

MASCULINITY AND
THE MAKING OF
AMERICAN JUDAISM

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6 The Courageous Diaspora

Masculinity and the Development of American Zionism

MASCULINITY PLAYS A starring role in the traditional story of European Zionism: the diaspora made Jews weak, hunched over, and passive, but Zionism would bring reconnection with the land and the regeneration of the strong male body. Even European Zionism's most famous visual images, such as the Galician Zionist E. M. Lilien's iconic paintings, promoted these themes. Strong male bodies and phallic images populate Zionist landscapes, whereas old, weak, frail religious scholars symbolize diaspora life. German Zionist Max Nordau famously called for a "Muscle Jewry," and claimed that diasporic Jewry was effeminate and degenerate.¹ Indeed, diaspora life had sapped Jewish manliness: "In the narrow Jewish street our poor limbs soon forgot their gay movement; in the dimness of sunless houses our eyes began to blink shyly; the fear of constant persecution turned our powerful voices into freighted whispers, which rose in a crescendo only when our martyrs on the stakes cried out their dying prayers . . . at last we are allowed space for our bodies to live again." For Nordau and others like him, Zionism and the land of Palestine would restore a manliness that the diaspora had robbed. He exhorted his audience, "Let us take up our oldest traditions; let us once more become deep-chested, sturdy, sharp-eyed men."

If Palestine symbolized strength and manliness, and the diaspora symbolized weak passivity, where could American Zionists fit in the story? How would American Zionists deal with this masculinity question? Many American Zionists were outspoken in their commitment to the United States, and only a minority had any intention of immigrating to Palestine. The negative image of emasculating diaspora life did not resonate with Americans, and so they would have to tell the Zionist story differently.

Despite the marginal nature of American Zionism, the movement and its participants provide a window into American Jewish masculinity. Scholars have noted *that* American Zionism was masculine, but they have not analyzed the features or implications of that masculinity. Mary McCune, for instance, writes in her article about American Zionist women that the "male leaders of the Zionist movement used explicitly masculine imagery."² She and other scholars are surely

correct in suggesting that pervasive masculine imagery marginalized both femininity and women themselves from Zionism and the Zionist narrative; they offer a sorely needed corrective to any purely “great man” histories of Zionism by providing the important stories of women in the Zionist movement. Though the focus here is on men, the point is not to turn back to that kind of great man history. Rather it is to explore American Zionist discourse in light of its construction of masculinity, to see the contours of that constructed masculinity, and to learn about what it meant to be an American Jewish man in particular.

Many histories of American Zionism assume that men are the default humans and that women are the special case. Philosophers use the term “unmarked” to describe the assumed, default position, whereas “marked” means the particular, different case. Men, in Zionist histories and many others in Western culture, are the unmarked sex, and women are the marked sex. We can see the scholarship on American Zionism in this light: it assumes that women and their gender roles are the special case and that men’s gender is neither particular nor worth analyzing in depth. There are several excellent studies on women and Zionism, and there are plenty of studies, especially older histories, that are almost entirely about men.³ But the latter scholarship never identifies that it is about “men and Zionism.” In fact, it rarely interrogates what it means or why it matters that its characters are men. It rarely even acknowledges the fact that its story is dominated by men. But what if we took seriously the idea that men’s gender is every bit as historically contingent as women’s gender? Beyond stating that the Zionist movement was masculine, we would then ask what this masculinity looked like. What images did it use, and how did they reflect or differ from other non-American Zionist images?

When I started this project, I expected to find that images and descriptions of strong, muscular male bodies were ubiquitous in American Zionism. Not only did these images appear in European Zionist circles but also the image of the muscular, self-determined man grew immensely in the United States as a widespread ideal of masculinity in the early twentieth century.⁴ Teddy Roosevelt proudly and iconically stood over a rhinoceros he had killed, Tarzan captivated American audiences, and some American Protestant Christians emphasized a strong, manly, business-like Jesus.⁵ If the European Zionist movement and much of white, American culture at large both embraced strong, muscular male bodies that dominated nature, we should expect to see similar images throughout American Zionism. But American Zionist materials mentioned male bodies rarely and depicted them even less. Unlike European writers, American Zionists spent little time in the early years of the twentieth century promoting muscular or strong bodies, and they rarely paired these characteristics with Palestine.

Instead they allegorized manly strength and bravery to be political and philanthropic and reshaped the geography of *galut* (exile, or diaspora) so America was

not a place of exile. The American Zionist image of the ideal American Jewish man had two distinctive features: first, it transcended geographical boundaries and second, it centered on nonphysical traits, such as courage. American Zionist writings cast this courage not as a physical capacity, but as a political willingness to embark on statecraft for the benefit of Jews from other lands. The two aspects of the American image bolstered each other ideologically—courage need not be located in the body, and many bodies need not be located in Palestine. Instead, they 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.

This version of Jewish masculinity that deemphasized the particularities of geography and bodies fit well philosophically with the argument for Judaism as an American religion. And American Zionism also had a close—though not simple—relationship with Judaism. There is general agreement in scholarly circles that Zionism was, at its core, a secular movement. This narrative sometimes pits Zionism against Reform Judaism, in a battle of what Naomi Cohen has characterized as “secular nationalism vs. universalist religion.”⁶ But a close look at American Zionism suggests this story of opposition is too simple. Most American Zionists promoted enlightened religious practice, and although they sometimes criticized the Reform movement for its naiveté, the movement included Reform leaders among its leading lights. Conversely, the Reform movement accepted outspoken Zionists as leaders, such as Rabbis Bernard Felsenthal, Gustav Gottheil, and Max Heller, the last of whom served as president of the Reform rabbinical body, the CCAR, from 1909–1911.⁷ All of these men were acculturated Jews who turned to Zionism long after they settled in the United States. Though Zionists were the minority within Reform circles, then, they were not outcasts.

