THE UNITED STATES and ISRAEL:

CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS of the SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

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Submitted to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of Amherst College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts with honors. Faculty Advisor: Jan Dizard

4 16 2007
Israel was not created in order to disappear - Israel will endure and flourish. It is the child of hope and home of the brave. It can neither be broken by adversity nor demoralized by success. It carries the shield of democracy and it honors the sword of freedom.

-President John F. Kennedy
Cultural Foundations of the Special Relationship

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INTRODUCTION:

THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

THE LOBBY

In March 2006, John J. Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen M. Walt of Harvard University published *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* on Harvard's Kennedy School of Government webpage. It was submitted as a digital “working paper” on March 13, 2006, and on March 23 was run in print by the *London Review of Books*. In the piece Mearsheimer and Walt contend that American foreign policy in the Middle East “is due almost entirely...to the activities of the ‘Israel Lobby.’” The Israel Lobby has managed to “skew” and “divert” U.S. foreign policy away from its own national interest while simultaneously “convincing” America that U.S. and Israeli interests are identical. “The Lobby,” as they call it, finds its constituent “core” in the mass of “American Jews who make a significant effort in their daily lives to bend U.S. foreign policy so that it advances Israel's interests” but can be more broadly understood as a “loose coalition of individuals and organizations who actively work to shape U.S.

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foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction.” The Lobby was the “main driving force behind” the American-led Operation Iraqi Freedom; “in its absence we probably would not have a war.”

Dispelling popular misconceptions, Mearsheimer and Walt inform us that “some Americans believe that this was a ‘war for oil,’ but there is hardly any direct evidence to support this claim. Instead, the war was motivated in a good part by a desire to make Israel more secure.” They allege that pro-Israel forces have long attempted to bring the U.S. military into the Middle East so that it may help protect Israel. Our entrance into Iraq “was a dramatic departure from previous U.S. policy, and the Lobby and Israel were critical driving forces behind this shift.”

The Lobby deploys many tactics in pushing the United States into a defensive posture towards Israel. On Capitol Hill, “the bottom line is that AIPAC, which is a de facto agent for foreign government, has a stranglehold on the U.S. Congress” and its success is due “to its ability to reward legislators and congres-

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4 AIPAC stands for the American Israel Political Affairs Committee. AIPAC proudly makes their clout clear on their webpage, which cites a New York Times article that describes AIPAC as “the most important organization affecting America’s relationship with Israel.” "Aipac - About Aipac," http://www.aipac.org/default.htm. A 1997 Fortune Magazine survey of lobbying power ranked AIPAC as the second most influential lobby in Washington. In 1999 and 2001, the same Fortune survey found AIPAC to be the fourth most influential in lobbying organization, after the Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons (AARP), the National Rifle Association (NRA), and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). "National Rifle Association Ranked No. 1 on Fortune Power 25 List," Business Wire May 14, 2001. The Fortune studies were conducted by interviewing nearly 2,200 insiders, including members of Congress, their staffs, and senior White House officials, to name their “mightiest” lobbying groups Jeffrey Birnbaum of Fortune writes that AIPAC owes its high rankings to its substantial campaign contributions. Jeffrey H. Birnbaum, "Washington's Power 25," Fortune December 8, 1997. Though not as comprehensive as
sional candidates who support its agenda and to punish those who challenge it.”

The Lobby also maintains “significant leverage” over the Whitehouse, a power which derives “from the influence Jewish voters have on presidential elections.”

Jewish voters have high turn-out rates and are concentrated in key states like California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania. And despite their small numbers, Jews make large campaign donations to both parties.

Perhaps the most pernicious tactic of the Lobby is through “repeating myths about Israel and its founding” its ability “to prevent critical commentary” from reaching the American debate. The Lobby accomplishes this feat in four ways. First, the Lobby controls public dialogue by “manipulating the media” through the plethora of pro-Israeli commentators who “zealously defend Israel” in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Washington Times, Commentary, the New Republic, and the Weekly Standard. The Lobby also censures news outlets perceived to be unfavorable to Israel like CNN and NPR by bombarding them with letter writing campaigns and demonstrations.

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the Fortune polls, in 2005 the National Journal interviewed 73 policy-makers about which two interest groups “wield the most clout on Capitol Hill.” AIPAC received 13 votes, half as many as the NRA. Peter Bell Richard E. Cohen, "Congressional Insiders Poll," National Journal 37, no. 10 (March 5, 2005).

Howard Dean, they claim, was denied candidacy because he espoused an “even-handed role” in the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, many commentators believe the “Dean Scream,” which received considerable criticism, led to his downfall. Howard Kurtz, "Reporters Shift Gears on the Dean Bus," Washington Post January 23, 2004.

Mearsheimer and Walt cite the memoirs of former New York Times executive editor Max Frankel: “I was much more deeply devoted to Israel than I dared to assert…Fortified by my knowledge of Israel and my friendships there, I myself wrote most of our Middle East commentaries. As more Arab than Jewish readers recognized, I wrote them from a pro-Israel perspective.”
Second, the Lobby’s pro-Israel forces have established “a commanding presence” at virtually every U.S. think tank such as the American Enterprise Institute, the Center for Security Policy, the Foreign Policy Research Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs. The last of the bipartisan think-tanks, the Brookings Institution, now conducts its research through the Saban Center for Middle East Studies under the oversight of the “ubiquitous” Martin Indyk.

Third, the Lobby aims at “policing academia” by bringing Israeli speakers to U.S. colleges and educating young advocates for Israel. In addition, the Lobby “monitors what professors write and teach,” “blacklists and intimidates scholars”, and “directs their fire” against the schools that hire them. Perhaps “most disturbing” is the attempt by Jewish groups to push Congress to deny Federal funding to universities shown to exert an anti-Israel bias.

Fourth, one of the Lobby’s “most powerful weapons” is its invocation of “the great silencer” – the charge of anti-Semitism; “pro-Israel forces, when pressed to go beyond assertion, claim that there is a ‘new anti-Semitism’, which they equate with criticism of Israel. In other words criticize Israeli policy and you are by definition an anti-Semite.”

The ability of the Lobby to influence Congress, the Executive, think tanks, the media, academia, and critical commentary has “convinced” Americans
of two things. First, Americans have been led to believe that Israel is a strategic ally and asset to the United States. Though Mearsheimer and Walt agree that Israel may have been a strategic asset during the Cold War, it has since become a “strategic burden” and a “liability in the war on terror and the broader effort to deal with rogue states.” Israel’s strategic value should also be questioned because it “does not act like a loyal ally” by reneging on promises like the discontinuation of “targeted assassinations,” providing sensitive U.S. military technology to potential U.S. rivals to China, and conducting “the most aggressive espionage operation against the U.S. of any ally.”

The second belief of which the Lobby has convinced Americans is that Israel has a moral claim to U.S. support. This moral case has four premises. First, Israel is often portrayed as “weak and besieged, a Jewish David surrounded by a hostile Arab Goliath.” Second, Israel exists as “a fellow-democracy surrounded by hostile dictatorships.” Third, Americans are convinced that because “Jews suffered greatly from the despicable legacy of anti-Semitism,” Israel’s creation “was an appropriate response to a long record of crimes.” Fourth, Israel is portrayed “as a country that has sought peace at every turn and showed great restraint even when provoked.” Mearsheimer and Walt refute these moral cases by counter-arguing that “Israel was far from helpless even in its earliest year;” “there are many democracies around the world, but none receives the lavish

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Mearsheimer and Walt cite the U.S. State Department Inspector-General and the U.S. General Accounting Office.
support that Israel does,” “the creation of Israel involved additional crimes against a largely innocent third party: the Palestinians,” and “Israel's conduct is not morally distinguishable from the actions of its opponents.”

Predictably, upon its publication *The Israel Lobby* created a firestorm of debate. Advocates for Israel hollered anti-Semitism and conspiracy paranoia while critics of the state cheered the academic validation for what they had been saying all along. In the softer spoken circles, however, the little praise Mearsheimer and Walt did receive was hushed under a din of disapproval, and not just from “the Lobby.” Eric Alterman, who himself criticizes the “reflexively” pro-Israel media, writes:

> For authors whose work I have long admired…their paper has surprising weaknesses. Perhaps because they are relatively new to the topic, the authors treat the "pro-Israel" American Jewish community as virtually monolithic…Second, the authors offer up the lobby as virtually the only determinant of US Middle East policy, as if the oil states, oil companies and the vast wealth they represent count for bubkes. That's just silly. The power of oil to determine the course of US foreign policy, like most things, is not what it once was. But neither is it chopped liver.8

After exposing many of Mearsheimer and Walt's logical breaks and what he considers inadequate scholarship, long-time critic of Israel, Noam Chomsky, concludes:

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8 Alterman’s interlocution for AIPAC rests upon the fact that the uniformity of AIPAC was improperly conflated with the American Jewish population. Many commentators argue that AIPAC represents only a “sliver” of Jewish-American opinion, as evidenced by the increasing influence of a new lobbying group funded by George Soros. "Taming Leviathan," *The Economist* March 15, 2007; Eric Alterman, "Aipac's Complaint," *The Nation* (May 1, 2006).
I won’t run through the other arguments, but I don’t feel that they have much force, on examination. The thesis M&W propose does however have plenty of appeal. The reason, I think, is that it leaves the US government untouched on its high pinnacle of nobility, ‘Wilsonian idealism,’ etc., merely in the grip of an all-powerful force that it cannot escape. It’s rather like attributing the crimes of the past 60 years to ‘exaggerated Cold War illusions,’ etc. Convenient, but not too convincing. In either case.9

In a public debate about The Israel Lobby, Rashi Kalidi, the Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies and Director of the Middle East Institute at Columbia University, drew attention to the piece’s myopic scope:

There were a variety of reasons for this war, which in my view did not primarily include the Lobby…However, and I think this is extraordinarily important, the degree to which the public debate in this country has been shifted, insofar as our whole understanding of the Middle East, has a lot to do with the much broader definition, I would argue, of the Lobby…If we narrowly focus on foreign policy and do not

understand that we are talking about the broader environment in this
country and how we understand and mainly misunderstand the Mid-
dle-East, then unfortunately, I think it’s a little too narrow.\textsuperscript{10}

In his assessment of Mearsheimer and Walt’s piece, Khalidi is arguing for a
discursive shift, one in which the “Arab-Muslim narrative” is given equal credit
in the American debate.\textsuperscript{11} By narrowing too closely on foreign policy and not
uncovering the social climate which facilitates that policy, we are, as Khalidi
suggests, ignoring a much broader interpretation of America’s allegiance to
Israel.

\textbf{PUBLIC OPINION}

Conspiracy theories aside, foreign policy is not created independently from the
will of the people. It is not that Americans directly create US foreign policy, but
they do circumscribe its limits. It has been argued that public opinion has a
constricrive effect on the creation of foreign policy. Valdimer Orlando Key, Jr.
proposed that public opinion should be envisioned as a system of “dikes” which
channel the flow of public policy. It is, as Gabriel Almond puts it, that which
sets the “permissive limits” by which the elite can formulate policy. James
Rosenau likens this limiting effect to a “slumbering giant,” which if disturbed

\textsuperscript{10} ------, “Debate: The Israel Lobby: Does It Have Too Much Influence on Us Foreign Policy?.”
\textsuperscript{11} Abraham Foxman, chair of the Anti-Defamation League, used this term. “Mearsheimer and Walt Cross the
Line from the Academy to Advocacy, Blaming Israel and Its Supporters on an American Muslim Platform,” in
\textit{Israel/Middle-East} (Anti-Defamation League (adl.org), 2006).
will awaken and exert influence through the direct means of elections. Powlick and Katz dub this potentiality the “dog that could bark.”

Empirical evidence has validated these metaphorical forces. There exists an academic consensus that that “public policy opinion does not set policy but is capable of setting the range or limits of policy” and therefore “constrains policymaking by limiting policy options.” There is ample evidence to support the claim that public opinion, misguided or not, is at least “consequential” in the setting of foreign policy agenda, and foreign policy must be implemented under the solicitude of “anticipated future opinion.” Elections exist as the “critical mechanism” linking public opinion to elite behavior, and politicians are forced to act within the range of public sentiment or at least its level of “persuadibility.” George F. Kennan summarizes how social sentiment can burden the American diplomat:

13 Richard Sobel, The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy since Vietnam (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), 25. Justin Lewis withdraws from this consensus when it pertains to foreign policy on the grounds that research compiled since World War II shows what he perceives to be a slight disjunction between the public and elite attitudes towards policy, but he still does concede that public opinion “we might say permits but does not sanction or mandate” foreign policy. Justin Lewis, Constructing Public Opinion: How Political Elites Do What They Like and Why We Seem to Go Along with It. (New York: Columbia University, 2000), 144 (emphasis original).
15 Philip J. Powlick, "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus.", 52.
17 Philip J. Powlick, "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus.", 52.
The peculiar impediments that rest upon the United States government in the conduct of foreign policy are ones that flow partly from institutions, imbedded as those are in the revered and almost ancient constitution, but partly also from deeply-ingrained traditions, customs, and habits of thought – all those things that Tocqueville referred to as *les manières* and to which, incidentally, he attributed greater importance, as determinants of national behavior, than to institutions.18

It is true that Jews are disproportionately represented in the branches of social thought and debate-setting such as academia and the media; however, such a long-standing commitment to Israel without a formal alliance and the large amount of aid earmarked in its name cannot have a fifty-nine year history without the approval of the American public regardless of the influence of pro-Israel forces on the dissemination of misinformation. The Lobby, as it could be, operates within the larger American discourse on the Middle-East, one which has historically been oppositional to Arabs and sympathetic to Israelis. Though it has fomented it profoundly, the Lobby - even taken to the most extreme caricature - was not responsible for creating this discourse. The views of the Lobby simply coincide with the greater American conception of the Middle-East and of Arabs in general. Twenty years before the inception of AIPAC, what Mearsheimer and Walt consider the Lobby’s most exercised arm, Americans were profoundly supportive of the nascent Jewish state.19


19 In 1945, 81% of Americans supported Jews settling in Palestine; only 6% were against it; Gallup Poll #361, 12/5/1945. In 1946, 65% of Americans supported allowing 100,000 Jews enter Palestine. Gallup Poll
approval of foreign aid to Israel and legislative policy which favors it depends upon the particular mechanisms which act to form, shape, and apply public opinion to the implementation of foreign policy decision-making, and therefore to the American political relationship to Israel, a relationship many believe to be pervasive and unique enough to be called nothing else but “special.”

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

The term “special relationship” was first used by President Kennedy in 1962 when he assured Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir that “the United States has a special relationship with Israel in the Middle East, really comparable only to that which it has with Britain over a wide range of world affairs.” Since then, presidential rhetorical has repeatedly alluded to an ethereal, apolitical relationship between Israel and the United States. When Soviet premier told President Johnson, “I don’t understand you Americans backing Israel. There are 80 million

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#371, 5/14/1946. The political climate was supportive when in 1948, in less than eleven minutes after Israel established independence, the United States became the first country to grant de facto recognition to the nascent Jewish State. De facto recognition refers to the President’s informal approval of the new state. On January 31, 1949 official or de jure recognition was granted. The press release read, “On October 24, 1948, the President stated that when a permanent government was elected in Israel, it would promptly be given de jure recognition. Elections for such a government were held on January 25th. The votes have now been counted, and this Government has been officially informed of the results. The United States Government is therefore pleased to extend de jure recognition to the Government of Israel as of this date.” "Press Release: The United States Grants Israel De Jure Recognition,” (Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, January 31, 1949). There are those, like Frank Manuel who argue that this recognition was an attempt to win Jewish votes for the 1948 election, and there are those, like Zvi Ganin, who argue domestic political considerations affected the timing but not the decision itself. Regardless of the causation, this decision profoundly affected the next 58 years of American foreign policy. Douglas Little, "Gideon's Band: America and the Middle East since 1945,” *Diplomatic History* 18 (1994), 522.
Arabs and only 3 million Israelis. It does not make sense. Why do it?” Johnson proudly replied, “Because it is right.” Both Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton have reiterated the “special relationship” terminology, and Ronald Reagan spoke of an “ironclad bond” that, according to George H.W. Bush, “transcends politics.” Most recently, George W. Bush at a press conference in the East Room of the White House met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to affirm “the deep and abiding ties between Israel and the United States.”

But how are we to understand the enduring reiteration of this transcendental bond? The term “special relationship” has been applied in other contexts by politicians and journalists to describe American connections to such varied countries as Britain, the Virgin Islands, Ireland, Germany, Liberia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, the Philippines, China, and Japan. The particular terminology, like

20 "Cover Story: American Jews and Israel," Time Magazine 1975, (emphasis added). President Nixon felt the same way: “The United States stands by its friends,” he said, and “Israel is one of its friends.” In 1977, President Jimmy Carter echoed Kennedy’s earlier sentiment: “We have a special relationship with Israel. It’s absolutely crucial that no one in our country or around the world ever doubt that our number one commitment in the Middle East is to protect the right of Israel to exist, to exist permanently, and to exist in peace.” According to President Bill Clinton, the integrity of the allegiance has made the “relationship between the United States a special – even on occasion a wonderful – relationship.” On November 19, 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell confirmed this relationship: “Since Israel’s establishment over 50 years ago, the United States has had an enduring, an ironclad commitment, to Israel’s security…This will never change.”

most political language, is deliberately vague yet eminently revealing if time is
taken to interpret it fully.

Though the particular term was first explicitly used by President Ken-

nedy, numerous scholars define the special relationship between the United
States and Israel differently, and subsequently find its political genesis at dif-
ferent points in history.22 Fortunately, Abraham Ben-Zvi of Tel Aviv University
argues that the point of conception for the special relationship is as inscrutable
as it is irrelevant, and that its existence should be conceptualized as one of many
potential relational paradigms. In this school of thought, the “special rela-
tionship” operates as a “symbolic construct that constitute[s] an integral part of a

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22 Douglas Little makes the claim based on recently declassified documents that Dwight Eisenhower and
John F. Kennedy – concerned over the long-term stabilit y of the Middle East – forged the beginnings of a
“special relationship.” Edward Tivnan believes the relationship began with Lyndon B. Johnson, who he
claims was ignorant about foreign affairs: “For Johnson, politics was a personal affair; it was about friends
and connections. And some of the Johnsons’ oldest and best friends were Jews and loyal supporters of
Israel.” William Quandt agrees with Tivnan’s dates but not his analysis. For him the “special relationship” was
the necessary outcome of the need to restrain Israel from using military force against President Nasser of
Egypt who had just blockaded the Strait of Tiran - “the stronger the stand of the United States and the
firmer its commitment…the more likely it was that Israel could be restrained.” Michelle Mart argues against
the political genesis of the special relationship, examining instead the “dramatic discursive transformation of
Jews and Israel in American popular culture and politics in the 1940’s and 1950’s from curious minorities to
kindred spirits.” Yaacov Bar-Siman Tov argues for a relationship timeline beginning with Nixon in Septem-
ber, 1970 when military cooperation in pursuit of common objectives in Jordan “proved the strategic
importance of Israel to U.S. global and regional interests and thereby turned the patron-client relationship
into a special one.” The Syrian backed PLO was threatening the sovereignty of King Hussein. Israel
confronted Syria, while the United States deterred the Soviet Union from involvement. And finally, Mitchell
Bard firmly believes the special relationship antedated the creation of Israel, given what John Adams wrote in
a letter to Thomas Jefferson: “I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize man than any other
psychological rather than an operational environment.” The *special relationship paradigm* “comprises the entire welter of domestic constraints regarding American-Israeli relations deriving from a sentimental and emotional set of attitudes towards Jerusalem.” The goals of the special relationship paradigm reflect a general goodwill towards Israel that exists both in and out of the Jewish community and is characterized by a persistent commitment to Israel’s existence, national security, and territorial integrity.23

The special relationship need not be seen as an objective truth but as only one of the many interrelated social constructs operating within the American-Israeli discourse. The special relationship paradigm operates largely as a symbolic framework in which perception supplants actuality, and usually unrelated bonds are forged through what William B. Quandt calls a “presumed congruence of values.” He explains:

> Americans can identify with Israel’s national style – the pioneering spirit, the commitment to western-style democracy, the ideals of individualism and freedom – in a way that has no parallel on the Arab side. Neither the ideal of the well-ordered Muslim community nor that of a modernizing autocracy evokes much sympathy among Americans. Consequently, a predisposition no doubt exists in American political culture that works to the advantage of the Israelis.24

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23 He distinguishes between the *special relationship paradigm* and the *national interest paradigm*, the latter “predicated upon purely geo-strategic perceptions of American interests in the Middle East.” The needs of the national interest paradigm include political and economic access to Arab oil, and historically, the need to increase American influence in the region at the expense of Soviet expansion. The special relationship and national interest paradigms operate simultaneously, one waxing while the other wanes depending upon domestic political considerations, cultural movements, and the global exigencies of the day. Abraham Ben-Zvi, *The United States and Israel: The Limits of a Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University, 1993), 14-16.

Even the most antiseptic treatments of the relationship between the United States and Israel cannot help but allude to the “national styles” which foster a socially subjective attachment between each state. Nadav Safran, the late director of Harvard’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies, writes:

Americans have also felt a strong sympathy for Israel as a democratic nation and a society imbued with the libertarian values and humanistic culture of the West. The United States has had to associate itself with and support many an authoritarian country and regime out of strategic necessity. But it could hardly fail to respond to calls for support and aid from a truly free small country and still maintain its claim to lead the Free World against the forces of tyranny. Israel evoked all the more sympathy on this score because it has been one of the rare working democracies among the scores of new nations that came into being since the end of World War II, and because its experience evoked echoes of America’s own experience. Like the United States, Israel is a nation of diverse immigrants who left inhospitable lands for new shores where they endeavored to build a new just and free society, and experimented in the process with new forms of human association. Also, the pioneering spirit that built Israel is reminiscent of America’s youthful days, and its drive and accomplishments in the economic, social, scientific, and military spheres have been strongly appreciated by an America dedicated to the cult of achievement and progress.25

Bernard Reich, former Secretary of Labor under President Clinton and currently a professor at the University of California, Berkeley’s School of Public Policy, offers a similar sentiment:

There is an underlying perception of Israel as the type of state (“like-image”), with a similarity of outlook and generally progressive in nature, which the United States would like to see exist worldwide. There is an element of cultural identity that views Israel as a “Western” state

in a sea of feudal, oriental states and as a perpetuator of the Judeo-Christian heritage. It is seen as a free, open, and democratic society – a “showplace of democracy” – pursuing peace. Israel is perceived as a brave, valiant, gallant, and young state, which provides a model of courage and tenacity. Its people are praised for their sacrifice, mettle, industriousness, dedication, determination, and spirit.26

To the extent that Jewish Americans have been able to advance their interests in Israel, that success is due to the general sympathy of their coalition partners and the public at large.27 It is not only Jews but also an American climate of opinion that allows for the influence of such organizations as the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The constriction of the foreign policy elite’s decision making is due to the existence and rearticulation of the sentimental ties that unify the two countries. In this vein, Mearsheimer and Walt, then, offer too superficial of an analysis. They advance a mono-causal critique of American-Israeli relations when a more inter-disciplinary and delicate approach is required to examine the over-determinant factors which foment the countries’ ties. Jewish Americans did not manipulate the United States into believing that Americans and Israelis are bound in a special relationship; instead, the special relationship is an organic

27 In 2004, when asked “In the Middle East Conflict, do you think the United States should take Israel’s side, take the Palestinians’ side, or not take either side?”, slightly more Americans favored taking Israel’s side than the did the foreign policy leaders. Benjamin Page Marshall Bouton, Robert Shapiro, Christopher Whitney, Catherine Hug, Jennie Taylor, "The Hall of Mirrors: Perceptions and Misperceptions in the Congressional Foreign Policy Process," in *The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations* (Chicago: October 1, 2004), 7.
development of American culture, a culture created by Jews and non-Jews alike.²⁸ Ruth R. Wisse writes in the *Wall Street Journal*:

> It would be a mistake to treat [Mearsheimer and Walt’s] article on the ‘Israel Lobby’ as an attack on Israel alone, or on its Jewish defenders, or on the organizations and individuals it singles out for condemnation. Its true target is the American public, which now supports Israel with higher levels of confidence than ever before.²⁹

Whether these high levels of public confidence constitute a special relationship is hard to prove, for the connection that the United States has with Israel is as much psychological as it is operational. Like any social construction, this peculiar relationship is real and fake, observable but unseen, true yet subjective. For American Jews it is affirmation of strength in the Diaspora; for Israelis it is a lifeline, to Palestinians it is a scourge; for skeptics it’s all about money; to Christians it’s all about faith. It exists as, what pre-eminent philosopher Simon Blackburn calls, an anti-realist phenomenon and the product of “our construction.” He writes the following: “Only those who perceive friendship as good will understand why we do so, and to them it can be explained why we do so by reminding them that it is good, or making them feel that it is so. The rest-aliens, outsiders, Martians—cannot be given the explanation.”

