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NOT YOUR GOOD GERMANS

HOLOCAUST MEMORY, ANTI-FASCISM, AND THE ANTI-ZIONISM OF THE JEWISH NEW LEFT

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Mr. Hoffman: Your idea of justice is the only obscenity in the room. You schtunk. *Schande vor de goyim*, huh?

The Court: Mr. Marshal, will you ask the defendant Hoffman to –

Mr. Hoffman: This ain't the Standard Club.

The marshal: Mr. Hoffman –

Mr. Hoffman: Oh, tell him to stick it up his bowling ball. How is your war stock doing Julie? You don't have any power. They didn't have any power in the Third Reich, either.

The Court: Will you ask him to sit down, Mr. Marshal?

The marshal: Mr. Hoffman, I am asking you to shut up.

Mr. Rubin: Gestapo.

Mr. Hoffman: Show him your .45. He ain't never seen a gun.

The Court: Bring in the jury, Mr. Marshal.

Mr. Rubin: You are the laughing stock of the world, Julius Hoffman; the laughing stock of the world. Every kid in the world hates you, knows what you represent.

Marshal Dobkowski: Be quiet, Mr. Rubin.

Mr. Rubin: You are synonymous with the name Adolf Hitler. Julius Hoffman equals

Adolf Hitler today.

~“At the Chicago Conspiracy Trial,” Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin et al.[\[1\]](#)

This piece is being made available as a preprint edition of the double-volume Marxism and the Critique of Antisemitism special issue of Historical Materialism. Further additions will still be made before then. The final published version of this text will be made available on the Brill website in the coming months. We ask that citations refer to the Brill edition. All Illustrations are by Natalia Podpora.

Early in the research for this project, I interviewed a long-time comrade in Chicago, Joel Finkel, who I knew as a socialist, 4th Internationalist, and active anti-Zionist with Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP).[\[2\]](#) Eager to learn how his socialism, anti-Zionism and Jewish identity intersected, I sat him down for a long, nearly three-hour conversation at the famous Jewish deli in the strip mall zone west of the Loop, the last fragment of what used to be a thriving Jewish neighborhood before urban renewal and the expanding University of Illinois obliterated it -- a reminder that the suburbanization of Jews was done as much by bulldozer as it was funded by racially restricted FHA housing loans. Like a number of other Jewish activists of his generation I have known through the years, Joel downplayed how much his Jewishness was central to his becoming a revolutionary: he wasn't religious, his parents were progressives but not in the Jewish left, and he underscored that the primary movers of his political life were objective and historical events such as the war in Vietnam and the civil rights movement. He had a clear analysis of the contradictions of

capitalism, the historical conjuncture of the 1960s, the role of Zionism in global imperialism, and thought of questions of personal identity as slightly foreign to his ears, as if I had asked him about his moon sign. And then, perhaps two hours into the conversation about how he got involved in the movement and developed his political outlook, he choked up, flushed, and almost sobbed, "we couldn't let it happen to anyone else." It, I asked? "The Holocaust. It couldn't happen again."^[3]

Finkel's formation is one I encountered often while reading memoirs and interviewing Jewish activists who were part of the New Left of the 1960s and early 1970s. In another interview with Susan Eanet (now Klonsky), a former Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) activist and founder of the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) and later the new communist October League, explained her own dedication to Palestinian liberation through Holocaust memory. After talking for several hours in her northwest Chicago home about her Jewish upbringing, about her father who was a founder of a liberal temple in Washington D.C., and about how that related to her anti-Zionist writings for the SDS newspaper *New Left Notes*, she finally explained: "we couldn't be good Germans."^[4] Jews, she said, more than anyone, should know the price of the world's silence as a genocide is taking place. Tellingly, also Mark Rudd framed his resistance to the Vietnam War in the exact same way in his memoir of SDS, saying he "can't be a good German."^[5] "In my home, as in millions of Jewish homes, "Hitler" was the name for Absolute Evil," Rudd explains, going to further to say "only this time, it was us, the Americans." Like Klonsky, Rudd evoked the Holocaust not to suggest that Jews are special victims of a unique tragedy or to justify or rationalize their behavior, but to explain why they felt a personal responsibility to oppose fascism and colonialism done in their name, either as Jews and/or

Americans. Shortly after her release from prison, for Weather Underground member Kathy Boudine recollected that her decision to support the Black Liberation Army's campaign of bank robberies and jailbreaks rested on her analysis that America was in the process of committing multiple genocides and that she, like Rudd and Klonsky, thought "a lot about Germany" during the Holocaust: "how do you live a life when your government is doing what its doing?"
[6] In other words, she neither could be a "good German."

The idea that there is a particular Jewish responsibility to oppose fascism and the genocidal race theory behind it was expressed clearly by another member of SDS and early friend of Rudd, David Gilbert. "For myself and many other Jews in the movement," Gilbert wrote in his memoir, "the bedrock lesson from the Holocaust was to passionately oppose all forms of racism" explaining also that he because of the Holocaust, he could "never join the oppression of other people."^[7] And even though Gilbert's describes his parents as apolitical, he asserts "they taught me racism was wrong" a conclusion drawn from witnessing the violence of antisemitism.^[8] Rudd also locates the meaning of the Holocaust not only with destruction of European Jewry, but specifically with "racism; that's what anti-Semitism was."^[9] "Racism" as an explanation of antisemitism does not locate antisemitism as something unique to Jews, but as part of a larger structure of white supremacy, in so far as it connects the persecution of Jews to the oppression of people of color. In this way Rudd connects his support for SNCC not only with a political project, but his own personal story. "With the solipsism of a child," he writes of reading Anne Frank's diary and looking at the death camp tattoos of his relatives, and "saw myself among the dead."^[10] For Rudd and for many Jews in the movement, their attachment to fighting

racism was a way of articulating their own feelings about being Jewish. As historian Arlene Stein suggests, "I developed an intense, vicarious identification with the struggles of African Americans" as a means to better understand "the collective experience of trauma" after the Holocaust.
[11] While Stein articulates this as a form of displacement, for Rudd and others it was a way to passionately connect with and honor their Jewish heritage.

It is often assumed that the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and the emergence of the Black Power movement engendered a split between Jews and the New Left.
[12] This story is told by both progressive and reactionary historians alike, and is memorialized in iconic images such as the Jewish Defense League standing in front of a Brooklyn synagogue in sunglasses to "defend" it from a planned speech by Black Panther James Forman or Abbie Hoffman's 1967 editorial for the *Village Voice* decrying to expulsion of the mostly Jewish white activists from Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (a position he soon, nonetheless, recanted after conversations with Stokely Carmichael and others).
[13] This split between Black Power and the anti-imperialist left is often said to coincide with the emergence of Holocaust memorialization. Some, such as Norm Finkelstein understand the sudden rise of Holocaust memorialization in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a cynical move to "exploit Jewish suffering" for the project of Jewish nationalism, while others such as Michael Staub locates increased public expression of Holocaust memory within the context of a late 1960s Jewish revival.
[14] Either way, both narratives assume a tension between left-wing Jews and Black Power and anti-imperialism as given, and locate a new American Jewish commonsense of Jewish nationalism abroad and a quickening of Jewish identity politics at home as both totalizing and

hegemonic. The only problem with this narrative is that the most prominent, and visible, Jewish radicals of the 1960s and early 1970s – Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Mark Rudd, Susan Eanet/Klonsky, Rennie Davis, Dick/Mickey Flacks, David Gilbert – did not agree. Not only did much of the Jewish New Left in organizations such as SDS and SWP continue to back the anti-Zionist Black Panther Party, many deployed Jewish memory of the Holocaust, the Red Scare, and antisemitism to formulate their revolutionary global politics. It is not so much that Finkelstein and Staub are incorrect, as their readings of a Jewish 1960s tend to write out of history how Jews in revolutionary – and non-Jewish -- organizations formulated a Jewish sensibility through Jewish memory, particularly of the Holocaust and the experience of right-wing antisemitism.

