prideful endeavor in the Zionist Enterprise.

It would be misleading to insinuate that the Zionist movement (in the United States or anywhere else) was an entirely male movement or ideology. Jewish women participated eagerly, actively, and with more influence and leadership than many American women had in non-Jewish politics and public life.¹⁹⁰ Theodore Herzl himself invited Rosa Sonnenschein (writer and editor of the *American Jewess*) to participate in the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897, where there

¹⁸⁹ Hadassah *Bulletin*, no. 33 (June 1917): 11–12 (Quoted in McCune, “Social Workers in the Muskeljudentum,” 135.)

¹⁹⁰ The issue of *feminism* and Zionism is a different issue, and one which is more highly complicated than the history of women in Zionism. A search will provide any interested party with much present commentary on the compatibility or antagonism of the two ideologies (see “No, You Can't Be A Feminist And A Zionist” in *The Forward* or “Yes, I Can Be A Zionist And A Feminist” in the *Huffington Post*, for example. The argument over the compatibility of Zionism and Feminism hit a new crescendo in January of 2017, when the Women's March movement in the United States banned Zionist women's groups from participating, citing their presence as possibly too triggering of other participants traumas.

were a total of twelve female delegates.¹⁹¹ Louis Brandeis also consistently supported women participating in the American Zionist enterprise, and his support became institutionalized once he assumed leadership of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs (PZA).¹⁹² “Every Jew a Zionist,” he explained, “we are making no distinction men and women, both, are equally welcome.”¹⁹³ That does not mean, of course, that women in the American Zionist enterprise were treated equally, given equal representation, or recognized and respected for their contributions as much as their male counterparts.

Some female Jewish Zionists considered themselves apart from the masculine aspects of the movement, contributing in ways that they saw as specifically American, Jewish, and female.¹⁹⁴ The United States movement divided along gender lines, with women contributing (through groups like Hadassah) medical and social welfare support for Jewish settlements in Palestine, and men pushing for more political and territorial ambitions. This was an acknowledged difference for female Zionists, who maintained that the practical work they were doing on the ground in Palestine was every bit as worthwhile and as Zionist as the lofty goals of the leading Zionist men. Hadassah founder and leader Henrietta Szold explained to the Hadassah convention in 1924:

¹⁹¹ Though these delegates were not granted voting rights in the first congress, this changed by the Second Congress when they were accorded voting rights in full. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry*, 19.

¹⁹² Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah, had a friendly relationship with Brandeis. At the 1924 Hadassah convention, she recounted a story of a discussion with Brandeis in which he made clear that he believed the work of the Zionist women in Hadassah to be indispensable. Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention July 2-July 3, 1924,” 219; Annual and Mid-Winter National Conventions Records in the Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society; I-578/RG 3; box 1; folder 15; American Jewish Historical Society, Boston, MA and New York, NY. McCune, “Social Workers in the Muskeljudentum,” 140-41, 146-47.

¹⁹³ Louis Dembitz Brandeis, *Brandeis on Zionism: A Collection of Addresses and Statements* (Union, NJ: The Law Book Exchange, LTD., 1999), 77.

¹⁹⁴ McCune, “Social Workers in the Muskeljudentum,” 138.

What our lords and masters do not seem to understand is that true pedagogy, a wise insight into psychology, means waiting for results. They want you to utter promises and pious wishes that cannot be carried out. I am not a man-hater, but I would like you, for instance, to compare our resolutions with the resolutions that have been adopted by the men's convention; and you will find that we have uttered no pious wishes, that whatever we have resolved upon is practical and can be carried out, and that it is thoroughly Jewish.

Here she makes clear that women's work is the more practical, even the more useful of the two spheres of contributions to the Zionist enterprise in Palestine. She goes even further, as she continues, in explaining that to do practical work is not just valuable, but more Jewish than to make impossible promises.

I would like to say to our lords and masters – of whom a few at least are present – it is thoroughly Jewish and it has been pointed out in this: that the Jewish version of the Golden Rule is ‘Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.’ The Christian version is ‘Do not unto others as you would not be done by.’ This is an impossibility. That is a pious wish. They cannot be carried out. Or again, we say, ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself.’ And the Christian religion says, ‘Love thy enemies.’ You cannot love your enemies. That is also a pious wish.¹⁹⁵

The pious promises of Zionist men, she explains, mean nothing, and are, in fact, more Christian than Jewish. The practical work of American women in the Zionist cause, by contrast is measurable, and is more Jewish.

Some Jewish women, however, were far more excited to join in the masculine side of the movement and embraced and extolled the value of muscular Zionism as an idea and in practice. Reporting on the Eleventh Zionist Congress (1914) in Vienna, an American Jewish woman, Judith Solis Cohen, wrote excitedly about the athletic demonstration at that event, which involved both men and women.¹⁹⁶ She explained, “Fourteen hundred young men and women in blue and white

¹⁹⁵“Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention July 2-July 3, 1924,” 220-21; Annual and Mid-Winter National Conventions Records in the Hadassah Archives on Long-term Deposit at the American Jewish Historical Society; I-578/RG 3; box 1; folder 15; American Jewish Historical Society, Boston, MA and New York, NY.

¹⁹⁶ The account of Judith Solis Cohen in 1914 explains her experiences at the Zionist conference of 1914 in Vienna. “Womankind: A Woman's Impression of the Zionist Congress, Edited by

uniform with the ‘Mogen David,’ the Zionist insignia upon their breasts, gave a display of what we proudly designated as ‘muscular’ Zionism. They cast from us the reproach that the Jewish race is a race of physical weaklings.”¹⁹⁷ Despite women being included and participating, Zionism was a male-dominated movement, just as most spheres of public life in the early twentieth century were male dominated. However, it was more than just a reflection of male-dominant society, as manliness was an integral part of the Zionist project from Herzl’s original conception. As Michael Berkowitz wrote, “To be a Zionist was to ‘take a manly stand’ and be a manly man, asserting the Jews’ rightful place among the people of the world.”¹⁹⁸

On both sides of this debate American Jewish leaders utilized the language of aspirational masculinity to promote their cause. We have seen the masculine language of Zionism and the Yishuv, but when we look to the Reform movement, perhaps the most ardent Jewish promoters of Americanization and Americanism, we see great opposition to the Zionist cause. Sarah Imhoff demonstrated that within the Reform movement there was a concerted effort to make American Judaism into an American religion (a process by which, she asserts, they also embraced more a manly Judaism).¹⁹⁹ Though some religious Jews opposed Zionism on theological grounds, leaders in the Reform movement did so as defenders of a patriotic universalist American Judaism.²⁰⁰ Rabbi Isaac Wise, one of the leading Reform rabbis of the nineteenth century, was staunchly opposed to the Zionist idea, favoring more aggressive Americanization. He wrote that “the Jew

Sarah Kassy,” *The Jewish Exponent* (1887-1990); January 9, 1914; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Jewish Exponent*, pg. 5

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry*, 19.

¹⁹⁹ Imhoff, 47.

²⁰⁰ Naomi Wiener Cohen, “The Reaction of Reform Judaism in America to Political Zionism (1897-1922),” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40, no. 4 (June 1951): 361-94.:

must become an American in order to gain the proud self-consciousness of the free born man.”²⁰¹ As an immigrant himself, he did so fervently, and encouraged all Jewish immigrants to do the same, to become “not only American citizens but [to] become Americans through and through outside of the synagogue.”²⁰²

David Philipson, a member of the first graduating class from Hebrew Union College in 1883, author, and founder the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in 1889, was, like Wise, a staunch advocate of Americanism and felt that Zionism flew in the face of that cause and the fight for Jewish acceptance in all aspects of American life and patriotism. He called both Zionism and the creation of the New York Kehillah “neo-ghettoism” and dangerously separatist.²⁰³ In his opposition to Zionism, he used the image of the passive, powerless Jew, claiming that historically, Jews had maintained a passive acceptance of the challenges from the outside world, and that Zionism’s answer was “at bottom [a] confession of surrender and defeat.”²⁰⁴ The entire CCAR came out as against Zionism from the start its political program, and (at least Rabbi Philipson) believed that it would be a short-lived fad.²⁰⁵ The prevalence of this attitude in conjunction with the presence of Zionists among Reform leadership led to a conflict at Hebrew Union College that ended with the firing of three professors.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Isaac Wise, box 4, Folder 9. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰² Isaac Wise, box 4, Folder 9. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰³ Correspondence with Jacob Schiff, Box 1, Folder 1. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰⁴ Address in Nashville Tennessee, October 9, 1934., Box 4, Folder 1. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰⁵ Letter to Jacob Schiff, August 26, 1907, Box 1, Folder 1. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰⁶ Friesel, “American Zionism and American Jewry,” 12.

Though most Reform Jewish leaders opposed Zionism, public opposition was a complex issue, both within and outside of the Jewish American community. Jacob Schiff, though opposed to “the menace of Zionism,” was concerned about openly disparaging it. He wrote that regardless of his feelings towards American Zionism, openly combatting the movement was bound to cause “too much antagonism and bad blood,” adding “it never pays to make martyrs to religious or semi-religious beliefs.”²⁰⁷ The opposition to Zionism also waned considering the worsening conditions for Jews in Europe. Though originally Jacob Schiff expressed hostility to the idea of Zionism and merely worried about conflict within the American Jewish community, his view changed shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution. Schiff wrote to Dr. Philipson about this shift, “the conditions in Russia, Poland, Romania, Austria, perhaps even Germany and elsewhere foretold that “considerable unhappiness, if not suffering, is likely in store ... for the Jewish population.”²⁰⁸ Jacob Schiff is an excellent example of the complexity of the Zionist problem for American Jewish leadership. His views advanced and shifted enough to create a very interesting historical debate about his eventual stance on Zionism. While historians have argued that Schiff became a reluctant Zionist throughout the First World War, Caitlin Carenen recently argued that he never came to fully embrace Zionism, remaining distant from the idea due to practical issues (like disbursing aid to Palestine, the proportionally large solicitation of aid from American Jewry, and the lack of cooperation in Palestine with non-Zionist groups), along with his own ideological inconsistencies.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Quotes from two letters, August 10 (1909) and September 3 (1918), Box 1, Folder 20. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰⁸ Letter to Dr. Philipson, September 5, 1918, Box 1, Folder 20. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰⁹ Caitlin Carenen, “Complicating the Zionist Narrative in America: Jacob Schiff and the Struggle over Relief Aid in World War I,” *American Jewish History* 101, no. 4 (October 2017): 441-63.

The real shift in attitudes towards Zionism in America came as a response to a public statement issued by the British government during the First World War, declaring England's support of the Zionist goal of establishing a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine (which was then an Ottoman controlled region with a minority Jewish population).²¹⁰ The Balfour Declaration (so named because Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour made the statement in a letter to Lord Rothschild, a leader in the British Jewish community) brought disparate groups and leaders who had drawn away from Zionism back into the Zionist camp, even bringing back other brands of territorialists, like Israel Zangwill, who believed that any opposition to a Jewish home in Palestine would be "treason to the Jewish people."²¹¹ The reaction in the Jewish press in America was jubilant, though there were still anti-Zionists unwilling to accept a homeland outside of the United States. Reform leaders felt particularly incensed at the idea that they should be expected to count Palestine as their homeland (though no one said they would have to do so). Rabbi Philipson remained an anti-Zionist for the rest of his life, even as some of his colleagues warmed to the idea of a Jewish nation in Palestine.

Despite Schiff's warning of divisive opposition, Dr. Philipson attempted to organize a conference of rabbis and Jewish laypeople to oppose Zionism in 1918. He reached out to Jewish leaders all around the country and from several areas of Jewish life. The conference collapsed after substantial opposition to this idea was voiced from notable figures like Jacob Schiff (who had previously been an ally of Philipson's in anti-Zionism), Louis Marshall, Cyrus Adler (a prominent Jewish leader who served as President of the Jewish Theological Seminary and of the American

²¹⁰ Though the declaration promised a "national home" it did not guarantee statehood or independence to the Jewish people in Palestine.

²¹¹ Quoted in Urofsky, *American Zionism*, 213.

Jewish Committee, as well as co-chair of the Council for the Jewish Agency), and Oscar Straus.²¹²

In the end, both Zionist and non-Zionist leaders opposed the conference as they struggled to keep Jews together despite the tensions in the American Jewish community.²¹³

There were concessions and cooperation, however, between the Zionist and non-Zionist leaders over the following decade. For example, in 1927 the Weizmann-Marshall agreement on the Jewish Agency connected both sides in supporting the migration and settlement of Jewish refugees to Palestine, if not the Zionist idea. Judge William Lewis (serving as president of the Appeal) wrote:

The recent publication of this accord, auguring as it does the establishment of harmony and cooperation in American Israel on behalf of Palestine, has brought added strength and zeal to the men and women who, through the United Palestine Appeal, and the funds that are associated in it, have borne the major part of the labor and responsibility involved in the rebuilding of the Jewish National Home.²¹⁴

Jewish non-religious opposition to Zionism in America defined itself by its determination to maintain the degree of success and acculturation which they had earned. Even after such understandings had been reached, acculturated American Jews fought to keep the public aware that Jews were not all Zionists, and that not all American Jews believed they should have national pride for any other nation than the United States. The Reform movement adopted a more positive attitude towards Zionism in 1937 at the convention of the CCAR, though the demographics of its

²¹² Letters from several rabbis and leaders sending their notices of non-attendance and pleas to cancel the conference can be found in the correspondence of Rabbi Philipson. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²¹³ Several letters from 1918, Box 1, Folder 1. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²¹⁴ "Zionists Throughout Country Welcome Weizmann-Marshall Accord," February 15, 1927, Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Accessed 6/21/2018, <https://www.jta.org/1927/02/15/archive/zionists-throughout-country-welcome-weizmann-marshall-accord>

leadership were quite different by then.²¹⁵ Anti-Zionists, like Rabbi Philipson, continued to speak out against Zionism, though their organizations were small until 1943, when they joined to establish the American Council for Judaism.²¹⁶

After the Balfour Declaration, the next great impetus for change in American Jewish attitudes was the United States' entry into both World Wars. The fact that Jews had kin in so many nations involved in the wars inspired accusations of dual loyalty, which Zionism did nothing to negate. At the same time, the increasing oppression of Jews across Europe drew more concerned American Jews into the Zionist camp, and at times, into the fighting before America even joined the battle.

²¹⁵ In their 1937 "Columbus Platform," the CCAR reversed its stand on Jewish peoplehood, declaring that "Judaism is the soul of which Israel [the people] is the body." The platform continues, "We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its [Palestine's] up-building as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life." "Reform Judaism & Zionism: A Centenary Platform," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed May 21, 2019, <https://www.ccarnet.org/rabbinic-voice/platforms/article-reform-judaism-zionism-centenary-platform>.

²¹⁶ For more on the formation of the American Council for Judaism, see Thomas Kolsky's 2010 book, *Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2010).

“Myths die *hard* and one of the *hadiest* is the canard that the Jew does not make a good soldier.”

- Jewish War Veterans of the United States ¹

CHAPTER IV: JEWISH MANHOOD AND THE WORLD WARS

American life granted Jews unprecedented equality and opportunity, though their story as Americans is also peppered with instances of rejection, denial, and continued attempts to gain access to particular aspects of American life. Unlike many of their nations of origin in Europe, the American government held very few programs or branches that actively denied or limited Jewish access or success, which is why the armed forces present such a unique case. Like athletic and fraternal organizations, service in the military is (and has been) a particularly masculine endeavor. More than virtually anything else in modern America, the military remains inseparably linked to men and manliness. It is not, as we have seen, the only measure of manhood, but the qualities which the military values are pointedly masculine ones.²

As discussed initially in the context of early Jewish participation in the American military in Chapter II, there was never one continuously accepted monolithic paragon of manly virtue. After the Civil War, Americans recoiled from militarism and the glorification of the fight. However, E. Anthony Rotundo explained that after a few decades the memories of the horrors of war faded, America once again began to embrace the soldier as the sum of American qualities of manhood. Theodore Roosevelt famously epitomized these virtues in his “strenuous life” speech;

¹ Italics original. Jewish War Veterans of the United States pamphlet, *Jews in the World War: A Study in Jewish Patriotism and Heroism* (New York: Jewish War Veterans of the United States, 1941), 2.

² For an in-depth analysis of the gendered qualities of military values see Edith A. Disler, “The Feminine as a Force Multiplier,” in *Attitudes Aren't Free: Thinking Deeply About Diversity in the U.S. Armed Forces*, ed. James E. Parco, David A. Levy (Maxwell Airforce Base, AL: Air University Press, 2010), 363-80.

resolution, duty, courage, indomitable will, perseverance, principles, sacrifice, and power.³ These more aggressive qualities did not fully replace or eliminate other forms of masculine virtue, like the enlightenment qualities of reason and democracy, but they did overshadow them at the turn of the century, and certainly in the lead up to the Great War.⁴ Michael Kimmel argued, in *Manhood in America*, that by the early nineteenth hundreds many Americans believed that “decades of peace had made American men effeminate and effete; only by being constantly at war could frontier masculinity be retrieved.”⁵ American veterans throughout the eighteenth eighties and nineties began to share their stories and explain the virtues of their experiences in battle, as a venue in which one could develop and exercise individual honorable qualities and foster camaraderie. The young men that came of age in this generation, those who would enlist to join the fight in the Great War, compared themselves to the brave generation of their fathers, and were eager to prove themselves when the opportunity arose.⁶

According to Kimmel, America retrieved that masculinity through a growing celebration of military spirit resurrected during the First and Second World Wars, a spirit which contributed to the United States maintaining a standing peacetime military (they had not held one previously). That American male leadership aimed to retrieve their masculinity in this way is clear in publications of the time. Roosevelt believed that men needed war to prove themselves, writing, “This country needs a war,” as did Randolph Bourne, who wrote “War is the Health of the State.”⁷

³ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 233-34.

⁴ Much of this language is evident in the materials presented in the previous chapter dealing with athletics, agriculture, and fraternity.

⁵ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 111.

⁶ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 234-35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 235. Randolph Bourne, *The State* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

During the two World Wars, American attitudes towards the military changed and their importance to American life increased. America had conquered its frontier, leaving no venue in which to develop that Rooseveltian ideal of manhood. The other venue, according to those same ideals of performative manhood, is through battle. The questions this chapter will attempt to answer are: Where were American Jews during this time of masculine retrieval? Were they attempting to take part and did American military institutions and comrades allow them to do so? As the Second World War was such an intense time of flux for the Jewish world, we will also look at the effects of the Holocaust and the emerging Israeli state on Jewish American masculine identity.

Jewish Participation in the Great War

There's a story in that paper
 I just tossed upon the floor
 That speaks of prejudice against the Jews.
 There's a photo on the table
 That's a memory of the war.
 And a man who never figured in the news.
 There's a cross upon his breast —
 That's the D.S.C.,
 The Croix de Guerre, the Militaire,
 These, too.
 And there's a heart beneath the medals
 That beats loyal, brave and true —
 That's Dreben,
 A Jew!

He is short, and fat, and funny,
 And the nose upon his face
 Is about the size of Buglar Dugan's horn.
 But the grin that plays behind it
 Is wide, and soft, and sunny,
 And he wore it from the day that he was born.

There's a cross upon his chest —
 That's the D.S.C.,
 The Croix de Guerre, the Militaire,
 Mon Dieu!
 He's a He-Man out of Texas,
 And he's all man through and through —
 That's Dreben,
 A Jew!

Now whenever I read articles
 That breathe of racial hate,
 Or hear arguments that hold his kind to scorn,
 I always see that photo
 With the cap upon the pate
 And the nose the size of Buglar Dugan's horn.
 I see upon his breast
 The D.S.C.,
 The Croix de Guerre, the Militaire —
 These, too.
 And I think, Thank God Almighty
 We will always have a few
 Like Dreben,
 A Jew!"

-- "The Fighting Jew" by Damon Runyon⁸

The First World War marks an important moment in the history of masculinity in the developed world. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, western concepts of those qualities of masculinity previously discussed (physical health, beauty, strength, valor, honor, and duty to family) served as the foundation for a middle-class dominant masculinity which remains the standard, with variations of course, on which this study is largely based. The Great War, a culmination of modernism and nationalism which included unprecedented global participation and

⁸ Inconsistent capitalization original. The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is one of the highest military awards given to a member of the United States Army. It is distributed for extreme gallantry and for risking one's life in combat with an armed enemy force. Damon Runyon, "A Jew," *Cosmopolitan*, November 1922, 11.

technology, provided a theater in which men could play out (and indeed resurrect) these solidifying ideas of masculinity through warfare (camaraderie, violence, valor, and duty to country). As George Mosse explained in *The Image of Man*, the Great War did not serve to *change* the dominant masculine ideal in Europe and America, but to strengthen those concepts of masculinity which had already begun to form.⁹ He added that the war had the effect of tying masculinity to nationalism in a new and lasting way. Even soldiers critical of the war at its onset, he explained, returned embracing the manhood they had been able to physically act out in the war and the freedom they had won.¹⁰ The trauma experienced by men who fought in the Great War, unique in its mechanized nature, was acute. However, regardless of the trauma of new methods of warfare, in the popular imagination (cultural imagery and depictions of war), war still made men of boys.¹¹ Fighting in the war and emerging with their humanity and manhood intact was a masculine rite of passage, traditional in its manly connection to the fight and unique in its facing down the technological advancements of the industrial age.

As citizens of many nations, but with connections to the Jewish diaspora, Jewish detractors often viewed Jews as disconnected from the land and nation, and for this reason, from modern manhood as well.¹² Contemporary American Jews tried very hard to combat the idea that they

⁹ Though the nature of warfare changed dramatically because of the industrialization of weaponry, Mosse said that trench warfare also allowed unrestrained aggression as men charged over the top to take enemy trenches, making it the bloodiest and most brutal warfare. Mosse, *Image of Man*, 110.

¹⁰ See the sixth chapter of Mosse, *Image of Man*.

¹¹ Gill Plain, *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and 'Peace'* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), chap. 4, ebook.

¹² The most obvious proponents of this theory are those functioning within a German *Volkisch* ideology (the Nazis were one of many such groups), which believed that as a people are inextricably linked to their land, Jews can be viewed as either a landless, soulless people, or a desert people, devoid of the richness of other lands. In either case, these views do not support the acceptance of Jews in their countries of residence. George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: The Universal Library, 1964), 4-5.

held unpatriotic dual loyalties. However, the Jewish religion and its texts, as Daniel Boyarin asserts, remain gentle in nature, and detest warfare overall. Even those stories of Jewish heroes are pointedly discussed by the rabbinic tradition with ambivalence, even antagonism, when it comes to militarism and martial tradition.¹³ In a speech delivered to Jewish audiences in 1914, Rabbi Gustav N. Hausmann demonstrated very well the confusing position in which Jews found themselves with regard to the fight. In defending Jewish patriotism, Hausmann extolled Jewish battle readiness and prowess, explaining (perhaps overly-optimistically):

Judaism exalts patriotism into a law. There can be no good Jew who is not a complete patriot ... All now admit, even those anti-Semitic countries who pointed at him suspiciously as an alien, as a foreigner, sometimes even as a traitor, that the Jew has the gift of patriotism for his country. The Jew is not only unswervingly *loyal*, but he has also been fearlessly *brave* on the battlefield. [italics original]¹⁴

He continued, however, also adhering to classic explanations of meek Jewish nature, claiming, “The Jew comes into the World Arena with an altogether different weapon, the weapon of weakness, of submission, of suffering. Ours has been the power of endurance; it is better to suffer than to die.” He summarizes, confusingly, “Fearlessly brave is the Jew on the battlefield. Judaism and Peace are one and interchangeable. Force is not to be relied upon. Might meets with defeat by might. Often weakness, based on right, defeats power. God is on the side of the weak.”¹⁵

Though not as befuddling as Hausmann’s assessment of Jewish valor, patriotism, and pacifism, what we see in studying Jewish Americans fighting in the Great War is equally complex. Jewish Americans, in large part, eagerly joined the fight before America even entered the war. Several accounts recall the need to disprove stereotypes of Jewish weakness, and to show Jews as

¹³ Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 284-86.

¹⁴ Rabbi Gustav N. Hausmann, “The Great War and the Hope of the Jew,” A Lecture delivered before Congregation Pincus Elijah and before Young Israel December 12, 1914 (New York City: S.N., 1915), 11-13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31-34.

on par with all other modern men in war, the manliest of pursuits. The rise in militance as the mark of a man is clear in their accounts, but so is the need to persist against continued accusations of Jewish cowardice and evasion. In the following pages, I examine two elements of the Great War: the Jewish Legion and the persistent myth of Jewish evasion. The common theme throughout is the need for Jewish men to prove their mettle by joining the fight and salvaging the image of Jewish heroism and manliness.

The Jewish Legion

Before America joined the Great War, Jewish Americans were gratefully left out of what Horace Kallen called their unique position of “fratricide,” as Jews fought in every army involved in the conflict.¹⁶ Kallen argued that the Jewish struggle for equality and freedom to practice their religion and tradition while contributing to the various societies in which they lived was the “great historical incarnation of the *casus belli*.”¹⁷ And indeed, American and Palestinian Jews did see the poor and unequal situation of European Jews in various nations as justification to join the fight (even before America entered the war). This was certainly the case among those Jews expelled from Jewish settlements in and around Jaffa by the Turkish government in 1914. Among the refugees (over ten thousand) gathered in Alexandria (Egypt) were Jewish veterans of Russian and

¹⁶ In an anecdote from the battlefields of Europe, Rabbi Hausmann shows the fratricidal nature of the war for Jewish soldiers, “In a bayonet charge, a Russian Jewish soldier stabbed an Austrian Jewish soldier to death. The former heard the latter utter with his last dying gasp: ‘Shema Isroel’ –God is one. [*sic*]” Hausmann, “The Great War and the Hope of the Jew,” 16.

¹⁷ *Casus belli* is Latin expression meaning an act or situation which provokes or justifies war. Horace Meyer Kallen, “Nationality and the Jewish Stake in the Great War,” An Address Delivered at the Third Annual Menorah Convention, at the University of Cincinnati, in Cincinnati, Ohio, December 22, 1914. Published in *The Menorah Journal* 1, no. 2 (April 1915): 13.

Yishuv fighting and defense groups.¹⁸ Two of these veterans, Captain Joseph Trumpeldor and Vladimir Jabotinsky (who would later become a leader in the Revisionist Zionist movement), proposed an all-Jewish army to fight under British command, on the Sinai Desert, which would inevitably become a fighting front. Initially turned down for work as soldiers by the British government, these 652 Jewish would-be soldiers became the Zion Mule Corps, carrying food and ammunition to British men in the trenches, proving their resolve to the British government. By 1917, British forces began training a group of these men in London to be the leaders of a new Jewish Legion (an actual combat unit), which officially formed at the end of 1916.¹⁹

Subject to all the same American influences and trends, Jews from the United States were eager to prove themselves, as Roosevelt had advocated, in the theater of war. Even more so than other American groups, perhaps, as they remained excluded from so many other venues of masculine performance.²⁰ The Great War provided the occasion to do so and a great number of Jews took it. The formation of a Jewish Legion abroad paired with the fact that the United States had not yet joined the fight, gave Jewish Americans an unprecedented opportunity to fight *as Jews*. Interest in the fight increased with the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in England, spurring hope for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In response, American Jewish men interested in joining the fight volunteered to join the Jewish Legion against the Ottoman Empire. Within the Jewish Legion, North American men constituted the largest contingent of volunteers, forming entirely American battalions making their way to Palestine via training camps in Canada.²¹

¹⁸ Claude Wallfish, "The Zion Mule Corps," *The Jewish Frontier* (April 1985): 26.

¹⁹ Hagdud Haivri League, Inc., Program of the formal establishment of Bet Hagdudim in Avichail, 1955. Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 1; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

²⁰ Sports, dueling, fraternities, education, etc.

²¹ "Jewish Battalions Paved Way to Statehood," *Jerusalem Post*, n.d., Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 9; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

American Jews volunteering in the Legion faced several impediments (especially after America joined the war), primarily age and American citizenship, which strictly prohibited citizens from serving in a foreign army. For those exempted from the American draft, however, these restrictions were not insurmountable.²² At least a few underage Jews lied about their age (if under 21) to fight.²³ Those who wished to join but were fully eligible for the American draft went so far as to forfeit their American citizenship to join the Legion.²⁴ William Braiterman was one such underage recruit who wished to join the Legion. A child immigrant from Russia, upon his arrival in the United States Braiterman very quickly began to Americanize, primarily by participating in American sports (through the available Jewish organizations) and engaging in more elements of American (and English-speaking) culture. Delighted with America but appalled by the antisemitic lynching of Leo Frank (so reminiscent of similar blood libel charges his family witnessed in Russia), he became an ardent Zionist in his teens. The Legion came to his attention when he encountered a Baltimore recruiter who called to him on the street, “You look like a strong Jewish Boy. Do you want to fight for your homeland?”²⁵ William ran away from Baltimore to Philadelphia (against his parents’ wishes) to enlist in the British army under a false name, lying about his age.²⁶ He fought in the Jewish Legion, bolstered by the Balfour Declaration and the

²² Hirsch Loeb Gordon, “The Jewish Legions in the British Army During the World War,” Address delivered at the 25th Anniversary Reunion, March 2, 1940, New York City. Accessed through YIVO archive at the Center for Jewish History, New York.

²³ A fairly common occurrence according to the Bet Hagdudim in Avi-chail.

²⁴ Such as Isaac Ben-Zvi in Martin Watt’s, *The Jewish Legion and the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 148.

²⁵ William Braiterman, “The Jewish Legion of World War I,” *The Sun Magazine*, April 23, 1967. Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

²⁶ It was not only Jewish boys who ran off to join the Jewish Legion to fight. Jewish girls also showed interest but were turned away from the all-male unit. One of the rejected girls who attempted to enlist in the Legion was a young Golda Meir, who was crushed by being turned

promise of a homeland for the Jewish people.²⁷ An entire gang of Jewish toughs (gamblers and prizefighters) from Brooklyn also joined up, following their leader's call of "Boys, let's go fight for the Jews!"²⁸

Outspokenly antiwar Jewish men who otherwise might have registered as conscientious objectors, like Russian immigrant Elias Gilner, weighed the duties to their various convictions and some decided, as he did, that deplorable as he found war, fighting for the Jewish Legion was something different all together. He explained how determined a pacifist he had been at the start of the war, that he had advocated peace publicly, and in response, "Invectives were flung at me; fists were raised at me; chairs were hurled at me; but I stood my ground."²⁹ He fled New York City, trying to escape anti-pacifist aggression, and ended up in St. Louis, where he found no relief. "I was socially ostracized as a slacker and I could find no peace as a man." Still, he held fast to his pacifism. But when he saw the call to fight for the Jewish people, in an all-Jewish battalion, "the pacifist arguments fell flat. I could not stir. The simple sentence [enlist in the Jewish Legion!] clearly possessed an irresistible power. It did not mean war to me. It meant the discovery of a road to peace."³⁰ He registered on the spot.

Though the United States government had allowed the Jewish Legion to recruit men who were otherwise not subject to the American draft, several American Jews remained torn about the Legion. Some Jewish assimilationists, anti-Zionists, and even Zionists concerned about the

away from the fight. Francine Klagsbrun, *Lioness: Golda Meir and the Nation of Israel* (New York: Schocken Books, 2017), 70.

²⁷ William Braiterman, Oral History Interview, 1974. Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 8; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

²⁸ Roman Freulich, *Soldiers in Judea: Stories and Vignettes of the Jewish Legion* (New York: Herzl Press, 1964), 33.

²⁹ Elias Gilner, *Jews Who Fought*, Pamphlet, printing and date unknown. American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

perception of Jewish dual loyalties objected to the recruiting of American Jews to the Legion. They argued that American Jews owed their full allegiance to the United States and should therefore enlist only in the American armed forces.³¹ For the most part, however, American Jews viewed the recruits as heroes, and received them as such, even before they reached basic training. One recruit recalled, about his journey to the Legion training ground:

The battlefield was still far. Our deeds of valor farther. But our heroism, offered in the open market, was guaranteed in advance, underwritten, and floated by pompous personages or by lean, anaemic [*sic*], and pious-looking individuals in bombastic speeches, lyric, ecstatic, or prayerful effusions. Small wonder that the issue was subscribed to and oversubscribed by generous matrons and their charming daughters. We were dined, petted, cuddled, worshipped, bemoaned, glorified, supplied with comforters and socks and sent on our way. Grapefruit, roast chicken, speeches, and kisses were bestowed upon us in Detroit, Montreal, and St. John's, Newfoundland. Speeches and kisses without grapefruit in a number of minor stopovers. We arrived in camp sore-lipped, heavy-limbed, swell-headed, hot under our shirts from carrying our luggage and under our skins from the sense of self-importance pumped into us by silver-tongued toastmasters and red-lipped girls.³²

The end of the war in 1918 cut off the flow of American Jewish volunteers at its height. Though about five thousand volunteers actively fought in Palestine, on Armistice Day, five thousand six hundred more (predominantly American) Jewish men were in training or transit to join the battle.³³

The Jewish Legion (known in Hebrew as *Hagdud Haivri*) was the first fighting Jewish military body since the Roman Empire, and served as inspiration for the future iterations of Jewish militaries and defense forces of what would become the State of Israel. Jewish men found, in the Legion, a stage on which to demonstrate (or manifest) their strength, Jewish nationalism, pride,

³¹ William Braiterman, "Memories of the Jewish Legion," Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 11; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

³² Gilner, *Jews who Fought*.

³³ In the thirties, veterans of the Jewish Legion built a settlement in Israel (named *Avichail* – My Father Warrior), consisting chiefly of men from America, and by the fifties, roughly 800 people resided in the colony. Avichail is still a moshav in central modern-day Israel. Hagdud Haivri League, Inc., Program of the formal establishment of Bet Hagdudim in Avi-chail, 1955. Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 1; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

honor, and courage. One Jewish colonel, Eliezer Margolin, wanted his battalion “to be brave and heroic, knowing well that the eyes of the Gentile world were upon them—the Gentile world which, for centuries, mocked the Jews as cowards.” According to fellow legionnaire, Roman Freulich, when his battalion captured a village (Es-Salt) in Palestine, they “proved that they were real men—brave men.”³⁴

Within their recollections, writings, and recordings, it is interesting to note how even among the rank and file of the Jewish battalions, stereotypes about Jews lacking in manliness persisted, and served to support their praise of their fellow soldiers as exceptions to the rule of Jewish meekness. After training, one Jewish recruit noted, “the frail and pallid tailors left the camp as tough and hardened soldiers.”³⁵ In this fashion, Major H. D. Myer, a Jewish English officer who had transferred to the Jewish Legion from his assignment in Europe, wrote to his fiancée that the Jews in his unit were far preferable to the ‘regular’ Jews of England, “They are people with ideas and ideals of things besides mere money making, and the soil of Palestine is suited to such. They are well developed mentally and physically and they are men.”³⁶

The Myth of Jewish Evasion

For Jews still at home in the United States, scrutiny of their manliness, as exemplified by the willingness and capacity to fight, persisted. In June of 1918, just a few months before the war officially ended, an American Jew, Lewis Brown, published an article in the *North American*

³⁴ Freulich, *Soldiers in Judea*, 114.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁶ Major H. D. Myer, “Soldiering of Sorts,” unpublished transcript, page 149. Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 14; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

Review addressing the supposed determination of American Jews not to fight in the war. In this article, Brown examined a statement from the instruction manual for the Medical Advisory Boards of the draft, stating that “The foreign born, especially the Jews, are more apt to malingering than the native born.”³⁷ Interestingly, Brown did not deny that *foreign-born* Jews may be prone to malingering, but he explained that it was only those who had not Americanized fully. He even defended their “slacking” by claiming that it was unique, “They are ‘slackers’, of course, but their ‘slacking’ is not sneaky, mean, and ‘yellow’. It is ‘red’; it is imbued with a peculiar zeal and passion. It is a type of ‘slacking’ altogether anomalous—and for that reason, most impressive—to the American born and bred.”³⁸

He provided a three-fold explanation for Jewish malingering; the first element argued that the Jew is naturally averse to war because of his teachings, that he is indeed “constitutionally antipathetic to physical violence. He has nothing of the berserker in him.”³⁹ The second mirrored Theodore Roosevelt’s statement about the historical emasculation of Jewish men. Brown argued that among Jews, the martial spirit “has been almost crushed beneath centuries of servility and oppression ... powers neglected tend to atrophy ... and so men unable to use physical force lose altogether the sense of fight. Their bodies wither ... they must live by their wits.”⁴⁰ The third reason he gave for foreign-born Jewish malingering regarded the memories they retained of the brutal draft and military in their home countries (primarily those from Russia). He explained that though he may have done the same if he had been in the old country, as an American Jew, he knew

³⁷ Office of the Provost Marshal General, *Manual of Instructions for Medical Advisory Boards* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 92.

³⁸ Punctuation original. Lewis P. Brown, “The Jew is not a Slacker,” *North American Review* 207, no. 751 (June 1918): 858.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 859.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 860.

“that here the soldiery is clean and fine and manly.” “Yes,” he continued, “I know all this, but—and here lies the root of the evil—my un-Americanized brother does not.”⁴¹ The Medical Advisory Board removed the slur on Jews from the manual in February of 1918. President Wilson ordered the removal of the offensive paragraph himself, in response to a telegram from Louis Marshall, the president of the American Jewish Committee, protesting the slander.⁴²

Not all Jewish leaders agreed with Brown’s assessment of the “slacking nature” of foreign-born Jews. A New York rabbi, Samuel Buchler, President of the Federation of Hungarian Jews in America, led a call to enlist Austro-Hungarian Jews in the American military, and planned to expand his efforts to men of other foreign birth as well.⁴³ Several notable leaders of the time (mostly of German-Jewish heritage, including Jacob Schiff) formed a Jewish anti-pacifist group in New York called the American League of Jewish Patriots in April, 1917.⁴⁴ The group existed to encourage Jewish American men to enlist in the American armed forces. The group claimed that through the Americanization process, the values of democracy would inspire men to act. They explained that “he who originally was a “slacker” is among the first to volunteer, and on the field of battle he is the renowned hero.”⁴⁵ According to Nancy Gentile Ford, these leaders (and the American Jews and Jewish newspapers who followed their line of thinking) expressed a “dual loyalty,” for American victory and for Jewish victory (both abroad and terms of Jewish status).⁴⁶ However, the desire on the part of these Jews reads less as a desire to “win” either the war or

⁴¹ Ibid., 862.

⁴² “Removal of Slur on Jews,” *The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* (1903-1922); March 15, 1918; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger, 518.

⁴³ Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All!: Foreign-Born Soldiers in WWI* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 37.

⁴⁴ Howard M. Sachar, *A History of the Jews in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 242.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Ford, *Americans All*, 37.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 37-38.

Jewish freedoms abroad (though that certainly does concern them) than it does the need to disprove the continued criticism that Jews are somehow different and cannot become American men, patriots, and soldiers. In all, approximately 225,000 Jews (both native-born and immigrants) served in the First World War.⁴⁷

In 1919, as the war wrapped up, the American Jewish Committee's Office of Jewish War Records released a report on Jewish participation "as an instrument wherewith to combat certain manifestations of anti-Jewish prejudice in the immediate present."⁴⁸ This report tells us several things about American antisemitism, its emphasis on emasculation, and American Jewish reactions to such prejudice. Firstly, the Office of Jewish War Records released the report unnecessarily early, as there were still troops mobilized, and so many soldiers, medals of valor, casualties, etc., could not yet be accounted for. The speed of the publication and its release to the American public came as a direct reaction to antisemitic claims of malingering and draft-dodging, which constituted an attack on the manliness and honor of American Jews. The sense of urgency for such reports doubtlessly increased in response to aggressive accusations of Jewish evasion made by the German government. In 1916, the German military conducted the *Judenstatistik* (Jew-census) to catalogue

⁴⁷ Numbers vary from about 200,000 to about 250,000. Nancy Gentile Ford is at the high-end estimate in her 2001 book, *Americans All* (37), as is Jessica Cooperman, while Sidney L. Markowitz is at the lower in his 1992 book, *What You Should Know About Jewish Religion, History, Ethics and Culture*. It would make a fascinating study to evaluate how many of these Jews were immigrants and how many native-born, given the massive immigration during this period, with the American Jewish population increasing from 250,000 in 1880 to four million by 1920. Jessica Cooperman, "'A Little Army Discipline Would Improve the Whole House of Israel:' The Jewish Welfare Board, State Power and the Shaping of Jewish Identity in World War I America," (PhD diss. New York University, 2010), 18. Sidney L. Markowitz, *What You Should Know About Jewish Religion, History, Ethics and Culture* (New York: First Carol Publishing Group, 1992), 88.

⁴⁸ American Jewish Committee, *The War Record of American Jews: First Report of the Office of War Records* (New York City: American Jewish Committee, 1919), 6.

the number of Jews serving at the front, though they did not release the numbers until the war had ended.⁴⁹

That the Office of Jewish War Records took antisemitic claims of malingering and evasion as an attack on Jewish manliness and honor (and were not apt to agree to the veracity of such ideas like Lewis Brown) is evident in the report, which reads less as a record of participation than it does as a determined effort to prove Jewish tenacity. A section devoted to the role of Jewish soldiers as combatant versus non-combatant explains that far more Jews wish to fight than to organize. Another section on volunteers explains that so many Jews in service were outside of the draft age, that their excessive numbers could not be a coincidence or happenstance, but that Jews were surely overrepresented due to high levels of patriotism and valor. The office's director, Julian Leavitt, concluded the report:

Jews of America have contributed their full quota to the winning of the war, and a generous margin beyond their quota; that they have enlisted cheerfully, fought gallantly and died bravely for the United States ... The qualities which [have] enabled the Jew to survive through the centuries—his capacity to endure, without breaking, prolonged and intense nerve strain; his qualities of initiative, his elasticity of mind, his capacity for organization, and above all, his idealism—[enabled] him to fit himself successfully into a democratic army fighting for world democracy.