Reform Jews and Zionists were not locked in a culture war of secularism versus religion. In fact, even when they argued with one another, Zionists and Reform Jews each claimed that they were the ones promoting real Judaism. Louis Lipsky, for instance, positioned himself as a true expositor of the real Judaism when he criticized Reform rabbis for conforming to “religion in the Christian sense, as a creed, which the Jewish religion never was.”⁸ Even when they did not say so explicitly, American Zionists often sought to make their movement compatible with ideas about American religion. Zionists wanted a movement that was both good for the Jews and “good” religion.

This chapter highlights the distinctiveness of American Zionism and its relationship to masculinity and religion. Although the Zionist movement, leadership, and supporters changed significantly from the turn of the century until the early 1920s, the American Zionist images of American Jewish masculinity displayed remarkable continuity. The first section shows the contours of this mascu-

linity by highlighting the differences between American and European Zionism. The second section focuses on the *Maccabaeon*, the United States' most widely read Zionist periodical, and shows how its authors and editors used ideas about religion and the land to construct a vision of American Jewish masculinity that valued courage and political work on behalf of others.

European and American Zionisms

European Zionists focused on state-building, and they thought that the state would be for all Jews, including themselves. Through an embrace of physical culture and a discourse of political self-determination, Herzl, Nordau, and others linked a Jewish state to the physical and political regeneration of all Jews.⁹ Jews had degenerated physically over the centuries, this ideology claimed, and Zionism would help redeem and reform the weakened Jewish body. European Zionists built gymnasiums and promoted gymnastics. They published images of strong Jewish male bodies. Perhaps this is why the historiography of European Zionism does not suffer from failure to analyze masculinity nearly as acutely as does the American scholarship. For instance, Todd Presner, Daniel Boyarin, Mikhal Dekel, and others all attend carefully to the cultural constructions of masculinity in the context of the European Zionist project.¹⁰ But while these scholars offer us subtle and theoretically rich accounts of the ways masculinity shaped these political movements, their narratives cannot simply be transposed onto the American context.

American Zionism differed politically from its European counterparts, which also meant that it was different with respect to gender and religion. This section begins by briefly sketching American Zionism's political context, then discusses how the American Zionist movement's ideals about Palestine fit with its construction of masculinity, and finally considers the relationship of religion, masculinity, and Zionist political ideals. Each element has continuity with European Zionist ideas, but each also tells a story of a Zionist masculinity that was distinctly American.

In many ways, American Zionism began the twentieth century as the little brother of European Zionism. It was numerically much smaller, had to fight to be taken seriously intellectually, and largely relied on European thought as a model for its identity. Americans were largely excluded from the leadership positions at international Zionist conferences. Especially before World War I, the Zionist movement claimed only a small percentage of American Jews. Though Arthur Hertzberg's characterization of American Zionism overstates its irrelevance and narrowness when he calls it a "moribund affair, totally shunned by the wealthy, assimilated Jewish community,"¹¹ it is nevertheless true that the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ) was a small and relatively marginal organization. Two years after its founding on the symbolic day of July 4, 1898, it had about 3,800

dues-paying members.¹² Despite the immigration of well over half-million Jews, it grew slowly, reaching about 15,000 members in 1914.¹³ The 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which Britain's foreign secretary Arthur Balfour wrote that "His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," buoyed Zionists when it gave state recognition to their goals. The declaration invigorated the American Zionist movement, but its number of adherents remained small.

When Louis Brandeis famously said, "to be good Americans, we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists," he was in the minority among acculturated American Jews.¹⁴ The anti-Zionist Jewish education expert Julia Richman expressed a more commonly held interpretation: "A Jew cannot be both a Jewish citizen and an American citizen. He cannot be a good Jew and a bad citizen. He ought to be and often is a true American citizen of the Jewish faith."¹⁵ Like Brandeis, she identified American values with Jewish values, but she rejected the connection with Zionism. For Richman, Jewishness was not about an imagined polity; it was about Judaism as a religion—a religion compatible with reason, universalism, and democracy. In short, she argued that Judaism qualified as "good" religion, which harmonized with the values of American citizenship.

As Richman's assertion suggests, a wholehearted embrace of political Zionism would come with significant liabilities on the American scene. Accusations of "dual loyalty" were not confined to antisemites and nativists. If American Jews worked for an independent Jewish state, how could they be good Americans? Settlement in Palestine was a noble goal, especially given the persecution of Eastern European Jews, but the Herzlian idea of a single Jewish state ran counter to the Judaism and the Americanism with which most American Jews identified. In "The Dangers, the Fallacies and the Falsehoods of Zionism III," outspoken anti-Zionist Reform rabbi Kaufmann Kohler wrote, "Zionism is nothing more or less than land hunger such as all the nations of the world manifest today, a desire quite natural and justifiable in the fugitive, homeless Jew of Russia and Romania."¹⁶ Zionism was an understandable nationalist project, insofar as its goal was aiding Eastern European Jews. But, as yet another iteration of modern nationalism, Kohler argued it was too particularistic and ran counter to the values of American Judaism. He summarized, "It cannot be *our* homeland of the American Jew."¹⁷ Kohler saw Judaism as a universal religion, and embracing political Zionism would render its commitments tribal and parochial. Many acculturated Jews worried about how non-Jewish Americans would perceive Zionism, and their worries were not entirely without cause.

