

***Dorot: The McGill Undergraduate
Journal of Jewish Studies***



Volume 15 – 2016

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Published by
The Jewish Studies Students' Association of
McGill University

Volume 15

2016

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ISSN 1913-2409

This is an annual publication of the Jewish Studies Students' Association of McGill University. All correspondence should be sent to:

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Preface

Editor-in-chief, Caroline Bedard, and five contributors put together a terrific new issue of *Dorot*, the undergraduate journal of McGill's Department of Jewish Studies. I am delighted to introduce their work.

The essays presented in this issue offer five intriguing snapshots of modern Jewish history and culture, taking us around the world from the Vienna of Stefan Zweig, Gustav Mahler and Sigmund Freud to the Montreal of A.M. Klein, Mordecai Richler and Leonard Cohen. They showcase cultural trends, social tensions, and tragic turns in both the Diaspora and Israel from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives: history, literature, cultural studies, sociology and more.

While Canada is often praised as a beacon of multicultural coexistence, Madeleine Gomery shows how the spectre of anti-Semitism — in the form of quiet prejudice rather than clamoring public discourse — still defined Jewish culture in post-WWII Montreal. The sense of exclusion, she argues, significantly marked the work of Montreal-Jewish writers A. M. Klein, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen and Mordecai Richler.

Alon Faitelis discusses the rise and articulation of Mizrahi socio-political consciousness in response to tensions between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim in

Israel, in particular the Mizrahi experience of discrimination – cultural, political, social and so on.

We stay in Israel with Mason Brenhouse's fine piece that examines how rock music moved to the center of Israeli popular culture from the 1960s onwards, how it competed with and partly displaced nationalistic folk music, was acculturated (or "Israelized"), but also remained a vehicle for expressing social and political dissent.

Madeleine Gottesman explores the intersection of American Judaism and gender identity in the literary work of Grace Paley. In this context she also examines the tensions that arise in the space between historical memory, tradition and the need to adjust to the new world.

Jesse Kaminski traces the identity shifts of the assimilated Jewish elite in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna caused by the failure of liberal politics and the consequent rise of anti-Semitism. He describes the alienation experienced by the assimilated Jewish elite and how this experience, in turn, reconfigured the relations among Viennese Jews, thus providing an interesting insight into the relationship between macro- and micro-politics.

I have enjoyed and learned from each of these five essays that bear witness to the intellectual enthusiasm and curiosity of our students and to the vibrant research going on in the many fields of Jewish Studies. Caroline Bedard has shown exemplary leadership in producing this new issue of *Dorot* which I am sure you will enjoy just as much as I did.

Carlos Fraenkel

Chair, Department of Jewish Studies

McGill University

Introduction

It is a pleasure and an honour to present the 2016 edition of Dorot: The McGill Undergraduate Journal of Jewish Studies. Having taken a fair number of Jewish studies courses, I know firsthand that students have the opportunity to learn and write about many interesting topics within the realm of Jewish studies. Unfortunately, most of the time only two people gain access to a student's writing: the student and the student's professor. Dorot helps remedy this lack of access. It is a valuable means by which students can share their dynamic writing both with each other and with the staff members who continually guide students in their learning endeavours. Thus, it is exciting to be able to showcase the perceptive writing of five students in particular, who collectively engage with a diverse range of topics.

Despite engaging with a range of topics, by coincidence all five papers can be seen as an exploration of identity. Madeleine Gomery discusses the post-WWII writing and poetry of four prominent Canadian Jewish authors from Montreal: A.M. Klein, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, and Mordecai Richler. Through analysis of their writing and poetry, she characterizes gentile, public opinion of Jews in Montreal following WWII and assesses the level of Canadian anti-Semitism in existence during the post-war years. Then, Madeleine investigates the link between gentile opinion, potential anti-Semitism, and the creation of modern-day Jewish identity in Montreal.

Alon Faitelis considers the rise of Mizrahi socio-political consciousness, which can be viewed as an integral part of collective Mizrahi identity. He examines the disadvantaged socio-political circumstances in which the Mizrahim found themselves upon immigrating to Israel during the late 1940s and early 1950s. These circumstances stemmed from an unbalanced socio-political relationship between the Mizrahim and the Ashkenazim in Israel. Alon proposes that Mizrahi socio-political consciousness developed as a response to this relationship and the consequent negative circumstances in which the Mizrahim found themselves.

Mason Brenhouse traces the history of rock music in Israel from the mid to late twentieth century, as the “rockization” of Israeli music and the “Israelization” of rock music occurred. He also demonstrates how rock music became a means of expressing political dissent. Mason’s paper implicitly unearths the connection between music and national identity, as Israelis grappled with embracing rock music and allowing it to eventually overtake folk music in terms of popularity, and as Israelis laboured to create their own brand of rock music.

Madeleine Gottesman focuses on four short stories written by the Jewish American author Grace Paley. Madeleine analyses the stories and explores characters’ womanhood, history and tradition, and sense of rootedness and belonging. She relates these concepts to the development of the characters’ identities in the twentieth century, Jewish American context.

Jesse Kaminski examines the failure of liberalism in fin-de-siècle Viennese politics as well as the rise of mass politics in Vienna. He posits that this failure of liberalism and rise of mass politics both shattered notions of assimilated Jewish identity and alienated Jews from the Viennese society they had previously embraced. Due to this shattering and alienation, Viennese Jews themselves became stratified along class, wealth, and religious lines.

This edition of Dorot could not have come to fruition without the contributions and support of many individuals. The edition has benefited greatly from the hard work and insightful editing of assistant editors Akiva Blander and Rayna Lew as well as copy editors Lindsay MacInnis and Patricia Neijens. Their efforts have been vital to completing the journal and are very much appreciated. Jennifer Guan must be thanked for her beautiful cover page art, which actually incorporates the journal's name, Dorot, in Hebrew in the roots of the tree.

Thank you to Professor Carlos Fraenkel, who offered enthusiastic support and guidance throughout the entire process of putting together this year's edition. Professors Eric Caplan and Esther Frank also encouraged me and advised me during this endeavour, which is greatly appreciated.

Lastly, thank you to all the students who expressed interest in Dorot and sent in submissions.

Putting together this year's edition of Dorot was truly an enriching experience — I hope the experience of reading it is enriching as well.

Caroline Bedard

To Emerge From the Ghetto Twice: Anti-Semitism and the Search for Jewish Identity in Post-War Montreal Literature

Madeleine Gomery

It is commonly held in popular thought, especially among young people, that the end of the Second World War signalled the end of overt anti-Semitism in Canada. According to this line of thought, Canadian anti-Jewish sentiment became less socially acceptable following the uncovering of the pogroms and concentration camps of the Shoah, and active persecution subsided into a more general sense of displacement. This displacement, which they believe arose in the place of overt anti-Semitism, is exemplified by Irving Layton's characterization of "the wandering ... suffering Jew."¹ An analysis of Canadian public policy and political speech supports a notion of a rapid decline of anti-Semitic thought and behaviour in Canada following the Second World War. However, what such a narrative fails to take into account are the words of Jews themselves, few of whom had a meaningful political voice.² Although no one individual can speak on behalf of an entire community, artists are often assigned this voice, particularly when they embody a communal spirit or identity. This has frequently been the case with Canadian-Jewish authors. Therefore, this paper

¹ Irving Layton, "For my Sons, Max and David" in *Canadian poetry, 1920 to 1960*, ed. Brian Trehearne (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2010), 344.

² There were exceptions to this, especially among wealthy professionals and entrepreneurs such as Samuel Bronfman.

aims to examine the Jewish writing and poetry of Montreal during the postwar years through the words of four of its most prominent authors: A.M. Klein, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, and Mordecai Richler. First, I establish the character of gentile sentiment towards Jews in order to determine whether anti-Semitism truly declined, as in the perception of the Jewish community. Subsequently, I assess the contribution of perceived anti-Semitism towards the creation of modern-day Jewish identity in Montreal.

Why Montreal? Demographically, there are currently about 100,000 fewer Jews living in Montreal than in Toronto, and aside from Toronto, Montreal contains a higher Jewish population than all other Canadian cities combined.³ As well, the literary exports of Montreal's Jewish community have been tremendous, and have a discrete geographic and linguistic influence when compared with other Jewish-Canadian writing. Jewish writing in Montreal has been largely influenced by the city's cultural and geographic proximity to New York. The presence of such an active, prominent and distinct Jewish artistic community nearby forced Montreal to come to terms with its own heritage, as it existed in the shadow of a city with a well-established and recognized literary culture. "Looking down on the cultural life of New York from here," wrote A.M. Klein, "it appears to be a veritable *yeshiva* ... The Jewish writers seem to call each to each, editing, praising, slamming one another's books, plays, and cultural

³ "Basic Demographics of the Canadian Jewish Community," *The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs*. <http://www.cija.ca/issues/basic-demographics-of-the-canadian-jewish-community/>, 14/03/14 March 14, 2014).

conference appearances.”⁴ New York’s literary domination has therefore become a marker against which Montreal’s Judaic literary community continues to struggle to define itself.

Language too has had an influence on the development of Jewish literature in Montreal, particularly because of the city’s linguistic rift between Francophones and Anglophones, which existed long before any substantial Jewish settlement. In the first part of the twentieth century, the Jewish ghetto near Saint-Urbain lay squarely between the poor Francophone communities east of St-Denis and the wealthier Anglophone settlements centered around McGill University and the Westmount area. The ghetto, as the symbolic dividing line between these two linguistic and cultural spheres, absorbed elements of both, while being welcomed by neither. Indeed, some tensions even existed between Ashkenazic Jews, who spoke Yiddish or other Slavic languages upon arrival, and Sephardic Jews, who had their own set of Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic languages. While the second- and third-generation children of both groups often grew up speaking both French and English, Ashkenazim were more partial to the latter, while Sephardic Jews encouraged more French education and integration.⁵ Klein wrote and practiced law in two languages, and he, Richler, and Cohen all knew French and used it in their writing. Nonetheless, the development of contemporary culture in Quebec has occurred, for the most part, independently

⁴ A.M. Klein in Michael Greenstein, *Third solitudes: tradition and discontinuity in Jewish-Canadian literature* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 4.

⁵ Robert J. Brym, William Shaffir, and M. Weinfeld, eds., *The Jews in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 176.

of Jewish culture, and in ignorance or even direct neglect of it. So while Montreal Jewish literature and poetry was written almost exclusively in English, its lack of a position within a broader national-provincial culture “has played a [large] role in reinforcing a sense of Jewish marginality in Québec,”⁶ another factor that has contributed to the population’s unique creative voice. This voice, exemplified in the works of Klein, Layton, Richler, and Cohen, exhibits evidence of communal isolation but also of community solidarity – diaspora, but also national reunion. It is the voice of a historically marginalized people expanding their identity to a new province and a new country. It adopts and emphasizes the Canadian literary sense of loneliness and ambiguity.

A.M. Klein’s voice throughout the pre- and post-war periods remains one of the most influential and iconic in the Jewish-Canadian literary tradition. Subsequent writers would emulate his style, and sometimes even argue that he was both the root and pinnacle of Jewish poetry in Canada. Leonard Cohen took this approach, arguing during a 1963 symposium entitled “The Future of Judaism in Canada” that Klein was “the last great poet who had tried to be both prophet and priest.”⁷ In Cohen’s mind, Klein’s later silence and ultimate death had signalled a loss of Jewish values to the capitalistic ambition of businessmen. Klein, born in Ukraine on February 14, 1909, is a key figure in understanding anti-Semitism post-1945, as he was already active as a poet and lawyer by that

⁶ Morton Weinfeld in *Jews*, 180.

⁷ Ira Bruce Nadel, *Various Positions: A Life of Leonard Cohen* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996), 126.

time. His perspective, therefore, includes the experience of a Canada — and a world — that was largely anti-Semitic, and provides a good basis for comparison between the two.⁸

Klein's only novel, *The Second Scroll*, was published in 1951. Its major theme is the overcoming of the loss of personal and ethnic identity following the Second World War, as symbolized in the unnamed Montreal narrator's search overseas for his estranged uncle, a Holocaust survivor named Melech Davidson. The text's occasional references to Canada are telling, especially in a work considered as a symbolic autobiography.⁹ As he travels from new world to old, the narrator attempts to find a fabled city in order to "break the routine of ghetto regionalism" that has defined his life in Montreal up until that point.¹⁰ As he does so, he frequently recalls his childhood in Montreal, "a city in which saints meet at every street corner," making it ironically fit to contain that "parcel of Holy Land" that is the Israeli consulate.¹¹ Despite his acknowledgement of the Catholicism at the core of the city, as well as his characterization of himself as a man "of the ghetto streets ... a Jewboy," his associations with Montreal are largely positive.¹² He asserts his faith in a country that has not demonized him for his Jewishness, "praising Canada as the true north, strong and free."¹³

⁸ Miriam Waddington, "Introduction," *The Collected poems of A.M. Klein* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974).

⁹ Linda Rozmovits, "A Narrative Messiah: The Redemptive Historiography of A.M. Klein's *Second Scroll*," *Prooftexts* 11 (1991), 25.

¹⁰ Greenstein, *Solitudes*, 23.

¹¹ A.M Klein, *The Second Scroll* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 30.

¹² *Ibid.*, 123.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 47.

Although his search constitutes a metaphorical search for an international Jewish identity, it by no means negates his ties to Canada; he acknowledges multiple times that his life “was, and is, bound to the country of my father’s choice, to Canada.”¹⁴ By the end of the novel, the narrator believes he has found a common Jewish identity in a sort of unspoken poetry, in the “shared role as chroniclers of Jewish history.”¹⁵ He also expresses a wish to return to Montreal, his youthful home. So, although the narrator’s quest in *The Second Scroll* can be interpreted as evidence of a crisis in Jewish identity following the war, it does not contain any particular evidence of a claim or sense of Canadian wrongdoing. In fact, the narrator praises Canada as a kind of secular Jewish homeland, a commentary that can be ascribed to Klein himself, if one takes into account the semi-autobiographical nature of the work.

Likewise, Klein’s postwar poetry, while exemplifying his lack of a sense of belonging in a Jewish context, suggests that this feeling is attributable exclusively to the Holocaust, rather than to exclusion in Canada. In poems such as “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage,” he evokes the European anti-Jewish sentiment of the Second World War: “Rejoice Judaeophobes / The brew you brewed and cellared is not flat! ... *Sieg heil!* / Behold, against the sun, familiar blot: / A cross with claws!”¹⁶ In “Job Reviles,” he pleads, “How long, O Lord, will Israel’s heart be riven? / How long will we cry out to a dotard God / To let us keep the breath that

¹⁴ Ibid., 20.

¹⁵ Rozmovits, “Messiah,” 32.

¹⁶ Klein, *Poems*, 115.

He has given?"¹⁷ None of these sentiments are associated with Montreal, which Klein seems to view as a safe haven. "The Rocking Chair" is full of comforting imagery of a Québec disconnected from the persecution Klein associates with the international Jewish experience. Towards the "biblic birds" of the Hôtel-Dieu, "who fluttered to me in my childhood illnesses / me little, afraid, ill, not of your race,"¹⁸ which are emblems of Montreal Catholicism, Klein holds nothing but good will. Even in the immediate aftermath of WWII, an event that saw explicit and vocal anti-Semitism in Canada, Klein considered Montreal as the home that "in these beating valves / for all my mortal time reside!"¹⁹ For A.M. Klein, Canada was a country sufficiently free of anti-Semitism, enough to make him satisfied with and even proud of his identity as a Canadian citizen.

Irving Layton came from an ethnic and geographic background similar to that of Klein. However, he had a very different, and negative, outlook on Canada, which he nonetheless qualified as "a good country, [that I] think is going places."²⁰ At the same time, he believed Canada was in desperate need of a soul and identity separate from that of the English-speaking majority. In his poetry, Layton, like Klein, attempts to "find a language for [the] nightmarish, valueless world"²¹ of postwar Jewry that he navigated. But unlike Klein, Layton's Jewishness "manifests itself more in his approach to a subject than in the subject

¹⁷ Ibid., 139.

¹⁸ Ibid., 300.

¹⁹ Ibid., 317.

²⁰ Irving Layton, *Irving Layton, the Poet and His Critics*, ed. Seymour Mayne (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978).