In this sense, Rudd, Klonsky, Gilbert, Hoffman, and Finkel's deployment of the Holocaust speaks to ongoing and present debates about its meaning and relevance in the politics of Jewish memory and identity. There is a growing consensus that supposed silence among American Jews around the Holocaust was at best partial. Scholar Hasia Diner counters the narrative that the Holocaust was "unspeakable" until the late 1960s, or that Jews refused to remember or honor the dead out of fear of antisemitism, or shame of victimhood.^[15] Diner documents how memorials, religious ritual, journal articles and art were created and disseminated by Jewish organizations, synagogues, and in private homes and community events. Far from distant from the minds of Jewish Americans, the presence of the Holocaust reconstructed Jewish American life in personal and public ways. Indeed, the Holocaust was a common enough reference point in Jewish life that Philip Roth's first published story in the late 1950s not only evokes the genocide, uses it as the punchline of an ironic joke. Grossbart, the Jewish private who wants

to avoid combat in the Pacific and leave base for treyf eggrolls on Passover, manipulates the scrupulous Sergeant Marx by suggesting Jews "let themselves get pushed around" in Germany and needed to "stick together."^[16] Indeed, one can read the entire collection of stories in *Goodbye Columbus* as a kind of meditation on the Holocaust, from "The Conversion of the Jews" to "Eli, the Fanatic." The Jewish community in "Eli" are so desperate to not attract antisemitism they wish to ban a Yeshiva, but also so concerned about Jewish cultural continuance after the Holocaust, they do whatever their children ask of them, even convert to Christianity. In evoking the Holocaust with irony and complexity, Roth signals less a silence on the topic, as much as an intimate knowledge of it and of the many ways it complicated and animated Jewish American life - a near decade before the 1967 War.

Even for scholars like Diner acknowledge the "myth of silence" is a construction, however, there is an assumption that the Holocaust made the Jewish community fundamentally conservative and assimilationist. As Norman Finkelstein documents, the 1967 Arab Israeli War sparked not only a wave of support for the victorious Israeli armies, government officials from the State Department to the Pentagon began to understand how Israel could be a strategic ally. "The Holocaust proved to be the best defensive weapon deflecting criticism of Israel," Finkelstein writes.^[17] In service of Israeli nationalism, the Holocaust he argued was transformed from a fascist genocide that was part of a larger far-right racial project, to something very particular and "unique" that happened only to Jews.^[18] European historian Enzo Traverso takes this analysis a step further to suggest "the Shoah closed a cycle of European intellectual history, in which Jews had been a central part," transforming Jews from a "pariah" class to an integrated part of Western culture. It is Henry

Kissinger for Traverso, not Trotsky who inherits the meaning of the Holocaust in global politics.^[19] Citing the ways the Nuremberg Laws and American triumphalism celebrated both the inclusion of Jews into the fabric of mainstream American life and Israel into the sphere of the capitalist West, "the Jew" for Traverso has gone from being counter-modality to European modernity to its most ideal subject. Citing both Israel and human rights law, Traverso argues that the "former trouble makers and disrupters of order had become its pillars.^[20] Historian of antisemitism Paul Hanebrink frames it another way: as the victory over Nazi Germany became absorbed into the narrative of global American power, so did the Jews go from being a "Judeo-Bolshevik menace" to part of the "Judeo-Christian West."^[21]

In an essay by Mark Tseng-Putterman in *Protocols*, he argues that the mobilization of the Holocaust not only justifies the state of Israel for a Zionist Jewish establishment, its very memory actually makes Jews less likely to see Israeli "culpability in the so-called conflict."^[22] For Tseng-Putterman, Holocaust narratives create a kind of "Jewish-exceptionalism" that serves as the ideological infrastructure for Zionism, and more broadly, blinds white Jews to ways in which they mobilize their own whiteness. "Far from progressive," Tseng-Putterman continues, "the absolution of Jewish participation in white supremacy" by focusing on the Holocaust as the singular event defining antisemitism, "halts opportunities to challenge Jewish complicity." Indeed, the article argues it is precisely through the American narrative of the Holocaust that Jews have been conscripted into the institutional relations of American liberalism and American empire. That the U.S. can place itself as the protector of the Jews reinforces and can be understood to be the modality through which liberal white supremacist state maintains its legitimacy. Not only are the Nuremberg

Laws part of the legal superstructure of the global American empire, the incorporation of a certain kind of Jewish suffering is the way the state disavows its own history with eugenics and genocide. "There is an order" to state violence, the author declares, and by centering the Holocaust as a primary part of that order, Jews literally whitewash their own complicity with whiteness and empire as well as allow the state to benefit from Jewish investments in a normative history of antisemitism. In the order of state violence, the Holocaust is low on the hierarchy, and more silence, rather than less, is necessary. The article suggests that Holocaust narratives cannot be mobilized outside of a context of whiteness and cannot but help, in such as a context, redeploy it.

"Just as organized Jewry remembered The Holocaust when Israeli power peaked, so it remembered The Holocaust when American Jewish power peaked," Finkelstein argues, suggesting that the Holocaust not only deflected criticism of Israel, but also deflected white Jews from criticism of their whiteness.^[23] As Jewish studies scholar Ben Ratskoff wrote in *Jewish Currents*, Jewish analogies to the Holocaust are the "narcissistic" means by which Jews "disavow" concern for and their complicity in white racism and the normative violence of liberalism.^[24] "2017 may have offered a strange solace" Tseng-Putterman writes, posing that antisemitism actually reassures Jews of their safety in the world, rather than threatens it, as it mobilizes the state in their defense. Jewish memory of antisemitism not only exaggerates the threat of antisemitism, antisemitism is the very means by which Jews align their interests with the state – antisemitism is a form of state power. Antisemitism in this formation, makes white Jews whiter; it solidifies their relationship to narratives and institutions of American power. One may look no further than attacks against Jeremy Corbyn and progressive American socialists to see the ways in

which a discourse of antisemitism protects the powerful, and is deployed as a weapon against democracy.

Rudd, Klonsky, Gilbert and other New Left radicals articulate however a challenge both to the mainstream Jewish establishment's Zionist conscription of the Holocaust, as well as to Traverso and Tseng-Putterman's narrative about post-Holocaust memory and Jewish identity. While Traverso, Finkelstein and Tseng-Putterman are certainly accurate to point fingers at an increasingly reactionary Jewish establishment, their analysis tends to evacuate other possibilities for progressive Jewish life outside of or even oppositional to such institutions, with a logic, history, and subjectivity of its own. Such discourse tends to flatten Jewish experience into an expression only of large – if quite powerful – Jewish institutions. As Michael Rothberg documents, Holocaust memory is "multidirectional," and emerged in the context of anti-fascism and decolonial discourse in the 1940s and 1950s long before it emerged as a pillar for a muscular Israeli and/or U.S. nationalism.^[25] While widely divergent in their political commitments and perspectives, both Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* and Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, published in the early 1950s, locate both the origins of fascism and the roots of the Holocaust in European imperialism, in transnational, or perhaps supra-national projects of economic expansion and political repression. Indeed, as Norm Fruchter wrote for the summer 1965 edition of *Studies on the Left*, the wide-ranging anger at Hannah Arendt for her condemnation of both Jewish nationalists and Jewish leadership during and after the Holocaust was a marked *departure* for an American Jewish community that substituted the "secular values...of social justice, use of intellect, the pursuit of knowledge" for Zionism and its "myth of the victim which Jews tend to substitute for their

history."[26] This Rudd and Klonsky who do not wish to be "good Germans," the violence of fascism is not something that happens only to Jews, or can be accounted solely through Jewish history or Jewish victimization. The violence of fascism is a structural part of imperialism, whether the genocidal levels of violence deployed against the Vietnamese during the U.S. invasion, or ethnic cleansing and militarism of the Israeli state. The question for Jews is less how to memorialize the Holocaust as a uniquely Jewish tragedy, but rather what is the ethico-political stance the Holocaust requires of a Jew.