Unlike the dominant trends in European Zionism, American Zionism focused far less on creating a new Jewish state that would become *the* homeland for *all* Jews. Instead they envisioned projects in Palestine as a philanthropic effort primarily on behalf of other Jews. These projects would have the added benefit of

promoting and consolidating Jewish culture, arts, and knowledge for all Jews. Even the anti-Zionist Kohler was sympathetic to Zionism's practical project of saving Eastern European Jews. Reform Rabbi Gustav Gottheil spoke for most American Zionists when he wrote that Zionism was about "securing a home for the homeless."¹⁸

But America's Jews were not "homeless," even according to the outspoken Zionist Gottheil. For him, as for most American Zionists, the United States was the exception. And this American exceptionalism was not only political: it was also religious. Jews elsewhere were subject to the church of the state and to state-sanctioned oppression, and Zionism was intended to help those Jews. Gustav's son Richard followed in his ideological steps. Richard Gottheil was a professor of Semitics at Columbia University in New York and became the first president of the FAZ. His interest in shaping Jewish men through Zionism extended beyond the FAZ and its official hierarchy. He also founded the first American Jewish collegiate fraternity, ZBT, as a Zionist youth organization. ZBT, which now identifies itself as the three-letter Greek "Zeta Beta Tau," originally stood for Zion BeMishpat Tipadeh.¹⁹ Gottheil thought that young Jewish men were quite at home in the United States and Canada and that creating young men's Zionist organizations would help shape these young adults into ideal Jewish men.

Richard Gottheil, who had moved from England to New York when he was eleven years old, claimed that the American political context was exceptional because of its constitutional tradition of disestablishment and its social and political inclusion of Jews. In contrast, the political situation in post-Enlightenment Europe had led to Jewish exclusion: "Church and Society joined hands, and once more there was no place for Jews, who held with tenacity to their separate existence and refused to lose their existence."²⁰ Gottheil's subtext was not so subtle. The political arrangements of European states precluded Jews from remaining distinctively Jewish and fully participating in "Society" because of the marriage of "Church" and "Society." The United States, with its avowed separation of church and state, was exceptional, and it fostered "good" religion—religion based on individual conscience and compatible with democracy—whereas European systems brought with them religious coercion and discrimination. America's political arrangement was good for the Jews, while Europe's marginalized them.

Gottheil also expressed his advocacy of Zionism because it would provide a haven for Jews seeking refuge from Eastern Europe. The United States had already provided a fertile land for the flourishing of Jewish immigrant life, but he was skeptical about its capacity to accommodate all the needy and oppressed would-be immigrants. He wrote in 1914, "But such immigration cannot continue indefinitely, and the continued depression of the masses in Eastern Europe is having its effect in making the material with which the reconstructive process in the West is being carried on less worthy of its purpose and less effective in carrying it

out.”²¹ For Gottheil, a “reconstructive process” transformed oppressed Jews back into productive, self-sufficient, and proud Jews. But Palestine was not the only option that could remedy the ills Gottheil identified as “active antisemitism on the one hand and passive social oppression on the other.”²² He began by noting that the United States had already been performing this function. Zionism, in his view, could continue and expand it.

Gottheil and other American Zionists’ advocacy also hints at how acculturated Jews thought that Eastern European Jews lacked particular aspects of manliness. Similar to European Zionists’ claims about diaspora Jews in general, some American Zionists claimed that Eastern European Jews were weak and alienated from the land. The “physical want and suffering” of Eastern European Jews ended in “physical and moral demoralization, a trampling of men’s bodies and women’s souls,” FAZ secretary Jacob de Haas told a crowd gathered at New York’s Temple Emanu-El.²³ Acculturated American Jews also often saw “downtrodden” Eastern European immigrants in similar terms. Those Jews with their unhealthy bodies and underdeveloped religion needed help, they thought. Like the Zionists, but unlike most antisemites, acculturated American Jews largely thought that weakness and physical inferiority were but a matter of environment, and therefore within a generation or two of living in the American land of opportunity, these Jews would become uplifted.

Very few American Zionists had any intention of immigrating to Palestine (sometimes called “making *aliyah*”). Even the *Maccabaeen*, the publication of the FAZ, did not promote *aliyah* for American Jews. Apart from one article about an eighteenth-century rabbi, titled, lukewarmly, “Why Not Live in Palestine?” it presented American Zionism as a project of Jewish renewal that its supporters would, it assumed, conduct from the United States. By putting the idea of moving to Palestine in the mouth of a rabbi who lived long ago and far away, the magazine indicated the remoteness of that possibility for most of its readers. The *Maccabaeen* and the FAZ emphasized the compatibility between being good Americans and being good Zionists: American Zionists were Americans. The negative narratives painting all Jewish life outside of Palestine as emasculating, therefore, held little allure for them.

The description of diaspora Jewry as effeminate, American Zionists thought, only applied to those poor diaspora Jews in Eastern Europe who had suffered the ill effects of persecution. And they were effeminate not because of living in the diaspora per se, but as a result of political and social oppression. In 1902, rabbi of New York’s Shearith Israel Henry Pereira Mendes wrote an article that clearly revealed his assumptions about the different masculinities of American Jews, other diaspora Jews, and Zionists. As a proponent of Zionism, Mendes advocated the settlement of Palestine, but not for the purpose of bettering his own readers. American Jews, he assumed, would not be the primary inhabitants of Palestine,

but Mendes called on his own readers to “help” the “thousands of Hebrews [who] will flock there and will need to be helped, settled, and absorbed. Every Jew whom we can rescue from a Russia or a Roumania will be a deed well done, and never must effort be relaxed to turn the pallid, narrow-chested victim of persecution into the stalwart son of the soil.”²⁴ Working the soil in Palestine would help transform weak Jewish men into men with healthy bodies. What had caused these Eastern European Jews to become weak and unhealthy was not living in the diaspora. It was persecution. American Jews, in his view, were not weak and unhealthy, but they should support settlement in Palestine because it contributed to the “rescue” of the victims of persecution.²⁵