He explained that it was for the outside world, those who still did not recognize or believe the facts of Jewish valor, that the Jewish War Records office must exist and compile such data.⁵⁰

When Jews did receive high praise for their strength and battle prowess (from their fellow officers and superiors), their Jewishness was determinedly highlighted by both the Jews

⁴⁹ Both the fact that the German government considered this census necessary and the lack of information published only served to increase suspicion of Jewish evasion among antisemitic circles, and it continued to represent one of the key points of German antisemitic propaganda. Saul Friedlander, "Political Transformations During the War and Their Effect on the Jewish Question," in *Hostages of Modernization: Germany, Great Britain, France* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 153-54.

⁵⁰ The War Record of American Jews: First Report of the Office of War Records, 29.

themselves and the commentator, upholding the notion that theirs was an exceptional case (whether or not that was indeed their intent), and that the particular Jew in question was an exceptional specimen of Jewish manhood. This certainly held true in the case of Sam Dreben, the Jew mentioned in the poem included at the start of this section on WWI. Dreben, known in the American army as “the fighting Jew,” immigrated to the United States from Russia who proved himself in battle on multiple fronts, having fought in several wars and for several nations.⁵¹ Dreben was honored as one of the outstanding heroes of the First World War. He fought in the Philippines, China, Peking, Panama, and Mexico, before entering the Great War, and serving in Europe until it came to a close.⁵² According to Martin Zielonka, Dreben “never allowed any one to doubt his Jewish origin and his pride in it ... He was a living example that the Jew is not a malingerer.”⁵³

In her examination of the Jewish Welfare Board and the shaping of American Jewish identity during the First World War, Jessica Cooperman showed that even Jews who believed that such assumptions were merely prejudice still acknowledged the need for individual Jews to disprove them. Using Jacob Rader Marcus (who later became a Reform rabbi, scholar of Jewish history, and the founder of the American Jewish Archives) as an example, Cooperman showed that Jewish men serving in the American military during the war often got along with their non-Jewish comrades, but that such connections did not knock down the fences between Protestant, Catholic, and Jew. Marcus believed that all Jewish soldiers had a responsibility to maintain a high standard of behavior, but that even the best of behavior could not rid American men of their assumptions

⁵¹ Caption from page containing Runyon, “A Jew,” 11.

⁵² Martin Zielonka, “Sam Dreben, D.S.C.: The Fighting Jew 1878-1925,” *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2011): 79-84.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 83.

of Jewish cowardice or evasion.⁵⁴ Much like in the case of Dreben, Marcus explained that he believed he was accepted among his non-Jewish compatriots because his Jewishness was ambiguous enough that they saw him as “one of those Jews who are not really Jews.”⁵⁵ The “real” Jews in this case, as identified by Marcus’ contemporaries, were foreign-born Jews, Yiddish-speakers from Eastern Europe, Orthodox in religious practice, and more left-leaning politically. As Marcus was a Reform Jew, more Americanized and less seemingly foreign, he was more able to “pass” among other conscripted men. He believed, as did his contemporaries discussed in the previous chapter, that time spent in the American environment, around American men, would help foreign Jews to improve themselves and better reach the standard of American manhood, which would lessen the degree of antisemitic attacks against them.⁵⁶

As the persecution of Jews in Europe increased, Jews in America fought to maintain what little momentum of manliness and bravado they won through their militarism in the Great War, both in the American service and for the Jewish Legion. This positive progress was limited to individuals who served, and they were still seen as outliers. There is no evidence that the larger American perception of Jewish men reflected such change. Jewish men’s attempts to prove themselves and the manliness of the American Jew did not go entirely unrewarded. The Jewish War Veterans of the United States (JWV) formed before the turn of the century, but their work during and after the war, particularly their promoting the image of Jewish men of valor, helped lessen the view of Jewish men as evasive of duty. The JWV, addressing the rising antisemitism at home, claimed that the need for “an aggressive, militant organization like the Jewish War Veterans

⁵⁴ She explained that breaking down such boundaries was also not something that Marcus felt was necessarily a positive goal. Cooperman, “A Little Army Discipline Would Improve the Whole House of Israel,” 248-49.

⁵⁵ Quote cited from Cooperman, 250.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 252-54.

of the U.S.—whose existence refutes most of the falsehoods used—is becoming more evident in Jewish American life.” They saw it as their duty to “uphold the fair name of the Jew.”⁵⁷ The American Jewish Committee also served to weaken the myth of Jewish evasion with their report, as did the successful retracting the offensive statements in the *Manual of Instructions for Medical Advisory Boards*. In addition, the Jewish Welfare Board (which was established during the war as the Jewish civilian agency to aid soldiers during wartime and acted as Jewish representatives to the American War department) also worked to promote a positive image of Jews as patriotic Americans during the war.⁵⁸ Enough Jewish men served, and sufficient numbers of American leaders supported their claims of manly equality, that by the start of the Second World War Jewish *evasion* was not the common attack on Jewish manhood it had been previously.

Being Jewish became a little less of an impediment to success every year in the interwar period. By the mid-nineteen thirties, Jews were taking their place on the American scene more visibly and prominently than they ever had previously. Jews served as Supreme Court Justices, remained influential in arts, literature, music, theater, and many other spheres of public life without hiding their Jewishness as some had done in previous decades and generations.⁵⁹ Antisemitism, however, increased to unprecedented degrees in the United States. Between 1933 and 1941, over one hundred antisemitic groups were formed in the United States. This represented a tremendous

⁵⁷ Jewish War Veterans of the United States pamphlet, *Jews in the World War: A Study in Jewish Patriotism and Heroism* (New York: Jewish War Veterans of the United States, 1941), 23.

⁵⁸ For a thorough examination of the work of the Jewish Welfare Board during the Great War, see Jessica Cooperman’s “‘A Little Army Discipline Would Improve the Whole House of Israel:’ The Jewish Welfare Board, State Power and the Shaping of Jewish Identity in World War I America.”

⁵⁹ Though Louis Brandeis is the most well-known from this period, following quickly in his footsteps were Benjamin Cardozo (appointed in 1932) and Felix Frankfurter (appointed in 1939).

increase from Leonard Dinnerstein's estimate of the five that had existed before that time frame.⁶⁰ This movement was largely fringe, losing respectability from key antisemitic American figures like Henry Ford. Additional antisemitic leaders, like Father Charles Coughlin became more typical on the American landscape.

Jewish manhood faced several challenges during the Second World War, as the events of the war itself, the Holocaust, and the ensuing crisis of Jewish displaced persons in Europe had tremendous impacts on Jewish life across the globe. These events transformed the image of Jews in Europe, put an international spotlight on the Jews residing in Eretz Israel, and altered the self-image of Jews (and the functions of Jewish life) throughout the Diaspora, and particularly in the United States. During the Second World War, the American military employed strong concepts of gender in recruiting materials which reveal some notions about masculinity in the United States. Though Jewish men actively participated in the military, they remained excluded from some militaristic ideas of masculinity and attempted to alter that exclusion and their perceived weakness.

American Men and the Second World War

Uncle Sam Wants YOU!

Recruiters for the American armed forces took on an enormous task as American entry into the Second World War seemed progressively more likely. From the moment America entered the war, the Roosevelt administration saw international American leadership as the end-goal and began building on America's image of strength and stability. If America was to enter this

⁶⁰ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 112.

international conflict, it would commit to serving as peacekeeper after the war had concluded, ensuring American dominance in the postwar world. In 1942, the United States government created the Office of War Information (OWI) to persuade the American people not only to join the rank and file of the armed forces, but to contribute to the war effort in every imaginable way by creating a supporting home front. The OWI had a difficult task as citizens still felt the effects of the First World War and were not eager to fight in another war.

The interwar years saw massive challenges to traditional gender roles in the United States. Women achieved new levels of mobility, won access to the vote, and participated in more areas of American life than they had previously. Previously accepted standards of manhood were challenged as the Depression emasculated male providers.⁶¹ The confusion of these years created a tension around transforming gender roles, and a perceived threat to preexisting notions of manhood. As a result, when America entered and fought in the Second World War, traditional images of manliness (the role of the protector, obligation to family, community, and country) were already being stressed. Once again, the war provided an opportunity for boys to become men, and for men to reclaim and prove their manhood in a time of uncertainty and confusion.⁶²

During the war, the OWI ran recruiting campaigns that stressed manliness through voluntarily enlisting in service to the country. The stated goal of their campaign was not to create an impossible ideal, but to represent what Americans already were at their best.⁶³ The popular

⁶¹ Michael S. Kimmel, "'Born to Run': Nineteenth-Century Fantasies of Masculine Retreat and Recreation (or The Historical Rust on Iron John)," in *The Politics of Manhood: Profeminist Men Respond to the Mythopoetic Men's Movement (and the Mythopoetic Leaders Answer)*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1995), 139.

⁶² Much as they had done during the First World War, in response to the effects of an overly-comfortable life on the men of America (see previous section).

⁶³ Since its inception, the Office of War Information adopted a "strategy of truth," based on the presumption that informed citizens could be trusted to make up their minds, and that disseminating "truth" would promote trust in the American government. This was a double-

image of the enlisted man was a maverick who *chose* to commit to the war effort and transformed from an everyday man (or a weak, incomplete man) to a heroic soldier. American propaganda contrasted this image with the people of enemy nations who lacked the freedom to make their own choice to heroically take up the charge, but whose governments forced them to do so instead. The freedom inherent in American identity enabled Americans to be their own men. Hollywood film productions provided one of the most effective methods of spreading this message. The OWI monitored, often censored, these productions and successfully used them to spread their message. The office even published a *Manual for the Motion-Picture Industry* as a guide for American movie-makers to properly represent America and the war.⁶⁴

During the depression, popular films depicted evil forces corrupting and degrading American society, dragging it down into debauchery and chaos. Hollywood image-makers and the OWI (who worked together a great deal throughout the Second World War) saw in the war a chance to rebuild American manhood from the disillusion and depression of the interwar period. The war was an opportunity to reconstruct manhood and character by providing a unifying “cause worth dying for.” Wartime films featured American heroes who represented the melting pot in their ethnic diversity (native-born Americans, new immigrants, southerners, Jews) using popular

edged sword, however, as while the “truth” of American manhood and patriotism held aloft the “best” of American manhood, it also disdained those classified unfit for service as unmanly and pitiable. Similarly, conscientious objectors and those who attempted to avoid the draft were presented as worthy of the highest contempt and punishment. Susan A. Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 88.

⁶⁴ Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, “What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-1945,” *Journal of American History* 64, no. 1 (June 1977): 90-92.

and patriotic volunteerism to bring people together for a common cause.⁶⁵ Wartime recruiting imagery (targeting both men and women) was highly gendered. The posters recruiting men to fight for the Marine Corps, the United States Navy and the US Army depicted well-muscled men (often shirtless) storming beaches, destroying enemy submarines, and flying planes. The same visual tactics appeared in depictions of Uncle Sam: blue jacket and American flag top hat tossed aside, shirt unbuttoned, rolling his sleeves up sinewy arms for the fight ahead.⁶⁶

Though gender relations remained tense during the war, the armed forces still needed women to serve in support roles. Attempting to maintain gender division, the military restricted women's work to more traditionally female tasks.⁶⁷ Recruiting posters that targeted women showed well-put-together women in uniform, committed to serve in order to relieve men of the tasks which kept them from the fight. One such Marine Corps poster, for example, showed a woman in uniform standing beside a fighter plane with a clipboard. The caption read, "Be a Marine: Free a Marine to Fight." These posters showed women rigging parachutes, on WAVES duty (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service) in control towers, and at Coast Guard shore stations with SPARS (Coast Guard Women's Reserve).⁶⁸ One recruiting pamphlet read:

This is total war — a war in which every woman as well as every man must play a part. The men in the Navy and Coast Guard are in for one reason alone — to fight! They're in to fly the planes, man the ships, smash the Nazis and Japs. But to keep them fighting, there

⁶⁵ For a more in-depth analysis of WWII films and their recreation of manhood, see Chapter Four of *The Big Tomorrow* by Lary May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ Based on the poster by the United States Army Recruiting Service captioned, "Defend your country: Enlist in the United States Army."

⁶⁷ Women were not given any combat roles in America, unlike the British forces during World War II, who allowed the "Wrens" of the Royal Navy to load artillery, fly transport planes, and even participate in combat activity with anti-aircraft units shooting down enemy planes.

⁶⁸ Women served in the United States Army in the Women's Auxiliary Corps (WACS), the Naval Reserve as Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES), in an experimental Army Air Corps program (WASPS), and in the Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS).

are important service jobs that must be carried on at home — man-size, full-time jobs which you, the women of America, can fill — jobs in which you can serve your country in your country and release the men to fight at sea.⁶⁹

The campaign for women in the military showed women in picture-perfect uniform, hair and makeup well in place, never fighting or getting dirty.⁷⁰

Images of wartime women diverged from the pristine female ideal only in the images depicting women working wartime production jobs on the home front. These occasionally showed women with their sleeves rolled up as well, mimicking the men in the military posters, the most famous being the “We can do it” campaign featuring Rosie the Riveter. Military recruiting did not utilize such images, as propagandists working for the armed forces kept the genders quite separate in their tasks and recruiting techniques. Indeed, even women entering the wartime workforce presented a challenge American manhood. Men across the country (and fighting overseas) worried about job competition from women after the war. They also fretted about maintaining traditional family structure as women emerged from their homes and homemaking roles to fulfill an unprecedented number of duties in the public sphere.⁷¹ Though of great concern to American men overall, this may not have troubled Jewish men as much as it did American gentiles. Jewish life had long employed women in more trades, and Jews most likely (on the whole) felt less troubled by the thought of their “breadwinner” roles weakening due to female labor

⁶⁹ “How To Serve Your Country In The WAVES or SPARS,” Gjenvick-Gjønvik Archives, accessed September 16, 2017, <http://www.gjenvick.com/Military/NavyArchives/Brochures/WAVES/1943-01-09-WAVESorSPARS.html#axzz4swn10Fc8>

⁷⁰ This was still much more inclusive of women than the recruiting materials of the First World War, which showed pretty women and slogans like, “Gee, I wish I were a man—I’d join the Navy.”

⁷¹ Caroline Gatrell, *Embodying Women’s Work* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 107-8.

and inclusion.⁷² Some Jewish immigrants, as we have seen in previous chapters, accepted that Jewish women were often in breadwinning roles, working outside of the home, and taking part in the larger community. Though Jewish men felt more comfortable with a diversity of roles for both men and women in the public sphere, they still responded to the propaganda campaigns of the military, which reinforced an American masculinity based on willingness to fight for one's country.⁷³

Your Best Isn't Good Enough: Jewish Enlistment and the American Military

Just as in the First World War, Jews volunteered for the American armed forces in World War II, as criticisms from all tiers of American society targeted their abilities, strength, and willingness to enter the fight. This is not to say that Jewish men entered the war for the sole purpose of altering their masculine image in America, but their volunteerism highlighted Jewish manhood and bravery through military service and wartime martyrdom. Leading up to and during the Second World War, Jewish men entered the military with a two-fold motivation: patriotic duty

⁷² Though there remained fears among all groups of other damage to the social fabric of America, as women went out alone more, attended public dances, and spent more time in the world without men. There were also fears that boys raised in female-headed households during the war would become feminized, their male identity somehow undermined by the lack of a strong male figure in the home. In 1942, Philip Wylie coined the term "momism" as a critique of the influence of overly present maternal figures in the lives of American boys, making them less manly and tough than the enemies they faced in Nazi-occupied Europe. Walter F. Bell, *American Masculinities: A Historical Encyclopedia*, s.v. "World War II" (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2003), 507-09. Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1996).

⁷³ As Deborah Dash Moore explains in *GI Jews*, joining in the American military gave young American Jews the opportunity to transform themselves into Jewish warriors, but it also linked them to the mainstream notions of manhood in America, and to other American men who were serving or who had served. Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 9-10.

and duty to their Jewish brethren in Europe. The Great War drew Jewish Americans overseas to fight against the Ottoman Empire in the hopes of establishing Jewish territory in Palestine, but at the start of this second war, the Third Reich directly threatened the Jews of Europe, making the need to join even more urgent. Though the numbers range among sources, there is a consensus that Jewish participation was at least proportionate to the Jewish American population; many argue that the number of Jews enlisted in the military was over-representative of their population. Approximately 550,000 Jewish men and women served in the American Armed Forces during the Second World War, accounting for between 4-5% of the soldiers serving in the United States. According to the numbers of the total American and American Jewish population found in the Jewish Year book from 1940, Jews constituted 3.6 percent of the total American population, showing that Jewish participation was, in fact, higher than their proportion of the American population.⁷⁴ With a sense of patriotic duty in line with their neighbors of other backgrounds, Jewish men entered the war as American citizens, like members of any other ethnic, religious, or migrant group.

Despite Jews enlisting voluntarily, non-Jews still viewed Jewish men as too cowardly, weak, and selfish to sacrifice themselves for their country.⁷⁵ It is possible, given the small percentage (and visibility in the public sphere) of Jews compared to other ethnicities in the general

⁷⁴ Numbers as well as commentary on the actual numbers of enlisted men can be found in the records of the National Jewish Welfare Board in the American Jewish Historical Society archives (both in the collection of the Bureau of War Records as well as the Military Chaplaincy records). Number of Jewish American population are located in the American Jewish Committee Archive Online. http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1941_1942_9_Statistics.pdf For additional commentary on Jewish participation in WWII, see Deborah Dash Moore's *GI Jews*, Derek Penslar's *Jews in the Military*, Joseph W. Bendersky's *The Jewish Threat*, and Jack Wertheimer's *Imagining the American Jewish Community*.

⁷⁵ Evidence for this claim will be examined in more detail as examples are enumerated in the following pages.

population of United States, that non-Jews saw few Jews in the military and assumed low participation. Complaints voiced in the American military, government, and public echoed those of Americans and Europeans of the past (and particularly during the First World War) that Jewish men evaded military service and patriotic duty, though these accusations were less common (and less institutionalized) than in the previous war.⁷⁶ Even within the government, accusations of Jewish cowardice still cropped up, at times propagated by national leadership. A congressman speaking in front of the House Military Affairs Committee, for example, believed that few Jews would willingly fight and argued that those who tried to escape their service should not be allowed to go “scot free.”⁷⁷

In the years that elapsed since the First World War, the belief that Jews were unwilling or incapable of taking part in the fight was not merely perpetuated by antisemites, it also had its basis in contemporary behavior. There were Jews volunteering, certainly, but there were also others (the religious community primarily) who did not want to fight. As committed pacifists, they argued that religious men should not be punished for refusing to join up or answer the call of the

⁷⁶ For example, in the previously discussed government published *Manual of Instructions for Medical Advisory Boards published in 1918*, an offensive publication the likes of which was not repeated in the Second World War.

⁷⁷ This congressman was not alone in his stance, and it crops up in other places among military recruiters throughout the rest of the twentieth century. There was a move, in 1980, for example, to explicitly recruit Jewish men in Long Island, on the premise that their numbers in the enlisted services were shamefully low, due, in no small part, from a report by a Lieutenant Colonel Phillips to that effect. The report and solicitation of recruits specifically from the Jewish community brought recriminations from both the rabbis of the community and the Jewish War Veterans of the United States. Letters and newspaper clippings, American Jewish Congress, records; I-77; box 709; folder 26; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA. Bendersky, *The Jewish Threat*, 295-96.

draft. A good number of Jews believed that a softer form of masculinity, one which focused on the life of the mind and promoted peace, should indeed be the primary occupation of Jewish men.⁷⁸

Religious Jews throughout the diaspora fought the masculinization of Jewish men to assimilate with their gentile neighbors. Daniel Boyarin points to a fascinating illustration from Budapest in 1938, which shows the “wicked son” of the Passover Haggadah as both muscular and modern, defying tradition.⁷⁹ To those Jews who believed that such masculinization of Jewish culture worked to the detriment of the Jewish people, service in the armed forces should be avoided. American Jews debated whether voluntary exclusion should be allowed for religious Jewish men. This would not detract from their view of themselves as manly or as Jews, of course, if their view of manhood avoided such *goyim naches*, as Boyarin argues.⁸⁰ Though not necessarily intentional, this attitude among Jewish leaders helped to perpetuate the view of Jews as timid, even cowardly, by fighting for the rights of Jews to avoid military service on the grounds of religious belief.

In June of 1936, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) adopted a resolution at their 47th annual convention seeking the exemption of Jews from military service "in accordance with the highest interpretation of Judaism."⁸¹ They included in their resolution that exemption from military service had long been granted to members of the Quaker Society of Friends and similar religious organizations. This pronouncement met with a backlash from the Jewish

⁷⁸ Again, this fits into Daniel Boyarin’s description of Jews as contemptuous of *Goyim naches* as including any such physical behavior including violence, fighting, sporting, of other behaviors associated with the ideals of European manliness.

⁷⁹ In the Haggadah (the text recited every year at the Passover Seder), there are four questions represented by four sons (or children in more modern Haggadot): The wise, wicked, simple, and the one who does not know how to ask. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 77.

⁸⁰ Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 78.

⁸¹ Statement of the Central Conference, 1936, Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Yearbook* Vol XLVI (Cape May, NJ: Bloch Pub. Co.).

community, particularly from Jewish veterans of the First World War, who viewed this as a slap in the face to their service, not only service to their country, but also to the image of American Jewry and Jewish men. Julius Klausner Jr., the National Intelligence Officer for the Jewish War Veterans wrote, in response to the resolution that American Jews were “painfully shocked” by the pronouncement.⁸²

Although the CCAR amended their original pronouncement, assuring that they never intended the exemption for *all* Jews, only conscientious objectors, the situation was further complicated by the history of conscientious objectors in the previous war. During World War I, conscientious objectors stated their case for exemption without any sort of statement by Jewish leadership demanding exemption or drawing the disdain of the American public.⁸³ Why should it be necessary, detractors of the CCAR asked, for American Jewry to take such a stance now, given the equal opportunity for conscientious objectors in the previous war? In fact, there was another recommendation for a resolution (which, after much debate, was not passed at the convention) for the CCAR to adopt the stance that Jewish leadership should urge the “uniform continuance of non-violent resistance to evil as a basic principle in Jewish life.”⁸⁴ This was a particularly weighted statement, given the plight of European Jews at the time.

Shortly after the resolution (and a short article drawing attention to it in the *New York Times* titled “War duty exemption for all Jews urged”), the Jewish War Veterans adopted a resolution of

⁸² Letter, July 1, 1936, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America collection; I-32; box 1; folder 8; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁸³ Leon Schwarz, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America collection; I-32; box 1; folder 2; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁸⁴ Yearbook, page 122, #30725 (Central Conference of American Rabbis), American Jewish Historical Society, Center for Jewish History.

their own, firmly against this stance, staunchly reaffirming the “heroic record” of Jewish fighters.⁸⁵ “Categorically, we deny that fighting for one’s country is inconsistent with ‘the highest interpretation of Judaism;’ we deny that patriotism is to be confused with militarism; we deny the right of any Jew to exemption on religious grounds; we deny that patriotic veterans love peace any less than do selfstyled pacifists [*sic*]. JWV stands for sholem – with honor.”⁸⁶ “In one fell stroke,” wrote a National Intelligence Officer with the JWV, “do those rabbis ... give credence and support to the charge that the Jew is a pacifist and a cowardly avoider of the obligations of citizenship.” He added that in the biblical history of the Jews, the passage to “go forth and smite thine enemies” was a “command to walk among our fellow man with dignity and not as flinching cowards ... The modern Jew, the American Jew, must be prepared to fight ... just as did the Maccabees and the Jewish military heroes of Biblical, medieval, and modern history.”⁸⁷ While clearly arguing that Jewish men are not weak and that Jews have a history of heroism in battle, the recrimination, “flinching cowards,” is clearly a jab at those rabbis within the Central Conference who were behaving just as they are expected to by antisemites who claimed that Jews could not truly be patriots.

⁸⁵ The Jewish War Veterans is the oldest organized veterans’ group in the United States (established in 1896), and it is still active today. The group does not only combat antisemitism, but also advocates for equality in the military and good treatment of all veterans, and it supports a museum in Washington, DC, the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, which is a testament to the patriotic contributions of Jewish Americans.

⁸⁶ Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America collection undated, 1923-1993, 2003 (box 1, folder 8), included as an added text to a letter to the CCAR from Leon Schwarz, a former Major of Mobile Alabama, included in a packet sent to the CCAR from Julius Klausner, Jr of the JWV.

⁸⁷ Letter titled “Jews Want No Exemption,” Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America collection; I-32; box 1; folder 8; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

Leon Schwarz, a former Jewish major in Mobile, Alabama, went so far as to write that if the CCAR could secure military exemption for Jewish men, they should adopt one further resolution, to endorse Adolf Hitler, as he also believed that a Jew is never really a citizen, merely a Jewish person living in someone else's country.⁸⁸ One of the greatest fears he voiced to the CCAR was the reaction of those men from other faiths serving in the armed forces. These men might end up far away defending their country while Jews remained at home, enjoying peace and the fruits of war. These letters show a fear that the hard work that Jewish veterans had put into correcting an old image was being nullified, and that the American masses would once again see the Jew as a coward. They were clearly worried, not that Jewish men would refuse to fight if permitted to avoid service (they themselves fought, after all), but that the *image* of Jews as men would be damaged.

Regardless of growing American antisemitism, and of the option to refuse military service as a conscientious objector, the Second World War showed no decline in Jewish participation in the military. Just as in the First World War, enlisting was not always easy for Jews who wanted to fight. Several volunteers fought antisemitism in army recruiting offices just to gain access to service. This war did, however, show the Army beginning to take on Jewish officers in unprecedented numbers.⁸⁹ In the Second World War, roughly 550,000 Jews (both men and women) served the United States. The disproportionate number of Jewish men of fighting age (Deborah Dash Moore cites about fifty percent of men between ages eighteen and forty-four)

⁸⁸ An extreme comparison, to be sure, but it was one of the main accusations against the Jews of Germany (and other European nations during antisemitic conflicts, like France during the Dreyfus Affair) made by antisemites. Letter to the CCAR from Leon Schwarz, a former Major of Mobile, Alabama, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America collection; I-32; box 1; folder 8; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁸⁹ Derek Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 88.

meant that most American Jews had close ties to someone serving in the armed forces.⁹⁰ Many of these Jewish families lost loved ones. Jewish percentages of military combat dead and wounded were high enough to equal their proportion of the American population.⁹¹

Jewish historians like Solomon Grayzel have implied, if not asserted, that high levels of Jews enlisting in the Allied forces against Germany in the Second World War was a rare or spectacular occurrence.⁹² This is a common misconception, as Americans at the time viewed Jews as being personally invested in the outcome of the war in Europe. A good number of those joining the United States armed forces, however, served in the Navy, fighting the war in the Pacific against the Japanese. These soldiers had little to no contact with (or impact on) the war against Nazi fascism in Europe. This did not mean, however, that the Navy was free of antisemitism.

⁹⁰ Deborah Dash Moore, "When Jews were GIs: How World War Two Changed a Generation and Remade American Jewry," in *American Jewish Identity Politics*, ed. Deborah Dash Moore (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 29.

⁹¹ Given the lack of data collected by the armed forces on national origin on native-born Americans, it is very difficult to find comparative numbers for other ethnic groups for comparison, as they do not have the religious distinction necessary for affiliation on soldiers' dog tags. Though I have not found information on the percentages of the casualties of any other group, I have located some numbers of Polish-American military participation in the war. According to Miecislau Haiman, "Being only 4 percent of the total population of this country, they constituted about 8% percent of the U.S. Armed Forces," which would put them at about equal participation, even if we are unaware of their casualty numbers. It is worth noting, however, that the sources for Haiman's numbers were the result of Polish Catholic parish surveys about servicemen in their parishes, so may not be as accurate as the number of Jews, who had to register as such. What I was able to find in terms of casualties, was another cohesive group which the military tracked separately (as they did Jews through religion), the numbers of African American war dead. However, as they served in entirely separate units and were not organized or treated as where white ethnics, the comparison is hardly comparable, and so though it is interesting, not particularly helpful. Bendersky, *The Jewish Threat*, 297. Miecislau Haiman, "The Polish American Contribution to World War II," *Polish American Studies* 3, no. 1/2 (January-June 1946): 35.

⁹²Solomon Grayzel provides a brief table showing the disproportionate numbers of Jews officially enrolled in the American, British, Russian, Canadian, and South African armed forces during the Second World War. He provides no other such tables concerning other wars, and he does discuss many in *A History of the Jews*, 671.

In her examination of Jewish GIs in World War II, Deborah Dash Moore unearthed a popular doggerel that spread through the American armed forces, in the testimony of a Jewish naval officer, who had admonished one of his subordinates for passing it along.

First man to sink an enemy battleship—Colin Kelly.
First man to set foot on enemy territory—Robert O’Hara.
First woman to lose five sons—Mrs. Sullivan Etc.
*First son of a bitch to get four new tires—Nathan Goldstein.*⁹³

It is a common misconception about American Jews that serving in the Second World War was a purely unifying experience, which slashed away at antisemitic feeling in the military.⁹⁴ Certainly, some Jewish soldiers felt that their lives in the military were less likely to contain antisemitism than civilian life, given the fraternal bonds formed by serving with their comrades-in-arms.⁹⁵ However, the unifying argument has been posed primarily in the case of racial or ethnic minorities, such as African Americans, Hispanics, or ethnic whites. Jews presented a minority trifecta, as they were considered an ethnic, religious, and racial group. In the cases of racial minorities, it is, perhaps, more accurate to claim a unifying experience than for the Jewish American minority, which was still suffering from rising antisemitic feeling within and outside of the military.

Indeed, while some of the more common antisemitic myths were dispelled by service alongside Jewish Americans (such as the belief that all Jews have physical horns), pervasive

⁹³ Moore, *GI Jews*, 169.

⁹⁴ This was also an assumption of the First World War, after which the Jewish war record was used by Jews in America and elsewhere to show their loyalty and patriotism. From his pulpit after the first war, the Americanist rabbi David Philipson claimed that “Modern anti-Semitism found its fullest refutation in the world war when the Jews of every land proved, if such proof were necessary, their devotion to their fatherlands, their intense patriotism and their high minded loyalty. [sic]” Address: Jew-Baiting, Box 4, Folder 10. MS-35. David Philipson Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁹⁵ Bendersky, *The Jewish Threat*, 297.

Jewish stereotypes about masculinity and fear of confrontation persisted.⁹⁶ The stereotype that Jewish men are bookish and feminine often rears its head in the very same oral testimonies of those who make clear statements against racism and for ethnic equality in the United States. So well-established were these views on Jewish behavior that those perpetuating them did not even think them intolerant. World War Two veteran Ben Ewing, speaking about his own battle with prejudice in the military, explained that he had gotten teased for being a racist redneck, by the very same soldiers who, while “kidding” him for being racist, made terrible statements about Jews. While he prided himself by the time of his interview on having overcome his own prejudice, he still used typically disparaging language to describe the Jewish men being picked on by other soldiers. He explained that the Jew most ridiculed in his platoon “was a typical non-athletic scholarly type sheltered lad” and that he “wasn’t physically able.”⁹⁷ Despite his loathing of prejudice, this was clearly standard of “typical” Jewish men in Ewing’s view.

By 1942, in the midst of the war, American discussion of Jewish soldiers and their mettle was far from over, and the language used in commentary, op-ed pieces, and public defenses of Jewish heroism continued to be gendered. The National Jewish Welfare Board published a hefty pamphlet, *In the Nation’s Service*, which collected articles, obituaries, and statements by public officials celebrating brave Jewish Americans fighting in the war. The articles addressed and refuted disparaging statements about Jewish cowardice. Damon Runyon argued, in an included article, that the belief that Jews were different or inferior had been clearly disproved, “for the

⁹⁶ The myth of Jewish horns is mentioned in countless veteran testimonies as widely believed, by both Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers. This author has experienced it herself on multiple occasions as well. It is cited as a recurring theme as well in Thomas Bruscino’s *A Nation Forged in War: How World War II Taught Americans to Get Along* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 80.

⁹⁷ Ben Ewing, Interview, Oral History Collection, Holocaust Memorial Center Archives. Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

American sons of Israel are writing their names in imperishable letters of fire across the skies of glory along with the Americans of every other religious faith and racial origin. The Jewish boys in this war are no more heroic than anybody else, but surely they are not any less.”⁹⁸ Indeed, *In the Nation’s Service* painted a picture of a numerical overrepresentation of Jewish Americans proudly joining the fight, and the antisemitism of the past melting away. However, the very fact that the National Jewish Welfare Board published the piece one year into the war demonstrated their belief in the necessity of disproving criticisms of Jewish cowardice. This urgent publication is highly reminiscent of the American Jewish Committee’s “First Report of the Office of War Records” published immediately at the close of the First World War, before all information could even be gathered.

The publications of Jewish fraternities reacted similarly (as organizations particularly affected by the sudden absence of young Jewish men), they constantly engaged in a one-way argument with invisible accusations of Jewish evasion. The Jewish fraternity, Pi Tau Pi, for example, continued publishing their periodical, the *Pitaupian*, throughout the war. The pages of the wartime publication are scattered with commentary on Jewish bravery and heroism on the front, letters from soldiers, and assurances back to Jewish servicemen receiving the *Pitaupian* that every Pi Tau Pi brother is constantly working to be “an alert true American citizen at home.”⁹⁹

Some articles or letters in the *Pitaupian* delicately finesse the issue of Jewish delicacy or lack of enthusiasm for the war. Every May during the war, pages entirely devoted to the fraternity’s Mother’s Day celebrations appeared, with statements for, by, and about the mothers of

⁹⁸ AJA-Archive notes and images\MS-780_ American Jewish Committee\Box B8, Folder 16, “In the Nation’s Service.” Article originally published by King Feature’s Syndicate, 1942, in his segment, Damon Runyon’s *The Brighter Side*.

⁹⁹ *Pitaupian*, October 1942, page 5, Box 2. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

fraternity brothers and servicemen. Jewish mothers wrote in, assuring Jewish boys that to show sentiment during times of war does not make them “sissies.” One mother wrote that “the greatest men, the men who best serve mankind are men of sentiment.” She continued that although those men fighting in the war should be praised, “other, less spectacular deeds deserve praise too ... let each Jew be a man of absolute integrity.”¹⁰⁰ These clues to fraternity brothers’ relationships with their Jewish mothers ran contrary to larger American wartime fears that American men would become feminized through momism. They demonstrate that Jewish boys, at least those who put such letters from their mothers in the pages of the *Pitaupian*, remained unafraid that their male identity was being undermined by the influence of a loving and concerned mothering figure.¹⁰¹

Contrary reactions also line the pages, as the fraternity urged men to action. Rabbi and National Chaplain of Pi Tau Pi, Dr. Phillip David Bookstaber, berated complacent Jews for not being involved in the fight, for assuming that they continue “business as usual” during the war. “Any Jewish group today that desists from cooperating with any part of the world struggle commits itself to serious and deserved criticism.”¹⁰² Those who vocalized accusations of antisemitism within the military were (even in publications cheering the heroism of Jewish soldiers) met with recriminations about oversensitivity, understandable though it may be, given the situation of world Jewry.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ “Mother’s Day Message” by Mrs. Victor Frank, *Pitaupian*, April 1943, page 8, Box 2. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁰¹ See note 64 on Philip Wylie, momism, and emasculation.

¹⁰² “Business as Usual” by Dr. Phillip David Bookstaber, *Pitaupian*, October 1942, page 3, Box 2. MS-497. Pi Tau Pi Fraternity Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁰³ Even the Army and Navy Public Relations Committee, National Jewish Welfare Board uses familiar language about Jewish boys, many of whom “enter upon their new associations in the armed forces timidly, some even fearfully.” Complaints of antisemitism in the ranks were often, though not always, the result of “oversensitivity” on the part of Jewish boys, as “it can be said unequivocally that the position of the Jew in the army is better than that of the Jew in civilian life.” In “Jews in the Armed Forces,” by the Army and Navy Public Relations Committee,

Among those who did fight, Jewish soldiers appeared in every theater of the war, mostly serving alongside their fellow Americans with no complaints about antisemitism within the ranks. Jewish soldiers often felt that the degree of antisemitism in the military mirrored that of American society at large, meaning a smattering of comments and minor discriminations, but nothing more threatening. Others, however, came back determined to prove themselves as men, having heard soldiers, even high-ranking ones, jeering about Jewish cowardice and determination not to fight.¹⁰⁴ This may have contributed to what one journalist referred to as a “whispering campaign” to promote the idea that Jews were evading service, despite their numerically high participation in the war outstripping their population in the country.¹⁰⁵ Rumors of draft dodging were common and are evident in the wartime correspondence of the National Jewish Welfare Board’s Bureau of War Records, which show complaints by local Jews from all over the country that Jews evaded the draft with the help of the Jewish community. In one letter to Samuel Leff, a field secretary for the Jewish Welfare Board, a colleague informed him of a Polish demonstration in New York in front of the Selective Service Board. This particular accusation involved a Jewish doctor giving Jewish boys “some kind of injection affecting their hearts, for draft evasion purposes.”¹⁰⁶ These

National Jewish Welfare Board. National Jewish Welfare Board Bureau of War Records, undated, 1940-1969 (bulk 1943-1946), Box 90, Folder 9, page 21-22.

¹⁰⁴ This seems to be a particularly sensitive issue among soldiers who participated in the liberation of Nazi concentration and death camps, an experience which will be discussed at length in the following pages. Bendersky, *The Jewish Threat*, 298.

¹⁰⁵ “In the Nation’s Service.” Article originally published by the *Atlanta Constitution*, “One Word More with Ralph McGill” (1942, July 13), Box 8, Folder 16, MS-780. American Jewish Committee Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁰⁶ In a back and forth correspondence between Samuel Leff and Milton Weill, begun April 8, 1942; National Jewish Welfare Board, Bureau of War Records, 1940-1969; I-52; Box 10; Folder 1; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

complaints spurred studies by local Jewish community leadership, collecting and compiling all available data on Jewish boys in the service.¹⁰⁷

Although some Jewish soldiers found it difficult to dispel stereotypes about themselves, others changed their comrades' views by engaging in the most masculine of activities, like fighting other soldiers in their platoons. Corporal Morris Eisenstein, after a supply sergeant harassed him for being Jewish, attacked the sergeant and "kicked the daylights out of him." "After that," Eisenstein explains, "all of a sudden, everybody was my buddy."¹⁰⁸ Such brawls and conflicts brought on by prejudice and resentment were common in the American military during World War II.¹⁰⁹ Fighting between Jews and antisemitic soldiers even broke out on the European front. Reaching his limit of antisemitic slander, Paul Steinfeld fought a fellow soldier in a foxhole, yelling for him to "go over and join Hitler's Army."¹¹⁰ The lack of understanding that the offending soldier registered was not unusual among non-Jewish soldiers. Throughout correspondence from the front, Lee Kennett explains, one group which remained consistently

¹⁰⁷ The earliest example of these studies was in Trenton, New Jersey, conducted by Dr. Louis Dublin in response to accusations of draft evasion by the non-Jewish community. This was a great effort, including records from draft boards, but also a city-wide house-to-house canvass, conducted largely by the War Records Committee of the Jewish Federation of Trenton. Letter to Mrs. Jane Wise, Chairman, War Records Committee of the Jewish Federation of Trenton, National Jewish Welfare Board, Bureau of War Records, 1940-1969; I-52; Box 10; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁰⁸ Morris Eisenstein. Interview [30699]. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at <http://vhaonline.usc.edu/> on 11/14/2013.

¹⁰⁹ Such petty harassment of the seemingly or assumed "weak" was abhorred by many soldiers, Jewish and gentile alike, and was known within the military as "chickenshit," bothersome behavior that had nothing to do with winning the war, or succeeding in battles. Fighting against "chickenshit" was a means of building respect and camaraderie among the troops. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 79-82.

¹¹⁰ Moore, *GI Jews*, 159.

politically and morally aware and committed to the opposition of fascism and Nazism were the Jewish soldiers.¹¹¹

One might assume that although antisemitism was present on the European front, on naval ships in the Pacific, and in training camps in the United States, once soldiers had entered the fight (especially those who were tasked with liberating Nazi concentration camps), they might have been more sympathetic to their Jewish comrades. This was not, however, always the case. Instances of antisemitic action were not as rare among camp liberators as one might expect, given their experiences. Emotions ran high after observing the horrors of Nazi brutality firsthand. Bearing witness to the terrors of the camps affected soldiers in varying ways. Some found themselves frightened by their own racial prejudice, which they reconsidered after their experiences on the front, and resolved to leave with a new respect for all men, regardless of race, religion, or background.¹¹² Their individual reactions aside, the experience of liberating the Nazi concentration and death camps changed those who participated. The wide range of actions taken by soldiers immediately following liberation attests to the complexity of the experience.