²¹ Greenstein, *Solitudes*, 35.

itself.”²² In this sense, Layton is a better focus for an analysis of Canadian anti-Semitism, because he is less forgiving than Klein, and more bound up in the cultural roots of the urban ghetto in Montreal. Although the Montreal of Layton’s poetry is sometimes “an Arthurian landscape, a Biblical scene,” it is just as often a sort of “holocaust for Mordecai Richler novels.”²³

One notable characteristic of Layton’s poetry is its bitter, accusatory tone, which owes itself in equal parts to the horrors of the Second World War and the experience of growing up in the Montreal Jewish ghetto. Layton’s picture of Montreal is far less idyllic than that of his contemporary Klein, as his work is characterized by a less tolerant attitude towards wartime anti-Semites. In “Ex-Nazi,” he describes his game of “blind man’s bluff” with his Polish neighbour, whose countenance, “innocenter than his bounding mastiff,” struggles to hide “the yammering guilt” he feels when beholding his Jewish peer.²⁴ Likewise, in “Das Wahre Ich,” written in 1964, he describes a woman who “tells me she was a Nazi; her father also.” With a thrill, he wonders: “At this moment, does she see my crumpled form against the wall, / blood on my still compassionate eyes and mouth?”²⁵ Indeed, Layton seems to take particular joy in the pathetic state of postwar anti-Semites, their public racism harder to justify in the wake of the Holocaust. Yet, he also alludes to a note of general public apathy regarding support for anti-Semitism. Layton carefully notes a number of stereotypes about

²² Klein, *Poet*, 5.

²³ Eli Mandel, *Irving Layton* (Toronto: Forum House Pub. Co., 1969), 10.

²⁴ Irving Layton, *Collected Poems*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), 24-25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 318.

Jewish men that he urges his sons to avoid becoming – “the despoiled Jew: the beaten Jew ... the Jew every Christian hates, having shattered his self-esteem,” and even “the alienated Jew cultivating his alienation / like a rare flower.”²⁶ He also makes reference to the gentiles of Montreal in such poems as “Early Morning in Côte-St-Luc,” who he describes as living in such wilful ignorance of the war’s horrors that Layton finds it difficult, when he sees them, “to make room / in [his] mind for these ... my kin / the inconsolable, the far seeing.”²⁷

It is clear from Layton’s poems that, although his sense of isolation is the result of involuntary “normal human vileness [and] racial prejudice,”²⁸ he and the Jews of Montreal were still not fully welcome – neither among “the hostile French-Canadians living on and beyond St. Denis Street,” nor in Anglophone Westmount, where “at any moment [I felt] mastiffs would be loosed on me or someone ... would say to me with cold but perfect English diction, ‘Get away from here.’”²⁹ For Layton, life as a Montreal Jew was tolerable, but also profoundly isolating. Layton attributed his loneliness not to vocalized expressions of anti-Semitism, but rather to a silent anti-Jewish prejudice firmly ingrained in much of the Canadian public.

“If Klein belongs to the first generation and Layton the second,” writes Michael Greenstein, “then Leonard Cohen represents the third generation of

²⁶ Layton, *Poetry*, 344.

²⁷ Layton, *Poems*, 55.

²⁸ Irving Layton, *Engagements: the prose of Irving Layton* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 147.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

Holocaust poets,” using Nazi crimes as “pretexts for a more generalized probing of the evils of modern society.”³⁰ Cohen, perhaps the gloomiest of Canada’s Jewish writers, is very different from the artists examined thus far for a variety of reasons. He did not grow up in the slums of Montreal, but rather in Westmount and in a traditional, respectably middle-class Jewish family. In addition, Cohen’s poetic works lack the unified perspective of Klein and of Layton. He instead approaches his subjects from various perspectives, many of them distinctly irreligious.³¹ In his books, on the other hand, Cohen draws from a strikingly similar well of experiences as Mordecai Richler did contemporaneously, while simultaneously using his unique position within the insularity of Westmount to shed light on the Jewish perspective of a city with a dominant white, culturally Anglophone past.

Of course, Cohen’s poetry, despite its spiritual agnosticism, is not lacking in a culturally Jewish perspective. He strikes a note similar to Layton’s “Das Wahre Ich” in his poem “The Music Crept by Us,” in which he resignedly notes: “I would like to remind / the management / that ... the band is composed / of former SS monsters ... However since it is / New Year’s Eve / I will place my / paper hat on my / concussion and dance.”³² He also takes note of gentile guilt – and avoidance – in “Morocco,” which simply reads, “I brought a man to dinner / He

³⁰ Greenstein, *Solitudes*, 41.

³¹ Nadel, *Positions*, 19.

³² Leonard Cohen, *Stranger Music: Selected Poems and Songs* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), 58.

did not wish to look into my eyes / He ate in peace.”³³ However, he sets off on a different path in “Montreal,” a criticism of those gentiles who ignore the isolation and poverty of the city’s immigrants: “Beware of what comes out of Montreal ... it is a force corrosive to all human institutions. It will bring everything down ... We who belong to this city have never left The Church. The Jews are in The Church as they are in the snow. The Church has used the winter to break us.”³⁴ These themes of religious and cultural isolation are analytically closer to the ones expressed in *The Favourite Game*, Cohen’s first novel, which deals closely with the contemporary Jewish-Canadian experience.

The Favourite Game is an autobiographical *Künstlerroman* that examines the life of its protagonist, Montrealer Lawrence Breavman, as he emerges from his Jewish-Canadian heritage and comes into his own in the New York artistic scene. As a cultural expatriate, Breavman learns to identify himself by his “exile from society,” ultimately concluding that this isolation is what makes him an “authentic Jew.”³⁵ The historical Jewish experience is characterized by marginality and, according to Cohen, this element remains constant in a Montreal that “like Canada itself, is designed to preserve the past, a past that happened somewhere else.”³⁶ Cohen, in fact, is arguing that a truly “Canadian” experience does not exist, and that it is the attempt to emulate glories of past empires — as exemplified by Westmount’s chilly insularity and highbrow

³³ Ibid., 191.

³⁴ Ibid., 265.

³⁵ Greenstein, *Solitudes*, 126.

³⁶ Leonard Cohen, *The Favourite Game* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 117.

Anglicanism — that makes it difficult for dispossessed Jewish immigrants to form a cohesive culture. Montreal Jews therefore cannot exist as a cultural unit within Canadian society because Canadian heritage does not exist independently as anything more than simply a collection of separate ethnic identities: “The past is preserved ... in the minds of her citizens. Each man speaks with his father’s tongue ... Just as there are no Canadians, there are no Montrealers. Ask a man who he is and he names a race.”³⁷ Breavman’s ambiguous identity is the result of Layton’s sense of detachment from mainstream society as taken to its logical extreme. This is the same sentiment described at various points by Layton, and in Cohen’s work it is made all the more impactful because the protagonist exists within “Westmount heights designed to humiliate the underprivileged.”³⁸ Breavman is carefully excluded from full participation in the society of his wealthy white contemporaries, and abandons the pursuit of a Canadian identity that refuses to include him.

Mordecai Richler’s heroes face similar circumstances, specifically that they seek success in a society that continuously alienates them on account of their ethnic background. That said, Richer’s novels are generally marked by two key departures from Cohen’s. First, the protagonists, like Richler himself, come not from Westmount but from the traditionally Jewish Saint-Urbain neighbourhood. Second, they face frequent, active and aggressive postwar anti-Semitism while growing up in the ghetto. Richler, in this case, had insight into a certain stream of

³⁷ Ibid., 118.

³⁸ Greenstein, *Solitudes*, 131.

Canadian sentiment that Klein and Layton did not experience in the same way: to them, anti-Semitism was much less violent a sentiment than in the pre-war years. Cohen, although a generational contemporary of Richler, grew up in a setting that at least allowed him to transcend some of the restrictions of classism that define Richler's characters.³⁹

From *The Acrobats* (1954) to *Barney's Version* (1997), Richler's protagonists are all flawed men who yearn for material achievement and the attainment of symbols of societal recognition. Richler, who once proclaimed "to be a Jew and a Canadian is to emerge from the ghetto twice,"⁴⁰ was a brilliant observer of both gentile and Jewish hypocrisies. In *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, he examines the casual anti-Semitism that permeates all levels and spheres of society, from the schoolteacher Mr. Feeney's friendly but misplaced jokes with Jewish students – "'Do you know how the Jews make an S?' ... Mr. Feeney would go to the board, make an S, and draw two strokes through it"⁴¹ – to the alcoholic Mr. MacPherson, who exclaims one day in a fit of rage, "The trouble with you Jews is that you're always walking around with a chip on your shoulder."⁴² Notable too are the Jewish characters' dislike of some fellow Jews, like the greedy and ambitious Duddy. These characters are perceived as

³⁹ Ibid., 142.

⁴⁰ Arnold E. Davidson, *Mordecai Richler*, (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1983), 27.

⁴¹ Mordecai Richler, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz: A Novel* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1959), 22.

⁴² Ibid., 59.

perpetuating anti-Semitic stereotypes, to the point that they “almost give anti-Semitism a good name.”⁴³

Statements like this are reflective of some private writings of the time, including those of Canadian policy-makers whose decisions impacted Jewish Canadians and refugees in the years surrounding the war. In a 1948 diary entry, then-Prime Minister William Lyon McKenzie King, despite his assurances that he has “never allowed [anti-Semitism] to be entertained for a moment,” nonetheless wrote, “Evidence is very strong ... that in a large percentage of the [Jewish] race there are tendencies and trends which are dangerous indeed.”⁴⁴ The worries of Mordecai’s Irwin Schubert and other like-minded cosmopolitan Jews were not, then, ill founded. Although the anti-Semitism in Richler’s stories rarely escalates to the point of physical violence, it is extremely pervasive. Segregation, though technically illegal, is still tacitly permitted and even endorsed in some Montreal institutions and regions of Quebec. In *Son of a Smaller Hero*, protagonist Noah Adler steals a sign that reads “This Beach is Restricted to Gentiles” from a resort in the Laurentians.⁴⁵ Pierre Berton corroborated this incident in an investigative article for *Maclean’s* in 1948. Berton was surprised to find that when he called resorts to ask about summer reservations, he was much more successful (and treated more civilly) when he went by names such as “Smithson,” instead of

⁴³ Ibid., 81.

⁴⁴ Irving M. Abella and Harold Martin Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (New York: Random House, 1983), 228.

⁴⁵ Mordecai Richler, *Son of a Smaller Hero* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966).

“Greenberg.”⁴⁶ In applying for jobs, he encountered similar prejudices, being told variously that Jews did not have the right “temperament” for certain companies, that “they didn’t know their place,” and, simply, that various organizations just “didn’t employ Jews.”⁴⁷

However, Richler’s characters do not universally experience this kind of racism, and, in fact, tend to encounter much more of it upon leaving Canada. While Richler’s Canada might abound with comically absurd anti-Semitic stereotypes, the sentiment is not hateful so much as ignorant. Furthermore, it is generally only found among the elderly characters. In *Joshua Then and Now*, the titular protagonist has an encounter with virulent anti-Semitism in Spain, in the form of the Jew-hating Dr. Mueller.⁴⁸ *Cocksure’s* gentile protagonist Mortimer Griffin, when faced with the temptation of professing anti-Semitism in order to ingratiate himself to some ex-Nazi businessmen, “protests and wants to be, simply, Mortimer Griffin, Canadian, man of decent conscience.”⁴⁹ So, it would seem that ultimately, although they face prejudice on an everyday and individual level, Richler’s postwar characters do not have to face anti-Semitism at its institutional worst, such as in the form of physical violence or forced expulsion. In fact, according to Richler, Canadian Jews have a better living situation than many of their peers in other countries. Like Klein, Richler’s

⁴⁶ Howard Adelman and John H. Simpson, *Multiculturalism, Jews, and Identities in Canada* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, the Hebrew University, 1996), 40.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁸ Mordecai Richler, *Joshua Then and Now* (New York: A.A. Knopf) 1980.

⁴⁹ Mordecai Richler, *Cocksure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 128.

characters often conclude that they are “at ease in Canada, as was Richler himself, who ultimately characterized Canada as “a society well worth preserving” and Montreal as “the most agreeable city in Canada.”⁵⁰

In summary, the Second World War and the growing consciousness of the horrors of the Holocaust were insufficient to immediately end all traces of anti-Semitism in Canada. However, from the 1950s onwards, Jewish immigrants finally overcame their status as “the second-least desirable of immigrants,”⁵¹ and anti-Semitism became less and less acceptable in public opinion and discourse. This occurred due to increased Jewish and other immigration, but also due to a demographic shift that saw the literary takeover of a generation further removed from the pre-war anti-Jewish bias than their parents and grandparents. However, Jewish exclusion from a culturally elite subset of society — one marked more by tradition and ancestry than by wealth or merit — did engender a sense of isolation, particularly in Montreal. This isolation is discernable in the works of all the Montreal Jewish writers examined in this paper. Although no one individual can claim to represent a community as a whole, writers have the privileged ability to tap into cultural pools of heritage and communal feeling. An age-old Jewish sense of exclusion and purposelessness was heightened by continued prejudice, even after World War II. But the basis of this suffering was the cultural isolation sustained due to quiet public prejudice, not the institutionalized

⁵⁰ Mordecai Richler, *St. Urbain's Horseman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 5; Richler, “Canada: ‘An Immensely Boring Country’ – Until Now,” *Life*, 9 April 1971, 62; Richler, “The Stanley Knowles Lecture” (University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, 23 March 1999).

⁵¹ Abella and Troper, *None*, 224-225.

ghettoization of the World War II years. What is more, this social exclusion facilitated the growth of a unique literary tradition in Montreal, which even now continues to meaningfully contribute to the ever-dynamic process of forging a Jewish Canadian national identity.

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The Origins of Mizrahi Socio-Political Consciousness

Alon Faitelis

Israel's sixty-seven years of history can be understood as an experiment in the amalgamation of various distinct cultures which together evolved to shape one homogenous society. This occurred as part of an enduring process, which remains dynamic and disposed toward change in the present day. Despite the consolidation of a diverse, inclusive national culture founded upon the connecting factor of Jewish peoplehood, the Zionist story (both imagined and real) has always contained a dimension of societal division drawing upon differences from within the Jewish world. Following the premise that Israeli society has largely been influenced by the rippling effects of unbalanced relationships between Ashkenazi and Sephardic immigrant communities during the state's formative early years, this paper aims to situate the rise Mizrahi socio-political consciousness within the context of mass discontent stemming from a history of systematic discrimination. This will be achieved by focusing on the defining characteristics of the early years of mass immigration to Israel, followed by the collective Mizrahi socio-economic and political experiences that inspired the development of mass consciousness.

The meaning of the term "Mizrahi" has been subject to significant change and contestation before finally settling on the meaning it holds today. For example, David Lehmann and Batia Siebzehner, in their study of the Shas party,

define Mizrahim as "Eastern or Oriental Jews, from *mizrach* - the East."⁵² Yet, as Sergio DellaPergola points out, this "Eastern" or "Oriental" component is a problematic one because it holds no objective meaning.⁵³ Eastern relative to where? Oriental from which perspective? Despite past debates, its contemporary place within the popular lexicon has come to be reserved for Jews who are descendant from Sephardic communities specifically in North Africa and the Middle East.⁵⁴ Due to the focus of this paper on the Mizrahim's collective experience, it will deliberately leave out any discussion of the important diversity and intricacies that exist within this broad group. That topic itself is an extensive one and deserves its own case study.

The collective experience that led to the rise of a lasting group consciousness among Mizrahim truly began in the years 1948-1953, a watershed period by virtue of two interconnected processes. First, the mass immigration of several hundred thousand Jews from North Africa and the Middle East to the newly founded State of Israel within a rather limited span of time. Second, the solidification of social, economic, and political relationships between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews through the persistence of several trends which came to shape the collective experience of these immigrants.

⁵² David Lehmann and Batia Siebzehner, *Remaking Israeli Judaism: The Challenge of Shas* (London: Hurst, 2006), xiv.

⁵³ Sergio DellaPergola, "'Sephardic and Oriental' Jews in Israel and Western Countries: Migration, Social Change, and Identification," *Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry* (2007), 4.

⁵⁴ Peter Y. Medding, *Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), viii.