> “This,” Blackburn concludes, “is as it must be.”³⁰

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²⁸ Mearsheimer and Walt allude to the “special relationship” by arguing, “this situation has no equal in American political history.”
³⁰ Simon Blackburn, "How to Be an Ethical Anti-Realist,” in *Moral Discourse & Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches*
My essay is directed at those Martians. In Chapter 1, I examine the foundational myths in American culture and how Americans learned to see a piece of their own history in the state of Israel. Chapters 2 and 3 involve the entrance of Jews, and by extension Israelis, into mainstream America through assimilation and the secularization of religion which allowed terms like Judeo-Christian to bridge the historical divides between Christian America and Jews. In Chapter 4, I critically examine the role the Holocaust played in garnering American sympathy for the Jewish state. Chapter 5 is an exposition on the the perception of Israel as a strategic ally, a perception which allowed Americans to positively evaluate the state even in times of crisis. My intention is to recreate the birth of Israel as it existed in the American mind, pulling from sources as varied as State Department memos to editorial cartoons. By the end, the American relationship with Israel will appear more nuanced than *the Lobby*, sentimental to more than only Jews.
In the year 1893, a group of distinguished historians met at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. The gathering marked the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus’s voyage to the New World, and the convention was held to honor the seafaring legacy in the discovery of America. A dapper thirty-two year old Frederick Jackson Turner addressed the crowd, deciding to put forth his own, alternative hypothesis:

“American democracy,” Turner said, “was not carried in the Susan Con-stant to Virginia, nor in the Mayflower to Plymouth. It came out of the American forest, and it gained new strength each time it touched a new frontier.”

By keeping in touch with primitive conditions, the American West has been the American point of departure from other similar, continental, more urban oriented democracies. When poor social conditions in the Atlantic states were perceived to reach impenetrable crystallization, the vast frontier offered “a gate of escape” where individualism, economic equality, common man democracy, and freedom to rise reigned supreme. On these peripheral parts of society

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is where distinctly American characteristics were born. Turner credits the emergence of common traits in the American intellect to the cultural laboratory of frontier life:

That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and with all that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom - these are the traits of the frontier.2

Turner argued that the Westward expansion of the American frontier was both a geographic and symbolic movement away from the influence of Europe, and therefore to study the frontier “is to study the really American part of our history.”3

The mythic frontier mentality extant in the United States depends upon the belief of discovery and settlement. Though Native Americans had maintained claim to North America for millennia, it was Columbus who “discovered” it. The pioneer mentality necessitates a belief of settlement rights, rights which are sometimes god given, other times a result of one group’s sense of superiority, and sometimes a combination of both. Any story of conquest is inherently one of ethnocentrism, and in the case of the American pioneers, their success at the hands of a vast and more numerous enemy emboldened their claim to the

American West. For the few pioneers against a continent of enemies, the fear of being overwhelmed was undoubtedly great. Previous stories of imperial conquest aided by the vastness of oceans romanticized the native into an exotic species, but for Americans on the ground, separated no longer by oceans but by trickling streams, the threat of being slaughtered was very close and very real. Given the proximity of native and settler, it was no longer the native who was foreign or peripheral, but the settler who had overstepped his boundaries, an exile from civilization. That situation had to be changed:

How a profound tale of loss of cultural bearings was to be turned into a story of eternal gain, how that periphery was to be transformed into this heartland, how this chosen people was to occupy their chosen land and create a a true new England or new Jerusalem – this was the problem. None of this would be possible as long as a pagan people occupied what the Puritans in particular had envisioned as an uninhabited wilderness, *America Deserta*, a great emptiness in which they, the new Israelites, would construct a City of God. For the land to be emptied, its native inhabitants would have to be left in the condition in which the Puritans arrived. They would have to be transformed into exiles, their existence made peripheral to that of the Europeans, their lands turned into living exhibits of marginality.

For this ideology of displacement to thrive, a new narrative with a new lexicon was formed in the minds of the pioneers. In contrast to the Spanish conquistadors who, by definition, conquered, American pioneers considered their enterprise a matter of “settlement” not “invasion” and the move Westward one

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4 Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture* (University of Massachusetts, 1995), 21
of “expansion” and not “conquest.” In the context of Manifest Destiny, movement is inherently progress, a teleological fantasy of exploration. This movement followed a dual trajectory. First, for settlement not to be invasion, expansion not conquest, the land had to be envisioned as virgin and vacant. And, second, if that land was neither virgin nor vacant, then it must have been inhabited by a people who were unfit to occupy it. Michael Wigglesworth, in 1662, encapsulates in four lines this two and a half century long expansion.

\begin{quote}
A waste and howling wilderness
Where none inhabited
But hellish fiends, and brutish men
That devils worshipped.
\end{quote}

These stories have a way of sticking with us, even though they might be superficially unrecognizable. The pioneer and cowboys of yore still seep through our cultural imagination, assuming different shapes at different times. The early Twentieth Century saw a resurgence of the mythic frontier in lands outside the contiguous and saturated United States. Twentieth Century promoters breathed new life into an aging myth to expand our frontiers through imperialistic moves into the Pacific Rim. In the mid-twentieth century, President Kennedy referred to the “New Frontier” which was to be found in the urban and industrial world,

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item[5] Ibid., 21.
\item[6] Ibid., 19.
\end{itemize}
where men and their machines could pioneer a new society. Soon, scientific exploration would advance from technology to march into regions of the unknown and push us to the “frontiers of knowledge.” And when the lower stratosphere was pioneered by Lindberg and the *Spirit of St. Louis*, the Arctic and Antarctic pioneered by Peary and Byrd, researchers were left with no more lateral movement and nowhere to look but up. The latter Twentieth Century’s entrance into space revitalized the frontier myth once again, and an ancient vocabulary began to serve new needs:

> When promoters searched for an appropriate vocabulary to describe the new sphere of American domination, that is, they found a ready-made one in the tired but still functional traditions of the western. The connections between western ‘flight’ and aeronautic ‘flight’ had already been anticipated by dime novelists, some of whom found it easy enough to transform western cowboys into space cowboys, high-noon gunfights into celestial shootouts, and frontier expansion into the politics of space ownership on the high-frontier.9

Gene Rodenburry, creator of *Star Trek*, played into this mythopoeic impulse: he intended the original design of the series to be a “Wagon Train to the Stars,” and the tagline of the show poignantly refers to “space, the final frontier.”10

And though today the American public widely regards the frontierism of yore to be a more diverse and sordid story than is usually taught, myth routs reality in the battle for perseverance. New Western Historians, those who revisit

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9 Pfitzer, "The Only Good Alien Is a Dead Alien: Science Fiction and the Metaphysics of Indian-Hating on the High Frontier.", 52.
10 Ibid., 61.
the pioneering days with a critical eye and see it as more complex than originally thought, have at least come to partial terms that regardless of the value judgments placed on the story, the story itself unites the country in odd ways:

Packed full of nonsense and goofiness, jammed with nationalistic self-congratulation and toxic ethnocentrism, the image of the frontier is nonetheless universally recognized, and laden with positive associations. Whether or not it suits my preference, the concept works as a cultural glue – a mental and emotional fastener that, in some curious and unexpected ways, works to hold us together.”

Pioneerism has persevered as one of America’s national myths, defined as “a story with a symbolic meaning, made up of stereotyped incidents involving characters who are larger than life, whether they are heroes or villains.” Such myth making is inherently a distortion, though not a revision, of history. Myths become streamlined versions of actual events which neglect the intricate and multiple elements, what Robert C. Beckers calls the “thousand and one simpler facts which we do not for the moment care to use,” that go into the creation of history. Myths do not rewrite history, but they do negate its historicity, and current events become seen as past events, devoid of infinite intricacies, subsumed under a grander myth. The tendency towards mythogenesis operates as a filter through which we interpret the present in relation to our mythological past.

The pioneerism myth can be considered part of our “cultural tool kit,” one of the many frames through which Americans perceive, interpret, and orient themselves in relation to the world. Frames operate as “mental shortcuts” by which we make sense of the world, “pictures in our heads” or “vividly labeled storage boxes,” into which the efficient places new experiences, a process known as “indexing,” and moves on. When a new event invades our experience, we undergo an immanent search through our mental containers to find an old element which is familiar to the new element, and understand the new story as if it were an “exemplar” of that old element. Frames allow for a “symbolic contest” waged with metaphors, catch phrases, and other symbolic devices which act in tandem to support an “interpretative package” for making sense of events, a phenomenon best understood as a “conceptual scaffolding.” Such a scaffolding is built with the tools we already have access to, becoming erected because of existing ideologies and cultural currents, not for the creation of new ones. The most effective frames are therefore those which “resonate with cultural narration, that is with stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one’s cultural heritage.” Roger Schank summarizes this process of

interpreting and understanding new experiences succinctly: “understanding means finding a story you already know and saying, ‘Oh yeah, that one.’”

The perceptions of Israel from the 1940’s to the 1960’s resonated with the cultural heritage of the United States and, in the minds of Americans, Israel was able to be framed by and fit tightly within the pioneering myth. The explicit parallel between Israel’s national rejuvenation in the land of Canaan and the United States Manifest Destiny rests upon the idea that Palestine was land that nobody really wanted, whose nomadic inhabitants did nothing to benefit it or themselves. The belief that settlement and agriculture are the hallmarks of progress is reaffirmed in the American school system, and this national credo rings indelibly true: “We chose this land; we took it; we made it bear fruit.”

Following the dual trajectory our national pioneering myth takes, the new Israeli landscape was seen as either vacant, or if not, populated by individuals incapable of reaping its rewards, for it is only those with the bravery and cunning to harvest fruit from an unforgiving earth that shall be the ones to inherit it. The dispossession of the Native Americans has been accepted by most Americans, and this acceptance has so pervaded ordinary experience as to blend imperceptibly into our assumptions about what is true. The concept of homestead rights is part

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20 The set of assumptions about what is true comes in two forms, either in the form of traditions, which have been “taken for granted so that they seem an inevitable part of life,” or in the form of common sense, a “set of assumptions so unselfconscious as to seem a natural, transparent, undeniable part of the structure of
of the American condition, and as the dust of Palestine became the soil for Zion, Americans would learn it was part of Israel’s too.

*The Juggler*, the first American film shot in Israel, highlighted the beauty of the desolate landscape which the plucky Israeli pioneers were eagerly developing. *Variety* magazine noted in 1953 that the film was about “the pioneering of a new republic by a brave people...It is rather inspirational.”21 Leon Uris’s book and later movie, *Exodus*, explicitly referenced parts of Israel as parts of the United States and lauded Israel as it bustled to create a landscape, employing the frontier thesis to urban development as the Israelis built thriving cities in the desert: “The sound of the hammer, the music of the drill, the concrete mixer, the welding torch never stopped in Israel!” And Solomon observes in the 1959 film *Solomon and Sheba*, “Can you believe that only a few years ago this was all a desert...It is a joy to make the desert bloom.”22

The pioneerism of Israel especially in agricultural settlements was not simply a product of the imagination; it was a manifest reality on the ground. The other countries in historical Levant - Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and the *Fellah* of Palestine - were facing a barrage of soil erosion as years of neglect and unsustainable agriculture practices had ripped the red earth soil from Palestine and swept it away dirty-brown into the Mediterranean sea. In 1944, Walter Clay

22 Ibid., 171.
Lowdermilk, commissioned by the USDA to conduct a survey of Mediterranean
countries, described the soil conservation and agricultural bounty of the Zionists
to be sensational:

We were astonished to find about three hundred colonies defying great
hardships and applying the principles of co-operation and soil conser-
vation to the old Land of Israel.....here in one corner of the vast Near
East though, work is in progress to rebuild the fertility of the land in-
stead of condemning it by neglect to further destruction and decay…
The country is emerging from a backward low-yield agricultural econ-
omy, dependent chiefly on grains and olives and is evolving towards a
modern, scientifically directed and richly diversified economy with
fruits, vegetables, poultry and dairy products play an ever greater role.
The wooden plow is yielding to the tractor, the flail to the threshing
machine. Rural Palestine is becoming less and less like Trans-Jordan,
Syria and Iraq and more like Denmark, Holland, and parts of the
United States.23

The elite print press played their part to mythologize these concrete achieve-
ments. The first Prime Minister of Israel, Ben Gurion, who had three Time
magazine cover stories between 1948 and 1957, was described by journalists as a
modern Israeli pioneer known for his tough past, plain clothes, and ascetic
lifestyle. His retirement to a kibbutz in 1953 was a symbolic reiteration of the
pioneering story, “a constant reminder to the rest of the country, and presum-
ably the world, that this desert must be opened, and is being opened to develop-
ment.”24 The stories associated with the agricultural developments in Israel were
characterized more by spirit than by western technological innovation. In 1957,

23 Alon Tal, “To Make a Desert Bloom: Seeking Sustainability for the Israel Agricultural Adventure,” in The
Blaustein Institute for Desert Studies (Sdeh Boqer, IL: Ben Gurion University, 2005)., 7.
24 Mart, Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally., 59.
the editorial page of the *Washington Post* portrayed Israel’s accomplishments as a miraculous display of achievement and progress: “If ever a desert has been made to blossom like the rose, modern Israel it is.” The following year, editorialists for the *New York Times* reaffirmed and congratulated the pioneerism entrenched in the Israeli national creed, declaring Israeli success and determination as the outcome of the “unconquerable strength of a pioneer spirit welling up from two thousand years of tragic history.”

In the foundational years of Israel’s existence Americans viewed its kibbutz lifestyle as a nostalgic affirmation of their own founding. A land left barren and unused was undergoing massive terra-formation, construction, and large scale agricultural progress. Israel embodied the American frontier, perched on the borderland between savagery and safety, tilling, settling, and ultimately civilizing an uncharted land.

VICTORY CULTURE

The American push westward was largely a story of dispossession through war. “American exceptionalism” and “Manifest Destiny” allowed, even called for, a justification of the use of force. The American spirit is the story of righteous battles fought in the name of the American project, a myth of “regeneration

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through violence.”26 Every successive war was as much a story of creation as it was of destruction; we have been born in blood and baptized in battle. The pioneering mythos, the family in “A Little House on the Prairie,” cannot exist without its brothers - the cowboys stationed at the periphery and the cavalry poised ready to charge. The city on the highest hill cannot survive with divine light alone but only through an army, through heroes, through soldiers, and through the Eucharist of the dead.

Tom Engelhardt traces this national impulse, the pioneering spirit expressed through battle, which he deems “victory culture.” Until the latter part of the Twentieth Century, the post-Vietnam era, American history has been a success story, from our declaration of independence to the two total wars “to make the world safe for democracy.” American involvement in those wars is overwhelmingly a story of triumph, and more specifically, triumph in the name of grander struggle, so that even a national tragedy like the Civil War becomes the successful yet bloody effort “to save the union.” Largely forgotten, therefore, would be events like the War of 1812, “because there was no place in the story for a defeat that was not a birthing moment for the culture of triumph or for a war that tended well short of victory. The only acceptable defeats or last

stands would be those that were the end of the beginning for us and the beginning of the end for them.”

Until the latter 20th century Americans had never known defeat and very rarely known invasion. In addition to the war of 1812, there was Pancho Villa’s 1915 raid into New Mexico, the Alamo, the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, some landings in the Aleutian Islands, and some scattered balloon bombings on the West Coast, but these isolated events did not force Americans to account for an overall defeat in war. The frame of victory culture remained despite these anomalous events, events which did not cast doubt on the triumph of American might but only exposed the enemy’s “aberrant nature” and engrained their wanton slaughter of Americans “in the national memory as proof of the righteousness of subsequent acts of vengeance.”

The propensity to reconcile through amnesia and the demonization of those problematic parts of our past is dubbed by Frederich Nietzsche as the “monumental” creation of history, a method of remembering in which “many of the differences must be neglected, the individuality of the past forced into a general formula and all the sharp angles broken off for the sake of correspondence.” The resilience of the victory culture narrative derives from our “monumental” construction of history. The topography and boundaries of the

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28 Ibid.
United States have constantly fluctuated, and with it, the topography and boundaries of “victory culture” have changed. But the monumentalizing of American history allows for an uninterrupted narrative drive, for the deviant elements which could cast doubt upon the infallibility of victory culture are eschewed for mythological, monumental, and historical expedience. It is “this power to organize narrative boundaries without fear of contradiction [which] gave the war story its extraordinary simplifying and unifying presence.”

Victory culture, the culture of war - that unifying presence and that extraordinary simplicity – became our elixir and our salvation, and in the years directly following World War II and the de jure existence of the state of Israel, war culture had become just another part of the American way of life. A generation who had just returned victorious from abroad invigorated victory culture, heralding an age of cult like respect for the American armed services in real life as well as forms of cultural production. Between 1952 and 1953, for example, the Emmy award winning television series *Victory at Sea* sang songs of praises to the US navy. “For twenty-six Sundays last year,” wrote *Harper’s Magazine* editor Bernard DeVoto, “neither the telephone nor the doorbell was answered at my house between 3 and 3:30 p.m.”

A generation of adults whose children would become the baby boomers celebrated the military victory overseas, and hoped to see their progeny instilled with the same fighting virtue

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31 Ibid., 75.
as themselves. In 1954, for instance, 75% percent of Americans favored “requiring every able-bodied young man in this country when he reaches the age of 18, to spend one year in military training and then join the reserves.” Victory culture and the cult of the military shined in the years after World War II, compared to today when only 35% would favor mandatory service.32

The civilian military of Israel was sure to evoke the sympathy of a culture which cherished its militarism, and though Israel was conceivably on the other side of the map, its struggles were close to home. From Israel’s formal beginnings, Americans were well aware of the military challenges facing the nascent state; in 1948, 90% of Americans reported being knowledgeable about the fighting between the Jews and the Palestinians.33 For Americans, the story of Israeli and Palestinian internecine conflict was one hand the result of British entanglement in the Middle-East and their greed for trade routes and pipelines, but on the other hand, it was one of Israeli pioneers, circling their wagons to face the onslaught of inimical foes.

The images of Israeli settlers and farmers, kibbutzim surrounded by hostile neighbors, evoked images from an American past of pioneers protecting

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33 In 1945, 61% said they “followed” the discussion about Jews settling in Palestine. In 1946, 59% said they followed the news about Palestine. In 1947, 82% responded that they had “heard or read about the trouble in Palestine.” Gallup poll #421, 1948;Gallup Poll #264, 1/23/1946; Gallup Poll #397, 5/23/1947.
civilization. *Time* in August 1948 noted that many of the collective settlements were “stockaded forts, built to protect pioneer settlers from Arab attacks.” Israel’s geographical size was compared to that of a small American colony; *Life* magazine in May 1948 described how Israel, “a country the size of Connecticut, is ringed by hostile neighbors.” The pioneering project remade Israelis, leaving calluses on their hands as well as their hearts, and Americans learned to revere these pioneer soldiers who beat their ploughshares into swords.

The quintessential pioneers were the native born Israelis, known as *sabras*. The term refers to a “prickly pear” cactus with a thorny, thick hide that conceals their supple, soft interior. These *sabras* were “tough on the outside, sweet and tender on the inside.” The concept became ubiquitous in American journalism and popular fiction, and in many ways was employed as a parallel between Israelis and Americans. In October of 1949, *The New Republic* observed that sabras, “like Americans, are aggressive, competent and impatient to get things done.” In 1951, a *New Yorker* article explicitly blended the images of American youth and Israeli sabras: “Israeli children are regular Californians – sturdy, open-faced, sun-coppered kids, potentially bigger, it seems, than their parents, and perhaps bolder, too.” In popular fiction such as *The Wall*, *The Last Temptation*, and *My Glorious Brothers* and in the films *The Sword in the Desert* and *The Juggler*, these sabras display prowess and resolve much like Americans who had

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34 Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally*, 69.
35 Ibid., 56.
just a few years before been forced to lay down their civilian garb and don a pair of black leather boots.

The Israeli pioneer-soldiers appealed to an array of diverse Americans. In The Juggler, one female kibbutz member easily slings a rifle, protecting her male companion on a hike through the surrounding hills. In The Last Temptation, the main character, Deborah, becomes a pioneer fighting for her beloved state: “She was a gladiator now. She had slain dragons.”36 A July 1948 article in the New York Times juxtaposed pictures of unisex Israeli soldiers – men, women, boys, and girls from over thirty-five different countries - and elicited a multi-ethnic American empathy for their own young: “The troops sing with a gusto that is deep, spirited and contagious. Watching a bus load of these youngsters on their way to battle you could easily mistake them for a local baseball team on its way to play old Siwash.” The article describes them as a “heterogeneous lot, with a lust for life and adventure. They may have come from any one of a dozen countries but their final choice was Palestine, and they intend to remain and fight for it.” According to the author, the Haganah, Israel’s official army, was the “world’s most democratic army.”37 Like the American army, Israel’s army was made up of middle-class, regular people. Another New York Times article of 1948 lauded the civilian constituency of the army - many of whom were shop-keeps,

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36 Ibid., 6.
office managers, bartenders, or waiters with little or no military training - whose only ordnance was resolve:

A friend who came to Palestine twenty-five years ago tells me that the first time he ever held a firearm in his hand was a few nights after his arrival when his roommate handed him a revolver.

“What's this for?” he asked.

“You’re on guard tonight,” the other replied.

“And that’s how I joined the Haganah,” he says.38

While Americans revered the grit of the Israeli pioneers and their egalitarian, voluntary, and law-abiding army, they frowned upon Arab attacks upon civilians, their recklessness, and their “immaturity.” There was sincere concern for a brave and democratic Israel facing reactionary, hostile, and uncompromising neighbors with their “holy” mission of destroying the vulnerable Jewish state. According to the *New York Times*, “if friendliness toward Israel means hostility to the Arab states that is only because the Arabs would have it so.”39 An elegiac article on Israel’s tenth anniversary told of the “unwavering enmity of the Arab world” and their “reiterated hostility and refusal for ten years to make peace.”40

In contrast to the brave and methodical military maneuvers of the Israelis and their “tough little army”, Arabs swarmed, shrieked, and frenzied.41 The image of a whirling dervish and an unorganized barbarian horde with

41 “After Three Years,” *Time* May 21, 1951.
wanton disregard was sure to evoke American antipathy towards the Arab armies. While the Israelis had incorporated and disarmed their dissident elements like the Irgun, which the CIA declared committed “sabotage and terrorism” and the Stern Gang which it deemed “fanatics,” the Arabs were actively promoting theirs. Reporting on Israel’s War of Independence, *Time* magazine made sure to note that the Arab armies destroyed homes and holy sites alike, leaving them “blown down or crushed in by explosives.” Squads of Arab marauders left Tiferet Israel Synagogue resembling a “Dali-like nightmare with gaping holes and a smashed dome.”

During border skirmishes, Israel’s military endeavors were considered *activities* but the Arabs’ were *infiltration* and *marauding*. Israel’s analytic military style was contrasted against the primitive and reckless Arab attacks. An analyst in the Policy Planning Staff observed: “The blunt fact is that the Jewish troops were more capable, more determined and better led than the Arabs.” A journalist for *Life* Magazine concurred, noting that “Arabs were…cowards, and ran at the least excuse.”

These caricatures of Arabs and Israelis continued throughout much of the latter 20th century. During the Suez Crisis, *Time* reported the Israel Defense Force, “a deadly machine full of disciplined power,” was swiftly mobilized.

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42 Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally*, 71.
44 Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally*, 70.
against its rival Egypt’s “ill-trained army.” Journalists relayed stories of how reservists were summoned by telephone calls or telegrams, and footsloggers were summoned by a rap at the door: “it’s my sergeant,’ a pajamaed businessman told his sleepy wife. ‘He tells me, ‘Come!’”

Successive Israeli military battles against her aggressive neighbors and triumphs by the skin of her teeth reinforced the concept of Arab recklessness against Israeli resolve. The newly created image of the “tough Jew,” both pioneer and cowboy, reached legendary proportions by the spring of 1967. During the escalation toward the 1967 war, White House aide John Roche told President Johnson in the vernacular of the Lone Star State, “I confess that I look on the Israelis as Texans and Nasser as Santa Ana.” Both recognizing and exploiting the aggressive theology of the Arab armies, Secretary of State Dean Rusk prophesied that Nasser might invoke the memory of Saladin and appeal to “the ‘Holy War’ psychology of the Arab world.”

In 1967, Israel faced seemingly insurmountable odds. In the first four months of that year, thirty-seven Arab terrorist attacks were conducted against Israel, Syria lobbed mortars onto Israeli kibbutzim from the Golan Heights, and Egyptian troops massed along Israel’s border. President Nasser of Egypt ordered the UN Emergency Force to retreat and blocked the Straits of Tiran,

cutting off Israeli supply routes to Asia and oil shipments from Iran, all the while explicitly calling for the “extermination of Zionist existence.” The Syrian Defense minister echoed his call, defining the upcoming war as a “battle of annihilation.” King Hussein of Jordan signed a defense pact with Egypt, declaring “this act will astound the world.” President Abdur Aref of Iraq joined in: “Our goal is clear – to wipe Israel off the map.” Approximately 250,000 troops, more than 2,000 tanks, and 700 aircraft knocked on Israel’s door. When the war began, the US State Department coolly declared, “Our position is neutral in thought, word, and deed.”