A small percentage of those American soldiers liberating the camps were Jewish, reflecting their overall percentages in the military. These Jewish soldiers faced an odd mirror when they liberated surviving Jews from the concentration camps in Nazi occupied Europe. Jewish American soldiers recognized that their connection to the Jewish victims was more than a common humanity; they were part of the same international religious and cultural community. They had a particularly

¹¹¹ Lee Kennett, *G.I. The American Soldier in World War II* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987), 89.

¹¹² Such as Ben Ewing, Interview, Oral History Collection, Holocaust Memorial Center Archives. Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus, Farmington Hills, Michigan. This is also the claim of several historians about the liberating experience, such as Thomas Bruscino in *A Nation Forged in War*.

complex reaction to the victims that greeted them in the camps, as their feeling of pity and disgust were tinged with recognition and commonality.¹¹³

It seems counterintuitive to imagine that the soldiers liberating the camps continued to be (or even became) antisemitic, considering their own experiences, both with Jewish soldiers and in light of Nazi atrocities. Although most soldiers did not engage in such activity, the psychological distress of liberating the German concentration camps prompted a number of antisemitic actions against Jews by American soldiers. Some of these soldiers targeted their fellow Jewish American comrades, and some even took action against Jewish camp survivors. In 1945, after liberating Buchenwald Concentration Camp, Private Howard Cwick, a Jewish soldier in the United States military, nearly killed a fellow US soldier for antisemitism. Cwick walked in on a Sergeant Cooley, tormenting a group of liberated Jews. He was force-feeding one man and shouting them all down with insults and slurs. “It horrified me” Cwick explained, “This was a man, a Jew, from a camp. And Cooley, the antisemite, was doing this to him.” Cwick entered, drew his gun, brought back the hammer, and threatened the Sergeant’s life. He warned Cooley, “If I ever see you treat another Jew like this again, I’ll kill you.” The Sergeant left in shock. Although Cwick did not shoot the man, he never knew, thinking back, what he would have done had Cooley fought back.¹¹⁴

The anecdote about Sergeant Cooley and Private Cwick is one particularly ugly manifestation of antisemitism during liberation, directed at the recently liberated. Similar surges of violence cropped up directed not only at the liberated victims of Nazi brutality, but at local townsfolk in occupied Europe and fellow soldiers of Jewish descent. In some cases, American

¹¹³ Moore, *GI Jews*, 235.

¹¹⁴ Howard Cwick, Interview [33870]. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at <http://vhaonline.usc.edu/> on 11/5/2013.

soldiers took out their aggression on local women, through forcible rape and abuse.¹¹⁵ Of course, this is only one form of response to the events they witnessed, but it is one deserving of more scholarly attention than has been paid.

Perhaps the most surprising antisemitic statements made after liberation were indeed those made against comrades-in-arms. Harry Zaslow, a Jewish soldier from Philadelphia, experienced instances of antisemitism directly following and even during his platoon's liberation of Dachau. The military often granted looting rights to American soldiers in German territory, officially and unofficially. When Zaslow's platoon approached the camp (not having a clue what they would find there), they were giddy to open the trains halted outside of the camp, sure that they would be full of Nazi loot. When they opened them, however, they were full of piled corpses. Upon opening the boxcars, a comrade told him, "Zaslow, if you're not careful, you're gonna be in that boxcar." Recalling this statement Zaslow explained, "He meant that because I was Jewish ... that I *should* have been in that boxcar." He explained that some of his fellow soldiers were so entrenched in antisemitism that even seeing the camps and all the suffering inside did not change their views.¹¹⁶

Tensions among liberators continued as soldiers became restless with their duties in helping the displaced persons and clearing out the camps. Shortly after the liberation, Harry Zaslow was performing watch duty at night in a prison tower. Carved into the wooden railing were the words, "Zaslow is a dirty Jew." Within days of arriving, and certainly during the process of liberation and rescue, at least one of his comrades expressed his own antisemitism at Dachau. Recalling this incident, Zaslow said, "Here I am standing in this tower isolated all by myself with

¹¹⁵ For a fascinating and thorough history of the abuse of French women by American liberating troops see Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

¹¹⁶ Harry Zaslow, Interview, Oral History Collection, Holocaust Memorial Center Archives. Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

my own thoughts. Here's what I felt ... this is a tragedy. I mean, we fought the Germans to liberate the country and the Jewish people who were in the camps, and the Germans were our enemies. And now, a few American soldiers are my enemies as well."¹¹⁷

Outbreaks of antisemitism within the military continued after they returned home. Some soldiers remained bitter at the Jewish people for what they themselves went through in the process of liberation. Upon his return to the States, Harold Baldwin, a non-Jewish Dachau liberator from Brooklyn, was shocked at such attitudes when speaking with fellow soldiers from his own platoon shortly after the end of the war. Catching up with an army buddy, Baldwin explained, "he said one thing about this war I don't like, he said, 'we should have killed all the bastards, the Jewish people.'"¹¹⁸

When asked about personal experiences with antisemitism in the American military, nearly all World War II veteran interviewees responded with first-hand knowledge and experience of antisemitic actions by individuals or institutions within the American armed forces.¹¹⁹ At the same time, several recall their experiences in the war as eye-opening to the importance of and need for tolerance of ethnic and religious diversity.¹²⁰ From this range of experiences, it is clear that service in the Second World War did, in fact, mark a pivotal time in the perception of ethnic and racial diversity among those who served. Liberating the camps did not unify all participating soldiers

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Harold Baldwin, Interview, Oral History Collection, Holocaust Memorial Center Archives. Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

¹¹⁹ Of all the Shoah Foundation oral testimonies, and those at the Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus that I have reviewed, none which are tagged with antisemitism (as a topic or a question) responded that they had no such experiences, Jewish or not.

¹²⁰ This is particularly true of those who served alongside black soldiers, as in the case of Ben Ewing, whose story was relayed above.

against hate and discrimination. For some, it even solidified negative perceptions of Jews as weak and helpless, and provided them opportunity to vent their anger on Jewish soldiers and survivors.

However, the majority of soldiers in the liberating units did not turn on their Jewish comrades, or on the inmates of the camps, but they did express their anger in other brutal ways. At several of the camps, American soldiers captured SS guards who had not fled before their arrival. Americans took some of the SS as prisoners, as protocol dictated; and some shot them on the spot. Upon arrival at Dachau, American soldiers captured a group of SS guards. When asked what happened to the prisoners, a liberator answered, "It's a black mark upon the United States Army, what we did. We shot them. I had a complete hatred for them. I shot them. I was part of that. In fact, I looked at 'em and I spit at 'em."¹²¹ Some non-Jewish soldiers even urged the killing and interrogation of captured SS by Jewish soldiers. One veteran recalled, "We had the Jewish boys do the interrogation ... Scared the daylights out of our prisoners. They had a Jewish fellow that was interrogating them, and the Jewish fellow had the upper hand. Oh, that guy had a lot of fun. He enjoyed it. We enjoyed it too."¹²²

Too Young to Fight: Big Boys at War and Little Boys at Home

Those too young to fight overseas weighed varying ideals of Jewish masculinity and militarism presented by the adult Jewish community. For Jewish youth, just as for Jewish adults, the events of WWII and the Holocaust affected them deeply and filled them with complicated

¹²¹ Harold Baldwin, Interview, Oral History Collection, Holocaust Memorial Center Archives. Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

¹²² Ernest James, Interview [34954]. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. Accessed online at <http://vhaonline.usc.edu/> on 11/05/2013.

emotions. This generation, however, came of age at a time when Jews fought for their very survival, and inevitably encountered (if they did not know personally) several American Jews in uniform.¹²³ Participation in Jewish youth organizations in the United States intensified during this period and several groups came together in the shadow of the conflict abroad. The National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) organized and held its first convention in 1939 and addressed the international state of the Jewish people. Though at its inception it primarily reached out to college-aged students, in the era immediately after the war, the target age dropped from college to high school.¹²⁴

The Jewish youths in NFTY were motivated and invested in the war effort, but discussions among adult religious leadership reflected more traditional Jewish ideals and defended Jews investing in scholarship and prayer over brute strength. As with these Jewish youth groups, adult mentorship came from both the secular and religious community and reflected the conflicting views of those groups with regards to Jewish enlistment. Addressing the full assembly at the first ever NFTY conference in 1939, Rabbi David Polish, in the last speech of the convention, addressed the temptation of Jewish boys to join the fight. He acknowledged those, both historical and contemporary, who “cried out in rage against the seemingly servile and craven resort to mere spiritual defense when fire and sword would have conveyed a more coherent message to the enemy.” But his sermon still supported the claim that the Jewish people, by their very nature, were not fighters, and that they could not and should not attempt to become so. He explained:

Each people possesses its own particular strength. It can successfully contend against adversity only with that strength. Resort to any other is like attempting to pass a counterfeit coin. Some people thrive on their military might, others on their fleets, others on their colonies. But our strength lies in the inner sanctuary, the Torah. Do not laugh it off!

¹²³ As mentioned earlier, if the estimated 50% of men between ages eighteen and forty-four were enlisted, most American Jews had close ties to someone serving in the armed forces.

¹²⁴ “Our History,” NFTY, accessed 11/2016, <https://nfty.org/about/history/>

Perhaps most comparable to this paradox of triumphant weakness is that weazened [*sic*], puny giant of India, Mahatma Gandhi. In his fasts, his penances, his prayers, lies his empire defying might. If one man by faith alone can withstand a world, what hidden powers yet await a whole people whose might lies hidden in its Torah.¹²⁵

Youth leadership at the same conference voiced their concern for Jews abroad, and their desire to become a stronger, more virile people. They saw Jewish torment abroad and weakness at home. The youth may not have “laughed off” the argument that their true strength lay in the Torah (as Rabbi Polish had said), but their pride was in those Jews residing in Palestine who were fighting actively. One youth leader claimed that Palestine was “the only country on the face of the earth in which the Jew does not run away, nor hide, nor meekly bend his back to receive another blow, nor stand hopeless, helpless, spat upon. There he fights back! There he defends his home, his hearth, his life!”¹²⁶

It is particularly interesting, at this gathering of young American Jews, that America is not considered a country in which no Jew stands helpless. Again, even the young Jews at this conference did not deny antisemitic notions of Jewish meekness; they accepted their basis in reality and argued for change. Throughout the war, in the speeches and op-ed pieces in NFTY publications, there is a mix of pride in Palestinian Jewishness and bitterness at the docility of Jewish life in the United States. One particularly frustrated young man railed against the inaction of American Jewish boys to take part in the manlier practices of American life: sports, fighting, and military endeavors. He argued that Jewish boys did not take part because they were merely “tolerated” in American society, and as such, if they made waves they would immediately be accused of communism or of un-Americanism, so they remain quiet out of fear of reprisal. Again,

¹²⁵ Conference proceedings, January 1939, Box 1, Folder 1. MS-266. National Federation of Temple Youth Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹²⁶ Conference proceedings, January 1939, Box 1, Folder 1. MS-266. National Federation of Temple Youth Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

the Yishuv is the example of manliness for American Jewish youth embittered by their own perceived weakness.¹²⁷

The Holocaust

Anger at the lack of Jewish acceptance in American manhood was heightened by the process of Nazi oppression of Jewish Europeans that began in 1933 and continued throughout the war. It aroused horror and sympathy for the oppressed and murdered, but (as can be seen in the student opinions above) the traumatic victimization of Jews also altered the international perception of the Jewish people and increased the desire for a revival of Jewish strength. Nazi cruelty dominated conversation in American Jewish life throughout the duration of Nazi power. At the close of the war in the European theater, the images of Jews changed, very suddenly, over the course of a three-week period. This dramatic transformation came in the form of photographs and accounts of Jewish survivors pouring out of Europe and dominating the American press after the liberation of Nazi camps by American GIs. A new and dominant image of Jews emerged: the camp survivor or living skeleton, adding the *victim* as a new archetype to the Jewish image. In the following section, I examine the effect of the liberation of Nazi concentration and death camps on the Jewish American self-image through the accounts of Jewish leadership, youth groups, and soldiers.

Jewish men who served in the American armed forces challenged ideas of Jewish softness, and Jews at home in America glorified their heroism. However, images of Jews emerging from

¹²⁷ *Bitter Herb* by Herby Groelinger, 1947. Box 1, Folder 3. MS-266. National Federation of Temple Youth Records. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Europe during and after the war threatened to overshadow what progress they had made. The Nazi assault on Jewish life, which began before the wholesale murder of European Jewry, continued throughout the war and had a significant impact on the ways Jews were viewed by others and by themselves. Discriminatory German policies stifled and dictated Jewish life in Germany, and then in Nazi occupied Europe, several of which focused on the destruction of group cohesion. In practice, these biased policies were highly gendered. To state that Jews seemed emasculated in the wake of Nazi persecution would not fully explain the historical underpinnings of the issue, or how directly this persecution attacked Jewish masculinity.

Gendered Persecution

A real and very intentional process of emasculation took place in Nazi Germany, one which affected European Jews directly and global Jewry indirectly. The early stages of persecution under the Third Reich discriminated against all Jews, certainly, but Jewish men were particularly targeted. And though Nazi policies had no direct influence on the lives of American Jewish men, the changes to the international perception of Jews which the Holocaust created affected American Jews during and after the war. The Nuremberg Laws, in their original form in September of 1935, laid out two discriminatory policies; the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour. The former stated that only those of German or related blood remained eligible to be Reich citizens; all 'alien' races became subjects without citizenship rights. The following month, a supplementary statement defined who the government identified as Jewish, and its release timed with the Reich Citizenship Law coming into practice. The latter, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, prohibited marriages and sexual

intercourse between Jews and Germans. It also forbade Jews from employing German women under the age of forty-five to work in their homes, or in homes which boarded even a single Jewish man.¹²⁸

The Nazi government, as Marion Kaplan explains, by subjugating and excommunicating Jews from the public sphere, forced the Jewish communities of Europe into a sort of *social death* before ever forcing them into concentration or death camps.¹²⁹ The Reich Citizenship Law attempted precisely that. By taking away their citizenship and civil rights, the government disenfranchised Jews politically, socially, and commercially, forcing them into a perpetual state of dishonor. Jews found themselves barred from access to German society which they had enjoyed since their emancipation in the late nineteenth century, and, in September of 1942, forced to endure a return of the medieval sumptuary laws requiring them to identify themselves with a Star of David. According to Joseph Goebbels, Germans in Berlin initially responded with horror at the treatment of Jews, so much so that many banded together and protested with their Jewish neighbors against the new laws, sharing their own rations with deprived Jews, and trying to protect them. “Suddenly,” Goebbels explained, “all the Jews in Berlin are nothing but quaint little babies,

¹²⁸ Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-45* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 47-50.

¹²⁹ In her 1998 book, *Between Dignity and Despair*, Kaplan examines the daily life of persecuted Jews in Nazi Germany and focuses on the lives and experiences of Jewish women to better understand the daily experiences of German Jews. She argues, very convincingly, that the destruction of Jews’ social lives was a prerequisite for the coming genocide. And that the destruction of social cohesion is best evaluated by examining the lives of women. In doing so, however, she lays the framework to examine Jewish men in the process of German persecution. The ways in which women suffer differently from men, which Kaplan analyzes so well, also highlight the very particular way that men suffered, for having been born Jewish and male, through policies that specifically targeted their manhood. Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

moving by their helplessness, or frail old women.”¹³⁰ In this statement, Goebbels lamented the affection that German citizens had for some of their Jewish neighbors, but though frustrated, he also highlighted the lack of agency Jews felt, and the infantilizing (or emasculating) nature of their new position.

The second of these laws did not merely strip away rights, but declared an offence punishable by law. In response to violations of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, the Nazi government dealt with Jewish men more harshly than women (at least in the beginning, when women were not supposed to be subject to prosecution for the violation of racial purity laws at all). The Nazi government assumed that men comprised the responsible parties in sexual relationships, and women remained merely objects of men’s desires.¹³¹ Hitler’s writing and Nazi propaganda often portrayed Jews as rapists of Christian women. However, the sexual nature of this act, Andrea Dworkin argues, did not make Jewish men more masculine, but more animal.¹³² Although eventually Nazis also prosecuted Jewish women for race-mixing, the initial punishment was specific to Jewish men, to eradicate their more primal, masculine desires.¹³³ As such, it was an attack on their masculinity and their ability to engage women with the freedom

¹³⁰ Translation of the *Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts*, British Broadcasting Cooperation, quoted in “The Covenant of the Gangsters,” by Ernst Kris, *Journal of Criminal Psychopathology* IV, no. 3 (1943): 450.

¹³¹ Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 80.

¹³² The idea that a Jewish man could become dehumanized and dangerous and needed to be fixed by physical removal of male organs is an interesting addition to the discussion of masculinity in antisemitic rhetoric, and one which was briefly discussed in the first chapter. It implies that the exclusion of Jews from Christian society could result not only in their emasculation and comparison to women, but in their exclusion from manhood all together. Dworkin, “Sexual Mythology,” 119.

¹³³ This view of male responsibility was a close reflection of Hitler’s personal views on the issue. He had, in the initial years of the law, intervened in individual cases to ensure that women would not receive sentences for a male crime. Christiane Kohl, *The Maiden and the Jew: The Story of a Fatal Friendship in Nazi Germany* (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Press, 1997), 144.

that was granted to German citizens. Even in those marriages which predated the Nuremberg Laws, intermarried couples with a Jewish woman and Aryan man were not as harshly condemned as those with a Jewish man and Aryan woman.

According to Maddy Carey's recent book, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust: Between Destruction and Construction*, the Nazi genocide against European Jewish men attacked their masculinity twice over: They emasculated Jews as victims and then feminized them as passive in their own destruction.¹³⁴ The first expands on Kaplan's work concerning Jewish women, the latter will be discussed in more detail in the following section on Jewish American reactions to the Holocaust. The Jewish position leading up to and during the Second World War, according to Carey, eliminated Jews' *ability* to be masculine in the ways that normative society dictated they must. A Jewish man would have previously been able to meet some European qualifications for manhood: he was able to work and provide for his family, protect his loved ones, and hold a position of respect in the community.¹³⁵ The Nazi assault on Jewish businesses and exclusion from professions left Jewish men unable to provide for their families and maintain their livelihoods. It affected the roles of women as well, as when a Jewish man's career was destroyed it often left their wives, mothers, and daughters to carry the financial burden and the task of maintaining family cohesion. The attack on Jewish professions and incomes also left Jewish men largely unable to protect their families and loved ones from harm, deportation, forced labor, and public assault/humiliation. Carey points out that those who could protect their loved ones from such assaults often did so by use of bribery, an option which was not available to those already stripped of their professions and ability to work.

¹³⁴ Maddy Carey, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust: Between Destruction and Construction* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 54.

¹³⁵ Carey, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust*, 58-70.

The last element, in Carey's estimation, concerned the social standing of a Jewish man within his community. Eliminating Jewish access to the public sphere (the social death about which Marion Kaplan wrote) inhibited their standing, a condition further exacerbated by the public humiliations that Jewish men were forced to endure.¹³⁶ This is the state in which the Jews of Germany and occupied territories found themselves in the years leading up to the mass killings and physical genocide; robbed of their social standing as men, denied the right to fraternize with the women of their choice, and minimizing their ability to provide for their loved ones.

The rounding up, sorting, and killing of Jews throughout the period was largely dictated by their age and gender. In keeping with fears of racial mixing and the dilution of German bloodlines, Nazis viewed Jewish women (as the bearers of Jewish children) as enemies in the Nazi war for long-term racial superiority, but they saw Jewish men as a threat in the immediate. They attacked Jewish men, therefore, in very different ways, the results of which were devastating for both Jewish men and women. The targeted attacks on Jewish men fit into Mary Anne Warren's definition of *gendercide* as a sex-neutral term (in this case applied to the Jewish male population) for the deliberate destruction of a group based on their particular sex.¹³⁷ Once the murders began, Nazi forces killed young and able Jewish men first, as the first stage of a genocide they would escalate to include women, children, the elderly, and the infirm.

The *Einsatzgruppen* (Nazi killing squads) initially selected Jewish men for early killing, maintaining the traditional taboo around killing women and children which would not be routinely

¹³⁶ Carey specifically references the cutting of Jewish men's beards, in communities in which the beard was itself a sign of social status within the Jewish community. These same men would be forced to doff their hats, bow, or salute as a sign of respect to German officers. Carey, *Jewish Masculinity in the Holocaust*, 63, 67-68. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 17-18.

¹³⁷ Mary Anne Warren, *Gendercide: The Implications of Sex Selection* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allenheld, 1985), 22.

broken until 1941.¹³⁸ Daniel Goldhagen speculated that the early orders to begin the mass killings with only male victims was a means of acclimating the shooters to murder, without the trauma of killing women and children, which would violate their sense of chivalry.¹³⁹ Whether this was the intention of those giving the killing orders, it is clear based on first-hand accounts by the killers themselves that the male victims were less traumatic to kill, as they were more of a perceived threat to the nation, and therefore more justifiable. In the initial massacres, the victims were limited to young men and teenage boys. By the time the mass killings began, of course, the process of emasculating Jewish men and stripping them of their dignity was well underway.

American Jewish Reactions

Just as European immigrants brought with them perceptions about Jewishness and Jewish manhood when they first came to the United States, and again during the mass migration period, so again did the situation of European Jews affect Jews in the United States and on the world stage. Jews of Europe had been emasculated by Nazi persecution, which allowed for the more damaging element of their emasculation in the eyes of the international community: their perceived passivity that aided their own destruction. American Jews acknowledged this process, even as it was occurring, and it affected their self-image as Jews.

American Jewish reactions to Nazi persecution of their European brethren were not monolithic. Though Jewish leaders in the United States were sympathetic to the plight of European

¹³⁸ Christopher Browning, *Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 260-261.

¹³⁹ Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 149-50.

Jews and called for assistance and philanthropy, even some of the most concerned Jewish leaders supported President Roosevelt's non-interventionist stance.¹⁴⁰ Early in Hitler's rule, Jewish leadership (both in and outside of Germany) worried that Jewish intervention from abroad would solidify in the minds of the German people that Jews were themselves a foreign element, and make the situation for German Jews even worse.¹⁴¹

American Jewry long held themselves apart from other Jews of the diaspora, having accessed the most equality and opportunity for acculturation of any diaspora community (to their minds).¹⁴² Some still worried, however, that if Jews were successfully suppressed in Germany there could be a suggestive influence on the public opinion of Jews in the United States which could adversely affect their position.¹⁴³ New York City served as the hub for Jewish American discussion and action in reaction to the events abroad, comprising hundreds of Jewish organizations with various goals, strategies, affiliations, and viewpoints.¹⁴⁴ Many Jewish religious groups mobilized to send aid in the years leading up to the Holocaust, some Orthodox rabbis even driving around wealthy Jewish neighborhoods on the Sabbath to solicit funds to aid Jews in

¹⁴⁰ Shlomo Shafir explains this negotiation of tactics in "American Jewish Leaders and the Emerging Nazi Threat (1928-January 1933)," in *America, American Jews, and the Holocaust: American Jewish History*, ed. Jeffrey Gurock (New York: Routledge, 1998), 159.

Rabbi Stephen Wise was very supportive of non-intervention as late as 1939, when he delivered an address to a mass rally at Madison Square Garden in December of 1939. Stephen S. Wise Collection, MS-49, Box 5, Folder 8. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁴¹ American League for a Free Palestine Records; I-278; box 2; folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁴² This is evident in countless statements by rabbis, community leaders, and Jewish historians too numerous to list. Some argued the opposite, however, that because Jews in America accessed American life so fully and assimilated so thoroughly, they would cease to be Jews at all. This was perhaps most famously argued by Alan Dershowitz in his 2000 book on the subject, *The Vanishing American Jew: In Search of Jewish Identity for the Next Century*.

¹⁴³ Shafir, "American Jewish Leaders," 159.

¹⁴⁴ Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Jews in Gotham: New York Jews in a Changing City, 1920-2010* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 104.

Europe.¹⁴⁵ Many organized to lobby the American government to take action, including the Rabbis' March on Washington on October 6, 1943 in which over four hundred Orthodox rabbis marched on the United States capitol.¹⁴⁶

Many other Zionist and Jewish communal organizations also mobilized for aid, some of them directly involved with Jewish communities in Europe, such as the Joint Distribution Committee, American Jewish Committee, various *landsmanschaftn* (mutual benefit societies built around the town of origin for community organizing within an regional group of Jewish immigrants), and several Jewish labor organizations.¹⁴⁷ Determination to help, however, did not negate the influence that the despicable image of Jews emerging from Germany presented. Even among those who mobilized support, some American Jewish leaders still derided those German Jews who were being oppressed. Blaming the victim might be too harsh an assertion, but it is accurate to say that some leaders criticized and lamented the passivity of European Jews in the face of their own destruction, regardless of their efforts to send aid. Though not a universal attitude, this judgement on the part of some Jewish leadership does show the influence that the treatment of German Jewry had on American Jewish men's sense of masculinity and strength.

Before the scope of oppression and murder of the Jews in Nazi Germany became clear to Jewish leadership in the United States, Rabbi Stephen Wise, President of the World Jewish Congress, used the passivity of the Jews of Germany and their failure to protect themselves as a

¹⁴⁵ Gurock, *Jews in Gotham*, 109-10.

¹⁴⁶ Mordecai Paldiel, *Saving One's Own: Jewish Rescuers During the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 424-25.

¹⁴⁷ For reference on the construction of Jewish immigrant communities in New York City, see *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People* by Deborah Dash Moore, Jeffrey S. Gurock, Annie Polland, Howard B. Rock, Daniel Soyer (New York: New York University Press, 2017), chapter 4 ("Forging Community").

negative example for American Jews.¹⁴⁸ He sympathized with the declining situation of the Jews in Nazi Germany, and called repeatedly for support, migration assistance, boycotts, and several measures to help and protect European Jewry as the Nazi threat loomed ever larger. However, he drew a clear distinction between the type of Jews that remained in Europe and the distinct American Jews that he was leading and helping to mold.¹⁴⁹

In 1938, still unaware of the extent of the atrocities in Europe, Wise criticized the impulse on the part of some American Jews to adopt a strategy of identifying themselves as Americans who *happened* to be Jewish but were Americans foremost. This emphasized their nationalism and patriotism and minimized their outsider status. Wise distinguished between proud American Jews like himself and the “tragic cowardice” of the Jews of Germany who had defended themselves against antisemitic accusations by claiming, “We are not Jews; we are German citizens of the Jewish faith.”¹⁵⁰ He proclaimed his own identity as an American Jew (*not* an American who happened to be a Jew). Though some American Jews expressed outrage at his proclamation and critique, Wise considered it “one of the chiefest distinctions of my life” to have earned the resentment and enmity of fellow Jews who disliked him for the fact that he consistently “insisted

¹⁴⁸ Address to the American Jewish Congress delivered by Dr. Wise for the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the organization, June 12, 1938, Stephen S. Wise Collection, MS-49, Box 5, Folder 8. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁴⁹ Wise has been criticized for this disparaging attitude towards European Jews and his lack of inaction to push the American government to intervene, particularly by historian Saul Friedman and Elie Wiesel. This accusation, however, is not limited to Wise, but has been levied against much of the American Jewish community. Saul Friedman notes that Wise knew about the Final Solution for months before taking any public action. Melvin I. Urofsky, *A Voice That Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen S. Wise* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982), 319-20.

¹⁵⁰ I believe here that Wise is referring here to the *Centralverein* (CV), the liberal political organization of “German citizens of the Jewish faith,” to counter antisemitic propaganda. Address to the American Jewish Congress delivered by Dr. Wise for the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the organization, June 12, 1938, Stephen S. Wise Collection, MS-49, Box 5, Folder 8. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

upon the end of a policy of evasion and timidity on the part of the Jews.”¹⁵¹ “Let us have an end,” he said, “of the cowardice of Jews who speak of themselves as Americans who are Jews.”¹⁵²

Naturally, Wise condemned the Nazi explanation for their defeat of Jews, that they were simply *minderwertig* (inferior), but he submitted that the “pitiably timorous” Jews of Germany allowed themselves to be “broken and oppressed.” In this, he recognized their emasculation and passivity as their undoing. “It was unwise and fatal for Jews to leave unanswered” the charges leveled against them by Hitler and his party.¹⁵³ To the question of how Hitler’s persecution of Jews should be met, Wise answered in the most chivalrous language, “We who are Jews are resolved to meet it as men, to dare do all that doth become men, to defend ourselves in every honorable, peaceable and just way. Better that Jews nobly perish than ignobly survive.”¹⁵⁴

Naturally, Wise represented only one attitude of Jewish American leadership, but it is one which reflected the American Jewish sense of distinctiveness in the world of diaspora Jewry. It is also not one which could be lost among the varied reactions of America’s Jews, as Rabbi Wise was such a dominating figure of the time in American Jewish life. Indeed, when the World Jewish Congress in Geneva sent reports of the German plan for the Final Solution to the United States, representative Dr. Gerhart Riegner requested that they be sent to the American and Allied

¹⁵¹ Correspondence, June 16, 1939, Stephen S. Wise Collection, MS-49, Box 5, Folder 8. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁵² Rabbi Wise was lauded for his strength and courage, at times in the manliest imaginable language. In an article praising him published in a Boston newspaper in 1932, he was referred to as “one of the most courageous men of our times,” one who “appeals to men as a ‘two-fisted, red-blooded fighter who asks for no quarter and gives none in his battle for his ideals.’” Excerpted text from a Boston paper, November 30, 1932, Stephen S. Wise Collection, MS-49, Box 5, Folder 8. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁵³ Speech in March and radio address in September of 1935, Stephen S. Wise Collection, MS-49, Box 5, Folder 8. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

¹⁵⁴ November 1943, Stephen S. Wise Collection, MS-49, Box 5, Folder 8. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

governments, and to Rabbi Stephen Wise in New York City.¹⁵⁵ Once Jewish leaders were aware of and speaking out about the atrocities in Germany, Rabbi Wise called together a group of Jewish organizations united to form the Joint Emergency Committee on European Jewish Affairs to organize a Jewish relief response.¹⁵⁶ The fiercest opponents to Rabbi Wise and the Emergency Committee's tempered actions were not, primarily, American Jews, but the Revisionist Jews from Palestine working in the United States to rally a more aggressive response (and to whom the committee had refused entry to participate).¹⁵⁷

The Noble Perished and Ignoble Survivors

After Wise's press conference to announce that Nazi Germany was implementing a policy to annihilate the Jews of Europe on November 24, 1942, the American public was aware of the Final Solution and the goal to exterminate the Jews of Europe.¹⁵⁸ Americans knew the goal was present but had no way of truly knowing the extent to which it had been carried out, though even the earliest reports leading to this announcement did estimate that two million Jews had already

¹⁵⁵ David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: New Press, 2007), 42-44.

¹⁵⁶ The seven groups included were the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Jewish Labor Committee, B'nai B'rith, World Jewish Congress, Synagogue Council of America, and Agudath Israel of America. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 67-69.

¹⁵⁷ These opponents, chief among them Peter Bergson and the groups that he and his fellows organized (including the American Friends of a Jewish Palestine; the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews; the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe; and the American League for a Free Palestine), will be discussed in greater detail in the last section of this chapter, "Uncle Sam and the Sruлик." Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 328.

¹⁵⁸ For an explanation of how and when Rabbi Wise became aware of the details of the mass killing through the American State Department, see Urofsky, *A Voice That Spoke for Justice*, 319-22. Robert A. Michael, *The Holocaust: A Chronology and Documentary* (Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson Publishing, 1998), 177.

been murdered. Sporadic reports emerged from Europe of unimaginable horrors, sporadic occurrences of defiance, and death immeasurable.¹⁵⁹ Jewish American reactions to events in Europe were as diverse as Jewish communities. Within New York City alone, hundreds of Jewish groups (religious, political, social, etc.) organized and reacted, reaching out to government officials in Washington, holding rallies and marches in New York City, publishing papers for Jewish audiences, and disseminating information about Jewish events abroad.¹⁶⁰

As allied troops liberated concentration and death camps, the picture of European Jewry abroad was quickly dominated by the unimaginable vastness of the destruction the Nazis delivered to the Jewish people, and by the visage of the skeletal camp survivor.¹⁶¹ The helplessness (real or perceived) of the Jews of Europe supported some of the most pervasive antisemitic assumptions about Jewish weakness.¹⁶² That the Jewish dead were victims of atrocity was not denied, but the view that they went without fight, or that they had no fight in them to begin with, supported negative preconceptions about the Jewish people, and even those arguments made by American

¹⁵⁹ Though there was coverage of Nazi atrocities during the war, it was not until the liberation of camps began that photo stories and articles about the scale of atrocities actually became commonplace. For detailed analysis of the New York Times' coverage (and lack thereof) of Nazi atrocities during the war, see Laurel Leff's *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹⁶⁰ For an examination of the diversity of Jewish New York's reaction to the war, Holocaust, and attempts to create a Jewish state, see the third chapter of Gurock, *Jews in Gotham*, 104-31.

¹⁶¹ It is worth noting that as American troops were liberating the Western front, it was Soviet troops first encountering the death camps, while American troops encountered concentration camps. Eventually, of course, American troops (and the Jewish Chaplains) made it across to a wider range of Nazi camps to deal with displaced Jewish survivors.

¹⁶² This was true not only for antisemites, but among Palestinian Jews and American Jewish communities as well. In his 1963 book, *As Sheep to the Slaughter? The Myth of Jewish Cowardice*, K. Shabbetai recounted the Jews who themselves concluded that the slaughter of European Jewry was due to the cowardice of diaspora Jews. This included sabra children, the Israeli Attorney General, American Jewish Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, Raoul Hiberger, and various others. K. Shabbetai, *As Sheep to the Slaughter? The Myth of Jewish Cowardice* (New York: World Federation of the Bergen-Belsen Survivors Association, 1963).

Jews that they, as American Jews (and embracing American ideals of virile tenacity) were cut of a different cloth.¹⁶³

The prime goal of winning the war guided the progress of Allied troops through Europe, liberating the camps was merely a byproduct of their presence, not a planned rescue mission. As such, liberating the camps did not constitute a turning point in the war, so much as an inevitable task of the war's end. However, the photographs and films of camp liberations are the images that haunt the mind when imagining and remembering the war. That soldiers arrived with both still and motion cameras and were allowed and encouraged to share them with the public, has made these scenes some of the most recognizable imagery of the Holocaust and possibly of the war.¹⁶⁴ The American armed forces not only encouraged, but sometimes even ordered soldiers to take pictures of the most gruesome sights, particularly of suffering camp prisoners, to document and publicize Nazi cruelty.

This became the first genocide to be documented so well with photographic technology.¹⁶⁵ The standards for publicized images showing the realities of war (which had been set by previous wars) shattered because of the graphic nature of what troops found in German territories. Though the technology dated back to the American Civil War, it was less advanced, less portable, and less

¹⁶³ I am not discussing those that deny the Holocaust in this statement, although even most of them do not deny that Jews were the victim of atrocity of some kind.

¹⁶⁴ According to Barbie Zelizer, by 1944 the U.S. Signal Corps shot fifty percent of all of the still images published in U.S. newspapers, books, and journals. *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 22.

¹⁶⁵ Although there are some photographs of Armenians sent on death marches by the Ottoman Empire, most crimes against the Armenian people were not documented with photography. The photographs taken during this earliest of modern genocides were not systematically taken (as many were during the Holocaust, by the Nazis and even victims living in both Ghettos and Concentration Camps) but by bystanders who accidentally encountered the events or aftermath of the genocide by happenstance. Peter Balakian, "Photography, Visual Culture, and the Armenian Genocide" in *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 91-92.

accessible in previous conflicts. By 1942, the United States military attached a photographic team to nearly every fighting unit, along with the personal cameras soldiers brought with them.¹⁶⁶ In addition to the availability of equipment, the U.S. had a vested interest in showing the world the cruelties of totalitarianism, as tensions rose with the fear surrounding the spread of Soviet communism.

American soldiers and journalists in Europe released shocking and haunting photographs, and their effect was immeasurable. The American press did not, for the most part, release photographs of Nazi atrocities against Jews in Europe until the end of the war in 1945. At this time, General Eisenhower mandated that the visual records (still and moving pictures) of liberation of camps by soldiers be distributed, over a three-week period, in the spring of 1945, to persuade civilians that descriptions of the atrocities were accurate. Photographs flowed so quickly (and in such quantities) out of the camps and into British and American presses, that they struggled to determine how graphic and how many images they should print. The image became an extremely important aspect of liberation. These photographs served as evidence to convince a public who could not imagine what soldiers were seeing as they combed across the German-held territories. It is important to note that it was still a commonly-held belief that photographs contained an undeniable degree of accuracy and truth (a belief that is now completely absent), which was particularly important to the collective understanding of Nazi atrocities. Therefore, the collection of photos bearing witness to atrocities was a mark of verisimilitude.¹⁶⁷ Images of bodies stacked like corded wood, and piles of corpses so large they necessitated a bulldozer to move them into mass graves, were sent home with news of camp liberation. These masses of bodies brought home

¹⁶⁶ Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, 22.

¹⁶⁷ Barbie Zelizer, "Gender and Atrocity: Women in Holocaust Photographs," in Zelizer, *Visual Culture and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 249.

for American viewers the magnitude of the Nazi death machine. This was one of Eisenhower's goals in demanding a mass witnessing of the camps: trying to visualize the unimaginable scope of the killings.¹⁶⁸

Presses publishing the photographs of mass graves did not identify the masses as Jewish, as they were not, in fact, all Jews. Often the victim groups would be mentioned all together, with Jews included, but making no mention of the specific targeting of Jews among these persecuted groups. Though some scholars have criticized this omission as a willful blindness to the reality of the Jewish Holocaust, Peter Novick rightly points out that those liberated from camps were *not* in fact primarily Jews. There were Jews among the liberated, but the death camps devoted to the methodical murder of Jews were largely destroyed and abandoned in the German retreat from Allied forces. It was in the years *after* the war that Jewish Americans began to see all survivors as Jewish, in photos and otherwise.¹⁶⁹ Following the liberation and the knowledge of the scope of Jewish tragedy, all images of mass graves, displaced persons, and murder victims became associated with Jews, regardless of actual identity of those individuals photographed.¹⁷⁰

Through the photographs of Nazi atrocities, another figure emerged and dominated collective Holocaust memory; the image of the survivors, the "walking dead," as one liberator called them. The image of the skeletal survivors, sores on their bodies and eyes deep-set, was one of a people who had been stripped of their dignity. This is not to say that there was no sympathy

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2000, e-book edition), Chapter 4.

¹⁷⁰ This is particularly important to this section, as I discuss the Jewish survivors in liberation photographs. Some of them are clearly Jewish, like those conducting Jewish services, but at least a few of them are *presumed* to be Jewish by those who originally created and captioned the images. It was also certainly important to the other victim/survivor groups after the Holocaust who were not associated with the same suffering as those Jewish survivors, and not included in the postwar settlement at Yalta.

for the abused masses of survivors, but there was an undeniable repulsion at the sight of them. Once again, the same question is asked of them as of the dead: why did they not fight back, how could they *let* this happen?¹⁷¹ In addition to the actual photographs of the walking dead, Nazi propaganda films also made their way back to the United States, where they fostered an unfortunately harsh response from the American public, who viewed clips of them in postwar documentaries with no identification of their original source.¹⁷²

Liberating forces asked themselves this question, as they did of the dead, but the remaining survivors were the only place to look for answers. Entering the camps and encountering the horrors of the systematic slaughter of Europe's Jews, American soldiers (both Jewish and otherwise) reacted in various ways, though all with shock, revulsion, anger and disbelief.¹⁷³ For some Jewish American soldiers, their heartbreak for their European brethren at times conflicted with their pride as American soldiers. One liberator, recalling that he refused to enter the camp himself explained, "We didn't want our buddies to see how cheap Jewish life is ... we didn't want to be there when the goyim see it."¹⁷⁴ Reactions were varied, even among Jewish soldiers. Many not only entered

¹⁷¹ According to Richard Middleton-Kaplan, the "sheep to the slaughter myth" really took hold at the end of the Holocaust in response to photographs from within the ghettos and liberated camps which made their way to the United States. He particularly recognized the photographs of skeletal corpses and survivors, and the very famous photograph of a young boy in the Warsaw Ghetto with his arms raised in surrender as culprits for the cold response of so many Americans. Richard Middleton-Kaplan, "The Myth of Jewish Passivity," in *Jewish Resistance Against the Nazis*, ed. Patrick Henry (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 8.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹⁷³ Bonnie Gurewitsch, "American Soldiers Confront the Holocaust," in *Ours to Fight For: American Jewish Voices from the Second World War*, ed. Jay M. Eidelman (New York: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 2003), 63.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Gurewitsch, "American Soldiers Confront the Holocaust," 64.

the camps, but made it their purpose to stay there as long as possible, initiating what would become American and international relief and relocation efforts for Jewish survivors.¹⁷⁵

Liberating soldiers were responsible for caring, at least in part, for the survivors they had liberated. Caring for such infirm and mistreated people was not easy on Allied soldiers, who, of course, were not trained for such things. In some cases, sympathy for these beleaguered Jews among American soldiers turned to repulsion, both towards the individual survivors and the group at large. Leon Bass, a liberator from Philadelphia, described how the behavior of the living victims at Buchenwald shocked and sickened him,

“He was skin and bone. And he stopped right there in front of me, he undid what was holding his trousers, he let them fall, he squatted down, and he began to defecate. Right in front of me. And I couldn’t believe this. He was so thin it looked like the bones of his buttocks would come through his skin, but I stood there saying no, no, you don’t do this in public! Where is your dignity!”¹⁷⁶

In cases like Bass, the soldiers’ revulsion was visceral, but did not lead to disdain of the prisoners themselves. In others, however, the weakness of these Jews not only repulsed them, but even led to antisemitic actions committed by liberators against surviving camp victims.¹⁷⁷

Although camp prisoners had been “liberated,” they were not yet *free* people, a fact which only added to the pitiable nature of the Jewish character in Europe at this time. Survivors were, for all intents and purposes, still prisoners of the concentration and death camps that they had

¹⁷⁵ On the various relief organizations and their early interactions with survivors through Jewish members of the American Military, see Abraham S. Hyman, *The Undefeated* (Jerusalem, Israel: Gefen House, 1993); Rabbi Herschel Schacter, “Sholom Aleichem Yidn, Ihr Zeit Frei!” in *Ours to Fight For: American Jewish Voices from the Second World War*, ed. Jay M. Eidelman (New York: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 2003); and Oscar A. Mintzer, *In Defense of the Survivors: The Letters and Documents of Oscar A. Mintzer, AJDC Legal Advisor, Germany 1945-46* (Berkeley, CA: Judah Magnes Museum, 1999).