The first process takes precedence in the discussion surrounding Mizrahi socio-political consciousness as it made possible the conditions under which the latter process occurred. In following the premise stated above, it is necessary to understand what brought such a large number of Jews into Israel from across North Africa and the Middle East. A clear factor was the establishment of a Jewish state with full sovereign rights over its own land, peoples, and governing laws for the first time in nearly two millennia. While immigration to what now constitutes the State of Israel had long been possible and had increased substantially throughout the first half of the century, unprecedented was the fact that it could now take place both legally and in virtually unrestricted numbers.⁵⁵

However, another factor must be considered, as the creation of a sovereign Jewish state fails to fully explain why so many people came specifically from the regions at hand. The common understanding of this chapter in Israel's history revolves largely around the narrative of a mass Jewish exodus forcibly implemented by a number of Arab and Muslim states in the wake of the 1948 War.⁵⁶ Although the incidence of forced expulsion varied greatly from country to country and some scholars have argued that the voluntary dimension of this migration has been vastly undermined, the rapid emigration of several hundred thousand people with deep ties to their locales was an immense and historic feat whose proportions provide just one of many justifications for the

⁵⁵ Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History* (London: Doubleday, 1998), 257.

⁵⁶ DellaPergola, "'Sephardic and Oriental' Jews in Israel," 3.

prevailing exodus narrative.⁵⁷ Of the 700,000 Jews who arrived in Israel during the immediate post-independence years (1948-1951), approximately one half was from North Africa and the Middle East.⁵⁸ In the late 1950s, a renewal of mass immigration brought more than 160,000 immigrants, largely from Morocco and Tunisia.⁵⁹ Another increase in immigration between 1961 and 1964 saw the arrival of 215,000 immigrants, primarily from Morocco and Romania.⁶⁰ Such was the scale of Mizrahi immigration, which was to fundamentally transform Israel's demographic reality by the 1960s.

The government's response to this massive wave of immigrants would profoundly shape the Mizrahim's collective social and economic experience for decades to follow. According to Chetrit study of intra-Jewish conflict in Israel, the state's established elite addressed the challenges of mass immigrant absorption by instituting a system of socio-economic inequality that based itself on practical empathy and was consequentially synthesized by its Mizrahi victims as a system of oppressive relations.⁶¹ How was such a system of social and economic inequality actually implemented? First and foremost, it was carried out in terms of state planning and physical settlement. Still today, the Mizrahim's collective memory of suffering hinges mainly around one symbol: the *Ma'abarah*,

⁵⁷ Derek J. Penslar, Review of *Immigrants in Turmoil: Mass Immigration to Israel and Its Repercussions in the 1950s and After*, by Dvora Hachohen (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 334.

⁵⁸ Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Stephen Sharot, *Ethnicity, religion, and class in Israeli society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 27.

⁵⁹ Ben-Rafael and Sharot, *Ethnicity, religion, and class*, 28.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Sami Shalom Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews* (London: Routledge, 2010), 43.

or transit camp. Beginning in 1949, state authorities placed newly landed immigrants in Ma'abarot (plural of Ma'abarah) that were attached to existing towns, where they would ideally be integrated into the local economy.⁶² However, these camps rapidly disappointed most hopes that were invested in them due to shabby construction, poor location, and local authorities lacking the resources necessary to deal with the inhabitants' various needs.⁶³ Iraqi-born Israeli novelist Sami Michael witnessed the Ma'abarah living conditions firsthand and wrote of it as a place where there were "people who seek bread from the rubbish, and there [were] children afflicted with disease and poverty... The army of jobless [were] stranded between the tent and the workplace, unable to find a means of income."⁶⁴ That Mizrahim accounted for 80% of all transit camp inhabitants in 1952 far outweighs their numbers among the newly landed population.⁶⁵ The Ma'abarah therefore emerged as a strong and lasting symbol in the collective Mizrahi identity.

Additionally, most Ma'abarot were placed in urban peripheries or frontier areas including the Negev, Upper Galilee, and Jerusalem Corridor where their primary purpose was to ensure Jewish territorial continuity, rather than addressing immigrant needs.⁶⁶ There, Mizrahim were disadvantaged with regards to central resource distribution and frequently suffered from infiltration

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Penslar, *Review of Immigrants in Turmoil*, 334.

⁶⁴ Sami Michael, "The Newly Arrived Men of Letters," *al-Jadid* 1, no. 9 (1954), 202.

⁶⁵ Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel*, 45.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 45, 53.

attacks from Arabs in neighboring states, particularly Jordan and Egypt.⁶⁷ A further way in which the state perpetuated its policy of inequality was by means of resource allocation. Not only did there exist a visible gap between the quality, quantity, and diversity of resources distributed among settled versus newly landed immigrants, but the lengths of time under which different immigrant groups were forced to endure the harsh conditions which accompanied Aliyah, like those which defined life in the Ma'abarot, varied as well.⁶⁸

It is imperative to ask why the state treated this particular group of immigrants in such a way. On the one hand, the living conditions described above can be attributed to the fact that difficult times called for harsh measures and the state, after all, simply functioned with what little resources it had.⁶⁹ On the other hand, government policies clearly appear to have contained a highly prejudiced rationale and the systematic inequality they perpetuated might be understood as a manifestation of Ashkenazi patronization toward newly landed immigrants from Sephardic lands. During a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in 1950, Yitzhak Raphael of the Hapoel HaMizrahi Party (an Ashkenazi religious party) spoke in a manner that gives some credence to this understanding by stating that "Immigrants from other countries [Mizrahim] who are making demands today, for a long time did not want to do Aliyah, and had postponed their Aliyah. For this reason we don't have such an obligation toward

⁶⁷ Ibid., 53.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 51.

them ... The Jews of Poland come from good living conditions. For them, camp life is much more difficult than it is for a Jew from Yemen, for whom the camp itself is rescue."⁷⁰

Furthermore, inequality was entrenched within the social and cultural spheres of Mizrahi immigrant life, particularly with regards to education. The early state's education system functioned on a discriminatory basis, which virtually neglected Mizrahi communities whose children were considered unready to be thrown into schools with the rest of the population.⁷¹ While it is true that Mizrahi immigrants generally struggled to overcome Hebrew language and literacy gaps in addition to lacking a high level of formal education from their countries of origin,⁷² the government approached this reality as problematic evidence of an inherently cultural inferiority that separated Mizrahi from Ashkenazi Jews.⁷³ Systematic inequality in this sphere had especially damaging consequences considering that good, accessible education tends to provide the best pathways to success in a modern society.⁷⁴ It is therefore not shocking to learn that Mizrahim suffered overwhelmingly from the prospect of downward socio-economic mobility upon making Aliyah. Of those who arrived with some professional background, 69% moved to blue-collar occupations or

⁷⁰ Ibid., 44.

⁷¹ Ibid., 46.

⁷² DellaPergola, "'Sephardic and Oriental' Jews in Israel," 17.

⁷³ Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel*, 48.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 47.

otherwise during the state's early years.⁷⁵ Even Mizrahi youths who attended secondary schools were less likely than their peers to continue toward the path of higher education as they were overwhelmingly assigned to vocational tracks, rather than academic ones.⁷⁶ Indeed, Mizrahim as a whole have yet to fully recover from the institutional setbacks they faced as a result of such government policies during Israel's early years, and "immigrants from Asia and Africa have not yet closed the negative occupational gaps, remaining underrepresented in high-status positions and overrepresented in low-status positions."⁷⁷

Beyond the government's discriminatory policies and perpetuation of socio-economic inequality, other factors also separated Mizrahim and Ashkenazis. Most visible among these factors was the difference in conservation or acceptance of cultural uniqueness. While Israel has witnessed the development of an integrative melting pot culture, Mizrahim in general have tended to conserve their traditional religious identities and cultural norms to a discernibly high degree when compared with those whose origins are found in Europe.⁷⁸ Such heavy retention of religious tradition later became a primary marker of the Mizrahi-oriented Shas party that emerged during the 1980s.⁷⁹ Yet another separating factor worthy of mention revolves around feelings of symbolic ownership over the state and its institutions, stemming from the Jewish

⁷⁵ DellaPergola, "'Sephardic and Oriental' Jews in Israel," 19.

⁷⁶ Ben-Rafael and Sharot, *Ethnicity, religion, and class*, 33.

⁷⁷ DellaPergola, "'Sephardic and Oriental' Jews in Israel," 18.

⁷⁸ Ben-Rafael and Sharot, *Ethnicity, religion, and class*, 33.

⁷⁹ Lehman and Siebzehner, *Remaking Israeli Judaism*, 79.

communities' varying degrees of political involvement within the Zionist movement. That most Mizrahi Jews made Aliyah only after independence has resulted in the widespread perception that they did not partake in Israel's founding narrative.⁸⁰ Whether or not this is true, should such factors determine a community's degree of citizenship and sense belonging in the nation?

Israeli novelist Sami Michael partly addresses these politics of belonging from the perspective of Mizrahi intellectuals in "The Newly Arrived Men of Letters," a 1954 essay in which he briefly explores the challenges facing Mizrahi writers in their attempt to negotiate the intricate divide between identities old and new upon arriving in Israel. He explains how the man of letters, "the engineer of the human soul ... who leaves behind his homeland quickly feels like a fish out of water ... all of a sudden he lands in a strange atmosphere — alien to his understanding, taste, language, and history."⁸¹ Michael proceeds by arguing that whereas some people claim that the Mizrahi man of letters will never be able to fully immerse himself in the waters of Israeli nationalism because of his past cultural dispositions, such an attitude is a dangerous one and the opposite is in fact true.⁸² According to him, the Mizrahi intellectual must courageously endure the newly founded state's harsh realities and make the effort to integrate into the nation so that he might thrive in its dynamic social and cultural landscapes. Israelis must "direct new arrivals ... toward a positive integration into this

⁸⁰ Anita Shapira, "Hirbet Hizah: Between Remembrance and Forgetting," *Jewish Social Studies* 7.1 (2000), 26.

⁸¹ Michael, "The Newly Arrived Men of Letters," 199-200.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 201.

nationality, toward increasing likability; development of all that is humane, progressive, and scientific, and the fighting of all that is regressive, nonmaterial, and fractured."⁸³

Yet, just as Israel failed to properly absorb Mizrahi immigrants into the state's modernizing socio-economic landscape, it also failed to integrate them into its formal political apparatus. The result was a widespread sense of political alienation based upon feelings of institutional discrimination and deprivation.⁸⁴ In *Ethnicity, religion, and class*, Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Stephen Sharot present one of several approaches through which scholars have addressed this issue. They argue that the failure to integrate these immigrants as full citizens was not surprising for two retrospective reasons. First, ethnic pluralism was not institutionalized because the state's Ashkenazi majority had no real pluralistic tendencies prior to 1948 and second, Mizrahim were left to fill up the "low ranks of a modern occupational structure" as the essential foundations of a modern society had already been in place by the early 1950s.⁸⁵ Does "the prevalent ideology in Israel of the scattered communities of Jews coming together in unity and brotherhood only [serve] to mask the true situation of ethnic division," as Swirski suggests?⁸⁶ While Israel has consistently demonstrated its role as a safe haven for Jews regardless of their ethnicity or origins, the view that Mizrahim

⁸³ Ibid., 202-03.

⁸⁴ Ben-Rafael and Sharot, *Ethnicity, religion, and class*, 35.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 36-41.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 41.

were socially, politically, and economically marginalized certainly holds a great deal of truth.

The issue of political alienation can be understood in terms of numbers. During the First Knesset elections in 1949, the Sephardic list (Sephardim and Edot Mizrah, as it was officially known) was awarded four seats in a legislative body totaling one hundred and twenty. More tellingly, this translates into 3.5% or 15,287 of 434,684 votes cast.⁸⁷ Another Mizrahi party, the Yemenite Association, received the lowest number of votes among the parties elected, managing to land only a single seat.⁸⁸ In the Second Knesset elections less than three years later, the Sephardic list's seat share dropped to a mere two while the Yemenite Association received a higher percentage of votes than in the previous elections, but remained with only one seat.⁸⁹ Both parties had merged into the General Zionists by the 1955 elections, indicating their respective failures to broadly resonate with the rapidly growing Mizrahi population. The General Zionists received thirteen seats, but was reduced to eight in the following elections.⁹⁰ The Fifth Knesset elections in 1961 saw the Liberal Party, a merger between the General Zionists and the Progressive Party, placing third with seventeen seats.⁹¹ By 1971, Knesset members of Middle-Eastern origin (not

⁸⁷ Knesset Election Results, *The Knesset*.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

representative of all Mizrahim) numbered only fifteen.⁹² The important takeaway from these numbers is that even as the Mizrahi population emerged as Israel's largest general demographic group by the 1960s, no major political party dedicated its central platform to the advancement of their civil rights and unique interests in Israeli society.

Israeli politics' elitist disposition can also be noted in the national leadership's private rhetoric at this time. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion warned Eliyahu Eliachar of the Sephardic list in rather blunt words, "Should you succeed to arouse Sephardim and members of Edot Hamizrah to organize and become aware of their minimal civil rights in a democracy, the Left's hegemony, and Mapai's supremacy in managing the state would be undermined."⁹³ Indeed, Ben-Gurion and his fellow party officials sincerely believed that the government needed to remain Ashkenazi in terms of its ethnic composition, although some did indicate the importance of assigning one "unimportant" position like the ministry of the police or ministry of the post to a Sephardi minister.⁹⁴

Ultimately, the Mizrahim's collective place within Israeli society was determined by their political and economic dependence on Ashkenazis for work, housing, and social services. The government as well as leading organizations such as the Jewish Agency and the Labour Movement's Histadrut were

⁹² Ben-Rafael and Sharot, *Ethnicity, religion, and class*, 35.

⁹³ Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel*, 54.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

dominated by Jews of European lineage.⁹⁵ This should not lead one to the conclusion that European Jews intended to produce the extensive inequality that had rapidly appeared. The reality is far more complex and revolves around dynamic interactions between objective policies of stratification and their unintended consequences. What can be inferred, however, is that Mizrahim were by and large not in charge of their own fate. State institutions and civil society perpetually reinforced Ashkenazi privilege in the face of Mizrahi social, economic, educational, and institutional inferiority.⁹⁶

Sallah Shabati is a 1964 Israeli comedy film that successfully draws a powerful portrait of the Mizrahim's social and economic hardships during the early years of mass immigration. The film's plot revolves around Sallah, a Mizrahi immigrant who spends his days following various schemes in hopes of lifting his family out of the Ma'abarah and its unbearable living conditions. A great domestic and international success that garnered a nomination for Best Foreign Language Film at the 37th Academy Awards, *Sallah Shabati* has since been regarded as an early classic of Israeli cinema. Despite its satirical use of cultural stereotypes and potentially offensive material, the film is historically useful. The Mizrahi-Ashkenazi paradigm is most clearly articulated through the relationship between Sallah's daughter, Habbubah, and a young *kibbutznik* named Ziggy. While their deep love for one another speaks to the belief that Jews of all origins form a single nation tied together by an unshakeable internal bond,

⁹⁵ Ben-Rafael and Sharot, *Ethnicity, religion, and class*, 42.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

mounting pressures against their relationship from both families represent the many challenges induced by the convergence of unique and sometimes conflicting cultural, religious, and ideological identities.⁹⁷

Beyond this symbolism, the film also focuses on the reality that shaped Mizrahi *olim's* (new immigrants) collective experience. An early scene depicts Sallah and his family arriving at the *Ma'abarah* only to discover that their new home is a crumbling, one-room, tin shack, surrounded by unpaved alleys that are constantly flooded with loud and disorganized human movement. Sallah's disappointment is almost painful in its innocence, "This is place? Why not a nice one?"⁹⁸ Another scene shows a number of political organizers as they attempt to entice the newly landed immigrant to vote for their respective parties in the upcoming elections by preying upon his naiveté and desperation for better living conditions. While some guarantee that his family would be the first to move into a brand new housing development, others shamelessly present him with wrapped gifts as he stands in line to vote. In the end, Sallah believes himself to have outsmarted them all after proudly admitting, "I made an agreement with three parties, each of them promised me something!"⁹⁹ But Sallah oftentimes proves to be retrospective beyond his character's satirical cover with such powerful lines as, "Always the same. Black's never any good, but white is just

⁹⁷ Menahem Golan and Ephraim Kishon, *Sallah Shabati* (1964).