As Gilbert makes plain, Jewish survival is not the primary lesson the Holocaust imparts. While it is clear that Gilbert, Klonsky, Rudd, Deutscher and others understood Jews to be targets of fascist violence, they also understood that social solidarity, not Jewish particularism, or nationalism, was what Holocaust memory should mean. As Deutscher writes "I am a Jew by force of my unconditional solidarity with the persecuted and exterminated."[27] Note the construction - it is not solidarity with other Jews that makes Deutscher Jewish, it is particular "force" that marks his passion and his solidarity. It is the depth of commitment against persecution and extermination that makes the Jew. While Gilbert does not explicitly say this, one could possibly derive that the lengths was willing to go, eventually to a life sentence in prison, marks the "force" of his solidarity, and hence his Jewishness. And yet Gilbert is also clear to normalize such feeling. His parents, who he describes as apolitical, his father an Eisenhower Republican, mother a relatively liberal but not zealous Democrat, explicitly articulated that the lesson of the Holocaust was to stand against racism. That this was the opinion of Jews who were otherwise politically in no way remarkable suggests less their idiosyncrasy by the articulation of a Jewish commonsense in the decades immediately following the Shoah, not an

aberration. When Rudd writes, "I saw myself among the dead" when he imagined the Holocaust as a child, it did not lead him to think Jews were exceptional - rather it led him into the struggle to oppose genocide and imperialism wherever he encountered it.

Perhaps the most sustained engagement with the radical usable past of the Holocaust is Suzanne Weiss' memoir, *Holocaust to Resistance: My Journey*. Weiss, a Polish survivor who spent the last years of the war in hiding and then in a Jewish orphanage in France, emigrated to the United States when two Jewish members of the Communist Party in New York adopted her in 1950. The first time Weiss articulates herself as a Holocaust survivor in public however is many years later, during an official state visit by Ariel Sharon to Toronto in 2003. Framing her own experience as both unique and yet at the same time part of larger structures of racialized state violence, she spoke the following at a rally outside of Sharon's hotel:

Hitler's Holocaust is unique in history; nothing is 'similar' to it. Still, many Israeli techniques -- the expulsions, the ghettoization, the pervasive checkpoints -- have a disquieting resemblance to Nazi methods. To oppose Sharon is *not* anti-Jewish....a united resistance can, like the anti-Nazi Resistance of my childhood, win out against the aggressors.[28]

Before this point, Weiss was no stranger to politics: she had been a member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) since her teenage years, and had organized antiwar demonstrations, visited Cuba on an official delegation, and worked in heavy industry trying to form unions among other workers. And yet it wasn't until she undertook a personal journey first to Poland, then as a social worker among Holocaust

survivors that she articulated the meaning of her experience: “I wondered whether Holocaust survivors differed from survivors of other traumas, tragedies, or genocides, such as Palestinian families subjected to daily terror, the destruction of their families, and the loss of their homes, possessions, and homeland,” she asked. “Holocaust survivors, I concluded, must be addressed not through comparison with other historic disasters... Yet working with Holocaust survivors sharpened my awareness of the suffering of all peoples emerging from genocide and societal traumas.”^[29] This double turn, in which Weiss recognizes the specificity of Jewish trauma does not make it perfectly analogous to other forms of oppression, yet her increasing awareness – unlike Traverso and Tseng-Putterman’s claims – increases her feelings of solidarity with other oppressed people, especially with Palestinians.

It’s also clear in Weiss’ narrative that her conclusions regarding the Holocaust are not a rupture with her family’s past or her experience, but rather as she articulates it, a final culmination. Throughout her text she sprinkles comments from her mother, such as “Jewish people have a natural affinity to Negroes seeking human dignity,’ Mom said” on walking past a lunch-counter protest, or “The Ku Klux Klan hated Jews just as much as they hated Blacks,” noting a synagogue was dynamited the same week as a Black church.^[30] During the Suez crisis in 1956, Weiss’ father confirmed his continued critique of Zionism by noting “Israel is on the wrong side again,” aligned with imperial west.^[31] Weiss’ most succinct articulation of a Jewish anti-Zionist subjectivity was in high school. Troubled one day when a Jewish friend ask if she was a Zionist, she replied “no, I’m Jewish.” For Weiss, her Jewish identity both preceded the question of Zionism, and also excluded it. When she asked her red-diaper baby boyfriend about the incident, he explained that a “Zionist is anyone,

Jewish or not, who defense the settlement of Israel as the Jewish homeland.”[32]

Neatly separating Zionist politics from Jewish identity, Weiss’ sense of Jewish identity was reaffirmed, and reflected that Jews will experience antisemitism wherever they go, no matter the location or country – and couldn’t see how a nation-state would solve such a question. She asked her rhetorically, “wouldn’t it be a convenient place to get rid of us all at once?” In this way Weiss both articulates an anti-Zionist common sense, in which Zionism is something both alien from her point of view, but also troubling: she didn’t understand why it seemed important to her friend when it was something that seemed so far, so removed. And her response – though equally laconic, was common diasporic reason – antisemitism is global, it makes sense then to be a global and dispersed people, on the move. More than anything else, it was the brevity of the passage that was remarkable – in less than a page in a 300 page memoir, the question of Zionism was settled in her mind. Are you a Zionist? No I’m Jewish, seems paradoxical, yet it is the governing logic of the 1960s Jewish New Left.

While the central political “journey” in *My Journey* is from Holocaust survivor to revolutionary, the physical journey Weiss undertakes is from Poland, to France, to the United States, and then finally, in the 1980s, back to Poland. While one cannot call it kind of reverse-Aliyah back to Europe, it is clear that Weiss finds a kind emotional and historical sense of closure by visiting the towns in which her family once lived. For Weiss the return back to Poland is filled both with melancholy and also optimism. She travels to the Jewish cemetery in Piotrkow, where her mother and grandmother ran a bakery. Finding the cemetery “overgrown with weeds” and the townspeople unconcerned with its upkeep, Weiss writes that

"alone, I listened to the melancholic murmur of the breeze swaying leaves" before returning to Warsaw. [33] Yet while in Warsaw, she is heartened to learn that the *Solidarnosc* movement, which the SWP supported, printed "anti-racist leaflets and posters... as proof that the union stood firm against xenophobic sentiment." [34] These twin feelings, that the murder, and erasure of her family from Poland, and the "Polish Spring" with the Solidarity movement, suggests that whatever her fight around Jewish identity and the Holocaust may be, there are European problems to be resolved in Europe. The entire journey of the text, from survival to finally awakening of the political implications of the Holocaust, live within a political cycle around questions of capitalism, fascism, human rights, the state, and Jewish memory. Israel's only presence in the text is read only as an interloper, literally – as Ariel Sharon visits Toronto, much to the dismay of the Weiss and her comrades.

The Anti-Zionism of the Jewish New Left

It is often assumed that with some exceptions, that the emergence of Holocaust memory among American Jews coincided with general American jubilance over the Israeli victory in the 1967 War. As Norm Finkelstein writes, "American Jewish elites suddenly discovered Israel" after the Six-Day War, while Keith Feldman takes this step further to suggest, after Norm Podhoretz, "nothing less than the mass conversion of the American Jews to Zionism." [35] Amy Kaplan, Eric Dollinger and Melanie McAlister also document how the U.S. press and much of the Jewish and non-Jewish institutional world deeply identified with Israeli's lightening victory over Arab states, contrasting Israeli missiles blowing up Soviet jets before soaring over Africa to free hostages with "with images of Americans fleeing in helicopters from rooftops in Saigon." [36] Many

Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, identified on a personal level the Israeli victories as if they were their own. For many scholars of Jewish life, the sudden identification of the United States with Israel, combined with Jewish class ascendency after World War II, marks the end of Jewish otherness in the United States: internationally, and domestically, Jews had entered the mainstream of American life. Rudd's narrative it would seem, asks us to question that assumption.