On June 4, Israel launched a preemptive strike, and in six days shattered the Arab forces. Israel lost 777 men which, given its population, is proportionally twice as many men the United States lost in eight years of Vietnam. On the declaration of a cease-fire, Israel had captured enough territory to triple its land size. The defeat galvanized Israeli resolve, and proved in American minds the inferiority of the Arabs as warriors. According to a CIA study of the Arab-Israeli conflict, “The June [1967] war was frequently invoked by analysts as proof many Arabs, as Arabs, simply weren’t up to the demands of modern

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49 In addition to the 779 soldiers who died, 2,563 were wounded, and 15 prisoners were taken. On the other hand, the Arabs lost 21,000 men, 45,000 were wounded, 6,000 prisoners were taken, and over 400 aircraft were destroyed. Bard, *Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 59; Shaul Cohen, "Six-Day War," http://encarta.msn.com.
warfare and that they lacked understanding, motivation, and probably in some cases courage as well.”

The press clearly reflected this belief, and they heaped praise upon Israel for its successful operation against a numerically overwhelming but inept Arab army. A month after the war, the New York Times ran a profile piece about Israel’s one-eyed hawk, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, who masterminded “Israel’s military machine” and deserves credit “for the speed and totality of the victory, unequaled in the history of desert warfare.” The Washington Post declared that Israel’s triumph had left the “shattered Arab position…in a state of shock, depression, anger, and guilt.” An editorialist for the Los Angeles Times emasculated the Arabs by describing a young Israeli girl he met: “Somehow I can’t help but wonder if the little girl who sat in my kitchen is one of those fierce Israeli warriors who decimated the Arab legion.” The Time magazine lead story for the week following the war was titled “How Israel Won the War,” and the cover displayed a proud General Dayan staring off into the distance while an Arab armored vehicle smoldered behind him. A month after the Israeli victory, a prime time CBS news special gave an hour-by-hour account of the six-day

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50 Little, American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945, 32.
“lightning war” with in-depth interviews with General Dayan and Army Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin.55

With the public display of Israeli resolve, a new crop of Jewish jokes entered the public repertoire. In a play on normal Jewish stereotypes, these new jokes praised Jewish strength and vitality. An artist for the *Los Angeles Times* ran a cartoon with three old ladies waving large picket signs that read: "SPEAK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG SCHTICK"; "BLITZKREIG IS THE ONLY WAY"; and "CHARGE OF THE BAGEL LANGERS".56

NEW WARRIOR

In the late 1960s and through the mid-70s, as Americans were busily praising Israel’s military triumph, they were also lamenting their own irksome loss. American ostensible defeat in Vietnam translated into a new rendition of the military narrative. William Gibson calls this chorus of national dismay “the post-Vietnam blues.”57 The controversies and shame surrounding a decade of involvement in Vietnam discredited the state, the military, and the heroic warrior of yore. America’s big stick was splintered and the stream of long and unbroken

military victories was damned. Using the terminology of Richard Slotkin, Gibson writes that our “cultural archetype,” or what Engelhardt deems our “victory culture,” was dismembered. This archetype can be described as “the story of a heroic warrior whose victories over the enemy symbolically affirm the country’s fundamental goodness and power; we win our wars because, morally, we deserve to.” The corollary of this archetype is that if we lose, it is because, morally, we deserve to. The American psyche became disjointed over our defeat in Vietnam, and together, we had one big national identity-crisis. Gibson asks, “If Americans were no longer winners, then who were they?”

This identity crisis was amplified by concurrent social transformations. Civil rights and ethnic pride movements gained footholds, waves of immigration permeated our borders, and whites began to feel as though they were marginalized; the United States suffered trade deficits and loss of jobs and home ownership while crime, violence, and drug abuse surged; in essence, a majority of Americans began to feel “more powerless than ever.” The uncertainty over the state of the nation and its future caused people, and especially white men, “to dream, to fantasize about the powers and features of another kind of man who could retake and reorder the world.”

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58 Ibid., 10.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., 11.
The product of this fantasy was the para-military warrior and its culture of vigilante justice – “the new warrior.” Gibson argues that popular media was both a product and creation of this new para-military dream world. Detective Callahan in Dirty Harry (1971), Charles Bronson in Death Wish (1974), and Sylvester Stallone in Rambo (1982), inculcated the mythological hero as he who transgresses the constraints of institutions, laws, and organized military, respectively.62 The concepts of these warriors framed our understanding of armed conflict as winnable only if the warrior is unburdened by the government, peace activists, or, as is with Israel, the United Nations. The do-it-alone and no-holds-barred attitude was the fundamental appeal of the new warrior, a hero who “could do what was necessary to win victory and thus affirm the fundamental truths of America’s virtue and martial prowess.”63

Gibson’s pinnacle new war hero, Mickey Rourke, in Year of the Dragon (1985), clarifies this concept eloquently. A Vietnam veteran and police officer frustrated over organized crime and the red-tape of his department, he declares, “This is a fucking war and I’m not going to lose it, not this one. Not over politics. It’s always fucking politics. This is Vietnam all over again. Nobody wants to win this thing. Just flat-out win.”64

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62 Ibid., 5.
63 Ibid., 28.
64 Ibid., 34.
The modern manifestation of this concept is Jack Bauer. In the wildly successful television series *24*, Jack is a counter-terrorist agent who must torture, terrorize, maim, and in the third season become addicted to heroin, all for the sake of America. He is the incarnation of the warrior-hero, a man who must sleep with a “pillow under his gun,” reinforcing the concept that the laws of the world, the Geneva conventions, for instance, must be circumnavigated if victory is to be ensured.

George Lakoff argues that we conceive of nations as persons. There are metaphorical child states that are “developing” or “underdeveloped,” and there are adult states which can be “friendly nations,” “rogue states,” “enemy nations,” and so on.”65 If it is true that we conceptualize the nations of the world as a global community, an organization of personified states, then Israel is the “new warrior” Rambo, small but endowed, government equipped but independent. Israel, like Rambo, faces insurmountable adversity whose survival is guaranteed only by its perseverance, superior skills, and maybe, a little help from God. Through its military might, Israel was able to reinvigorate the “victory culture” paradigm that had eroded during Vietnam. For instance, after Israel’s victory in

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65 George Lakoff continues: “Most of the United Nations consists of developing and underdeveloped countries. That means they are metaphorical children. Now let’s go back to the State of the Union address. Should the United States have consulted the United Nations and gotten its permission to invade Iraq? An adult does not ‘ask for a permission slip’! The phrase itself, *permission slip*, puts you back in grammar school or high school, where you need a permission slip from an adult to go to the bathroom. You do not need to ask for a permission slip if you are the teacher, if you are the principal, if you are the person in power, the moral authority. The others should be asking you for permission. That is what the *permission slip* phrase in the 2004 State of the Union address was about. Every conservative in the audience got it. They got it right away.” George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2004), 11.
the Six Day War the *Los Angeles Times* ran a cartoon showing a scrappy college student and elderly women burning their Vietnam protest signs. Underneath, the caption read: “Thanks, Israel, for showing me there is such a thing as a ‘just war’ – for freedom!”

Israel’s self-reliant military embedded itself into the consciousness of many of the American “new warriors.” In the 1970s, the Israeli made Uzi, born by illegal arms manufacturing in 1930s Palestine, reached an iconic, legendary status. Gripped by Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator* and *Commando* as well as Chuck Norris in *Delta Force*, prominent in television shows like *The A-Team*, *Mission: Impossible*, and *Miami Vice*, and held by G.I. Joe commando Snake Eyes as his weapon of choice, the Uzi became “badder than ever.”

By the 1980s the Uzi had become one of the most popular Israeli imports into the United States. When importation of the Uzi was banned and the cost for the submachine gun skyrocketed, sporting enthusiasts and gun hobbyists were even more determined to get their hands on it, and gun stores raked in profits with raffles and events to unload their remaining stocks.

William Gibson argues that President Reagan, former B-movie cowboy actor, helped to resuscitate the waning “victory culture” paradigm, so that both

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new warrior and old operated within the American military discourse. President Reagan himself admits, reflecting upon his presidency, that the role of movies and military culture shaped his foreign policy as president: “Maybe I had seen too many war movies, the heroics of which I sometimes confused with real life, but common sense told me something very essential – you can’t have a fighting force without an espirit de corps. So one of my first priorities was to rebuild our military and, just as important, our military’s morale.”

President Reagan’s militaristic rhetoric held sway, and his reinvigoration of the national military pulse allowed the United States in 1991 to wage one popular war. When George Bush took Reagan’s seat and engaged in the “hundred-hour” war in Iraq, the parallels between contemporary political situations and the warrior archetypes of yore became explicit. The old Western imagery of two gunfighters squaring off at noon and soft whistles blowing through the air as balls of hay rolled across Main Street became the image of the Gulf War. Newsweek’s February 11th cover announced that we were engaged in a “Showdown in the Sand.”

The glory and necessity of the military in the American mind had become re-imagined or at least resurrected. After Vietnam, for instance, most

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69 Gibson, Warrior Dreams : Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America, 268.
70 In 1991, 78% of Americans, in retrospect, approved of the war in Iraq. Americans as well, 60% of them, would have been less likely to vote for a candidate for presidency if he had opposed the war in Iraq. Gallup (7/18/1991-7/21/1991); Gallup (7/18/191-7/21/1991).
71 Gibson, Warrior Dreams : Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America, 292.
Americans, 46% in 1975, believed that war was an “outdated” method of reconciling difficulties. By February of 1991, 80% believed it was “sometimes necessary.” After Vietnam Americans reported having more confidence in the “the church and organized religion,” 68% in 1975, than they did in the military, only 58%, yet by 1991, 85% of Americans had trust in the military, compared to 59% in organized religion.

If one thing has pervaded the American psyche in the 20th century, it has been our militaristic impulses and respect for the armed forces. Though it waned during Vietnam and the character of our militaristic spirit has fluctuated, the influence of the paradigm has not. In this vein, Israel’s militarism is not frowned upon by the American public. In fact, according to a 2006 PIPA poll, the United States was the only country in a twenty-seven country poll which had a plurality that believed Israel had a “positive influence in the world.” According to Steven Kull, the director of the PIPA poll, “it appears that people around the world tend to look negatively on countries whose profile is marked by the use or pursuit of military power.” For Americans with Israel, the opposite is

73 The results amount to over 100% because respondents were given more than one choice. "Confidence in Institutions," Gallup News Service June 8, 2006.
true. In another poll, Americans were asked to name, off the top of their head, the branch of the military “most important to our national defense.” From 2001 to 2004, the Air Force was consistently named as number one. Given the American respect for the military and especially for the Air Force, Israel, whose IAF is legendary around the world, garners a special place in the public consciousness. Israel’s swift, aerial, and unilateral destruction of Iraq’s nuclear reactor in 1981 attested to the “new warrior” creed, but perhaps most revealing is the 2005 statement by Vice President Dick Cheney on MSNBC’s “Imus in the Morning” in which he alludes to the “mystique” of their military independence: “Given the fact that Iran has a stated policy that their objective is the destruction of Israel, the Israelis might well decide to act first, and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards.”

Because of its special place in American consciousness, Israel becomes an embodiment of the same mythic association Americans have with their own pioneers and soldiers. Many Americans, it seems, truly believe in both the virtue and justification of the use of force as well the concept of settlement and annexation, when it is conducted by allies, as a legitimate means of territorial expansion. In the wake of the 1967 war, a fraction of Americans, 16% of them, believed Israel should give back the land it had claimed as a result of the war.

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76 The word “mystique” was used by Bret Stephens, former editor of the Jerusalem Post, at a speech at Amherst College; Jim Vandehei, “Cheney Warns of Iran as a Nuclear Threat,” The Washington Post January 21, 2005.; Bret Stephens, “After the War in Lebanon” (Amherst College, Sept 27, 2006).
Most, 45%, believed it should at least keep some, while 25%, a quarter of all Americans, believed it should keep it all.77 In 2002, at least a third of Americans support the continuation of Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza strip, the territories that have remained in Israel’s hands since the 1967 war. Even when the pollsters prompted the respondents with damaging indictments of Israel’s settlement activity, a significant amount of Americans believed in the legitimacy of Israeli settlement.78

The military and pioneering history of Israel appears as a condensed history of ours, defensive wars against hostile neighbors and territorial expansion in the name of Manifest Destiny. From pioneers to cowboys, tin soldiers to GI Joes, “victory culture” to “new warrior,” Americans have had a profound respect for the military as a prestigious arm of national might as well as continual approval for pioneerism and settlement as a legitimate endeavor of national ambitions. The national stories of pioneerism allow Israel a place in the American myth, an association which is one of the many ways Americans deem the state worthy of support.

77 Gallup, 6/26 – 7/1/1968.
78 This proportion who support settlement is probably higher because the Israeli argument about the necessity of settlements was articulated as a mystical Jewish historical claim, and not as the spoils of war, and the Palestinian argument was more properly phrased. I have excluded the concept of Jewish historical claim on Israel from my analysis because, though it was popular within Jewish circles, was hardly ever used to evoke American sympathy. For Christian Zionists, where the claim could gain most ground, the belief of Jews returning to Israel is more eschatological than it is historical. “Military and National Defense.” (March 3, 2007) Gallup.
II

JEWISH ASSIMILATION

BETWEEN RACE

In 2002 and after seven years of incarceration, Stephen Liebb, orthodox Jew and convicted first degree murderer, petitioned the United States District Court to have his racial classification changed from “white” to “other.” The Californian prison system uses four ethnic categories, “white,” “black,” “Mexican,” and “other”, for the purposes of housing prisoners and lockdown situations. By classifying Liebb as “white,” he was forced to live with neo-Nazis and White supremacists inked with swastika tattoos and SS lightning bolts. The case, however, never got off the ground; at this point, to consider reclassifying Jews as an “other” is inconceivable.¹

Though contemporary Jewish whiteness seems self-evident, it has not always been considered as such. The 1911 edition of *The Dictionary of Races and Peoples*, a government published immigration handbook, categorized Jewish immigrants as a distinct race of “Hebrews” or “Israelites” regardless of their

national origin. In 1910, Reverend Arthur Avernethy PhD., published the successful book *The Jew a Negro*, proving through “ethnology” and “scriptural proofs” how “the Jew of today, as well as his ancestors in other times, is the kinsman and descendant of the Negro.” Such a perception of distinctive racial identity was held by some Jews as well. Maurice Fishberg, a Russian-born Jewish immigrant, measured over 4,200 Jewish noses in 1911 New York and concluded that Jews were much like ‘negroes’ given their “very dark skin, black and woolly hair, elongated head, prognathous face, muzzled jaws, large thick lips, and broad fiat nose.”

While these observations might elicit a little laughter now, that laughter is a privilege, namely, a white privilege. Given historic perceptions, then, how is it that Jews came to be “white folks”? When did the racial classification in our country, and not just in government classification but in popular conception, change to absorb Jews as white? The answer to this question lies in what David Roediger calls “the critical examination of whiteness.” This examination is the effort to break through the illusionary boundaries of whiteness, to deconstruct what appears to be normal, natural, and biological. Whiteness should therefore not be considered an essential fact, but instead a definition applied to different

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3 The term “prognathous” refers to having a jutting jaw. Leonard Rogoff, "Is the Jew White?: The Racial Place of the Southern Jew," *American Jewish History* 85, no. 3 (1997).
people at different times in different ways. Like wealth, it is first acquired then transmitted, but unlike wealth, whiteness cannot be so easily defined; its moment of acquisition not immediate but gradual, and Jews like other immigrants had to gain their whiteness over time. Like many American immigrants, Jews maintained what Roediger describes as a racial “inbetweeness.”

Daniel Itzkovitz refers to the particularly Jewish version of this ambiguity as “Jewish chameleonism.” What they mean by this terminology is that Jews could not become absorbed into the prefabricated public perceptions of racial identification and status. Neither black nor white, Jews stuck out as a precarious abnormality in the neatly divided racial division functional and operative in America. The United States has traditionally maintained this bifurcated racial discourse by separating between blacks and whites, the slave and master narrative. In the way race is framed there are two poles, and a newly introduced element is magnetically pulled to either one; it does not find a balance between the two. American racial discourse aims at the reconciliation of new elements, the attempt to figure out where someone “fits” in the racial divide.

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7 Though the contemporary economic attainment of Asian Americans the massive influx of Latino immigrants has thrown a wrench into this clear divide, the division clearly manifested itself from the founding until turn of the century European immigration. It is helpful to understand the black and white binary as ability or inability to assimilate. Though Asians are socially mobile and economically secure, are they assimilated? More specifically, are they white? Important to this concept is the delineation of assimilation versus acculturation. “Acculturation” is the process by which the culture of a particular society is instilled in a
EARLY DIVISIONS

Before the racial caricaturing of the early 1900’s, Jews held a relatively stable place in American society. During the 19th century there was no clear divide between the Anglo-Saxons and Jews; both were equally American. The first appreciable Jewish immigration into the United States, from 1848 to 1852, was by mostly elite German Jews, highly assimilated into German society. These Jews were well-educated and achieved considerable success, establishing companies like Levi-Strauss, Macy’s, and Gimbel’s. There was very little debate in the Jewish community and the broader American community as well over Jewish racial identity. Elite country clubs did not exclude Jews; in fact, they became prominent members.8 Among their white neighbors, Jews were accepted as “honorary White protestants.”9

In the 1870’s, with the aftermath of the Civil War and the era of Reconstruction, the question of Jewish racial identity became more salient. Though in the American Jewish Community itself there was a never a unified position towards their own racial status, the overall attitude can at least be summarized by

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a pro and a con, between those who approved of and those who rejected the embrace of “whiteness.” Those wishing to embrace whiteness were mostly Confederate Jews who hoped to benefit from the system of racial oppression in the South. By considering themselves white and by giving no reason for the rest of the population to think otherwise, this group of Jews enjoyed the privileges of white status in a racially divided South. Union Jews, on the other hand, associated their plight with the plight of African Americans, and understood anti-Semitism to be synonymous with American racism. Union Jews frequently fought for Black rights and integration, and did not deny their own distinct racial status. The NAACP was founded by such Union Jews as Henry Moscovitz, Julius Rosenthal, Lillian Wald, and Rabbis Emil G. Hirsch and Steven Wise.

In the era approaching World War I, the Jewish attitude towards whiteness underwent a similar divide but along different lines. Though the same distinctions still applied, a larger fissure emerged between the mid-19th century first wave and the early 20th century second wave of immigrants. Second wave Jewish immigrants were predominantly “scurvy and swarthy” Eastern Europeans, many of them communist and Zionist, and they posed a “symbolic threat” for the white population. Their foray into the workplace at a time of increased

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10 Leonard Rogoff writes that in the South, “Jews were a racial tabula rosa upon which anything could be written,” and that “the anthropological status of the Jews reflected their social standing.” Rogoff, “Is the Jew White?: The Racial Place of the Southern Jew.”
12 Sachar, A History of the Jews in America.
industrialization and urbanization intimidated blue-collar whites. Many of these Jews, however, did not feel the same threat. Already accustomed to urban society, second wave immigrants came with the skills necessary for trade and industrial life. As petty tradesmen or workers in the Jewish dominated garment industry, Eastern European immigrant Jews were free from the burden of a competitive job market with its racial frictions. By monopolizing particular niches such as the garment industry, before 1917 there were almost no African Americans and only a small amount of Italians in this trade, and by creating insulated Jewish enclaves like the Lower East Side, in 1915 one in every four New Yorkers was a Jew, these second wave immigrants learned to imagine the world in their own binary, one between Jews and non-Jews. As opposed to elite first wave Western European Jews who embraced and were embraced by white society, Americans considered the racial distinctiveness of second wave Jews a simple fact. For Jews, this fact would soon become a liability.

14 For Jews, the contest over defining themselves as a race separate from just White continues to this day. Though the cleanly defined immigrant groups of yore have disseminated and intermingled with one another, the basic divide still exists as to whether Jews should claim themselves as simply White or as something more distinct – maybe even special. A recent study at the University of Utah, for example, found that Jews have the highest IQ of any ethnic group, as much as a full standard deviation above the general European average, which means, at the farthest end of the spectrum, 23 per thousand Ashkenazi (of which most American Jews claim descendancy) Jews have an IQ over 140, compared to only 4 per thousand Northern Europeans, and Jews on average score 12-15 points above the test’s mean value. While this study should be a source of pride for American Jews, an affirmation of something their mother has been telling them since birth, it was hardly popularly received by all spectrums of the public Jewish community. Abraham Foxman of the secular Anti-Defamation League denounced it because it could, somehow, be used as another trumpet in anti-Semitic clarion call. “Will bigots use this? Bigots will use anything,” Foxman says. Chanan Tigay, "Ashkenazi Iq Gene Study Stirs Debate,” *Jewish Journal* June 10, 2005. Rabbi Avi Shafran of Aish Ha Torah, a religious yeshiva and outreach organization, denounced the study for reasons beyond potential use as anti-Semitic grist; instead, “its danger lies in its potential to lead us Jews ourselves astray, by enticing us to view intellect as inherently important.” David Goldstein, professor of genetics at Duke University, tells me, “It’s either Jewish
THE RISE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

What should have been a sigh of relief at the close of World War I (1914-1917) was instead a gasp of despair. Eric Goldstein argues that the termination of the First World War led to expressions of “national doom,” a feeling among white Americans that civilization was ready to burst at the seams, and “much of this dramatic decline in self-confidence was due to the destabilizing political and social changes ushered in by the war. In exchange for the massive toll it took on American material and psychological resources, the war delivered few of the sweeping benefits it had promised.”

Europe existed under the menace of Russian communism, the American populace was fearful of more foreign entanglements and radical ideological imports, the domestic landscape was marred by divisiveness over returning to prewar conditions, benefits to American labor reaped during the war were being reneged by employers, and white Americans felt underprivileged by the wartime gains of immigrants and blacks. Most importantly, Goldstein argues, is that for many “native-born whites” the war represented a “final break with the idealized, community-based culture of their past.” The United States was placed in a position of world power which it


15 Goldstein, The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity, 120.
could not reject, a new age of modernity which was both tempting but frightening, accepted yet renounced: a bittersweet reality.

For most members of the dominant society, the blandishments of modern culture-automobiles, movies, mass produced goods, urban leisure – were too attractive and promising to reject. Unable to suppress their sense of fear and disillusionment amidst rapid change, they were also unable and unwilling to turn back from the new social and cultural realities of their world.16

The features of modernity towards which white Americans were most ambivalent - business, urban life, intellectuality, and self-interest - were categorically perceived as Jewish traits. And maybe it was so, for Jews at this time relished in the new modernity. Children and grandchildren Eastern European immigrants became acculturated to American society and jumped headfirst into pursuits associated with social change: urban politics, unions, newspapers, writing, editing, art, performance, and motion pictures. And though they were far from dominating American institutions, Jews remained an identifiable minority positioned in places of broad cultural power. As producers and artists, they were disproportionately represented in the professions producing the burgeoning mass media whose new forms of cultural production had a profound effect on American values and perceptions. Visibly a minority and visibly quite influential, it became all too easy for the dominant white society to ascribe Jews with all the insidious ills of modernity and the lewd temptations of urban life.

16 Ibid., 121.
At the close of World War I, the strength of the black-white dichotomy which had previously bolstered white confidence and racial solidarity in times of crisis was brought into question by the particular racial place of Jews. The Progressive Era ideology of the late 1800’s which incorporated Jews as an equal member of American society began to lose its viability, the belief that assimilation through intermarriage could incorporate Jews into the white family was undermined by Jewish endogamy, and the attempt by some to categorize Jews as blacks was undermined by Jewish success:

The period’s tendency toward facing up to even the most unpleasant ‘truths’ decisively shaped the way white Americans of the interwar years described and understood the racial place of Jews. Most significantly, they were no longer able to contain the troubling image of the Jew within the more comforting categories of black and white. Given the mood of skepticism prevalent between the wars, the method used to suppress the Jewish image in the early twentieth century now seemed hopelessly naïve. On the one hand, there was a growing recognition that, for better or for worse, Jews and the forces of modernity they represented were an integral part of national life. As a result, American whites could no longer plausibly dismiss their connection to those forces by comparing Jews to ‘inferior’ peoples of color. On the other hand, few white Americans retained sufficient confidence in the path of modern American life to see the Jews – the bearers of that modernity – as stable members of white society. Unable to either place Jews beyond the pale of whiteness or to fully embrace them as undifferentiated whites, white Americans came to increasingly see the Jew as a distinct racial “problem.”