Religion also played an essential part in these philanthropic, health-minded American Zionist ideals. In 1906 Solomon Schechter, the architect of Conservative Judaism, identified Zionism as a source of strength for all Jews, even while denying that all Jews needed to move to one homeland. This strength was not limited to a physical location in Palestine—its effects were profoundly religious. Zionism was “a true and healthy life . . . invigorated by sacred memories and sacred environments, and proving a tower of strength and of unity not only for the remnant gathered within the borders of the Holy Land, but also for those who shall, by choice or by necessity, prefer what now constitutes Galut.”²⁶ Schechter explained that participating in the Zionist project, in whatever location, created the “true and healthy life.” In America, Zionism could mean strength and manliness, but those characteristics took on metaphorical more than embodied meanings, and they did not often have an explicit connection to Palestine. Here Schechter offered a stark distinction from some of the most prominent European Zionists. Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik’s 1898 poem “HaMatmid” starkly depicted memories of the past through a physically weak, if nevertheless romantic, figure of the Talmud student. Where Lilien and Bialik depicted hunched, weak, and old observant Jews studying, Schechter saw traditional texts as invigorating, not enervating. Zionism would “invigorate sacred memories and sacred environments” with its reference to the land of Palestine. These sacred communal “memories,” a reference to a biblical past, would prove a “tower of strength.” Far from aligning textual study with bodily weakness, as Lilien or Bialik had, Schechter saw these textual memories as the very source of the strength of the Zionist project. He did not celebrate the particular figure of the Eastern European Talmud student, but he did embrace the texts themselves as a source of Jewish emotional and communal strength and bravery.

Others made even more explicit connections between Zionism and religion. Mendes’s 1902 article “Spiritual Zionism” insisted on the centrality of religion to the Zionist enterprise. “Spirituality,” he began, “that is the keynote of Judaism and all Zionism that is not in harmony therewith is unreal Zionism.”²⁷ For Mendes, there was no conflict between secular nationalism and universalistic religion. Far from seeing the universalist impulses of Reform Judaism and the national goal of

building a Jewish society in Palestine as inimical, he saw them as fundamentally intertwined: “I will never be content with the realization of my dream, my hope, my belief, unless ‘Palestine for the Jews’ means not simply the erection of a Jewish state, but the creation of a spiritual centre for all mankind, a source of spiritual inspiration for Jewish communities throughout the world, so that Palestine shall be for all men a gateway to God.” Mendes framed the familiar Reform understandings of Judaism’s universal message and a Jewish religious mission to all humanity as central to the Zionist enterprise.

Mendes provides an example of what historian Alon Gal has called the “mission motif.”²⁸ This “mission” idea, consonant with universalist religious impulses and most popular in Reform circles, asserted that Jews in exile would become an example “for men of all nations,” as Mendes wrote.²⁹ Though scholars generally imagine the idea of a universal mission as an anti-Zionist motif, here Mendes shows how it existed within Zionist circles. He wrote, “I can conceive of no *raison d’être* for the Jew on the stage of history except to exercise spiritual influence, to lead men to God, that their thoughts shall be Himward, their characters patterned after the pattern God sets us in the Holy Book, that our lives shall be consecrated by a consciousness of the Fatherhood of God, of nearness to Him, and of His nearness to us! ‘Bring God into human life’—that is Zionism.” Mendes’s version of American Zionism was anything but secularizing. It was both universalistic and religious in its commitments. This commitment to universalism also recalls the philosophical idea of universalism as masculine, as we saw in chapter 1.

Although European and American Zionism shared many texts and ideals, they developed in different political, religious, and gendered contexts. Most European Zionists subscribed to the idea of *shlilat hagalat*, or the negation of the diaspora. In this formulation, diaspora life is inherently negative, and the only salvation of the Jewish people can come from a Jewish return to Palestine. As we have seen, however, very few American Zionists, however, thought in these terms, and *shlilat hagalat* never caught on in the United States. Furthermore, most American Zionists did not even think of the United States as *galut*. In part because of this refusal to classify American Jewish life as exilic (and therefore negative), as the next section suggests, American Zionism never painted American Jews as effeminate. Instead, American Jews were masculine in their philanthropic and political effort to support the cultivation of the land on behalf of other Jews.

Galut, the Land, and the Maccabaeans

In 1901, the emerging American Zionist movement began to publish its own journal. In its first issue, the *Maccabaeans*, the print organ of the FAZ, declared its purpose: “to reconstruct the Jewish people, to lead them to an organized national

existence, to make Jewish religious life possible, to foster the study of Jewish literature and history, to provide a stable home for the oppressed and downtrodden of our race.”³⁰ This five-part agenda predictably included a sense of Jewish peoplehood, Jewish culture, and Jewish history alongside an “organized national existence.” But it also framed that national existence as a means to an end: a “stable home for the oppressed and downtrodden.” Zionism, in this sense, was a benevolent political movement aimed at helping other Jews. Even its word choice suggested this goal when it referred to the Jewish people as “them.” It did not seek to “foster *our* knowledge,” or “develop *our* national existence” or “create a stable home for *ourselves*,” even while it referred to “our race.” The reference to “our race” indicates that American Zionists had a sense of the Jewish collective, but they nevertheless did not associate the whole of the Jewish collective with future life in Palestine. The *Maccabaeen’s* mission statement did not suggest that Zionism would help transform its own readers into more physically healthy or strong men, but it did suggest that they could participate in a project to uplift their fellow Jews in faraway lands. As its declaration of purpose suggested, the *Maccabaeen* also promoted Judaism. Creating a home for downtrodden Jews would be one part of making “Jewish religious life possible,” and its pages would also promote religious knowledge among its readers.

The *Maccabaeen’s* audience was largely acculturated Jews. Although in its initial layout, each issue concluded with a Yiddish section, these pages were phased out less than a year from the journal’s inception. In an article on “the immigrant,” the journal made clear who its audience was (and was not). “The so-called East Side is taking care of itself to a very large extent. Considering their numbers, we may expect that in the next decade responsibility for the improvement of Jewish conditions will be transferred to them.”³¹ The *Maccabaeen* referred to immigrant Jews on the Lower East Side as “them,” and “they” needed care, though it seemed that they were beginning to be able to provide it themselves. This paternalistic attitude—a combination of responsibility for other Jews and condescension—also informed the readers’ attitude toward Eastern European Jews who remained in Eastern Europe and faced antisemitism, lack of economic opportunity, and other undesirable situations. The *Maccabaeen* styled itself as a periodical for cultured, educated American Jews.