On the level of large Jewish institutions, this narrative of Jewish "conversion to Zionism" and the sense of belonging it implies would seem to bare itself out. Historian Matt Berkman notes how such jubilation followed the money: he tracks how after the 1967 War, a massive institutional shift in communication strategies, donor accounts, and political priorities towards supporting Israel -- even among mainstream Jewish institutions such as the American Committee for Judaism (ACJ) that had up to this point remain non-Zionist.^[37] Prior to the late 1960s, most Berman comments that large Jewish institutions mostly focused on the plight of Jews in the U.S., including refugees and Holocaust survivors.^[38] This shift in funding not only suggests a turn to Zionism as definitional for American Jewish life, it also suggests that large Jewish institutions felt Jews were no longer, in the main, a special case needing extensive extra-governmental support. And more than this, for many Jewish liberals who were turning away from what they understood as the excesses of the radical left, Israel seemed to be like America, only better - "there were no draft dodgers in Israel," historian Michael Fischbach writes of the new pro-Israel consensus, and Vietnam War, no burning ghettos, no drug addicts, no crime.^[39] This merger between liberals and conservatives on Israel was perfected by Otto Preminger and Dalton Trumbo's 1960 film *Exodus*, based on Leon Uris' novel of the

same name. As Kaplan notes, it frames Uris' narrative of Israel's founding as violent retribution for the Holocaust, while also maintaining concern with international legitimacy, the United Nations, and world peace after World War II.^[40] The new support for Israel seemed to both be a progressive war of liberation by a persecuted people, while also magically defeating America's enemies supported by the Soviet Union. Jews were America's best story.

For center-right and even liberal commentators such as Nathan Glazer and Irving Howe, supporting Israel took on a "mystical" importance, cementing Israel for the first time as not only a center, but the center of Jewish American life.^[41] For liberals such as Howe and liberals-turned-neocon such as Glazer, Jews who were outspoken in their antagonism against Israel or support for Palestinians, ceased to be Jews. As troubling as Howe and Glazer's conclusions are for their gate-keeping of Jewish identity, there are a number of radical historians who ironically uphold Glazer and Howe's thesis: as Keith Feldman argues in his study on the role of Palestine in the formation of American empire, "both the Jewish left and the Jewish right felt threatened by the Black Power movement," especially Black Power activists' critique of Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.^[42] For the right, the Black left was dangerous because of their attention to Jewish practices of economic exploitation and their rising class status. Jews Glazer felt, were singled out as the enemy of Black Power. While for Feldman, the Jewish left does not descend into such racist rhetoric, Black Power organizations' increasingly hostile stance towards Israel and ouster of Jewish activists from Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) meant for them the historic and often quite material alliance was over. In titling his chapter "Jewish Conversions," Feldman documents the rightward drift of former Jewish leftists, as their support for Zionism and multiethnic democracy isolated

them from the radicalizing currents of the anti-imperialist left.

While the convergence of Holocaust memory and support for the state of Israel became a mainstay of Jewish institutional life on both the center and right, it is often forgotten how marginalized Jewish centrists and conservatives felt themselves to be in the 1960s, especially on the question of Zionism. Indeed, if anything, the Jewish mood by the late 1960s was quite the opposite: from the overheated rhetoric of the Jewish Defense League (JDL) to the more dulcet tones of Jewish professors and the Jewish press, the assumption was that Zionism was in crisis on the Left, even and perhaps especially because of the left's Jewish constitution. The sense among Jewish right wing radicals, and liberal intellectuals seemed to be that Jewish youth sided far more with SDS than with the IDF, let along the JDL. The mood was so dire that in 1970, a conference was convened by the Histadrut Cultural Exchange Institute in New York's Arden House, gathering over a dozen leading liberal to left Jewish intellectuals to discuss the crisis. The lineup included sociologist Nathan Glazer, socialist historian Irving Howe, distinguished Hebrew professor Robert Alter, Mordecai Chertoff, Harvard professor Seymour Lipset, journalist Leonard Fein among others, and with the exception of Noam Chomsky, there was broad consensus that the Jewish left had turned against Zionism and thus, in their reading, the Jewish people. For Jewish activist and journalist Leonard Fein, he summed up the mood of the New Left by saying "considerable intellectual support the left once had for Israel is gone."[43]

One fact that perhaps also would puzzle a contemporary readership was how *Jewish* these dignitaries of liberal Jewish life also assumed the left to be. Irving Howe laments that "Jewish boys and girls, children of the generation that saw Auschwitz,

hate democratic Israel and celebrate as revolutionary the Egyptian dictatorship...a few go so far as to collect money for Al Fatah."^[44] Buried in Howe's lament is not only the grief over Jewish youth's rejection of Zionism, but that in their revolutionary fervor, they are "indifferent to the antisemitism of the Black Panthers," suggesting that Black Power and Jewish nationalism are diametrically opposed.^[45] Seymour Lipset also notes accurately that the "New Left is disproportionately Jewish," and concludes that then the New Left Jewish youth have joined a tendency "opposed to the Jewish people as a people."^[46] For Lipset and many others on the panel, the post-Bolshevik left has long opposed Jewish nationalism and Jewish culture, and the opposition to the state of Israel was not about American empire, but rather, the long war of the left to destroy Judaism in the name of universalism and advocacy for the most marginalized. While some such as Walter Laqueur and Chertoff, this was explicable as a Jewish rebellion against one's liberal Zionist parents, and attributable to the wider youth movement.^[47] And for others such as Lipset, joining the left is blended with the desire to "assimilate" and to use the left as a vehicle to become fully American, for nearly all, there was an assumption that Yet for most, there was a broad recognition that the New Jewish Left, like the Old Jewish Left, was hostile to Jewish nationalism, or "particularism," especially as it manifested in the Israeli state. For Glazer, this was all about race, as he cogently and perhaps aptly summed up the many alliances and solidarities of the left by saying bluntly: "the New Left supports the Arabs because the blacks do" - which for Rudd and Klonsky would be a point of pride; for Glazer, an act of "sycophancy."^[48] For nearly all the authors, again, Chomsky excepted, "there are Jewish interests and it is the thrust of the New Left to oppose them."^[49] Or as SWP leader Gus Horowitz dryly summarized in 1971, "the Zionist forces are...on the defensive. They are much less

confident of public sympathy than they used to be.”^[50]

What makes the New Left's anti-Zionism legible beyond just the opinions of individual activists and appear as an existential threat to Zionists and the Jewish right is that anti-imperialism had become perhaps the central slogan, the ideological anchor of New Left movements by the late 1960s. The U.S. invasion of Vietnam was increasingly understood as part of the left commonsense as less a policy mistake, or even a crime, but an expression of U.S. imperialism, and one episode in a global fight between the Third World and the West. As Martin Luther King reframed the War in his famous "Beyond Vietnam," no longer was the call for the U.S. to fulfill its own principles of democracy, but rather to grasp U.S. was on the "wrong side of a worldwide revolution," a phrase that would be understood commonly in the 1960s to mean the anticolonial uprisings from Vietnam to Cuba to Algeria to Ghana to South Africa. King's shift in this moment was not only surprising to many because he "broke the silence," but he also signaled his support for New Left and their analysis of the War and the role of America in the world. This connection between Black liberation and the struggle against imperialism was the core focus of the Black Panther Party, and came to be the dominant frame of radical analysis for the leadership and much of the membership of SDS.^[51] As David Gilbert summarized Eldridge Cleaver, "You're either part of the solution or part of the problem; either on the side of the people of the world or of imperialism."^[52] For the Jewish intellectuals gathered by the Center for Cultural Exchange, they understood very well what this broad global analysis would mean for Jewish nationalism - and indeed, the 1967 War seemed to cement Israel in the minds of much of the New Left as yet another imperial power.
^[53]