White anxiety about the trajectory of American culture away from its core values caused Americans to look for a reason or at least an excuse for the perceived social instability. Disillusioned by internationalism and fearful of Bolshevik

17 Ibid., 125.
Americans were frightened that foreigners would corrupt the nation’s “pristine” values and traditions. The attempt to hold someone accountable for marring American culture cast the Jewish “race” as an insidious force capable of entrenching itself and contaminating American institutions all the while remaining solely dedicated to its own interests. Anti-Semitic flourishes are endemic to this type of climate, and American anti-Semitism surged in these inter-war years, reaching a “high tide” by the 1940’s.\textsuperscript{18} The eruption of anti-Semitism was responsible for what we now understand to be the widespread expulsion of Jews from elite country clubs and Protestant enclaves. In 1924, for instance, the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce in one Florida community advocated expelling all Jews and foreigners from St. Petersburg to make it “a 100% American Gentile City.”\textsuperscript{19} In 1923, students at NYU hung posters around campus calling for the expulsion of Jews from the University. The poster read: “Strictly Kosher – Must not apply here. SCURVY KIKES ARE NOT WANTED at New York University…if they knew their place they would not be here…Make New York University a White Man’s College.”\textsuperscript{20} College presidents held meetings to address the “Jewish problem”, and schools like Columbia, Princeton, Yale, Duke, Rutgers, Barnard, Adelphi, Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Penn State, Ohio State, Washington and Lee, and the Universities of

\textsuperscript{18} Leonard Dinnerstein, \textit{Antisemitism in America} (New York: Oxford University, 1994).
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{20} Goldstein, \textit{The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity}, 129.
Cincinnati, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Texas, Virginia, and Washington instituted quota systems to restrict the places available for Jews.21

On May 22, 1920, an article titled “The International Jew: The World’s Problem” reiterated the essence of *The Protocols of the Elder of Zion* and dominated page one of Henry Ford’s publication, the *Dearborn Independent*. The scurrilous newspaper engaged in an anti-Semitic litany for 91 consecutive weeks.22 Before the essays began, The *Dearborn Independent* had a circulation of around 72,000 copies a week. By 1922, the figure increased to 300,000 and by 1924 circulation rose to 700,000 – only 50,000 copies fewer than that of the largest daily newspaper in the United States at the time, New York City’s *Daily News*. The *Dearborn Independent*’s essays on Jews were read in mostly rural areas, whose populations knew little about Jews except from Henry Ford’s publication, religious teachings, or gossip.23 This virulent anti-Semitism continued well into the 1930’s when fear of “Jewish communism” became even more widespread, and Roosevelt’s economic and social policy was perceived to be a Jewish ploy – “The Jew Deal” according to some commentators. Father Coughlin began a radio broadcast that venomously libeled Jews, blaming the Depression on an

21 Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 86.
22 The essays continued intermittently until 1927.
“international conspiracy of Jewish bankers.” Throughout the 1930’s, 40 million listeners tuned in to his show every week.24

INTO THE PALE

As attacks against Jews continued into the war years, political and cultural transformations laid the foundations for what would become an attenuation of the inter-war virulence and an embrace of Jewish whiteness. The exigencies of war time mobilization and solidarity required an inclusive, expansive nationalism. President Roosevelt adopted a national education project which through its expanding notion of “America” would operate as both a unifying scheme and as moral opposition to Nazi racism. The administration by the early 1940’s developed a newfound sensitivity to global perceptions of American life, particularly acknowledging that an isolated domestic event could affect its international image. The United States could best advance its geopolitical position not through guns and ships but through ideology and its way of life.25

To recast its image as the moral antithesis to Hitler, the U.S. Office of Education aired a series of radio broadcasts titled “Americans All…Immigrants All.” Soon, pro-fascists and anti-Semitic spokespersons were censored and shunned. The government pressured the Catholic Church to silence Father

Coughlin who in 1942 finally turned off his poisonous microphone.\textsuperscript{26} The Immigration and Naturalization service abolished its policy of identifying new European arrivals based on race, and instead adopted the nomenclature “white.” Ship manifests continued to use racial designation until the 1950’s, but in 1943 the particular designation “Hebrews” for Jews was eradicated.\textsuperscript{27} The administration and Americans as well recognized that intergroup conflict constituted serious social problems which would be exacerbated by prejudice and ethnocentrism but mitigated by the promotion of diversity and tolerance.\textsuperscript{28}

By consolidating immigrants into the broader category of White, the administration hoped to alleviate racial tensions which could undermine the war effort. Racial hatred became seen as subversive and “un-American.” The Roosevelt Administration believed that domestic stability could best be achieved by expanding and consolidating the notion of Whiteness while still maintaining the clear distinction between white and black America. In the armed forces, blacks and Asians were segregated in their own units while Jews, Italians, and Irish were assigned to “white” units whose members had family ties tracing back to the founding of the country. Between 1944 and 1945, around twelve million soldiers were shipped overseas; Irish, Italian, Germans, and Jews became

\textsuperscript{26} Goldstein, \textit{The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity}, 192.
\textsuperscript{27} Hart, “Making Democracy Safe for the World: Race, Propoganda, and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy During World War II.”, 55.
\textsuperscript{28} Philip Gleason, "Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity," \textit{The Review of Politics} 43, no. 4 (October, 1981). Gleason argues that this belief of mitigation was present in the circles of and academics, social scientists, and policy makers.
brothers in arms as much as they became brothers in race.\textsuperscript{29} On the other hand, blacks and Asians, separated in their own platoons, were ostracized from this massive integrationist project.

On the home-front, comprehensive propaganda efforts promoted the unity of a white fighting force against a darkened and demonic enemy. Propaganda posters frequently depicted the Japanese as rats, bats, monkeys, subspecies of humans or monsters all together. The “Japs” were displayed with almost vertically slanted eyes and whiskers; their victims, women, children, and American GI’s were displayed in a blinding white while blacks and Asians fighting for the United States were hardly ever shown. The administration’s wartime efforts fortified the standard racial binary, and Jews enjoyed the privilege of standing on the dominant side.

Outside the sphere of policy, American culture at this time became receptive to accepting Jews as whites. Andrea Most argues that on Broadway, the opening of \textit{Oklahoma!} should be seen as an attempt by Jewish playwrights Rodger and Hammerstein to engage in a strategy of “theatrical assimilation.” By not rejecting the racialist language that labeled the privileged members of America white, \textit{Oklahoma!} paints the antagonist Jud as black, and he becomes a scapegoat whose death cleanses the community of evil. Andrea Most believes

\textsuperscript{29} “Dedication of National World War II Memorial,” (US Census Bureau, April 9, 2004). Though anti-Semitism was widely reported in the barracks, gentile and Jew alike emerged fighting for equality as members of the “civil religion of America.” See, for example, Deborah Dash Moore, \textit{Gi Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation} (Cambridge, Ma.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 10-11.
that the ploy was deliberate, forming a conception of whiteness as the opposite of black, a form of whiteness that would therefore embrace Jews. Instantly appreciated and popularized as a delightful piece of Americana, *Oklahoma!* both reflected and aided in the initiation of an expansive notion inclusive whiteness at the expense of racial harmony during the Second World War.30

In addition to Broadway, war time movies and newsreels celebrated diversity while limiting just how far that diversity could stretch. Jewish inclusion relied upon a broad concept of whiteness which distinguished itself from and against the racialized Japanese. The Germans, just as complicit in starting World War II, were imbued with a rational evil, but the Japanese, a darkened and racialized “other,” were shown as impulsive hordes. In the Paramount newsreel *1943 Our Third Year at War*, the narrator claims that the “German is a logical creature…[and] has hopes of winning at least a negotiated peace…Look at the Japanese. They have yielded outposts but at a price…The Jap hopes to pay for time with blood.”31 And despite the racist “savaging” of the Japanese, the “war-world” imagined by Hollywood was seemingly more benign than the one in which the audience lived. *Life* editorialists praised *Bataan*, a war epic about an American platoon battling the Japanese beast, as a moral victory for the “white

30 This continues on with *South Pacific* and the *King and I*, plays which reiterate whiteness against “others.” Andrea Most, """We Know We Belong to the Land": The Theatricality of Assimilation in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, *PMLA* 113, no. 1 (Jan., 1998).
31 Sumiko Higashi, "Melodrama, Realism, and Race: World War II Newsreels and Propaganda Film," *Cinema Journal* 37, no. 3 (Spring 1998), 46.
A poll of servicemen during World War II revealed that 38-48% of soldiers agreed with the statement “I would really like to kill a Japanese soldier”; but only 5-9% did when it came to the Germans. In the European theater, 54% of infantrymen interviewed said that seeing Axis POW’s had given them the feeling “they are men just like us; it’s too bad we have to be fighting them.” In contrast, only 20% had such a reaction after seeing Japanese prisoners; instead, 42% of those soldiers interviewed “felt all the more like killing them.”

In the halls of academia, an expanded notion of whiteness gained ground as anthropologists dismantled the pseudo-scientific racial classifications which previously divided what would become white society. Franz Boas convinced the American Anthropological Society to pass a resolution stating that the terms “Aryan” and “Semitic” had “no racial significance whatsoever” and were only useful as indicators of linguistic groups. This declassification was popularized in book form like Ruth Benedict’s *Races of Mankind* and Ashley Montagu’s *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth* which became instant best-sellers. The 1940’s also witnessed an old term find itself sticking in the popular lexicon: “ethnicity,” which was pioneered by Jewish scholars in the 1920’s, finally gained wide acceptance as a method to describe those groups who maintained an insular identity, previously referred to as “clannishness,” but were also part of

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white society. Jews would from then on be considered an “ethnicity” within the broader white “race,” whose differences were not biological but only cultural. The new vernacular distinguished between nonwhite “racial” groups and white “ethnic” groups, allowing for the espousal of Jewish distinction without necessarily negating its place in the broader realm of whiteness. The term “ethnicity” could not previously find traction in popular usage because Jewish racial identity remained a hotly contested matter, but with the emergence of an expansive concept of whiteness which began to embrace Jews and the corollary decline of racial interpretations of Jewish identity, “ethnicity” became the mot juste to describe American Jews.

These series of transformations profoundly affected white racial identity, which, in the post-war years, became more expansive than it had ever been. The changes in the 1940’s created a climate of opinion which began to give way to accepting Jews in the 1950’s and 60’s. In 1946, 42% of Americans conceived of Jews as a distinct race, but by 1962, only 23% held that belief. Even more revealing is that given the racial discrimination faced by Jews in American universities in the interwar years, Jews became increasingly viewed as compatriots instead of racial interlopers. In 1938 26% of Americans believed Jews should be limited from college admission, but by 1962 only 4% held that

beliefs. Wartime policies, especially towards veterans, allowed Jews as one of many new whitened ethnic groups to benefit from post-war economic ascen-
dance and join the ranks of typical Americans in suburbia. Jews and other ethnicities were given GI benefits and access to FHA and VA loans, and soon the Cohen’s, Smith’s, Murphy’s, and Vittone’s were living side-by-side in Levit-
town and other suburban tract housing projects.

Comfortable in the newly appreciated social locations, Jews could not help but laugh. Self-deprecation became a means of and response to Jewish assimilation. Comedians such as George Burns, Jack Benny, Milton Berle, Sid Caesar, Mel Brooks, and Jackie Mason took the stage, and through the medium of comedy allowed Americans to see that Jews were normal, safe, and slightly neurotic. Wayne Gladstone, an American Jewish comedian, observes: “I simply didn’t know why there were so many Jews in comedy. My Hebrew school certainly didn’t offer credits in stand-up, and I was pretty sure there wasn’t an ‘earlier, funnier’ Torah.” The popularity of Jewish humor derived instead from Jews’ peculiar form of assimilation:

37 Ibid., 104.
38 The FHA and VA’s “low-down-payment, low-interest, long-term” loans to young buyers allowed the massive suburbanization projects of the 1950’s. Half of all suburban housing in the 1950’s and 60’s was financed by FHA/VA loans. Through discriminatory housing practices, such as red-lining neighborhoods which were racially mixed and making them ineligible for loans, through “restrictive covenants” which prevented homes being sold to Catholics, Jews, and Blacks before the war but only Blacks after it, and through FHA underwriting manuals that mandated that loans be only available for racially homogenous neighborhoods, Jews found themselves living in an environment of whiteness almost legally guarded from the intrusion of blacks, and could sit comfortably in their newly gained whiteness. It was here that Jews finally became white, where they became just another part of the family; every house sat as a representation of a different ethnicity, but all the houses were on the same block - the white block on the good side of the street. See Karen Brodkin, How Jews Became White Folks (Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers, 1994), 46.
In America, Jews are a white minority. Think about it: We can live comfortably, practice freely, and bowl adequately. But being a Jew in America is like using left-handed scissors: You can make it work, but it just doesn’t feel right. This is Jesusland. Always has been, always will be. So perhaps what makes Jews so funny is not Judaism, but Christianity – and the American Jew’s constant immersion in it.39

With Jewish cultural production becoming part of American culture, white Americans began adopting particular Jewish traits, and Jews became another slice of the American apple pie. One did not have to be Jewish to make jokes about her Jewish mother or enjoy Levi’s bagels and deli meats. Many of what are considered American staples were created by Jews during this period of assimilation; the songs “God Bless America,” “White Christmas,” “Easter Parade,” “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer,” “Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow,” “Silver Bells,” and “The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)” were all written by Jews.40

EXPORTING RACE

As Jews entered and even helped to create American society, Israelis latched onto their coattails. Karen Brodkin argues that Israel – the Jewish state – was

40 “God Bless America” and “White Christmas” were written by one Izzy Baline, who changed his name to Irving Berlin. In Philip Roth’s Operation Shylock, the narrator observes, “God gave Moses the 10 Commandments, and He Gave to Irving Berlin ‘Easter Parade’ and ‘White Christmas.’ The two holidays that celebrate the divinity of Christ – the divinity that’s the very heart of the Jewish rejection of Christianity – and what does Irving Berlin do? Easter he turns into a fashion show and Christmas into a holiday about snow.” Joshua Jacobson, "Who Knew It’s by a Jew," in MyJewishLearning.com (2007).
perceived as a metonymical Jew. Tiny in land and population, ostracized by its neighbors, and constituted for and by Jews, Israel acts as a symbolic representation of Jews as a whole. If this metonymy is true, then the American acceptance of Jews into the pale of whiteness allowed Israelis that same embrace. The Israeli leaders who Americans learned to revere were predominantly white looking European Jews. Journalists praised David Ben-Gurion, one such Jew, as the very American “George Washington of Israel.”

Jewish and Israeli headway into mainstream America pushed Arabs to the periphery. The particular nature of Arab identity, which the demagoguery of Egyptian pan-Arabist Nasser exploited, was the tendency to find strength through all of their peoples, but this same strength in unity for the Arabs was deemed weakness in homogenization by Americans. The pan-Arabist identity clashed with the American respect for individualism and unique nationality. Much like the uniformity of the Japanese hordes which Americans learned to fear and demonize during World War II, Arabs were given an unreal and mythic level of homogeneity. Such a “myth,” writes William Gibson, “reduces the Indians, the Vietnamese, the Soviets, the Arabs, and all other collective enemies to a handful of men. Never do these enemies have any political or social or

41 Brodkin’s claim is borne out by public opinion cross-tabulations. Empirical evidence reflects a significant positive correlation between perceptions of Jews and perceptions towards Israel: “a triangular relationship might exist wherein positive relations with American Jews lead to favorable attitudes toward Israel...This phenomenon confirms one of the most important roles American Jews play in the formation of the Israeli image in American public opinion.” Eytan Gilboa, American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 303; Brodkin, How Jews Became White Folks.
42 For one such reference to the “prophet-founder,” see Pepper, "Hawk of Israel."
moral reason for fighting; they have no real historical existence.” The term “Arab-Israeli conflict” itself attests to that reduction, rhetorically placing Israel against all Arabs as enemies, even though there were a number of Arab states that remained neutral. In effect, this allowed the transgressions of one to be imputed to all, and the blending of individual and stereotype, for many Americans, introduced a racist element - from the government to the public - into the Israeli discourse.

In the years before and during Israel’s formal establishment, the US State Department, though remaining oppositional towards the prospects of an alliance with Israel, was nevertheless hardly exuberant about the Arabs and their ubiquitous, racially inherent negative attributes. A 1947 CIA report, for instance, concluded that Arabs were “inflamed by national and religious fervor,” while many were “fanatic” and “irresponsible tribesmen.” George Kennan, the State Department’s Chief of Policy Planning, remembered upon a trip to Iraq how the people there were prone to “selfishness and stupidity” and “inclined to all manner of religious bigotry and fanaticism.” A 1949 CIA psychological profile of the Middle East concluded that the Arabs were not only “non-inventive and

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44 The first poll to use the term “Israeli-Palestinian” instead of “Arab-Israeli” was Harris in January 1975.
45 Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally*, 76.
slow to put theories into practice” and “skillful mainly at avoiding hard work” but also capable of “astonishing acts of treachery and dishonesty.”

In the media, the treachery and dishonesty of the Arabs was affirmed by their unscrupulous military conduct against a dignified Israel. A November 1948 *Time* article noted that Israeli soldiers who had engaged in hand-to-hand combat complained that “Egyptian soldiers were biting them in the necks.” Their savagery was due to their primitivism, another article explained: “Arabs were about as dangerous as so many North American Indians in modern mechanized war.” In August of that year, *Time* similarly reported that “the Jews were too tough, too smart, and too vigorous for the divided and debilitated Arab world to conquer.”

Jewish “smarts” were constantly juxtaposed against Arab ignorance and irrationality. The *New York Times Magazine* in 1950 noted that most Muslims could not read, and “needless to say, this great mass of people-stretching from Morocco to Malaya and including twenty-one countries-today lives in a world of literary darkness and ignorance.” The next year, the *NYTM* ran an unremitting profile of the Arab world:

> The Arab is fundamentally a child of nature. His life is primitively dramatic in a way the Occidental has almost forgotten. Blood feuds and terrorism are never far under the surface. Arab society is like that

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47 Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally.*, 69.
48 "Time Listings."
of boys at the gang and boys’-club age, but what is play among children is deadly earnest among adult Arabs.

“The Arab”, as this quasi ethnographic and zoological study concludes, “as an American would say, balks like a mule. He always knows what he doesn’t want but seldom knows what he does want.” That same mule-like sterility is seen in other facets of Arab life:

The literature is childish. Journalism is a repetition of pat phrases. The political leaders sound as if they had memorized axioms from an out-of-date textbook on nationalism that had picked up at a second-hand book stall. Arabic classics are little read because they have so little meaning today. The folkways and ancient customs are growing weaker.

Not to be undone by the *New York Times*, the *New Republic* opted to simply call the Arabs “retarded.”

Arabs were routinely displayed as bearded, big-nosed desert-dwellers with primitive tents, camels, and Kaiffyas. They were violent but ultimately weak, scheming yet ultimately naïve. This process of removing individuality from Arabs, emasculating them, and pushing them to the periphery of civilization is deemed by Douglas Little as “American Orientalism.” He traces the main thrust of this impulse from the *National Geographic* magazine in which Arabs graced the pages as backwards, exotic, decadent, inferior, and occasionally

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51 Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally*, 76.
dangerous. With the declining significance of race in America and the incorporation of Jews safely into society, Israelis were counterpoised against these Orientalized hordes:

Meanwhile, Zionist pioneers were ineluctably transforming the dream of a Jewish state into Middle Eastern reality through blood, sweat, and tears. Both the dream and the reality soon prompted most Americans to shed their residual anti-Semitism and to regard the children of Isaac, now safely more Western than oriental, as a strategic asset in American’s increasingly nasty confrontation with the children of Ishmael.52

As the century progressed, events like the 1973 Yom Kippur War when Arab forces surprise attacked Israel on its holiest day, the massacre in Munich, when the Palestinian group Black September murdered eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympics, and the Iranian hostage crisis (1979-1981), in which Ayatollah Khomeini kidnapped and held fifty-two Americans hostage for 444 days, evoked American antipathy toward Arabs and confirmed long-standing beliefs of their savagery.53

In 1975, for instance, a Caddell poll presented respondents with a list of images and asked whether they applied to Israelis or to Arabs. Americans deemed Arabs as “backward” (47%); “underdeveloped” (47%); “greedy” (41%);

52 Little, American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945, 11.
53 That Iran is not an Arab state is inconsequential. Arab is an ethno-linguistic term for those countries in which Arabic is the official and spoken language. Muslim is a religious designation. Iran is Muslim but not Arab; instead it is Persian and they speak Farsi. However, opinion polls vacillated between each term, reflecting and reinforcing the consistent American conflation. The difference between Arab and Muslim or Sunni and Shiite is unknown to even American congressman; see, for example, Jeff Stein, "Can You Tell a Sunni from a Shiite?," The New York Times October 17, 2006.
“arrogant” (37%); and “barbaric” (38%). On the other hand, Israelis were deemed “peaceful” (41%); “honest” (39%); “intelligent” (39%); “friendly” (46%); and, most importantly, “like Americans” (50%). Between 1975 and 1982, including the highly controversial 1982 Israeli war in Lebanon and the Sabra and Shatila massacre, a Yankelovich poll revealed only slight variations among the constant trend of clear American majorities who perceived Israel as “freedom loving” (83%); “modern” (78%); “pro-U.S.” (77%); “democratic” (74%); “reasonable people” (72%); and “anti-Communist” (86%). In another poll, Israelis were described as “intelligent and competent” (66%); “brave” (65%); “religious” (75%); “friendly” (43%); and “persecuted and exploited” (37%). These qualities are the same qualities with which Americans described themselves, affirming that Israelis, like Jews, had been embraced by the United States within its fold of what was considered reasonable Western civilization, in direct opposition to the peripheral Arabs, who in a similar poll were characterized as “rich” (72%); “dress strangely” (58%); “mistreat women” (51%); and “warlike, blood-thirsty” (50%).54 A poll conducted in 1981 found similar results: half of the respondents described “all” or “most” Muslims as “warlike and blood-thirsty,” (50%); “treacherous and cunning” (49%); and “barbaric” and “cruel” (44%).55

The American press helped to fortify these perceptions. After the oil crises of 1973, an editorial cartoon in the Commercial Appeal showed two malevolent, alien and rodent-like Arabs greedily rubbing their fingers over the globe. Afterwards, when Khomeini usurped power in Iran, he became depicted as an evil Aladdin who summoned the forces of violence and anarchy. An editorial cartoon in the San Francisco Chronicle portrays the Grim Reaper with his arm around Khomeini, telling the brooding cleric, “I’ve really enjoyed your work.”

Similarly, Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War was characterized as an evil dictator with a penchant for recreational violence through phrases plucked directly out of popular culture: “the Butcher of Baghdad,” “Beast of Baghdad,” “Wolf of Babylon,” and “Madman of Middle-East.” And while it may seem over-suspicious to uncover Orientalist themes in senseless blockbusters, the intonations are still present and worthy of contemplation. Consider, for instance, Disney’s seemingly innocuous animated classic Aladdin, whose Saddam Hussein look-alike in the song “Arabian Nights” croons “Where they cut off your hands if they don’t like your face/It’s barbaric, but hey it’s home.”

Or, more recently, consider the record-breaking movie 300 which depicts a horde of

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58 Aladdin was the most successful movie of 1992, with over $217 million in domestic box office sales. "Aladdin Box Office Info," in BoxOfficeMojo.com.
“blood-thirsty” Persians attacking a disciplined, white, and “freedom loving” Spartan army.59

Sympathy for Israel based upon the concept of civilization and westernization has more salience in the American white community than it does for blacks; however, support for Israel is distributed quite evenly among racial groups.60 This even distribution may be due to the internalization of white superiority through the celebration of a “national type.” Will Herberg explains:

The “national type” as ideal has always been, and remains, pretty well fixed. It is the Mayflower, John Smith, Davy Crockett, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln that define the American’s self-image, and this is true whether the American in question is a descendant of the Pilgrims of the grandson of an immigrant from southeastern Europe.61

Those Americans who display explicitly racist tendencies – those who believe that racial groups are inherently less intelligent or violent – display the highest level of antipathy towards Israel.62 Part of most White Supremacist litanies is the belief in Jewish conspiracies and the world domination of Zion. It is, in fact, in American White Supremacists where the most virulent anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism finds fertile soil. Some would incorrectly argue that American support

59 In the month of its release, 300 outnumbered crowds for the rest of the top-10 movies combined and broke the record for best March debut ever.
62 Using the General Social Survey between 1974 and 1994 and cross-tabulating racism, as defined by thinking blacks are inherently of lower intelligence, and the Israel thermometer test, warmness towards Israel, shows little statistical significance. Controlling for race, when there is statistical significance (p<.05) it is those who believe blacks innately have a lower IQ that display the coolest attitudes toward Israel.
for Israel is due to a stripped down racism, in which Israel is seen to be a white country butting against a dark enemy. For instance, Aaron M. Love writes that Israel represents the new expression of an old white racism:

With the African liberation movements abroad and the civil rights struggle at home, the white supremacist war on African people has entered a new stage, but the war on the Arab has found its triumphant moment...Israel the white European nation in a sea of dark savagery.63

If American support for Israel was solely due to the entrance of American Jews into the pale of whiteness in the years following World War II, then Love's analysis would be correct, but the particular American Orientalism operating within the Arab-Israeli discourse has broader connotations than the normalization of Jews. It is not only that Jews became white, but that Israelis became Americans. If the delineation between the Arabs and Israel can be seen among racial lines, then that definition of race needs to be extricated from the standard notions of white and black and reconsidered as, what Michael Foucault calls, “state racism.”64 In this vein, American blacks, American whites, Jews, and Israelis are part of a broader conception of race – an American race – “in which

64 Foucault defines state racism as “a racism that society will direct against itself against its own elements and its own products. This is the internal racism of permanent purification, and it will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization.” The idea of explicitly racist state racism need be understood in a new discourse: “I think we should reserve the expression ‘racism’ or ‘racist discourse’ for something that was basically no more than a particular and localized episode in the great discourse of race war or race struggle. Racist discourse was really no more than an episode, a phase, a reversal, or at least the reworking, at the end of the nineteenth century, of the discourse of race war.” Michel Foucault et al., Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76, 1st Picador pbk. ed. (New York: Picador, 2003), 60-65.
one is either with America (good) or against America (evil).” If we reevaluate race as not a pseudo-scientific biological delineation but rather as a concept of “who is like us” – democratic, peaceful, freedom loving - then blacks and whites are part of the more expansive notion of race, and Israel should not be considered to have such high levels of support because it is “white” but, instead, because it is “like America.”