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

fine ... It's not the dog, but his color that counts."¹⁰⁰ This message is a simplistic one, but such attitudes resonated among many of those who sought to make their home in a country where they felt perpetually excluded.

The rise of Mizrahi socio-political consciousness can accurately be characterized as a mass response to the collective impact of various developments within Israeli society discussed thus far. The community's broad sense of self-awareness and its general attitudes gradually solidified over the canvas of societal inequality painted by their interactions with Israel's Labour Zionist elite and the Ashkenazi population throughout the early years of Mizrahi mass immigration. The state's treatment of Mizrahi immigrants in the 1950s as well as subsequent decades also revealed a fundamental contradiction between Zionism as ideal and reality. Although the movement sincerely sought to build a national homeland for people, it failed to accept a significant number of them with the same open arms once this vision was finally realized. This contradiction can be identified as one starting point of the Mizrahim's emergence of group consciousness, which would partake in transforming Israel's political and social landscapes through the Likud's "revolution" during the 1977 legislative election and the rise of the Shas party in 1984.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

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The “Israelization” of Rock Music and Political Dissent Through Song *Mason Brenhouse*

In the mid 1960s, rock music made its triumphant entrance onto the Israeli music scene in the form of small musical groups known as *lehaqot ha-qetzev*, which consisted of lower class Mizrahi musicians who lived primarily in the suburbs of Tel Aviv. Heavily influenced by Anglo-American rock musicians of the era such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks and others, lehaqot ha-qetzev groups began to play imitations of these rock musicians’ compositions in small clubs in Tel Aviv. Eventually, lehaqot ha-qetzev groups began to compose their own music and lyrics in an attempt to create a genre of their own: Israeli rock music. However, mainstream listeners and critics initially saw this music as crude and as lacking in any sort of connection with the meaning and content of “authentic” Israeliness.¹⁰¹

At the same time, the dominant culture of youthful rebellion found in Western societies during the 1960s was slowly making its way to Israeli culture. By January 1966, this Western cultural influence had infiltrated Israel, paving the way for the establishment of a musically based youth counterculture founded against the dominant nationalistic musical culture that had been established in

¹⁰¹ Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 137.

Mandate Palestine (and after 1948, established in Israel) during the late 1940s.¹⁰² However, it took several years before the “Israelization” of rock music occurred completely. Only in the 1980s did Israeli rock music become the most popular genre of music in Israel, eventually acting as a direct means of expressing political dissent.¹⁰³ This paper will examine the emergence of rock music in Israel, this music’s “Israelization” during the late 1960s, and its immense growth in popularity during the 1980s. It will further demonstrate how rock music served as a revolt against the nationalistic Sabra culture that developed in Mandate Palestine during the 1940s, and how rock music became a vehicle for political dissent in the 1980s.

During the mid 1940s, nationalistic musical culture began to dominate in Mandate Palestine with the emergence of folk music and folk dancing. By 1958, folk dancing had become a large and popular movement throughout the newly formed State of Israel, with many clubs and troupes being established.¹⁰⁴ Folk dancing brought with it celebrations of unity, youthful joy, and the vitality of the new nation. Most importantly, folk dancing became an international symbol of Israel and served as a marketing device for the Israeli image of the new Jew, *i.e.* the Sabra. Israeli folk music was heavily influenced by Yiddish, Slavic, and Russian folk songs, as well as by Hasidic songs, Jewish prayers, and even

¹⁰² Tom Segev, *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005), 134-38.

¹⁰³ Scott Streiner, “Shooting and Crying: The Emergence of Protest in Israeli Popular Music,” in *The European Legacy*, Vol. 6, No. 6. 776-7.

¹⁰⁴ Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 236.

Socialist protest songs. The folk songs were lyrically based on nature, work and labour, the land of Israel, and its landscape.¹⁰⁵ Their lyrics praised the land of Israel and the blossoming nation of Jews who were cultivating the land.¹⁰⁶ Thus, Israeli folk music successfully conveyed Zionist ideals by associating the Jewish people with the land of Israel.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, folk dancing acted as the primary vehicle to instill in the typical Sabra the values of Zionism and love of the new land of Israel. Through an emotional musical experience, folk music and folk dancing reinforced in the Sabra's mind the Zionist ideals to which he was exposed in his education. Eventually, due to its simple musical structure, Israeli folk music, often referred to as "homeland songs," came to be considered Zionist religious hymns.¹⁰⁸ The music acted as a means to unify the people of Israel, leaving them with a feeling of belonging and a sense of a common national fate.

Certainly, folk music played an important role in shaping both Zionist identity and the Israeli national identity of the Sabra. One group of Jews in Palestine, and after 1948 in Israel, on which folk music had a great impact was the members of youth movements. A variety of sources including parents, counselors, schoolteachers, neighbourhood friends, and eventually the radio exposed these young Sabras to folk music. Many members of these youth movements themselves became songwriters of Israeli folk music, writing an

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 236-37.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 237-38.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 236-39.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 238-40.

entire repertoire that was considered representative of “authentic” Israeliness.¹⁰⁹ These songwriters created the most popular genre of music in Israel up until the beginning of the 1980s, when it was dethroned by Israeli rock music.

As mentioned earlier, rock music’s influence on Israel began during the mid 1960s while folk music was still the most popular genre of music in the state. Heavily influenced by Anglo-American rock musicians of the era such as The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, and The Beach Boys, Mizrahi men living in suburban Tel Aviv formed groups to play crude “Israelized” versions of Anglo-American rock songs.¹¹⁰ At this time, the public viewed rock music as a genre enjoyed only by those from lower class backgrounds, and considered it “unauthentic” in its Israeliness. Indeed, Mizrahi men from lower and middle class backgrounds in particular took a liking to rock music.¹¹¹ The musical groups these men formed were eventually referred to as *lehaqot ha-qetzev*, and they served as pioneers in the “Israelization” of rock music. These early *lehaqot ha-qetzev* groups – such as *Ha-shmenim ve-ha-razim* (the Fat Guys and the Thin Guys), *Ha-kokhavim ha-kehulim* (the Blue Stars), and the Goldfingers – came onto the Israeli music scene during the mid 1960s and introduced a musical counterculture that clashed with the nationalistic culture associated with, and heralded by, Israeli folk music.¹¹² Indeed, the emergence of rock music in the mid 1960s represented a rejection of, and disregard for, the meanings associated with the aesthetics and

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 237-38.

¹¹⁰ Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture*, 138.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 138-39.

¹¹² Ibid., 139.

cultural preferences of the ideologically mobilized nationalist and Zionist musical culture that had been dominant in Israel since the mid 1940s. As rock music prompted this disregard and rejection, it simultaneously offered itself as an exciting new musical culture in which fun and sexuality played major roles.¹¹³ It became established in Israel during the mid 1960s and began to undergo “Israelization” in the late 1960s, although this “Israelization” was not a rapid and instantaneous process, lasting until the early 1980s.¹¹⁴

Initially, Israelis, and in particular Israeli music critics, deemed rock music crude and lacking in any “authentic” Israeliness.¹¹⁵ Specifically, they saw it as lacking content that was similar to the popular Israeli songs of the era.¹¹⁶ This notion of illegitimacy in Israeli rock music slowly dissipated during the late 1960s with the rise of Israeli consumer culture and an increased Western influence on Israel. During the late 1960s, rock music began to emerge as a noteworthy component of a modern lifestyle and served as a method of empowering and motivating Israelis to embrace Western and Anglo-American culture. Eventually, several *lehaqot ha-qetzav* groups received substantial media attention and began to gain prominence in the Israeli music scene.¹¹⁷ Many of these groups ended up producing and recording records in the late 1960s. The Churchills in particular began to pave the way for Israeli rock music’s

¹¹³ Ibid., 139-41.

¹¹⁴ Almog, *The Sabra*, 241.

¹¹⁵ Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture*, 140.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 140-42.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 145-46.

popularity. Closely associated with legendary Israeli rock musician Arik Einstein, The Churchills became one of the central forces in Israeli rock music. Influenced by Anglo-American psychedelic rock groups such as Cream and Jefferson Airplane, The Churchills worked with Einstein on many of his albums, including the vastly influential and critically groundbreaking Israeli rock albums *Poozy* (1969) and *Plastelina* (1970).¹¹⁸ In fact, many Israeli music critics consider *Poozy* to be the first Israeli rock album due to its musical fusion of Sabra culture and the spirit of the 1960s.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, in 1970 Einstein and The Churchills began to collaborate with Shalom Hanoch, who is often referred to as “The King of Israeli Rock,” and together they wrote, composed, and recorded the seminal Israeli rock album *Shablul* (1970). Greatly inspired by the musical and lyrical styles of The Beatles, *Shablul* was considered to be “Israelized” rock music. The beginnings of the “Israelization” of rock music can be recognized in the style of Hanoch and Einstein’s unruly and exuberant vocal delivery and the loose, free, and wild way in which The Churchills played their instruments.¹²⁰ Influential in terms of the trajectory of Israeli rock music, Einstein and Hanoch’s *Shablul* shaped the “Israelization” of rock music and the “rockization” of Israeli music. As a result of his creation and recording of *Shablul*, Einstein is often referred to as an architect of Israeli culture, causing rock music to come to the fore of the Israeli music scene

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 146.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

in the early 1970s, and triggering the formation of several Israeli rock bands.¹²¹ Hanoch and Einstein demonstrated that it was possible to make Israeli rock music that matched the artistic standards established by Anglo-American rock musicians and that also possessed the local authenticity of Israeli music.

The band Kaveret, greatly influenced by Einstein and Hanoch, achieved musical prominence in Israel during the early 1970s. While Kaveret was heavily inspired by local Israeli rock musicians such as Hanoch and Einstein, it also drew inspiration from Anglo-American rock groups of the era. Bands such as The Allman Brothers Band, Led Zeppelin, and The Jimi Hendrix Experience were changing the musical landscape of the era, and inspired Kaveret to produce a heavier rock sound than its Israeli predecessors.¹²² From a commercial standpoint, Kaveret sold a remarkable 200,000 albums in Israel, granting the band critical and commercial acclaim.¹²³ Lyrically, Kaveret was defined by its often jovial lyrics, which continued to solidify the rejection of the nationalistic music culture established in the 1940s via folk dancing and folk music.¹²⁴ For example, in Kaveret's song "Yo Ya" there are several lyrical examples illustrating a continuity of the musical counterculture established by Israeli rock music in the mid 1960s. When Kaveret's Danny Sanderson writes the absurdist and whimsical lyrics, "My cousin wanted to learn to swim, so he could surf all day. He learned to swim by correspondence course from a famous lifeguard. When he finally got

¹²¹ Segev, 1967: *Israel*, 137.

¹²² Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture*, 151-52.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 152-53.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 151-54.

in the water, within seconds he was gone. Two jumped in right away, drowning the two from the one,”¹²⁵ he rebels against the lyrical framework set up by Israeli folk music. Sanderson’s lyrics effectively signal the transition from nationalistic, realistic lyrics to playful, non-nationalistic – although still meaningful – ones. While playful, “Yo Ya”’s lyrics convey to the listener that life is unpredictable and that one must be wary of all the sudden obstacles that it can present, giving the song a meaningful message about the uncertainty of life. The lyrics lack any legitimate political, Zionist, or even cultural overtones, signaling a continuation of the free, rebellious counterculture established in Israeli rock music by Einstein, Hanoch, and The Churchills during the late 1960s.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, popular music in Israel underwent a transformation through which Israeli rock began to dominate the music scene. Israeli rock music slowly overtook folk music and displaced it from its status as the most popular music genre in Israel for nearly forty years. This change was due to increased Western influence during the late 1970s. Firstly, the collapse of the Israeli labour movement in 1977 heralded by the election of the center-right Likud party allowed for more capitalist and “Americanized” forces to penetrate Israel, contributing to greater Western influence.¹²⁶ Secondly, the import and availability of material and cultural goods from the West increased throughout

¹²⁵ Danny Sanderson and Alon Oleartchik, “Yo Ya” *Poogy Tales* (Tel Aviv: Hed Artzi, 1973) translated by Hebrew Songs (<http://hebrewsongs.com/song-yoya.htm>).

¹²⁶ Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture*, 161.

the late 1970s, allowing both Anglo-American consumer culture and musical culture to shape and combine with Israeli culture.¹²⁷

The 1980s saw the rise of female Israeli rock musicians such as Chava Alberstein and Yehudit Ravitz, who were some of the first women to hold prominent positions in the Israeli rock music scene. Women were finally able to become active participants in a genre of music that was typically dominated by male musicians, further diversifying the field of Israeli rock music. These female musicians, along with other famous Israeli rock musicians such as Hanoach, Einstein, Sholomo Gronich, and Ariel Zilber, formed an elite group of Israeli rock musicians that produced an extensive body of work.¹²⁸ This group established a position in the local field of popular music that cemented Israeli rock as one of the most popular genres of music in the country. In order to further develop Israel's rock music scene, these influential musicians brought to the country a professional community of individuals involved in the business of producing, writing, recording, and composing rock music.¹²⁹ For example, they brought session musicians, sound engineers, musical producers, composers, lyricists, singers, and musicians, who all specialized in working with rock music. Furthermore, several major record companies emerged in Israel, helping the Israeli rock music industry grow.¹³⁰ By 1983, Israeli rock music had supplanted

¹²⁷ Ibid., 161-62.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 163-64.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 161-62.

folk music as the most popular genre of music in Israel,¹³¹ signaling the completion of the “Israelization” of rock music and the “rockization” of Israeli music.

Between the early 1980s and the early 1990s, Israeli rock music began to shift from a passive and indirect musical rebellion against the dominant nationalist music culture associated with Israeli folk music to a more direct, active musical rebellion. Israeli rock musicians began to express political dissent with aggressive, unrelenting lyrics that questioned certain Zionist ideals and even questioned the political structure of the State of Israel. For example, during the Lebanon War that took place between 1982 and 1985, Israeli rock musicians composed lyrics that explicitly opposed the Israeli government’s military actions. One particular artist who composed such lyrics was the legendary Shalom Hanoach, who wrote the song “He Doesn’t Stop at Red Lights” as an attack on Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, and who encouraged other Israelis to oppose Sharon’s wartime actions.¹³² Hanoach’s pessimism and anger towards Sharon’s actions and decisions during the Lebanon War are clear when he writes, “Clear the way here comes the murderer, a raging bull he doesn’t bother to slow down. Watch out for your life, he doesn’t stop at red lights. You shut up — he’ll set the agenda. You sleep — he’ll lead the flock. And if suddenly you wake up in an abyss, too late — he doesn’t stop at red lights.”¹³³ Through this lyrically

¹³¹ Ibid., 163-64.

¹³² Streiner, “Shooting and Crying,” 777.

¹³³ Ibid.

expressed disapproval of Sharon and his military actions, Hanoch expresses his political dissent during the Lebanon War. Hanoch's work signalled just the beginning of Israeli rock music's expression of unconcealed political dissent during the 1980s.

The Israeli rock musician Chava Alberstein also expressed political dissent in her music, especially in her album *London* (1989), in which she critiques Israeli politics and expresses dissatisfaction with the first Palestinian Intifada (uprising) that occurred between 1987 and 1993.¹³⁴ Alberstein's disapproval of the Israeli government's actions during the Intifada are found in the lyrics of her interpretation of the classic Passover song "Chad Gadya," in which there are explicit examples of dissent directed towards the Israeli government. Alberstein's condemnation of the situation is clearly expressed in her lyrics, "How long will the cycle of terror continue? Those who attack, those who are attacked, those who beat, those who are beaten. When will this insanity be over?"¹³⁵ Alberstein's anger and resentment towards the government is exemplified in this version of "Chad Gadya," in which she embeds powerful notions of dissent and protest against the Israeli government by intertwining contemporary Israeli rock musicianship and lyricism with the classic Jewish song. Alberstein's work is representative of the expression of political dissent via Israeli rock music during the Intifada.

¹³⁴ Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture*, 168-69.

¹³⁵ Streiner, "Shooting and Crying," 779.