While high profile Jewish, left wing writers and activists such as I.F. Stone, Isaac Deutscher, Irwin Silber of the *National Guardian* and Noam Chomsky were publicly critical of Israel after the 1967 War, what obscures the Jewish left critique of Zionism obscured today (even if it was quite clear in the 1960s), is that the liberation of Palestine was understood by members of SDS and SWP as part of a larger anti-imperialist struggle against Western capitalism. Rather than summarize the conflict as between competing religions or ethnic groups, SDS, SWP and their allies tended to frame Palestine, much as they did the struggle in Vietnam and Cuba, as part of a wider global conflict between the Third World and the capitalist West. As Richard Saks, a member of SDS and later the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), framed it: in so far as “imperialism was at the center of our analysis of American capitalism,” we also understood that “Israel was an outpost of American empire.” [54] As Rudd summarized, support for Palestinians “It distinguished the true anti-imperialists from the liberals” and he wanted to be on the side of anti-imperialism.[55] It was an issue that marked the New Left’s rupture with the liberal 1960s consensus, clarifying that the U.S. failure in Vietnam or the unpopularity with the draft were not particular issues to be solved, but systemic crises in a world system they meant to overthrow. In 1968 the SDS leadership decided to explain its position Palestine in a series of articles by Eanet a staff writer for *New Left Notes* and someone close to leadership. Eanet also expressed in an interview that it would be strategic for the articles on Palestine to be authored by someone who was not only known to be Jewish, but the daughter of the founder of a major synagogue in Washington D.C.[56]

Despite or perhaps because of Eanet’s background, her articles to do not frame the conflict in the Middle East as a Jewish and Arab issue, but rather in an

editorial note describing the series, the editor argues that "outside of Vietnam" the "movement against imperialism in the Arab countries....may be the leading struggle against U.S. imperialism in the world today."^[57] Turning the New Right thesis that Israel is like America, but better, Eanet describes a country like the United States, only perhaps worse - as the dispossession of Palestinians from their land and Israel's expansive agenda is far from complete, and the Israeli working class saturated with racism. Eanet marks in the beginning of the article that the "situation in Palestine was analogous to the flight of early colonists in America...to a land already occupied by Indian people." Noting that it was the racism of early Jewish colonists that prevented them from joining with the Arabs against the British, Eanet also argues that it was Jewish racism that informed the Kibbutzim labor policy of hiring only Jews, not socialism. Divesting Palestinians from their land and "means of production" in the cities was just a start: "Zionism was an ever expanding policy," Eanet writes, and given the "metaphysical concept of a 'homeland' and 'chosen people'" the Israelis will "expand as they can militarily." With the rise of Al-Fatah and its "support of the Arab masses" one should not only see the analogy to Vietnam, but the analogy to the United States: one can stop an Indian War before it is over. This analogy was furthered by a second SDS pamphlet by Larry Hochman, who argued the "fundamental...central issue in Southwest Asia is the fact that a Jewish state has been established in the Arab midst without the invitation or consent of the indigenous population...at the aegis of Western imperial rule."^[58]

The SWP was generally aligned with SDS and with Black power positions on Israel-Palestine. And like SDS, it was largely the Jewish members who argued and debated the policy on Palestine, at least in print – Peter Buch, Pete Seidman, Gus Horowitz, and John

Rothschild. In part the Jewish authorship of SWP pamphlets was explained by the need to defend the organizations against claims of antisemitism. But it also seemed to come from a sincere desire by the Jewish members to not only shield the organization, but also address the ways in which SWP's position is derived from a long, and proud, history of American Trotskyists taking a principled stand against Zionism, antisemitism and fascism, even when other Marxists were quiet. The adopted resolutions and supporting materials, later published as a small book of around 80 pages titled "Israel and the Arab Revolutions," was chiefly authored by Gus Horowitz, one of the few Jews in SWP who had grown up in an orthodox, Zionist household. The pamphlet offered two major lines of argument – the first, that the Palestinian movement for self-determination was, unlike Nasserism and Ba'athism, a democratic people's movement of the broader Middle East, and as such, an "advance" over the anti-colonial bourgeois nationalism that had come before in the region. And because the movement was democratic in nature, Horowitz argued, it had the real chance to "appeal to the Jewish masses" and win them "away from Zionism."^[59]

While SDS approached Israelis through the lens of "white skin privilege," Horowitz tended to view the Israelis as both exploited by nationalism at the same time as they formed an "oppressor nationality" in relationship to Palestinians.^[60] Arguing that SWP is not only the strongest voice "against Zionism" on the left, it also is the "strongest opponent of anti-Semitism," Zionism for Horowitz "does not advance the interests of the Jewish people – in Israel or anywhere else in the world."^[61] While Horowitz grants that Zionists have constructed their own "Hebrew nationality" that is distinct from diasporic Jewish identity, a Jewish-only state aligns Jews with "imperialism" and with their own bourgeoisie.^[62] It

is for this reason that Jews in Israel do not have an independent working-class movement, fear invasion from the Arab world, and fear their growing pariah status globally – Israelis have sacrificed the possibility for peaceful cohabitation with their neighbors for a violent bourgeois nationalism. Yet unlike the Arab national governments that are neither serious about Palestinian liberation and will deploy antisemitic rhetoric, Horowitz argues, the democratic nature of the Palestinian liberation struggle offers a place for Jews within it, if they are willing to give up on an ethnic state. The fear that Palestinians will drive Jews into the sea is not the fear of antisemitism, but fear of revolution: “to consider that the Arab revolution will necessarily threaten the national oppression of the Israeli Jews is an unfounded *fear of the revolution itself*, a fear which is incited for counterrevolutionary reasons by the imperialists and Zionists.”^[63] The situation for Jews in Israel Horowitz concludes, is not that of a religious or ethnic minority as it is in other countries, but as an oppressor – and the liberation of Palestinians will be their own liberation.

While neither Eanet nor Horowitz identify themselves as Jewish in their articles, nor do their articles claim a particular Jewish subjectivity, for them as well as the other two-dozen or so New Left revolutionaries I interviewed, they understood their socialist anti-imperialism, including their anti-Zionism, as a continuation rather than a rupture with their Jewish sense of self. For some such as Horowitz, Saks and SDS activist Steve Goldman, they identified primarily as Marxists and anti-imperialists, and yet, toward the end of the interview, echoed similar sentiments, that the “Jewish tradition” is to “side with the underdog,” and “the oppressed,” and because of this, most Jews are “less inclined to anti-communism,” and probably “more likely to sympathize with people of color.”^[64] This position – that they were both inside a tradition they could define and yet also, not

defined by the tradition – was a common, perhaps the most common, sentiment among the activists – so much so I might almost call it a kind of Jewish subjectivity itself. For former SWP organizer Linda Loew, who like Saks came from a red diaper background, she summed it up simply by saying that she both liked being part of a multi-ethnic movement in which she could organize with farmworkers, students, and civil rights activists, and not feel that she was burdened by a sense of identity – which she thought of as her father’s intense sensitivity around perceived and real antisemitism.[\[65\]](#) Yet she also prided herself on being the kind of Jew who opposed Zionism, and felt very much that she was carrying on the legacy of her parents. “I didn’t feel there was a break,” she said, between her life in the New Left and her parents’ life, either in the kind of revolutionary work she was committed to in the SWP, or with her sense of what it meant to be Jewish. Like Yuri Slezkine’s commentary on Sholem Aleichem’s “Tevye the Dairyman” Hodel running off to be a revolutionary – even or especially an anti-Zionist one -- is in a larger Jewish sense, still all in the family.[\[66\]](#)

New Left Anti-Fascism and (Jewish) Red Scare Memory

One reason for a Jewish left to oppose Zionism during the 1960s while also affirming a Jewish subjectivity may have been due to the way progressives tended to see the post-war prosperity in very different terms than large mainstream Jewish institutions such as AJC and ACJ and their adherents. As Marc Dollinger writes, “American Jews celebrated the postwar consensus,” enjoying their “integrating into the suburbs” and finding “common ties” with their new often white, Christian neighbors.[\[67\]](#) Along with this new consensus, of course, there was also a rapid rise in class ascension, fueled by the GI Bill, university entrance in greater numbers, and the beginning of the end of restrictive covenants backed

by FHA loans – all things, it should be noted, denied to most African-Americans during the same period. Yet while large numbers of Jews ascended into the middle class, for the many hundreds of thousands of Jews on the Communist and socialist left of the 1940s and the decade of the 1950s, the era of course, looked quite different. For Jews on the left, whether in the Communist Party, as members of Communist affiliated unions and organizations, or simply people with strong left sympathies, the era appeared less as the birth of a new post-war consensus, and more like the emergence of a post-war fascism.