65 Mark Kelly continues: “We can define state racism as whatever ‘justified the death-function in the economy of biopower by appealing to the principle that the death of others makes one biologically stronger insofar as one is a member of a race or population.’ The word ‘biological’ in this definition is…used rather loosely, such that there is no implication that the discourse of the strength of the population needs to be couched in explicitly biological terms to be biologically racist – there simply needs to be an understanding of the population as something that is threatened by internal and external agents, and which one can grow stronger by the elimination of those threats.” Mark Kelly, “Racism, Nationalism and Biopolitics: Foucault’s Society Must Be Defended, 2003,” *Contretemps* 4 (September, 2004), 61.; also see Morgan Brigg, "Post-Development, Foucault and the Colonization Metaphor," *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (2002), 427.
III

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

The 1950's heralded a multi-denominational religious revival. One study reveals that church membership climbed from 44% of Americans in 1940 to 55% percent in 1950, peaking at 69% in 1959. Another study reports that 73% of Americans were church members in 1952. With the large baby boomer generation, parents began to affiliate with organized religion for the sake of their children who attended Sunday school, and this act by the new and numerous American families with Sunday school age children constituted the bulk of the religious revival. Beyond church membership, bible stories become reinvigorated and retold, and in 1952, 1953, and 1954 *The Holy Bible, The Revised Standard Version* was the nonfiction bestseller.

Because of these trends of the 1950's, commentators at the time could not help but talk about a pervasive, almost palpable religious awakening in the

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1 The disparity is due to two different methods of counting Church membership, either through church rosters or through individual questionnaires. Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally*, 85.
country. The fruit of this growing religiosity is uttered in the breath of most Americans in every school on each and every day, for it was only in 1954 that “Under God” was introduced into the Pledge of Allegiance, and it was two years later that Congress by unanimous vote adopted “In God We Trust” as our national motto. Because of this ubiquitous religious revival, President Eisenhower was immune from criticism when he declared “an atheistic American is a contradiction in terms.”

A barrage of new social stimuli paved the way for this religious awakening. The enormity of World War II in addition to the creation of Pandora’s atomic box produced a new social crisis which cried for a religious answer. The godless “red scare” and the capitalist-communist “battle for the minds of men” called for religious guidance and spiritual interpretation. It can also be argued, paradoxically, that the expulsion of religion from public schools did not clear the way for secular ideology, but in fact isolated it from scientific inquiry, allowing it a level of apolitical inscrutability.

The revival of the 1950’s is best described as an invigoration of religious feeling as opposed to the formality of religious practice. This tendency manifested itself as a form of identity, a lessening awareness of scripture, and a humanistic transformation. It was said that religion in America tended to be

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“religion at a very low temperature.” Religion lost its transcendental, supernatural character and reached a more inclusive, lowest-common denominator form of secularism. As religion gained importance it lost its authenticity; Americans became decreasingly interested in religion as worship and more dependent on religion as a social location or reference point. The declining significance of race and nationality gave birth to an old yet rejuvenated method of identity: religion.

Because of religion’s role as a social location, religious endogamy increased while ethnic endogamy declined, so that by the 1950’s, the trend of inter-marriages became less defined by national origin and more dependent on religious identification. Catholic Italians married Catholic Poles, Protestant British married Protestant Germans, and even Ashkenazi married Sephardic Jews. Marriage was no longer understood to be a product of nationality but a form of intra-religious integration. In America, more than seven-tenths (70.34%) of British-American, German, and Scandinavian marriages occurred within Protestant groups; an even larger proportion (72.64%) of Italians, Irish, and Poles intermarried within the Catholic group; and almost all Jews (96.10%) married other Jews.7 The marriage preferences in the 1950’s revealed a much higher degree of religious rather than ethnic endogamy.

Building upon these tendencies, Will Herberg in his study, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, offered a revamping of our national metaphor from a “melting pot” to melting pots. Employing the research conducted by the study of the same name, Herberg developed a new national metaphor – “the triple melting pot.” Herberg critiqued pluralism by offering a tripartite pluralism of social organization and national cohesion. Herberg started from the idea of Jewish playwright Israel Zangwill’s “melting pot,” but decided the soup was better digested if three pots were on the stove. Instead of everyone being dumped and simmered into a monotype American, each religious denomination, Protestants, Catholics, or Jews had their own melting pot. In this way, Irish and Italians could mix together in the Catholic stew, English and Germans clumped in the Protestant porridge, and Jews congealed in the borscht. The emerging social structure of America was “one great community divided into three big sub-communities religiously defined.” Americans had typically expected immigrants to dissolve their previous national obligations for the sake of American identity, but, and even in the days of the revolution, had never expected immigrants to abrogate their faith. Religion, therefore, offered disparate Americans a place in society which did not necessarily negate assimilation or American nationality.

The resurgence of this religious identity is founded upon the “principle of third-generation interest.” Second generation immigrants who had discarded their parents’ ethnic identifications for the sake of assimilation and pragmatism
gave birth to a third generation which yearned to learn about the days of yore; “what the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember.” The ethnic delineations of the grandparents with their foreign language and foreign culture could not satiate the desire of these American born, Americanized grandchildren; however, religion with its transnational outlook offered third generation Americans, and a large bulk of second generation Americans, the ability to satisfy the urge for both singularity and sameness because religion was as American as apple-pie. In light of this phenomenon, Herberg suggested:

> By and large, to be an American today means to be either a Protestant, a Catholic, or a Jew, because all other forms of self-identification and social location are either (like regional background) peripheral and obsolescent, or else (like ethnic diversity) subsumed under the broader head of religious community. Not to be a Catholic, a Protestant, or a Jew today is, for increasing numbers of American people, not to be anything.

For this reason, Americans were inclined to think of themselves as members of a church, whether or not they actually were, hence the significant fact that more Americans reported being a member of a church than church rolls indicated – “the avant-garde is becoming old-fashioned; religion is now the latest thing.” By creating continuity with themselves and their ancestors, religion allowed immigrants “to define their place in American society in a way that could sustain their Americanness and yet confirm the tie that bound them to their forebears.”

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9 Ibid., 55 - quoting John Hallowell.
This increase in religious identification, however, did not correlate with or foment inter-religious mistrust. The religious resurgence of the 1950’s can be characterized best by its secularism, and the three religions became homogenized and Americanized by the downplay of theological and liturgical disputes and the focus on ethical behavior and moralistic outlooks.\textsuperscript{10} By lionizing what unites instead of brooding over what divides, these three groups shared a “common religion” which, historically, has existed as the “American Way of Life,” a symbol by which Americans define themselves and establish their unity.\textsuperscript{11} Germans, for instance, unified over racial-folklore, French through culture, but for Americans, a diverse array of immigrants, the national cohesion was understood by Herberg as the American Way of Life, a peculiar sense of constitutional democracy, free enterprise, free market competition, mobility, idealism, holiday rituals and symbols – “it is a faith that every American, to the degree that he is an American, knows and understands.” It is individualistic, dynamic, pragmatic, moralistic, and forward looking; it stresses incessant activity, the need to “get ahead,” and “deeds not creeds;” it offers universal love and philanthropy but allows hatred of enemies and dangerous political parties. The American Way of Life is a uniquely American “organic structure of ideas, values, and beliefs, and beliefs that constitute a faith common to Americans and genuinely operative in their

\textsuperscript{10} Joel Schwartz, "Protestant, Catholic, Jew..." The Public Interest (Spring 2004), 109.

\textsuperscript{11} Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew.
lives, a faith that markedly influences, and is influenced by, the ‘official’ religions of American society.”

When President Eisenhower remarked that “Our government makes no sense…unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith—and I don't care what it is”, Americans understood that Eisenhower was not indifferent to religion but expressing a conviction that underneath, the three great faiths of America were really “saying the same thing.” The dissolution of the particularities of each of the three faiths allowed for a perceived unity in which all three professed similar ethical, moralistic, and spiritual outlooks which affected and were affected by the American Way of Life - a religious validation of social patterns. The American Way of Life should not be considered a synthesis of the three great faiths but rather an organically constructed civic religion which influenced and was influenced by those faiths.

To understand this fully, let me propose an example: American Protestantism, founded largely on Calvinism, originally maintained that salvation could only be achieved through election, God's arbitrary will. Working hard and doing good deeds served only as affirmation, not the attainment, of election. How-

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 This concept of the “Protestant Ethic,” was introduced by sociologist Max Weber, who wrote: “In fact, the summum bonum of this ethic, the strict earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life, ... is thought of ... purely as an end in itself, ... Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs. This reversal of what we should call the natural relationship, so irrational from a naïve point of view, is evidently as definitely a leading
ever, such a covenant of grace in this period, because of the decreasing emphasis of theology, changed to reflect more of the American Way of Life in which success was considered dependent on hard work. Inasmuch as the American Way of Life was created by the Protestant work ethic, the Protestant work ethic was changed to reflect economic competition and the need for self-reliance. Religion, instead of being the end value in and of itself, was a means to further the value of the American Way of Life:

In this reversal the Christian and Jewish faiths tend to be prized because they help promote ideals and standards that all Americans are expected to share on a deeper level than merely ‘official’ religion. Insofar as any reference is made to the God in whom all Americans ‘believe’ and of whom the ‘official’ religions speak, it is primarily as sanction and underpinning for the supreme values of the faith embodied in the American Way of Life. Secularization of religion could go further.15

Such religious sanctioning of the American way of life instills politics with the force of faith:

This religiosity very easily comes to serve as a spiritual reinforcement of national self-righteousness and a spiritual authentication of national self-will…In its crudest form, this identification of religion with national purpose generates a kind of national messianism, which sees it as the vocation of American to bring the American Way of Life, compounded almost equally of democracy and free enterprise, to every corner of the globe; in more mitigated versions, it sees God as the champion of America, endorsing American purposes, and sustaining American might.16

15 Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew.
16 Ibid.
The United States, especially in the 1950’s, was enriched by a self-righteousness which divided between the innocent, virtuous Americans and the corrupt and dangerous continents of Europe and Asia. It is through understanding Herberg’s description of the overlapping political and religious terminology and credos that Joseph McCarthy’s 1950 speech in Wheeling, West Virginia can be fully understood. McCarthy asserted: “Today we are engaged in a final, all-out between battle communistic atheism and Christianity.”17 Communism was antithetical to American capitalism, indeed, but simultaneously communism was deplored because of its atheism and rejection of the American Way of Life, religiously imbued.

JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY

Herberg’s text is an invaluable description of 1950’s America in its ideal type. Through his construal of the American Way of Life and our common religion, he is describing to us what modern commentators call “Judeo-Christian” morality, an alliance of American, Western religions against Eastern idolatry and atheism. The nomenclature “Judeo-Christian” was adopted as an overarching inclusive terminology to describe what had begun to occur by World War II in the form of an inter-faith cohesion based upon the principles of Western

THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL

democracy and capitalism. The term, therefore, was spiritual as well as political. Eisenhower, for instance, concluded that “the ideal of peace” was “another noble concept of our Judeo-Christian civilization.”18 Though we conceive of it now as a tool of conservative political commentators, it was initially introduced into the public lexicon by liberal Jewish and Christian leaders who looked to provide an alternative to pro-Fascist sympathizers and anti-Semites in the United States who had mobilized around the term Christian. Specifically, the term was employed to embrace Jews into the three “fighting faiths” of democracy in combating Nazism, Fascism, anti-Semitism, Communism, and eventually, Islamo-fascism. “As it came to be understood during the war years...this new creed expressed a distinctive and essentially pluralist American religious faith that underpinned American democracy.”19

The concept of Judeo-Christianity can be disputed on liturgical grounds: Christians believe the Messiah has come; Jews do not - a seemingly fundamental divide that offers no reconciliation. However, the introduction of the term into common parlance in the 1950's resulted from the secularization of religion and the deviance from traditional scripture. “Judeo-Christian” was an outgrowth from the symbiotic process between the American Way of Life and the American religions which reflected and converged into one another. As religion

18 Ibid.
expanded and reconditioned itself to promote moralistic and cultural ideals as opposed to the quest of scriptural study, “Judeo-Christian” became the *mot-juste* to describe the commonality of the triple-melting pot. As the apotheosis of Jewish and Christian similarity, the term gained mythic currency in that “all the sharp angles” were “broken off for the sake of correspondence.”20 The iconoclast public philosopher Arthur A. Cohen argues that “as a myth it is therefore both negative and positive, deathly and dangerous, visionary and prophetic one and the same time.”21 Though he considers it inflated with “intrinsic meaninglessness,” he cannot dismiss its overall utility as a particularly American form of dissolving borders and forging bonds where none existed. Writing in 1957, Cohen claims:

> It is in our time that the ‘Judeo-Christian tradition’ has come to full expression. It is, moreover, in our time that its mythic reality can be scrutinized. It need not be observed that the concept of the Judeo-Christian tradition has particular currency and significance in the United States. It is not a commonplace in Europe as it is here; rather Europeans are more habituated to speak of Jewish-Christian amity, to define the foundations and frontiers of community, to describe and in describing to put to rest historic canards and libels than they are to proclaim a tradition in which distinctions are fudged, diversities reconciled, differences overwhelmed by sloppy and sentimental approaches to falling in love after centuries of misunderstanding and estrangement.22

Americans fudged unity while Europeans affirmed distinction, for if the term accurately reflected the fraternity of Abrahamic faiths in America, then a second

22 Ibid.xix.
hyphen should have been added, “Judeo-Christian-Muslim.” That such an addendum was not attached betrays its subtle effects and ethnocentric designation. Marshall Grossman writes that what he considers the “violence of the hyphen” is due to its use “in a mytho-pathological way that disjoins Jewishness from the social and political practices of Jews and conjoins it to a generalized notion of ‘the West’.” The putative conjoining of Jews and Christians allowed Americans to celebrate their Judeo-Christian heritage and integration while reaffirming their illusory boundaries against outsiders, whether they were atheistic communists or Muslims. The term itself and the concept it reveals became the mortar holding together the walls of America, its national cohesion, and the logic of its existence. The concept of a Judeo-Christian heritage is a form of normalization, a technique to incorporate and embrace otherwise disparate identities against an incompatible other, and by doing so, serves to delineate between inclusion and exclusion. Judeo-Christianity became a metaphor for what are considered the American values of democracy, freedom, enterprise, and human rights – concepts which were and continue to be perceived as alien to Muslims.

23 Grossman then argues that the victim of the Judeo-Christian hyphen is actually the Jews: To which he adds: “Moreover, I want to suggest that the similarity in the rhetorical form of the two hyphens provides for a seductive chiasmus at which the Judeo- is superimposed on the colonial to identify the Jew with the persistence of the subjugated other within the post-colonial self.” Marshall Grossman, "The Violence of the Hyphen in Judeo-Christian," Social Text 22 (Spring, 1989), 122.
For instance, Robert Spencer argues that “in principal contrast to the Sharia is a Judeo-Christian value that may seem paradoxical at first glance: secularism. The Bill of Rights forbids the establishment of a religion or any prohibition ‘of the free exercise thereof.”24 Spencer’s paradoxical misappropriation of the term Judeo-Christian supplants the Bible with the United States constitution. The importance of that conflation cannot be understated - Michael Cromartie, vice president of the Washington based Ethics and Public Policy Center, told The Washington Post that a “‘Judeo-Christian understanding of things like freedom of conscience and liberty’ are embodied in the Constitution. No offense intended,’ he said, ‘but Muslims weren’t a part of that, even though they’re part of the discussion now.”25

I am not inductively arguing that every pundit speaks with such convoluted terminology, but the merging of Judeo-Christianity and American culture is seemingly widespread. In a study of U.S. newspapers (1981-2003) explicitly using the term “Judeo Christian,” 64% used it in the context of “American culture” but only 51.8% used it in the context of religion (there was overlap). And, according to the study’s director, “two thirds of the times that the term Judeo-Christian is used by an author or person quoted in an article, there was a

decidedly positive evaluation of the term...It was, in other words, seen as a good thing, something positive and socially beneficial.”

The concept of a Judeo-Christian heritage predated the explicit use of the term itself, but nevertheless the ideal it represented was foundational in garnering American support for Israel, as it is one of the many elements that allow Americans to positively evaluate that state. The universalistic ethos of American culture and ecumenical outreach of its religious institutions only spanned so far, so that Israel became part of the Judeo-Christian family while Muslims were categorically excluded. In 1951, for instance Eleanor Roosevelt in a letter to President Truman expressed her anticipation for the Muslim women of Belgrade to take off their veils and join the Twentieth Century. Muslim became a shorthand reference for political opinion that seemed irrational by Western standards. A 1950 Businessweek article about anti-Israel opinion in the Arab world mentioned that in Lebanon, “which has a large Christian population, businessmen talk openly of the need for peace.” On the other hand, “Moslem opinion” threatened the Middle-East, and the article cautioned Arab governments to be wary “less they upset diehard Moslems.” The State Department, as well, maintained such religio-centric standards. It valued Lebanon as “another

26 Ibid., 220.
enclave against the Moselm world”- a world in which any call to peace from outsiders “is like waving a red flag to a bull.” 27

The New York Times Review of Books reflected the conviction that Judeo-Christian brotherhood operated as the post-war cultural glue and that it was the Jews who were foundational to that heritage and that bond. One writer claimed that “the ethnoreligious system of Judaism expressed the particular genius of a people.” Another lauded the Jews for the legacy of great thought which they gave without remuneration to the modern world: “the wisdom which the Arabs had inherited from the Persians through them from the Greeks, and ultimately came to Western Europe, and led to the Renaissance, was due in larger part to a group of forgotten Jewish rabbis.”28 When the line was drawn dividing the earth in two, Israel and the Jews stood on the American side.

These “two worlds” of Judeo-Christianity and Islam were reified in “divided Jerusalem.” In 1947, the United Nations declared that according to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) partition plan the holy city should exist as a zone under international control. After the Israeli War of Independence (1948-49), Arabs claimed the East part of the city, Israelis the West. The mainstream American media sympathized with the Israelis because of their willingness to “compromise” and the access they would have granted to

27 Mart, Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally, 91-2. Citing a Department of State Position Paper: Lebanon, 5 May 1953.
28 Ibid., 93.
international tourists, while the Arabs were denounced for their “rejection” and aggression against the sacred city. For example, American Federation of Labor President William Green valiantly described the Israelis who had earned the rights to the city’s gates: “[Jerusalem] had been sanctified by the heroic defense which was made against the Arab attacks.” As Christians, many Americans felt they had a historical and biblical stake in Jerusalem. Edward R. Murrow framed the divided city in a 1953 television story as one about a city made holy by Jesus’s presence two millennia before. Jerusalem was also frequently referred to as the “ancient capital of the Jews.” Subsequently, “the easy acceptance of the biblical paradigm strengthened the narrative of Judeo-Christian unity which connected Israelis and Americans.”

The preponderance of biblical story-telling during the 1950’s religious revival allowed Americans to pull images from biblical contexts and apply them to the Israeli state. In a way, Israel reaped the reward of one of the most finely tuned meta-narratives in history. The story of the feeble David versus an overwhelming Goliath incorporated the Israeli struggle into its paradigm. In *The Last Temptation* and elsewhere, the Haganah was seen to not “even have a chance in a million,” and in *The Sword in the Desert*, a young Zionist tells her lover, “Israel hasn’t got one chance in a thousand.” A 1949 *Life* story on the new state explicitly stated that “Israel was born indeed, but the Jews have need of the

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29 Ibid., 95.
Shield of David to keep their nation alive.” This biblical framing allowed Jews the coveted spot of David versus Goliath, an image brought to life through their successive victories in war against indomitable odds.

When Israel routed the forces of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Algeria in the Six Day War of 1967, the image of a beleaguered state rung by hostile enemies reached legendary proportions. As cartoonists looked for visual symbols to depict the various combatants, no image was more applicable than that of an Israeli David versus an Arab Goliath. A Louisville Courier-Journal cartoon under the caption “Descendents of David” shows a tiny David with a sling-shot facing an Arab soldier so large as to take up the whole frame. He is armed with a dagger, merciless eyes, and a shield which reads “Arab Nations.” A two-panel 1967 New York Times editorial cartoon had a similar gist. The first panel is of a shirtless Arab impressing a crowd as he swallows a sword-shaped state of Israel. But in the adjacent panel is a picture of an Israeli who slings a rock at the Arab – wearing a shirt now reading “Goliath” – breaking his sword, which splinters and jabs the Soviet bear behind him in the eye. Even Arabs picked up on the imagery; a Mr. El-Manssour in a letter to the editor of Time accused Israel of cowardice, asking why it had taken to so long to engage Nasser’s threats: “O David,” he asks, “where is thy sling?” After the war,

30 Ibid., 67.
to el-Manssour's accusation of cowardice, a man from Brooklyn responded, “O Goliath, where is thine army?” The David and Goliath imagery was widespread, and this imagery could only exist given the common religious heritage of the United States.

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

By the 1970’s, the tripartite religious revival had ebbed, and a new revival burgeoned. During the 1976 United States Presidential Campaign, Jimmy Carter helped bring the term “born-again Christian” into national consciousness. Since then the terms “born again,” “fundamental,” and “evangelical” have been heard with increasing frequency in the American media. These terms are hardly synonymous, but they do involve a general exegetical interpretation of the End Times literature which mandates the return of Jews to Israel for the Christian eschatological quest. For Christian fundamentalists, there is a belief in Jewish restorationism, whereby when Jews regain sovereignty over Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, the End Times prophecies in Romans 9-12 will be revealed.

The vitality and political mobilization of the New Christian Right beginning in the late 60’s cannot be understated. By 1980, religious book sales

34; “The Deliverer will come from Zion/he will banish ungodliness from Jacob/and this will be my covenant with them/when I take away their sins.” Romans 9:26-27; For scholarly interpretation, see Matt Waymeyer, "The Dual Status of Israel in Romans 11:28," TMSJ 16, no. 1 (Spring 2005).
constituted one third of all commercial book sales, one of seven radio stations was “Christian” owned and operated, evangelical schools enrolled almost a million children, with two new schools established every 24 hours, Christian broadcasters hit 20% of the entire United States viewing audience, and the largest single advertising budget ever compiled was by the Campus Crusade for Christ which raised over a billion dollars to evangelize every man, woman, and child on earth.35

The surge of evangelism and fundamentalism occurred predominantly in the South – in 1979, 50% of Americans who believed in the literal interpretation of the Bible lived in the region – which was an important development in America’s relationship with Israel because that region has historically been rife with anti-Semitism.36 Poll data compiled from the 50’s and 60’s showed the South to be the most anti-Semitic region in the nation, but by the 1970’s such regional anti-Semitism began to ebb.37 Jews became less and less seen as “atheist-beatnik-nigger-lovers” and attained a new-found, privileged identity.38 This is hardly to say anti-Semitism among Southern Christian fundamentalists died - the End Times literature in itself calls for the destruction of a people through conversion - but Jews were at least seen as necessary pieces in that eschatological

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36 In 1979, 27% of those believe in the literal interpretation lived in the Mid-West. Ibid., 134.
37 Dinnerstein, Antisemitism in America, 175.
38 Quotation taken from Dinnerstein.
puzzle. Eli Evan noted in 1973 that it was then “easier to be Jewish in the South” than it had been in earlier decades. In 1972, the Southern Baptist Convention issued a decree condemning anti-Semitism. In that same year, Neil November, the new President of the Richmond Jewish Community Council, acknowledged that in his city “we’ve at least begun to scratch the surface of changing the image of the fat, bald-headed, long-nosed, money-man Jew...to that of the strong, wavy-haired, tall guy that you’d better watch out for.”

With the proliferation of End Times literature, the last bastions of virulent anti-Semitism became permeated by a newfound respect, or at least need, for Jews. In fact, the South currently displays the highest level of sympathy and favorability towards Israel compared to all other regional groups. Yet Christian Zionism cannot be considered the only reason for such a decisive shift. Many conservative Christians are also impressed by the religious nature of Israel and the achievements of Jewish Orthodox forces in such matters as observing the Sabbath and important religious festivals, public financing of religious education, and the influential role of traditional religion in public life. And

39 Arthur Cohen argues that the End Times prophecy is anti-Semitic in itself because it is inherently the negation of a people. Cohen, The Myth of the Judeo-Christian Tradition.
40 Dinnerstein, Antisemitism in America, 194.
41 61% of the South sympathizes with Israel, compared to the East (51%), the Midwest (55%), and the West (54%). Frank Newport, “Republicans and Religious Americans Most Sympathetic to Israel.” The previous Gallup results are authenticated by the General Social Survey. In 1974, the South was the most likely to “dislike” Israel, but by 1994, they were the most likely to “like” Israel. General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center, Chicago.
though many Christian conservatives acknowledge that Israelis are probably no more religious than most Americans,

It helps the morale of conservative Christian forces in the United States to think that there exists in Israel living proof that the model of radical separation of church and state is not the only model available for consideration by people of goodwill who are concerned about recent trends in respect to the public role of religion in the United States and about public morality.\(^{42}\)

Since the mid-90’s, members of the conservative Israeli Likud party have found more consistent support from the Christian Right than from the all-too-liberal Jews, and its members routinely go on Bible Belt tours to promote their policy.\(^{43}\) Interestingly enough, it was through the zealotry of Christianity that Jews found their place in the traditional den of the enemy.