Another musician who received critical acclaim and popularity for expressing his political concerns musically and lyrically was the Israeli glam rock legend Aviv Geffen. By the age of twenty-six, Geffen had already sold over 200,000 albums, and had received significant critical acclaim and commercial success, becoming one of the most successful Israeli rock musicians of all time.¹³⁶ Heavily influenced by Shalom Hanoch, Geffen composed songs expressing betrayal and existential meaninglessness, and he often criticized in both lyrics and interviews the Israeli military and its mandatory conscription policies. The strong image of rebellion associated with Geffen and his music led many of his fans to feel a sense subversiveness and radicalism.¹³⁷ Geffen’s music allowed him to serve as an unofficial spokesman for a generation of young Israelis who began to question some of the fundamental ideals of Zionism upon which the State of Israel was founded, especially the salient role of the military in Israeli life and society.¹³⁸

Musically, many of Geffen’s contemporaries praised him, and even veteran Israeli rock musicians glorified his singular ability to compose music.¹³⁹ The political dissent expressed in Geffen’s lyrics is clear in his song “97 Profile,” in which Geffen criticizes the Israel Defense Force (IDF) and its mandatory enlistment policies. The title “97 Profile,” references the highest fitness rating a new IDF draftee can receive, thereby critiquing the IDF and its ability to

¹³⁶ Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture*, 165.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 165-66.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 166-67.

dehumanize young Israeli men and women by making them into bureaucratic numbers and instruments of war. Geffen plainly expresses political dissent towards the IDF and the Israeli Ministry of Defense when he writes, “A 97 Profile – but much less inside. The commander says, ‘shoot.’ In the uniform, he salutes, fighting for his sanity. The Death Defense Forces.”¹⁴⁰ By expressing open dissatisfaction with the IDF and referring to it as “The Death Defense Forces,” Geffen effectively used Israeli rock music as a vehicle for political dissent, dramatically shaping the genre.

The popularity, political content, and musical contours of Israeli rock music are exemplified by popular Israeli rock musicians such as Arik Einstein, Shalom Hanoch, and Aviv Geffen, who have sold hundreds of thousands of records. Artists such as Shalom Hanach, Chava Alberstein, and Aviv Geffen used Israeli rock music as an effective tool to express political dissent from as early as the Lebanon War in 1982, when Israeli rock music was becoming the dominant and most popular genre of music in Israel. Before Israeli rock music emerged, most popular music in Israel celebrated the beauty and grace of the land, its people, and their victories in battle, engendering a predominantly nationalistic folk music culture in Israel as early as the mid 1940s. From its humble beginnings in *lehaqot ha-qetzev* groups playing crude imitations of Anglo-American rock songs, to the immense commercial popularity it attained in the 1980s, Israeli rock music successfully spawned an influential musical and societal counterculture

¹⁴⁰ Streiner, “Shooting and Crying,” 782.

based on a rejection of the meanings, aesthetics, and content of the dominant, ideologically nationalistic, and Zionist culture in Israel. The “Israelization” of rock music and the “rockization” of Israeli music solidified rock music’s prominence in the Israeli music scene and allowed for the genre to become a vehicle for political dissent.

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Grace Paley's Exploration of Identity

Madeleine Gottesman

Grace Paley was a Jewish American author who wrote during the 1950s and 1960s. In "The Loudest Voice," "The Contest," "The Immigrant Story," and "The Long Distance Runner," Paley examines different categories of identity in America. She investigates a monolithic category of womanhood in an increasingly bold manner in her stories reflecting the order listed above, as Jewish characters continue to assimilate into the American context. Initially, refined literary strokes seek to liberate women from social norms in an explicitly Jewish context, then broad strokes explore a universal crisis of a generation of women with total freedom and, consequently, with a loss of identity. A common thread, sharpened in each story, is that characters acknowledge their Jewish pasts and grapple with them, yet none ultimately return to tradition. The idea of belonging is also a recurrent theme, as the notion of home becomes increasingly elusive as the characters struggle with their pasts and feel their identities are in flux, despite their adamant assertions of independence.

In challenging categories of womanhood, Paley introduces women of various ages who are assimilated to different extents, but who are linked together by common Jewish European roots. These female characters, in diverse capacities, serve to challenge normative constructions of Jewish women. In "The Loudest Voice," the young female protagonist, Shirley, is loud and ambitious,

countering the stereotype of modest, passive women, relegated to the domestic sphere, particularly in the Jewish context. Despite people constantly telling her to be quiet, she refuses to alter her personality to fit the traditional mold and eventually she is rewarded and granted a spotlight. When Shirley's mother tells her husband and Shirley to be quiet they respond, "In the grave it will be quiet."¹⁴¹ That Shirley is not a "typical" girl confined to female stereotypes hints at the concept of identity fluidity – Shirley has inherited the "male" characteristic of loudness from her father. The traditionalist notion that women should be quiet in public settings can be understood as related to the Halachic concept of "kol isha" – in an Orthodox context, it is considered immodest for women to be loud or to sing. The imagery of groaning in "The Loudest Voice" confirms mainstream disapproval of Shirley's loudness: "The whole street groans: Be quiet! Be quiet!"¹⁴² However, Shirley claims the groaning "steals from the happy chorus of my inside self not a tittle or a jot."¹⁴³ She is self-aware and not self-conscious about her behaviour.

A teacher at her school, Mr. Hilton, acknowledges the merits of Shirley's loudness and so casts her in his Christmas play. He tells Shirley, "Most of the parts have been given out. But I still need a child with a strong voice, lots of stamina."¹⁴⁴ She is of critical help to Mr. Hilton in finding his script and in

¹⁴¹ Grace Paley, "The Loudest Voice," in *The Collected Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 34.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 35.

quieting her peers.¹⁴⁵ The story ends with Shirley's internal narration as she prepares to go to bed after the play: "I had prayed for everybody ... I expected to be heard. My voice was certainly the loudest."¹⁴⁶ There is a therefore discernible undercurrent in "The Loudest Voice" that Shirley is made worthy by her loudness, not shamed for it — this feature persists throughout the story.

In "The Contest," the female character Dott is a secondary character, enabling Paley to navigate and challenge the stereotypes of Jewish women from the perspective of a Jewish man, Freddy. Freddy classifies Dott inaccurately and, through her actions, she rebels against his imposed definitions. Freddy's initial stereotypes of Dott are exaggerated to the point of making the reader question the origins and validity of Freddy's assumptions. When he first mentions Dott he states, "My last girl was Jewish, which is often a warm kind of girl, concerned about food intake and employability. They don't like you to work too hard, I understand, until you're hooked and then, you bastard, sweat!"¹⁴⁷ He then comments on his thinness: "I am [thin], but girls like it. If you're fat, they can see immediately that you'll never need their unique talent and warmth."¹⁴⁸ Freddy thinks he is quite knowledgeable about women and their inner desires, and so is confused when Dott abandons him: "I can still find no reason for your [Dott's]

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 40

¹⁴⁷ Grace Paley, "The Contest," in *The Collected Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 41.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 42.

unconscionable behavior."¹⁴⁹ He is unable to relinquish or critically reexamine his beliefs about Jewish women. He can understand her actions only in terms of traditional Jewish inclinations, explaining, "I realize you were motivated by the hideous examples of your mother and all the mothers before her."¹⁵⁰

Dott is more independent and less nurturing than Freddy initially believed, yet he chooses to continue to ignore this fact. She travels alone and even extends her trip in London. Upon receiving a letter from Freddy offering her another chance, she severs the relationship by sending him two gifts: "a carefully packed leather portfolio, hand-sewn in Italy, and a projector with a box of slides showing interesting views of Europe and North Africa."¹⁵¹ The foreign character of these gifts symbolizes Dott's independence and sense of adventure. It is clear that by acting on her own volition and refusing to concede to Freddy's requests, Dott resists the restrictions imposed by normative constructions of Jewish women.

In "The Immigrant Story," Paley challenges the perception that women, especially Jewish women, are irrational and over-emotional. Jack, embittered by his Polish Jewish family's immigration story and associated hardships, accuses the narrator, a female character, of having "a rotten rosy temperament,"¹⁵² *i.e.* seeing the world through rose-coloured glasses. Yet the narrator-protagonist is

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 49.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Grace Paley, "The Immigrant Story," in *The Collected Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 239.

nonetheless able to aptly assess her position and surroundings, noting, “Because of poverty, brilliance, and the early appearance of lots of soft hair on face and crotch, my friend Jack was a noticeable Marxist and Freudian by the morning of his twelfth birthday.”¹⁵³ She is able to see the world optimistically without completely losing a sense of clarity.

In contrast, Jack is closed-minded, his personal history acting as a springboard for his parochial and sometimes illogical thinking. From the outset of the story, Jack’s particular worldview is established: “Jack asked me, isn’t it a terrible thing to grow up in the shadow of another person’s sorrow?”¹⁵⁴ Jack is referring to the “shadow” and “sorrow” of his immigrant parents, who experienced and survived anti-Semitism, poverty, and starvation. He also incorrectly interprets a memory by distorting the context. He describes his father sleeping in a crib in a way that aligns with his perception of his father as weak: “My mother made him sleep in the crib ... she was trying to make him feel guilty. Where were his balls?”¹⁵⁵ The narrator interjects with reason, asking “How do *you* know what was going on? ... You were five years old.”¹⁵⁶

During a conversation with the narrator, it is revealed that Jack harbours resentment toward her for announcements she made in school thirty years earlier. This persistent resentment demonstrates an obsessive fixation with the

¹⁵³ Ibid., 240.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 238.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 239.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

past that perhaps hinders Jack's personal growth.¹⁵⁷ However, Paley seems to sympathize with Jack's enduring attachment to his family's dark past, and in doing so, demonstrates the narrator's limitation: the narrator insists on Jack escaping an inescapable past. This idea is unpacked later in this essay. Nonetheless, the female narrator is more than a passive, compassionate listener. Rather, she is a *force*, expressing and rationally defending her ideas and opinions.

In "The Long Distance Runner," Paley develops a Jewish character, Faith, who is from the story's outset completely free from the limitations of social norms, and Paley harnesses Black-Jewish relations to establish a universal link that unites all women. The two main characters are Faith and Mrs. Luddy. The former is a white Jewish single-mother living in an affluent suburb, while the latter is a black single-mother living in an urban slum, specifically in the apartment in which Faith lived as a child. Faith is uninhibited by the many societal conventions pertaining to body image and modesty. For instance, she runs alone "in silk shorts half way over her fat thighs" and an undershirt.¹⁵⁸ She is a single mother with a perpetually absent boyfriend, yet there is no indication that these circumstances bother her. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Faith is not defined by her religion, womanhood, motherhood, or relationships with men, leaving the reader uncertain as to what does inform her identity. Paley also de-essentializes women as nurturing mothers, despite the fact that Faith

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 240

¹⁵⁸ Grace Paley, "The Long Distance Runner," in *The Collected Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), 242.

does not seem to lack nurturing inclinations, thereby avoiding a challenge to motherhood itself. For example, Faith calls her son, Anthony, a pet name “Tonto,” and when she leaves Mrs. Luddy’s apartment she “kissed the top of his head a little too forcefully and said, ‘Well, I’ll see you.’”¹⁵⁹ Simply, Faith does not know how to translate her motherly inclinations into good mothering.

Due to powerful upheavals in her life, such as motherhood, divorce, and a move to the suburbs, Faith’s identity is constantly in flux. This flux motivates Faith to return to her childhood roots, in an attempt to pause time for introspection — because of her liberation from any one single defining feature, she seems to lack meaning. In Mrs. Luddy’s apartment and neighborhood, the two women, seemingly worlds apart, are able to connect and relate to one another because of their shared sense of womanhood. They are able to cultivate a ‘safe space’ in Mrs. Luddy’s apartment by acknowledging their female bond, distinct from and in opposition to men. For example, they agree that “First [men] make something, then they murder it. Then they write a book about how interesting it is.”¹⁶⁰ The women free themselves to focus on and deal with themselves, crossing boundaries of ethnicity, tradition, and history.

During Faith’s three-week stay at Mrs. Luddy’s apartment, she seeks to disengage from her family.¹⁶¹ Mrs. Luddy tells her she must eventually return to them, commenting, “Well, don’t you think your little spoiled boy’s crying for

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 243, 255.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 250.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 249.

you? ... Time to go lady.”¹⁶² Mrs. Luddy's frequent admonishments, such as “Girl, you don't know nothing,”¹⁶³ transforms her into a mother-like figure who teaches Faith. Foreshadowing this, Faith earlier in the story tells a girl, Cynthia, that Faith's mother is dead.¹⁶⁴ Her evident lack of attachment to her own mother signifies that there is room in her heart to accept another motherly figure. During her journey back to her family after her stay at Mrs. Luddy's, Faith notes, “In the three weeks I'd been off the street, jogging had become popular.”¹⁶⁵ It seems more plausible that she has an enhanced awareness of joggers, rather than a sudden inflation in the number of joggers having taken place. This indicates Faith's newly cultivated self-awareness. She walks by a park filled with mothers and their babies and “In order to prepare them, meaning no harm, I said, ‘In fifteen years, you girls will be like me, wrong in everything.’”¹⁶⁶

When she returns home and tries to convey to her family her experiences with Mrs. Luddy, her son Richard's exclamation that she “Cut the baby talk”¹⁶⁷ confirms that Faith has been transformed into a baby-like figure while trying to sort out her identity. She has not yet integrated what she has learned. Faith cannot incorporate the broad lessons pertaining to identity and motherhood she learned, such as being a more present mother, once she is thrust back into her

¹⁶² Ibid., 255.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 253.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 248

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 256.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 257.

home life. She even offers her son Anthony money for cigarettes.¹⁶⁸ In failing to apply her lessons to the 'real world,' it seems too late for Faith to internalize the values of her 'adoptive' mother, Mrs. Luddy. Faith left her home in an attempt to find herself and to find where she belongs. In effect, she left to rediscover her home, symbolized by her choice to return to her original home.

Faith's womanhood is significant, however she seemingly struggles to find meaningful significance in anything beyond that and womanhood is not enough to resolve her feelings of displacement. It is unclear if she will be able to find a 'home' (a place of understanding and meaning), or if freedom has corrupted her ability to do so. This speaks to a universal crisis of struggling with feelings of displacement once the shackles of social restriction are removed.

Paley's earlier stories, "The Loudest Voice" and "The Contest," in contrast to "The Immigrant Story" and "The Long Distance Runner," postulate the option of a balanced Jewish-American identity. The later stories attest to the problems of a Jewish past encountering forces of assimilation during the processes of fortifying an identity and constructing a 'home' in America. In "The Loudest Voice" and "The Contest," Jewish identity is central. In "The Loudest Voice," Shirley advances the idea that one can reconcile pervasive American-Christian culture with one's historical Jewish identity. Since she is quite young, her identity crisis is less intractable. For example, in response to seeing a decorated Christmas tree in her neighbourhood, she narrates, "With both my hands I tossed it [the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

tree] a kiss of tolerance. Poor thing, it was a stranger in Egypt,"¹⁶⁹ quoting the Hebrew Bible. Jews were once strangers in Egypt and are therefore commanded be kind to strangers. Shirley utilizes a Jewish idea to reconcile her love for Christmas with her Jewish identity.

Shirley's mother ridicules her for being involved in a school Christmas play. In line with the traditional belief that women are particularly responsible for the transmission of Jewish tradition to further generations, Shirley's father is not disturbed by her involvement. Later, Shirley's mother comments, "I'm surprised to see my neighbors making tra-la-la for Christmas."¹⁷⁰ Her husband responds, "You're in America! Clara, you wanted to come here. In Palestine the Arabs would be eating you alive. Europe you had pogroms. Argentina is full of Indians. Here you got Christmas."¹⁷¹ There is a tension between these oppositional schools of thought, *i.e.* whether Jews in America should fight to defend their Jewish identity despite the ease of assimilation, or whether they should be grateful to have escaped the horrors of anti-Semitism and give in to American culture. This question is perhaps more thoroughly explored in "The Immigrant Story." Nonetheless, Shirley is acutely aware of her Jewish heritage and identity, and finds that she is able to reconcile it with the predominantly Christian American culture.