Several years before Philip Roth ironized Jewish assimilation in *Goodbye Columbus*, Jewish Communist writer Howard Fast published a different tale about Cold War Jewish life in the United States: *Peekskill USA*. The short book is a first-person narrative of Fast's role in the infamous Peekskill riot of 1949, in which gangs of right-wing vigilantes twice attacked the concert goers and supporters of Paul Robeson. Fast was part of the initial organizing committee, using his name and reputation to help publicize the event, and on the first night, was also one of the concert attendees who organized resistance to the mobs: he and two dozen other men fought off the fascist attackers, protecting the concert space while others fled to safety. Fast's analysis, supported by the Civil Rights Congress that urged him to write it, was that this event was the opening salvo of a new form of fascism that was emergent in American life. As Fast writes, “the *Peekskill* affair was an important step in the preparation for the fascization of America and for the creation of receptive soil for the promulgation of World War III,” as a way he concluded to both prepare the U.S. for necessary “violence” to put down the left, and also begin preparations for new military conflict. [68] As one of the many instances of “force and violence against the *left*” Fast saw the coming Cold

War, what Dollinger refers to as “consensus,” as less a coming sign integration and liberal democracy, than as a right-wing purge of the left, and the intensification of a militarized state.[\[69\]](#)

The racial and political coordinates of the vigilante violence were quite stark to Fast. The crowd that assaulted the concert goers shouted racist and antisemitic slurs, “screaming at us in a full frenzy... full of the taste of death,” promising that “every n-bastard dies here tonight! Every Jew bastard dies here tonight.”[\[70\]](#) Rather than just a random event or stray racial epithets, Fast cites both the ACLU and the Civil Rights Congress documentation of how both riots were premeditated, and done in full view of local and state police. Fast not only witnessed police intermingling with the vigilantes, he watches as a cop “beat the windshield of the car in with his club while he drew his revolver with another hand, while “another policeman” was “smashing in the windshield of a car that asked for directions.”[\[71\]](#) The racist and antisemitic rhetoric Fast also documents as systemic and premeditated. Stickers were printed and plastered all over town reading “COMMUNISM IS TREASON. BEHIND COMMUNISM THE JEW” and a statement from one of the groups organizing the riot read:

You Jews, and we mean you Communist Jews, have made yourself obnoxious and offensive to the American people, and you are only using the American Negro as a “Front” in your criminal un-American activities.[\[72\]](#)

Fast additionally documented an attempt to assassinate Robeson, with a sniper’s nest discovered in the trees behind the stage, and even before the full assault on the concert goers, black people were dragged out of cars in town and beaten in broad

daylight. Fast described the mob not as "lumpen" but as "prosperous-appearing men, well set up, well dressed, real estate men, grocery clerks, lunch counter attendants..." – not a rabble but "decent citizens" and civic leaders.^[73] It was an organized assault, from the top down.

Fast said he wrote the book to wake Americans up, for he felt Americans have an "amazing resistance... toward" the "acceptance" of an "unmistakable phenomenon – the cultivation and growth of American fascism. We simply do not believe it."^[74] As if to prove his own point, Fast himself documents multiple moments in the text when he either refuses to recognize what he is seeing, or refuses to listen to advice from people who had a better understanding of what transpired that week. Frequently "Mrs M," his children's nurse, and a Black woman, admonished Fast for not understanding how "white folks behave" and left town before the second concert.^[75] Likewise, the night of the second concert, Fast frequently documents how he fails to comprehend what he sees:

"Then suddenly we had to slow down. The car ahead of us had fared worse than we; every window was smashed, even the rear window. I remember saying to R-

"The road is wet. They must have gotten the gas tank or the radiator."

There was a dark wetness that flowed out of the car ahead of us; and then we realized that it was blood, but an enormous flow of blood that ran from the car that way and into the road."

Even at the level of Fast's sentence, the "but" creates an opposition between what he sees and the enormity of it, revealing his own sense of unreality as he faced

yet again another barrage of violence on the way out of the concert grounds. Through his Black nurse and his own feelings of unreality, Fast quietly documents not only the slowness of his own perceptual response, the much longer lineages of fascism his nurse seems far more aware of: “how white folks behave.”

Perhaps the most important Communist organization to make the connection between the U.S. and home-grown fascism was the Civil Rights Congress (CRC). Founded in 1946 to replace the International Labor Defense, it took an explicitly antifascist approach to organizing against racism and anti-union suppression. Placing the Holocaust at the center of its analysis of capitalism, William Patterson, its director, compared the fate of African-Americans in the United States to Jews under the Holocaust. Furthering the analysis of Negritude theorist Aimé Césaire, Patterson held the origins of fascism lay in colonialism and slavery, systems that in an era of crisis, returned back to Europe to form fascism. Following this logic, perhaps the CRC's most famous and controversial act was the We Charge Genocide petition delivered to the United Nations in 1951, claiming that under the U.N. charter, the United States was committing genocide against African-Americans, and U.N. intervention against lynching and Jim Crow was necessary. What was remarkable about the CRC was that it was one of the few organizations with a sizeable grassroots Jewish and African-American membership and leadership to denounce the Rosenberg trial as a site of fascist violence. One might even say that because of its Jewish and African-American members and leadership, it was uniquely suited to make such comparisons. Unlike the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the NAACP that both denounced the Rosenbergs, the CRC connected the execution of the Rosenbergs to lynchings of African-Americans in the deep south and Nazi genocide in

Europe[76]. The CRC, like the Communist Party and later the BPP saw the violent backlash against Communism, including the execution of the Rosenbergs, the bloody riot at Peekskill against Paul Robeson, and the jailing of Communists under the Smith Act as signs of incipient fascism. Had the CRC not been banned in 1956 as a "subversive organization" under the same Act, it is very possible that it would have been among the groups sponsoring the BPP's "United Against Fascism" conference.

Stanley Aronowitz's 1960s pamphlet on the specificity of American fascism likewise connects the Holocaust to the "systematic and conscious genocide against generations of blacks, both North and South," linking the Nazi mass murder to "lynchings" and the "brutality" with which "American Indians" were treated by an "advanced industrial country."[77] Aronowitz, who comes out of the left-labor tradition and was not allied with SDS, nonetheless saw in the Panther's description of the United States as fascist something that aligned with a longer left tradition in the United States. Fascism for Aronowitz, is not merely a kind of lower middle-class populism, but a modality of rule that arises when the traditional modes of parliamentary hegemony are no longer sufficient to resolve contradictions or quell rebellion. But rather than see fascism as a departure from normative modes of rule, fascism exists within and is an expression of U.S. liberal institutions, founded as they were on forms of capitalist violence. Thus Aronowitz concludes, much like the CRC, that the "anticommunist purges" of the late 1940s and 1950s constituted a "prefascist stage" of American capitalism, which culminated in the "public trials of countless communists...the murder of Rosenbergs....witchhunts against trade unions....and the McCarran Act" which banned any organization affiliated with the Communist Party.[78] Unlike the Zionists who might refer to the Holocaust as a form

of Jewish exceptionalism, or radicals such as Tseng-Putterman who would order the Holocaust on a hierarchy, the CRC, Aronowitz, the CP and others thing of racial genocide and fascism in its many intersecting forms as a totality of capitalist rule.