From the 1950’s until the 1970’s, a secularized form of religion reflected the American Way of Life, defined by enterprise, freedom, human rights, and democracy. Israel, the Jewish state, was embraced by this expansive religious identification which spoke more of political outlooks than it did of theology. The terminology of Judeo-Christianity was used to both embrace Jews and shun outsiders; it was both inclusive and exclusionary. In the 1970’s, a new religious fervor grew predominantly in the South, incorporating Jews, and specifically

\(^{42}\) This tendency may not be only within the Christian Conservative movement. Many Americans (64%) believe that religion can be the answer to “all or most of today’s problems,” 73% of Americans are “convinced God exists,” and 85% consider religion to be important in their own lives; Paul Charles Merkley, Christian Attitudes Towards the State of Israel (McGill-Queen’s University, 2001), 201; “Religion,” Gallup News Service January 23, 2007.

\(^{43}\) Lieven, America Right or Wrong., 182.
Israel, within its eschatological puzzle. Israel was incorporated into both the ecumenical Judeo-Christian dialogue as well as the fervent Christian Right, a group which had historically been oppositional to Jews. Jews and Israelis secured their place in the American Protestant-Catholic-Jewish unity, its Judeo-Christian heritage, and the Christian eschatological destiny.
Conventional understanding emphasizes a causal relationship between the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel. The argument proceeds through reasoning that the world, represented in 1947 by the United Nations, mid-wifed the birth of Israel through its sense of collective guilt over the mistreatment of Jews under Hitler. Sanctioning Israeli sovereignty was, and continues to be, a method of whitewashing the sins of global indifference and appeasement to Nazi atrocities. The state of Israel serves then as a posthumous victory over Hitler and a vicarious reconciliation by the rest of the world with their decade of apathy.

This interpretation is most trenchantly aimed at the United States, whose racially imbued restrictive immigration policies have been reproved mercilessly as a cause of needless Jewish deaths. Commonly decried is the iconic St. Louis, a ship carrying nine hundred and fifty Jewish refugees which in 1939 was close enough to Miami to see the city’s lights through the humid haze but was turned around at Roosevelt’s request, and its passengers ultimately perished
in the Holocaust. The success of David Wyman’s *The Abandonment of the Jews* pays homage to that conception of American remorse. At the dedication of the National Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993, President Clinton reiterated such a lamentation: “Before the war even started, doors to liberty were shut, and even after the United States and the Allies attacked Germany, rail lines to the camps within miles of militarily-significant targets were left undisturbed.”

From this standpoint, American support for the State of Israel seems a logical reconciliation with its own inaction, a responsible measure for wiping the slates clean. Such a causal interpretation is understandable because the end of the Holocaust and the formal establishment of the State of Israel occurred within only two years of each other. It is assumed that Western countries, and in the case of this analysis, the United States, felt a sense of guilt after World War II, that in the emaciated bodies of survivors they saw a glimmer of hope, the land of Palestine shining in their eyes. But if guilt were the motivating factor, then this episode would be the first time in history the world had ever cried.

Such a misconception, however, is commonly advanced as undocumented, self-evident truth: “As we now know,” writes Tad Szulc, Allied guilt over inaction during the Holocaust “played an overwhelming role in persuading all the big powers to create the state of Israel.” The Western world, writes another, “voted in late 1947 to give the Jews their own state as partial remittance for its

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complicity in the Nazi Holocaust.” The Holocaust, writes David Horowitz, “created a guilt complex among non-Jews.” “The leadership of the Western world, especially in America,” write Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, “could not escape the guilt. A shamefaced, remorseful postwar West now supported the Jewish demand for an independent state in Palestine.”2 Benny Morris notes that “the value of the Holocaust in cementing U.S.-Israel relationship has certainly faded since the late 1940’s.”3 Associating the modern psychological phenomenon of survivor’s guilt with the true mechanisms of realpolitik is a retrospective analysis which seems to “fit” now but which cannot withstand historical scrutiny.

The United Nations Resolution 181 which called for the partition of Palestine makes no reference to the Jewish genocide in Europe. The proceedings and discussions among the member states, as well, provide “little indication in the opinions expressed by the different nations to show that the Holocaust had influenced their positions.” American approval and recognition of the Jewish state as articulated by politicians never mentioned the European atrocities. The United Nations gave equal weight to the claims of both the Jews and the Palestinians, which is why they decided to divide the land.4

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2 Ibid., 71.
4 Novick argues that it was in the first twenty-five years of Israeli independence, when the Holocaust should have been most salient, that the United States was the least supportive of the state. Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 71; Evyatar Friesel, "The Holocaust: Factor in the Birth of Israel," in *SHOAH Resource Center* (Yad Vashem).
As for the American public, guilt could not be a motivating factor for the creation of the Jewish state because in 1947, Americans were unaware they should feel guilty. During and after the years of World War II, Americans remained uninformed about the enormity of Jewish suffering at the hands of the Nazis. The *New York Times*, considered then as it is now as a newspaper of record, combined with its many Jewish subscribers and Jewish owners, seems a reasonable case to study the national tendency to downplay the particularly Jewish nature of Hitler’s exterminations. It is true that the *Times* did report on what is now considered the Holocaust, and a student of Holocaust studies can generate a detailed account of the roughly six years of war through its articles. According to Laurel Leff’s systematic analysis of *Times* articles during those six years in which World War II can be considered to have formally occurred, 1939-1945, the *Times* ran 1,147 stories about what was happening to the Jews of Europe generally, an average of 17 stories a month or one story every other day.\(^5\) If they chose to, Americans could know of what we now consider the Holocaust.

However, the placement of and emphasis put upon those news stories obfuscated the particular Jewish dimension of Hitler’s annihilation. A newspaper has the ability to demonstrate the importance of a news story by making it a lead day after day and branching several stories from that lead. A newspaper, as

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well, can run editorials, magazine pieces, weekly and yearly summaries, all ways to emphasize the urgency of a news story – but the *Times* never did this with the Holocaust. The lack of emphasis placed upon the events which constitute the Holocaust allowed news to be read, but possibly not understood, understood but possibly not remembered. Americans were aware of the millions of innocents lost to Hitler’s violent machinations, but the Jewish victimization which was disproportionately represented in the victims of the Third Reich was relegated to side stories underneath and in between more universalized accounts of extermination. Of the approximately 23,000 front page stories during the sixty-eight months of European war, only forty-two, just about 0.18%, were about what was happening to the Jews specifically, and even in those cases the Jewish identity of the victims was slipped underneath the cover, obfuscating the singular Jewish persecution. Because of the tendency for journalists to elide the specific Jewish persecutions, if you were an American during the years of World War II:

You could have read the front page of *The New York Times* in 1939 and 1940 without knowing that millions of Jews were being sent to Poland, imprisoned in ghettos, and dying of disease and starvation by the tens of thousands. You could have read the front page in 1941 without knowing that the Nazis were machine-gunning hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union. You could have read the front page in 1942 and not have known, until the last month, that the Germans were carrying out a plan to annihilate European Jewry. In 1943, you would have been told once that Jews from France, Belgium, and the Netherlands were being sent to slaughterhouses in Poland and that more than half of the Jews of Europe were dead, but only in the context of a single story on a rally by Jewish groups that devoted more
space to who had spoken than to who had died. In 1944, you would have learned from the front page of the existence of horrible places such as Maidanek and Auschwitz, but only inside the paper could you find that the victims were Jews. In 1945, Dachau and Buchenwald were on the front page, but the Jews were buried inside.6

Even after the liberation of Auschwitz, now known to be a Jewish extermination camp, when newspaper accounts meticulously described the gas chambers, piles of ashes, mounds of corpses - even the manufacturer of the crematoria, Topf and Son, was named - the Times secularized the victims, referring to them as “more than 4,000,000 citizens of various nations – France, Netherlands, Italy, Hungary, Poland.”7 The genocide of World War II which is considered by historians, scholars, pundits, and journalists to be at least a profound Jewish calamity, were, at the time, considered transnational citizens of Hitler’s persecutions, not delineated by any particular religion, race or ethnicity but simply held together by antagonism or resistance towards Hitler’s rule. Even if Americans did know of the Jewish tragedy, because of the unfounded atrocity stories of World War I they were hardly inclined to believe them. Thus, in January 1943, though it was a certifiable and known fact that two million Jews had been killed or deported since the war began, less than half the population believed it. Almost two years later in December 1944, over three-quarters of the public

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6 Ibid., 67.
7 James Carroll, “Shoah in the News: Patterns and Meanings of News Coverage of the Holocaust,” in Discussion Paper (Boston: Harvard University, October 1997), 5. Some argue that this reluctance to mention the Jewish victims was due to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, an American Jew who owned and operated The Times, who they hold accountable for eliding Jewish suffering for the sake of assimilation: “If Judaism was his faith, however, assimilation was Sulzberger’s religion.” Ron Hollander, “Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper,” American Jewish Studies 92, no. 3 (September 2004), 380.
believed that Germans had “murdered many people in concentration camps,” but the bulk of respondents estimated the number dead at 100,000 or fewer.8

After the war, those whose lives were inexorably changed, whose homes were destroyed and families lost, were not yet considered “survivors.” Instead, they were “displaced persons” or “DP’s” and “refugees.” The characterization of these refugees as predominantly Jewish was a retroactive application onto what President Roosevelt innocuously called “the unfortunates.”9 To argue that Americans supported a Jewish state as remuneration for a particularly Jewish genocide is to give them historical knowledge which at the time was unknown. The argument, as well, that Americans were sympathetic to the mass of Jewish refugees who no longer had a place to call home and therefore needed the land of Israel is equally unsupportable. In 1947 and after two years of authentication of Hitler’s Judeocide, when Americans were asked about the nature of displaced persons still in refugee camps, only 13% them identified the refugees as Jews.10

A “collective failure” to understand that the Nazis were engaged in a specific genocide, the liberal idea that Jews were one among many victims, the belief that America was waging a wider, world spanning war, and the desire to not give grist to isolationist’s demands by portraying the war as one for the Jews contributed

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8 Stember goes on to say, “The public almost certainly was not aware at first how large a proportion of the victims had been Jews. Even by the end of the war, when Hitler’s policy of systematic murder probably was generally known in this country, the public does not seem to have realized the extent to which Jews were special targets of his wrath.” Stember, *Jews in the Mind of America*, 141.


10 Most believed them to be Catholic or victims of political persecution. Stember, *Jews in the Mind of America*, 150.
to this general tendency to obscure the Jewish dimension of Hitler's destruction. Americans were not yet inclined to identify Hitler's victims and European Jews as one in the same, and early American support for the state of Israel cannot be claimed to have originated from Holocaust sympathy.

Beyond the press, the Holocaust was also not mentioned in conversation. Those survivors who immigrated to the United States and had first hand accounts of Hitler's Jewish extermination were admonished to keep silent about what they had witnessed. For example, one such survivor was told by his aunt, “If you want to have friends here in America, don’t keep talking about your experiences. Nobody’s interested and if you tell them, they’re going to hear it once and then the next time they’ll be afraid to come see you. Don’t ever speak about it.” The American baby-boomer Jews growing up in the 1950’s also rarely discussed the Holocaust. Their parents felt inhibited from invoking it, as they were wary of exploiting the Holocaust to garner support for Israel or special treatment for Jews because on one hand, Jews in the 1950’s and 60’s did not want to be identified as victims by their fellow Americans, and on the other hand, and especially during the McCarthy era when public perception was dominated by belief in an international Communist conspiracy, the Jewish community like many “foreign minorities” wished to lower its profile, especially since many Jews fell into the liberal camp, and thwart allegations of bi-

nationalism.\textsuperscript{13} This is not to say the Holocaust was silenced, but it was only discussed in a form of quiet memory rather than public commemoration.

**UNIVERSALIZING**

The temerity towards publicizing the Jewish nature of the Holocaust was expressed and reinforced by the American forms of cultural production about World War II and the Holocaust which de-Judeocized the Nazi annihilation. From Hollywood to Broadway, Americans and Jews alike did not care to mention the particular Jewish claim to the Holocaust. The 1947 Hollywood film *Gentlemen’s Agreement* which linked genteel anti-Semitism with other values poised to undercut the nation never once mentioned the Nazi extermination. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which opened on stage in 1955, won the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Critics Circle Award, and the Tony Award for best play. Yet nowhere on stage were the identifiable Jewish parts of the *Diary*, Anne’s nightmare, the Chanukah celebration, and the Gestapo hammering on the Frank’s door, to be seen. The producers, who were themselves Jewish, felt compelled to “tone down” the play’s Judaism and to tell her tale as a story “not about Jewishness but as a story of universality, about unfailing optimism and the strength of the

human spirit as manifested in the face of terrible deprivations."14 When the play was adapted for cinema in 1959, the Jewish Film Advisory Committee lauded it for its universalizing of suffering: “It could have very easily been an outdated Jewish tragedy by less creative or more emotional handling – even a Jewish ‘Wailing Wall,’ and hence regarded as mere propaganda.” William L. Shirer’s record-breaking 1960 bestseller *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* resonated throughout American society, but only 2 or 3 percent of his 1,200 page book is devoted to the murder of European Jews, a proportion which no critic commented on.15 This is not to say the American public ignored the Holocaust, but the accounts which were not universalized were not significantly remembered. Deborah Lipstadt argues that in the post-war “can-do, optimistic spirit” that pervaded America there was simply no room for accounts of such a horrendous crime:

> The postwar boom was in full swing. It did not seem to be an appropriate time to focus on a painful past, particularly a past which seemed to be of no direct concern to this country. This even had transpired on another continent. It had been committed by another country against “an-other” people. What relevance did it have for Americans?16

The particular Jewish nature of the Holocaust had the potential to enter public awareness in 1960 with the capture of ex-Nazi Adolf Eichman from Argentina

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16 The Holocaust was featured in the CBS religious series, *Look up and Live*, ABC's *Directions* broadcast *The Final Ingredient* about a group of Jews celebrating their last Passover Seder at Belsen, *This is Your Life* featured nine segments on the Holocaust, *Judgment at Nuremberg* was made into a movie in 1961. Deborah E. Lipstadt, "American and the Memory of the Holocaust, 1950-1965," *Modern Judaism* 16, no. 3 (Oct, 1996), 197.
by the Mossad, the Israeli equivalent of the C.I.A. Tried and executed in Israel for war-crimes, Israeli actions worried American Jews about invigorating the stereotype of Jewish vengeance as well as the general tendency not to isolate the newly democratic West Germany which was an ally against the pervasive threat of the Soviet Union. Subsequently, American Jewish groups worked to present the Eichmann trial to the public in a universalist fashion. Attorney General Gideo Hausner opened the trial by placing Eichmann in a genealogy that extended from Pharoah through Haman, Chmielnicki, and Petlura. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the Israeli government's intention was “to alert the conscience of the world to the fearful consequences of totalitarianism.” The trial was “not a case of special pleading for Jews...What happened to the Jews of Europe...can very well happen to other peoples oppressed by totalitarianism.” John Slawson of the American Jewish Committee in a meeting with television executives told them that the purpose of the trial was to confront “hatred and totalitarianism...and their continued presence in the world today.” The themes that the television executives were to stress were that “this must never happen again anywhere to any people” and “this is the result of letting bigotry grow.” The media picked up on these themes, framing the Eichmann trial as a warning against the constant threat of totalitarianism, and the dominant theme became “man's inhumanity to man.” Midge Decter of the American

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17 The concept of “Jewish vengeance” results from the perception of the duality of God, the Old Testament's “God of Vengeance” and the New Testament's “God of Love.”
Jewish Committee Staff analyzed press reaction, and in an internal memorandum wrote that the trial’s encapsulation within a “liberal democratic world-view,” meant that it, “far from reminding the world of Jewish fate may, in America at least, have closed the books on it forever.” Her analysis appears to be correct. Though 86% of Americans reported having heard or read about the Eichmann trial in 1961, 44% reported it made them no more or no less sympathetic towards Israel and the Jewish people. The trial, as well, had no elucidatory effects on the nature of the Nazi genocide; by the end of the trial Americans agreed that the execution of Eichmann was a “good thing” but were largely unaware of some of the trial’s most basic information. Only 20% knew and believed that six million had actually been killed.

Peter Novick argues that the Jewish Holocaust only became a salient phenomenon in the late 1960s, and this development occurred in two stages, both contingent upon Israel. The first stage occurred in 1967, when the combined Arab armies in the Middle East threatened Israel’s imminent destruction. During the war’s escalation, Arab spokesmen were vociferously calling for the total

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19 Gallup Poll #648, (7/25/1961). 34% of Americans reported it made them feel more sympathetic, only 5% said it made them feel less. Gallup Poll #647, (6/21/1961).
annihilation of Israel. In 1967 they threatened to “wipe Israel off the map” and “drive the Jews into the sea.” One boasted that “the surviving Jews will be helped to return to their native countries,” but, he added, “there will be very few survivors.”

While President Johnson and his intelligence experts pondered whether it would take at least a week or at most ten days for Israel to devastate its opponents, American Jews were struck with panic, a visceral fear of a second annihilation. As Jews became more safely situated in the United States and McCarthy era fears of subversion and binationalism ebbed, the initial inhibitions which had previously self-censured the Jewish community evaporated.

Jews all over the country began to engage in a series of rallies and fund-raising efforts for the embattled state. The secularization of Judaism and its concomitant lack of Jewish literacy, endogamy, and fulfillment of religious obligations were all permissible as long as support for Israel was strong. For Jews, the politics of Israel mattered not, for Israel was a metaphor, a dream-like or mythological affirmation of Jewish fortitude. Charles Liebman, a scholar of Diaspora-Israel relations, succinctly explains: “Israel is a symbol, its particular policies are not very important to American Jews.” For instance, by the 1980’s, fewer than one third of American Jews knew that archenemies Mencachem Begin and Shimon Peres were members of different parties.

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22 Shain, “American Jews and the Construction of Israel's Jewish Identity.”, 192.
The energy and emotions released by the 1967 war were channeled into the establishment of pro-Israeli organizations, and former traditional Jewish-American institutions were reevaluated with a greater emphasis on Israel’s role in their constitutions. The intensity of the 1967 war and its aftermath “transformed Israel in the life of American Jews from a country about whose fate many of them cared into a country about whose survival they were obsessed.” In 1967, 665 Americans emigrated to Israel, but in 1969, 5,739 did. In 1967, 90,700 Americans visited Israel, but in 1968, the number of American tourists totaled 153,500. Besides trinkets and Judaica, American Jews who traveled to Israel brought intangible vestiges of it back to the United States: Sephardic Israeli terms like kippa replaced yarmulke, and pronunciations like Shabbat replaced Shabbas, and bat replaced bus mitzvah. For American Jews, the 1967 war introduced Holocaust memories into their collective consciousness, and “the Holocaust [became]...a question that history posed about the fate of the Jews, a question to which the establishment of the state and its continued strength is thought to provide an answer.” The answer Israel provided entered the collective consciousness through appealing to what influential though controver-
sial scholar Jacob Neusner calls the folk theology of “Holocaust and Redemption”:

The extermination of European Jewry could become the Holocaust only on 9 June [1967] when, in the aftermath of a remarkable victory, the State of Israel celebrated the return of the people of Israel to the ancient wall of the Temple of Jerusalem. On that day the extermination of European Jewry attained the – if not happy, at least viable – ending that served to transform events into a myth, and to endow a symbol with a single, ineluctable meaning.28

The first stage of Peter Novick’s analysis, the 1967 war, caused Jews to remember the Holocaust and appropriate the trauma into Israel’s saga. With the second stage, the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the memory spread to the American public as well. During 1973 war, the combined Arab armies launched a surprise attack on Israel during Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, when most Israeli Jews were in prayer. Though ultimately victorious, that victory came with a heavy loss of human lives, and perhaps the greatest loss of all was Israel’s perceived “invincibility.” The surprise attack in 1973 cast doubt on the credibility and survivability of a Jewish homeland. Jews around the world clamored in crisis: “Was Israel’s establishment a mistake?”; “What is the point of the Jewish

28 Citing Jacob Neusner, in Novick, The Holocaust in American Life., 150. Jacob Neusner is decried by many Jews because his views on Jewish theology are hardly neutral and are from a haskalah standpoint, specifically secular philosophy applied to religious scripture. However, I feel this quotation is reflective exactly because it properly elucidates American Judaism at the time, which, given the secularization of religion, lead to more of a philosophical than a theological approach. Neusner writes the following: “There is no ‘Jewish way’ of organizing experience and interpreting reality, although there was and is a Judaic way; There is no single Jewish ideology, indeed no single, unitary Jewish history, although there once was a cogent Judaic theology and a Judaic view of a unitary and meaningful progression of events to be called ‘Jewish history’. . . . There once was such a system, but in the secular revolution it has collapsed.” Jacob Neusner, Stranger at Home: "The Holocaust," Zionism, and American Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 80.
people’s existence?”; “All those who were killed, was it worthwhile?” The Arab quest for annihilation invoked the memory of the Holocaust in the minds of Jews for years to come, and “what in May 1967 had been a brief and soon-dissipated fear of a renewed Holocaust became an enduring specter.”

As the Holocaust became enmeshed with the state of Israel, the Jews who initially upheld only Jewish commemoration of the Holocaust, for the Holocaust belongs to Jews in a way it does not belong to non-Jews, increasingly began to see merit in bringing Holocaust education to the gentile masses. Novick, while acknowledging that he in no way is arguing for a Jewish conspiracy or Jewish domination of the media, admits that “anyone who would explain the massive attention the Holocaust has received in the media in recent years without reference to [Jews] is being naïve or disingenuous.” It is true that as the state of Israel became important to Jews, as Israel’s fate edged closer to Auschwitz, and as Jews became more distanced from the silencing of the 50’s and 60’s, American Jews played their part in evoking American sympathy for Israel through wide-scale Holocaust appreciation. The Holocaust became not only a Jewish memory, but an American memory as well. In 1978, NBC’s April miniseries *The Holocaust* was watched by half of surveyed Americans. With over 100

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30 Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*.
31 Ibid., 207.
32 Gallup Poll #101, (1978). Richard Libowitz the acceptability of the Holocaust in public life was underscored by the television program, “whose sanitized presentation of genocide, love on the run and happy
million Americans watching the program, “more information about the Holocaust was imparted to more Americans over those four nights than over all the preceding thirty years.” The Holocaust edged its way into the public school curriculum, and efforts began on a national Holocaust Memorial.

The entrance of the Holocaust in the American social memory and public commemoration occurred because of Israel, instead of what is commonly believed to be Israel’s entrance in the American mind because of the Holocaust. Peter Novick argues that the particular interaction between Israel and the Holocaust as they operate in American life combines the state of Israel with the ethical infallibility of the Holocaust, allowing it a level of mythological and easily defined morality. As Americans “no longer saw the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in black-and-white terms, the Holocaust offered a substitute symbol of infinitely greater moral clarity.”
This moral clarity is created by the unique form of American Holocaust commemoration, which has been labeled the “Americanization of the Holocaust.”

The most important facet of Americanization operating with the Holocaust discourse is the idea of redemption, and this concept of redemption has interwoven American heritage and political realities with the lessons of the Holocaust. For instance, Alvin Rosenfeld isolates “the American tendency to downplay or deny the dark and brutal sides of life and to place a preponderant emphasis on the saving power of individual moral conduct and collective deeds of redemption.” The Holocaust, which casts doubt on a benevolent God, which gives grist to theodicy, and which for some can be seen as irredeemably evil, has over time become imbued with an American drive for redemption out of defeat, a battle for the war. Rosenfeld writes that Americans are willing to confront the Holocaust: “a terrible event, yes, but ultimately not tragic or depressing; an experience shadowed by the specter of a cruel death, but at the same time not without the ability to inspire, console, uplift.” Americans have appropriated the Holocaust by injecting it with the American concept of martyrdom and rejuvenation, much like our “victory culture,” a sacrifice for a greater end. Jean

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Baudrillard warns that “when you add repentance and moral good conscience to a traumatic event, in a way you sanction it and take its ruptural energy from it...The event is distanced from us once and for all by the very means available to us for remembering it.”

For this modification and reinterpretation of history, Holocaust stories of redemption have eclipsed more brooding and mournful accounts. Successive reproductions of The Diary of Anne Frank, for instance, have sprinkled a “sugar-coating” onto the death and despair. The text of the book was reordered for the theater production, so that when the curtain closed and the lights dimmed, the audience is left with Anne’s cheery aphorism: “I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart.” More modern accounts are defined by a similar American redemption. Consider the final scene of Schindler’s List, a film met with such encomia as to give it the position as the definitive take on the Holocaust. The bleak black-and-white Nazi imagery transitions into a colorful procession of the surviving “Schindler Jews” shot in Israel, a new flower blossoming from mud – “the contrast is clear, as is the point...” Because the success and security American Jews enjoy is created through

39 Deborah Lipstadt asks, “in fact, Anne wrote those famous lines before her experiences in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, where first she watched her beloved sister die as a result of starvation, disease, and exposure to the elements, and then succumbed to the same herself. Would she have been inclined to write such uplifting lines at that time?” Lipstach, "American and the Memory of the Holocaust, 1950-1965.", 197.
genuine attachment and identification with American culture, it has become increasingly difficult to render the Holocaust without American themes.