In its early years, the American Zionist movement did borrow from the European Zionist movement, including some of its ideals of masculinity. The early issues of the *Maccabaeen* occasionally reflected European ideas of the masculine Zionist body, sometimes almost literally: it reprinted Herzl’s writings at length—*Altneuland* appeared in serialized form, for instance—and Max Nordau’s writings, letters, and speeches appeared at length in about half of the issues published in its first eight or nine years.³² Yet, especially in the years after Herzl’s death in 1904, the *Maccabaeen’s* pages featured more American Jewish writers,

and a distinctly American perspective began to emerge. Although it still deified Herzl, it printed fewer and fewer of Lilien's sketches and openly criticized Nordau.³³ American Zionist writers took their places, and their ideological dependence on European Zionism faded.

Reporter Louis Lipsky was the first editor of the *Maccabaeian*, and he passed the reins to the British-born and newly arrived immigrant Jacob de Haas in 1902. In 1914, Lipsky would leave his position as editor of *The American Hebrew* and return to edit the *Maccabaeian* when he became secretary (and later president) of the FAZ. Even during his time away from editing, Lipsky contributed to the journal often. In December 1907, he wrote "The Festival of Chanuka: A Talk with Jewish Boys and Girls," in which he called Zionists "the modern Maccabaeans."³⁴ Though it at first appeared to be an educational discussion for children, the article was actually a didactic piece that sought to reorient and reinvigorate the American Jewish community around the ideas of land, soil, and healthy bodies. Ultimately, the article suggested that Jewish manliness was actually about politics, not about physical transformation. Lipsky's ideal Jewish community did not center on building stronger bodies, but rather on creating a safe haven for all Jews. To do this, Jews had to reconnect with their peoplehood and history.

Lipsky began his December article by asking his readers: "Why was the Festival of Chanuka so endeared to you, and why did you as boy or as girl, feel, as if, of all Jewish holidays, that holiday was the dearest, the best, the most enjoyable?" Despite the title and opening question, however, girls quickly dropped out of his audience. Hanukkah was the best holiday, he explained, not because it was the Jewish answer to Christmas but "because it was the holiday appreciative of the spirit of resistance! How often had your boyish soul been pained by the tales of the submissiveness of the Jewish people." He told his boy readers that they held images of Jews as an oppressed and downtrodden people, but that Hanukkah made them feel good about being Jewish. "Because Chanuka noted an event telling of resistance, you, as a boy, felt that you could celebrate it." Boys rightly eschewed political submissiveness and identified with political resistance, in Lipsky's formulation.

Hanukkah provided a chance for Jewish boys to connect with the Jewish people, Lipsky assumed, because it connected their own Jewish history to their admiration of men who defended the American land: "You admired the heroes of the Civil War, when you thrilled as the veterans of that war passed before you on Decoration Day; so too when you heard of Judas Maccabaeus, of his brave brothers, of that heroic old man who struck the first blow, your youthful soul expanded, and you felt yourself at home among the Jewish people." Lipsky's imagined boy audience already admired American soldiers because of their brave feats (though, notably, there was nothing about their physical bodies or appear-

ance). And when they learned about the story of Hanukkah, they could admire historical Jews too.

This move—arguing for the value of Zionism by showing its similarities to American wartime or pioneering conquests—relied on the value of a masculinity of bravery and willingness to do political work on behalf of others. Later Lipsky compared the “Pilgrim fathers” to the Zionists and argued that Zionism was “compatible with American tradition, with democratic principles, [and] with present American citizenship.”³⁵ More than just compatible, Lipsky’s conceptions of Zionism and American citizenship were quite similar in both their political and gendered ideals.

Throughout these writings, Lipsky took for granted that his readers both knew American stories of courageous, martial, and pioneering masculinity and were enchanted by them. His imagined audience, the “boy,” however, did not know about the parallel Jewish ideas and history until he was taught. Only when the boy “heard” about Hanukkah could he have the same feeling of pride in manliness about Jewishness. Learning of this model of the spirit of political resistance, Jewish boys could feel “at home among the Jewish people.” They could feel “at home” because the Jewish men in this history behaved bravely and embraced a masculinity of which they would be proud:

They were not a Jewish people holding its breath for fear of the wicked opinion of the world, but a daring people. They were guerrillas, at first, and how fine it was to think that Jews, too, laid in ambush awaiting their foe, that they, too, experienced the midnight prowling in the forests, the cautious peering through the thickets, the thrilling daring of the midnight attack. And when you read how they fought in the open, having won their right to their soil, what a relief to know that you could celebrate the anniversary of their bravery in spite of their subsequent defeat.

The thrill, the bravery, the daring—these were the things that made Jewish history relatable and a source of pride. The courageous masculinity of the Hanukkah story ensured it would resonate with American Jewish men.

“In brief,” Lipsky wrote, “Chanuka gave you a satisfactory explanation of the Jewish Goluth [*galut*]. The Jewish people, you thought, were a strong, not a suffering people; a virile, not a supplicating people.” The story of Hanukkah assured Jewish boys that Jewish masculinity was admirable masculinity and that living in the diaspora was nothing to be ashamed of. Those Maccabean diasporic Jews were manly, not effeminate, and the Hanukkah story was splendid despite “their subsequent defeat.” Lipsky’s version did not, however, focus on strong or muscular bodies but rather celebrated courage, demonstrated in a martial action toward a political end.