¹⁷⁶ Leon Bass, Interview 44720 (*Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation, 1998), accessed October 2017), segment 43.

¹⁷⁷ As in the case of Private Cwick in the previous section.

inhabited before their captors abandoned their posts or were caught by American, Soviet, or British troops. Restricted to the camps, they continued to wear their own camp uniforms (or the uniforms of their former captors) and subsisted on 2,000 calories a day, 1,250 of which came from rations of black bread.¹⁷⁸ They had no homes to return to, no means to travel, and no way to take care of themselves. Their status merely changed from *prisoner* to *displaced person*, but they were still not allowed to leave, and had to rely on military personnel to provide them with food, shelter, and information about the outside world. The issue of what to do with these displaced people was discussed in and between the victorious allied powers, with several American politicians lobbying for the release of displaced people from German camps.¹⁷⁹

In spite of their pitiable and helpless position, soldiers often blamed Jews for the trauma that they *themselves* were experiencing, believing that it was because of Jews that America had gone to war, and thus, the reason that they were forced into the unpleasant task of cleaning up the

¹⁷⁸ From the report of Earl G. Harrison (U.S. representative on the Intergovernmental Commission on Refugees) to Harry S. Truman, September 30, 1945. *The Department of State Bulletin XIII*, no. 326 (September 30, 1945), 456-463.

¹⁷⁹ Melvin Price, for example, a member of the United States House of Representatives from Illinois, pleaded before congress for the American president to release imprisoned Jews from liberated Nazi camps, where they had been held for four months following victory in Europe. He also brought a letter from Peter Bergson to the Congressional record, a political activist who is discussed further in the following section, "Heroes of the Yishuv." Harry Truman, in his public response to the report from Earl G. Harrison on the displaced persons, was particularly concerned with Harrison's descriptions of the conditions for Jewish refugees, "As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of SS. troops." "Displaced Persons in Germany Letter from President Truman to General Eisenhower Transmitting report of Earl G. Harrison," *The Department of State Bulletin XIII*, no. 326 (September 30, 1945), 455-463. Melvin Price's appeal from the Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 79th Congress First Session, *Appendix Volume 91-Part 12*, A3924.

mess.¹⁸⁰ They were resentful of having to provide for the survivors and felt, in some cases, that the survivors expected and took too much from the liberating forces.¹⁸¹ Displaced persons quickly transformed, in the minds of many, from helpless victims to needy, demanding, homeless masses.

This view of Jewish survivors as pathetic, needy, and passive in their own destruction was a common one, and not one reserved for antisemites. In fact, those who were sympathetic to the plight of European Jews may have been more susceptible to the assumption that the victims were pathetic than those who believed the Jews were truly at fault or undeserving in some way. In her work on the advancement of human rights through victim storytelling, Diana Meyers speculates

¹⁸⁰ This view was by no means limited to American military. In the American press throughout the war, identification of the victims as Jews had been determinedly avoided. Roosevelt, when referring to victims of the Nazi regime called them *unfortunates*, but refrained from saying that the majority were Jews. *The New York Times*, in articles about both Dachau and Auschwitz during the liberation, referred to the victims as citizens of various nations, but neither mentioned the word Jew. By 1938 both the press and the Eisenhower administration avoided drawing attention to the Jewishness of the victims. This was, James Carroll argues, to undercut public knowledge, which might spur indignation about the inaction of the American government in the plight of the Jewish people. But it also reflects the very real resentment harbored towards Jews, once America seemed destined to enter the war, and after it ended. There was arguably more sympathy for the unidentified masses of “citizens” than there would have been for masses of murdered Jews, as (according to Carroll) by 1944, 44% of Americans believed that Jews were the main cause of the war. James Carroll, “Shoah in the News: Patterns and Meanings of News Coverage of the Holocaust,” Discussion Paper D-27, Joan Shorenstein Center – Press, Politics, and Public Policy, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, October 1997, Pages 4-6.

¹⁸¹ As Joseph Bendersky explains in *The Jewish Threat* (Chapter 10), this was a fairly common attitude in the American military. Many soldiers believed that Jews were too destroyed as people to understand how to be civilized again, and in Austria local police were even authorized (by American forces) to shoot uncooperative survivors, since it was all they were capable of understanding. Even beyond soldiers who had personally liberated or visited camps in Europe, many American soldiers stationed in all US occupied territories (allied or Nazi) felt no love for the Jewish people and blamed them for their having to remain on the continent.

In the fall of 1945, the American Army took a poll which they did not release for months. This poll showed that 51% believed that Hitler “did the Reich a lot of good before 1939,” 30% preferred the Germans to both the French and the English, 24% were willing to concede a German right to rule Europe, and 22% were satisfied that the Germans had “good reasons” for their persecution of Jews, with another 10% per cent undecided. Data from Karl Frucht, “Clem Has Been Here: Second Thoughts on the American Soldiers in Europe,” *Commentary* 1, no. 5 (March 1946): 42.

that there are two common “types” of victims: the pathetic and the heroic. According to Meyers, to earn a place as a truly pathetic victim and to avoid the contempt of observers for their own plight, not only must one have endured horrific suffering, but the part they played in that suffering must be beyond reproach. If they are deserving of compassion, then they must be fully innocent and functionally passive (their oppressors must so thoroughly disempower them as to leave no doubt of their innocence; this entails shame and passivity in exchange for blamelessness and sympathy). Agency and victimization, she argues, are therefore incompatible in the minds of many people and agencies.¹⁸² The shift from prisoner to displaced person granted the prisoners a sliver of agency. They were no longer entirely powerless against their fate (at least this is what an outside observer might believe, if only witnessing their plight through American presses, which patriotically heroized the American liberators). This supposed agency helps, in some part, to explain the attitudes of American Jews, like Rabbi Wise, or members of NFTY, who at times harshly criticized the lack of resistance by European Jewry.

What information American observers were receiving about the liberation (particularly the abundance of liberation photographs which emerged in that three-week period in the spring of 1945) represents men and women very differently.¹⁸³ Images of women after the liberation reinforced preconceived notions of gender identity. Photographs of women with children, cleaning or collecting items in groups, caring for the dead, and preparing food featured prominently in both British and American newspapers. Barbie Zelizer argues that the way photographers chose to

¹⁸² Diana T. Meyers, *Victims' Stories and the Advancement of Human Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, e-book edition), Chapter 1.

¹⁸³ The difference in representation to which I am referring is primarily that which depicts survivors. There are some gendered differences in photographs of the dead that American presses chose to publicize. For the most part, however, the masses of corpses are indiscernible bodies, and the occasions of gendering the dead in photographs is less striking than it is for images of survivors.

show female survivors depicted a community of women resuming their nurturing and domestic routines. Survival, then, was presented as the act of resuming normal female routine. The captions for the photographs reinforced this idea, presuming that if women were preparing food, cleaning, or gathering items, each was an act of nurturing the community of survivors.¹⁸⁴ Although the actual experiences of female survivors varied, women were presented as monolithically helpless victims. Captions attached to photographs of women stress their womanhood, to additionally condemn the perpetrators for their violations of female dignity. In photographs of men, by contrast, gender is not highlighted at all; they are merely victims of Nazi atrocity.

Though Zelizer's chapter focuses on the injustices of the representation of women as universally helpless victims, it raises a very important question about the male side of that representation. It is, of course, unreasonable to hope to find images of former camp inmates playing football, wrestling, or generally horsing around, given their circumstances and physical condition. However, that does not mean that such depictions of male survivors did not gender them in other ways. Liberation photos do depict men reclaiming some sort of male gender identity, and this comes in two varieties; the first is through a typical masculine norm, and the other is decidedly Jewish.

The first is played out through violence. This can be found in personal accounts (memoir, testimony, etc.) as well as in photographs of former camp inmates beating, berating, or in some way exerting power over the SS and guards that had been left behind and captured by liberating

¹⁸⁴ This occurred even if the reality of the photos was an individualistic act of survival. One photograph of female survivors pilfering the clothes of corpses was published with three different captions, hinting that the women were gathering for the community, taking care to prepare the dead for burial, or gathering the clothes to prevent the spread of lice. For more on the gendered captioning of liberation images in the press, see Zelizer, "Gender and Atrocity," 258-61.

forces. The most famous images of men taking revenge on captured Nazis were those of allied soldiers committing violence against them, forcing them to labor in some way (usually in the moving and burial of corpses) or forcing them into some other act of humiliation. There are some images of Jewish prisoners doing the same, though they are not as numerous.¹⁸⁵ More common are pictures and recollections of Jewish men trying to return to normalcy through some of their pious practices, behavior which might be interpreted by pious Jews as masculine, but not by the American public.

Countless photographs circulated of freed but displaced Jewish men praying and leading others in prayer. Jewish chaplains arriving with American forces found that Jewish survivors were often eager to participate in funeral rites, holy days, and daily prayer.¹⁸⁶ In many ways, the Jewish chaplains of the United States military had the most functional and difficult responsibilities to survivors in displaced persons camps. They served as intermediaries between Jewish religious and social organizations in America, provided the only available religious support, acted as the primary contacts for survivors to learn news of their loved ones, and sent out word of their survival to relatives in the United States. These responsibilities were thrust on them as the only available

¹⁸⁵ Dagmar Barnouw, *Germany 1945: Views of War and Violence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 67-69.

¹⁸⁶ Rabbi Abraham Klausner's collection at the AJHS has many references to prisoners asking to lead prayers, funeral rites, etc. Letters to American Jewish organizations from Klausner and Jewish soldiers with whom he worked to provide for the Jewish displaced persons asked for American Jews to send clothes, toiletries, English-German dictionaries, and religious articles (prayer books, talleissim [sic], tefillin, etc.). "Conditions in the Displaced Persons Camps," September 9, 1945, Abraham Klausner Papers ; P-879; box 1; folder 27; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY. The Rabbinate attempted to supply the materials necessary for the religious needs of Jewish DPs, establishing synagogues, providing Torah scrolls, building ritual baths, and even overseeing the kosher slaughter of animals. The United States Army, responsible for many DP camps, redistributed prayer books in enormous numbers for prisoner use, including a loan of 25,000 books so Jews in the camps could carry out their services. Hyman, *The Undeafated*, 157, 331-32.

option, they were initially sent to Europe, of course, to provide religious support for the Jewish military personnel serving in Europe and had no idea what they would encounter in the camps, or what work would be expected of them.

The presence of American rabbis serving as military chaplains, and their religious support to help Jewish survivors return to prayer (and when possible, to reading Jewish texts), was not insignificant. Daniel Boyarin's assertion that Jewish men maintained a separate, gentler form of masculinity to begin with might suggest that this was an expression of that particular Jewish masculinity and therefore a reclamation of their identities as Jews and as men.¹⁸⁷ Most generally accepted standards of masculinity were otherwise impossible to manifest in the camps. They could not form communities, had no families to support, no work to conduct, and no physical strength with which to conduct it. Even if religious learning and practice were acknowledged in the United States as form of empowered masculinity, it would not provide an equally normalizing image to that of female survivors prepping dinner. In short, it does not serve to make these surviving Jews seem more powerful and masculine, only more Jewish.¹⁸⁸

Gendered perspectives on surviving victims came to condemn male Jews in two ways: they were pitied as pathetic victims or, when they were not, they were instead disdained as having survived the camps through some deplorable or duplicitous qualities. Much evidence supports that it was a common view among Jewish leaders that the surviving Jews of Europe must somehow be the worst of the lot, that the best had all perished "nobly." In an article in the *Saturday Evening*

¹⁸⁷ The traditional *Edelkayt*, as Boyarin describes, is gentle, timid, studious, and dates back to the Babylonian Talmud. A return, then, to this style of male behavior might have served as a way for Jewish survivors to reclaim not only their masculinity, but specifically their manhood as Jews. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 13-15.

¹⁸⁸ In later years, pictures and anecdotes about Jewish retaliation, resistance, and even vengeance become popular among American Jews, which we will see in the following section.

Post in 1946, Samuel Lubell explained that a grim Social Darwinism prevailed in the Nazi concentration camps, one which “toughened the bodies, hardened the hearts and sharpened the wits of the few who survived ... It was a survival not of the fittest, not of the most high-minded or reasonable and certainly not of the meekest, but of the toughest.”¹⁸⁹ It was possible then, to escape the stigma of lambs to the slaughter, but only by forfeiting those qualities which made victims so sympathetic.

This was common enough that survivors often felt the need to explain or excuse their survival in positive terms, asserting their moral and physical strength. A group of Jewish youths who had survived internment, concentration camps, death marches, and escape attempts wrote to the Joint Distribution Committee in the United States seeking help in 1945. They wrote, “You will no doubt want to know how we survived. The answer is simple: We not only had more physical endurance, but also moral endurance. We told ourselves that we must heroically bear all suffering and we lived through.”¹⁹⁰

Though it was a common perception, not all Jews were represented as sheep to the slaughter, as stories of resistance were circulated widely in the cases where it did occur. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising got much attention from American Jewish groups, as an exception to the passive behavior which was attributed to Jews in Europe.¹⁹¹ In the aftermath of the war, American

¹⁸⁹ Samuel Lubell, “The Second Exodus of the Jews,” *Saturday Evening Post* 219 (October 5, 1946): 16-17, 86. Quotation found in Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, Chapter 4.

¹⁹⁰ Letter From Survivors to Joint Distribution Committee, Box 2, Folder 16, P-879 (Rabbi Abraham Klausner Papers), American Jewish Historical Society, Center For Jewish History.

¹⁹¹ Even in their appreciation of the uprising, however, the perception was still that “the majority of Jews submitted passively to the German terror,” according to a World Jewish Congress report published in 1943. *Lest we forget; the massacre of the Warsaw ghetto. A compilation of reports received by the World Jewish Congress and by the Representation of Polish Jewry* (New York: Spett Printing, 1943), 35. Accessed through the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. Lipstadt, *Holocaust*, 32.

Jews glorified the Jewish resistors (the fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto, the armed Jewish partisans in the forests of Belarus, and their like), but this began a few years after the war, in tandem with the emergence of a new Jewish hero: the *sabra*.¹⁹² The *sabra* (meaning a Jew born in Palestine) became the counterbalance to the withered camp survivor, playing a vital role in the rescue and relocation of Jewish displaced persons.¹⁹³ The Holocaust did not create the *sabra*, it had already come to life in the Yishuv. The *sabra* presented a new Jewish archetype which contrasted with the image of the *halutz* tending his farm. In the aftermath of the war, Jewish Americans used the example of these tough Jews of Palestine to redefine themselves, and to minimize the impact of the figure of the camp survivor on the Jewish psyche and image.

Heroes of the Yishuv

At the close of the war, not all surviving European Jews desired to find homes in Palestine, but an unprecedented number did attempt the migration, supported, in part, by the international Jewish community.¹⁹⁴ For nearly a century before World War II (even before the agricultural *aliyah* in 1882), Zionists had been traveling to Palestine from Europe, so there was a

¹⁹² The earliest of these may have been the John Hersey novel, *The Wall* (1950), one of the best-selling novels of the year.

¹⁹³ The 1960 film adaptation of Leon Uris's novel, *Exodus* (discussed more in the following pages) drew as stark a contrast as possible between the Holocaust survivor characters and the *sabras*. This is examined in more detail in the following section, "Heroes of the Yishuv."

¹⁹⁴ Additional data and analysis on pre-state and post-Holocaust migration to Israel, see Sergio DellaPergola, "Demography in Israeli Palestine: Trends, Prospects, Policy Implications" (Paper Presented at IUSSP General Conference, Salvador, Brazil, August 2001), 9-10 (figure 1). Also see "עלייה-והגירה-בין-לאומית - שנתון סטטיסטי לישראל," Publications, Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel), accessed March 21, 2019, <https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/subjects/Pages/עלייה-והגירה-בין-לאומית.aspx>. Also, to review a helpful map with charts of migration flows and numbers, see Elie Barnavi, ed., *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People: From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), 194-195.

multigenerational Jewish community present. The attempts of survivors to reach the Yishuv (the Jewish settlements in Palestine prior to Israeli statehood) were legendarily difficult, as many displaced Jews remained stuck in camps in Europe, and when they did begin the migration, were often halted by British troops and turned away or interned in displaced persons camps on the island of Cyprus.¹⁹⁵ The political situation in Palestine was fraught, and the masses of victims were left largely at the mercy of the Allied powers.

In contrast to the image of enfeebled Jewish survivors in Europe, the international perception of Jews living in the Yishuv was that of strong, wilderness-taming pioneers, evocative of Teddy Roosevelt's idea of manhood through the taming of the wilderness in the Dakotas. And indeed, Roosevelt did advocate the foundation of a Jewish State in Palestine after the Balfour Declaration, even suggesting that one of the Allies' conditions for peace should have been the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.¹⁹⁶ Given his other statements about Jews, that a return to the rugged life would suit them and rebuild the Jewish man, the pioneering opportunities in Palestine would have seemed ideal. By that time, he had owned his ranch in the Dakota territories for two decades and spent much time of the frontier, where he believed the emasculated moralities of upper-class city life could be remedied.¹⁹⁷

This Jewish pioneer existed before the Holocaust, of course, but the image of that pioneer became particularly stark when set next to the emerging victims of Nazi brutality, emasculated,

¹⁹⁵ The most famous of the ships turned away by the British was the Exodus, a refugee ship piloted by Palestinian Jews, holding 4,515 passengers, most of them Jewish refugees from Europe. The British forced the ship to turn around and return to Germany (in this case not sent to a displaced persons camp on Cyprus. Murray S. Greenfield and Joseph M. Hochstein's, *The Jews' Secret Fleet: The Untold Story of North American Volunteers Who Smashed the British Blockade* (Jerusalem, Israel: Gefen Publishing House, 1987), 113.

¹⁹⁶ Isaiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine: British-Jewish-Arab Relations, 1914-1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 312.

¹⁹⁷ Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 148.

passive, and helpless. These two dichotomous images of Jewish strength became new archetypes for the Jewish man in the twentieth century, but the transition from one to the other was not an easy process. Many refugees trekked towards Palestine where the promise of political Zionism would transform Jews from victims to fighters and, hopefully, the land of Palestine to a Jewish nation. They were supported in this endeavor by much of the international community (the Allied nations, at least), largely the American Jewish community, though there were American Jews who were not Zionists.

The Sabra: A Real Jewish Hero

American Jews saw the Yishuv and its Jewish inhabitants as a beacon of hope for the Jewish people. The generations of Jews born in the ancestral homeland presented a “new Jew,” much in keeping with the muscular Zionism espoused by Max Nordau. These new Jews called themselves *sabras*, a term which applied only to those born on the soil of Eretz Israel. They were so named for the thorny prickly pear, a harsh exterior containing sustenance and sweetness.¹⁹⁸ The *sabras* (both men and women are included in this description) were held as the ideal of Jewish strength and were glorified in American Jewish literature, film, and culture, though much more prominently after the Israeli state was declared.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ According to Oz Almog, the *sabra* “was taken as a metaphor for the native Israeli, whose rough, masculine manner was said to hide a delicate and sensitive soul.” Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 4.

¹⁹⁹ One of the most popular American authors to glorify this image was Leon Uris. Though Leon Uris wrote fictional accounts of many Jewish struggles (*Mila 18*, for example, about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising), his most famous work was *Exodus* (1958), a novel about the ship, *Exodus*, full of Jewish refugees, many of them children, attempting to make it to Palestine. This book introduced and glorified the image of the *sabra*, and showed their tough nature, warm hearts, and dedication to the cause of Zionism. It also showed a stark contrast between even those stronger

Even before the Holocaust, Jewish pioneers in Palestine maintained a sense of superiority supported by their belief in the socialist ideal which they were bringing to fruition, largely in the *kibbutz* movement (collectives in Palestine, usually agricultural), and by the fulfillment of the Zionist dream. Jews raised in the Yishuv were taught from their early years that they were the manifestation of Jewish chosenness. Not only were sabras “chosen people” as Jews, but also the fruits born of a socialist utopian society, the combination of which seemed destined to be “a light unto the nations,” as Hebrew texts had long promised.²⁰⁰ This is reflected in their recollections, literature, and art. As one author wrote, concerning Palestinian Jewish fictional literature in the forties, “Their main subject was the mythical Sabra, the native-born soldier boy. Handsome, upright, honest, bold and hounded by none of the complexes of the Diaspora, he was always ready to die in defense of his home and the life of his “girl.”²⁰¹ Even in this reflection from the eighties, the sabra is identified as male not only in the male-as-default sense, but very specifically by referencing his “girl.” In fact, both men and women born in Palestine were sabras, but this does show the tendency to associate the figure with manliness.

This did not make for an affinity with Jews of the diaspora, but a sense of superiority and even contempt for the Diaspora Jew. Masculine vitality was stressed in early descriptions of the Jews of the Yishuv, in sharp contrast to the weak, ugly, feeble nature of more traditional, religious

survivors of the Holocaust and the Sabra, as the main character (Ari Ben Canaan) is a strong, handsome sabra, contrasted with the broken, damaged, soon-to-be terrorist, Dov Landau.

²⁰⁰ A defender of Zionism in 1926 stated this attitude with surprising accuracy when he wrote that the task of progressing the whole human race (a responsibility which fell to Jews according to doctrine) “may be fulfilled by a national self-centered Jewish people.

Meyer W. Weisgal, “The Land of Israel,” *The American Israelite* (1874-2000); July 29, 1926; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The American Israelite*, 1.

²⁰¹ Though this does seem an overgeneralization of what was a wide breadth of writers, it certainly shows a consistency in themes. Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 290.

Jews.²⁰² This view was particularly harsh considering those Jewish survivors attempting to get to Palestine after the end of the war. Though Zionist, and believing that Jews should migrate to Eretz Israel, sabras were not altogether pleased to join forces with their weak counterparts from Europe. They looked down on those Jews (on all the Jewish Diaspora, really) as weaker, pathetic, unfulfilled versions of themselves. When pondering how the Jews of Europe came to be destroyed, how they put up so little fight, some young sabras assumed that they “let themselves be slaughtered” due to “the cowardice of the Diaspora Jews.”²⁰³

That tension between young sabras and Holocaust survivors existed is not disputed.

According to Avner Holtzman in his 1995 lecture at Yad Vashem:

The accepted view is that the Israelis were uniformly alienating and patronizing toward the survivors, a posture that derived from the “negation of the Diaspora,” a basic concept of their parents. Translated into practical terms, this concept meant that the Hebrew-Zionist education given the new generation in Palestine/Israel sought to create an unbridgeable chasm between the “new Hebrews” and the old Jewish world, with its contemptible “ghetto mentality.” It was precisely against this mentality that the parents of the “Generation of 1948” had rebelled. That education bore fruit, according to the detractors of the “Generation of 1948,” when the sabras, the native-born Israelis, took a position of pronounced superiority toward the broken and downtrodden Holocaust survivors who arrived in the country after 1945.²⁰⁴

Yishuv life was meant, on several counts, to shed all previously emasculating practices of European Jews, imposed from within or without. This meant that working the land was particularly important in developing the new Jews of Palestine, as Jews had not been eligible for landownership and agricultural pursuits in Europe. It meant shedding some religious practices and

²⁰² For more on the mentality of the sabra, and the negative, at times patronizing attitude towards Diaspora Jews, see Almog, *The Sabra*, Chapter Two: The Elect Son of the Chosen People.

²⁰³ An overheard conversation between two young sabras recounted in K. Shabbetai, *As Sheep to the Slaughter: The Myth of Jewish Cowardice* (New York: The World Association of the Bergen-Belsen Survivors Association, 1963), 9-10.

²⁰⁴ Avner Holtzman, “‘They Are Different People’: Holocaust Survivors as Reflected in the Fiction of the Generation of 1948,” *Yad Vashem Studies* XXX (2002): 344. pp. 337-368.

lifestyles, for example, replacing traditional prayer and study with manual labor and physicality, to rebuild the Jewish nation which had been enfeebled by diasporic life. As Holtzman pointed out, the “ghetto mentality” is precisely what the migrants (those who migrated by choice rather than by postwar necessity) were trying to eradicate by relocating to raise their children as sabras. Sabras were raised speaking only Hebrew, disdaining Yiddish as the language of the Galut. Upon entering Palestine at the close of the First World War, Jewish Legionnaire Elias Gilner recalls meeting a sabra who refused to acknowledge the Jewish Legion soldiers while they spoke Yiddish, forcing them to ask him for directions in Hebrew.²⁰⁵ This attitude, and the attempts to squash the weaker tendencies of Diaspora Jews, assumed veracity in some European antisemitic notions of Jewish life and practices and saw these qualities as flaws in need of restructuring. Health, vigor, a muscled body, and dedicated Jewish soul would redefine these new Jews.²⁰⁶

But the sabras did not come to replace feeble Jewish survivors in popular representation or understanding of worldwide Jewry, they coexisted as a contrasting image of the modern Jew. Indeed, those living in Palestine were indispensable in the transport of survivors from Europe to Palestine. Though they varied in their feelings towards survivors, they expended great efforts in getting as many refugees as possible settled in Eretz Israel.²⁰⁷ Fascinating as they and their attitudes towards Jewish survivors may be, the purpose of this section is not to examine the role that sabras played to relocate displaced European Jews. It is to examine the effect that the existence of the sabra had on the hearts and minds of Jewish men in America which continues to the time of this writing (though it has certainly changed over the intervening decades).

²⁰⁵ Gilner, *Jews Who Fought*.

²⁰⁶ In the vein of Max Nordau, Rabbi Cook, etc.

²⁰⁷ Efforts which will be examined more closely in the following chapter, “Israel, Jewish America, and the Fighting Jew.”

Uncle Sam and the Srulik

During the war, a branch of Revisionist Zionists from Palestine, working with the Irgun, sent delegates to the United States for the express purposes of garnering American support for the Jewish state and for the creation of a Jewish Army.²⁰⁸ They operated under several group titles, including the American League for a Free Palestine (ALFP), American Friends of a Jewish Palestine, the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews, and the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe. These men brought with them a militant, masculine Zionism to the United States, which some American Jewish men felt compelled to support. They found the idea of Jews fighting, while the news from Europe was all of Jews being abused, very attractive.²⁰⁹ The prospect of an internationally gathered all-Jewish army was not entirely novel, as the Jewish Legion fought under the command of the British during the First World War. The proposed Jewish army was, in fact, being promoted most fiercely by the leading Revisionist Zionist, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who had been the mind behind the original Jewish Legion.²¹⁰ As a Jewish soldier, Jabotinsky had also founded the Jewish Self-Defense Organization in Russia and, eventually, co-founded the Irgun in pre-state Palestine.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ The Irgun was an underground Zionist paramilitary organization operating in Mandate Palestine beginning in 1931, when founded by a splinter group of commanders who left the Haganah to protest its defense charter.

²⁰⁹ Though this section examines the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews, the following chapter will take a closer look at the other partnering organizations of the ALFP, and their connection to the Israeli state and Zionism on a political level.

²¹⁰ Pamphlet on the Jewish Battalions, Jewish Legion collection; I-429; box 1; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

²¹¹ The Irgun's other co-founder, Joseph Trumpeldor, died defending a Jewish settlement in Palestine in 1920, and is also hailed as a Zionist hero.

Jabotinsky came to New York in 1940, trying to rally American Zionist support for the creation of a Jewish army, made up primarily of Palestinian and European Jews. There was still time, he argued, to get Jewish volunteer fighters from European areas not yet occupied by the Nazis (like Romania and Hungary), as well as those who managed to escape from Poland. He believed that in addition to the 50,000 troops which would join from Palestine, a force of an additional 120,000 volunteers could be raised from the American and European Jewish communities.²¹² What he sought from American Jews was financial and political support for this plan. Though he died of a heart attack during his visit, his ideas did not die with him.²¹³ Supporters of his vision remained in the United States to continue spreading his ideas and gathering support in the United States.²¹⁴ Keeping in close contact with the Irgun back in Palestine, these representatives rallied support for the Zionist cause, helped to acquire weapons and munitions, and collected funds to maintain the struggle. Another of the creators of the Irgun, Hillel Kook, came to the United States, following Jabotinsky, to garner support for a Jewish Army in Palestine during the Second World War.²¹⁵ Hillel Kook (also known by his alias, Peter Bergson) was instrumental in bringing the image of the tough Jews of the Yishuv into Jewish life in America and into the American national consciousness.

²¹² “Leader Says Jews Will Fight As Unit,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1940, 6.

²¹³ Jabotinsky died while visiting a Betar camp, which will be discussed in the following chapter. His last action was an inspection of the Betarim (Revisionist Zionist youths) who greeted him in military formation. *This is Betar*, Pamphlet, Brit Trumpeldor of America (New York, 1940), 37-39. Accessed through the YIVO Library Collection at the Center for Jewish History.

²¹⁴ There will be more on Jabotinsky’s influence in the United States in the following section.

²¹⁵ If the name Kook is familiar, it is because Hillel Kook is the nephew of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first chief rabbi of the Yishuv, who provided the opening epigraph for Chapter IV. Hillel Kook took on his alias, Peter Bergson, to avoid embarrassing his uncle with his clandestine actions in the United States. Monty Noam Penkower, “In Dramatic Dissent: The Bergson Boys,” *American Jewish History* 70, no. 3 (March 1981): 284.

Jewish discourse about the war was limited largely to Jewish presses abroad, as the American Jewish community had no interest in rocking the boat of the broader discussion of the war, inviting antagonism in an already fraught climate.²¹⁶ But Hillel Kook made his priority the rallying of larger support and awareness by reaching greater audiences. American presses were covering very little about the destruction of European Jewry during the war, but the Committee for a Jewish Army (started by Hillel Kook and other members of his group) were advertising to the American public, publishing full page advertisements in the *New York Times*, advocating an all-Jewish army in Palestine.²¹⁷

In 1942, the Committee for a Jewish Army took out a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times*, which bluntly asserted that not only were Jews fighting along with the rest of the world but were desperate for opportunities to fight more. “What are Jews doing in this war? In England, the United States and in Russia this question has an easy answer: They are fighting. But there are thousands upon thousands of Jews who are not fighting.” The statement continues to explain that there are “fearless Palestinian Jews,” stateless Jews sent adrift by persecution in Europe, and those diaspora Jews in countries which are not yet involved in the war, all “eager to fight back and to avenge.” The committee asserts that *all* Jews, everywhere, want to fight, united, under one flag of liberty, and under Allied command. Jews in Palestine, they argue, must be trained and given arms, planes, tanks, and guns, so they will not be “slaughtered ... as helpless children.” “A powerful and courageous army ready to give its life for the ideals that mark the Allied cause lies waiting to be born.”²¹⁸

²¹⁶ There were, after all, Nazi rallies held in the United States, blame of Jews for American involvement in the war (or fear of involvement), and antisemitism, which seemed to be on the rise.

²¹⁷ Advertisements, *New York Times*, January 5, 1942 and December 7, 1942.

²¹⁸ Advertisement, *New York Times*, January 5, 1942, 13.

The advertisements only got more desperate as the situation (and American knowledge of the situation) of Jews in Europe deteriorated. After Rabbi Wise alerted the public to the mass murder in November of 1942, the Committee for a Jewish Army redoubled its publicity efforts with a new full-page *New York Times* spread, headed by an illustration in which a screaming Jewish soldier, half buried in a pile of his murdered relatives, sheds a tear and holds his gun aloft. The bodies include a mother and infant, an elderly woman, a man in chains, and an elderly bearded man wearing a star of David armband and clutching a torah, with swastika-hilted knife in his back. Underneath this figure, the words, “We shall no longer witness with pity alone.” “All they ask,” the text reads, “is the right to fight, and die, if need be, for democracy, and the survival of their people. Though still unwanted and unarmed, they still do not give up. They are awaiting the signal from America—the Moral and military arsenal of World Democracy.” They urge the American public to support a change in the status of Jews, from being “compelled to haunt the corridors of Time as ghosts and beggars and waifs,” to the “Fighting Jew, arising from ‘blood, sweat, toil and tears,’ marching shoulder to shoulder with the Legions of the United Nations to ultimate victory.”²¹⁹

The committee was dedicated to building political support from US senators and congressmen and worked as the public face of the Irgun in the United States. Kook was particularly interested in building American Jewish pride and dignity, an idea which closely followed Jabotinsky’s concept of *hadar*, the pride of bearing that, if adopted, would rehabilitate the new Jew from the diaspora, giving him the social graces, strength, and dignity that was lacking in diaspora Jews.²²⁰ Throughout the course of the war, a rift also grew between Kook and

²¹⁹ Advertisement, *New York Times*, December 7, 1942, 14.

²²⁰ Hillel Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 147-48.

Revisionist Irgun leadership in Palestine. The younger generation (led by Menachem Begin) focused their efforts on arming and training fighters, not publicizing the work and achievements of what was still supposed to be an underground organization.²²¹ They saw the old guard (including the movement's creator, Ze'ev Jabotinsky) speaking the language of action and strength, but not prepared to enact their rhetoric on the battlefield.

This translated, in their actions in the United States, into a boastful American campaign, celebrating Jewish strength in Palestine, and publicizing the plight of European Jews. This was not, however, representative of most American Zionist leadership. In fact, when Jabotinsky arrived in New York and began to rally support in earnest, American Jewish leadership (Stephen Wise chief among them) were particularly concerned that fighting for the creation of a Jewish army might increase antisemitism and claims of Jewish war-mongering, and intensify doubt of Jewish American loyalty to the United States.²²² Stephen Wise (and the American Jewish Congress) believed in and trusted American leadership (Particularly Franklin D. Roosevelt) to act in the best interest of American Jews, whereas the Revisionist movement and followers did not, and so took very different approaches to dealing with American government.²²³

Jews in the United States were shocked and devastated by the emerging truths of the destruction of European Jewry under the Nazis. They were also, as we have seen, defensive in their attitudes towards surviving Jews and the perception of Jewish weakness that was then cast on themselves as part of the international Jewish people. They had, throughout the war, repeatedly contrasted the weak Jews of Europe with the strength and success of Jews in America, who had

²²¹ Eran Kaplan, "A Rebel with a Cause: Hillel Kook, Begin and Jabotinsky's Ideological Legacy," *Israel Studies* 10 (2005): 92-93.

²²² Medoff, *Militant Zionism in America*, 61.

²²³ Gurock, *Jews in Gotham*, 104-06.

instilled within themselves American pride and self-determination. These qualities, they argued, complemented their Jewishness and set them apart from the starving, wounded masses in Europe. The example of the sabra, an image that made its way quickly into American Jewish art and literature, helped to give American Jews an archetype of a “new Jew” to which American Jewry could aspire and of which it could be proud. Youth groups quickly gravitated to these soldiers as new Jewish heroes (recall the earlier quote from the first meeting of the North American Federation of Temple Youth who held the sabra in such high esteem).

American Jews defensively fought to develop their masculine image. They held aloft the sabra and the Jewish soldier as positive examples, refocused their attention on the Jews who fought during (and in the case of the sabras after) the war, and, when promoting the manly Jewish image, largely left the Holocaust out of their discussion.²²⁴ This is not to say that there were not very popular depictions of Holocaust narratives in the immediate postwar years, or that those narratives left European victims out of the story. In fact, five of the *New York Times* best sellers in 1948 were books dealing with the Holocaust, and all five stories focused on Jewish soldiers fighting in Europe, and liberating concentration camps.²²⁵ That these narratives dealt with Jewish soldiers struggling against antisemitism from their own comrades was a means of highlighting both the Jewishness of the heroes, and the toughness of American Jews. Authors also glorified the sabra as a strong hero in a wave of representations of Jewish men in the years following the close of

²²⁴ Hasia Diner has convincingly argued and that the assertion that Jewish Americans ignored the Holocaust until the Six-Day War is a fallacy. There was a good amount of Holocaust representation in American literature and life, but it was largely found in the pages of war novels, tangential wartime stories, radio broadcasts, sermons, activism, etc., and (most importantly) not under the heading of *Holocaust*. Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

²²⁵ Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Holocaust: An American Understanding* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 31.

World War II. Eretz Israel became the focus of much American Jewish life, and a new trend began to emerge when Holocaust film became popular, one which depicted sabra heroes, strong and battle-worthy (though often blond haired and blue eyed), as in *Exodus* (1958 novel adapted to film in 1960), *Judith* (1965), *Cast a Giant Shadow* (1966), and *Tobruk* (1967).²²⁶ The 1960 film adaptation of *Exodus* drew as stark a contrast as possible between the Holocaust survivor and the sabra, as the heroic sabra, Ari Ben Canaan (played by Paul Newman), was a tough, attractive, masculine figure, whereas the Auschwitz survivor is forced to recount his own suffering, and even to admit that he had been sexually abused by German soldiers.²²⁷

Once the Second World War concluded and the Jewish State was established, the image of Jews in Israel changed, as sabras evolved from the land-working pioneers of the twenties, thirties, and forties to the fighting heroes of the new state's military. New images of Israelis, national heroes, and even mascots emerged to support this change in Israeli culture. A visual representation of this change came in the form of a new popular character named Srulik. Kariel Gardosh (known to his fans as "Dosh"), a Hungarian Jewish newspaper cartoonist who had escaped Europe during the war, set out to produce a personification of the fledgling Israeli state. He intended to create an image which would "concisely and accurately symbolize the young State of Israel ... like other national figures such as American Uncle Sam, the Russian bear and Marianne, or the heroine of the French Revolution."²²⁸ His caricature was of a young man in a cap and shorts named Srulik, who personified Israel as a young, innocent sabra, surrounded by bigger, meaner enemies (though

²²⁶ This is the start of the depictions of Jewish heroes which Paul Breines condemned in *Tough Jews*, arguing that the "tough Jew" image (created in postwar literature) was altering American Jewish self-image, and to no good end.

²²⁷ A dichotomy which Deborah Lipstadt recounts in *Holocaust: An American Understanding*, 42.

²²⁸ Translated from Hebrew, "שרוליק נולד," <http://srulik.co.il>, accessed September 27, 2018, <http://srulik.co.il/שרוליק>.

with a little characteristic sabra *chutzpah*).²²⁹ In the early years, Srulik was often surrounded by fully-grown international and political figures, trying to find his way in an established world of politics. As the state matured, however, Srulik enlisted in the military, grew taller, put on a uniform and combat boots, and came to personify Israel less as a child, and more as a “new Jew.” He was not the established, well-dressed or flamboyantly suited Uncle Sam, but a young, plucky, and boyish personification of the sabra.

Changes to Israeli life and self-image went far beyond the new Israeli borders. From the moment of Israeli independence, Jewish life throughout the diaspora began to change, as large pockets of Jewish communities refocused on developing, supporting, and even migrating to the new state. This change affected American Jewry and their perceptions of Jewish manhood as well. As the sabras and *halutzim* evolved into the Israeli soldier, American Jews had a new rubric for manhood against which to compare themselves and to which they might aspire. Over the following decades, the effects of military successes and international acclaim of Israeli manhood can be seen in all aspects of Jewish American life, from religious practice to youth programs, in film, literature, and television, and in their reactions and participation to the world around them.

²²⁹ For an English publication of the Dosh cartoons in these early years, see Dosh, *To Israel, With Love* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960).

Our return will only succeed if it will be marked, along with its spiritual glory, by a physical return which will create healthy flesh and blood, strong and well-formed bodies, and a fiery spirit encased in powerful muscles. Then the once weak soul will shine forth from strong and holy flesh, as a symbol of the physical resurrection of the dead.

-Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (first Ashkenazic chief rabbi in pre-state Israel)¹

CHAPTER V: ISRAEL, JEWISH AMERICA, AND THE FIGHTING JEW

The Jews of Palestine established Israel as a state in 1948, amid protest, grief, and disarray. Several international Jewish communities financed the enterprise and participated in the process of its construction. Jews in Palestine began the organizations which evolved into Israel's military (the Israeli Defense Forces) long before statehood was declared. These groups acted as the training ground for the halutzim (and then sabras) to reconstruct Jewish masculinity and shed the weakness of the ghetto Jew and the Galut. These pre-state defense organizations developed into the successful Israeli fighting forces that continued to ward off attacking countries in the decades to follow independence and began to establish the unique Jewish masculinity of the Yishuv. Though they could not have predicted exactly how the state would be established, the ideal new Jew which Herzl and Nordau popularized manifested in the Yishuv and grew into a masculine modern Jewish nation.