In this context, it makes sense that the most serious left-wing pamphlets and articles on antisemitism in the 1960s would appear from Marxist organizations. While most New Left organizations had significant Jewish presence, their considerations centered on defending groups like SNCC and the BPP against charges of antisemitism for calls against Zionism. In part because there is a lengthy Marxist literature on antisemitism, and in part from their own analysis of the role antisemitism plays in the construction of fascism, both the CPUSA and SWP devoted extensive resources to discussing the present role of antisemitism in America and its relationship to Zionism and the right. Both CP and SWP publications do not single out antisemitism as a transcendent evil, nor mark the Holocaust as a singular event in human history. Like Marcuse and the BPP, they locate the Holocaust within the larger structures of capitalism and imperialism, and see antisemitism as a structural and reoccurring feature of capitalist life. In collection of essays in late 1970s on antisemitism and Zionism from *Jewish Affairs*, Communist author Hyman Lumer documents still active presence of antisemitism in American life. Quoting from a University of California study, Lumer writes that two-thirds of Americans are antisemitic, one of third hold such views "private," another third are "outspoken antisemites" and a last tenth "advocate doing something to take 'power' from the Jews."^[79] Lumer roots antisemitism in capitalism and imperialism, and in doing, places the "Nazi Holocaust" alongside the "millions of Africans" who "suffered death at the hands of slave traders" and the "genocidal extermination of the Indian people in the Western

hemisphere.^[80] Like Hannah Arendt, Lumer locates antisemitism in both the economy in so far as he documents Jews' exclusion from "top executive and administrative positions" in banks, corporations, and elite universities, but he primarily aligns antisemitism as part of a political formation, the far right.^[81] "With a sharp swing toward reaction on the part of the Nixon administration....fascist elements...rise in an open, virulent expression of antisemitism," Lumer argues, further documenting the "desecration of synagogues" in recent months.^[82] Lumer who was one of the members of the Communist leadership who went underground in the 1950s and later arrested and jailed for a year under the Taft-Hartley Act for "conspiring to lie about membership in Communist Party" as an organizer in a labor union, was very familiar with both the fascist and antisemitic nature of the American state. Like generations of Marxist critics before him, Lumer locates the rise of antisemitism as a means to deflect from the power of global capitalism, and shield the ruling classes from scrutiny.

The specificity of antisemitism for the left, was not then simply an afterthought. Pete Seidman, a red diaper baby whose father lost his job during the red scare, wrote the position paper for SWP on antisemitism. While Seidman had been personally aware of antisemitism from a young age, as he was bullied at school and his father was a blacklisted former communist, it was the experience of being attacked by the ADL for SWP's support for Palestinians that goaded him into serious study on the question. What is perhaps most remarkable about Seidman's study is the emphasis it places on the failures of liberal democracy to protect Jews from structural antisemitism both before and after WWII. Antisemitism, for Seidman, is less a means for market liberalism to disavow the racial modalities of capital accumulation as Tseng-Puterman and Ratskoff

suggest, than a structural part of the liberal state itself. Focusing on the Roosevelt administration, Seidman shows how even while Roosevelt made token gestures toward Jewish inclusion and courted Jewish leaders of well-heeled organizations, on its most fateful policy decision, whether to allow Jewish refugees from Europe fleeing fascism, Roosevelt collaborated with assimilationist Jewish organizations to keep Jewish refugees out. Not only did the Roosevelt administration not raise quotas, it intervened to ensure that even existing quotas were not filled, even after Kristallnacht made the Nazis' plans quite clear. This did not change even after the full knowledge of the Holocaust was widely shared: Roosevelt and later Truman's policy of keeping Jewish refugees out of the United States remained -- fearing that Jews, as the Nazis felt, would bring with them communism and other "unassimilable" ideas. For Seidman, the Roosevelt administration's refusal to allow Jewish refugees was entirely in line with the antisemitic culture of assimilation, enthusiastically embraced by many Jewish organizations, including B'nai B'rith and the AJC, which felt that becoming "good Americans" was important than rescuing Jews from the Holocaust. Seidman goes so far as to accuse the Roosevelt administration of conscious antisemitism, noting that despite the "carefully cultivated reputation as a friend and benefactor of the Jews," placed a known antisemite and fascist sympathizer, Breckinridge Long, in charge the administration's Jewish refugee policy.^[83]

For Seidman, the U.S.'s increasingly vocal support for the state of Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War was not a sign of Jewish inclusion, but rather a new form of state antisemitism. Far from making Jews safe, Seidman argues, much as Arendt did two decades earlier, Israel creates a "haven" only by the "militarily conquering" of a "nation of two and a half million people" conducting an "endless war with the refugees it created."^[84] Further Israel depends "for its

survival" on "aid from U.S. imperialism," allying "the Jewish people" with a empire that the "oppressed peoples around the world" regard as an "enemy." To secure this allegiance and to ensure that Jewish refugees arrive in Israel and the not the United States, from the 1930s through the Holocaust, Zionists felt "any struggle against....immigration policies might interfere with Zionist attempts to woo U.S. support for their plans."^[85] Further, Seidman documents, Zionists allied with the right-wing of the Jewish establishment who for their own reasons, "believed any influx of Jewish refugees from Europe would undermine their assimilation into U.S. society."^[86] Embittering the Palestinians and allying with both reactionaries and the U.S. empire, Seidman felt that the State of Israel was objectively antisemitic both in its foundation and in its practice. This proposition that Zionism feeds the very antisemitism it says it exists to defend against was apparent from the very inception of the state. Turning the metaphor and history of the Holocaust on its head, Seidman wrote that it is precisely because the Zionist state exists, "the people of Israel will face Munich-like dangers or worse."^[87] For Seidman it is was the cruelest of ironies that the SWP was labeled as antisemitic by the ADL, as he argued, it was Trotskyists and other radicals who opposed fascism in the U.S. and in Europe, while it was the Jewish establishment and Zionists who tacitly or even explicitly allied with fascists on the condition they supported a Jewish state in Palestine.

As George Novack, the SWP Marxist intellectual wrote in 1968, reviewing the posthumous publication of Deutchers' *Non-Jewish Jew*, worries about antisemitism may seem "unduly alarmist to those privileged and short-sighted Anglo-American Jews who have been sunning in the prolonged prosperity and social stability of the post war decades."^[88] Novack is acknowledging here that for most white

American Jews, the terror of Nazism and even Peekskill seemed but a distant, far-removed echo. Like Marcuse's analysis of "proto-fascism," repression does not have to be total to still be racialized and reactionary: that some Jews experienced antisemitic state violence at the height of the cold war while others experienced prosperity is not so much a contradiction of late capitalism but a condition of its function.^[89] Yet there is always a danger that at some moment, the counter-revolution against fascism may not be deemed to be sufficient, and echoing Fast's experiences in Peekskill concludes, "Let this society suffer any severe shock, such as it is bound to suffer; let there be again millions of unemployed, and we will see the same lower-middle-class alliance with the Lumpenproletariat, from whom Hitler recruited his following, running amok with anti-Semitism," he wrote. "As long as the nation-state imposes its supremacy and as long as we have not an international society in existence, as long as the wealth of every nation is in the hands of one national capitalist oligarchy, we shall have chauvinism, racism, and, as its culmination, anti-Semitism."

For many of the New Left activists with whom I spoke, there was a particular urgency to their antiracist work that was not solely explicable by political calculus or benevolence alone. For many of the two-dozen or so interviewees I spoke with, there was a special importance, only a decade and a half after the Holocaust, less than a decade from the red scare, to work in the civil rights movement. David Gilbert remembers his youthful attraction, still an adolescent, to hearing MLK speak; Linda Lowe remembers it was power of Malcolm X's Autobiography that brought her contact with the antiracism of the SWP; Phil Passen relates how joining the Freedom Rides dedicated him to a life of struggle; and many, including Geoff Mirelowitz, remembers his parents taking him to his first protest,

a desegregation picket in Chicago for the desegregation of the schools.[90] That these activists would connect the Holocaust to antiracism and antifascism and then also to anti-Zionism did not strike them as wholesale inventions of the present - they were, for the most part, intuitive connections. They were part of the Jewish world in which they were raised. That they seem strange, or forced, or even nostalgic today suggests how much Zionist propaganda and historical amnesia has clouded Jewish memory, and specifically, memory of the left. As Mirelowitz himself said, such ideas did not need to be spoken to him aloud to be absorbed - they were simply in the air, in the Yiddish jokes, in the aura that was around him growing up. Rudd's story thus remains exemplary in a sense: that he might "see himself among the dead" of the Holocaust, and then throw himself headlong into the struggle against racism and imperialism. That one might understand the Holocaust and its implications and decide that provides one safety and security means that perhaps one has not experienced antisemitism or understand its implications and imbrications with other forms of racism and state power.