¹⁶⁹ Paley, "The Loudest Voice," 38.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

In "The Contest," the characters' Judaism is at the fore, since Dott is stereotyped as a Jewish woman against the background of a contest organized by a well-known Yiddish newspaper. Moreover, the Jewish contest creates a situation in which Dott is able to assert independence. Although she and Freddy win the contest, they cannot go together on the trip they won because they are unmarried.¹⁷² Tradition is therefore not entirely absent from their lives, yet they defy it, as they had been in a relationship for some time. In this way, they make clearer the tensions between old country tradition and American progressiveness. Similar to what Shirley does, Freddy chooses some aspects of Jewish tradition to maintain, and other aspects of American culture to take on. For example, he both reads Yiddish and eats his American "Rice Krispies."¹⁷³ Shirley, Dott, and Freddy have not yet strayed far enough from tradition to experience a religious identity crisis. In contrast, in "The Long Distance Runner" and "The Immigrant Story," the reader learns that a balance of tradition and progressiveness, as well as a sense of belonging, is not always possible or easily attainable.

"The Immigrant Story" and "The Long Distance Runner" feature characters who have largely abandoned tradition and are then left searching for meaning. Jack and Faith are variously tethered to their pasts, yet negotiate their identities without returning to tradition. "The Immigrant Story" explores two Jewish characters trying to make sense of their histories, which occurred

¹⁷² Ibid., 47.

¹⁷³ Paley, "The Contest," 41.

precisely because of their Jewishness, while "The Long Distance Runner" emphasizes the universality of identity crisis when one feels displaced.

In "The Immigrant Story," the narrator represents those Jews who latch onto America as a primary identity because it has provided Jews with a safe haven, while Jack represents those Jews who feel alienated in the American context, their tragic pasts binding to Judaism sometimes against their will. As a child, the narrator claimed "I thank God every day that I'm not in Europe. I thank God I'm American-born and live on East 172nd Street where there is a grocery store ... and on the same block a shul and two doctors' offices."¹⁷⁴ Her observations do contain certain Jewish elements, but her Jewish tradition is clearly shaped by a reverence for American tradition. "There were twenty-eight flags aflutter in different rooms and windows. I had one tattooed onto my arm. It has gotten dimmer but a lot wider because of middle age."¹⁷⁵ The tattoo on her arm symbolizing American freedom can be understood in relation to Holocaust imagery — for instance, the tattoos Jews received in Nazi death camps. Her tattoo has widened, signifying an augmentation and deepening of her American identity over time through her appreciation of the country to which she feels indebted and most connected.

As mentioned earlier, Jack's experience with immigrant parents, who fled anti-Semitism in Poland yet continue to suffer in America because of poverty and the mental scars of past traumas, have led him to general disillusionment.

¹⁷⁴ Paley, "The Immigrant Story," 240.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Although he chooses Marxism and Freudianism as ideological refuge – ideologies staunchly free of religion – his inability to let go of the past or make sense of it means that his identity and sense of belonging remain unstable.¹⁷⁶ The trauma of his Jewish background does not propel him to a Jewish future, and his association with Judaism is not one of choice but of burden and necessity. It has chained him, despite his attempts to free himself from religion. This narrative, from which he can never be fully independent, continues to structure his life and outlook.

In “The Long Distance Runner,” Faith frees herself from restrictive social norms and traditions, drawing attention to a generational crisis among those who liberate themselves such that they lose a sense of meaning. Faith is Jewish, as her parents live in the “Children of Judea” retirement home.¹⁷⁷ However, the retirement home and Judaism more generally are purposefully only briefly mentioned, and not more deeply explored, so as to convey how minimally they impact her self-identification. Ironically, Faith bears no attachment to faith. She returns to the neighbourhood of her childhood in order to return to her roots and to explore her identity.

What emerges from Paley’s other stories culminates in an unanswered question in this story: once American Jews relinquish Jewish tradition and it no longer serves a meaningful purpose, what is left? When Jews blend in as white people, despite a unique non-white history, what remains of their identity?

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Paley, “The Long Distance Runner,” 248.

Black-Jewish relations are instructive in unpacking Faith's identity. Faith is tied only to her womanhood and her "whiteness." Her womanhood is what secures her bond with Mrs. Luddy and her whiteness is an inescapable feature that is universally perceived by others. Residents of the black neighbourhood comment on Faith's whiteness, asking, "How come white womens [sic] got rotten teeth? And look so old?"¹⁷⁸ (256) What she finds is nothing particularly Jewish, but rather universal, via shared womanhood. In previous stories, characters relate to one another as Jews. However, Faith is so engrossed in the American milieu that she cannot relate to her own Jewish mother, but rather only to a black woman.

In "The Immigrant Story," tradition is ever-present and even agonizing. In "The Long Distance Runner," tradition seems to become escapable as time spent in America accumulates, but the emptiness stemming from total disassociation from tradition may ultimately draw one back to it. The story hints at this eventual return to tradition via its open ending, in which Faith is portrayed as baby-like, suggesting that she may be able to secure an identity and find a home by reattaching herself to her Jewish past and by finding meaning within it.

The progression of Grace Paley's short stories encourages contemplation on the place of Jews in American society and, within that context, the place for Jewish women specifically. There is certainty that women use the American context to facilitate their self-emancipation and liberation. Yet, there is uncertainty as to how Jewish people will identify once they are liberated and

¹⁷⁸ Paley, "The Long Distance Runner," 256.

uninhibited by social restrictions. In Grace Paley's stories, the shedding of tradition for the sake of independence and for the sake of the freedom to identify is juxtaposed with an ensuing loss of Jewish identity, resulting in a feeling of being without a 'home.'

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The Failure of Liberal Politics in Vienna: Alienation and Jewish Responses at the Fin-de-Siècle

Jesse Kaminski

Vienna, the Habsburg imperial capital, was a city undergoing massive social, economic, and political change as the nineteenth century ticked away. Fin-de-siècle Vienna conjures up images of the summit of imperialist culture, still maintaining its claim as the artistic and intellectual center of Europe. This belied the reality of a society in flux as old guard liberals competed with the growing power of mass political movements. Mobilized by popular anti-Semitism, anti-liberalism and anti-capitalism, these mass movements threatened the foundations of the multi-cultural empire. The needlessly formal structure of Viennese society at the end of the century entrenched an increasingly irrelevant social hierarchy. This ossified society, together with its rigid unspoken etiquette and the failure of liberalism to deliver on its state-building promises, rendered Viennese society unable to reconcile its reality with the inevitability of modernity. Vienna's crisis of modernity had profound effects on the growing number of assimilated, bourgeois Jews who found themselves increasingly alienated from the society they had so wholly embraced in recent generations. The unleashing of mass politics in the Viennese milieu severed Jewish identity from its surroundings, initiating a crisis of personal and communal dimensions. Assimilated Jewish identity, terminally intertwined with Austrian liberalism, shattered upon liberalism's collapse into its various assimilatory and nationalistic

affinities. Increasingly, Viennese Jews were stratified along class, wealth and religious lines and dominated by the assimilated liberal elite, finding themselves alienated from both their own community and the Austrian nation-state developing around them.

Opportunity Lost: The Failure of Liberal Politics

Liberal hegemony in Viennese politics prior to the 1880s had promised the opportunity for Jews to engage in social and political life if they accepted the premise of cultural and political assimilation. The failure of liberal politics to bring these promised benefits to its constituents demonstrates the rejection of Jewish belonging in the increasingly divided Viennese political sphere. As writer Stefan Zweig put it, “the nineteenth century was honestly convinced that it was on the straight and unfailing path toward being the best of all worlds.”¹⁷⁹ The Enlightenment-era basis for assimilated Jewish identity in the Habsburg Monarchy, Emperor Joseph II’s *Toleranzpatent* of 1782, naturalized Jews as citizens with the goal of eliminating their cultural and political distinctiveness.¹⁸⁰ This was to be achieved through German language education, restrictions on Jewish cultural difference, and military conscription — the hallmarks of enlightened liberal state building.¹⁸¹ In years following the revolution of 1848, Emperor Franz Joseph (1830-1916) even drew praise from Jews as “a friend and defender” for his open disapproval of anti-Semitism as deleterious to national

¹⁷⁹ Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (London: Cassell And Company, 1943), 14.

¹⁸⁰ David Aberbach, *The European Jews, Patriotism and the Liberal State 1789-1939*, ed. Oliver Leaman, Routledge Jewish Studies (New York: Routledge, 2013), 70.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

unity.¹⁸² This vertical relationship with imperial power would later serve to ostracize Jews from their nationalist neighbours due to their direct association with an increasingly discredited political system.

The vertical relationship between imperial authority and the Jews in the Habsburg monarchy began with the *Toleranzpatent*. The *Toleranzpatent* provided a single mechanism for Jewish social integration via assimilation. In the years after 1848, when restrictions on Jewish residency in Vienna were softened, the Jewish population grew largely through immigration from around the empire, from a few thousand to 175, 318 by 1910.¹⁸³ However, participation in Jewish communal administration was limited by the assimilated establishment, which dominated its official body, the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*. Enfranchisement in this group was based on a high tax floor allowing no more than 15% of Jews to vote in elections between 1900 and 1914.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, of those eligible, only 25-35% voted.¹⁸⁵ Voting within the Jewish community was lowest in 1912, when only 1,960 votes were cast, just 10% of those eligible and 1% of the total Jewish population.¹⁸⁶ For Vienna's Jews, a direct political relationship with imperial rather than national power allowed them to become "the most rapid upwardly mobile minority in the empire."¹⁸⁷ The embourgeoisement of Jews in Vienna also created strong emotional and personal-political ties with the figure of the

¹⁸² Ibid., 69.

¹⁸³ David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (Portland: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2000), 16.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid..

¹⁸⁶ Ibid..

¹⁸⁷ Aberbach, *The European Jews, Patriotism and the Liberal State 1789-1939*, 68.

Emperor, fostering a durable Habsburg patriotism in many Jewish cultural elites that left a lasting influence. It seemed, at least on the surface, that Jews were becoming figures of national unity such that Dr. Adolf Jellinek (1821-93), a community leader, remarked in 1883, "The Jews of Austria are Austrians first and last, they feel and think Austrian, they want a great, strong and mighty Austria."¹⁸⁸ While the vertical relationship successfully imbued many Viennese Jews with the desire to adopt and internalize Viennese culture as a means to achieving integration, it stymied the development of horizontal ties with their neighbours.

The unique situation of the Jews, without a territorialized identity within the empire, also bolstered this sense of patriotism and attachment to Viennese imperialism through arts and culture. David Aberbach contends that "Jewish influence on the arts, especially in Vienna ... was spectacular and lasting," reinforcing Stefan Zweig's concurrence that "love of Viennese art made [Jews] feel entirely at home, genuinely Viennese."¹⁸⁹ However, securing a niche for assimilated Jews in Viennese society came at the cost of relations between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbours. Increasing agitation by nationalist movements also imperilled bourgeois Jewish attachment to its liberal identity.

Beginning with the *Ausgleich* of 1867, it became clear that future political reform in the empire would be along national lines. Combined with the loss of Lombardy in 1859 at Solferino and defeat by the Prussians in 1866, Habsburg

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 69.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

supranational identity suffered serious blows. This would impel Austro-Germans and other national groups to assert their identities more vigorously.¹⁹⁰ Liberals became increasingly associated with unrestrained capitalism and elitism, unaided by “maintain[ing] parliamentary power by the undemocratic device of the restricted franchise.”¹⁹¹ Conflation of capitalism, internationalism, and Jews as antithetical to the German nationalism would emerge amongst students at the University of Vienna in the 1870s, in part as a product of weakened Habsburg supranational identity. It left assimilated Jews, in Gustav Mahler’s words, “three times homeless — as a Czech in Vienna, as an Austrian among the Germans, and as a Jew throughout the world. Everywhere an intruder, nowhere welcome.”¹⁹²

The weakening of Austrian identity also paved the way for the collapse of liberal political hegemony in Vienna by 1895. In the 1880s, the liberal establishment faced competition from growing pan-German nationalist, Christian Social, and Social Democratic movements.¹⁹³ This was exacerbated by the lack of political support outside of “middle-class Germans and German Jews of the urban centers.”¹⁹⁴ The foundations of liberalism in Vienna were constrained by the ascendant bourgeois class that latched onto it as a form of self-identification. Liberal ideology and the ascendant bourgeois class coalesced after the revolutions of 1848 into a sense of *Bürger* unity, drawing on traditional

¹⁹⁰ George E. Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s* (Cambridge, MA: Abt Books, 1988), 72.

¹⁹¹ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 5.

¹⁹² Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 108.

¹⁹³ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 5.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

privileges of urban taxpayers and explicitly excluding lower classes from political rights.¹⁹⁵ As well, the strictures of the conservative and monarchist Habsburg aristocracy, cemented by rigid class and social status, blocked the direct assimilation of the two classes into a liberal-dominated constituency.¹⁹⁶ These exclusionary identities contributed to the failure of Austrian society to achieve the fusion of bourgeois and aristocratic classes, as in England or France, and left the emergent bourgeoisie reliant on an imperial patron.¹⁹⁷ Stefan Zweig wrote how his father, a wealthy businessman, did not frequent the Sacher Hotel, a bastion of the elite, “because of a natural feeling of respect.”¹⁹⁸ Refused entry into the highest levels of power, it was through appropriating elements of aristocratic culture such as the arts that the liberal bourgeoisie found “a refuge from the unpleasant world of increasingly threatening political reality.”¹⁹⁹ In this context, many Jewish intellectuals found refuge in journalism, academia, and the arts, which served as an outlet for the marginalized as well as a position of public visibility.

The collapse of Viennese liberalism was ensured by the Panic of 1873, as well as by the resulting expansion of the political franchise. The economic chaos provided the necessary collapse in everyday life to discredit the liberal system entirely and mobilize anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, and anti-Semitic movements in

¹⁹⁵ John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 11.

¹⁹⁶ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 7.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 28.

¹⁹⁹ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 8.

response. According to John W. Boyer, the artisanal manufacturing sector was the hardest hit in the aftermath of the Panic.²⁰⁰ In 1848, the Viennese textile industry comprised 1,281 master artisans in cotton and wool. There were as well 452 silk manufacturers employing 8,616 workers in 1850. By 1880, this had shrunk to no more than 83 manufacturers employing 1,134 workers and 176 master artisans.²⁰¹ Consolidating production into smaller, monopolistic units after 1873 created a sustained decline in wages and prices. Combined with increased competition from imported goods, Austrian small-businesses were left without effective means of competing.²⁰² The direct effects of the economic depression on many middle and lower-middle class Viennese artisans resulted in the 1879 defeat of liberal dominance in the *Reichsrat*. Its subsequent replacement with an 'Iron Ring' coalition of Conservatives, Clerics, and Slavs lead by Count Eduard Taaffe until 1893 ²⁰³ was the disabling blow to the Viennese liberal status quo, demonstrating liberalism's fundamental fragility.

The enfranchisement of the "5 fl. men" in reforms between 1882 and 1885 enabled the phenomena of mass politics to take root in Austria.²⁰⁴ The economic decline between 1848 and 1880 also increased the number of artisans who

²⁰⁰ Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, 43.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid., 44.

²⁰³ Richard S. Geehr, *Karl Lueger : Mayor of Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 40.

²⁰⁴ Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, 40.

belonged to the so-called “5 fl. men,” the lowest category of taxpayer, by 60%.²⁰⁵ It would be from this constituency that the Christian Socials and German nationalists initially drew upon for support, reacting readily to reject notions of capitalism, liberalism, and *Bürgertum*, the universal German bourgeois liberal class.²⁰⁶ Carl E. Schorske contends that liberal society fundamentally failed to “respect [the] liberal coordinates of order and progress” through a lack of trust in the political maturity of the public.²⁰⁷ The simultaneous success of overtly anti-liberal movements attests to this. Liberal politics in Vienna had self-immolated by the late 1880s. By empowering mass political movements, Vienna’s liberals found themselves the victims.

The expansion of the franchise and the entrenching of anti-Semitism in political discourse condemned the liberal, assimilatory concept of the nation to death in Viennese politics, casting all Jews out of the nation. Mass movements mobilized the newly enfranchised lower classes, appealing to their anti-Semitic, anti-liberal, and anti-capitalist beliefs, which solidified after 1873. Anti-Semitic rhetoric was further stoked by the survival of the Rothschild bank as many others collapsed, stirring a rumour of Jewish profiteering.²⁰⁸ Emerging racial science also reinforced the understanding of Jews as biologically distinct from Germans, despite outward appearances, an idea which gained currency in intellectual circles. Theodor Billroth, a famous Viennese physician, published *The*

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 7.