Lipsky, however, admitted that a triumphalist narrative of Jewish history was not warranted from a contemporary global perspective. “The majority of our

people are the victims of persecution,” he wrote, and other Jews have assimilated so thoroughly that they are no longer Jewish. But Zionism, with its celebration of Jewish bravery and political assertiveness, was the solution to this historical downturn. “Our celebration of Chanuka, our Zionist celebration, is a protest and a jubilant song. We who are Zionists offer you once more the youthful dream.” Readers, whom he now addressed as adults who could “once more” experience youthful ideas, should claim Judas Maccabaeus as their hero because he was “the warrior Jew, who fought the battles of his people.”

Even if Judas Maccabaeus was a hero because of his battles and not because of the miracle of the oil, Lipsky insisted that the “manly life” Zionism offered was not separable from Judaism. “The Jewish law, the ineradicable basis of the Jewish religion, was given to a nation. That law grew out of the life of a people living on its own soil. Every particle of Jewish religious thought received its coloring from the life and history of a nation.” Nationalism and religion were two sides of the same coin. Lipsky closed with a call to American Jews to become Zionists: “Who would not be in the ranks of such a cause, fighting, as they did two thousand years ago, for the preservation of our national integrity? . . . who would not strive for the revival of a sturdy, self-reliant, wholesome Jewish nation upon its own soil?” There was no separation between secular nationalism and religion—though here Lipsky had less interest in universalist ideals than many other American Jews. For Lipsky, Hanukkah inspired boys because it provided historical examples of ideal Jewish masculinity: men who bravely embarked on a political quest on behalf of the safety and religious freedom of the Jewish people.

A political episode seven years later—what became known as *milhemet hasafot*, “the war of the languages”—helps us see how American Zionists imagined their own situation to be different from that in other *galut* countries and what the implications of those differences were for masculinity. In its “Review of the Month” in February 1914, the *Maccabaeian* complained that the German Jewish philanthropic organization called the Hilfsverein advocated German-language use at the newly formed Technicum, Palestine’s first university and forerunner to today’s Technion. American Zionists objected, and the *Maccabaeian* characterized German Zionists as “unmanly.” The piece reported that “the American directors have spoken with a unanimous vote” for Hebrew and against German. Then its author, editor Israel Goldberg, upbraided these German Jews for their “unmanly golus attitude.” American Jews did not suffer from this unmanly diasporic affliction, he implied, but some Germans did: “Against those who do not belong to our camp we prefer not to raise the banner of revolt against our brethren, poisoned with the virus of an undignified and unmanly *golus* spirit.” To combat this undignified, unmanly, and contagious attitude, he urged American Zionists to “take up arms, and declare that Palestine is beyond their jurisdiction, that Palestine belongs to our national future, and across its threshold no Jew may

cross who does not leave behind him all thought of any other nationality but that which is being created in Palestine.”³⁶ It was American Zionists’ job to combat an “unmanly golus” attitude in German Jews, but here is also a remarkable moment: Goldberg positions Palestine as “our national future” to the exception of “any other nationality,” and yet he put American Jews together with Palestine’s Jews. “Their fight is ours,” he wrote. He sought to protect Palestine’s Jews from the interests of German Jews because of the latter’s diasporic interests, and he portrayed Americans and Palestinians together opposing this “unmanly” project.³⁷ Goldberg placed German Jews and their interests on the side of unmanliness and implicitly placed American and Palestinian Jews together on the side of manliness. This German-language proposal, then, failed one of the two key elements in American Zionist manliness: a universal benevolence to Jews escaping the diaspora.

The next segment of the “Review of the Month” expressed concern about the proposed Burnett bill, an act to restrict immigration. In this case Goldberg’s concerns were not about Jews in America, but Eastern European Jews—“large numbers of our brethren”—who would want to “emerge out of their sad condition.” Goldberg spoke out against the immigration restriction, and simultaneously positioned Zionism as an important fallback measure: if the United States were not open as a safe haven, then settling Palestine became all the more important. Unlike the German Jews who sought to project their own interests onto other Jews, a “manly” attitude meant helping one’s suffering brethren.

American Zionists also fashioned the category of *galut* into a novel shape: Palestine was Zion and Eastern Europe (or Europe more generally) was *galut*. But they rarely suggested that the United States was exile. In March 1914, for example, the *Maccabaeen* section, “News and Views, in the lands of Goluth” included news briefs with the following headlines: “Ministers Change: Antisemites Remain,” “Echoes of the Beilis Trial,” “Persecution of Jewish Artisans,” “Jews Flee from Lodz,” “‘Enlightened’ Germany, Antisemitism Rampant,” “‘Brave’ Austria, Antisemitism among Austrian Officers,” “‘Liberal’ France, French Catholic Press Attack Jews,” “And Roumania, the Struggle for Jewish Rights.” These “lands of Goluth” never included the United States. This list of Jewish troubles abroad implied an especially Zionist form of American exceptionalism—that is, that exile was elsewhere.³⁸

Beyond the pages of the *Maccabaeen*, this classification—other lands as *galut*, America as different—also took on gendered meaning. When David de Sola Pool wrote about a Jewish cultural celebration for the journal *Jewish Charities*, he lauded both the immigrants and the United States itself, which he did not mark as *galut*. By celebrating his (or her, presumably, because there were women in attendance) Jewish culture, “the immigrant was making a manly assertion of his own individuality.” This manly assertion of individuality also served as one

element of the connection between the immigrant and the United States: “The Jewish evening marked a clearly defined step upward in its conception of mutual responsibilities between the immigrant Jew and his adopted land . . . and gave some measure of guarantee of a future Jewish development of the Jew in America.”³⁹ Far from being *galut*, then, the United States would serve as a place for the Jewish development of the Jew. For Goldberg, the *Maccabaeen*, de Sola Pool, and other American Zionists the United States did not—and should not—demand complete assimilation, nor did it allow the kind of Jewish oppression as did the “golus tragedies of Eastern Europe.” “Golus tragedies,” it seems, were not the sort that occurred in America.