¹ Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York, NY: Meridian Books, 1959), 431.

From Sabra to Citizen: Creating a Jewish State

Constructing Israeli Masculinity

Jewish military organizations in Palestine from the turn of the century to the declaration of statehood were many and haphazardly organized. Initially put together for self-defense during conflicts with the local Arab population, they lacked both training and arms. As they operated within an externally controlled territory, Jews in Palestine made an effort to keep peaceful relations with the ruling authority of the time (be it Ottoman or British). For that reason, they constructed their defense organizations underground. The earliest of these groups were Ha-shomer and Bar Giora (later to be absorbed into Ha-Shomer), which consisted primarily of male Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Though a small number of women served in Ha-shomer, their work remained within the confines of traditionally female tasks such as cooking, laundry, and medical care.² These groups acted as incubators for Israeli masculinity in its infancy, in part fulfilling the prophecies of Rabbi Kook, Theodore Herzl, and Max Nordau. They manifested a new Jewish manhood by rebuilding the Jewish body with muscles, and by redefining Jewish manhood through the performance of manly purpose. They sought to actively correct the flaws characteristic of diaspora Jews through physical training (both before and after the establishment of the state) and believed that they presented measurable positive results.³

The desire to become more masculine is evident in the actions carried out by Ha-shomer, which sought to protect their new lands and shed their old, ghetto Jew image and mentality. They became a very different “Tough Jew” than those imagined by European Zionist thinkers. In the

² Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defense Force* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 1998), 14.

³ Etan Bloom, “Toward a Theory of the Development of the Modern Hebrew Handshake,” in *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender and History*, ed. Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman and Paul Lerner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 157.

case of Herzl, his desire to fight in duels and his urging other Jewish men to do likewise was a matter of dignity and prestige in bourgeois European society. When Max Nordau spoke of the “muscle Jew” he did so in terms of mind and body regaining vitality. He spoke of training in the gymnasium, and restoring masculine dignity and health. These enlightened Zionist leaders advocated equal social status and a return to a healthy and strong masculine Jewish image, not bloody battles and clandestine fighting in the desert. Although the Zionist settlers and farmers reflected the desire for this new image, Ha-shomer took the change further and prioritized battle as a primary part of the new Jewish masculinity. As Martin Van Creveld writes, “Self-defense apart, the first concern of the *shomrim* or “guards” was to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the small towns from which they came and that, to them, stood for everything that was base, cowardly, and weak. Accordingly, they modeled themselves on the Circassians [*sic*], who enjoyed a reputation for bravery and whose place, after all, they sought to take.”⁴

The *shomrim* incorporated elements of local Arab culture, learned some of the language, and defended Jewish farms and settlements from Arabs who might attack. These Jewish men grew their mustaches to emulate local Arabs, as they viewed the locals as epitomic masculine figures; they were connected to the land, protected their people, and were fierce in battle. Not all the Jews of the Yishuv took part in, or even approved of these tactics, nor of the new self-image the *shomrim* adapted. Ha-shomer’s interest in forming this new self-image bothered some Jewish settlers, who the *shomrim* sometimes even bullied into paying them for protection.⁵ These Jewish settlers

⁴ I assume that Creveld is here referring to the *Circassians*, a Palestinian minority which used to work as guards for Jewish settlements in Palestine, along with some Druze and Arab groups. Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-14.

prioritized creating a full religious Jewish life and encouraging a renaissance of labor, not reconstructing the Jewish image.

Ha-shomer was replaced in 1920 by Haganah, which developed very slowly over the course of the next decade, under the British Mandate. The goals of the organization changed with the state of Jews in Palestine. By 1920, Ha-shomer was a relic of the Ottoman period, created to protect Jewish settlements from marauders, not equipped to deal with the new struggles settlers faced in the fight for a Jewish national homeland.⁶ The Haganah, along with several other small military organizations, stayed in place until the end of British rule and the declaration of the Jewish State of Israel. After statehood was established, the Haganah became the core of the Israeli Defense Forces. Any narrative of Israeli masculinity and the growth of Jewish military strength in Palestine must include the participation and support of the British Empire. The British government declared support for the formation of a Jewish homeland in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and although statehood was not yet in sight, many Zionists counted on this support to construct and institutionalize a Jewish homeland and eventual Jewish state. In the early years of the Yishuv, while England still controlled Palestine under the British Mandate, the British accommodated Jewish immigrants to a degree, though they remained reluctant to fulfill the Balfour Declaration for fear of Arab retaliation.

England had a well-established Jewish community with a highly reputable group of British Zionists advocating the Jewish cause in Palestine. The British Board of Deputies (the main representative body of the British Jewish community) actively participated in internal British affairs and earned the respect of many elites of larger British society. Jews served as British

⁶ Ervin Birnbaum, *In the Shadow of the Struggle* (Jerusalem, Israel: Gefen Publishing House, 1990), 89.

citizens during the First World War, and so established a military history for themselves in England, and generally had support in the English army, navy and air force. Forming British Jewish Regiments and Jewish Battalions (the Jewish Legion) represented very deliberate attempts by British Zionists to showcase British and foreign-born Jews as soldiers capable of fighting with honor.⁷

British support of the developing Jewish military in Palestine involved several key British military experts and veterans, primary among them, British Army Captain Orde Wingate. Wingate began a tour of Palestine in 1936 as captain of an Infantry division in intelligence. He arrived on a mission to Palestine to collect intelligence for England while the tensions between Jewish settlers and Arab locals were rising. At the time, the British Army leaned more toward the side of the Arabs, according to Major-General Derek Tulloch, sympathizing with them as an overpowered and backwards people—though a people with whom the British had to deal to maintain their access to Arab oil resources. Wingate, upon arriving, believed that the Arabs had become the oppressors, and the Jews their victims.⁸ Wingate became an ardent Zionist after a short time in Haifa and surpassed the expectations of Yishuv leadership through his willingness to disobey commands, placing the Zionist cause above the British crown.⁹ His motivations were varied, as he saw injustice and wished to right it, but also believed that Zionism was inherently correct for religious

⁷ Certain Zionist leaders were also greatly respected and admired in England, such as Chaim Weizmann, who made great contributions to the war effort in England during the First World War, producing acetone necessary for explosives. Continuing his research for the British government, he also worked for England during the Second World War, including projects on synthetic rubber and high-octane gasoline. Michael Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9. Spencer C. Tucker, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 1076.

⁸ Major-General Derek Tulloch, *Wingate: In Peace and War* (London, England: Macdonald and Company Ltd., 1972), 45.

⁹ Tulloch, *Wingate*, 47-48.

reasons.¹⁰ His religious belief, not Zionism, made him a Zionist supporter. In fact, he was not at all well read in Zionist literature, claiming, “There is only one important book on the subject, the Bible, and I’ve read it thoroughly.”¹¹ Wingate believed not only that the Jewish people should remain in Palestine, but that they had the makings of an elite and powerful fighting force, which, if properly trained, would be more than capable of defending itself. He helped, over the course of his stay in Palestine, to manifest a new Israeli manhood through defense and military strength.

Wingate sided with a portion of Palestinian Jews who believed in the full formation of a Jewish Army, which Wingate could lead into battle in the inevitable all-out war with the Arab population. The policy of the British Army and of the Jewish Agency, however, supported only peaceful, defensive preparations on the part of the Haganah.¹² In 1937, the British military authorized Wingate to organize patrols comprised of British soldiers and Haganah members (all male) called the “Special Night Squads” (funded by the Jewish Agency) which quickly became the elite force in the defense against Arab revolts.¹³ He became a symbol of hardened manly virtue and military strength among Jewish fighters. He was notoriously hard on all his men during training, sometimes even hitting them with his rifle butt, or striking them with his hand for misreading maps or making unnecessary noises. Yet, when off duty, he was informal with his Jewish trainees, calling them by their first names, and generally mingling with the troops.¹⁴ It was

¹⁰ Wingate was a Christian, and a millenarian. This meant that he subscribed to the belief in a future millennium following the Second Coming of Christ (based on the Book of Revelation 20:1-5), brought about by the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. This belief was common among non-Jewish Zionists and was one motivation for British interventions on behalf of the Jewish people, most notably, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which formalized British support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

¹¹ Christopher Sykes, *Orde Wingate: A Biography* (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1951), 111.

¹² Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 113.

¹³ Tulloch, *Wingate*, 46.

¹⁴ Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 152.

said of his military prowess, “after three weeks under Wingate a squadman [*sic*] was made a soldier.”¹⁵ The men who trained with him did not call him by his first name, but called him “Hayedid” (the Friend).¹⁶ Though he did not live to see Israel become a Jewish State, his influence on the Israeli Defense Forces and in cementing physical strength in the Israeli psyche is memorialized in the Wingate Institute, Israel's National Center for Physical Education and Sport in Netanya, created in 1957, named in memory of the famous national hero.¹⁷ From its founding, the facility has trained military personnel in combat, served as a center for nutrition and health education, and still trains the Israeli national sports and Olympic teams.¹⁸ In essence, the Wingate Institute is the place where muscle Jews are built. Over the years, both men and women have attended the institute for training or sport, fulfilling Wingate’s desire and hope for the people of Israel to learn to defend and protect themselves, and perpetuating ideals of Israeli strength and masculinity.

During the fight for Israeli statehood, American Jews and Jews from all over the diaspora joined to fight for the fledgling state. The War for Independence, also known as the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, could not have been won without a massive influx of men, material, and economic support from the Jewish diaspora (particularly America and Western Europe). The *Machal* (the Hebrew acronym for overseas volunteers) comprised volunteers from fifty-six countries, mostly WWII veterans from various nations, many of whom hailed from the United States.¹⁹ Though

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁶ Mitchell Smith, *Baseballs, Basketballs and Matzah Balls: What Sports Can Teach Us About the Jewish Holidays* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009), 177.

¹⁷ “About the Wingate Institute,” Wingate Institute, accessed March 8, 2019, <https://www.wingate.org.il>

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ About 3,500 volunteers, according to Derek Penslar, a much smaller volunteer core, proportionately, to Canada, South Africa, and several other nations. Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, 237.

Sabras born in the Yishuv presented the image of ideal Israeli soldiers, in truth, in the early years of the war, eighty percent of the early military force was made up of newcomers who had been in Palestine for less than a year, and so made up a vital majority of Jewish fighters.

After the end of the Second World War, when Jewish refugees attempted to migrate to Palestine, the international Jewish community applied pressure on the British to grant Israel its independence, fulfilling and building on the promise of the Balfour Declaration. The State of Israel declared itself as a new nation in May of 1948 and the unification of Israel's paramilitary units into the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) was one of the first actions taken by the new Israeli government and David Ben Gurion, the first Israeli Prime Minister.²⁰ He intended to showcase the importance of the Jewish military presence in the upheaval surrounding the declaration of statehood, as well as prevent the breakup of the new state by the factionalism of different ideological and political groups. Combining the Jewish paramilitary troops was not without incident, as several groups (such as the Irgun) wished to remain independent or at least to maintain some level of autonomy within the IDF. There was little time to squabble, however, as immediately after Ben Gurion declared Israeli independence, the state was at war. They had, of course, been fighting continually, but the War of Independence followed the termination of the British Mandate and the presence of the British military in Palestine.

By the fifties, the Israeli fighter began to transition from a social ideal to a soldierly profession. According to Oz Almog, the myth of the Sabra gradually shrank away, replaced by a new dominant figure of more aggressive masculinity, the emphases shifting from pioneer values to combat capabilities and the masculinity of the new fighting Jew. Israeli children's stories of the

²⁰ Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive*, 81.

fifties idolized the “boy fighter” who joined more combat-hardened older Sabras to become heroes themselves in the continuing war of retribution and vengeance with neighboring Arabs.²¹

American Jews and the Creation of a Jewish State

In the initial decades of Israeli statehood, the international Zionist community disseminated newsreels, journals, press, images, and propaganda about the state and the heroism of the fighting Jew.²² American Jews celebrated those Americans who served in Israel’s fight for statehood in popular representation such as the 1966 film, *Cast a Giant Shadow*, starring Kirk Douglass as American Machal commander, Colonel David Marcus.²³ American Jews lauded Marcus as a shining example of their contribution to Israeli defense. He volunteered to support what he saw as a fight parallel in many ways to the American struggle for independence, one which, like the American struggle, necessitated support from friends abroad with like-minded beliefs in democracy and freedom.²⁴

Though American Jews celebrated their own contributions to the war effort in Israel, they volunteered in much smaller numbers than those Machalniks from Canada, South Africa, England, and France. This reflected, at least in part, the significant impediments for American volunteerism in the shape of strictly enforced American laws forbidding participation in foreign military

²¹ Almog, *The Sabra*, 132-35.

²² Though a lot of this material emerged from Israel, much of it created within the United States as well.

²³ Marcus was celebrated even more for his success as an American Jewish man. From Brooklyn but having attended West Point and law school, Marcus became Commissioner of the New York City Corrections Department and was the subject of another Hollywood film in 1939, *Blackwood’s Island*.

²⁴ For a more thorough history of Marcus’s contribution to the Israeli struggle, see the seventh chapter of Penslar’s *Jews and the Military*.

conflicts.²⁵ In addition, Derek Penslar argues that “American Jewry was less connected with Palestine than its diaspora counterparts, and its Zionism was far more likely to be philanthropic, manifested through donations of money, not bodies.”²⁶ Those Americans who went to Palestine to join the fight, however, were, according to David Malet, very unlikely to have been ardent Zionists at all before the war.²⁷ Their motivation was far more personal (several experienced acute, personal losses of family overseas during the war) and more in reaction to the Holocaust and the sight of displaced Jews being pulled off ships heading for Palestine. They did not come out of the woodwork to volunteer but were recruited -- targeted by Irgun and Haganah operatives in the United States, who reached out to Jewish war veterans individually and through public displays (like those of the ALFP).²⁸ Overall, it is true that American Zionism manifested largely on paper (both political and monetary). American Zionists supported the Israeli cause by sending money and weapons, rallying for the cause, and even undermining American policy to get resources to Israeli forces.

Jewish American philanthropists saw their financial support not as less masculine than military volunteerism, but as their best way to contribute to a new developing Jewish strength overseas.²⁹ In fact, since the United States banned the transport of arms to Israeli paramilitary groups, American Jewish philanthropists committed an act of defiance against the American

²⁵ David Malet, *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civic Conflicts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 132.

²⁶ Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, 238.

²⁷ Malet, *Foreign Fighters*, 132-133.

²⁸ Each of these influencing agencies and their tactics are discussed in the following pages, including the ALFP.

²⁹ As Sarah Imhoff argued (previously quoted in Chapter III) that Jewish American men “abstracted courage and manliness into the political realm, where they focused on forming political bodies more than fleshy ones. Building and securing a society for the vulnerable was the central task of American Zionist masculinity—not bodybuilding, but society-building. Imhoff, *Masculinity*, 182.

government through their contribution.³⁰ Successful American Jewish entrepreneurs and Zionists formed a secretive volunteer network known as the Sonneborn Institute (so named for its founder, Rudolph G. Sonneborn), whose main goals were the acquisition of weapons for Israel and support for Aliyah Bet.³¹ The Sonneborn Institute worked very closely with the Haganah, contributing in intelligence, arms, funds, and influence.

Group membership grew to several thousand by 1947, and members recognized the new Israeli hero emerging to fill the void of Jewish masculinity left in the wake of the Second World War. One member recalled, “I have known Jews all my life who were waiting for the day that they could point to another Jew that carried a gun and say, ‘he represents me.’ Meaning not to a gangster but a hero, and in the last few weeks the papers have come forth and they mention Haganah with respect.”³² This quote is particularly interesting, as it reflects not only the recognition of the Israeli fighter as a new hero, but also, perhaps unintentionally, undermines the notion that contributors to the institute vicariously became heroes themselves. They engaged in illegal activity but were not gangsters, and fought for Jews by supporting those in Israel, but none of them were themselves the “Jew that carried a gun.”³³ They still looked overseas to Israeli fighters for this new ideal of manhood and supported it from afar.

³⁰ President Truman invoked the Neutrality Act on December 14, 1947, imposing a unilateral embargo on weapons to both sides in the Zionist-Arab conflict. After this Act was established, exporting of American arms to Palestine was illegal. Ricky-Dale Calhoun, “Arming David: The Haganah's Illegal Arms Procurement Network in the United States, 1945–49,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 23-24.

³¹ For a more thorough history of the Sonneborn Institute see the seventh chapter of Derek Penslar's *Jews and the Military*, as well as Murray S. Greenfield and Joseph M. Hochstein's, *The Jews' Secret Fleet*.

³² Quote provided by Derek Penslar, *Jews and the Military*, 241-44.

³³ Though it is worth noting that not all historians have presented the Sonneborn group as mere fundraisers, or as the “unsung heroes” of Israel's 1948 War (as Rafael Medoff and Chaim Waxman have done), but as high-level conspirators. With international influence. Indeed, historian Ricky-Dale Calhoun argued that “despite the heroic myth in which it has previously

This masculine Israeli fighter was not the chivalrous soldier of the Middle Ages, the Civil War, or even the First World War. Supporting the Irgun meant supporting a clandestine and sneaky organization, which, at times, carried out acts of terrorism. The fighting Jew was not the same as the knightly soldier or volunteer, he was fighting for the survival of his people by whatever means necessary. In some respects, the Irgun worked to reinforce some of the negative stereotypes about sneaky and self-serving Jews against which the American Jewish establishment fought. For this reason, quite a different demographic of American Jews supported the Irgun over the Haganah. Members of the Sonneborn Institute, for example, gave exclusively to the military organizations they felt represented Jews in a more positive light. However, the Jewish underworld also played a role in funding and arming the Haganah. Members of the Haganah sent to the United States to garner assistance for the Israeli struggle ended up making several useful contacts among Jewish gangs and mobsters. Their connections in New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Las Vegas provided the Haganah and the Irgun with weapons, ammunition, cash, and connections in South America to help in the illegal transport of materials to Israel.³⁴

Some of the interactions between Haganah emissaries working in the United States and Jewish criminals show how much Jewish gangsters approved of Jews taking up arms and fighting as men. When speaking with a Haganah emissary, Bugsy Siegel (one of the most infamous Los Angeles mobsters, Jewish or otherwise) asked, “You mean to tell me Jews are fighting? Fighting

been cloaked, the Jewish Agency’s U.S. arms procurement effort amounted to a highly effective criminal conspiracy.” Ricky-Dale Calhoun, “Arming David,” 22-32. Rafael Medoff and Chaim I. Waxman, *The A to Z of Zionism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 187.

³⁴ According to an interview with Reuven Dafni, a Haganah emissary, the Jewish gangster Sam Kay was friends with the Panamanian president, and helped to contract him to register Israeli ships there and sail them under the flag of Panama. Robert A. Rockaway, *But He Was Good to His Mother: The Lives and Crimes of Jewish Gangsters* (New York: Gefen Publishing House, 2000), 247.

as in killing?” When he was assured that Jewish violence was becoming a reality in Palestine, he began donating in large sums of cash, estimated at a total of \$50,000.³⁵ Similarly, the American League for a Free Palestine received a check from Meyer Lansky for \$25,000 to support the cause.³⁶ Bugsy and Meyer not alone in his desire to see Jewish militancy become a reality in Palestine. He and other American Jews saw that desire come to fruition most publicly in the actions and publications of the defiant and militant Irgun, whereas the Haganah worked largely under the radar in the United States and with some support from leading American Jewish organizations.

In defiance of several American Jewish organizations, the Revisionist Zionists continued their efforts (as seen in the previous chapter) to rally diaspora Jews to the fight in Palestine and to garner American support for the idea of a confrontational and rebellious Jewish Army, based on the urgent need for a “Hebrew fight for freedom.”³⁷ These efforts came primarily from the National Director of the Committee for a Jewish Army, Hillel Kook, and by the American League for a Free Palestine. They began such work early in the war with the arrival of Jabotinsky in the

³⁵ Rockaway, *But He Was Good to His Mother*, 247-48. For more examples of Jewish mob support of the Irgun and Haganah, see 243-54.

³⁶ Gurock, *Jews in Gotham*, 128-29.

³⁷ This was the phrase that the American League for a Free Palestine used in their campaign to enlist public support when starting a “Palestine Resistance Month,” to get Jews “home” to Palestine from Europe. The difference in terms between *Jewish* and *Hebrew* was particularly important to Hillel Kook, who from 1944 onward made this distinction a central theme in his worldview. He claimed that the Hebrews were the descendants of an ancient Hebrew nation, comprised of the Jews of Europe and the Jews living in Palestine. The Jews in America were different, Kook said. They were not members of the Hebrew Nation (who owed national allegiance to no one) but were American Jews of Hebrew descent. The motivation behind this differentiation (though it was not successful) was to free American Jews from their fears of accusations of double-loyalty between the American and Hebrew nations.

Jewish Telegraph Agency, October 2, 1946. Accessed online at http://pdfs.jta.org/1946/1946-10-02_226.pdf on 1/2/2018. Hillel Kook, “Kol Koreh me-et ha-Umah ha-Ivrit” [A Manifesto of the Hebrew Nation], accessed through Kaplan’s “Rebel with a Cause,” 93.

United States seeking support for a Jewish Army, and they continued after the war ended and through the fight for Israeli statehood. The ALFP and its brother organizations tried to rally support through the image of Jewish /Hebrew toughness, determination, and fighting spirit. Though the Irgun was a clandestine organization, this group was far from it. They organized huge publicity campaigns (like the full-page *New York Times* advertisements discussed in Chapter III), and collected well-known, recognizable American men to be the faces of the organization, most notably, a US Senator from Iowa, Guy Gillette, who served as the League president.

The league, though not an exclusively male organization, was saturated in the language and imagery of chivalry and manliness.³⁸ In a thirty-page booklet published on the history of the “Hebrew Freedom Movement,” the ALFP laid out the struggle of Hebrew heroes fighting for a greater cause. The booklet depicted ten heroic Hebrew emissaries who came to the United States on a selfless and gallant quest. Throughout this publication, these heroes and their American allies are lauded as having “fearlessly challenged the mighty of this world, caring little for the consequences to their personal welfare,” by creating and orchestrating the necessary organizations in America to protect Hebrew freedom abroad.³⁹

³⁸ The League’s materials presented images of Jewish Palestinian fighters resembling the masculine war posters put out by the OWI. Shirtless men or men with rolled up sleeves, carrying a variety of weapons, tools, and uniforms or flags adorned with the Star of David. Members, supporters, and leaders within the movement are referred to consistently in the language of chivalrous manhood: defiance, bravery, free and mighty, fighters, stalwart, etc. *For Survival and Freedom*; American League for a Free Palestine Records; I-278; box 2; folder 5; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

³⁹ The organizations are the American Friends of a Jewish Palestine; the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews; the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe; and the American League for a Free Palestine. *For Survival and Freedom*; American League for a Free Palestine Records; I-278; box 2; folder 5; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

The league produced as much attention-grabbing publicity material as they could muster during the war. They credited the full-page *New York Times* advertisements (which the Committee for a Jewish Army had released early in the war) with breaking the conspiracy of silence in the American press and beginning a constant flow of public information from then forward. In a full two-page spread in the *Times*, the league published their “Proclamation on the Moral Rights of the Stateless and Palestinian Jews,” one full page was devoted to the names of many (though not all) of the 5,000 American leaders who signed their names to the proclamation (a good number of their impressive supporters were not Jewish), which recognized the right of all members of the Hebrew Nation to fight in their own army, with their own insignia.⁴⁰

They intended, through these efforts, to inspire action through public opinion and outrage. They created grand spectacles, like their 1943 pageant at Madison Square Garden, *We Will Never Die*, which then toured, performing in several other major American cities.⁴¹ The author of the pageant, and one of the most important voices in the movement, was Jewish playwright, journalist, screenwriter, and novelist Ben Hecht. Hecht created the most striking of the league’s publicity and work. Working with Peter Bergson, Hecht wrote the scathing ads and inspirational poetry which the league published during the war and gave the movement a voice.⁴² This voice, through his writing and the league’s events, had a decidedly masculine tone which was particularly critical of the American Jewish and Zionist philanthropic community. In 1946, Hecht’s play *A Flag is*

⁴⁰ “A Proclamation,” *New York Times*, December 7, 1942, 14.

⁴¹ In the four months following the opening of the pageant, over 100,000 people attended different productions across the country funded by local communities, with Ben Hecht even tailoring the most important performance (to Government officials in Washington DC) to more directly accuse American politicians of inaction. Adina Hoffman, *Ben Hecht: Fighting Words, Moving Pictures* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 154-155.

⁴² For more on the (at times fraught) relationship between Hecht and Bergson in their efforts to save the Jews of Europe, see chapter eight of Adina Hoffman’s *Ben Hecht*, “The Cry.”

Born (published and produced by the ALFP) opened on Broadway to sold-out crowds. It meant to inspire Americans (both Jewish and otherwise) to support the creation of a Jewish state.

A Flag is Born is a self-identified propaganda piece, following in the footsteps of *The Eternal Road* (a philosemitic spectacle of biblical proportions released in 1937 as a response to the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor in Germany).⁴³ Indeed, Kurt Weill (the composer behind *The Eternal Road*) wrote the music for *A Flag is Born* as well. The play centers around three survivors of the Holocaust, all trying to walk to Palestine, who meet by chance in a European cemetery and consider aloud the position of the Jews of the world who remained alive. The play depicts two types of survivors, an older couple (Tevya and Zelda) who lost everything but retained their Jewish beliefs and practices, and a bitter young Jew, resentful of the weakness of European Jewry. It takes place on the sabbath, and as the older Jewish couple prays, Tevya has visions which connect him to the heroes of Jewish history. Tevya has several visions during his prayer, and in one of them he confronts the leaders of the world to grant Jews their homeland.⁴⁴ This part of the play is biting satire, showing the nations of the world refusing action, and the British as an irrational, foolish empire.

Hecht presents his audience initially with two types of Jewish men; David, the bitter young Jew, and Tevya, the traditional ghetto Jew, and the two argue throughout the play. The play is led

⁴³ For more on the *Eternal Road* and its cultural and historical significance, see Jonathan C. Friedman, *The Literary, Cultural, and Historical Significance of the 1937 Biblical Stage Play The Eternal Road* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2004).

⁴⁴ The biblical heroes he connects with are all men: Solomon, David, Saul, etc. There are some visions of women, but only as parts of celebrations of the kings. The play is decidedly male. Zelda is present to weep for her lost children, but does not experience the visions, or express her own longing for the Jewish homeland, she just doubts aloud if they will ever make it. In fact, while Tevya prays and connects himself to Jewish history, and while he argues with his great enemy (the entire world) for the rights of Jews to a homeland, Zelda (quietly and unnoticed) dies in the background, which Tevya only realizes after his confrontation with world leadership has ended.

along by a detached narrator, who makes it clear to the audience that diaspora Jews do not only need to fight for their homeland, but for their manhood as well.

The inner eyes of the ghetto Jew of Europe were not for seeing God only but for looking on his own manhood. This is Tevya's last secret in the graveyard--that he dreams of the glory of being a man. His soul has not accepted the lower levels designed for it by the hate and villainy of a world. It will not bow to contempt or murder. Condemned to survive as human rubbish, it will lift itself up out of the dusts and move bewilderedly toward its destiny--manhood. Such is the reason of Tevya's journey to Palestine. There his manhood lies. There he will go--or die reaching for it.

Tevya does indeed die reaching for it. Tevya, upon discovering that Zelda has died during his prayer, gives in and lies down to die beside her. Only David, with hatred in his heart, survives the night. He nearly kills himself following the couple's deaths, forfeiting any hope of dying at the hands of an enemy (his greatest wish), when he is called forward in a vision by the heroic Jewish soldiers of Palestine, introducing a third image of Jewish manhood. "Don't you hear our guns, David? We battle the English--the sly and powerful English. We speak to them in a new Jewish language, the language of guns. We fling no more prayers or tears at the world. We fling bullets. We fling barrages. The manhood the world took from us roars again in Palestine."

The intention of the play was to target an American audience and to appeal to the guilt or shame of American Jews and their inaction. Throughout the play, Hecht attacks affluent American Jewry through David, who, in response to the thought of the monetary charity American Jews sent abroad to Europe's Jews, rages, "I spit on their food."⁴⁵ He glares into the audience and asks,

Where was your voice crying out against the slaughter? We didn't hear any voice. There was no voice. You Jews of America! ... Strong Jews, rich Jews, high-up Jews; Jews of power and genius! ... A curse on your silence! That frightened silence of Jews that made the Germans laugh as they slaughtered. You with your Jewish hearts hidden in your American boots!⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *A Flag is Born* (Script), 1946, page 21. American League for a Free Palestine Records; I-278; box CB 2; folder 4; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

The appeal to Americans was an interesting one. While harshly criticizing American Jews and their fearful complicity, Hecht also appealed to their American identity, to their desire to be stronger, to reclaim their Jewish manhood. It was after all, written by an American Jew who maintained a strong yet conflicted connection between his Jewish and American identities.⁴⁷ Jewish Americans like Hecht may not have wanted to move to Palestine themselves, but they recognized it as the training ground for Jewish masculinity and praised the muscular form of Judaism being created there.⁴⁸ At the close of the play, when spectral Jewish Palestinian soldiers appear to David, they promise him to “wrest our homeland out of British claws--as the Americans once did.” Hecht here appeals to American pride and equates the fight in Palestine with American independence. The soldiers tell David that his connection (and the implied connection of any other diaspora Jews that may have been in the audience) to his people and his land would rescue him from the degradation of diasporic Jewry, and lead him, they promise, “to the land where manhood and a gun wait for you.”⁴⁹

Though Hecht was American, many of his colleagues in the League were not. They were Palestinian Zionists whose actions, statements, and publicity efforts not only caused anger and resistance from the American Zionist elites, but also inspired them to deplore the ALFP as counterproductive to the cause of Jewish survival. Leading American Jewish organizations denounced the actions of these newly formed groups as a misleading representation of the Zionist

⁴⁷ Hecht wrote in his autobiography that it was not until the mass murder of Jews in Germany began that he “became a Jew” in his anger and determination to fight. In doing so, he explained, he simultaneously became an American in a truer sense than his having simply been born in the United States. Ben Hecht, *A Child of the Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1954), 518.

⁴⁸ See earlier analysis of American Jewish perspectives on Muscular Zionism in the first chapter, section titled “American-Made: Muscular Zionism in the States.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

struggle by a few unsupported and unqualified adventurers from Palestine. Kook and his group refused to cooperate with the pre-existing American Jewish establishment and through their publications undermined them by claiming that they were the only group taking measurable action.⁵⁰ The American Zionist Emergency Council (AZEC) referred to them as “a handful of young men ... attempting to perpetrate a colossal hoax upon the American people.” They urged the public, “Do not be misled by this group’s publicity – remember that full-page advertisements will not rebuild the Jewish National Home.”⁵¹ They stressed that true American Zionists should not patronize the league’s pageant, *We will Never Die*, or give any funds to the league.⁵² In fact, the Jewish establishment was so unhappy with the pageant that they actively attempted to shut down production. Rabbi Stephen Wise, as the head of AZEC, particularly disliked Kook, calling him a rabble-rouser and a troublemaker.⁵³

Despite the friction among American Zionist circles, the material released by the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews promoting the Jewish state and Jewish manhood galvanized at least a few Jewish American men into defining themselves anew with each military, social, and agricultural success in Israel. It provided them a concrete example of the modern Jewish military hero they had longed for during the war and missed all the more

⁵⁰ In truth, Peter Bergson (Hillel Kook) believed initially that he *could* work with the American Jewish and Zionist establishment. However, though he initially cooperated with their early requests for him not to publish incendiary material, when they stopped inviting him to the table or responding to his queries, he stopped attempting to appease them. David S. Wyman, “The Bergson Group, America, and the Holocaust: A Previously Unpublished Interview with Hillel Kook/Peter Bergson,” *American Jewish History* 89, no. 1 (March 2001): 11-13.

⁵¹ Various disclaimers by American Zionist organizations, American League for a Free Palestine Records; I-278; box 2; folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁵² Zionists vs. League: Dispute Flares up in Boston Area, *Jewish Weekly Times*, February 2, 1947, 1, 5.

⁵³ Quoted in Judith Tydor Baumel’s *The "Bergson Boys" And the Origins of Contemporary Zionist Militancy* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 122-23.

because of the piteous image of European Jewry in light of the Holocaust. Israel did not attempt to incorporate the Holocaust or the image of the wizened survivor into international relations or culture from the start of their nation through the late sixties. In fact, they attempted to downplay the role of the European Jewish tragedy in their national story. As we have seen, the new Israeli state welcomed all Jews, but survivors from Europe were not Sabras, they were not representative of the new state or the new Jew. The goal of the state was to create an entirely new life for Jews, allowing them to shed their ghetto mentalities and diaspora weaknesses, precisely what the Palestinian Jewish heroes of *A Flag is Born* had promised.

American Jewish Youth and Israel

American Zionist youth transformed in the years surrounding the creation of the Israeli state. Over about a decade, from the close of the war to the mid-fifties, the focus of Zionist youth organizations shifted from zealous support for the creation of a state (and rallying American youth to migrate themselves to Palestine to fight for independence) to a stance that supported the State of Israel but accepted the reality of Zionism in America without the necessity of aliyah (immigration of Jews from diaspora communities to the land of Israel/Palestine). The earlier part of this support, the push for American migration to Israel, manifested in the form of physical training, camps, and militaristic education.⁵⁴ Zionist youth groups used the fight for Israeli statehood, a uniquely *Jewish* fight, to rally support. Once statehood had been declared and the war for independence won, however, the urgent need for migration became a harder sell.

⁵⁴ This section provides information on elements of this earlier part of the movement, focusing on both the revisionist *Betar* movement and other Zionist groups, such as the American Zionist Youth Commission.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Jewish American youth began idolizing the Israeli fighter during the Second World War, comparing him to the weaker, defenseless Jews of Europe and even Jews in the United States. The generational difference in American Zionist ideology during the war demonstrates the hero-worshipping of the younger generation. There were separate youth movements, Zionist and Revisionist, leading up to the war (just as there were in the adult Zionist organizations), but as the war raged on, young American Zionist leadership militarized on both sides. The Revisionist youth movement, Betar (created by Jabotinsky), reflected the same militaristic and anti-establishment sentiments as did the adult movement. Even the name, Betar, pays homage to a Palestinian hero, as it is short for Brith Trumpeldor, so named for Captain Joseph Trumpeldor, who cofounded the Jewish Legion with Jabotinsky and who the group hailed as one of the first real Jewish heroes of modern-day Palestine.⁵⁵

In 1931, Zionist youth founded the American branch of Betar and the material they distributed from Betar (like the materials produced by the Hebrew Freedom Movement) depicted the halutz as a brawny Jewish hero, a physical redemption of the male Jewish body. The American Betar movement grew as news of the Jewish plight in Europe trickled into American newspapers. Also like the Revisionist adult leadership, Betar disparaged the American Jewish establishment for throwing money at the problem of Israel, assuming charity would help to eventually create a state, instead of leaving for Palestine to fight like men. By the end of the war, Betar criticized their own pre-war movement as well, saying that when the war began American Zionist youth was fully unprepared to fight the necessary battles, that they were “still busy collecting pennies to plant and

⁵⁵ *This is Betar*, 13.

build houses.”⁵⁶ Much like the ALFP, they saw the Holocaust as a rallying cry for young Zionists to take measurable action.

Betar’s practical goals included educating Jewish American youth to enable them to fulfil their Zionist duty through psychological, moral, and physical training. They aimed to create a new Jew “out of decay and disintegration, through sweat and blood, a new people—proud, kind and refined, and tough.”⁵⁷ They drew on the imagery of the Maccabees, taking the menorah as their emblem, and teaching Jewish boys to be militant Zionists. They opened the Jabotinsky Aviation School in Queens, New York, in the hopes that once a Jewish legion was created, as it had been (by Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor) in the First World War, the hundreds of attending Jewish boys would be ready to join the fight at a moment’s notice. After Pearl Harbor, however, once America entered the war, the government shut down all private aviation schools and (according to Betar ephemera) every boy from the Jabotinsky school joined the United States Army.⁵⁸ Betar also opened a summer camp, Camp Betar, in Hunter, New York, where their founder Jabotinsky died in 1940.

At the close of the war, however, the Revisionist movement resumed their training of American youth. Brith Trumpeldor of America, Inc., an affiliate of the New World Zionist Organization of America (NZOA), which Jabotinsky founded when he broke away from the World Zionist Organization in 1935, opened a school to train Jewish American teens (sixteen and over) to fight in Palestine.⁵⁹ The two-month course included military drills, jiu jitsu, map reading and sketching, Palestinian geography, radio communications, Hebrew and Arabic language, hand-to-

⁵⁶ *This is Betar*, 48.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁹ Medoff, *Militant Zionism in America*, 26. “Youths Drill Here to Free Palestine,” *New York Times*, January 14, 1946.

hand fighting, and wrestling. When the course was completed, students were expected to leave for Palestine to fight, or to remain in America to train “the thousands who look to Betar for guidance and adequate preparation for the task confronting them and Jewry.” They made no attempt to hide the rebellious nature of their recruiting or their disdain for the practices of the American Zionist establishment, “If you are ready for action, if you want more than demonstrations, if you believe as we do that in the hands of American Jewish youth lies the future of Palestine, if you are a proud and militant Jew, then you will join our school.”⁶⁰

Though Betar remained the official Revisionist movement youth group on college campuses, other Zionist groups looked to the Revisionist movement for answers to questions raised by the inaction of the leading Zionist establishment. The Zionist Organization of America and Hadassah joined together in 1940 to create the American Zionist Youth Commission (AZYC) to support organized Zionist education for American Jewish youth, from a perspective compliant with the goals and policies of the World Zionist Organization. Several Jewish campus groups operated as affiliates of the AZYC (and were provided some funding through the parent organizations), including Hillel and Avukah (The American Student Zionist Federation). The ZOA recognized Avukah in 1925 as the only officially supported campus Zionist organization. To their displeasure, however, Avukah also began to harshly criticize the ZOA for what they considered feeble wartime actions and Zionist leadership. The youth leadership, by 1942, had radicalized and begun to stray from American Zionist institutions. They disagreed on several points and became determined to recognize three goals for their organization: the security of Jews in America, the fight against fascism, and their connection to a Jewish Palestine. These points

⁶⁰ “Youths Drill Here to Free Palestine,” *New York Times*, January 14, 1946.

helped the group fashion a more militant, radical agenda. Non-militant American Zionism as it stood, they argued, could be considered “historically and politically non-existent.”⁶¹

American Zionist leadership grew increasingly uncomfortable with the more right-wing, militant language emerging from Avukah and attempted to negotiate the youth groups policies to fall back in line with those of the ZOA, so as not to alienate possible recruits or the larger campus communities. After eighteen months of negotiation with AZYC, Avukah leadership concluded that mainstream American Zionist leadership was weak, preferring a “hush-hush” and “be nice” policy to actual Zionist action. “The only adult Zionist group that is bringing up political issues today is the Revisionist ... The ZOA today has a ‘class Zionism’ which does not tolerate Avukah.”⁶² More than anything, Avukah became frustrated with the establishment’s determination to ‘toe the line,’ to remain inconspicuous, and avoid publicity for Jewish action on campus. Though not an exclusively male group, Avukah’s leadership (nearly all those railing against the establishment) were predominantly male.⁶³ In the AZYC report on the “Avukah problem” in 1942, the chairman made a point of explaining that the two female student representatives who appeared to meet with the adult organization were merely sent as props. The commission realized, when checking the backgrounds of the two women, that neither of them actually acted as leaders in Avukah (as they claimed), but were wives of ex-chairmen, presently

⁶¹ *The Avukah Problem: A Special Report by the American Zionist Youth Commission, 1942*, 18; Campus Zionism collection; I-428; box 1; folder “Avukah convention Reports”; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁶² Statements from both students (whose praesidium included future neocon Nathan Glazer) and faculty advisors are used here from “Militant Student Zionism,” Summary Report of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of Avukah, June 15, 1942; Campus Zionism collection; I-428; box 1; folder “Avukah convention Reports”; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁶³ The Executive Secretary was female.

serving as adult advisors for the organization.⁶⁴ In light of their growing militancy, Herman Weisman (the chairman of the commission) urged the ZOA and Hadassah to rescind recognition of Avukah as the only university campus Zionist organization.

In Jewish youth groups across the country, the strength, stoicism, and success of the Israeli soldier became an aspirational goal for Jewish American boys. Though aliyah of their core membership had never been the primary objective of the majority of even the most ardent of American Jewish youth groups before the war, in 1945 the goals of organized Jewish youth showed a quick movement towards migration to Palestine. Before the war several different Zionist American youth groups existed (some of which have been discussed, including Hashomer Hatzair, Avukah, and Left Labor Zionists), and many lost some of their wartime membership to the war efforts, as young Jewish boys volunteered to serve. When the war ended, several of these diminished groups reorganized themselves into the Intercollegiate Zionist Federation of America (IZFA), which included both the AZYC and Avukah. Their new program worked with unprecedented effort to send as many young Jews as possible to migrate to Palestine to live in kibbutzim and help build the Jewish State.⁶⁵

The IZFA gathered a core group of student leaders, the *Haoleh*, to promote aliyah among members. The *Haoleh* brought students on weekend trips from college campuses to *halutziut* (pioneering) training farms to indoctrinate and prepare participants for aliyah. The farms were modeled on and run by Israelis, as American Jewish youth's role models for rugged Judaism.