²⁰⁷ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 117.

²⁰⁸ Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 71.

Teaching and Learning of Medical Science in 1876 in which he concluded that the Jewish race was addicted to money.²⁰⁹ The popularity of these ideas was demonstrated by the exclusion of Jews from German nationalist circles, notably from several Austro-German *Burschenschaften* (student groups), which by 1890 had all banned Jews. One of these groups, *Albia*, had three Jewish members, including Theodor Herzl, who resigned from the group after its anti-Semitic deliberations disgusted him.²¹⁰

The Catholic hierarchy latched onto this growing anti-Semitism by appointing Baron Karl von Vogelsang editor of the *Vaterland* newspaper in 1875, empowering them amongst its Catholic, aristocratic readership. A German convert from Protestantism, Vogelsang saw the role of Jews through a Marxist lens, “unwholesomely wound up with capitalism.”²¹¹ In claiming that “[Jews] so poison trade and commerce that an honourable Christian can hardly create a place for himself,” he tried to bridge the ideological gap between the working class, clergy, and aristocracy.²¹² Supporters of the Christian social movement and German nationalism would coalesce around two parties during the late 1880s. A small but influential pan-German party, led by Georg Ritter von Schönerer, pledged to fight “the Habsburgs, the Catholic Church, and the Jews,” while the Christian Social Union, founded in 1887 and led by Karl Lueger, took aim at “capitalism and Judaism,” which their constituency saw as interchangeable

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 72.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 73.

²¹¹ Ibid., 75.

²¹² Ibid.

terms.²¹³ Under the name of Christians United, these parties ran a joint slate of candidates for the 1889 Vienna City Council on an explicitly anti-Semitic platform.²¹⁴

The success of the Christian Socials in the 1890s is demonstrative of the erosion of liberalism and its replacement with “a racially based nationalism from which Jews were excluded by definition.”²¹⁵ Initially however, it seemed as if the 1895 refusal of the emperor to accept the victory of anti-Semitic politician Karl Lueger would stem its rising tide such that “Sigmund Freud, the liberal, smoked a cigar to celebrate the action of the autocratic saviour of the Jews.”²¹⁶ Lueger rightly saw this as an error and wrote, “Not to confirm a man loyal to the emperor, whatever his name, would be the greatest mistake that could be made.”²¹⁷ Assuming office in 1897 after two years of stasis, he “began a decade of rule in Vienna which combined all that was anathema to classical liberalism: anti-Semitism, clericalism, and municipal socialism.”²¹⁸ For Lueger, anti-Semitism was largely a political tool, “a very good means of creating a stir ... but when one is at the top one no longer has use for it. This is a sport for the lower breeds.”²¹⁹ Responding to accusations of socializing with Jewish businessmen he quipped,

²¹³ Ibid., 86.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 46.

²¹⁶ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 6.

²¹⁷ Dr. Karl Lueger, “I decide who is a Jew!” : *the Papers of Dr. Karl Lueger*, ed. Richard S. Geehr (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 256.

²¹⁸ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 6.

²¹⁹ Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 106.

“Just who is and who is not a Jew is something I determine for myself.”²²⁰ Lueger’s usage of anti-Semitism as a political tool existed in conjunction with a pragmatic acceptance of the central role of Vienna’s Jewish community in the economy and social services. Understanding the rhetorical nature of Lueger’s anti-Semitism, some Jews like Hannah Arendt considered his time in office as “actually a kind of Golden Age for the Jews,” and claimed that the only prominent Viennese Jew to take Lueger’s words seriously was “the ‘crazy’ feuilleton editor of the *Neue Freie Presse*, Theodor Herzl.”²²¹ This “politics in a new key,”²²² organized around the rejection of liberalism and based on mass support, would for Carl E. Schorske come to represent the new Viennese political atmosphere in which Lueger, Schönerer and even Herzl would benefit.

Social Alienation: A Jew, Despite Outward Appearances

The failure of liberal politics to bring about the integration it promised alienated many Jews within Viennese society. This was most visible in the lives of many Viennese Jewish intellectuals at the turn of the century, such as Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), and Stefan Zweig (1881-1942). Faced with professional and personal crises of identity, these individuals developed personal responses to experiences of alienation. Freud’s psychoanalytic understanding of the mind as a political system understood the conflicts between its constituent parts in a similar way as Vienna’s raucous

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 116-17.

politics, drawing on Freud's own experiences and conflicts. Mahler's career would be blighted by virulent anti-Semitic attacks aimed at the perceived Judaization of Viennese culture, yet his pragmatic approach to conversion would, however, still fail to achieve his career goals. Zweig's life embodied the cosmopolitan European identity forged by a lifetime of travel that he saw as native to Vienna, a multicultural European's microcosm. These three men's struggles to reconstitute identity prove central to understanding Jewish intellectual life in Vienna at the time.

Freud perceived that the social and political disintegration he witnessed had a direct effect on the increasing prevalence of mental illnesses such as hysteria. Through his work, he drew conclusions emblematic of the time and place in which he lived. One conclusion made in his 1900 book *The Interpretation of Dreams* is that "A dream is the fulfillment of a wish."²²³ He conceived of this in three layers, mapping his own life into professional, political, and personal conflicts, presenting them in reverse order. He travelled from the professional, which is rooted in the present, to the personal, which is rooted in unconscious memories from infancy.²²⁴ Freud faced considerable obstacles in his career and personal life due to his Jewish heritage and the controversial nature of his work. He was particularly bitter about his professional exclusion from the 1890s onwards and waited seventeen years for a professorship when eight was the

²²³ Ibid., 182.

²²⁴ Ibid., 184.

norm.²²⁵ This intellectual alienation was compounded by the dominance of Karl Lueger's Christian Socials. Freud had long suspected political anti-Semitism had delayed his promotion due to "denominational considerations," for which he was passed over on 24 January 1897; the election of an overtly anti-Semitic mayor only served to reinforce that belief.²²⁶

The death of Freud's father in 1896 was the major personal crisis leading to his isolation from society. This further circumscribed his "social and intellectual withdrawal."²²⁷ Joining B'nai B'rith in 1897 he found a "comfortable refuge where he was accepted ... [and] respected without challenge as a scientist."²²⁸ His troubled relationship with his father would develop into the Oedipal Complex in which he theorized that sons seek to rebel against their fathers. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he related how his father acted passively in the face of anti-Semitism, an example of "unheroic conduct" which led him to resent his father.²²⁹ Freud extrapolated this theorized father-son conflict, challenging the failed classical liberalism endorsed by his father's generation. Although Freud never denied his dual German and Jewish identities until the rise of the Nazis, increasing anti-Semitism led him to lament in 1930, "I considered myself German intellectually, until I noticed the growth of anti-Semitic prejudice in Germany and German Austria. Since that time, I consider

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ William J. McGrath, *Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 175.

²²⁷ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 186.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ McGrath, *Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis: The Politics of Hysteria*, 60.

myself no longer a German. I prefer to call myself a Jew.”²³⁰ Freud’s academic and personal life were very much intertwined, as the conflicts he recognized in himself were the basis for his academic work, which attempted to rationalize both political and mental conflicts.

Gustav Mahler’s career was marked by his complete devotion to music and his pragmatism in trying to advance his career as far as possible. Unlike Freud, he would attempt to mitigate the effects of his collapsed identity by allowing one element to subsume the others through conversion. Though relatively low, the rate of conversion in Vienna was higher than the rest of the monarchy and even Berlin.²³¹ Mahler’s efforts to expunge his Jewishness, however, were for naught, as his immigration to New York City in late 1907 demonstrates.²³² Mahler’s Jewish heritage would continuously form part of the scathing critiques laid upon him by his contemporaries, despite his baptism in 1897.²³³ From his days as an aspiring musician, his detractors highlighted his Jewish heritage to undermine the German-ness of his work. Anti-Semitic attacks on his character increased after his appointment as director of the Vienna Court Opera in 1897, a position supposedly secured by his earlier conversion. A newspaper at the time of Mahler’s appointment wrote that he “satisfied the different racial types, the Germans having all the work, while the Jew received all

²³⁰ Paul Roazen, *Freud, Political and Social Thought* (New York: Knopf, 1968), 174.

²³¹ Jacques Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, trans. Rosemary Morris (New York: Continuum, 1993), 187.

²³² Jens Malte Fischer, *Gustav Mahler* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 568.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 259.

the credit.”²³⁴ The *Reichspost* implied his directorship would result in the Judaization of German music, “as soon as Herr Mahler starts spouting his Yiddish interpretations [*mauscheln*] from the podium.”²³⁵ *Mauscheln*, a derogatory term to describe the Yiddish-accented German spoken by Jews, allowed “observers to identify even those Jews who had dispensed with the outward characteristics of Judaism.”²³⁶

This literary jab also highlighted Mahler’s style of conducting with violent and fidgety movements, attributes stereotypically assigned to Jews. Mahler was very self-conscious regarding his movements. As his wife Alma attested he “frequently asked me to warn him when he gesticulated too much, because he hated to see others do so and thought it ill-bred.”²³⁷ This invective found its roots in Richard Wagner’s own anti-Semitic views, which were absorbed by his followers. Still, many Viennese Jews in the 1880s identified as Wagnerians despite his anti-Semitism, young Mahler included.²³⁸ However, virulent anti-Semitism in the Viennese Academic Wagner Society eventually forced Mahler’s resignation.²³⁹ In *Das Judentum in der Musik*, published in 1850 and expanded in 1869, Wagner argued that the Jews lost their ancient culture in the diaspora and have appropriated German culture, stating “The Jew speaks the language of the

²³⁴ Ibid., 256.

²³⁵ Ibid., 252.

²³⁶ Ibid., 253.

²³⁷ Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a national identity : the Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford, U.K.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 144.

²³⁸ Thomas S. Grey, *Richard Wagner and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 155.

²³⁹ Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 64.

nation in whose midst he dwells ... but he speaks it always as an alien.”²⁴⁰ He excoriated the “cultured Jew,” who has “taken the most inducible pains to strip off all obvious tokens of his lower co-religionists”²⁴¹ and wrested control of music from Germans. The final anti-Semitic campaign levied against Mahler began 1 January 1907, in the wake of several failures at the Court Opera. This time however, the criticism came from almost all Viennese papers including the liberal *Neue Freie Presse* ²⁴² along with the familiar trope of “Mahler the Jew, driving away the best singers.”²⁴³ Mahler’s emigration to New York City freed him from the virulent criticism he had been receiving in Vienna, and he received a standing ovation at a performance in New York on 1 January 1908.²⁴⁴ Repeated, virulent attacks against Mahler indicate the depth of the popular cultural rejection of liberal nationalism along with the acceptance of an ethnically exclusive anti-Semitic German nationalism, which could not countenance Jewishness in any form.

Stefan Zweig’s reaction to his crisis of identity was an attempt to transcend the national, thereby escaping a reality he refused to accept. Claudio Magris understands Zweig as exemplifying “a vague and imprecise cosmopolitanism, an inspiration to universality often drowning in rhetoric and

²⁴⁰ Richard Wagner, *Judaism in Music and other Essays*, trans. W. Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 84.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁴² Fischer, *Gustav Mahler*, 531-32.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 536.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 573.

dilettantism.”²⁴⁵ A prolific world traveler, he was satirized by Karl Kraus in 1913 as a man who “is to be found today in Canada, tomorrow in Mariazell ... at home among crowds of friends in Paris, Prague, Brussels, Rome, Komotau, Madrid or New York.”²⁴⁶ In part, Zweig’s cosmopolitanism can be understood as corollary to his upbringing as part of the “Jewish bourgeoisie of the first rank.”²⁴⁷ Oliver Matuschek states that Zweig’s bourgeois upbringing had little emphasis on religion at all, with family testimony and documentary evidence of communal participation in religious tradition completely absent.²⁴⁸ Instead of encouraging participation in religious activities, his parents sponsored the young Zweig’s travels to France after passing his *Matura* in 1899,²⁴⁹ Italy in 1903, and elsewhere, “so gradually becoming a European.”²⁵⁰ Undeniable literary talent also provided Zweig with a rapid rise, as he published his first book *Silberne Saiten* in 1901 and received generally positive reviews.²⁵¹ Still, he noted that his social opportunities in Vienna were “tied to [his] surroundings,” associating mostly with “the same Jewish bourgeois class as [himself]; in the constricted city.”²⁵² This was to mark an increasing realization of the fragility of his identity despite not facing the same overt anti-Semitism as others.

²⁴⁵ Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 200.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Oliver Matuschek, *Three Lives: A Biography of Stefan Zweig*, trans. Allen Blunden (London: Pushkin Press, 2011), 30.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Donald A. Prater, *European of Yesterday: a Biography of Stefan Zweig* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 28.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Matuschek, *Three Lives: A Biography of Stefan Zweig*, 52-53.

²⁵² Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 92.

Zweig's early success led him to the *Neue Freie Presse*, then under the editorship of Theodor Herzl.²⁵³ He wrote of his first impression of Herzl, "unwittingly I realized the ironic witticism 'the King of Zion' had some truth in it."²⁵⁴ His great respect for the man whose approval was "as if Napoleon had pinned the Knight's Cross of the Legion of Honour upon a young sergeant," did not extend to his Zionist politics.²⁵⁵ Indeed, he wrote of Herzl's followers, "the quarrelling and dogmatic spirit, the constant opposition, the lack of honest, hearty subordination in this circle, alienated me from the movement which I had only approached out of curiosity."²⁵⁶

Zweig constantly sought to broaden his worldview beyond the Viennese milieu. In comparing Berlin and Vienna Zweig noted, "I found myself in a circle where actual poverty existed, with torn clothing and worn-out shoes, a sphere which I have never touched in Vienna. I sat at the same table with heavy drinkers, homosexuals, morphine addicts."²⁵⁷ Unlike Herzl whom Zweig thought "looked regal,"²⁵⁸ he broke with the upper crust by mixing with 'bad' society.²⁵⁹ He remarked in the preface of his autobiography *The World of Yesterday*, "I know of no pre-eminence that I can claim, in the midst of the multitude, except this: that as an Austrian, a Jew, an author, a humanist, and a pacifist, I have always

²⁵³ Matuschek, *Three Lives: A Biography of Stefan Zweig*, 53.

²⁵⁴ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 88.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁵⁹ Matuschek, *Three Lives: A Biography of Stefan Zweig*, 55.

stood at the exact point where these earthquakes were the most violent.”²⁶⁰ It was his cosmopolitan identity that demonstrates that Zweig was the product of a Vienna he understood as, “a synthesis of all Western cultures ... [n]owhere was it easier to be a European.”²⁶¹ He considered his composite identity a product of and native to Vienna’s diversity. This was shattered after Hitler’s rise in Germany as he was “forced to leave [Vienna] like a criminal” in 1934, moving first to Bath in England, then to New York City in 1940, and finally to Petrópolis, a German colony in Brazil, in 1942.²⁶² Just prior to his suicide in 1942, Zweig would remark about his rootless identity, “and so I belong nowhere, and everywhere am a stranger, a guest at best.”²⁶³ The varied intellectual responses to individual crises of identity reveal the depth of fragmentation and the social uprooting of many otherwise assimilated Jews.

Reconstructing Identity in Post-Liberal Politics: Internal Discord, External Rejection

The collapse of Viennese liberal dominance during the 1880s and its replacement with anti-capitalist, anti-liberal, and anti-Semitic mass movements was a serious shock to the established Jewish community. While individual responses may offer insight into the personal ramifications of the collapse of Austro-Jewish identity, communal responses highlight the collective reaction, or lack thereof. The main conflict within the Viennese Jewish community occurred

²⁶⁰ Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 5.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 328-30.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

along the lines of assimilation or nationalism. The assimilatory approach of the Jews' representative body in Vienna, the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (IKG), came increasingly under threat from socialist, nationalist, and Zionist movements, each offering alternatives to the discredited liberal leadership. The IKG and its politics would therefore come to embody this conflict within the Jewish community, representing the variegated political reactions and demonstrating the identity dislocation generated by the shattering of the liberal order.