On the rare occasion that the *Maccabaeen* mentioned that American Jews might move to Palestine, it posed this immigration as an altruistic decision that benefited the cause much more than the individual. When Helena Cohn wrote about “Palestine and the Jewish Colonists,” she was insistent that Palestine needed “strong and sturdy” men and women “filled with the pioneer spirit.” And although she vigorously promoted settlement in Palestine, when it came to discussing potential American “pioneers,” she emphasized sacrifice, altruism, and utility to the Zionist cause: “The American Jew will have to give up much that has made his life pleasant in America, but owing to his economic situation and his mental qualities he will be able to do useful work in Palestine and to lead a life which, although full of hard work, will afford him leisure to indulge in intellectual and aesthetic pleasures.”⁴⁰ Her description suggested that American Jews would be “useful” to the project, more than the project would be useful to them. As already courageous, pioneering, and self-sufficient, American Jews would bring their manly virtues to support Palestine and the Zionist movement, rather than Palestine Zionism instilling those manly virtues in them.

The *Maccabaeen* even celebrated Jews as exemplars of masculinity. When, in May 1914, the United States sent troops to Veracruz to intervene in the Mexican Revolution, the *Maccabaeen*’s first page began by extolling the manly virtues of Jews as American soldiers. Three of the seventeen marines who died during the skirmish were Jewish, and Goldberg tied this to a history of Jews as brave volunteers for the American nation: “This is in keeping with American tradition. The Jews of this country have always offered their lives in excess of their numbers.”⁴¹ Jews had always expressed their courage in support of the United States.

This Veracruz military action, along with later wartime discussions, was one of the few times that the *Maccabaeen* focused on physical acts of bravery. Yet even here Goldberg emphasized the psychological motivation—the “sub-conscious feeling,” he called it—behind the act of enlistment. “When they were admitted into the army anywhere, they seemed imbued with superhuman powers of endurance, as if they were determined to show the incredulous world that the calumny against their people was not deserved.” Goldberg set these particu-

lar acts of Jewish bravery in the broader framework of convincing others of the value of Jews as manly members of nations. This bodily sacrifice was a means to the end of quashing non-Jewish stereotypes of Jews as disloyal citizens. He did not value “superhuman powers of endurance” as essentially Jewish—or even as a desideratum—but he saw Jewish veterans’ actions as a way to promote positive images of Jewish men as citizens.

Moreover, this bravery held an inverse relationship to the usual Zionist geography. Rather than linking it with the land of Palestine, Goldberg valorized the diaspora as the location of bravery. “This is no new Jewish trait, the valor,” he continued. “It is as old as the gulus.” Exile, not Zion, was the breeding ground of manly Jewish valor. He then urged that this American Jewish brave masculinity serve as a model for Zionist masculinity, and Jewish masculinity in general: “He fights as an American soldier to show the world that Jews have the fighting spirit. May this fighting spirit animate all Jews in doing battle for their own country, as well as for their adopted countries.” Goldberg held up American Jewish men, in volunteering and fighting for the US Armed Forces, as the exemplars of masculinity.

Conclusion

The American Zionist movement, then, did not simply mirror its European counterparts, or celebrate *muskeljudentum*, gymnasium fitness, and physical culture in a full-throated or unambiguous voice. The conjunction of Zionism and American exceptionalism produced a different discourse about gender. American Zionist manliness largely took the form of the nonphysical traits of courage and benevolence, while redefining the geographic boundaries of *galut* and any attendant effeminacy so as not to include the United States. Acculturated American Zionist men saw this manliness as something they were uniquely poised to have: in their eyes, as Americans and Zionists, they were already doing an excellent job of Jewish manliness.

Although most acculturated Jews denounced political Zionism, its rationale and rhetoric bore many resemblances to the physical culture and the ideology of simultaneous self-sufficiency and communal responsibility of the broader Zionist movement.⁴² Like Zionists, many acculturated Jews saw settlement of the land as a way to revitalize Jews and Jewish culture. Part of this regeneration explicitly aimed to make men more physically fit and healthy, and they also saw cultivation of the land as a way to create better Jewish citizens.

Even though the Zionist movement did not initially include the majority of American Jews, some of the gendered aspects of its ideology, such as the embrace of the rural and agricultural, physical culture, and the romanticization of certain kinds of physical labor, resonated with broader American cultural trends toward the “strenuous life” and critiques of the unhealthiness of cities. Like the imagined

Indian culture, Zionist rhetoric drew on the language of closeness to the land, masculinity, health through physical labor, and self-sufficiency.⁴³ The Galveston Movement, agricultural communities, and Indian-Israelite connections offered ways for Jews to embrace this vision of Jewish manhood, strength, and productivity without the liability of appearing disloyal or uncommitted to the United States as a nation.

Part II of the book considered the ways Jews rendered the arrival of Jews in the United States (the Galveston Movement), their American Jewish past (via affinity with Indians), their present (via agricultural movements), and their future (via Zionism). These movements all had strong aspirational elements. That is, they sought to “uplift” immigrants and portray Jews and Jewish masculinity in a positive light to both themselves and their neighbors. The next section looks at another side of Jewish masculinity, namely the vices and negative aspects associated with it.

Notes

1. Max Nordau is probably the best-known Zionist thinker to articulate this view, and his ideas gained widespread support and development in Zionist circles. He espoused the idea of *muskeljudentum*, which would use physical exercise such as gymnastics and other competitive sports to reverse the physical effects of persecution. For Nordau’s narrative of the historical suppression of Jewish physical prowess, see Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1898). On *muskeljudentum*, see Max Nordau, “Muskeljudentum,” in *Zionistische Schriften* (Cologne: Juedischer Verlag, 1909), 379–381. A translation is printed in Paul Mendes Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

2. Mary McCune, “Social Workers in the Muskeljudentum: ‘Hadassah Ladies,’ ‘Manly Men,’ and the Significance of Gender in the American Zionist Movement,” *American Jewish History* 86, no. 2 (June 1998): 134.