⁶⁴ This was explained as particularly duplicitous since the women used their maiden names, to obscure their relationships with the men in charge. *The Avukah Problem: A Special Report by the American Zionist Youth Commission, 1942*; Campus Zionism collection; I-428; box 1; folder "Avukah convention Reports"; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁶⁵ Sumner Alpert, "Zionism on the Campus," *Jewish Education* 18, no. 2 (February/March 1947): 41.

When the war broke out in Israel, they increased efforts to send young American Jews to Israel to fight, and to support the Haganah.⁶⁶ The core group of IZFA members put a good deal of effort into proselytizing to other Jewish groups (like college campus Hillel organizations), and by the mid-fifties most of the original members made aliyah, and the remainder of the group reformed into a less zealous migration-based organization, the Student Zionist Organization (SZO).

The generational tension between Zionist youth groups and the Jewish establishment only grew in the decades which followed, as Jews in the United States watched the developing Israeli nation from afar, contemplated their own lack of action during the Holocaust, and debated their current responsibility to the Jewish state. Zionist youth, frustrated with the American Jewish establishment, continued to distance themselves and move further to the left. The sense of responsibility became more complex as America entered an unprecedented age of affluence in the postwar years. This affluence provided many Americans access to the middle class and altered several facets of life in America for Jews and non-Jews alike. Unlike the burgeoning State of Israel, American masculinity became less measured through physical prowess and fighting power, and more associated with affluence and conformity in suburban life. In the nineteen sixties, American Jewish youth explored their frustration and anxiety over the tension between these conflicting masculine ideals in the social and political movements of the time.

⁶⁶ Carole Joffe, "Changes in Campus Zionism," *The Maccabean: Forum for American Jewish Youth* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1965): 15-24. Accessed through the American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

The blacks in America are the first to abjure the idea of assimilation, to realize the inherent lie in the concept of the melting-pot . . . Today's young American Jew is a good bit slower. He desperately wants assimilation; Jewishness embarrasses him . . . He cannot accept the fact that he is seen as a Jew, that his destiny is that of the Jews, and that his only effectiveness is as a Jew. But he wants to be an "American," . . . he is a ludicrous figure. He joins black nationalist groups, not as a Jew but as a white man. His whiteness, his precious whiteness, is too valuable to him for it to be relegated to a secondary position. He does not understand that his relevance to the black struggle is as a Jew and a fellow victim of endless white exploitation . . . He must realize that his own struggle for liberation is a continuing one, that he too has much to fear and also much of which to be proud. The miracle of Israel, a national liberation deferred for 2000 years, should be his inspiration. The Jew did it alone, as the black knows he must, and he did it with guns.

-M. Jay Rosenberg, 1969¹

CHAPTER VI: MANHOOD IN AMERICAN JEWISH POST-WAR CULTURE

The affluence of postwar America altered the definition of manhood in the United States and presented new challenges to the rugged Judaism emerging simultaneously in Israel. American suburbs became a new proving ground for masculinity and American men struggled to conform and adhere to universalized ideas of normalcy, providing alternate avenues to masculine identity, apart from military service and outward toughness. Fear of communism and difference in the early years of the Cold War further added to the frantic need to prove oneself, as cold warriors like Joseph McCarthy equated communism and socialism with homosexuality, effete intellectuals, and

¹ M. Jay Rosenberg, "To Uncle Tom & Other Such Jews," 1969; Jewish Counter Culture Collection; I-504; box 5; folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY.

soft men.² Such crises in gender identity affected some groups more quickly and powerfully than others, particularly those already experiencing differences in perceived masculinity. Jewish Americans fought throughout the war to prove themselves and continually encountered resistance and bigotry.³ But in postwar America, Jewish manhood (and Jewish identity on the whole) entered a complex period of flux and crisis. American Jewish youth particularly felt the influence of both the changing masculine norms in the United States (both the ever-present military hero and the newly established suburban man) and the new image of Jewish strength coalescing in Palestine.⁴

We have seen how traditional Jewish manhood, valuing scholarly pursuits and cultivating a gentle nature, had been challenged over the early twentieth century, among individuals and within urban Jewish communities. In the postwar years, however, as the American middle class expanded, and suburban life grew to represent the dominant American dream (and conformity the watchword of the day), Jewish America followed suit. Where a life of scholarly interest and study had previously been so esteemed, Jewish America came to embrace the more mainstream goals of achieving manhood by acquiring and maintaining bread-winning positions, enabling Jewish fathers to support wives and children who need not work themselves.⁵ This change in Jewish life, and indeed it constituted a measurable change from pre-war Jewish occupations and affluence, stirred up concerns in the Jewish community about a growing crisis of Jewish identity, as tension

² Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 236.

³ As seen in Chapter V, particularly in the area of military service.

⁴ Though of course Jews were still subject to the draft and served as did all other groups in the following decade, particularly during the War in Korea.

⁵ This changing expectation for Jewish men is discussed in more detail in the following section, but is explained in Rachel Kranson's discussion of masculinity and upward mobility in her 2017 book, *Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility in Postwar America*. Postwar changes to American manhood affected all American men, but Kranson argues that it affected Jewish men more than most, as more Jewish men entered professional fields.

built between the conflicting images of the scholar, the sabra, the American war hero, and the American middle-class success.

As many middle-class Jews settled into suburban life and relative wealth, the struggle on the ground in Palestine raged on. Even after Israel emerged victorious in the War for Independence and declared their statehood, Israeli men and women struggled to build the new state, resettle refugees, and make the desert bloom. Some Jewish American men, themselves veterans of the Second World War, went to Israel themselves to help fight, build, and (as in the case of Leon Uris) to popularize the new emerging Jewish image from Palestine. The films, literature, and media which emerged from American Jewish life throughout the fifties and sixties sharply contrasted the image of increasingly soft suburban men in the United States and the rugged men building a new society in the Palestinian desert.

America in the Sixties

Jews in the Widening Middle Class

Unease regarding growing Jewish American affluence abounded in the late fifties and early sixties. Much of the middle-class Jewish community experienced very real societal advances, but some Jews saw this progress as detrimental to Jewish religious life and intellectual tradition. Criticism of this upward mobility, and the type of men it created, laid the foundation for the Jewish archetypes in film and fiction that still define Jewish American life today, both within and outside of the Jewish community. The pre-existing image of bookish Jewish intellectuals was buttressed by the newly emerging Jewish businessman, career-driven and (though not scholarly in the traditional Jewish sense) living the life of an educated and successful elite.

Criticism of Jewish American affluence by militant Zionists (both in and outside of the country) reached its height during the war. Betarim programming taught participants that the movement had failed to gain ground in time to be of real help during the war because American Zionists believed that what was needed of them was money, not blood and sweat in the fight for a Zionist state. The movement resented assimilation in the United States as the cause, calling it “ugly, disgusting and bankrupt.”⁶ They referred to an American Zionism they dubbed “Zionism deluxe,” in which the only obligation of the Zionist was to help provide refuge through charity to poor Jews overseas.⁷ This view of American Zionism was wide-spread even before the war, enough so that there was a well-known joke which defined an American Zionist as: one Jew who collects funds from a second Jew to send a third Jew to Palestine.⁸ Much of this changed, however, in the conditions of the postwar world. Once Israel established statehood, the urgent need to help overseas evaporated and American Jews enjoyed the economic boom of the years following the war.

The image of Jewish America changed in the postwar years, as Rachel Kranson outlined in her 2017 work, *Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility in Postwar America*. Kranson explained that although the postwar shift in American manhood (largely from cities to suburbs) affected all American men, it reached Jewish men in even greater proportions than most American communities, as larger percentages of Jewish men entered professional fields.⁹ In postwar Jewish American literature, three Jewish types interact and compete in a constant reevaluation of Jewish

⁶ *This is Betar*, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 61

⁸ References to this description of American Zionism appear in several memoirs, Betar literature, ALFP materials, and elsewhere.

⁹ Rachel Kranson, *Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 99.

manhood: the tough Israeli (the halutz or the sabra); the suburban Jew of American affluence; and the traditional bookish Jewish intellectual.

Jewish writers, producers, and media-makers used these contrasting images of Jewish manhood to comment on and evaluate Jewish life in postwar America. One of the most prominent and frequently referenced authors writing fiction in this vein of male evaluation is Phillip Roth, whose Jewish male protagonists sat on the uncomfortable dividing line of traditional Jewish intellectualism and post-war assimilation, watching with trepidation as Jewish manhood changed, and trying to find their place in the changing male landscape. The characters that Roth created presented as simultaneously superior in their traditional intellectualism and inferior in their earning potential and place in larger society and expectations for American men.¹⁰

With Phillip Roth and other Jewish writers of his time, we see a revival in the concept of the “self-hating Jew” a term to which I have earlier given some attention. The criticisms of modern Jewry as physically or culturally inferior by contemporary Jews built on themes from early German Zionist ideas of Jewish regeneration. Max Nordau’s critique of European Jews in the mid-nineteenth century as degenerate, weak, and disconnected from their stronger ancestors reemerged in light of the Israeli state, demonstrated by unfavorable comparison to the Jews of Israel. Just like earlier views presented through muscular Zionism, Roth’s neurotic intellectual American Jewish male characters also internalized antisemitic views, this time with an added caricature of the Jew as corrupted by his monetary success. Criticism of upwardly mobile American Jews as unmanly and degenerate was particularly prominent among those who extolled the virtues of the

¹⁰ For a brief analysis of this tension between tradition and affluence, read the fourth chapter of Kranson’s *Ambivalent Embrace*, titled, “What Kind of Job Is That for a Nice Jewish Boy? Masculinity in an Upwardly Mobile Community,” 97-113.

Israeli fighting forces. These critics held wealthy American Jews as examples of the deterioration of Jewish life against which Jews in Israel must fight.

Interestingly, there is a marked difference in the way Zionists drew this comparison and criticism. The Revisionists, those in the ALFP (who supported the Irgun and more militant rebellion), harshly criticized American Jewish men, presumably to shame them into action to support Israeli fighters.¹¹ Those supporting the leading American Zionist institutions and the Haganah's tactics for more gradual independence recognized that their own strengths as Jewish American businessmen were not physical or heroic, and so they appealed to their sense of pride in their success, rather than their sense of shame in not being "tough" themselves.¹² Contributing support to manly Jews abroad allowed these American Jewish men to feel as though they were underwriting the fight to improve the image of Jews everywhere. Both, by different means, held American Jewish men as weak counterparts to the heroes of Palestine. An excellent example of these different strategies can be found in comparing the Revisionist Ben Hecht's play, *A Flag is Born* (1946), and the bestselling novel by Leon Uris, *Exodus* (1958).

If Ben Hecht was, in his desire to prompt immediate action, harshly critical of the American Jewish and Zionist philanthropic community, Leon Uris wrote *Exodus* with the opposite intention. *Exodus* attempted to foster support through pride in Jewish progress in Israel by appealing to an

¹¹ Peter H. Bergson and Dr. Chaim Weizmann engaged in a very public exchange, in which Bergson repeatedly attacked Weizmann and other American Jewish leaders as continuing a status quo of Jewish American leadership which was both "disastrous for us Hebrews and most harmful and potentially explosive for Jews everywhere," by denying support to the cause of an independent Jewish Palestine. "You and all these good people," Bergson explained of American Jewish organizations, "must understand how futile and ridiculous and harmful this all is." "Blueprint for Hebrew Freedom: A Letter from Peter H. Bergson to Dr. Chaim Weizmann," American League for a Free Palestine Records; I-278; box 2; folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹² As was the case in the Sonneborn Institute, discussed in the earlier section titled, "American Jews and the Creation of a Jewish State."

American sense of kinship with the fledgling state, not by shaming American Jews to action. *Exodus* presented a fictionalized account of the heroic and illegal transport of Jews from Europe to Palestine in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The novel glorified the Jews of Palestine as manly to an unprecedented degree. Though Jewish audiences around the world adored the new perception of Jews that Uris promoted, the glorification of Palestinian (and Israeli) Jews targeted primarily American audiences. Uris (who himself served in the United States Marine Corps during the Second World War) explained, “I wrote *Exodus* because I was just sick of apologizing—or feeling that it was necessary to apologize. The Jewish community of this country has contributed far more greatly than its numbers I am definitely biased. I am definitely pro-Jewish.”¹³ His goal was less to affect Israelis or any of the key players in the story, but to emotionally move (and even redeem) Jewish Americans through his retelling. And indeed, some of the historical actors upon which he based the book expressed discomfort at the “toughness” which Uris had retroactively granted them in his retelling. One of the captains of the real-life Exodus, Captain Yehiel Aranowicz, told *Time Magazine*, “Israelis were pretty disappointed in the book, to put it lightly. The types that are described in it never existed in Israel. The novel is neither history nor literature.”¹⁴

At the forefront of disparaging the new tough Jewish image was Philip Roth, who just a few years after the publication of *Exodus*, exchanged very public criticisms with Leon Uris. Their published back-and-forth provides an excellent example of the growing tensions in popular depictions of American Jewish masculinity. While Uris attempted to put a masculine and heroic

¹³ Quoted in Joseph Wershba, “Daily Closeup: Leon Uris, Author of ‘Exodus,’” *New York Post*, July 2, 1959, 34.

¹⁴ Quote from Philip Roth, “The New Jewish Stereotypes,” *American Judaism* 11, no. 2 (Winter, 1961): 11.

shine on the American Jewish community by glorious representations of Israelis and Jewish family life, Roth wrote about what he saw as the unique family problems found in Jewish American homes, which, quite contrary to Uris's work, showed emasculated men closely guarded by their doting Jewish mothers. According to Uris there was, in the late fifties, a certain school of Jewish American writers who:

...spend their time damning their fathers, hating their mothers, wringing their hands and wondering why they were born. This isn't art or literature. It's psychiatry. These writers are professional apologists. Every year you find one of their works on the bestseller lists. They do a disservice to the Jewish people. Their work is obnoxious and makes me sick to my stomach.

For his part, Roth points to the mendacity of the depictions of Jewish heroes in novels by Uris and those of his ilk. He explained that they (in this case specifically Uris and Golden, author of *Only in America*):

...burden no one with anything. Indeed, much of their appeal lies in the fact that they help to dissipate guilt, real and imagined. It turns out that the Jews are not innocent victims after all—all the time they were supposed to be persecuted, humiliated, and mocked, they were having a good time being warm to one another and having their wonderful family lives.¹⁵

The real problem with this happy view of Jewish life, Roth explains, is that Jews are never the only readers of this popular work. While it may improve public relations for American Jews, and make those who read it feel good, he argued that it contained a significant secondary statement, which is that "if the victim is not a victim, then the victimizer is not a victimizer either."¹⁶

In works like Roth and Uris, we find the tension between popular representations of Jews in postwar America clearly depicted. Not all Jews in America enthusiastically embraced the image of the tough Jews, which for some, was a long welcome (and even hard-won) reward. Uris is a perfect example of this second attitude, though he had more in common with Roth's writing in his

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

real life than his published back-and-forth with Roth might indicate. Deride the image of the hated, doting, typical American Jewish mother though he might, Uris himself had a relationship with his own mother which reads quite like characters in a Philip Roth novel. M.M. Silver, in his book on Leon Uris and the writing of *Exodus*, even conjectured that “*Exodus* was one massive and theatrical way to win an argument with a whining Jewish mother.”¹⁷ This discussion is readable in interactions between adult Jewish men in popular media in the nineteen fifties. In the following decade, Jewish children raised in postwar America (those who, unlike Roth and Uris, did not live through and remember the Second World War and the Holocaust) also struggled with their Jewish identity, but by the sixties, America was so tumultuous that American youth struggled with all aspects of their identity.

The nineteen sixties were years of tremendous and fast-paced change, ramping up over the decade to what several American historians identify as a year of rupture in 1968.¹⁸ It was the peak of the Vietnam War and the antiwar movement (particularly considering the Tet Offensive and the My Lai massacre). The country was in near chaos, with riots breaking out in Washington, Chicago, and Baltimore; the assassinations of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy; and an unprecedented variation and degree of protest (civil rights, university campus upsets, antiwar demonstrations, feminist rallies, gay rights protests, Black Power demonstrations, and the rise of the drug culture). Jewish students grappled with their Jewish identity in light of Israel, their

¹⁷ M. M. Silver, *Our Exodus: Leon Uris and the Americanization of Israel's Founding Story* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 114-115.

¹⁸ For further reading on the sixties and 1968 specifically, see Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2004); Elaine Carey and Alfred J. Andrea, editors, *Protests in the Streets: 1968 Across the Globe* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2016); and Kosc, Grzegorz, Clara Juncker, Sharon Monteith, and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson, eds., *The Transatlantic Sixties: Europe and the United States in the Counterculture Decade* (Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag, 2013).

American identity in light of atrocities of war, and their place in Jewish American society in light of the Civil Rights Movement.

In this environment, all elements of American life came into question, and gender played a very important role in that questioning. While women fought for equal rights, and men contemplated their future and the possibility of the draft, gender rose to the surface both as an issue itself (as in the feminist and gay rights movements) and as an issue attached to other problems of the day. The war in Vietnam was a central issue to nearly all elements of social upheaval in the sixties. It affected people differently based on their ethnicity, sexual orientation, level of education, and especially gender.¹⁹ For all the reasons that the previous wars we discussed defined and promoted hegemonic masculinity, the Vietnam war did the same. The difference, however, is that unlike both World Wars, American involvement in the Vietnam War was a highly contentious issue, and those on the far Left determinedly fought against it. Jews have historically tended to be on the far left, and so in this war, unlike in previous examples, Jewish men did not show up in disproportionate numbers to prove their manhood.²⁰ I suggest that instead, they attempted to prove

¹⁹ That the American military draft during the Vietnam conflict affected men more than women is clear as the draft did not include women. But many activists of the time (particularly John Lewis and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) and historians since have argued that the draft disproportionately discriminated against African Americans. For an examination of the specific effect of the draft on African Americans, see James E. Westheider, *Fighting on Two Fronts: African Americans and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), chapter II (“I’m Not a Draft Evader . . . I’m a Runaway Slave”: African Americans and the Draft).

²⁰ Though there are no dependable records for Jewish enlistment, voluntary or draft, for the war in Vietnam, there are other records which show the decline in Jewish enthusiasm for service. For example, the records of Jewish Peace Fellowship, a group founded in 1941 by Jewish anti-war activists to support conscientious objectors in 1941, show their peak membership (between 1941 and the present) during the years of the conflict in Vietnam. Their newsletter, *Shalom*, also shows the leaders of the Jewish Peace Fellowship struggling to keep up with and assist all of the young Jewish men attempting, at record numbers, to obtain conscientious objector status during the conflict in Vietnam. By 1971, their fundraising materials pleaded that “in greater numbers than ever before, young men and women are turning to the Jewish Peace Fellowship” as their

it elsewhere, by entirely different means, and introduced new masculinities to the Jewish American character in the process. Rejection of the war meant rejection of what it promoted, which was multifaceted, but included traditional militaristic manhood.

The Vietnam War and American Manhood

By the early sixties, young Jews in America actively discussed the rising extreme right and its threat to Jewish acceptance in the American landscape.²¹ The threat of communism and its perceived association with Jewish intellectuals put American Jews on the defensive. This issue particularly affected young Jews who often found themselves at odds with the American Right, participating as they did in large numbers in the Civil Rights Movement. Young American Jews felt drawn to the struggle of African Americans on several levels (which will be discussed in more detail in the following section), but the SZO considered it their duty to commit to the struggle of Civil Rights and to reach out to include Black Jews in particular, who they saw as an underserved sub-group of American Jewry (which was discriminated against even by the white Jewish majority), as well as prospective Zionists.²²

With the entrance of the United States into the Vietnam War, criticism of American militarism grew in step with fervent escalation of masculine wartime rhetoric, and this rift shook the beliefs that many Americans held about masculinity and strength. The war certainly maintained the traditional, militaristic focus on masculinity through vigor, national service,

only Jewish pacifist option. *Shalom: The Jewish Peace Fellowship Newsletter*; Jewish Peace Fellowship Records; I-189; box number; folder number; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY.

²¹ As personified by the Barry Goldwater campaign and the resurgence of the American conservative right.

²² Joel Brooks, "The Black Jewish Community," *The Maccabean: Forum for American Jewish Youth* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1965): 48-56.

victory, and brotherhood. The Johnson Administration, facing criticism at home, was particularly set on maintaining a masculine image through the war. The president famously stated, in a moment of bravado, that “We not only screwed Ho Chi Minh, we cut his pecker off,” emasculating and metaphorically castrating the enemy.²³ This hypermasculine Cold War “measuring contest” that Johnson maintained throughout his presidency was just part of a much larger fear that he was “insufficiently manly for the job.”²⁴ His wartime attitude towards Ho Chi Minh and the Soviet Bloc was well-known enough for there to have been a joke in Washington, highlighting the nervous defense of American manhood. The joke is that the Soviet Union placed an order through the American government for hundreds of cases of twelve-inch condoms. In response, the administration, unwilling to admit to any implications of not possessing any of that size, produces the prophylactics, and sends them to the Soviets in cases marked “Short.”²⁵

Despite the strength and longevity of wartime machismo, two other very significant additions to American definitions of masculinity emerged during the war in Vietnam. The first is a change in the persistent model of masculinity provided by military service, which largely depended on the support of the nation and citizens at home. Prior to the Vietnam War, service in the military was one of the most reliable bastions of masculinity available to American men. Soldiers fighting in Vietnam, whether drafted or voluntarily enlisted, found this formerly

²³ The masculine theme cuts both ways in this war, as leaders use it as motivation to push forward on all sides. Though Johnson claims to have emasculated Ho Chi Minh, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, explained, “What is happening in Vietnam cannot be repeated. We cannot allow the same forces that have emasculated South Vietnam to emasculate the whole region.” David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972), chapter 18, e-book. Kuan Yew quote from Kahane, *The Jewish Stake in Vietnam* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1967), 183.

²⁴ For more on Johnson and desperate masculinity, see the eighth chapter of Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, titled: The Masculine Mystique.

²⁵ The joke is related in Andrew Bard Schmookler, *Out of Weakness: Healing the Wounds That Drive Us to War* (New York: Bantam Books 1988), 126.

dependable means of shoring up masculinity now criticized back home as having indulged in hypermasculine excess or a sort of false masculinity. Upon returning home, they found that, in many ways, Americans saw them as “failed men.”²⁶

In addition, the war created an unprecedented legion of disabled veterans, with unique emotional trauma, especially those disabled through use of Agent Orange who were denied recognition, and therefore support, by the government for their injuries and suffering.²⁷ The returning wounded soldiers (whether mentally or physically) paired with the tremendous blow of American defeat, forced men searching for a masculine identity to reassert their manhood through a different sort of strength. A portion of those men returning from war found such an alternate strength based on friendship, camaraderie, and shared trauma (some as prisoners of war). In what some scholars of masculinity call the *remasculinization process* of the seventies and eighties, American producers of film, television, and literature created a new articulation of male identity, reflecting on the Vietnam War, which focused on comradeship and strength through brotherhood.²⁸

The other new addition to the growing landscape of American masculine identities is the draft resister (this includes illegal dodgers, legitimate medical test failures, registered conscientious objectors, and those who escaped the draft through active enrollment at university). Detractors of draft resisters associated them with the image of long-haired hippies, emasculated and ridiculed as homosexual. They criticized antiwar protestors as unmanly and draft-dodgers as cowardly. Even the terms which became commonplace when referring to supporters and

²⁶ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 263.

²⁷ This was the case until the administration acknowledged that the substance was indeed harmful to humans and offered veterans disability benefits in 2015.

²⁸ For more on this remasculinization process in film and television, see Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

detractors of the war, *hawks* (supporters of the war) and *doves* (those against the war) were feminizing. Hawks disparaged doves through feminizing language, belittling those at all levels of antiwar sentiment. Johnson attacked a member of his own cabinet as a dove, ridiculing his masculinity, he exclaimed, “Hell, he has to squat to piss.”²⁹ And this language and anti-dove sentiment all had an effect, whatever an individual’s feeling about the war, on their sense of compromised masculinity.³⁰

Say Burgin argued, in her 2012 article on the gendering effects of the antiwar movement on activists, that this threatened masculinity gave those who evaded the draft a sense of guilt for not serving their manly duties, and instilled in them a desire to assert their manliness within the antiwar movement.³¹ Within the movement, and in response to accusations of cowardice by hawks, protestors and draft resisters redefined their brand of masculinity as one which was not based around the militaristic warring archetype. They saw their resistance to needless war as a more sincere manhood, based on responsibility to society and justice. In doing so, however, they often strengthened their sense of masculinity through dominance over women in the movement. Todd Gitlin, in his history/memoir on the wartime protest movement, *The Sixties*, clearly depicts a culture dominated by heterosexual men, with a deeply entrenched support of the dominant patriarchal model. Recognizing their importance to the success of the movement, he referred to women activists as the “cement of the male-run movement.”³² Some of the most influential women

²⁹ Myrian Miedzian, *Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002), chap. 2, e-book.

³⁰ Say Burgin, “Understanding Antiwar Activism as a Gendering Activity: A Look at the U.S.’s Anti-Vietnam War Movement,” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 13, no. 6 (2012): 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 374. Gitlin devotes a short chapter to the break of women from the antiwar movement into feminist circles in “Women: Revolution in the Revolution,” 362-377.

in various protest movements of the sixties and seventies, expressed the frustration they felt in dealing with the male-dominated political culture, particularly on college campuses.³³

Backlash and Rebellion

Counterculture, Protest, and the Jewish American Man

The antiwar movement of the sixties contained a distinctly Jewish dimension which manifested as a highly gendered phenomenon. Among the primary actors in antiwar demonstration, Jewish men actively and disproportionately took on leadership positions. Some of the most recognizable figures of the time were Jewish, such as Jerry Rubin, Robert Alan Haber, Abbie Hoffman, Mark Rudd, Allen Ginsberg, David Gilbert, and A.J. Weberman.³⁴ In spite of major disruptions to gender norms caused by multifaceted massive social change in the sixties (second-wave feminism, antiwar protest, protesting the draft, black nationalism, etc.), Jewish men still struggled to find their own unique place in the ever-broadening landscape of masculinities in the United States. In this section we examine both Jews in the New Left, and the Jewish New Left.

As non-violent protest increased all over the country, Jews became particularly prominent among the protesters and supporters of social movements around the United States. Even in non-Jewish specific groups, Jews were quite visible in leadership and among the ranks. According to

³³ In her 2018 book on Jewish Radical Feminism, Joyce Antler relays the experiences of some of these prominent feminist activists. A close examination of Jewish feminism appears at the end of this section, after the issues of masculinity and whiteness have been discussed. Joyce Antler, *Jewish Radical Feminism: Voices from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), chap. 1-2.

³⁴ Jewish women also participated disproportionately in radical activism of the time, including the antiwar movement, with recognizable leading activists like Shulamith Firestone, Marilyn Salzman Webb, Margery Tabankin, and Bernardine Dohrn, among others. However, for reasons which will be discussed below, they were held back from leadership positions in the antiwar movement. In addition, women activists were often fighting on multiple fronts, either choosing or splitting their efforts between antiwar, college protest, women's rights, and civil rights.

the writer Paul Berman, two-thirds of the white Freedom Riders travelling to Mississippi were Jewish; the majority of the steering committee of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964 was Jewish; the chapters of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) at Columbia and the University of Michigan were both more than half Jewish; at Kent State in Ohio, where only five percent of the student population was Jewish, Jews constituted nineteen percent of SDS membership (also worth noting that three of the four students shot by the National Guard at Kent State were Jewish).³⁵ This disproportional representation on college campuses is largely due to the affluence that the American Jewish community attained in the years following the war. Of the students participating in these groups, most came from middle-class Jewish families, and restrictions on Jewish attendance in American universities had become a thing of the past. With unprecedented access to higher education, Jews were overrepresented at universities overall, not

³⁵ Numerical data on Students for a Democratic Society chapters from *A Tale of Two Utopias*. For more on the Jewish students killed at Kent State, see the article from Jonah Lowenfeld's "Remembering Kent State as an American Tragedy With a Jewish Face," *Forward* April 28, 2010, <https://forward.com/news/127615/remembering-kent-state-as-an-american-tragedy-with/> (accessed 12/10/2017). Paul Berman, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 44-45.

only in protest.³⁶ Many of these students identified their parents' Jewish identity and their own Jewish upbringing as more motivating to their cause than their parents liberal or leftist affiliation.³⁷

Agitators in the antiwar movement often sustained several intersecting interests and causes, not always exclusive to the goal of peace. Feminist protesters, for example, frequently participated in the antiwar movement, splitting their efforts and time between multiple movements.³⁸ Their differing interests intersected through overarching ideologies like anticolonialism (a struggle that simultaneously involved political, gendered, economic, and racial issues). Despite the egalitarian rhetoric espoused by so many intersectional protestors, the antiwar movement suppressed female expression in a typically patriarchal fashion reflective of larger American society. Dominant Jewish male leaders struggled to prove their place among the influential masculine heroes of the revolution, particularly black nationalists (as will be discussed in detail below). This made for a

³⁶ According to Stephen Steinberg, Jews were (in the sixties and seventies) disproportionately represented in all levels of higher education. His research includes statistical data on undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members. The Jewish population, according to his data, comprised 3.2% of the national population. The percentage of Jewish faculty, however, was 8.7%, Jews comprised 10% of graduates, and 5.3% of undergraduates (though these numbers are even more disproportionately Jewish in the highest-ranking institutions). He also notes that in spite of the tremendous expansion of American institutions of higher learning, the proportion of Jewish participation remained consistent, though he notes at the time of publication (1973) that it was beginning to show signs of tapering off. Stephen Steinberg, *The Academic Melting Pot: Catholics and Jews in American Higher Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), 167-169, see table on 101. Paula Hyman has also pointed to the unprecedented numbers of college-aged Jewish women enrolled, as more than fifty percent of Jewish women of age were in college by 1970, a product, Hyman explained, of their middle-class incomes, small family size, and instilled cultural value of education. Paula E. Hyman, "Jewish Feminism Faces the American Women's Movement," in *American Jewish Identity Politics*, ed. Deborah Dash Moore (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 223.

³⁷ According to a survey of youth activists by Braungardt and Braungardt, "Life-Course Development," quoted in Antler, *Jewish Radical Feminism*, 149.

³⁸ Nearly every feminist protestor profiled in Joyce Antler's book on Jewish Radical Feminism relays the experience of Jewish women involved with radical protest on multiple fronts, including union activism, garment workers, civil rights workers, antiwar protestors and peace activists, Jewish activists, Zionists, and more. Antler, *Jewish Radical Feminism*.

more machismo-ridden climate, with men trying to prove themselves at the expense of one another, and of women.³⁹ This particularly held true in more militant groups, but even among peaceful protests women were relegated to the sidelines by a male-dominated and hyper-masculine climate in the movement. Because the draft comprised one of the key issues of antiwar protest, men involved in antiwar activism (both Jewish and otherwise) asserted their authority over the issue, which they felt affected them most, as it was their lives which would be at risk if the draft continued.⁴⁰ This male dominance often relegated women to more menial tasks which would maintain their subordinate role in the movement, such as typing reports or preparing food for events.⁴¹ Even in the act of refusing the draft (a practice which some men decried as un-American and unmanly) hyper-macho rhetoric can be seen in materials produced by activists, as in the slogan, “Girls say yes to boys who say no.”⁴² This division of gender among antiwar activists, Sara Evans argued, gave rise to women’s liberation, as female activists unwilling to be marginalized took their negative experiences in the antiwar movement and made them central issues of women’s rights and inequality.⁴³

³⁹ Even some of the men in the movement recognized continuity between this treatment of women at meetings and the treatment of women in the Jewish community. Jerry Rubin later reflected, “I remember during yippie meetings the ‘men’ talked their business and humored the women when they began to talk, not expecting to hear anything ‘worthwhile.’ During all that time I was seeing, not Joan, Barbara, or Laurie, but my grandma on the second floor of the synagogue watching my grandfather with the men downstairs.” Jerry Rubin, *Growing (Up) at 37* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 159.

⁴⁰ Burgin, “Understanding Antiwar Activism,” 20.

⁴¹ Natasha Zaretsky, “Feminists of the 1960s and 1970s,” in *Women's Rights: People and Perspectives: People and Perspectives*, ed. Crista DeLuzio (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 200.

⁴² Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 368-73. Though a lot of feminists in the antiwar movement disliked the campaign, many went along with it to further the cause. Joan Baez even posed for a photo which would become a poster bearing this slogan. Burgin, “Understanding Antiwar Activism,” 20-21.

⁴³ Sara Evans, *Personal politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 170-71.

At Columbia University, where multiple student movements erupted simultaneously, faculty theorized (of the Jewish students in non-Jewish specific white protest) that the protest was, in part, an attempt by Jewish students to revolt against their middle-class parents and prove their masculinity and place alongside black nationalists. These students, according to one faculty member, “regard their fathers as emasculated by suburban life and their Judaism as a ‘shallow, pale thing’ ... They hate their fathers for this -- for accepting Ridgewood (the suburb) and part of their hostility to Judaism comes from this.”⁴⁴ Whether Jewish students involved in the movement actually drew their motivation from tension with their parents’ generation is murky guesswork, aside from the statements made by the students themselves (some of which I examine below). However, comments by the older generation of Jews, such as the faculty member above, or sociologist Lewis Feuer, provide insight to how the older generation interpreted intergenerational tension. Feuer, for example, also believed that these Jewish students were, at least in part, motivated by the emasculation of their own fathers. However, he highlighted the shift to suburban life far less than the post-Holocaust image of Jewish weakness which also served to emasculate Jewish men. He explained:

In previous generations Jewish students felt ashamed that their often cultureless parents were a persecuted people, always passive, always suffering, telling horrid stories of the indignities of pogroms. Their fathers seemed lacking in manliness. Their misfortune lacked the heroic cast, and were therefore devoid of the nobility of tragedy. Then a new generation after the Second World War heard of Jews, it was as victims, again almost always passive, of the Nazi holocaust [*sic*], of those who had torn from them the last shreds of human dignity as they were led in queues to abattoirs. The Jewish students of successive generations felt that their parents—orthodox, liberal, religious, agnostic—somehow shared

⁴⁴ Report by the American Jewish Committee’s Information Service on the *Faculty Thoughts on the Jewish Role in the Student Disorders at Columbia University*, November 1968, Box 95, Folder 2, MS-603. Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

in the psychology of passive acquiescence, that as the persecuted, they had been virtually deprived of their manhood, emasculated.⁴⁵

The Jewish male protestor then, according to Feuer, felt it necessary to protest the injustices done to Jews and everyone else, without calling attention to his Jewish background. Feuer argued that the basic reason for Jewish students being so involved in protest was a revolt against their fathers not for being emasculated by modern life, but for being emasculated by historical antisemitism. Either way, it is both fascinating and telling that Feuer and other Jewish men from the survivor/parental generation observed the antiwar movement and highlighted their own emasculation as the cause for the student rebellion.

Sociologist Nathan Glazer gave a quite different explanation for the prominence of Jewish students in the counterculture and protest movements. He hypothesized that tensions had actually diminished between generations in families with liberal or radical parents. Nearly all Jewish parents, he believed, considered themselves at least liberal if not radical. From their own experiences, he explained, they tended to support the activism of their own children. With the support of their parents, Jewish students participated more actively, knowing they still had a home and family to fall back on.⁴⁶ Regardless of the accuracy of any of these claims about the Jewish-generational motivation of student protestors, it is nonetheless clear that young Jewish men attempted to take back a manlier identity, and that the older generation perceived it as such. These young men attempted to do so exerted their efforts within a larger American countercultural and political context, as opposed to a forming and working through specifically Jewish groups.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Lewis S. Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 429-30.

⁴⁶ Nathan Glazer, "The Jewish Role in Student Activism," *Fortune Magazine*, January, 1969, 126.

⁴⁷ In an interview in 2009, Rudd explained that his life as an outlaw was living out a sort of "young man's fantasy."

When protests erupted in April and May of 1968 at Columbia University, contemporary Jewish observers understood the movement to have a distinctly Jewish component. This is evident in the papers of the American Jewish Committee Office of Information Service, which detected an identifiably Jewish presence among both student protestors and faculty supporters. Worried that the presence of Jews in the protests might spark antisemitism, the American Jewish Committee interviewed five high-ranking Jewish academics at Columbia to comment on the anxieties of the Committee regarding the Jewish element of disruptions on campus. Though they gave their feedback on Jewish students as uncategorical truth, it contains much speculation and psychologizing. The theme which dominates the commentary is that Jewish activists wanted to emulate groups that they saw as more masculine, like black nationalists and African Americans fighting for civil rights. By observing black activists and Black Power groups, young Jewish men saw a precedent of masculine civil protest which they could mimic. The faculty interviewed by the American Jewish Committee believed that for Jewish student activists the “desire to identify with revolutionary Negro experience is crucial.”⁴⁸ However, this identification was ideological, not practical. “The frustration here,” one faculty member explained, “probably is that they (the Jewish kids) are soft, they're not tough, they're not really experienced in life. They have to assert their masculinity, that's a fundamental challenge. They're sort of play-acting; they know when the

Mark Rudd wrote an op-ed for the *New York Times* in April 2018 in which he explained that the white male role in protests at Columbia in 1968, though a majority, largely piggybacked on the work of black student leaders from Harlem, and even undervalued female student protestors and leaders.

Mark Rudd, “The Missing History of the Columbia '68 Protests,” accessed October 19, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/22/opinion/-missing-history-columbia-protests.html>

⁴⁸ Report by the American Jewish Committee’s Information Service on the *Faculty Thoughts on the Jewish Role in the Student Disorders at Columbia University*, November 1968, Box 95, Folder 2, General correspondence, memos & working papers, 1968. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

score is over they can go back home; the others, the black kids, can't."⁴⁹ It is interesting that this faculty member and Nathan Glazer agreed on the sympathetic nature of the Jewish generational dialogue, that Jewish (presumably liberal) parents at home supported the activism of their sons and daughters on college campuses. However, Glazer used this point to explain why there had come to be so many Jewish students in the movement, whereas the Columbia faculty member used it as a point of frustration for the students already involved. The two ideas are not mutually exclusive, as perhaps the supportive nature of the parents allowed students to become activists, but also plagued their sense of independent masculinity. At any rate, there was no getting around the large (and visible) participation of Jewish boys in the protest movement, or the desire to manifest masculinity which the faculty generation ascribed to them.