In the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for instance, American soldiers are given the coveted position of liberators, imbuing the redemption of the Holocaust with an American dimension. Because political exigencies in the present affect our representations of the past, the Holocaust Museum has become a remarkable lionization of American nationalism and military might. When President Reagan received a letter arguing that the Holocaust, a genocidal crime committed by alien tyranny, should not be given a spot in the Washington Mall, he responded: “Although some have questioned the wisdom of placing the memorial for a European catastrophe so close to the gleaming symbols of our democracy, the lessons of the Holocaust...belong here.”

But what are these lessons, and how are these lessons conveyed? Peter Burke argues that history, because it is a social possession, is solely a social creation. “Society, he argues, “through commemoration, transmission of traditions, public monuments, and reenactments, attempts to impose interpretations of the past, to shape memory.” None of us were alive for the original Independence Day, but we know it intimately through public commemoration.

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41 Jr. Marouf Hasian, “Remembering and Forgetting The “Final Solution”: A Rhetorical Pilgrimage through the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum,” Critical Studies in Media Communication 21, no. 1 (March 2004), 73 (emphasis added). Consider how different this was in 1964, when the New York City’s Arts Commission rejected a planned memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising because Newbold Morris, the parks commissioner, claimed the city had to ensure that “monuments in the parks...be limited to events of American history.” Monty Noam Penkower, "Shaping Holocaust Memory,” American Jewish History 88, no. 1 (2000).
Such a collectivist version of history, not in the positivist, objective sense, but as an interpersonal and social creation, allows for the transmission of history which is distinct from the actual event, a history created by present needs and influences: “the point is that we have access to the past...only via the categories and schemata...of our own culture.” Burke argues that the direct result of these schemas’ transformational power is the creation of a new history, a hyperbolized simulacrum or myth, not necessarily inaccurate, but nonetheless a story wrought with “symbolic meaning made up of stereotyped incidents.” The stereotyping of historical knowledge derives from the repository of caricatures in the social memory of a given society.42 Within Holocaust commemoration there exists what Primo Levi describes as a “desire for simplification,” a basic need to divide the world into clearly defined categories of ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The Holocaust Museum, instead of harping on Jewish suffering, serves as an invigoration of the American ideal: “Not only does this representation of history facilitate the integration of the Holocaust into the historical consciousness of Americans, it also promotes a sense of patriotism by juxtaposing the goodness of the United States with the evil of Nazi Germany.”43

In a sense, American liberation and the Holocaust are two sides of the same coin, whereby knowledge of the Holocaust is connected to American

42 Burke, “History as Social Memory.”, 98-104.
pride. The Americanization of the Holocaust as it is portrayed in museums creates victims which resemble middle-class Americans, for this is the simplest and most effective promotion of identification. And if the idea that the victims of the Holocaust were simply citizens, like us, does not hold, then the overwhelming Christian imagery is sure to garner attention. As Novick writes, think of:

the ritual of reverently following the structured pathways of the Holocaust in the major museums, which resembles nothing so much as the Stations of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa; the fetishized objects on display like so many fragments of the True Cross or shin bones of saints; the symbolic representations of the Holocaust – notably in the climax of Eli Wiesel’s Night – that employ crucifixion imagery.

The survivor has become the secular saint.

The Holocaust emboldens the concept of the mythogenesis of history and the creation of easily digestible stories, a method of delineating clearly between those that are good and those who are evil, the fights of the ennobled against those who wish ill-will. The term Holocaust itself comes from the Greek meaning “burnt offering.” This definition assumes that destruction comes with a benefit, so that the sacrifice is made for a greater good. Contrast that nomenclature with the Hebrew word for the same event, “Shoah,” which simply means

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44 Dochartaigh, “Americanizing the Holocaust: The Case of Jakob the Liar,” 458
45 Novick, The Holocaust in American Life, 11.
“catastrophe.” It is an American idealization to find redemption in the depths of despair, to create martyrs out of senseless dead.

James Young writes that “the matrix of a nation’s monuments employs the story of ennobling events, of triumphs over barbarism, and recalls the martyrdom of those who gave their lives in the struggle for national existence – who, in the martyrological refrain, died so that a nation might live.” It is in this vein that support for Israel is a particularly American phenomenon, as the Holocaust itself has lodged itself uniquely into the American social consciousness. After the 1967 war, as the Holocaust became increasingly used by Jewish organizations and pundits as a de facto justification for the existence of a Jewish State, support for Israel because of the Holocaust, because of that Holocaust in which Americans have learned to find redemption, becomes a patriotic response. And, Americans, it can be argued, are neither ignorant nor indifferent to the destruction of European Jews: in a survey conducted in 1999, it was ranked as the fourth most important event in the twentieth century. Americans support Israel because Americans find in it the redeeming power of the Holocaust. In that story of redemption, in that greater glory in which all other struggles are

48 The five most important events for Americans were World War II (71%), women gaining the right to vote (60%), dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshimaj (66%), the Holocaust (65%), and the Civil Rights Act (58%); David W. Moore Frank Newport, Lydia Saad, "The Most Important Events of the Century from the Viewpoint of the People," in Gallup News Service (December 6, 1999).
subsumed, Israel acts much like the United States, a haven against the world’s injustice, where tragedy finds its reason.
STRATEGIC ALLIES

THE FRAME

Foreign policy beliefs are organized in a hierarchical structure. On the top of this hierarchy are “core values” such as morality of warfare, in the middle are “general postures” such as militarism, and at the bottom are “specific issues” like direct military involvement in a given situation. This organization leads to a “vertical constraint,” whereby “specific foreign-policy attitudes are bound by more abstract, general beliefs.” ¹ Polling data in both the United States and Great Britain provides comparative support for the “strongest version” of this top-down value hierarchy model and how these “broader and more abstract domain assessments or dispositions serve to structure foreign policy beliefs.”²

There is ample evidence to suggest that Americans are uninformed about foreign policy, global politics, and outside cultures. But ignorance does not necessitate objectivity. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Therefore, the first (specific issues) and sometimes second (general postures) rungs of the ladder

cannot be properly formulated, and as “cognitive misers” they must look to the highest rung (core values), in all its platitudes, for the structuring of their foreign policy beliefs. The public is forced to rely upon an “associative framework” which relegates their attitudes on foreign policy to a “symbolic realm,” leaving them dependent upon a few “heuristic shortcuts about general postures toward the world.”

A general unawareness of factual and contextual knowledge as well as the reliance upon symbolic cues creates a “mythic discourse” or “pseudoenvironment” where foreign policy is “translated from a story of money and power to a simple moral tale.” This tale is woven through “the marriage of information and values” and the characters in it are given the standard judgments of good or bad. The public relies upon this narrative as a simplifying response to “to cope with an extraordinarily confusing world,” and in this case, an extraordinarily convoluted history of Middle-East regional geo-politics. As Shimon

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1 Lewis, Constructing Public Opinion: How Political Elites Do What They Like and Why We Seem to Go Along with It, 132.
2 Richard Sobel, The American Political Science Review 93, no. 4 (December 1999), 1017.
3 Lewis, Constructing Public Opinion: How Political Elites Do What They Like and Why We Seem to Go Along with It, 134.
5 Lewis, Constructing Public Opinion: How Political Elites Do What They Like and Why We Seem to Go Along with It, 135.
7 Lewis, Constructing Public Opinion: How Political Elites Do What They Like and Why We Seem to Go Along with It, 1114.
Apisdorf puts it, “Once upon a time, the Middle East was a difficult place to understand, and then it got totally confusing.”

The need for simplification relies on organizational frames, the notion that we perceive through regulatory schemas and the creation of comparisons, and these frames organize experience “by rendering events or occurrences meaningful” and “simplifying and condensing aspects of the ‘world out there.’” William Gamson identifies the “strategic interest” frame as the dominant paradigm functioning within the Arab-Israeli discourse from around the 1950’s until the 1970’s:

The official frame, STRATEGIC INTERESTS, understands the issue in geopolitical terms and views the Middle East as a theater of major power competition, a battleground of the Cold War. One doesn’t ask, in this frame, which of the combatants has justice on its side, but of their value as strategic assets for the superpowers.

Though he believes the frame lost traction after the 70’s, his assessment is skewed because of his historical context. Gamson developed his concept in the late 80’s, a tumultuous time in American-Israeli relations. What he perceived to be a decline in the frame’s resonance is, in retrospective analysis, only a temporary dip which reached normal levels shortly after his book was published. If we dismantle his definition of strategic interests from Cold War geopolitical

maneuvering, and consider strategic assets to include allies against rogue states or the War on Terror, then I would argue that the frame did not dissolve but continues until this day.

**Constructing the Frame**

From the 1940’s and on, the lessening perception of Jews as tricksters and shylocks fomented fidelity between Americans and Jews as well as Americans and Israelis.\(^{14}\) This normalization of Jews in American culture paved the way for them to be seen as allies and not saboteurs in the climate of the Cold War. The state of Israel became increasingly seen as a strategic asset instead of a liability in the battle between the United States and the Soviet Union. The competition for allies and constraints imposed by mutually assured destruction, if both powers were to directly confront one another, allowed a group of United States client states to acquire a degree of influence “out of proportion to their size.”\(^ {15}\)

Positioned at the fault line between the West and East, a deep water port for American ships, a launching ground for potential American maneuvers, and a vital democracy in a region racked by tyranny, since its birth Israel served as a veritable gatekeeper of the Western hemisphere and potential guardian of American interests in the Middle East. Though Israel was socialist at the time, it elicited from the American public the perception of a democratic, capitalist, and


\(^{15}\) Ben-Zvi, *The United States and Israel: The Limits of a Special Relationship.*, 9.
virile nation poised ready to pounce or at least growl at a possible Soviet incursion into the Middle-East.

The embrace of Israel as an ally, however, was neither universal nor initially guaranteed. The Arabist State Department, Pentagon, and CIA of the 1950's conceived of Israel as a liability and danger to US global and regional interests. In the first decade of Israel’s formal existence, the United States blocked Israel’s attempts to join NATO or a US headed regional alliance, issued no formal guarantees of Israel’s existence or territorial integrity, denied Israel’s offer to allow the United States to build bases in the Negev, turned down Israel’s offer to stockpile food and ordnances for U.S. troops, sanctioned arm shipments to Israel, objected to the supply of arms from other states, and withheld substantial economic support. Indeed, without Czech military assistance, it is doubtful if Israel would have survived. In the 1950’s, Israel was weak both economically and militarily, still recovering from the devastating War of Independence and the absorption of a vast number of poor, immigrant Jews. During this period, the Middle East became a war zone, and it was Arab and nonaligned countries which were perceived as more important to the United States than Israel in the quest for geopolitical dominance over the U.S.S.R. In the efforts to win over these select Arab states, the State Department considered an alliance with Israel to be a liability.

16 Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A Special Relationship?."
The tendency to consider friendship toward Israel as inimical to U.S. political and security interests was exacerbated by the Suez Crisis. In 1956, President Nasser of Egypt organized and sponsored acts of terrorism across Israeli borders, tightened the pan-Arab boycott on Israel, and finally nationalized the Suez Canal in violation of Egypt’s previous commitment to free passage. Israel, England, and France – without the countenance of the United States – invaded and extricated the Suez in October 1956. The President issued a formal reproach of Israel and the American public followed his lead, largely criticizing Israel for its military incursion. A Gallup poll taken in late 1956 found that Americans disapproved of Israeli action by a plurality of 43 to 23 percent. However, within months of the conflict and Israeli withdrawal, Americans tempered their initial criticism, and a majority of Americans displayed a “sympathetic understanding” toward the Israeli operation. Israeli withdrawal contributed to the attenuation of disapproval and criticism of Israel, and the bulk of the blame for the conflict was imputed to Egypt. According to another set of Gallup polls taken during and after the war, Americans displayed higher favorability ratings towards Israel than to Egypt by a margin of two-to-one, predominantly because of an increasing distrust and negative attitude towards Egypt, which, in the eyes of Americans, had attacked American and Western interests and aligned with the Soviet Union.17 The American aggravation over Israeli intransigence transitioned

quickly into sympathetic support; the transience of the initial rash mood ameliorated due to Israel’s perceived position as an American ally. The enmity between Americans and Israel during the Suez Crisis was apparent but existed only as an aberration, a slip from the dominant “strategic interest” frame. This frame existed as the norm from which frictional events like the Suez Crisis could be considered simply deviations.

Political figures outside the insulated confines of the State Department in addition to the pundits and editorialists of the popular press played their part in characterizing Israel as a mature and viable ally pursuant to American interests. More than solely a client state or autocratic regime whose only benefit was its antagonism to communism, Israel was portrayed as a promoter of United States culture and ideals. It came to be seen not only as a deterrent to Soviet aggression but more importantly as an extension of American cultural values. Israel shone proudly as a beacon of democracy and free enterprise in a land of dictatorships and kings. It was a veritable line in the desert sands, an ally which could be relied upon to promote American ideals and deter Soviet expansion into the Middle East.

The Arab states, on the other hand, were seen to be too immature and unreliable to garner such a role. The Arab League, according to a 1948 article in the *New York Times*, could not be depended upon because it remained too

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18 Question qn50e (The Gallup Poll #576), 1956.
“divided by internal dynastic rivalries and has yet to demonstrate military strength.” In the same year, an article in the New Republic concluded that Israel was “encircled by retarded states lacking in responsible leadership.” Doubts about the anachronistic Arab political structures in the modernizing 20th century reverberated through policy making circles as well; a 1952 a National Security Council report dismissed the “semifuedal leadership of the region.”

By the early 1950’s and after only a few years of formal independence, Israel had already been ascribed the solidarity and unity of a much older state. In 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson heard pleas from thirty-two congressmen who argued that “Israel was the one state in the Near East upon which the United States rely.” Another congressman explained that “the character of the government of Israel is so much in keeping with our own.” Though he ultimately rejected the congressmen’s pleas in lieu of building connections with the surrounding Arab states, Acheson did agree that Israel would have made the best ally: “I thought that the Egyptians were not thoroughly reliable”, he remarked.

More amiable to Israel than the State Department, that year an editorial in the Washington Post applauded “Israel’s position as an exemplar of genuine democracy in the Middle-East.” After the general elections of 1951 in which parties supporting free enterprise and anti-Russian policy gained power in Israel, the

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19 Mart, Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally., 69-82.
20 Ibid., 69-82.
Post issued a cheer for “the ability of the Israelis to maintain the principles of freedom” which attested to their “political maturity.” In April of 1951, the New York Times declared Israel “a genuinely democratic nation” and a “force for stability and progress in the Middle East.”

Arabs, on the other hand, had neither the signs of democratic political tradition nor the indicators of economic development. Presaging current times, former President Harry Truman criticized the Eisenhower administration for not supporting Israel enough in her defense against “bandits and thugs.” President Nasser of Egypt, Israel’s major foe, was repeatedly deemed “immature” by journalists, his brand of nationalism perceived as vague, petty, and irrational. NBC news commentator Bob Wilson declared in July 1956 that the “audacious conduct of Nasser is a threat to the welfare of Egypt, the Free World and the general peace” and that the United States had an obligation to stop “the dangerous and false nationalism of this immature leader.” The pan-Arabist movement was seen through the frame of a Communist movement, and for American culture which has always prized distinctiveness and independence, the homogenization was seen as political regression.

23 “Israel Needs Help.”
24 Ibid.
25 Mart, Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally., 150.
26 Ibid., 77, 159.
ment was much like America’s; on the tenth anniversary of Israel’s independence, the *New York Times* extolled Israel by echoing Abraham Lincoln:

Conceived in idealism and born in fire, Israel has already accomplished the impossible. It has established itself as a free democracy on an ancient, rocky soil that had not known freedom for centuries. It has grown in strength and security though surrounded by hostile neighbors. It has created a new kind of civilization at this traditional crossroads of old civilizations.²⁷

In the *New Republic*, Reinhold Niebur (1957) approved of the ties between the democratic traditions of each country in a piece titled “Our State in the State of Israel.” Israel, he argued, was “the only sure strategic anchor for the democratic world.”²⁸ An article in the *New York Times* appearing in 1960 heralded Israel as “an outpost of democratic government and haven for the oppressed.”²⁹

Because of the relative tranquility in the late 1950’s to the mid 1960’s, polling data and editorials about Israel is scant, the lack of data reflecting the apathy of Americans towards the minimal political developments in Israel. At the close of 1956, a Gallup “rate your feelings” poll found that 50% of Americans held a favorable attitude towards Israel, as opposed to only 16% who harbored negative feelings. The poll, however, was not reissued until 1966, and those with positive feelings rose to 63% of the population, compared to 20%  

²⁷ “Israel’s Tenth.”  
who harbored negative feelings.\textsuperscript{30} Locked in a steady cease-fire with Egypt and less of a captivating fledgling state, Israel's novelty began to wear off, yet given the increase in favorability ratings between these years and the absence of any major conflict, it is fair to assume that Americans felt good about their new friend.

Though pundits, congressmen, and the press had advanced the special interest thesis since Israel's inception, it was only in the early 1960's that the executive branch began to follow suit. Though a formal alliance or defense treaty was not then and has not yet ever been signed between the United States and Israel, John F. Kennedy made overtures to the idea when he rhetorically committed the United States to defense of Israel: “in case of invasion the United States would come to the support of Israel.”\textsuperscript{31} Kennedy also approved the sale of HAWK anti-aircraft missiles, and though the deal was in itself quite small, it inaugurated what would become a long-standing commitment to U.S.-Israeli arms trading.\textsuperscript{32} Although Kennedy's gesture was interpreted by many to only facilitate hostilities in the Middle East, the bulk of blame for inciting an arms race was laid on the Soviets. Military sales to Israel were described in the news and government publications as “defensive arms” for a “preventive war” as opposed to Soviet arm shipments which were “offensive arms” for the Arabs’

\textsuperscript{30} Question qn50h (The Gallup Poll #738) 12/8/1966-12/13/1966; qn50e (The Gallup Poll #576) 12/14/1956-12/19/1956. Gallup.

\textsuperscript{31} Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A ‘Special Relationship’?.”

\textsuperscript{32} Pipes, "How Special Is the U.S.-Israel Relationship."
“war of extermination.” President Johnson reiterated his predecessor’s commitment in both defense and guns, assuring Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol that the United States stood “foursquare behind Israel on all matters that affected their vital security interests” and that the United States “would not remain idle if Israel is attacked.”

**CONVERGENT NEEDS**

Popularly received by the press, public, congress, and executive, Israel’s role as a check on forces and developments antagonistic to American interests in the Middle East reached its acme in 1967. Had Nasser’s pan-Arabist army crippled or destroyed Israel, even if just in the form of a political victory, it would have allowed him to establish hegemony in the Middle East and extricate any remaining American influences. The United States would have been forced to take drastic action in another region of the world while its military resources and national unity were already being sapped by the Vietnam War. With Israel’s “complete and swift” victory over the combined Arab forces, the United States gained the high ground. Positioned to turn the tables on the Soviets and their clients, it hoped to use its leverage in the Middle East to influence the Soviet’s behavior in other theaters of conflict. Johnson and then Nixon decided to aid...

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34 Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A Special Relationship?"
Israel in maneuvering around the military and political pressures to cede its newly acquired territory until the Soviets would make concessions. Though this dedication did not bear fruit, the decision solidified the strategic interest frame for the last group of people who were traditionally resistant to it, the State Department. The temporary honeymoon wedded America’s real interests in the Middle East to Israel’s territorial ambitions, and harmonized America’s moral and strategic interest in the tiny state.35

For Americans at large, Israel’s military triumph in 1967 transformed Jews from victims to victors, and branded the Arabs as “feckless, reckless, and weak.” Douglas Little poetically describes the overwhelmingly warm reception that greeted Israel’s victory in America:

For a generation that remembered appeasement as a dirty word and regarded Nasswer as a Hitler on the Nile, the Six Day War closed the book on Anne Frank and fulfilled the dream of Exodus. The burned-out tanks that littered Egypt's Sinai Desert and Syria's Golan Heights and the angry mobs who burned Uncle Sam in effigy from the Gulf of Sidra to the banks of the Euphrates confirmed for many Americans that the Arabs did not have an inferiority complex; they were simply inferior.36

In the years following the Six Day War, U.S. assistance to Israel began to flow from a trickle to a flood. Prior economic assistance had mostly come in the form of loans which Israel repaid, but in 1971 Congress officially began “earmarking” or granting Israel funds which required no remuneration. In 1974, for the first

35 Safran, Israel: The Embattled Ally, 582-583.
36 Little, American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945, 32.
time in Israel’s history, United States also began earmarking military grants, $1.5 billion worth that year, in addition to the military loans which commenced under President Kennedy.\(^{37}\)

The surge in aid under Nixon is due to the administration’s emphasis on self-defense and the doctrine that United States would aid nations who could provide for their own security. Israel’s resilience in the Six Day War (1967), the War of Attrition (1968-1970), and the Yom Kippur War (1973), proved its viability as an independent force. A major tenet of Israel’s political-strategic doctrine has been the Israel Defense Forces’ self-reliance for meeting any military challenge. Moshe Dayan expressed this doctrine to the American public during the CBS program “60 minutes” on April 13, 1971: “I would like you to sell us arms, to help us in the political field. I don’t want you to fight for us, because once you will be getting killed for us, you won’t like us very much.”\(^{38}\)

The American public was receptive to his plea. In May of 1971, a Gallup poll issued a list of eleven countries to respondents and asked about their willingness to send American troops, to send only supplies, or to stay out if Communists or Communist backed forces invaded any of those countries. Americans were least willing to send troops to Israel than to any other country on the list (11% favored) but were most willing to send supplies (44% favored).


\(^{38}\) Gilboa, *American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 221.
To put their responses in perspective, in the event of a Communist attack more Americans would rather have sent supplies to Israel than to England, Canada, Mexico, West Germany, or Japan.39

The willingness to issue Israel military aid continued throughout the 1970’s, even with the 1973 Arab oil embargo which explicitly resulted from Arab animosity toward Israel after the Yom Kippur War.40 Between 1973 and 1980 inclusive, when asked to choose between supporting Israel with military aid or remedying the oil shortage at home, two thirds of Americans chose Israel.41

The permanency of the strategic ally was proven throughout the 1980’s when, like the Suez Crisis of the 1950’s, American and Israeli relations became taxed. In 1982, controversy erupted when the world found out that Lebanese Maronite Christians had slaughtered Palestinian fighters, and even worse, Israel may have known it was happening. In 1987-90, the first Palestinian intifadah introduced the image of the Israeli tank aimed at Palestinians armed with rocks, from where the uprising gets its nickname, “War of the Stones.” Both of these events marked the lowest levels of American sympathy for the Israelis and the highest levels of sympathy for the Arabs. Nevertheless, through the 1980’s a third of Americans continued to consider Israel a “reliable” or “close” ally of

39 A similar Times-Harris poll asked about US armed forces, implying that would require military supplies as well. The results were the same. The hypothetical situation of Israel’s being attacked was more of a possibility than any of those countries, and the typical unwillingness of the United States to sacrifice its own reflected their fear and prediction of another Arab-Israeli war. And, with the American respect for the Israeli military, they knew these ordnances would be put to proper use; Ibid., 224.
40 Dankwart A. Rustow, "Who Won the Yom Kippur and Oil Wars?," Foreign Policy 17 (Winter, 1974-1975).
41 Gilboa, American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict., 64.
the United States, which is peculiar considering no formal alliance has ever been signed. Of those who did not consider it an ally, most considered it at least “friendly.”42 When the Los Angeles Times reported on the possible Israeli implication in the massacre, it was Israel’s democratic tradition, institutional transparency, and efforts to hold those accountable which allowed it to continue eliciting the “frame” of a strategic ally, an ally portrayed as similar to the United States: “In the end, it was the basic strength of Israel’s democracy that prevailed.”43

RESILIENT FRAME

Whatever reservations Americans may have had towards Israel because of the events of the 1980’s were eviscerated by the Gulf War of 1991. During that war, Saddam Hussein launched thirty-nine scud missiles into Israeli cities and towns, even though Israel was neither part of the coalition forces nor part of the fighting. Though Israel was fully capable of a counteroffensive, President Bush urged Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to show restraint. Israelis cooperated, and stoically chose not to retaliate.44 Americans watched as Israelis strapped gas masks to their grandparents, children, and dogs, quietly acquiescing to President

42 WP-ABC Feb.’89, Oct. ’81, Mar. ’82, Aug/’82; USA Today, Nov 81-Aug 82; Gallup Jan.’83; Roper Jan.’84; Martilla & Kiley, ADL ’89; Gallup, AJC ’88; Harris ’82, 83, ’85. available at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.com.
Bush’s recommendation. Because of Israel’s cooperation, by the close of the conflict almost half of Americans considered Israel a close ally of the United States and the level of sympathy for the state peaked, reflecting a positive correlation between sympathy towards Israel and its perception as an ally.45

Through the 90’s, the conception of Israel as an ally as well as American support for the state leveled back to normal, but that status quo had always been positive. With the terrorist attacks of 9/11, American sympathy for Israel and their perceptions of it as a reliable or close ally began to increase precipitously. According to Gallup, in August of 2001 41% of Americans sympathized with Israel, and 14% with the Palestinians. But in September of that year and in the wake of the attack, 55% of Americans sympathized with Israel, and only 7% with the Palestinians.46 The sympathy towards Israel has remained relatively constant since September 2001, a majority sympathizing with the state.47

American perceptions of Israel as an “ally” have also increased steadily since 9/11, from 38% considering it as one in 2001 to 47% in 2006.48 A CNN poll taken immediately after Israel’s conflict with Hezbollah (2006) shows that

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45 Gallup, Jan. ’91.
46 Gallup, Aug. ’01, Sept ’02.
48 "More U.S. Adults See Israeli Government as an Ally or Friend Than They Do Twelve Other Middle Eastern Countries," The Harris Poll #67 August 30, 2006.
49% of Americans consider Israel an “ally”, another 33% consider it “friendly.” The strategic asset or ally frame has persevered, even though many Americans consider U.S. support for Israel to be a cause for the attacks of September 11th. In 2002, when asked “would you say that US support of Israel is very important, somewhat important, or not important at all as an explanation for the terrorist attack on September 11?”, almost 9 out 10 Americans considered it “important.”