3. For instance, though these volumes mention Hadassah and Henrietta Szold, they are all histories focused on men. Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1979); Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of Israel* (New York: Schocken, 2003); Melvin Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (New York: Bison Books, 1995).

4. These broad questions are taken up in Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, and Rotundo, *American Manhood*.

5. See Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man*; and Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

6. Naomi Cohen, “The Maccabean’s Message: A Study in American Zionism until World War I,” *Jewish Social Studies* 18, no. 3 (July 1956): 166.

7. See Jonathan Sarna, “Converts to Zionism in the American Reform Movement,” in *Zionism and Religion*, eds. S. Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira (Waltham, MA: University Press of New England, 1998), 188–203.

8. Louis Lipsky, "The Duty of American Jews," *Maccabaeen* (Feb. 1909): 41–46.
9. Todd Samuel Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (New York: Routledge, 2007). See also Lederhendler, *Jewish Responses to Modernity*.
10. Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*; Presner, *Muscular Judaism*; and Mikhal Dekel, *The Universal Jew: Masculinity, Modernity, and the Zionist Movement* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011).
11. Hertzberg, *American Zionism*, 2.
12. Cohen, "Maccabaeen's Message," 163.
13. Naomi Cohen, *American Jews and the Zionist Idea* (New York: Ktav, 1975), 9. It had also hovered there for a decade. Hertzberg, *American Zionism*, 106.
14. Quoted in Jacob de Haas, *Louis Dembitz Brandeis: A Biographical Sketch with Special Reference to His Contributions to Jewish and Zionist History* (New York: Bloch, 1929), 163.
15. Richman, *Methods of Teaching Jewish Ethics*, 75.
16. Kaufmann Kohler, "The Dangers, the Fallacies and the Falsehoods of Zionism III," *Reform Advocate* 33 (1907): 350, quoted in Yaakov Ariel, "Kaufmann Kohler and His Attitude toward Zionism: A Reexamination," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 43 (1991): 212.
17. Kaufmann Kohler, *Palestine and Israel's World Mission* (Pittsburgh, PA: Rodef Shalom Congregation, 1918), 4, quoted in Ariel, "Kaufmann Kohler," 213.
18. Gustav Gottheil, "The Mystery of Our Mission," *Maccabaeen* (May 1902): 243–244.
19. *American Jewish Year Book 1900–1901* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1901), 182. For the history of ZBT, see Marianne Sanua, *Going Greek: Jewish College Fraternities in the United States* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003)
20. Richard Gottheil, *Zionism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1914), 26.
21. *Ibid.*, 206–207.
22. *Ibid.*, 205.
23. Jacob de Haas, *Zionism: Why and Wherefore* (New York: Maccabaeen Publishing Co., 1902), 10.
24. Henry Pereira Mendes, "Spiritual Zionism," *Maccabaeen* 2 (Jan. 1902): 16.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Quoted in Cohen, *American Jews*, 10
27. Mendes, "Spiritual Zionism," 15.
28. Sarna, "Converts to Zionism," 196–197; Alon Gal, "The Mission Motif in American Zionism, 1898–1948," *American Jewish History* 75 (June 1986): 363–385.
29. Mendes, "Spiritual Zionism," 15.
30. *Maccabaeen* 1 (1901): 3–4.
31. "Review of the Month," *Maccabaeen* 22, no. 6 (Dec. 1912): 182. Cf. Cohen, who suggests that the audience was immigrants ("Maccabaeen's Message," 164).
32. In 1907, for example, the *Maccabaeen* included "The Decadence of French Jewry," (Feb. 1907); "Dr. Nordau to English Zionists" (Feb. 1907); "Dr. Nordau on the Program" (Apr. 1907); letter sent to American Jewish Congress (Aug. 1907); speech at 8th Zionist Congress; and "Dr. Nordau on Political Zionism" (Dec. 1907).
33. In 1914, for instance, several issues criticize Nordau at length.
34. Louis Lipsky, "The Festival of Chanuka: A Talk with Jewish Boys and Girls," *Maccabaeen* 6 (Dec. 1907): 246–248.
35. Lipsky, "The Duty of American Jews."
36. "Review of the Month," *Maccabaeen* 24 (Feb. 1914): 36. Goldberg held American Jewry as distinctively valuable throughout his life. He later—and most famously—wrote *The Jews in America*.

37. This had also happened before 1914. HUC professor Caspar Levias had also harshly criticized “honest Jews” who opposed Zionism. He diagnosed them with the “German Ghetto” mentality that was “unable to rise to the manly, self-respecting and only true conception, that one’s right to existence is the mere fact of his already existing; but they clutched at the servile and degrading claim of a Jew’s usefulness. Such a claim, it can safely be said, would not enter the head of a Hottentot. Why should the Jew, of all peoples, have to apologize for their existence? If they suffer persecution, it is not for want of right, but for lack of might.” But he blamed it on “German Jews,” gave German examples, and never suggested that American Jews might be similarly implicated. “The Nostrum of the German Assimilators,” *Maccabaeian* 5 (May 1907): 177–179.

38. “News and Views in the Lands of Goluth,” *Maccabaeian* 24, no. 3 (Mar. 1914): 89–90.

39. David de Sola Pool, “A Jewish Evening,” *Jewish Charities* (1906): 7.

40. Helena Cohn, “Palestine and the Jewish Colonists,” *Maccabaeian* 25, no. 2 (Aug. 1914): 70.

41. “Review of the Month,” *Maccabaeian* 24, no. 5 (May 1914): 131.

42. I do not mean to suggest that the Zionist movement had a monopoly on these ideas. The labor movement, for instance, shared in a similar attitude of promoting physical labor and communal responsibility.

43. For analysis of the gendered aspects of Zionism, see Dekel, *Universal Jew*; Michael Berkovitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and Fin-de-Siecle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).