Indeed, Jewish students were present even in civil rights groups which were primarily African American. There were young Jews, for example, in the early days of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) who participated in all levels of protest. Two Jewish men from New York were famously killed while working with black civil rights protestors in the Freedom Summer murders in Mississippi in 1964. Students for a Democratic Society, the Weathermen, and other primarily white student groups attempted to join forces with more militant protestors, like the Black Panthers and other black nationalists. In large part, they were rejected, not embraced as brothers in arms in a shared struggle. Another professor at Columbia used the case of Mark Rudd (the Columbia branch SDS member who would break off to help form the more radical Weathermen in 1969), as an example of this rejection by black nationalists, and the subsequent desire by Jewish students to assert their masculinity. He explained, of the SDS takeover of an administration building on campus, "the

⁴⁹ Ibid.

black students in Hamilton Hall challenged Rudd... they challenged his masculinity in a way ... you know They said, 'show us your way, take your own building,' and he did.”⁵⁰

In his 1963 essay, “My Negro Problem—And Ours,” Norman Podhoretz showed that this desire to emulate the masculinity of African American boys was not entirely new to Rudd’s generation. He brought up masculinity explicitly when explaining the relations between black and Jewish boys in his Brooklyn neighborhood, explaining that it was the African American boys’ “superior masculinity” that Jewish boys envied.⁵¹ He did not believe, like Rudd, that the two groups united in their struggles as minorities, but explained the tensions between them through their experiences in growing up in segregated American society. He explained that growing up Jewish in Brooklyn, his view of the black boys in his neighborhood was that they were “free, independent, reckless, brave, masculine, erotic ... But most important of all,” he went on, “they were tough; beautifully, enviably tough, not giving a damn for anyone or anything. To hell with the teacher, the truant officer, the cop; to hell with the whole of the adult world that held us in its grip and that we never had the courage to rebel against except sporadically and in petty ways.”⁵²

Rudd has made several statements that support similar assumptions about his own motivation and actions (and those of his fellow Jewish protestors). In fact, Rudd is an excellent case study of the generational divide within his Jewish family. Both his parents’ families were

⁵⁰ Report by the American Jewish Committee’s Information Service on the *Faculty Thoughts on the Jewish Role in the Student Disorders at Columbia University*, November 1968, Box 95, Folder 2, General correspondence, memos & working papers, 1968. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁵¹ Norman Podhoretz, ““My Negro Problem—And Ours,”” *Commentary Magazine*, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/my-negro-problem-and-ours>

⁵² For more analysis of Podhoretz’s article and Jewish-Black relations, see Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine*, “The Fire This Time: SNCC, Jews, and the Demise of the Beloved Community”; Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 149; quote is from Podhoretz, “My Negro Problem—And Ours.”

mass-migration period immigrants. His mother was the first American-born in her family from Lithuania and his father immigrated from Poland and served in the American Army in World War II. Continuing to serve as a reservist, he Americanized his name from Rudnitsky to Rudd, as according to his son, "someone had told him that a Rudnitsky could never rise above the rank of Captain, so in 1954 he shortened his name—and mine—which seemed to do the trick."⁵³ He eventually rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

The Rudd family was not particularly religious but maintained their sense of Jewish culture and apartness from the “goyim” in their relatively integrated suburban neighborhood. The teenage Rudd was desperate to escape the middle-class Jewish suburban life he resented as overly bourgeois and old-fashioned, so he joined a non-Jewish but still Jewish-dominated movement at Columbia. He remembers it as such, explaining “All of us were Jewish. It’s hard to remember the names of non-Jewish Columbia SDS’ers; it was as much a Jewish fraternity as Sammie.”⁵⁴ However, their Jewishness was not the primary factor unifying these student protestors. Rudd recalls, “I don’t remember one single conversation in which we discussed the fact that so many of us were Jewish. This glaring lack alone might serve as a clue to what we were up to: by being radicals we thought we could escape our Jewishness.” If these Jewish men hoped to escape their Jewishness, I would argue that a main feature of their dissatisfaction was with the Jewish manhood

⁵³ Mark Rudd, “Why Were There So Many Jews in SDS? (Or, the Ordeal of Civility),” accessed December 10, 2017, Markrudd.com, <http://www.markrudd.com/indexcd39.html?about-mark-rudd/why-were-there-so-many-jews-in-sds-or-the-ordeal-of-civility.html>

⁵⁴ Sammie here means the fraternity Sigma Alpha Mu, which was a Jewish fraternity founded in 1909 at the City College of New York, commonly known as “Sammy,” or “Sammie” for its SAM abbreviation. Though still in existence with over fifty national chapters, excluding pledges based on religion is no longer permitted in Greek societies, so Sammy is no longer exclusively Jewish, though they maintain a “deep appreciation its Jewish heritage and the ethical values of Judaism which have enriched its life and the lives of its members.” “The Fraternity,” Sigma Alpha Mu, accessed September 10, 2018, <http://sam.org/fraternity>. Rudd, “Why were there so many Jews in SDS?”

they wanted to leave behind. Rudd acknowledges the male atmosphere when he compares SDS (a non-gender specific group) to a Jewish fraternity (Sigma Alpha Mu). Once he had broken with SDS and was leading the Weathermen, tensions between the men and women involved grew. Rudd got into conflicts with the Jewish women in the Weather Underground (particularly Bernadine Dohrn, Jane Alpert, and Robin Morgan) over chauvinism in the group. Between Jewish men and women involved in the movement, he argued that this tension within the group was a male/female struggle between Jews, rather than an ethnic struggle.⁵⁵ However, when discussing his own sexual conquests while living as a fugitive activist, he explained that to a Jewish boy like himself, sleeping with lots of women, particularly *shiksas* (non-Jewish women who are traditionally forbidden by Jewish law), was his way of living out a male fantasy.⁵⁶

It is particularly interesting to consider the contradictory issues at play for Jewish students at Columbia. They recognized and wanted to escape their suburban privilege (and Jewishness) and yearned to join the more oppressed black student protestors, with whom they *did* feel a kinship as an oppressed minority (as Jews). They felt that although there was a large Jewish population, the school was still “dripping with goyishness.”⁵⁷ Rudd explained, “Identifying with the oppressed seemed to me at Columbia and since a natural Jewish value, though one we never spoke of as being Jewish.”⁵⁸ Though Rudd was not discussing his masculinity as such, he does reinforce the

⁵⁵ Mark Rudd, “After Words with Mark Rudd,” filmed March 24, 2009 for BookTV on C-SPAN2, Video, 41:25.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 11:00

⁵⁷ According to a study conducted by Hillel in the academic year 1962-1963, twenty-five percent of the Columbia student body was Jewish, which was fairly consistent from the turn of the century. At the end of the First World War, Jews comprised twenty one percent of the students at Columbia, according to a study conducted by the Bureau of Jewish Social Research. See table on page 6 of Alfred Jospe’s study, “Jewish Students and Student Services at American Universities: A Statistical and Historical Study,” Hillel International, accessed October 24, 2018, https://www.hillel.org/docs/default-source/historical/1963_jewish_students.pdf?sfvrsn=0

⁵⁸ Mark Rudd, “Why Were There So Many Jews in SDS?”

conclusion reached by the Columbia professor quoted above, who explained that Rudd's "desire to identify with revolutionary Negro experience" showed his frustration as a soft Jewish kid; not tough, not experienced, and not as oppressed as Jewish history might entitle him to feel. He also mentioned, as an aside, that there were a greater proportion of gentile women than men in SDS (the flipside to Jewish participation), demonstrating that men joining the movement in greater numbers as a masculine endeavor may have been limited to their Jewish membership.

There was still a good deal of Jewish camaraderie within the protest movement at Columbia, though in separate groups or dealing with separate issues than the larger groups like SDS. One of the most unifying protests of Jewish students *as Jews* was to fight against the dismissal of Rabbi Goldman (sometimes called Rabbi Bruce), who served as a Jewish Chaplain at Columbia University during the 1968 protests and was known as the "radical rabbi." While at Columbia, Goldman was sympathetic towards several radical movements. He supported student protests (including the destruction of property), accepted interfaith relationships among students, approved of mixed gender co-habitation (against the school's policy), and provided abortion counseling to Barnard students.⁵⁹ The fight over Rabbi Goldman, and the unity of Jewish students protesting *as Jews* directly contradicted to the efforts to "pass" in American society which the previous generations had been attempting. Those who participated in these specifically Jewish actions made their Jewishness more visible within the New Left, as did Rabbi Goldman. The Jewish Advisory Board at Columbia (comprised of the older generation) felt this jeopardized the prestige of the Jewish establishment. Jewish students were quick to condemn the defensive actions

⁵⁹ Barnard College is the private women's liberal arts college affiliate. Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 1-4.

of the Jewish Advisory Board as “a bunch of self-hating Jews faithfully ass-licking their WASP masters.”⁶⁰

Outside of the university environment (though often closely linked) young protestors staged the same demonstrations, also led by a notable number of Jewish participants, and also largely male. One of the most unusual courtroom spectacles in American history took place from 1969-1970, and comprised one of the most public demonstrations of this new Jewish manhood of the time. Though not generally presented as a piece of a particularly Jewish American story, the trial of the Chicago Seven (originally the Chicago Eight) is a stand-out event in the history of Jewish men and counterculture. The defendants were charged with conspiracy to incite the 1968 riots at the National Democratic Convention in Chicago. Of the seven defendants, three were Jews (Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, and Lee Weiner) and all were men.⁶¹ In addition, both defense attorneys (William Kunstler and Leonard Weinglass) were Jewish, as was one of the two prosecuting attorneys (Richard Schultz) and the presiding judge (Julius Hoffman). Of the twelve key players in this drama, therefore, seven were Jews. And in the entire ordeal, only a few women participated as actors, and all in subservient positions (stenographers and assistants).⁶² It is not only because of the Jewishness or maleness of the players that I claim this trial as a Jewish masculine event. Throughout the trial, the defense played out a form of guerrilla theater which consistently commented on their own and Judge Hoffman’s Jewishness. They may not have

⁶⁰ Staub, *Torn at the Roots*, 3.

⁶¹ The defendants were Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, David Dellinger, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis, John Froines, and Lee Weiner.

⁶² Although, interestingly, of the twelve jurors, ten were women. Pnina Lahav, “Theater in the Courtroom: The Chicago Conspiracy Trial,” *Law and Literature* 16, no. 3 (2004): 408, 407.

thought of the proceedings as a demonstration of male Jewishness, but maleness was an element of the trial.⁶³

Initially, the federal government charged eight defendants with conspiracy and intent to incite a riot, including one of the co-founders of the Black Panthers, Bobby Seale.⁶⁴ Seale's attorney fell ill and entered the hospital for emergency surgery days before the trial. Judge Hoffman refused to postpone the trial or to grant Seale a new attorney (he insisted that Seale accept representation by the counsel of the other defendants). Seale protested that he needed to have his choice of attorney or exercise his right to represent himself. Unwilling to compromise, the judge had Seale bound, gagged, and eventually severed his trial from that of the other defendants.⁶⁵ The uproar over the confrontation between Seale and Judge Hoffman made the trial an instant spectacle of racial inequality. Just as Jewish university students felt kindred with black nationalists, so too did the Chicago Seven defer to Seale's wisdom and experience when they acquiesced to have his lawyer be chief counsel for the group. Shortly after having him bound and gagged, the judge declared a mistrial for Bobby Seale, ejecting him from court and separating him from the other defendants.⁶⁶ At this point, the racial element of the trial, which had previously dominated the

⁶³ The defense attorneys recognized that perceptions of gender played an important role in the case and tried to eliminate jurors who might impugn the masculinity of the defendants. During the juror selection process, Kunstler and Weinglass proposed several questions to eliminate potential jurors which Judge Hoffman dismissed, one of which was "Do you believe that young men who refuse to participate in the armed forces because of their opposition to the war are cowards, slackers, or unpatriotic?" Kunstler and Weinglass intended to eliminate jurors predisposed to judge the defendants as unmanly, which demonstrates the significance of gender roles in this courtroom drama. Rita James Simon, "The American Jury: Instrument of Justice or of Prejudice and Conformity?" *Sociological Inquiry* 47, no. 3-4 (July 1977): 275.

⁶⁴ The Government also charged Seale (along with Dellinger, Hayden, Davis, Hoffman, and Rubin) with inciting violence. Jon Weiner, ed., *Conspiracy in the Streets: The Extraordinary Trial of the Chicago Eight* (New York: The New Press, 2006), 14.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 105-108.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

courtroom, was replaced by a Jewish presence. The Jewish atmosphere was defined by both the centrism of the Holocaust which had been growing in the two years since the Six-Day War (also known as the June War or Third Arab-Israeli War, and examined in more detail in the following section), and the conflict between the Jewish generations: establishment and counterculture.

The defendants used the Holocaust as a tool to insult the Judge, court, and system prosecuting them. The defendants vented their frustration at the establishment, comparing them to Nazis consistently throughout the trial. Even David Dellinger, a non-Jewish defendant, vented his anger at Judge Hoffman through this language, “You want us to be like good Germans supporting the evils of our decade and then when we refused to be good Germans and came to Chicago . . . now you want us to be like good Jews, going quietly and politely to the concentration camps while you and this court suppress freedom and truth.”⁶⁷ Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, in one of the most memorable theatrical stunts of the trial, entered the courtroom one day wearing black judge’s robes with yellow Jewish stars affixed to their chests.⁶⁸ They routinely called the judge and prosecutors Nazis and compared them and the warring American government to Hitler and Nazi Germany.

In identifying themselves as Jews, and continually interjecting Holocaust comparisons to the proceedings, Hoffman and his fellow defendants presented themselves to the public as the persecuted minority. They did not present themselves, however, as passive or meek victims, but changed the implications of their persecution as Jewish men. Decades later, Abbie Hoffman,

⁶⁷ United States. District Court (Illinois: Northern District), *Contempt, Transcript of the Contempt Citations, Sentences, and Responses of the Chicago Conspiracy 10* (Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1970), 72.

⁶⁸ Pnina Lahav, “The Chicago Conspiracy Trial as a Jewish Morality Tale,” In *Lives in the Law*, ed. Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas, and Martha Merrill Umphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 39.

reflecting on his own identity and feelings towards the older generation, explained, “Deep down I am sure we felt our parents’ generation was a bunch of cop outs. Six million dead and except for the Warsaw Ghetto hardly a bullet fired in resistance.”⁶⁹ According to Pnina Lahav, Hoffman, his co-defendants, and their entire generation of young Jews were fuming about the passivity of Jews in previous generations, and were determined to right that wrong by placing themselves in the line of fire, which they did (in cases like Mark Rudd, quite literally in the form of terrorist bombings).⁷⁰ Though not fought with fists, engaging Judge Hoffman in a Jewish battle allowed them to “fight to the good fight,” so to speak, and to distinguish themselves from those who went like lambs to slaughter, or (as in the case of Julius Hoffman) assisted in oppression, instead of fighting for the oppressed. The Yippies (the Youth International Party founded by Hoffman and Rubin) were absurd and reveled in spectacle, but not entirely without purpose.

The conflict between the Jewish establishment and countercultural youth played out in this theatrical war which the defendants fought against Judge Hoffman. Sharing the same Jewish last name and heritage, Abbie Hoffman led the charge of a very Jewish brand of ridicule against his oppressor. Initially, he threatened to change his own first name to “fuck” so that when called to testify he would legally have to be addressed as “Fuck Hoffman.”⁷¹ At times, he referred to Judge Hoffman not by their shared surname (refusing any idea of kinship) but called him “Julie,” “the judge,” or “Magoo.”⁷² He also gave his own name, not as Hoffman, but as “Shaboysnakoff.”

⁶⁹ David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 5-6.

⁷⁰ Pnina Lahav, “Theater in the Courtroom: The Chicago Conspiracy Trial,” *Law and Literature* 16, no. 3 (2004): 435.

⁷¹ Pnina Lahav, “The Chicago Conspiracy Trial as a Jewish Morality Tale,” In *Lives in the Law*, ed. Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas, and Martha Merrill Umphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 33.

⁷² The judge bore a striking resemblance to the cartoon character Mr. Magoo, and Hoffman led his supporters in chanting “Screw Magoo.” Ibid.

Hoffman, he insisted, was his slave name.⁷³ This not only implied that as a Jew he had been robbed of his identity, but also implicated Judge Hoffman, who bore his own “slave name” without question. Abbie’s antics in the courtroom were more spiteful than comical, clearly lashing out against sell-out establishment Jews. “Your idea of justice is the only obscenity in this court, Julie,” he shouted at the judge, “this ain’t the Standard Club” (the Standard Club was an exclusive German-Jewish club to which the judge belonged).⁷⁴ Abbie spoke to him scathingly in Yiddish, “You *schtunk*. *Shchande vor de goyim*, huh?”⁷⁵

The trial was also tense for Jewish activists who had been trying to emulate and gain the respect of African American groups like the Panthers. Just as Rudd and his SDS comrades at Columbia and elsewhere wanted to work with black nationalists and fight for civil rights causes, the seven other defendants were adamantly supportive of Bobby Seale. They deferred to Seale’s choice of attorney as chief counsel and they zealously stood up for him in all proceedings. However, the relationship between the Panthers and young Jewish protestors became more strained in the aftermath of the Six-Day War. Jewish activists found it difficult to work with African Americans while celebrating the heroic Israeli victory against a similarly oppressed people.⁷⁶

Not all Jews were comfortable with the growing association of Jews to the Civil Rights Movement. Some of the youth believed that the visibility of Jews might be used as justification

⁷³ Harry Brod, “Toward a Male Jewish Feminism,” in *A Mensch Among Men*, ed. Harry Brod (Fremont, CA: The Crossing Press, 1988), 185.

⁷⁴ “Judge Hoffman is Taunted at the Trial of the Chicago Seen After Silencing Defense Counsel,” *New York Times*, February 6, 1970, 41.

⁷⁵ Spelling original. Meaning “you skunk [or stinker], fronting for the gentiles [or, you shame us in front of the gentiles]. I have seen translations vary around these two general ideas, this spelling of the transliteration is from Wiener, *Conspiracy in the Streets*, 205.

⁷⁶ The Six-Day War and its effect on Jewish American youth is examined in detail in the following section. For a very interesting and thoughtful analysis on the various perspectives of the relationships between participants in the trial, see Lahav, “The Chicago Conspiracy Trial as a Jewish Morality Tale,” 21-54.

for increased antisemitism in the United States, particularly where Jewish activists were so visible, as on college campuses.⁷⁷ Their fears proved to be well-founded, as very public episodes of Jewish restriction ensued in response to the Jew-activist connection. At the University of Wisconsin in 1967, the Board of Regents put a system into place to restrict out-of-state students from particular “hold states,” the states from which ninety percent of their Jewish students originated.⁷⁸ One legislator clearly admitted of the restriction that: “It was to get rid of the kikes from New York and the dirty niggers.”⁷⁹

Jewish advocates became visible among wartime dissenters of all ages, not only on college campuses. Jews participated in intellectual and political groups like Nader’s Raiders (legal, political, and social advocacy group following Ralph Nader), which also brought attention to the Jewish presence in the movement.⁸⁰ Nathan Glazer expressed his own fear that if the United States lost the war in Vietnam, Jews would be held responsible in some way, because of their prominence among the students and intellectuals speaking out against the war.⁸¹ The older generation of Jewish Americans expressed their concern that such a visible Jewish presence in varied movements pushed Jews away from Judaism and from more exclusively Jewish endeavors. When contemplating the crisis of diminishing Jewish identity upon leaving their parents’ home (a theme in Jewish commentary present through all of modernity, not exclusive to this decade), one American rabbi noted that though Jewish students previously found themselves barred from many (though not all) Gentile student groups, the student revolts of the sixties “destroyed these barriers”

⁷⁷ Hillel Schenker, “A New Antisemitism? Reflections on the Extreme Right,” *The Maccabean: Forum for American Jewish Youth* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1965): 5-14.

⁷⁸ Dorothy Rabinowitz, “Are Jewish Students Different?” *Change* 3, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 49.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

and therefore Jewish participation in exclusively Jewish student groups suffered a sharp decline.⁸² The only benefit to this shift towards outside groups, in his estimation, was that when radical Jews were rejected from some groups, particularly the black protest movement, they were forced to find a radicalism of their own, guiding those who did continue to embrace their Jewish connection to form more radical, socialist, Zionist organizations.

There is some truth in that assumption, though not necessarily that Jewish leftists reformed into Zionist organizations after rejection by black nationalists. Certainly, when the black nationalist movement declared Zionism a form of racist colonialism and accused Israel of oppressing a Third World people, they alienated Jewish protestors who also considered themselves Zionists. One notable instance of this occurred in Chicago at the 1967 National Conference for New Politics convention, when the black caucus condemned the Six-Day War as a war of Zionist aggression and imperialism. Within weeks of the conflict, SNCC published an article in their newsletter on “The Palestine Problem” which inarguably antagonized Israel. The article listed arguments for classifying Israel as white imperialism, and even depicted a cartoon in which a hand marked with a Star of David held a double-ended noose tied around the necks of a black man and a Palestinian man. An arm swinging a machete to cut the rope was labeled “Third World Liberation Movement.”⁸³ A photograph in the article showed a wall with cowering men lined up

⁸² Ezra Spicehandler, “National and Social Characteristics of Jewish Youth in the U.S.A,” in *Youth Today: A Collection of Articles and Essays*, edited by Yehuda Gotthelf (Tel-Aviv, Israel: The World Labour Zionist Movement, 1970), 129. Accessed through YIVO at the Center for Jewish History.

⁸³ Though SNCC stood by this article, they did issue a defense in their following issue of *Movement*. They explained that SNCC is partisan, and though anti-Zionist, they make a clear effort to distinguish between the Jew and the Zionist. They explain of the article, “It is not anti-Jewish. It does not characterize Jews as a group. It carefully distinguishes between Jews and Zionists.” *SNCC Newsletter* 1, no. 4 (June/July 1967): 5 (accessed through the online repository at Duke University) *SNCC, The Movement* 3, no. 2 (September 1967): 2 (accessed through the online library at UCSD).

against it at gunpoint with the caption, “Zionists lined up Arab victims and shot them in the back in cold blood. This is the Gaza Strip, Palestine, not Dachau.”⁸⁴ Black nationalists were not all anti-Zionist, so the relationship between the two groups did not follow a clear trajectory. Some leaders in the movement, whether sympathetic to the Zionist cause or not, even used Zionism as an example and precedent for reparations and the creation of a black state. Malcom X, though drawn to the Palestinian cause, suggested that the black community use the “strategy used by the American Jews” and explained that “Pan Africanism will do for people of African decent [sic] all over the world the same that Zionism has done for Jews all over the world.”⁸⁵

The rift between African Americans (particularly those in the Black Power movement) and American Jews only widened as a result of the Israel-Palestine debate. In truth, their conflict was far closer to home and was based on the journey that Jews had worked so hard to complete in in America: attaining whiteness. Whiteness in American culture is not only an aspirational goal, but is inexorably linked to masculinity.⁸⁶ Many scholars of whiteness and assimilation have argued that in the journey to become Americans, Jews also became white (or in some cases, they argue, had to become white in order to become American).⁸⁷ Matthew Frye Jacobson, for example,

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁵ His view on Zionism, however, revealed little solidarity with what “Zionism has done for Jews all over the world,” and much antagonism towards what he believed was the white oppression of another people of color, Palestinian Arabs. He explained, “the Jews ... with the help of Christians in America and Europe, drove our Muslim brothers out of their homeland, there they had settled for centuries, and took over the land for themselves ... In America the Jews sap the very life-blood of the so-called Negroes to maintain the state of Israel. Michael R. Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), “Malcolm X, Global Black Solidarity, and Palestine,” ebook. “Malcolm X Makes it Home From Mecca,” *Amsterdam News*, May 23, 1964.

⁸⁶ See Michael Kimmel’s various works on American manhood, particularly his 2015 work, *Angry White Men*.

⁸⁷ Jewish whiteness is a topic which has received some scholarly attention in the twenty first century, beginning with the oft-criticized 1998 Karen Brodtkin book, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*. Brodtkin’s most successful assertion was in

argued that Jewishness in the public eye (in film and television) was visibly marked, and then effaced by the use of blackface, which brought Jews more firmly into the category of “white.”⁸⁸ Other scholars of whiteness have used similar arguments for American ethnic groups achieving whiteness through negative comparison to African Americans, as Noel Ignatiev did in his 1995 book, *How the Irish Became White*.⁸⁹ That this transformation took place, and that it came at the expense of African Americans was a common trope in African American commentary of the late sixties and early seventies.

In an essay titled, “Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White,” African American novelist James Baldwin explained that the tensions between Jewish and Black communities in Harlem and Watts in 1967 was a result not of the Jewishness of Jews, but of the whiteness they had achieved. He explained:

In the American context, the most ironical thing about Negro anti-Semitism is that the Negro is really condemning the Jew for having become an American white man--for having become, in effect, a Christian. The Jew profits from his status in America, and he must expect Negroes to distrust him for it. The Jew does not realize that the credential he offers, the fact that he has been despised and slaughtered, does not increase the Negro's understanding. It increases the Negro's rage. For it is not here, and not now, that the Jew is being slaughtered, and he is never despised, here, as the Negro is, because he is an American. The Jewish travail occurred across the sea and America rescued him from the house of bondage. But America is the house of bondage for the Negro, and no country can rescue him. What happens to the Negro here happens to him because he is an American.⁹⁰

her description of the path to Jewish whiteness through accessing a middle-class, white masculinity. For more scholarly works dealing with Jews and whiteness, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.); and David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

⁸⁸ Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 119-21.

⁸⁹ Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995).

⁹⁰ James Baldwin, “Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White,” New York Times Digital Archive, accessed April 16, 2019, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/03/29/specials/baldwin-antisem.html>

As for the Jewish state, Baldwin explained that unlike the struggle for black rights in America, largely a non-violent movement, “no one has ever seriously suggested that the Jew be nonviolent. There was no need for him to be nonviolent. On the contrary, the Jewish battle for Israel was saluted as the most tremendous heroism.”⁹¹

Baldwin’s statement on Jewish whiteness explains, in part, what M. Jay Rosenberg was trying to convey in the epigraph opening this chapter, in which he claimed that the Jewish man’s failure was that he “joins black nationalist groups, not as a Jew but as a white man. His whiteness, his precious whiteness, is too valuable to him for it to be relegated to a secondary position.”⁹² He differs from Baldwin, however, in his conclusion that the Jew “does not understand that his relevance to the black struggle is as a Jew and a fellow victim of endless white exploitation.” This association of Jews with whiteness, to Baldwin’s mind, was merely more white oppression. Their particular Jewish background of oppression did not make them kindred, as Rosenberg believed, but emphasized their difference from the situation of African Americans.

Whiteness becomes particularly important in the context of identifying Israelis as white Jews, as James Baldwin and the SNCC did in their earlier statements. In doing so, American Jews (and African Americans) identify Israel as a white Jewish state, despite the fact that the majority of its inhabitants were not the image of white Jews which Zionist groups promoted. Ashkenazi Jews were only a minority of Jews in Israel by the late sixties, the majority being Mizrahi Jews from Northern Africa and Central Asia. By identifying Israelis with the European minority, observers pointed the brand of Israeli Jew that American Jews were so proud to emulate: Western European, Ashkenazi Jews. It was these Israeli Jews, specifically, that were the focus of most

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Rosenberg, “To Uncle Tom & Other Such Jews.”

American discussions about Israeli toughness, and with which they could continue to associate themselves without negating their white masculinity in the United States. This distinction that Jewish Americans (and those African American's ascribing whiteness to American Jews) made, whether consciously or unconsciously, is a noteworthy one. By emulating Ashkenazi Israelis as heroes, American Jews emphasized the focus on white masculinity and the compatibility of this particular Israeli manhood with the American traditional hegemon.⁹³ In doing so, they also solidified the impression among African Americans that oppression in Palestine, because of its white/black dichotomy, presented a shared struggle with global pan-African and black nationalist movements.⁹⁴

By the end of the sixties, many American Jews, including a glut of Jewish campus organizations, struggled with the dichotomy of contemporary oppression of minorities and impoverished peoples (particularly Palestinians and the PLO) and the historical oppression of Jews. One Jewish student from the State University of New York at Albany explained the difficulty of being a radical leftist who supported Israel. He felt that he had “to choose between the Fatah-supporting SDS and the ultra-middle class lox and bagel breakfast club, Hillel Society.” He explained, “I felt that there had to be a third route. That third route was Zionist radicalism ...

⁹³ For a fascinating examination of the Euro-centricity (and lack of diversity) of Jewish American life and scholarship, see Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, *The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

⁹⁴ It is also worth noting that there is a worthwhile comparison to be made not only between African Americans and Palestinian Arabs, but between these groups and Mizrahi Jews, who (despite the fact that they were the majority of Jews in Israel) struggled against racism from their Ashkenazi Jewish countrymen. The Ashkenazi, European Zionists in Israel attempted to “de-Orient” Oriental Jewry, in their own unironic version of Rudyard Kipling’s *White Man’s Burden*. For more on the relationship between European Zionists and Mizrahi Jews in the early years of Israeli statehood, see Bryan K. Roby, *The Mizrahi Era of Rebellion: Israel's Forgotten Civil Rights Struggle 1948-1966* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 168. Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine*, “The Fire This Time: SNCC, Jews, and the Demise of the Beloved Community,” ebook.

borrowing from the black nationalists, I announced the formation of a militant, radical campus Zionist organization called the “Hebrew Students Alliance.”⁹⁵ This group rallied over three hundred attendees at their first meeting, providing a venue for Jewish students who felt similarly isolated yet remained determined to “not surrender their identity just so they can be accepted by their “revolutionary” peers,” nor “give up their radicalism to accommodate the Jewish establishment.”⁹⁶

These groups, many self-identified Zionists, and Jewish socialist groups courting a tense relationship with the State of Israel, examined the good and the bad emerging from the new state. Even the most radical of the groups, however, reveled in Israel and in the *new Jew*, though their pride also took an underexamined gendered form. Male students often spoke of satisfaction with the state and rebuilding the Jewish people, though they did not acknowledge either the whiteness they highlighted in focusing on Ashkenazi Jews, or the masculinity which they were ascribing to the *new Jew*. For example, when asked why he cared so much about Israel, more so than Jewish religious life or culture, one student explained, “For me, Israel presents an alternative to American Judaism. It offers me an alternative to that ghetto mentality that I think many people have, and that I try to fight against. And it’s a symbol to me of new strength and the rebirth of the Jewish people.”⁹⁷

American Jewish women, however, recognized that this rebirth of the Jewish people in Israel was male-dominated and even oppressive of Israeli women. In the newsletter of the Jewish

⁹⁵ “My Evolution as a Jew,” by M Jay Rosenberg, 1970; Jewish Student Organizations Collection; I-61; box 15; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ *Nimrod*, Issue 4, Spring, 1981; Jewish Student Organizations Collection; I-61; box 15; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

Socialist Committee at Oberlin College, female contributors criticized gender inequality in Israeli life. They argued that the integration of Orthodox Jewish Law (halacha) into national law institutionalized the oppression of women and lack of feminism in Israel (throughout all Israeli society, but particularly in kibbutz life). It was the fault of both the religious law and the structure of the military, because both maintained such rigid gender roles.⁹⁸

Jewish female students acknowledged the growing popularity of the masculine sabra in Israel. Indeed, many praised the positive change to the Jewish image. However, they also occupied themselves with another gender-based struggle for change, which played out in the emerging feminist movement. As previously mentioned, the dissatisfaction with women's roles and treatment in antiwar protest presented female activists with a dual struggle, their dedication to the movement and their growing awareness of the necessity of the fight for women's rights. It was in no small part the growing aggressive masculinity of the protest movement, and the Jewish element of that masculinity, that pushed many Jewish women to dedicate their efforts more determinedly to gender equality.

Female activists in Students for a Democratic Society, for example, felt their roles inside the organization were as gendered and devalued as were their roles outside of the movement.⁹⁹ Karen Brodtkin argued that the attempt to whiten Jewish men came largely at the expense of Jewish women, by creating the stereotypes of the Jewish mother and the Jewish American princess and

⁹⁸ The same group, interestingly, spoke highly of anti-Nazi rallying in the United States by Meir Kahane and the Jewish Defense League, who were an unapologetically masculine movement, and the clearest example of the influence of Black Power on the Jewish Left. They are examined in more detail in the last section of this chapter, which deals with militant Judaism and the Jewish Defense League. *Nimrod*, Issue 1, Fall, 1979 and *Nimrod*, Issue 2, Spring, 1980; Jewish Student Organizations Collection; I-61; box 15; folder 10; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

⁹⁹ Antler, *Radical Jewish Feminism*, 36-37.

presenting them as smothering and emasculating Jewish men.¹⁰⁰ If this is the case, then abuses of Jewish women in the antiwar movement were, at least in part, a byproduct of Jewish men's attempts to attain white manhood. Amy Kesselman (a founding member of the Chicago West Side Group) explained that she started resenting Jewish men in the political movement on her college campus, both for their dominance of the scene and for the sexism she identified in Jewish American culture. She particularly identified a masculinist emphasis within her chapter of Students for a Democratic Society in Chicago, and cited this as one of the motivating factors for beginning a separate women's movement on campus.¹⁰¹ When women in the movement did speak out against the sexist and male-dominated atmosphere of the protest movement, they would be harassed and abused by their male comrades. One iconic example of this was when a co-founder of the radical feminist group the Redstockings, Shulamith Firestone, along with fellow activist Marilyn Webb, were harassed off a stage at an antiwar protest, with men in the crowd famously yelling for someone to "Fuck her! Take her off the stage! Rape her in the back alley!"¹⁰²

Many Jewish women broke from their other protest pursuits to focus on the cause of women's rights, and did so without openly acknowledging the Jewishness of so much of the feminist movement. According to members of the Boston Women's Health Collective (the group which published the widely-sold and disseminated book, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, originally published in 1971), recognizing the predominance of Jewish women in the collective would have been problematic to the cause of the universal women's movement, as identifying as a Jewish

¹⁰⁰ Her assertion about this relationship is largely based on the various writings of Riv-Ellen Prell, Paula Hyman, and the critique of literature by Phillip Roth and his contemporaries. Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks*, 160-62.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 65-66.

group was far too narrow an identifier.¹⁰³ This was a common theme among feminist activists, who retrospectively discussed the heavy participation of Jewish women, but believed at the time that it would do more harm than good to the feminist movement to threaten their universalist stance.¹⁰⁴ However, many of these same women did move to apply second-wave feminism to Jewish life, and this impacted not only Jewish women, but Jewish men as well, as Jewish life began to change to reflect modern notions of gender equality.

It was, according to Judith Hauptman, those Jewish women who were both part of the feminist movement of the late sixties and had become more focused on Jewish life in the aftermath of the Six-Day War who began a more dedicatedly Jewish feminist movement, one which focused on change in traditional Jewish practice.¹⁰⁵ Jews within the American feminist movement who did attempt to identify and celebrate their Jewish identity felt that their Jewish particularity, which was important to them, was delegitimized by the women's movement (much as African American women had felt delegitimized by lack of recognition in the movement for their dual struggle for civil rights).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid., 200-201.

¹⁰⁴ It is interesting that Jewish women did use Holocaust imagery (like the defendants in the trial of the Chicago Seven, to make distinctions of themselves as righteous and Judge Hoffman as evil). Betty Friedan, in one of the most controversial sections of her feminist classic, *The Feminine Mystique*, compares life as a housewife to life in a concentration camp, dehumanizing, infantilizing, and systematically designed to take away a person's sense of agency and self-determination. She called this the "Comfortable Concentration Camp." For an interesting analysis of Friedan's use of Holocaust imagery and its implications for historical assumptions about Jewish American reactions to the Holocaust before the Six-Day War, see Kirsten Fermaglich, "'The Comfortable Concentration Camp': The Significance of Nazi Imagery in Betty Friedan's 'The Feminine Mystique' (1963)," *American Jewish History* 91, no. 2 (June 2003): 205-232.

¹⁰⁵ Judith Hauptman, "Conservative Judaism: The Ethical Challenge of Feminist Change," in *The Americanization of the Jews*, eds. Robert M. Seltzer and Norman J. Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 296-97.

¹⁰⁶ Hyman, "Jewish Feminism Faces the American Women's Movement," 226.

In the early seventies, Jewish feminists dedicated direct efforts towards the Jewish religious communities and created several Jewish feminist organizations and publications, but never a comprehensive overarching Jewish feminist organization.¹⁰⁷ Early goals for feminist reform to Jewish life focused on making the status of women in Jewish life more equal to that of Jewish men, including positions of religious authority, and on eliminating the injustices to Jewish women based on male-focused assumptions of rabbinic law.¹⁰⁸ Because of these goals, Jewish feminism is not merely American feminism in the Jewish sphere, but its own unique movement which adopted influences from second-wave feminism. In 1972, Hebrew Union College (of the Reform Jewish Movement), ordained the first American female rabbi, and the Reconstructionist Movement soon followed (the first female rabbi in the Conservative Movement would not be ordained until 1985). This progress shows the growing significance of gender difference in the Jewish community throughout the sixties and seventies, and the journey that so many Jewish feminists took (from antiwar and college activism to Jewish feminism) shows how significant male-dominance and macho culture in Jewish American had become.

American Jews Respond to Israel and the Six-Day War

American Jews, much like those in Israel, did not immediately incorporate the Holocaust as a dominant feature in their everyday lives in the decades following the horrific events. After

¹⁰⁷ Including Lilith, Ezrat Nashim, and organizations which focused energy on Jewish feminist discussions and publication (like the North American Jewish Students Network). The Jewish Feminist Organization, which attempted to be such a representative body, was short-lived.

¹⁰⁸ Paula E. Hyman, "Ezrat Nashim and the Emergence of a New Jewish Feminism," in *The Americanization of the Jews*, eds. Robert M. Seltzer and Norman J. Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 285.

the world learned the extent of the atrocities committed against Jews in Nazi occupied Europe, American Jews avoided presenting the Jewish people as mere victims, and associating themselves strongly with the weakness of the slaughtered. The most popular representations of in the years following the Second World War depicted the heroics of Jews during and after the war, popularized by writers like Uris.¹⁰⁹ That piteous image, what we earlier called the “ignoble survivor,” is recognizable today as a common trope in Jewish culture, particularly in America. Some of the most iconic and beloved Hollywood Holocaust films (at least those before the turn of the twenty-first century) have undeniably pitiful Jewish antiheroes.¹¹⁰ However, for decades after the war, the international Jewish image focused largely on Israel, and when Israel was discussed or presented in the American community (though it was not yet a core of American Jewish life), Israelis were pioneers—strong and virile. American television aired representations of the Holocaust, in documentary form and in related drama as early as the late forties and fifties.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Though references to destruction of the six million were certainly present in American Jewish life, they were not nearly as popular as those focusing more on the suffering of the survivors, even in cases where the narrative also hinged on the connection between those few remaining survivors and the Sabras working to save them and bring them to Palestine. Hasia Diner demonstrates this well in discussion of Israel, Survivors, and American advocacy, particularly concerning the dominance of Uris’s *Exodus* over Ruth Gruber’s *Israel Without Tears*. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love*, 186-187.

¹¹⁰ *The Pianist* and *Schindler’s List*, for example, have Jewish leading men who are not (in any traditionally masculine sense) heroic tough guys. As I argued in my 2009 master’s thesis, “Heroes, Victims and Villains: Character Inversion in Holocaust Cinema,” there has been a trend in the last decade to present Jews during the Second World War, even victims of Nazi persecution, as heroic, tough, and even vicious. Before this trend began to emerge, however, Jews in Holocaust film were nearly universally pitiable victims. Miriam Eve Borenstein, “Heroes, Victims and Villains: Character Inversion in Holocaust Cinema,” (master’s thesis, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 2009).

¹¹¹ Jeffrey Shandler has highlighted the use of Television by the American Jewish community as a venue in which they could come to terms with the yet-unnamed events of the Holocaust, as part of their multifaceted progression from self-consciousness to self-awareness. Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 46-47.

However, such depictions primarily focused on documentary footage and survivor testimony, and were not brought to a place of prominence until the late sixties, when the Holocaust began to serve as a moral paradigm for the global issues of the day.¹¹² The Six-Day War, the War in Vietnam, and even the American Civil Rights Movement enabled Americans to bring the Holocaust to a place of primacy in their lives and culture (particularly American Jews), as they saw a correlation between the past and present as part of a related continuum.¹¹³

The dominant narrative of the Holocaust in American culture has stated that the Six-Day War marked a sharp turning point in American Jews embracing the Holocaust narrative. That it was the particular fear of a reprise of the Holocaust, which arose when the second president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser (along with several other Arab leaders), threatened to drive Israel into the sea in 1967, which prompted greater Jewish attention to the Holocaust.¹¹⁴ Though Hasia Diner has debunked the silence of American Jews about the Holocaust as a myth, that this threat propelled the State of Israel and the Holocaust more dominantly into the everyday lives of American Jews to a degree it had not previously reached cannot be denied.

The immediate fear was that Jews were on the precipice of another Holocaust, and this fear marked a turning point in American Jewish connection to Holocaust history.¹¹⁵ In addition, the clearly deep-rooted but latent attachment to and concern for the State of Israel rose to the fore.

¹¹² Ibid., 82.

¹¹³ We saw this played out clearly in the Chicago Eight trial, for example. For a discussion of the effects of the Six-Day War on Jewish American life and the rising centrality of the Holocaust in Jewish American culture, see the chapter “The Six-Day War and American Jewish Life” in Michael L. Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz: Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 79-90.

¹¹⁴ For a good summary of the accepted narrative, see Diner’s conclusion in *We Remember with Reverence and Love*, 370-375.

¹¹⁵ This fear was very real, in spite of the fact the Israel launched a number of preemptive strikes against Egyptian forces which has caused a lot of controversy over who should bear responsibility for actually beginning the war.

From the moment the war began, American Jews became so preoccupied with the events overseas that an unprecedented uniformity formed in the determined focus and panic of American Jews from all walks of life and denominations.¹¹⁶ The significance of that fear within the Jewish community, the sudden need to support the state, is how Alan Dershowitz explained the lack of connection that American Jews of Generation X felt towards Israel compared with the previous generations who lived through the brief but terrifying conflict.¹¹⁷

In addition to their fear for the safety of Jews in Israel, American Jews also felt a continuing guilt for their failure to rescue the Jews of Europe. This (in conjunction with the revival of antisemitic rhetoric aired in the Arab radio reports in May of 1967) garnered greater support for Israel, American involvement in the Middle East, and a surety that the loss of Israel meant a loss to Jewish identity everywhere.¹¹⁸ In addition, it motivated (at least in part) an antagonistic Jewish American response. According to Lucy Dawidowicz, “For the second time in a quarter of a century the Jewish people were facing annihilation. But this time, somehow, things would be different. There would be no passivity, no timidity. That was the mood of American Jews.”¹¹⁹ Jews in the United States had so incorporated the new image of the tough Israeli Jew that this now seemed a possibility—a great change from their perception during the Second World War. Their fear was quickly replaced with unprecedented pride in the Israeli state and Jewish strength, as Israel vanquished its enemies with enough speed to shock the international community.¹²⁰ Their military victory inspired further support for the new state from the American public (both Jewish and

¹¹⁶ Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz*, 79-80.

¹¹⁷ Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Vanishing American Jew: In Search of Jewish Identity for the Next Century* (Boston, MA: Little Brown and Company, 1997), 90.

¹¹⁸ Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz*, 81.

¹¹⁹ Lucy Dawidowicz, “American Public Opinion,” *American Jewish Yearbook* 69 (1968): 204.

¹²⁰ Gary A. Tobin and Sharon L. Sassler, *Jewish Perceptions of Antisemitism* (Berlin, Germany: Springer Science+Business Media, 1988), 82.

otherwise), which had already been high before the war began.¹²¹ As a garrison of Western democracy in the Middle East, Americans often perceived Israel as kindred, and as fighting for American interests abroad.¹²²

Of course, the speed at which the war approached and passed was such that volunteerism to fight was hardly an option as it had been in the Israeli War for Independence (fighting with the Machal) or in the First World War (fighting for the Jewish Legion). So American Jewish backing of the war manifested, as it had in the past, in monetary donation and political support. Monetary contributions manifested, in part, as a result of the periodic reminders of Jewish American failure to act during the Holocaust which notable survivors, like Elie Wiesel, used to stir up feelings of guilt over American Jewish complacency.¹²³ American Jewish financial contributions escalated dramatically, especially considering the short duration of the war. In the short period from the outbreak of war to its conclusion, American Jews alone raised one hundred million dollars in support of the state.¹²⁴

In addition to showing military strength, the war had religious meaning for the global Jewish community. Israel not only fought off its enemies, it also conquered territories like the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Golan Heights, as well as some irreplaceably sacred

¹²¹ According to public opinion polls from both Gallup and Harris taken in 1967 before the war broke out, an overwhelming majority of Americans sided with Israelis over Arabs in the conflict in the Middle East, with less than five percent believing that Arabs were in the right. Dawidowicz, "American Public Opinion," 198-200.