Even though an overwhelming majority of Americans consider Israel to be a liability, a majority considers it an ally or at least friendly and a large plurality is sympathetic to its concerns. The strategic asset and ally frame is more than the realpolitik of political science or the cost-benefit analysis of economics. It operates within the psychology of Americans, so that an attack on the United States does not make Americans question its allegiance to Israel, but, instead, compels them to affirm it. The strategic asset and ally frame is strong enough to withstand deviations, for even when new ‘facts’ cast doubt upon the frame, it is the facts that are rejected, not the frame.

50 47.4% of Americans considered it very important, and 39.8% of Americans considered it somewhat important; General Social Survey [United States], National Opinion Research Center, Chicago, IL.
CONCLUSION:

THE LIMITS

AMERICAN NARRATIVE

The special relationship between the United States and Israel has been solidified through their common pioneering mythos and militaristic culture, the Holocaust’s Americanized story of tragedy and redemption, the assimilation of Jews into American society, a shared Judeo-Christian heritage, and mutual roles as strategic allies. For most Americans, Israel is a stable, democratic, Western country amidst a sea of antagonism, dictatorship, and violence. Israel is in many ways a confirmation of America’s founding and a continuation of its own history. The salience of this narrative has been reaffirmed by the media, the government, and the general public opinion for the past fifty-nine years. However, another narrative exists, and this narrative is one of a Jewish Lobby which has co-opted American debate; it is one of a post-colonial thorn which has instigated Arab animosity; and it is one of a country duped out of pursuing its own benefit by advancing another country’s interest.

David Brooks describes these narratives in a New York Times editorial about a conference he attended which was co-sponsored by the American
Enterprise Institute and the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. The purpose of the conference was to congregate Americans and moderate Arab reformers to discuss pressing topics like Iraq, Iran, and the prospects for democracy in the Middle East. As it happened, the Arab speakers only wanted to talk about Israel. Emboldened by Mearsheimer and Walt’s authoritative *The Israel Lobby*, they claimed “the problems between America and the Arab world have nothing to do with religious fundamentalism or ideological extremism...They have to do with American policies towards Israel and the forces controlling those policies.” On the other hand, Americans tended to speak of the Sunni-Shiite split, the Iraq civil war, and the threat of a nuclear Iran: “We tended to argue that problems like Muslim fundamentalism, extremism and autocracy could not be blamed on Israel or Paul Wolfowitz but had deeper historical roots. We tended to see the Israeli-Palestinian issue not as the root of all fundamentalism, but as a problem made intractable by fundamentalism.” These two narratives flew past each other without even the clip of a wing. Arab speakers shifted the focus of their “cancer” from a dysfunctional Arab world to the chthonic forces in Israel and the lobby which promotes them. According to Brooks, this transference “has encouraged them not to be introspective, not to think about their own problems, but to blame everything on the villainous Israeli network.”

That the Arab world argues for a syndicate of insidious Jews which have not only persecuted Palestinians but also coerced the United States into invading Iraq should come as no surprise: a majority of Arabs in the Middle East believe the Israeli Mossad was responsible for the September 11 attacks. Such a conspiracy theory, as Chip Berlet conceives of it, is “a narrative that blames societal or individual problems on a scapegoat…Conspiracism is a parody of institutional analysis.” As for Americans, the tendency to blame Israel for conducting the September 11 attacks is as marginalized as it is absurd, yet disregarding extremist conspiranoia, there are many Americans who adopt parts of the Arab narrative and have doubts over the benefits of the American Israeli allegiance. Though currently 60% of Americans sympathize with Israel over the 14.5% who do with the Palestinians, historical precedent of US support is an indication, not a predictor, of future trends. The special relationship, as a paradigm, cannot die; it is safe to assume there will always remain at least one American who thinks within its boundaries. But if the positive public sentiment dissipates, and Israel is revered by only a scattered few of ardent Zionists, the de facto political alliance which depends upon that very public sentiment will wither along with it.

Harvey Sicherman diagnoses US-Israeli relations with the *gevalt syndrome*. Its symptoms are as follows: “On any day, one has the impression that (a) the sky is falling down on both states; (b) it will fall down tomorrow; or (c) it fell down yesterday but both governments are too stupid to understand it.” If and when that sky falls down, it will not come from terrorists, not from the United Nations, not from Europe, not from Arabs - but only from the will of Americans. If support for Israel is caused by and inextricably tied to the ideas of America which I have articulated in this essay, then it is when those visions of America loose salience that the death knell on the special relationship will be rung.

NO BLOOD FOR ISRAEL

The reverence for Israel’s disciplined army was a product of World War II and the continuation of “victory culture”, the reverence for Israel’s independence and tactics a product of the Vietnam War and the characterization of a “new warrior.” The war in Iraq has called the former into question. The victory culture was able to persevere after Vietnam through wars in countries that, according to Gary Anderson, acted as “sacrificial lambs” to regenerate the “magic of World War II”:

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These stepping stone victims were found in little places that many Americans had never heard of and could usually offer little or no resistance, such as Grenada and Libya under Reagan, Panama under Bush Sr. These and other successful military actions proved intoxicating for an America bent on burying the pain and embarrassment of Vietnam and reawakening the sugar-coated memory of World War Two.

The list of quick and decisive victories rejuvenated victory culture, a victory culture the war in Iraq has called into question: almost half of Americans (47%) believe we will lose this war; a majority of Americans (58%) believe the war in Iraq was a mistake; and, Americans think the most important problem facing this country today is the war in Iraq by a margin of four-to-one over the second most important problem, healthcare.

What is most deleterious to the US-Israeli special relationship is the convergence of a minority of anti-Israel activists with the majority held anti-war opinion. For example, the group United for Peace and Justice, which brought tens of thousands to Washington to protest the war in Iraq, will be joining with the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, whose slogan is “Wrong in Iraq, Wrong in Palestine,” to bring a mass rally to D.C. in June of this year. According to the director, “the purpose of the event is to hopefully bring greater attention both to the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian

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6 To his list I would also add the first Gulf War and US military operations in Serbia. Gary Anderson, "Historical Challenges to America's National Identity" (paper presented at the Vital Speeches of the Day, delivered at Invent, Cologne, Germany, November 19, 2005, 1/1/2006).
territories, but also to call attention to the role that the U.S. plays in supporting that, and specifically the financial role, of course.”

Events like this one coupled with the perceived academic infallibility of Mearsheimer and Walt’s *The Israel Lobby* have begun to imbue Israel with the negativity of the Iraq war. As Nietzsche would exhort us, such “false analogy...entices the brave to rashness and the enthusiastic to fanaticism by its tempting comparisons.” Even though 77% of American Jews oppose the war in Iraq, a full 25% over all Americans, the conflation of the war in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has the potential to gain ground. In the November 5, 2006 Sunday *New York Times* the Council for National Interest Foundation took out a full page ad titled “Who is Holding Peace Hostage? The Israel Lobby Is Trying to Sell Another War”, and the piece offers an image of a used car salesman with an “Israel Lobby” name-tag who swindles Uncle Sam into buying the Iran war. As Jews are distraught by the anti-Israeli and in many cases anti-Semitic undercurrents of the anti-war movement, many American Jews, and even many Americans, opt out of the debate altogether. In the anti-war circles which are the most antagonistic towards Israel, anti-war yet pro-Israeli advocates

11 Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, 24
become stifled. In 2003, 52% of Americans believed that at least one reason to go to war in Iraq was because it was a threat to Israel, which was not a cause of concern for the US-Israeli relationship because a majority of Americans (70-75%) favored going to war. But as the war becomes less appealing and its purpose less compelling, the anti-war opinion has the potential to transfer to Israel. Whether Israel’s security was a reason or not for the war matters not, only that Israel’s connection to it now exists as a point of discussion and part of the American debate.

The benefit, however, Israel has reaped from the public sentiment surrounding the war in Iraq is the continued disapproval of the United Nations as a corrupt institution and a threat to national sovereignty as well as the perception of France as anti-American. A common cry of anti-Israel spokespeople is the citation of Israeli violations of the United Nations. However, Israel – the “new warrior” – defies the institution, not because the warrior is bad, but because the institution is corrupt. Public opinion polls show a considerable

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14 See, for example, the story of Elly Simmons in “Wide Opposition to War Energizes Protests,” San Francisco Chronicle January 28, 2007. The anti-Semitic tones of many anti-war protesters is well documented in both the news and in pictures. When Berkeley’s Israeli Action Center held a rally against global terrorism, a counter protest held signs accusing Israel of genocide and stealing Palestinian organs, while yelling “Don’t believe the news, it’s controlled by the Jews.” “Anti-Israel Protests -- 2005,” ADL.org May 13, 2005.; Jenna Rosman, “Anti-Israel Activists Rally at York, U of T,” Canadian Jewish News November 23, 2006.
17 A majority of Americans (53%) believe the Bush administration deliberately misled the public about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. As well, the American belief that the US is spending “too much” on the military is at an all time high. Question qn41. (January Wave 2). 1/20/2006-1/22/2006. Gallup.; Joseph Carroll, "Perceptions Of "Too Much" Military Spending at 15-Year High," Gallup News Service March 2, 2007.
decrease in positive American perceptions of the United Nations since American sovereignty was pitted against international law. In 2003, a third of Americans wanted to decrease funding to the United Nations and over half looked “less favorably” upon it because it would not co-sponsor the war. In January 2003, 50% of Americans felt the United Nations was “doing a good job...in trying to solve the problems it had to face,” 43% felt it was doing a poor job, but by February 2006, only 30% felt it was doing a “good job,” and a majority (63.52%) felt it was doing a “bad job.”

France has taken a similar beating. In January 2003, a majority of Americans said they could not count on France as an ally. In March of that year a third of Americans considered “freedom fries” a sincere form of patriotism; 70% of Americans considered France “unreasonable,” and 49% thought “France was stabbing the U.S. in the back.” In April, 40% of Americans believed France opposed the war in Iraq “in a deliberate attempt to reduce U.S. power and influence in the world.” American perception of France went from 82% in 2002 viewing it favorably to 43% in 2006. France has long been considered hostile to Israel, and a surge of French Jewish families have been

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22 Question qn23 (September Wave 1) 9/19/2003-9/21/2003
immigrating to Israel because of the palpable anti-Semitism. The deterioration of France’s image allows its demonstrations against Israel like the Paris “Boycott Israel” rally in August 12, 2006 to be dismissed as typical French political anti-Semitism. France, as the icon of international obstreperousness, and the United Nations, as the symbol of the effete and ineffectual, helped to bolster the claims of the “new warrior” against the corrupt institutions that seek to yoke him.

FRAME SHIFT

A quick glance at a political map of the Middle East reveals a slight discrepancy. Within the borders of Israel are carved a chunk and sliver of land on the East and in the South, respectively. These polities are what remains of Israel’s territorial gains in the 1967 war. For many this land is “occupied,” for some they are “disputed,” and for a few they are “Israel.” Regardless of semantics, the dispute over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip remains Israel’s greatest political tribulation in the United Nations and the world. But global politics aside, Israeli activity in the territories has the potential of straining the American-Israeli special relationship by reversing the operative frames. While gruesome Palestinian suicide bombings reiterate the “aberrant,” “reckless,” and “immature” nature

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of Arabs in general, they have the potential of becoming justified under an inversion of historical frames.

The first of these is the “David and Goliath” frame. The Israeli War of Independence and the Six Day War introduced to Americans the image of an Israeli David facing an Arab Goliath, but with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the Palestinian intifadahs of 1988 and 2000, Israel has been increasingly portrayed as the overbearing giant and the Palestinians, literally, have become the gallant stone-slingers. An editorial in the Miami Herald, for instance, depicts an Israeli soldier so large that only his boots and automatic rifle fit into the frame. His smoking gun points to a burning cityscape of Gaza and dead Palestinian, a rock and sling-shot littered around his corpse. Underneath, the caption reads “David and Goliath (amended).” Whereas previously Israelis and Jews were considered victims of “persecution” and Palestinians “victims of circumstance,” such a frame has the ability to wither as Israelis are no longer perceived as the underdog. 84% of Americans believe “protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression” is an important goal of the United States, and with the caricaturing of the Arab David against an Israeli Goliath, the weaker nation Americans may soon protect might be the Palestinians.

26 These characterizations are taken from a 1973 study of Kansas school teachers. Michel Saleiman, “National Stereotypes as Weapons in the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” Journal of Palestine Studies 3, no. 3 (Spring, 1974).
The frame of Jewish persecution also has the potential to erode by what some consider the "trivialization" of the Holocaust. The construction of museums and proliferation of Holocaust literature and movies has been dubbed by more than one observer as "the Holocaust Industry." The Americanization of the Holocaust, the moral clarity it offers, and the commercialization and commoditization around it allows "in short, the removal of the sacred." 28 One of the most mordant critics of what he considers "the Holocaust Industry" is Norman Finkelstein, who considers Ellie Wiesel to be most culpable in exploiting the Jewish tragedy:

For Wiesel...The Holocaust is effectively a 'mystery' religion. Thus Wiesel intones that the Holocaust "leads into darkness," 'negates all answers,' 'lies outside, if not beyond, history,' 'defies both knowledge and description,' 'cannot be explained nor visualized,' 'is never to be comprehended or transmitted,' marks a 'destruction of history' and a 'mutation on a cosmic scale.' Only the survivor-priest (read: only Wiesel) is qualified to divine its mystery. And yet, The Holocaust's mystery, Weisel avows, is 'noncommunicable'; 'we cannot even talk about it.' Thus, for his standard fee of $25,000 (plus chauffeured limousine), Wiesel lectures that the 'secret' of Auschwitz's 'truth lies in silence.'29

The ethical infallibility of the Holocaust, through what some consider its trivialization but at least many consider its Americanization, can be used as an incisive dagger by anti-Israeli spokespeople. Though American Jews infrequently mention the Holocaust publicly as a reason for Israel's existence, critics of the

state have considered the Holocaust Israel’s raison d’etre. For instance, a recent anti-Israeli rally in London had the following sign: “A Monster Created the Holocaust; The Holocaust Created A Monster.” President Ahmadinejad of Iran has recently proposed his own version of the Holocaust reparation problem: “You believe the Jews were oppressed,” he spoke of Americans and Europeans, but “you oppressed them, so give a part of Europe to the Zionist regime so they can establish any government they want.”30 In September 2005, when the Danish newspaper Jyllans-Posten published a cartoon of the prophet Mohammed with a sizzling bomb on his head, the “West” defended it as humorous free speech, but the “East” decried it as blasphemous mockery. The standard levels of rioting and violence ensued.

In response to the Danish cartoon, Iran’s largest newspaper, Hamshari, had its own cartoon contest which called for artists to mock the Holocaust. The cartoon contest had the following entries: Ariel Sharon in a Nazi uniform; a rabid dog with a Star of David on its side and the word Holocaust around its collar; a dove prevented from flying because it is chained to a Star of David; an Israeli asleep with three Arab heads mounted to the wall above his bed; an Israeli soldier pouring fuel into a tank from a gasoline can that reads Holocaust on the side; two firefighters, each with a Star of David on their chest, using Palestinian blood to extinguish flames; a vampire wearing a Star of David drinking the

blood of Palestinians; and, the take home gift was a poster of three army helmets, two with a swastika and one with a star of David.

In defense of the cartoon contest, Grand Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran chastised the West for its hypocritical stance on free speech “In this freedom, casting doubt or negating the genocide of the Jews is banned, but insulting the beliefs of 1.5 billion Muslims is allowed.” Though Americans largely condemned this contest and the subsequent conference on Holocaust denial, could the American trivialization of the Holocaust and the potential sapping of its sanctity be responsible for exporting such an insult to history? Because of the post-hoc incorporation of the Holocaust into Israel’s public meta-narrative, when the Holocaust becomes degraded, trivialized, or forgotten, Israel then suffers, for redemption cannot exist without pure tragedy.

PEACE NOT APARTHEID

Like many works of polemic non-fiction, most people had already fabricated their opinions of Jimmy Carter’s Peace: Not Apartheid before they had a chance to read it. The “provocative” title, of course, says it all. President Carter believes

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32 Besides the scathing title, a major gripe was found on page 213, whose adverbial conjunction “when” appeared to justify the continuation of Palestinian terrorism. Carter writes: “It is imperative that the general Arab community and all significant Palestinian groups make it clear that they will end the suicide bombings and other acts of terrorism when international laws and the ultimate goals of the Roadmap for Peace are
the title to be apt because he defines “apartheid” politically and not racially. To him, apartheid is then:

the desire or avarice of a minority of Israelis for Palestinian land; it’s not based on racism…This is a word that’s a very accurate description of the forced separation within the West Bank of Israelis from Palestinians and the total domination and oppression of Palestinians by the dominant Israeli military.34

However, the use of the word “apartheid” and his repetition of the word “colonization” are wrought with latent meanings. Like many who consider the Holocaust to be a unique tragedy, many racial scholars believe apartheid to be a singular event in contemporary history and the term should be applied cautiously. For James M. Jones:

Apartheid is the formal ideology, policies, and programs that maintained racial segregation and white domination in South Africa from 1948 until it was dismantled in 1991. Apartheid is synonymous with the most egregious and morally unconscionable form of racial oppression in contemporary world history.35

Deemed an apartheid and colonialist state, Israel, it seems, has become embraced into the pale of whiteness and the West with their concomitant history

accepted by Israel.” Carter, Palestine : Peace Not Apartheid., 213. To his credit, Carter admitted that the syntax was misleading. On NPR he admitted, “that sentence was worded in a completely improper and stupid way. And I have written my publishers to change that sentence immediately.” Alex Chadwick, "Day to Day: Carter Faces Critics on Middle East Book," in NPR (NPR, January 24, 2007).
33 On another NPR program, Carter says: “And I realized when I chose this title that it would be provocative. I hope it provokes people to actually read the book and to find out the facts.” Chadwick, "Day to Day: Carter Faces Critics on Middle East Book."
of racism and colonialism. Pollster Stan Greenberg who studies global sympathies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict argues that the low levels of support Europeans have for the state of Israel derives from their framework of “post-colonialism.” There is a sense “that Europe could cancel out its own colonial history by taking the ‘right’ side” – the Palestinian side.36

Though to a lesser extent than Europeans, by likening Israel to an apartheid state, Carter elicits a long standing American antipathy for South Africa’s “colonial” apartheid system. During South African apartheid, Americans wished for its discontinuation through political pressure, economic sanctions, and trade embargoes.37 Though many Americans do not consider themselves as a colonial state, the recent invasion of Iraq has led many to believe that what we are engaged in is at best colonization and at worst a reiteration of the Crusades.38 Separated by seas and land, Israel for many has become perceived as a veritable extension of and the residual evil left over from the colonialist West.

36 Stan Greenberg, "Palestinian Support 'Crashes' in Europe," Jerusalem Post June 3, 2006. Robin Shepard writes: “The left-leaning antipathy toward Israel is moreover buttressed by deeper and wider pathologies in Europe's collective memory, particularly in our overriding sense of guilt about the past, a guilt that springs from the great 20th-century traumas of war and imperialism. The first has made Europeans, especially continental, overwhelmingly pacifistic: In the German Marshall Fund's 2004 Transatlantic Trends survey, only 31 percent of Germans and 33 percent of the French could bring themselves to agree with the ostensibly tame proposition that 'Under some conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice.' Such attitudes do not mesh well with television pictures of Israeli helicopter gunships firing missiles at militant targets in the crowded Gaza Strip, whatever the justification for Israel's actions.” Robin Shepard, "In Europe, an Unhealthy Fixation on Israel," Washington Post January 30, 2005..
Though based upon appearance, many Israelis, the *mizrahim*, would not be considered white, Israel as a state, because of exogenous Jewish assimilation, is considered to be so.\textsuperscript{39} If Israelis were not considered white, would the Israeli-Palestinian conflict be seen as an expression of racism or as inter-ethnic or tribal conflict? As well, though Judaism can be construed as separate from Christianity, the term Judeo-Christianity because of its use “in a mytho-pathological way…disjoins Jewishness from the social and political practices of Jews and conjoins it to a generalized notion of ‘the West’. ” Israel, then, is emblematic of the West, and a metonymical post-colonial project which many wish to see “grow up.”\textsuperscript{40} In this vein, Israel becomes culpable for the ills of Western history.\textsuperscript{41}

**LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS**

Those who criticize Israel see in that tiny state the source of humanity’s woes. For the extreme, the catastrophe occurred in 1948, for the moderate, it occurred

\textsuperscript{39} *Mizrahim* refers to those Jews from Arab and Muslim lands, many of whom came to Israel after they were expelled from their home countries such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, and Egypt. The term also applies to a wide variety of Jews who are Berber, Kurdish, Indian, Maghrebi, Yemenite, Mountain, Lebanese, Bukharin, Persian, and Georgian.


\textsuperscript{41} Let us, disregarding political opinion for a moment, hold the stance that Jews and Israelis are not a “colonialist” project. Does benefiting from someone else’s colonial legacy inherently make Israel culpable? Ruth Frankenberg would analogize this question to concept to white Americans, who though individually never engaged in slavery, continue to benefit from its existence. She argues that Americans concentrate on the “I” and not the “we,” thereby benefiting from and ignoring historical racism. One of her interviews encapsulates this notion: “[White Americans] don’t remember doing anything horrendous in their lives. They never lynched anybody…’when do you stop paying?’ is a big question. It was for me.” Ruth Frankenberg, “Whiteness and Americanness: Examining Constructinos of Race, Culture, and Nation in White Women’s Life Narratives,” in *Race*, ed. Roger Sanjek Steven Gregy (Rutgers University, 1994), 72.
in 1967. If it were not for Israel, the world would be a better place. The divi-
sions we see now in the world, the “clash of civilizations” that is so commonly
reiterated, comes from one isolated spot. Arab animosity and global terrorism is
rooted in Israel’s oppression of the Palestinians and colonization of their lands.
A Middle East without Israel would be a land of peace; the world without Israel
would be a world without strife. To this view, I find no merit.

Israel is not the cause of our problems but, rather, their reification. Is-
rael is the representation, geographically and psychologically, of a much broader
conception of not only the Middle East, but of ourselves, of how we conceive
of the world, of what is right and what is wrong. We frame the Arab-Israeli
contfrontation depending upon our social milieu: who we are defines how we see.
In my analysis, I have defined the “who” of America, a “who” which to some
may seem alien, generalized, or misled. A typical American may find merit in
only one, two, or maybe none of the concepts I have introduced. Americans are
individuals, each with her own form of identification, history, and morality, but
as much as I have concentrated on American individuals, the overall concept
which I have examined is one of Americanism. The concept of Americanism is a
social creation, what father of Sociology Emile Durkheim would call our
“collective representation.” Such an entity exists within the territory of the social
imagination and must be understood to be a being unto itself. Collective repre-
sentation rests upon the assumption that there can and do exist entities or social constructs which “surpass the knowledge of the average individual.”

As an abstract concept Americanism is fundamentally amorphous, ambiguous, and fluid. It is constantly changing, its temporary incarnation depends upon the social and cultural currents of the day, the overall shape of the river bent and carved by the million little contingencies which direct its flow. I have not determined where or when that river will reach the ocean; instead, I have attempted to examine its source. The American special relationship with Israel is inextricably tied to the concept of Americanism I have uncovered, and whatever the future may entail, that special relationship flows downward from one place - our “city upon a hill.”

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42 Durkheim uses truth as an example: “Now logical life evidently presupposes that men now, at least confusedly, that there is such a thing as truth, distinct from sensuous appearances. But how have they been able to arrive at this conception? We generally talk as though it should have spontaneously presented itself to them from the moment they opened their eyes upon the world. However, there is nothing in the immediate experience which could suggest it; everything even contradicts it.” Emile Durkheim, "Elementary Forms of Religious Life," in On Morality and Society, ed. Robert N. Bellah (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 210.
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