The IKG was formed in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution, receiving a permanent constitution in 1867. Charged with administering all Jewish religious and cultural affairs, it was "a microcosm of Jewish life in Vienna."²⁶⁴ The IKG was itself structured to provide greater influence to the wealthy liberal elite, dividing its electorate based on four classes, with a minimum payment of 20 *kronen* in 1900.²⁶⁵ This tax floor was double the amount required for enfranchisement in general elections since the 1882-1885 electoral reforms. As a result, the wealthiest 600-1000 members of the IKG controlled one third of the seats and ensured their domination and participation by the same token.²⁶⁶ While membership and taxation were mandatory, many wealthier, non-practicing Jews did not participate in communal affairs but instead "grumbled about the amount

²⁶⁴ Walter R. Weitzmann, "The Politics of the Viennese Jewish Community, 1890-1914," in *Jews, Antisemitism, and Culture in Vienna*, ed. Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak, and Gerhard Botz (London; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 122.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

they had to pay and lacked sufficient interest to vote.”²⁶⁷ A restricted electorate also silenced many members of the IKG as most orthodox or Galician members either could not afford to be part of the 11,000 Jews, *i.e.* 10% of the Jewish community, who qualified to vote in 1893, or they were reluctant based on religious differences.²⁶⁸ For the IKG, “a ‘western’, *i.e.* Viennese, lifestyle was expected; *shtetl* ways in business or religion [were] openly discouraged”²⁶⁹ and enforced through the exclusion of those not considered politically mature enough.

The leadership of the IKG was formed out of the most assimilated and respectable members, who “wore proper clothes, were impeccably groomed, spoke German with a Viennese lilt and grace ... often devoted as much or more time to municipal affairs as to Austrian liberal politics.”²⁷⁰ The duplication of liberal structures in the IKG served as an affirmation of “corporate/class privileges against the Jewish lower classes and against the more orthodox factions within the Jewish rabbinate.”²⁷¹ The dominance of the acculturated and liberal elite was the largest impediment to the broadening of the IKG’s activism against growing anti-Semitism. However, the 1883 election of Rabbi Josef Samuel Bloch to the *Reichsrat* challenged the IKG’s position on anti-Semitism.²⁷² Most

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 123.

²⁶⁸ Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, 79.

²⁶⁹ Weitzmann, “The Politics of the Viennese Jewish Community, 1890-1914,” 125.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 126.

²⁷¹ Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, 76-77.

²⁷² Weitzmann, “The Politics of the Viennese Jewish Community, 1890-1914,” 127.

famously, Bloch challenged Father August Rohling, who claimed the Talmud denigrated Christians, to read and correctly translate one page in exchange for 3,000 *gulden*, which Rohling declined. Eventually, Rohling was dismissed from his professorship as a result of the scandal.²⁷³

Despite its mandate to represent all Viennese Jews, the IKG was decidedly a liberal and bourgeois institution favouring assimilation to the Viennese lifestyle. Fundamental divisions in the IKG led Sigmund Mayer, a Jewish textile merchant, to complain in 1898 about the institution's "surfeit of *Gemüthlichkeit* [a spirit of friendliness] and a corresponding lack of vigour."²⁷⁴ Political fragmentation was also compounded by the increasing diversity of economic and social backgrounds within the community, as immigrants from Galicia, Hungary, Bohemia and Moravia displaced the dominance of the entrenched elite.²⁷⁵ Dr. Alfred Stern, a staunch assimilationist and IKG board member from 1888 to 1918, tried to downplay the feuds over the tax and suffrage system, amongst others, as individual issues not symptomatic of larger communal problems.²⁷⁶ As a result of its assimilationist attitude, the IKG was largely silent in defending Jewish rights, such that in one event a school ordinance to segregate Jews and gentiles went unopposed as the IKG representative chose not to attend.²⁷⁷ When news of a series of pogroms arrived from Russia in 1905 and 1906 and Karl Lueger made a

²⁷³ Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 78-79.

²⁷⁴ Weitzmann, "The Politics of the Viennese Jewish Community, 1890-1914," 130.

²⁷⁵ Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, 79.

²⁷⁶ Weitzmann, "The Politics of the Viennese Jewish Community, 1890-1914," 137.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 135.

speech implying the same fate should occur if Jews remain supportive of the Social Democrats, the IKG condemned it. Still, Lueger responded by calling for a boycott of Jewish shops,²⁷⁸ demonstrating the weakness of the IKG's ability to stand up for the Jewish community. The die was cast under old guard liberals like Stern, who, in refusing to endorse protests against anti-Semitism, cast the IKG as an unresponsive and unrepresentative organization controlled by a dissociated, assimilated, and timid elite.

The Social Democrats proposed a second route, external to the Jewish community, towards achieving complete assimilation. However, they continuously denied Jewish nationalist aspirations since ignoring them in an 1899 federalization proposition.²⁷⁹ As a Marxist party, the Social Democrats did not participate in Jewish communal politics and attacked "philo-semitism, liberal ideals and 'Jewish' interests," despite their largely Jewish leadership.²⁸⁰ They were in turn faced with perennial accusations of being a *Judenschutztruppe*, or a Jewish protection force, by their competition.²⁸¹ Furthermore, in assuming the inevitable disintegration of Jewish collectivity in the 1890s, Marxist theory led Social Democrats to argue against any separate Jewish socialist organization that might exacerbate racial and religious conflict between Jews and Gentiles. The assimilationist internationalism advocated by its leaders, Victor Adler and Paul

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 137.

²⁷⁹ Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 125.

²⁸⁰ Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: the Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (Rutherford N.J: Associated University Presses, 1982), 143.

²⁸¹ Robert S. Wistrich, "Social Democracy, Antisemitism and the Jews of Vienna," in *Jews, Antisemitism, and Culture in Vienna*, ed. Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak, and Gerhard Botz (New York: Routledge, 1987), 111.

Singer, both Jews, would come to predominate in the years before 1914.²⁸² Consequently, Jewish socialists would desperately avoid anything that might be considered Jewish.²⁸³ While universal suffrage in 1907 provided the opportunity to develop its Jewish constituency, by opposing Zionism and discouraging middle-class involvement, the question of enfranchisement divided many Jews between their affinities.²⁸⁴ However, the Social Democrats were a refuge for Jews willing to forgo Jewish identity for assimilation and willing to endure the self-effacing anti-Semitic invective increasingly popular in the movement.

Rising anti-Semitism and the discrediting of liberalism in the 1880s left its impression on a generation of students, particularly at the University of Vienna. Whereas national movements were guaranteed equal rights, including national and linguistic rights, by the 1867 constitution, Jews were not included and only considered a *volk* by the end of the 19th century.²⁸⁵ August Rohling's *Der Talmudjude*, published in 1871 and selling over 200,000 copies in Vienna by 1883, imprinted popular anti-Semitic canards in the public discourse.²⁸⁶ In response, two student organizations coalesced around two poles: Jewish and German nationalism. In particular, two alumni would come to shape post-liberal Jewish identity: Nathan Birnbaum and Theodor Herzl. While the majority of Jewish students would cling to remnants of their German identities like Herzl, rejection

²⁸² Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: the Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary*, 143.

²⁸³ Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 125.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 190.

²⁸⁶ Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 78.

from nationalist circles impelled the formation of Jewish, though otherwise identical, associations such as Birnbaum's Kadimah. The experiences of students at the University of Vienna would lay the foundations for emergent Zionist movements.

In 1883, a group of mostly Galician Jews formed the first Jewish student association, named Kadimah, in response to anti-Semitism, imitating the myriad of nationalist associations around them. Soon after, they released a statement to their *Stammesgenossen* (ethnic comrades) with the goal of "the regeneration of the Jewish people."²⁸⁷ However, the Viennese Jewish bourgeoisie preferred the German Liberal Students Association, which despite increasing Jewish membership and a corresponding decrease in Gentile membership, still encouraged integration with German culture.²⁸⁸ Both groups engaged in honour duels against German groups to protest anti-Semitism and receive satisfaction, becoming proficient enough by 1896 to impel the *Burschenschaften* (student fraternities) to resolve in the *Waidhofer Resolution*, "since any Jew cannot be insulted, he can therefore not ask for satisfaction."²⁸⁹

Nathan Birnbaum, the Viennese son of Galician immigrants and one of Kadimah's founders, contributed much to its ideals. *Megillah*, the group's handwritten publication, contained parodies of assimilationist Jews and notable anti-Semites, as well as nationalist poetry published under Birnbaum's Hebrew

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 80.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 190.

name Nahum ben Menachem.²⁹⁰ By the mid-1880s he was the leader and chief ideologue of the group. In 1884, Birnbaum published an essay titled *Die Assimilationssucht* in which he centers the suffering of Jews in the European context of the inevitable failure of assimilation.²⁹¹ Birnbaum considered the adoption of foreign culture as unhealthy for the survival of any nation but considered it a “specifically Jewish affliction ... a variety of illness that no other people carries more, and the most acute example that can be found.”²⁹² In the 1890s Birnbaum had established himself as the pre-eminent figure in Viennese Zionism, publishing the newspaper *Selbst-Emancipation*, establishing the term Zionism in political discourse, and linking disparate groups like *Hovevei Zion* in Bulgaria and Maccabee around central Europe with common ideals.²⁹³ However, Birnbaum’s cultural nationalism would increasingly be displaced by the territorialized variety emerging at the same time.

Theodor Herzl’s emergence in Zionist discourse in 1896 marks a profound shift from Birnbaum’s cultural nationalism to Herzl’s territorialized nationalism. There was clear tension between the two, seen in Herzl’s diary: “Birnbaum is unmistakably jealous of me ... I hear that he had already turned away from Zionism and gone over to Socialism, when my appearance led him back again to

²⁹⁰ Jess Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish modernity: architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 30.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 67.

Zion.”²⁹⁴ The rejection of assimilation espoused by Birnbaum conflicted directly with Herzl’s bourgeois admiration for the German aristocracy. Herzl wrote in his diary on 5 July 1895, “In point of fact, if there is one thing I should like to be, it is a member of the old Prussian nobility.”²⁹⁵ This fascination with German nationalism and culture is also traceable to his University involvement in *Burschenschaft Albia*. These popular clubs, known for academic pursuits as well as more engaging activities such as drinking and dueling, were expressions of a budding Austro-German nationalism.²⁹⁶ Furthermore, Herzl recognized the imposition of historical and social forces on the Jews, stating “We are what they have made us to be in the ghettos,”²⁹⁷ diverging from Birnbaum’s contention that assimilation was destructive from the start. Herzl would, in 1897, successfully organize the first World Zionist Congress in Basel, though it would be characterized by its narrow representation of the plethora of Zionist views.²⁹⁸ This finalized Birnbaum’s disaffection with Zionism.²⁹⁹

These two seminal Zionist thinkers are demonstrative, in part, of the divergent thinking occurring within the Zionist movement even in its infancy. Despite similar life experiences — they were both Jews in Vienna who were educated in law at the University and graduated within a few years of each other

²⁹⁴ Theodor Herzl, *Diaries*, ed. Marvin Lowenthal, trans. Marvin Lowenthal (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1962), 102.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁹⁶ Berkley, *Vienna and its Jews : the Tragedy of Success : 1880s-1980s*, 72-73.

²⁹⁷ Theodor Herzl, *The Jews' State: a critical English translation translated and with an introduction by Hank Overberg.*, ed. Hank Overberg (New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc, 1997), 140-41.

²⁹⁸ Heiko Haumann, *The First Zionist Congress in 1897 – Causes, Significance, Topicality* (Basel: Karger, 1997), 10-11.

²⁹⁹ Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish modernity: architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy*, 92.

– their ideological differences highlight how “both were products of fin de siècle Vienna and experienced acutely the alienation produced by the deflation of the liberal promise.”³⁰⁰ While the international efforts of the Zionist movement were stymied in their implementation until after 1918, the political discourse surrounding Zionism was thrust onto the main stage as a direct result of the failure of Jewish liberal identity and events surrounding it in Vienna.

Since settlement in Palestine progressed relatively slowly until after the First World War, the political energies of Jewish nationalist groups within Vienna were expended in attempting to wrest control of the IKG from its liberal elite and establish national recognition in domestic politics. The *Österreichisch-Israelitische Union* (OIU) was founded in 1886 by Joseph Bloch and differed from other community organizations in that it had a political outlook from its inception.³⁰¹ Rising from broad dissatisfaction surrounding the responses of the IKG to anti-Semitism, the OIU declared its goals as “active defense against anti-Semitism and fostering of Jewish identity and pride” with a focus on ethnic identity.³⁰² This was centered on understanding Jews as a “*Stamm* [tribe or ethnicity] with a distinct culture and heritage” in stark contrast with liberal nationalism.³⁰³ The OIU emerged as an effective political pressure group in the 1890s and into the new century, securing a majority on the IKG governing board

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 72.

³⁰¹ Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 189.

³⁰² Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 33-34.

³⁰³ Ibid., 34.

by 1889.³⁰⁴ Notably, in 1906 it organized a joint nationalist-Zionist campaign that forced Theodor von Taussig, director of the *Boden-Creditanstalt* bank and IKG board member, out of his community positions for extending loans to the Tsarist government at the height of Russia's wave of pogroms.³⁰⁵ Bloch also founded a newspaper in 1884, the *Österreicher Wochenschrift*, taking up political issues generally ignored by mainstream Jewish media. It also promoted nationalism based on "non-territorial, personal-national sovereignty," a concept developed by Austrian Social Democrats but consistently denied to Jews.³⁰⁶

While the brand of cultural national identity espoused by Bloch was able to establish itself as an opponent to the liberal dominated IKG, the Zionists were largely prevented from participating until after 1914 through the IKG's exclusionary use of undemocratic elections and internal disputes. With Herzl's death in 1904, the World Zionist organization moved its headquarters to Cologne. This left the Viennese movement to be taken over by more radical *Landespolitik* students, who favoured domestic national issues.³⁰⁷ These radicals combined domestic agitation for national recognition in Austrian politics and community matters with a commitment to work in Palestine.³⁰⁸ Feuds between peripheral Zionist branches and the center in Vienna also peaked between 1902 and 1907 over unresolved ideological issues such as a central organizational

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 189.

³⁰⁶ Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 29.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 47.

³⁰⁸ Weitzmann, "The Politics of the Viennese Jewish Community, 1890-1914," 141.

authority and the importance of *Landespolitik* versus Palestine-related activity, as Galician and Bukovinan Zionists demanded autonomy from the Viennese center.³⁰⁹ IKG leaders such as Alfred Stern and Sigmund Mayer saw the agitation and organizational feuds as radicalism, which aided Lueger's Christian Socials. However, the Zionists were ideologically committed to transforming the *Kultusgemeinde* (Cultural Association) into a *Volksgemeinde* (National Association), the "creator and servant of a revitalized national Jewish existence."³¹⁰ Organizations using the anti-liberal "politics in a new key" forged a mass movement that tried to escape the failures of liberalism.³¹¹ Therefore, the Jewish nation defined in Viennese Zionism transcended religious, class and geographic divisions, under which internal debate could occur. This identity proved durable but was unable to capture growing dissent pre-1914, as its supporters were too poor and internally divided to defeat the established IKG leadership.³¹² The rise of Zionist politics at the time aggravated divides in an increasingly heterogeneous population, stratified along lines of wealth, belief, and class.

Conclusion: A Community Divided

The failure of liberalism proved deleterious for the Jews of Vienna. Many considered themselves wholly integrated into Viennese society, having accepted the promises of liberalism in the years after 1848. Instead, they faced rejection

³⁰⁹ Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 47.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

³¹¹ Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 116-7.

³¹² Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 145.

from their compatriots and social isolation. The rise of radical, anti-Semitic politics in the 1880s marked the collapse of the liberal order and its promises. Still, liberal remnants persisted in the Jewish community, assailed by anti-liberal, anti-assimilationist movements. The resulting crisis of identity was central to the lives of the city's vibrant Jewish intelligentsia, affecting their personal and private lives and shaping their reactions to its effects. Many experienced a deep sense of alienation as they lost the grounding by which they defined their world; many failed to recover it entirely. Finally, increasing heterogeneity exacerbated divides along wealth, class, and religious lines. Nationalist and assimilationist movements born out of the failure of liberalism provided alternatives for escaping the alienation increasingly felt during the fin-de-siècle. Finally, while Zionism would only prove attractive on a global scale in the aftermath of the Holocaust, its origins as a movement are inextricably linked to Viennese society, its Jews, and their experiences during the fin-de-siècle.

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