¹²² And in many ways a lot of Americans still do, regardless of their support of other foreign democratic governments, particularly on the ever-more-conservative and anti-Muslim American Right. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), "Aiding a Fellow Democracy," ebook.

¹²³ Wiesel published his work *The Jews of Silence* in 1966, which focused on the Jews of the Soviet Union, but also implicated the Jews of the United States just as much as Jews enjoying the comfort of the developed and democratic world. Elie Wiesel, *The Jews of Silence: A Personal Report on Soviet Jewry* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 108.

¹²⁴ Dawidowicz, "American Public Opinion," 206-09.

to the Jewish religion, like the holy sites of the Old City of Jerusalem. These successes had implications for messianic, as well as political, Zionism. At this time, Zionism in Israel took a turn towards the religious, overpowering the previously dominant secular Zionist forces.¹²⁵ However, the war affected Jews and Zionists in the United States quite differently. According to Daniel Elazar, American Jews actually became less religious in the aftermath of the Six-Day War. He argued that Jewish life in America began to focus so intently on Israel (at the cost of Jewish religion) that it formed a unique “Israelotry,” in which Jews came to worship the Israeli state over the god of Israel.¹²⁶ Even the anti-Zionist group, the American Council for Judaism, found themselves conflicted over the matter. After the group’s director assisted the Syrian ambassador in writing a speech critical of Israel, a member of the group wrote that if the director “couldn’t say anything good about Israel, why couldn’t he have kept his big yap shut.”¹²⁷ Chaim Waxman wrote that individuals like this, after the war, landed in the odd position of identifying as both anti-Zionist and pro-Israel, but that for the overwhelming majority of American Jews, there was an unambiguously pro-Israel consensus. It is an interesting shift in American Jewish identity that among both Zionist and non-Zionist Jews, and even the religious and secular, Israel became an unshakable aspect of being Jewish.

However, marked differences in the image of Israel differentiated their present from their earlier struggle. The image of the Israeli evolved from halutz to sabra to soldier. It was, in fact, at the outbreak of the Six-Day War that the artist Dosh revamped his comic Israeli personification,

¹²⁵“How the Six-Day War Transformed Religion: Six perspectives on how the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict changed Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Mormonism,” *The Atlantic*, accessed August 1, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/06/how-the-six-day-war-changed-religion/528981/>

¹²⁶ Sachar, *A History of the Jews*, 890.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Chaim I. Waxman, *America’s Jews in Transition* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1983), 113.

Srulik, to be a soldier. He began drawing Srulik as taller, wearing long pants, military boots, rolled up sleeves, and a military helmet.¹²⁸ In the years of Israeli statehood, Israel established itself as the preeminent military power in the area, and their soldiers became icons of heroism and militaristic manhood.¹²⁹ They discovered what Lucy Dawidowicz described as a “new pride in being Jewish, in the aura that radiated from General Moshe Dayan, his ruggedness, vigor, determination.”¹³⁰ This change in the international Jewish image prompted two changes in the attitudes of American Jews which reflect both their attitudes towards the State of Israel as a foreign nation and their own personal identity. They came to see Israel as a state capable of survival, one which even thrived in the initial decades of its existence. Young Jews saw Jewish heroes in Israel and the older community saw new strength and success, and less urgency for survival.

The feverish determination to create a safe place for Jews after the Holocaust ended once that place had been established. American support changed in the coming conflicts, reverted to its pre-war Zionism of primarily philanthropic and political support, without military or illegal aid. The Six-Day War provided a defining moment, however, for the American Jewish relationship to the Israeli state, affecting even those who felt little connection previously. And indeed, the fear of Jewish destruction during the Six-Day War provided a tremendous drive for American youth to support the State of Israel, regardless of their earlier intentions to make aliyah themselves. It is an interesting measure of difference between the determined creation of the state and the settled reality of Israel that unlike the War of Independence, no Machal volunteers traveled to fight and

¹²⁸ Translated from Hebrew, “שרוליק מתבגר,” <http://srulik.co.il>, accessed September 27, 2018, <http://srulik.co.il/שרוליק>.

¹²⁹ This iconic status has since changed several times over, in response to the political actions and situations in Israel.

¹³⁰ Moshe Dayan was a former Defense Minister in Israel, and Dawidowicz, “American Public Opinion,” 205.

bolster Israeli forces. There was not time to do so in the Six-Day War, but even after, they did not do so in any of the conflicts which followed.¹³¹ American Jews did, however, begin to migrate to Israel in much larger numbers. The numbers of American *olim* (new immigrants in Israel) increased tremendously in the years immediately following the war. From 1968 to 1969, Jewish migration from American to Israel increased by over forty percent, and then by an additional seventeen percent by 1971. This increase was not permanent, however, as it all but disappeared by 1973, and declined even further in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War.¹³²

The Six-Day War changed the way that American Jewish youth saw themselves as belonging to a religious and ethnic minority, perhaps even more than for their parent's generation. As one young woman wrote at the close of the war, "Two weeks ago, Israel was they; now Israel is we."¹³³ Even those who had no interest in making aliyah felt drawn to the small state's struggle for survival. Though there was little time to plan volunteerism in Israel during the conflict, about 7,500 young Americans volunteered for civil service (though most did not make it there before the crisis was over).¹³⁴ Of these volunteers (primarily students), the enthusiasm for civil service declined when the threat was over, and there was no physical danger in the journey.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Though many American Jews have chosen to go to Israel to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces regardless of their intention of making aliyah, the rush to do so for a specific conflict has never since arisen, and the numbers remain quite small.

¹³² In 1968, nearly two thousand American olim arrived in Israel. The following year, 1969, saw the number rise to 7213, and increase of 40.3%. From 1969 to 1971, the number increased to 8714, a further 17.2%. The numbers then began to decline, and by 1974, the last year with such statistics available, the number had dropped back down to 3892. David M. Szonyi, "American Aliyah: Will it go up?" *Ruach Chaim*, Spring, 1976. Jewish Student Organizations Collection; I-61; box 53; folder 19; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹³³ Nancy Weber, "The Truth of Tears," *Village Voice*, June 15, 1967. Quoted in Dawidowicz, "American Public Opinion," 211.

¹³⁴ Dawidowicz, "American Public Opinion," 214.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 214.

At the time of the conflict, much of America's youth were forming a decidedly negative view of war based on the example of the War in Vietnam. The war in Israel, however, felt more personal for many Jews, and for some, far easier to see as a just war to protect a vulnerable people. This brought much of the young Left into conflict with their non-Jewish counterparts, who considered the Israeli government and military guilty of committing atrocities of imperialism against a colonized Arab people. For some young Jews, however, the two situations were impossible to reconcile; loathing war and supporting the Jewish people in a unique situation. As one student at City College in New York wrote:

The Israeli-Arab war has had a schizoid effect on my emotions. On the one hand, I find war and its inherent loss of life revolting and I could not and would not participate. On the other hand, I realize that Israel has been struggling for its existence while surrounded by hostile neighbors bent on her destruction, and I sympathize with Israel. The net result is that I sit home and curse war and the Arabs.¹³⁶

In the aftermath of the war, Jewish American identity came to focus as never before on the significance of the State of Israel and the necessity of including the Holocaust in Jewish culture and religion. Without the fear of another Holocaust, after all, American Jews may not have rallied as they did to the aid of the Jewish State. Though there doubtless would have been support, much rationale for volunteering, supporting, and donating was the fear of another genocide. After the tremendous fear and anxiety of the fate of Israel during the Six-Day War, American Jews began weaving the Holocaust as never before into their everyday public lives and religious education. Chaim Waxman argued that in the wake of the Six-Day War, the Holocaust as a symbol of Jewish survival became a core unifying element of Jewish civil life in America.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Ibid., 212-13.

¹³⁷ Waxman, "The Pendulum Shift, 1965-1975," in *America's Jews*, 104-34.

The State of Israel also became so significant in the everyday lives of American Jews that they began practicing Jewish life differently, adopting Israeli customs and even changing the way they pronounced Hebrew words to adopt the Israeli sound.¹³⁸ This “Israelotry” or “Israelization” appeared in several areas of American Jewish life. Jewish youth groups, synagogues, and summer camps began to incorporate Israeli folk music and dancing, which had previously not been a part of American Jewish life.¹³⁹ Having Israeli art and artifacts in the home became an important element of Jewish culture in the United States. The result of this shift is a major change in the process of Jewish American assimilation, as Jewish unification, solidarity, and defense became part of Jewish life. This also marked a shift, then, in divergent Jewish American masculinities, as achieving the hegemonic American masculine ideal became less important in the upheaval of the Jewish American self-image. Israel exemplified a new pride in masculine Jewishness, which provided a platform for a new, hypermasculine, American Jewish manhood.

Militant Judaism

Under the auspices of protecting American Jews, the most extreme Jewish emulation of toughness (with elements of Black Power, Israeli pride, and even American militancy) played out in the form of a militant Jewish defense movement. Militant Jews promoted the creation of “tough Jews” through physical training, intimidation, openly carrying firearms, and even forming biker

¹³⁸ Peter Novick calls this Israelization, and points to the shifting use of words, such as from *yarmulke* to *kippa*, or *Shabbos* to *Shabbat*. Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 148-49.

¹³⁹ Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz*, 80.

gangs (such as the Kosher Shifters).¹⁴⁰ This attempt to redefine Jewish strength reflected notions of aggressive manhood so prominent at the time (including both military attitudes and groups like the Black Panthers) and was made possible by the exaltation of the Israeli victory in the Six-Day War. The fear and anxiety for the survival of the Jewish people which defined the war for American Jews inspired some Americans to join the fight, and after its conclusion, left some young Jews still eager to join the fray. Though volunteers during the war included both men and women, those who became militant presented not only as aggressively pro-Israel, but aggressively Jewish and male. They took on an inarguably American flavor by modelling themselves on the aesthetics of the non-Jewish American toughs whom they sought to emulate.

An American Rabbi, Meir Kahane, became the leader and the face of this movement, devoting himself fully to the training of “husky Jewish boys in the not-so-gentle art of karate” to defend New York Jewish communities against antisemites.¹⁴¹ Kahane co-founded the Jewish Defense League (JDL) in 1968, an organization meant, much like the Black Panthers, to protect a threatened community where they believed the police failed to do so. Their logo showed this inspiration as well (and still does, as they exist to this day), depicting a raised fist inside a star of David. The JDL, though a unique organization in American Jewish history, was part of a larger movement among American ethnic minorities, one which Richard Moss called the “new

¹⁴⁰ For a brief history of the Kosher Shifters and their experiences in becoming American Men, read Elise Martel’s, “From Mensch to Macho? The Social Construction of a Jewish Masculinity,” *Men and Masculinities* 3, no. 4 (2001): 347-69.

¹⁴¹ In his case particularly, Kahane was concerned with growing tension in New York between the Jewish and African American populations. He moved his family to Brooklyn when he claimed a group of black militants invaded his home in Queens. “Never Again Cries Head of Jewish Defense Body,” *The Jewish Post*, October 3, 1969.

ethnicity,” including other similar groups like the Calumet Community Congress and the Italian American League.¹⁴²

The organization aimed to foster Jewish pride, teach Jews self-defense, and gain political power. Kahane openly criticized diaspora Jewry as emasculated and weak, and his rhetoric towards American and European Jews was even more openly disdainful than that of the sabras. Using what would become the slogan for Holocaust remembrance worldwide, “Never Again,” as their rallying call, the JDL simultaneously mourned the loss of Jewish life and used Holocaust victims as an example of Jewish weakness and willingness to let the world abuse and emasculate them. Speaking to a crowd in Philadelphia, Kahane explained that the Jewish people historically refused to help themselves, but remained meekly complacent. They “see a black cloud that says it’s going to rain but the Jew doesn’t go for an umbrella. He must first catch pneumonia.”¹⁴³ Another JDL member explained, “All of us had someone among those 6,000,000 during World War II who walked quietly into German gas chambers. We won’t just walk in again. Never again.”¹⁴⁴ The JDL walked a thin line between protecting Jews whom they saw as meek or complacent and presenting themselves as examples of Jewish success.

Kahane founded the group in 1968, by 1969 they had gathered 6500 members with membership in 17 cities nationwide, and by 1971 they boasted over 15,000 members.¹⁴⁵ Their

¹⁴² For more on the New Right Ethnic, see Richard Moss, *Creating the New Right Ethnic in 1970s America: The Intersection of Anger and Nostalgia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), Chapter II.

¹⁴³ “Three Hundred Hear Rabbi Kahana [*sic*] in Philadelphia,” clipped from *The Jewish Post and Opinion*, exact date unknown. Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁴⁴ John Peterson, “Jewish Defense League: Camp Builds Cadre of Street Fighters,” *The National Observer*, July 28, 1969.

¹⁴⁵ Numbers compiled from various news sources in the AJHS Jewish Defense League collection. It is worth noting, however, that many established Jewish institutions denied these high numbers of membership that the JDL claimed, if not the number of supporters who did not

recruiting tactics appealed directly to the feeling of emasculation and weakness with which so many American Jewish men identified and from which they wanted to break away. And indeed, some of the founding members (like the Newark Minutemen) looked like ideal Jewish tough guys. Their fourth founding member, Chaim Bieber, a renowned boxer, became well-known for being able to lift cars with his bare hands.¹⁴⁶ Even those closely associated with the peace movement, at times, got taken in by the appeal of the JDL, like Bob Dylan, who began supporting Kahane after the Six-Day War, while trying to connect to his own Jewish roots.¹⁴⁷ The larger Jewish American community, however, did not offer them support. The Anti-Defamation League criticized them as “a self-appointed group of vigilantes whose protection the Jewish community does not need or want.”¹⁴⁸ The Jewish War Veterans also denounced the organization as a disgraceful spectacle using “abhorrent tactics.”¹⁴⁹

It is not the purpose of this section to give a full history of the JDL, or the Jewish Defense Organization (an offshoot formed in the eighties after a feud between two leaders in the JDL), fascinating though they may be. However, there are elements of the JDL that speak directly to the

register as members. Various sources include clippings from Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *New York Magazine*. As small as this organization may seem, even if we assume that these numbers are exaggerated, compared with the American Jewish population, they cannot be dismissed as insubstantial. Even at the height of their recruiting, the Black Panthers only ever reached five thousand members. Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), 189.

¹⁴⁶ Though I have yet to discover any veracity behind this belief. Yair Kotler, *Heil Kahane* (New York: Adama Books, 1986), 33.

¹⁴⁷ “Dylan’s Jewishness,” unknown source clipping, June 17, 1971, Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA. Dafna Arad, “The Jewish Couple That Taught Bob Dylan Hebrew and Introduced Him to Zionism,” *Haaretz*, July 4, 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/.premium.MAGAZINE-the-lost-bob-dylan-nyc-tapes-1.5404956>

¹⁴⁸ Anti-Defamation League General Counsel Arnold Foster in “Jewish Militants Step Up Activity,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1969, 25.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

issue of the Jewish American male self-image. There are two essentials of JDL recruiting and training worth examining presently: their determination to present themselves as a distinctly American organization and their appeal to Jewish American men as a group capable of curing them of their emasculated Jewish condition.

While fiercely supporting Israel, the recruiting materials that the JDL published were proudly American and meant to announce the “arrival” of Jewish men in the American masculine milieu. Phrases like, “We are speaking of the American Dream!” and “Are you willing to stand up for *democracy* and Jewish survival?” topped fliers and pamphlets.¹⁵⁰ Followers and admirers of the JDL argued that the group represented “strength—not weakness, courage—not cowardice, and most important of all, its members are Americans first and Jews second.”¹⁵¹ Members of the JDL clearly saw in the Black Power movement an aspirational goal of strength and intimidation. They saw an idyllic image of machismo, and an inarguably American phenomenon. It is somewhat ironic, however, that they wanted to emulate Black Power and its particular brand of masculinity, as it was the increasing tension between the New York Jewish and black communities which had initially motivated the founders to create the group.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ From assorted clippings in the Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA; italics added.

¹⁵¹ 1969 clipping in the Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁵² Rising racial tension in the New York City schools precipitated the founding of the JDL, as blacks demanded more black teachers in primarily black schools in the Ocean Hill–Brownsville neighborhoods of Brooklyn, inspired by Black Power and the desire to be taught by educators who spoke the cultural language of black children. Of the white teachers they sought to displace, many were Jewish and Jewish communities felt there was rising black antisemitism. This culminated in the New York City teacher’s strike of 1968, and attacks on teachers in Jewish neighborhoods. The Defense League was founded largely on the notion that these attacks were being ignored by the police and going unreported by non-Jewish presses. Kahane argued that this was cause for Jews to step in and take care of it themselves, like the Panthers in Oakland or the Puerto Rican Young Lords in Chicago. Kotler, *Heil Kahane*, 31-34.

Supporters of the JDL criticized mainstream Jewish organizations for being “un-American” and even “Jewish ‘Uncle Toms’” in their lack of self-defense. Kahane himself called them “Uncle Irvings.”¹⁵³ He argued that criticism of the JDL from those groups, “almost always comes from a rich Jew who lives in Scarsdale or some other rich suburb. How can a rich Jew or a non-Jew criticize an organization of lower- and middle-class Jews who daily live in terror because of the breakdown of government? ... The Jew is the weakest link in the white chain and the black militant knows that few non-Jews are concerned with the Jew’s plight.”¹⁵⁴ But in spite of his fear of black aggression, even some of the JDL’s slogans were directly taken from the Black Panthers, like the call to “put some Jewish-is-beautiful spirit back in the Jew.”¹⁵⁵ This is an especially interesting appropriation given the JDL’s determination to protect New York’s Jewish community from radical Black leftists. They famously lashed out against a black militant attempting to read a manifesto which called for reparations for alleged past exploitation from the churches and synagogues of New York City. A group of JDL members appeared at Temple Emanu-El, where the speaker was supposed to appear, and stood guard with chains, sticks, and bats. One of the founders explained that Jews had been cowed by blacks for too long, and that “if they can enter our synagogues, it is just as well that they bring on the machine guns now.”¹⁵⁶ The paradoxical relationship that the JDL maintained with black militancy meant that although Jewish militants

¹⁵³ Phillip P. Brown and Seymour C. Lechter, letters to the editor from (clippings), original newspapers unknown, Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA. Meir Kahane, *Never Again! A Program for Survival* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1972), 52-72.

¹⁵⁴ Peterson, “Jewish Defense League.”

¹⁵⁵ The same author of that statement was quick to point out that those who hurled “abuses” at the JDL (“white-collar donkeys who claim to represent Boston Jewry”) “have never had the guts to assail to the same degree Black Militants.” P. Baram Brookline, letter to the editor “Jellyfish Jews,” *Jewish Advocate*, December 4, 1969, 2.

¹⁵⁶ Murray Schneider, date unknown, Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

acknowledged their debt to Black Power, they still felt a constant need to defend themselves against accusations of white privilege.

The calls to arms which the JDL used to rally support directly appealed to the desire of Jewish men to regain (or gain) some measure of tough masculinity. In fact, the JDL's recruiting materials, advertisements, and publications used the words *boys* and *men* to the point of redundancy, never mentioning female members (and indeed, there were very few). The JDL ran a three-column advertisement in the *New York Times* (1969) which targeted its prime group: young Jewish men of high school and college age. The image atop the ad shows six (presumably) Jewish men, all wearing sunglasses, some carrying clubs, and all looking intentionally menacing. They stand in front of a New York City synagogue. The text reads:

Question: Is This Any Way for Nice Jewish Boys to Behave?

Answer: Maybe. Maybe there are times when there is no other way to get across to the extremist that the Jew is not quite the patsy some think he is. Maybe there is only one way to get across a clear response to people who threaten the seizure of synagogues and extortion of money. Maybe nice Jewish boys do not always get through to people who threaten to carry teachers out in pine boxes and to burn down merchants' stores. Maybe some people and organizations are too nice. Maybe in times of crisis, Jewish boys should not be that nice. Maybe – just maybe – nice people build their own road to Auschwitz.

THE JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE IS DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT:

- Nice Jewish boys – or any nice boys – should not be forced out of their jobs by hoodlums.
- Nice Jewish boys – or any nice boys – should not be victims of quota systems and reverse discrimination in schools.
- Nice Jewish boys – or any nice boys – should not become victims of totalitarian revolutionaries of the Radical Left.
- Nice Jewish boys – or any nice boys – should not be forced out of their stores and see a lifetime of work destroyed by extremist thugs.
- Nice Jewish boys – or any nice boys – should not be forced to pay a penny to extortionists for crimes they never committed.
- Nice Jewish boys – or any nice boys – should not have to endure the potential rise of a Radical Right reaction which would destroy democracy.
- Nice Jewish boys – or any nice boys – should not be victims of a do-nothing city, state or federal government.

- NICE JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, WHITE AND BLACK BOYS SHOULD CREATE A SOCIETY OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN WHICH PEOPLE CAN GET BACK TO BEING NICE.

We Are Speaking of Jewish Survival! We Are Speaking of The American Dream!
How Much Is Jewish Survival Worth To You? How Much Are You Prepared To
Give For It?¹⁵⁷

This is a direct appeal to young Jewish American men, and their desire as “nice Jewish boys” to be on equal footing with more tough “Christian, white and black boys.”¹⁵⁸ Though the ad embraced the image of the nice Jewish boy, it clearly dismisses it as ineffective in securing peace and safety for the Jewish people, “Maybe – just maybe – nice people build their own road to Auschwitz.”¹⁵⁹ The image of the six Jewish men, however, does little to counteract the assumption that Jewish boys remain nice, or unthreatening. Aside from the dark sunglasses they wear, they do not resemble any sort of gang or military operation. They do not wear berets (like the Black Panthers), badges, matching boots, or anything resembling a uniform. They stand, hands in their pockets, at their sides, or gripping clubs, looking exactly how one might imagine nice Jewish boys would look with clubs in hand, wearing regular street clothes; jeans or slacks, button down shirts, and neckties. In some of their demonstrations, they do look a bit more organized, and possibly intimidating, than in the *New York Times* advertisement, but for the most part, photographs of the JDL show groups of otherwise average Jewish men, who happen to have weapons (sticks, chains, bats, etc.) in hand.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Inconsistent capitalization in the original. Advertisement, *New York Times*, June 24, 1969, 31.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ A slightly more intimidating image can be found in “The Jewish Defense League,” *Anti-Defamation League Bulletin*, November 1969. Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

The tone of the JDL is far removed from the assimilationist attempts to “become men” through successes in masculine pursuits in American institutions; in fact, they decry most existing institutions: right and left, Jewish and Gentile, criminal and government. And as a result, according to Yair Kotler, their membership consisted mainly of youth on the fringes of Jewish society: teens from broken homes, residents of poor and neglected neighborhoods, drug addicts, *ba’alei teshuvah* (a Jew who returns to Orthodoxy, or who becomes Orthodox for the first time), the unemployed, and the unbalanced.¹⁶¹ The ad, in spite of the group’s support of the Israeli state, makes no mention of Israel or Israeli strength, again emphasizing the American nature of this particular Jewish masculinity, intent on protecting democracy and the American way of life.

The JDL did carry out some of their plans. They set up an eight-week summer camp for Jewish boys in the Catskills (in Woodbourne), Camp Jedel, which trained them in karate, firearms, discipline, and included study of the history of Jewish underground fighters.¹⁶² The slogan of the camp was not subtle in its goals, “They used to send us to camps ... but NEVER AGAIN. Now we have our own camps to make sure ... NEVER AGAIN.”¹⁶³ Like some Jewish camps of previous generations, this camp was designed to turn boys into men, but in a much more aggressive fashion than those seen in pre-war America. Their aggressive weapons training program was in line with Kahane’s motto, “Every Jew, a Twenty-Two.”¹⁶⁴ In its first summer of operation, the camp supported one female student, and she made it clear in an interview that she decided to attend the camp to support the ideology. This student, Fran Grossman, explained that in the city it is

¹⁶¹ Kotler, *Heil Kahane*, 37.

¹⁶² “The Jewish Defense League,” *Anti-Defamation League Bulletin*, November 1969. Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁶³ Camp Jedel Flier, Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 13; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁶⁴ “*Playboy* Interview: Meir Kahane,” *Playboy Magazine*, October 1972, 76.

good to have karate skills, and that “the camp’s a bit primitive, but it gets the JDL message across.”¹⁶⁵ Perhaps when she called it “primitive,” she was referring to the determinedly non-intellectual, hyper-masculine, brutal training tactics. A reporter for the *National Observer* explained of a training session:

Two lines of sweaty, grimy young men stood rigidly at attention in the 90 degree weather ... For two hours the 34 teenagers had been punching, kicking, parrying—practicing karate, ‘the art of killing.’ A young instructor walked down the lines, kicking about every fourth lad hard in the solar plexus. Each doubled over momentarily and looked as though he might vomit; then he straightened up proudly. Three weeks of five-hour daily karate lessons had toughened the young men.¹⁶⁶

One JDL member who sent his child to the camp said that he had lost a son there, “When I visited there last week, my 15-year-old had become a man.”¹⁶⁷

The JDL, though not a large movement (at its highest estimate about one quarter of a percent of the Jewish American population in 1971), does demonstrate the combined influence of Israeli masculinity, the Holocaust, and the countercultural movements of the sixties.¹⁶⁸ It shows the most extreme manifestation of the very real feelings among young Jewish men that their manhood was called into question and needed to be redeemed through radical reconstruction. Using the strength of Israeli men as examples of how Jewish manhood could and ought to be, Jewish militants connected strong masculine Jews throughout history in one tough narrative. One supporter wrote that this stalwart Jewish group behaved “in the tradition of the Maccabees, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Haganah,” bringing together the few glorified examples of Israeli

¹⁶⁵ Though pictured in an article, Fran Grossman (the only female camper) wears a different uniform than the all-male student with whom she is training, who all wear white karate robes. Fran wears dark pants and a dark tunic. John Peterson, “Jewish Defense League.”

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Population data taken from the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 1971." Berman Jewish DataBank. Accessed December 08, 2017. <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/studies/details.cfm?StudyID=304>.

manhood which we have seen in previous chapters: the ancient heroes of Jewish history, the few violent resisters of the Holocaust, and the fighting forces in modern-day Israel.¹⁶⁹

An administrator at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue of New York described Kahane after he gave a guest lecture to the congregation as “tieless, shirt open at the neck, and collar draped over his suit jacket, he affectuates [*sic*] the appearance of the young Israeli, and his broad frame and muscular demeanor gives one a feeling of strength and power.”¹⁷⁰ He also drew a comparison between Kahane and his form of radicalism and an earlier, and quite different example of Jewish radical manhood, Rabbi A. Bruce Goldman.

But Jews in the radical Left (like Rabbi Goldman and his students) and Meir Kahane’s boys were not at all working for the same goals or even with similar tactics. In fact, Kahane and his followers largely blamed rising antisemitism not only on the Black Panthers and similar movements for ethnic pride, but on the antiwar liberal Left, particularly in their lack of support for the State of Israel during the Six-Day War. “We have never aligned ourselves with the bigots of the reactionary right. Now the radical-liberal left--white and black—in turning on us, picking the Jew to be their scapegoat.”¹⁷¹ They were particularly worried at the number of young Jews drawn to radical social and antiwar movements, which largely remained anti-Israel (or at least highly critical of Israel’s military activity). A brochure for Camp Jedel warned:

The growth of extremism, and more important, its ability to capture the allegiance of so many Jewish youngsters in a danger of the first magnitude. This is due to the fact that there is no group or framework which presents the other side, the true facts, concerning these groups and individuals plotting revolution and anarchy in America. At the same time, the

¹⁶⁹ “Defends JDL,” unknown source clipping, December 5, 1969, Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 3; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁷⁰ Stephen Wise Free Synagogue of New York Newsletter, Records of the Jewish Defense League; I-374; Box 1; Folder 4; American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY, and Boston, MA.

¹⁷¹ Peterson, “Jewish Defense League.”

sheer physical threat on the part of extremists has become alarming. Threats of force and its use on campus, beatings and robbery of youngsters in their own neighborhoods are all a part of an increasing phenomenon today. We are, therefore, operating a camp which will train Jewish youth for proud leadership—strong both in mind and body. The program, a rugged and difficult one, will turn out the type of Jewish youngster who is loyal and responsible to his own and his people’s needs.¹⁷²

Kahane never denied, even when criticizing militant black nationalist movements, that he happily adopted their tactics and welcomed the comparison. In an interview with *Playboy Magazine* in 1972 (one would be hard-pressed to find a more masculine venue for such a discussion), Kahane was asked to comment on the appropriation of black militants, and responded, “The Talmud says, ‘Who is wise? He who learns from all people.’ We’re happy when people call us Panthers, because we know a Panther doesn’t mess with a Panther.”¹⁷³

For their part, the radical Jews on the Left criticized the tough Jewish image emerging from both the Jewish Defense League and Israel as detrimental to peace and Jewish identity. These Jews tended to equate Israeli culture with fostering a harmful sort of hypermasculinity, which blamed the cultivated machismo of Israeli men for the destruction of Jewish unity and for war-mongering on the global stage. The JDL was an example of that negative effect on American Jewry. Abbie Hoffman explained that the Jewish American community had a fundamentally masculine issue, one which manifested in an embrace of Israeli male culture without question of the rightness of their politics. He claimed that “because they can’t get Jews on the American football teams--go beat up the goyim--they have to get their stiff erections through the Israeli army

¹⁷² Quote from Camp Jedel Flier. Though the heyday of the camp was in the early seventies before Kahane migrated to Israel, it was reopened under the name Camp Meir shortly after Meir’s assassination in 1990. It had a revival in the early nineties after the Crown Heights Riots, and there is some video footage available on the internet, though finding reputable sources is difficult. For one recruiting video, see “Camp Meir,” accessed September 14, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwBONwXTEu0>. A Flier for Camp Meir from 1990 shows similar goals and language as the original Camp Jedel materials.

¹⁷³ “*Playboy Interview*,” *Playboy*, 74.

and all its macho show-offing in Lebanon and other places."¹⁷⁴ While the Six-Day War made some American Jewish men prouder to be Jews, and the JDL attempted to emulate their toughness in the United States, other American Jews began to look back into their own histories, as Americans, to find other examples of Jewish toughness.

The upheaval that occurred in American society during this period, the Vietnam war, the antiwar movement, and the rise of an antiestablishment counterculture all served to complicate the identities of young American men, Jews included. However, the addition of the Six-Day War, and the severity with which it affected Jewish American culture, made the sixties and seventies a fascinating period in which Jewish American men reevaluated their position as Jewish world citizens and as men. As demonstrated in this chapter, this reevaluation did not follow any clear trajectory, but a fracturing and reconfiguring of Jewish male identities in the United States. It is just as important to consider the fact that each of the groups examined (protestors, militants, radical Zionists) represent the fringes of American Jewry, not the majority. It is, however, in examining these fringes, that we learn about what we might call a mainstream Jewish American manhood. Those who strayed from the norm to claim a new masculine identity help to define the masculinity with which they remained dissatisfied.

In truth, the dominant perception of Jewish manhood remained unchanged. It is evident in the thread of like-minded actors intent on changing the position and perception of Jewish men: Theodore Roosevelt hoped that Jews would emulate the "Maccabee or fighting Jewish type"; the City Athletic Club and agricultural associations trained Jewish New Yorkers to become respectable American men; Jewish Americans enlisted and fought in both American and Jewish

¹⁷⁴ Benny Avni, "An Interview with Abbie Hoffman," *Tikkun Magazine* 4, no. 4 (July/August 1989): 15-16.

armed forces, and then, as the Jewish War Veterans, fought for the recognition of Jewish American heroes; Bugsy Siegel poured money into the fight for Israeli statehood to train Jews to kill their enemies; Meir Kahane trained Jewish boys to brawl in the street to defend Jewish interests. The past century has continuous examples of the Jewish male struggle against a feminized image which continues, though more complex than ever in recent years, to this day.

CONCLUSION

The story of Jewish life in the United States is not one of unswerving upward mobility, nor is it one of consistent antisemitic impediments. As a history of an immigrant group, this dissertation followed the progress of American Jews up the slippery slope of assimilation. For the most part the Jewish trajectory has trended upward, but with periodic backslides of varying severity. Setbacks in the Jewish experience of Americanization demonstrate the tension between the religious and the secular, the old and the young, and the native-born and recent immigrants. This study was driven by a desire to explore the concept that each of these elements of tension in Jewish life, though perhaps differently motivated, contained a gendered element, which focused on the male as the model of a successful immigrant, making American hegemonic masculinity the highest goal of American assimilation. The instances of antisemitism which cropped up in American history were similarly gendered, using the success (or lack thereof) of Jewish men to be American as motivation for discrimination.

The image of chivalrous manhood which emerged in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allowed members of young states to prove themselves worthy of their new nations. The ideal of manly honor and duty coalesced in Europe alongside growing nationalist movements, which had distinctly masculine ideologies. The image of man supported the state, and the state, in turn, provided a venue and rubric by which European men demonstrated their masculinity. This Western notion of manhood excluded groups and nations which nationalists saw as outside of the people or folk. Jews were not only seen as foreigners of sorts in European nations, but as foreigners to Europe itself. Though the majority of Jews resided in Europe by the modern period, Europeans considered them historically and ethnically oriental and therefore outsiders incapable of assimilation. This view of the Jew as “other,” and animosity towards them, expanded

after the Second World War from the Jewish population to include the Arab population as well (what Edward Said called the new Orientalism).

By the time Jews arrived and established themselves in American cities, these same notions of Jewish difference had already been adopted from abroad. Jews remained outside of the hegemon while the American nation glorified the strenuous life and the tough nature of frontier manhood. Jews arriving from Europe had long been denied access to these same modern notions of manhood, to become American they had to work to become men in the American sense. Those Jews who strove to attain American manhood engaged in masculine American endeavors to the extent of their access and ingenuity. Their struggle to enter institutions of American masculinity reveals a great deal about Jewish assimilation in the United States, as it demonstrates a form of antisemitism reserved nearly entirely for Jewish men. The social and educational institutions Jewish men created to cultivate and demonstrate their masculinity makes clear the extent to which they believed masculine development would cure their unfortunate and unmanly condition.

Improvements made in the image of Jewish men in America in the early decades of the twentieth century were disrupted, if not nullified, by the massive upheaval of the Second World War. Jews temporarily became a primary focus of the global community, first as the downtrodden victims of oppression and then as the founders of a new state fighting for its survival. The Holocaust became a central element of American Jewish life, reviving the archetype of the suffering Jew and inspiring many American Jews to embrace their Jewish difference as the survivors of a heritage under constant attack. This feeling further exacerbated the simultaneous focus on the struggles of the fledgling Israeli state, a place where Jews, even more than in the United States, could be archetypically manly men.

For the generation of Jews growing up in postwar America, these conflicting issues of Jewish identity coincided with the rupture of societal norms catalyzed by the social and sexual revolutions of the sixties. This upheaval complicated not only issues of American identity and patriotism, but notions of gender roles, manhood, femininity, and Jewish identity on the world stage. As American men in the countercultural movement began to grow their hair long, protest violence, and embrace less conventional forms of masculinity, Jewish men also participated in aggressive, radical, and arguably more traditionally masculine endeavors than ever. These last changes resulted from a number of circumstances unique in American Jewish history (defensiveness after the Holocaust, embrace of American minority status as part of the civil rights movement, and conflict between support of the Israeli state and condemnation of American aggression in Vietnam). Even these newest changes represent just a part of the continuous process of Jewish men finding their way in the American masculine landscape.

Historians of the Jewish experience speculate about the unique history of Jews in the United States through the last century in terms of many events and perspectives discussed throughout this study. Excellent studies have emerged concerning the Jewish experience in the military, university life, agriculture, finance, civil rights and women's rights movements, counterculture and protest, crime, sports, and many others. What I have attempted to reveal is that one of the connecting threads between these elements of Jewish life in America is the component of masculinity, perceptions about it, and access to it. Examining Jewish participation in the civil rights movement, for example, is a fruitful field of study which has produced fascinating theses about Jewish altruism, motivation, and politics. It is worth adding to this field that Jewish men participated aggressively in protest, mimicked tactics from many black movements, and fought to be recognized as brothers in a related struggle. The Jewish experience in the American military,

particularly antisemitic encounters involving servicemen, is better illuminated if the particularly emasculating form of antisemitism they faced is considered. Though Jewish agriculturalism is an area which has received some academic focus, it is better explained when the masculinizing (not only Americanizing) mission of established American Jewish communities is included. In nearly every element of Jewish history in America, especially relationships between Jewish men and women, adding a consideration of the role played by Jewish men engaging with issues of masculinity adds much needed depth to our historical understanding of Jewish life and identity. In the debate over sustaining Jewish culture which Sylvia Barack Fishman revitalized in her 2008 work, *Matrilineal Ascent/Patrilineal Descent: The Gender Imbalance in American Jewish Life*, Jewish men are often blamed for the loss of Jewish culture. For answers about the motivation of secularizing Jewish men, engaging issues of masculinity in the United States can only serve to complicate such a discussion.

As a sweeping history of the twentieth century, this dissertation only scratched the surface of several areas of the history of Jewish American masculinity worthy of examination. I make no claims that Jews have or have not been successful in their goal of achieving American masculinity, largely because there has never been a consensus among Jews in America about how they should practice, assimilate, retain culture, or anything else. I have instead attempted to demonstrate that this goal, whether attainable or not, was ever-present among some elements of American Jewry, and helps to explain some of the actions taken, and the ways in which actions were orchestrated by Jewish men over the century. What is clear from the extent of my research is that the view of Jewish men as weak or effeminate has always been a present strain among popular sentiments about Jewish manhood in America, and there has always been a corresponding strain of Jewish men attempting to remedy this sentiment through proving or improving their manhood. It is also

clear that antisemitism itself is a gendered bigotry, manifesting in different ways across different nations, and America has not proven itself an exception. Recognizing the gendered nature of this particular bigotry and refocusing our study of Jewish history through the lens of a uniquely Jewish masculine struggle provides insight and deeper understanding of the American Jewish experience.

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Outlook

Jewish Education

The Maccabean: Forum for American Jewish Youth

The Journal of Religion

McClure's Magazine

The American Jewess

The Menorah Journal

The Jewish Frontier

The Sun Magazine

American Judaism

Commentary

Tikkun

ABSTRACT**FROM TALKING SOFTLY TO CARRYING A BIG SHTICK: JEWISH MASCULINITY
IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA**

by

MIRIAM EVE MORA**August 2019****Advisor:** Dr. John J. Bukowczyk**Major:** Immigration and Ethnic History**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

This dissertation follows the progress of American Jewish men in the difficult and often backsliding process of acculturation into American life. Jewish men have historically been held to a different standard of masculinity, one which both Jews and non-Jews throughout American history have ascribed in both positive and negative ways, often depicting Jewish men as bookish, gentle, weak, and even effeminate. Those Jews who strove to attain American manhood engaged in masculine American endeavors to the extent of their access and ingenuity. Their struggle to enter institutions of American masculinity reveals a great deal about Jewish acceptance in the United States, as it demonstrates a form of antisemitism reserved nearly entirely for Jewish men. The social and educational institutions Jewish men created to cultivate and demonstrate their masculinity makes clear the extent to which they believed masculine development would cure their unfortunate and unmanly condition (whether real or perceived). It is a unique element of Jewish American life and acculturation, and one which helps to explain much of the Jewish American journey. By examining this element of Jewish acceptance, denial, and attempted belonging through perceived manhood, we gain a deeper understanding of the Jewish experience in America, and can more thoroughly explain Jewish life in the United States throughout the twentieth century.

For the most part the Jewish trajectory has trended upward towards full acceptance, but with periodic relapses of fluctuating severity. Setbacks in the Jewish experience of Americanization demonstrate the tension between the religious and the secular, the old and the young, and the native-born and recent immigrants. Each of these elements of tension in Jewish life, though differently motivated, contain a gendered element that focuses on the male as the model of a successful immigrant, making American hegemonic masculinity the highest goal of Americanization. Antisemitism in American history has been similarly gendered, using the success (or lack thereof) of Jewish men to become American as motivation for discrimination. The persistent depiction of Jewish men as somehow outside of the masculine hegemon has been, until now, a largely unrecognized phenomenon in the history of Jewish American life. This study attempts to bring the issue of Jewish masculinity and the struggles surrounding it into the field of Jewish history, where it can help scholars better understand the history and journey of Jewish American life.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Miriam Eve Mora is adding this doctorate to her preexisting Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from West Chester University of Pennsylvania, as well as her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from Columbia College Chicago. She is a past recipient of a fellowship from the American Jewish Archives, scholarships from the Leo Baeck Institute, West Chester University, and multiple departments at Wayne State University. She has written curricula for the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills (Michigan), worked for several non-profit organizations in the Jewish community, and has been teaching enthusiastically since 2013.