Such an articulation centers, rather than makes peripheral, antisemitism and Jewish identity as part of an anti-Zionist perspective for this generation of revolutionaries. Both to declare their fundamental solidarity with Black Power organizations such as SNCC and the Black Panther Party, as well as to articulate how their own Jewish sensibilities aligned with their revolutionary commitments, opposing Zionism and fighting antisemitism affirmed of the kind of Jews they understood themselves to be. As Loew articulated her own sense of Jewishness, she didn't feel herself to be "breaking with anything" when she opposed Zionism - in fact, it made her feel like she was keeping "part of who we always were" alive. For those who remained on the revolutionary

left in organizations such as SDS, SWP, the CPUSA, the October League, and Revolutionary Union, rejecting Zionism as a project, and supporting the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was not only a way to reinforce their revolutionary commitments, it was a way to reinforce a Jewish heritage that felt less lost than under assault. "There was no question" one Chicago SWP activist Phil Passen said, "when the (1967) War broke out, I knew which side I was on." To be a Jew, Passen continued, "was to be on the side of the oppressed, and the Palestinians were clearly the oppressed." For the Jewish activists I talked to and who I have read, remaining an internationalist on the revolutionary left was an expression of their ethnos, their cultural subjectivity. In short, to be a revolutionary, an anti-Zionist, and to fight antisemitism, was a break with their Jewish life, but a fulfillment of it.

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[1] Abbie Hoffman et al., “At the Chicago Conspiracy Trial,” *The Jewish 1960s: An American Sourcebook*,

[2] I interviewed the following people for this essay, which is a segment of a longer project on anti-Zionism and the American Jewish left: Naomi Allen, Joel Beinin, David Bernstein, Susan Eanet/Klonsky, David Finkel, Joel Finkel, Dick Flacks, Steve Goldman, Gus Horowitz, Carol Kaplan, Linda Loew, Geoff Mirelowitz, Paul Mishler, Joanna Misnick, Myron Perelman, Phil Passen, Richard Saks, Peter Seidman, Sandi Sherman, Mike Taber, and Sherry Wolff. All but one identified as Jewish, and nearly all had been members of either Students for a Democratic Society or Socialist Workers Party, with one member of the Communist Party and one member of International Socialists and later the Internal Socialist Organization. I had two central goals with the interviews: to interview people who had written some of the journal articles and/or position papers and pamphlets on Zionism and antisemitism, such as Susan Eanet/Klonsky, who was the author of the many of the SDS/*New Left Notes* articles on Zionism and Palestinian resistance, Gus Horowitz, who wrote a long article and position paper on SWP's position on Zionism and Palestinian resistance, and Pete Seidman, who wrote SWP's long pamphlet on antisemitism. Otherwise, I wanted to speak with writers and intellectuals such as Joel Beinin, Dick Flacks and Mike Taber, but more often than not, people who were rank and file activists on the left. After interviewing 20 former and current revolutionaries, as well as reading memoirs by Rudd, Gilbert, Weiss, Quint-Freeman, Hoffman and others, I felt I patterns of memory, association and identity formation among Jewish members of 1960s and 1970s left could be formulated.

[3] Joel Finkel, interview with author, July 2019.

[4] Susan Eanet/Klonsky, interview with author, August 2019.

[5] Mark Rudd, *My Life with SDS and the Weathermen Underground*, 23.

[6] Kathy Boudine, interviewed by Zayd Dohrn on *Mother Country Radicals, Chapter 9: Revolutionary Suicide*.

[7] David Gilbert, *Love and Struggle: My Life in the Weather Underground, and Beyond*, 30.

[8] Ibid., 15.

[9] Rudd, *My Life*, 23.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Arlene Stein, *Reluctant Witnesses: Survivors, Their Children, and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness*, 15.

[12] I define "New Left" rather broadly in this essay to mean left organizations and organizers who placed U.S. imperialism, antiracism, support of Black Power, anti-anti-communism, the Cuban revolution, and a skepticism about the Soviet Union at the center of their politics. As Maurice Isserman demonstrates in *If I Had a Hammer*, James Miller in *Democracy in the Streets* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), and Dick and Mickey Flacks in *Making History/Making Blintzes*, there was a great deal of overlap between old left organizers and organizations than is usually acknowledged: SDS itself emerged out the Socialist's League for Industrial Democracy (LID) and to a lesser extent, the Trotskyist followers of Max Shachtman. Ironically, what distinguished SDS from other socialist organizations was its refusal to red-bait former and current members of the Communist Party, and its tenuous willingness to bear with the

Progressive Labor Party in its ranks. Alternatively, while many in SWP did not consider themselves to be part of the New Left formally, their willingness to work in coalitions around the New and Student Mobilizations against the war, support Black Power, and center opposition to the war in Vietnam, meant they were very much a part of the 1960s left politically, if not necessarily culturally. More importantly for purposes of this essay, both SDS and SWP had large Jewish membership and much of the activist history of SDS and SWP members were very similar: attracted initially to the civil rights struggle both in the north as well as the Freedom Rides, they were pulled into antiwar organizing by the escalation in Vietnam.

[13] Abbie Hoffman, *The Autobiography of Abbie Hoffman*, 82.

[14] Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, 2nd ed.; Michael Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism*, 52-55.

[15] Hasia Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1942-1962*, 2-6.

[16] Philip Roth, “Defender of the Faith,” *Goodbye Columbus*, 174.

[17] Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, 30.

[18] Ibid., 48-50.

[19] Enzo Traverso, *The End of Jewish Modernity*, trans. David Fernbach, 57, 2.

[20] Ibid., 58.

[21] Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*, 210, 227

[22] Mark Tseng-Putterman, "Fear and Isolation in American Zion," *Protocols*, 2017.

[23] Finkelstein, *Holocaust Industry*, 37.

[24] Ben Ratskoff, "Against Analogy," *Jewish Currents*, 2020.

[25] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, 34, 66-68

[26] Norm Fruchter, "Arendt's Eichmann and Jewish Identity," 22-23.

[27] Isaac Deutscher, "Who is a Jew," *The Non-Jewish Jew*, 51.

[28] Suzanne Berliner Weiss, *Holocaust to Resistance: My Journey*. 263.

[29] Ibid., 229.

[30] Ibid., 94.

[31] Ibid., 88.

[32] Ibid., 99.

[33] Ibid., 190-1.

[34] Ibid., 189.

[35] Finkelstein, *Holocaust Industry*, 21, Keith Feldman, *Shadow Over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America*, 109.

[36] Amy Kaplan, *Our American Israel: The Story of an Entangled Alliance*, 104, 135; Melanie McAlister, “The Good Fight: Israel After Vietnam,” *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East Since 1945*, 155-197; Marc Dollinger, *Black Power, Jewish Politics: Reinventing the Alliance in the 1960s*, xii, 7, 9.

[37] Matt Berkman, “Coercive Consensus: Jewish Federations, Ethnic Representation, and The Roots of American Pro-Israel Politics,” 4-7.

[38] Ibid., 12-16.

[39] Michael R. Fischbach, *The Movement and the Middle East: How the Arab-Israeli Conflict Divided the Left* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 164.

[40] Kaplan, *Our American Israel*, 77, 83.

[41] Fischbach, *The Movement and the Middle East*, 163

[42] Feldman, *Shadow Over Palestine*, 110-111.

[43] Leonard Fein, “The new left and Israel,” *The New Left and the Jews*, 128.

[44] Irving Howe, “Political terrorism: hysteria on the left,” *The New Left and the Jews*, 45.

[45] Ibid., 45.

[46] Seymour Lipset, “‘The socialism of fools’: the left, the Jews, and Israel,” *The New Left and the Jews*, 103.

[47] Walter Laqueur, “Reflections on youth movements,” and Mordecai S. Chertoff, “The new left and newer leftists,” *The New Left and the Jews*, 56, 175.

[48] Nathan Glazer, “Jewish interests and the new left,” *The New Left and the Jews*, 159 163.

[49] Ibid., 157.

[50] Gus Horowitz, “The Revolution in the Arab East since 1967: Draft Theses,” *Israel and the Arab Revolution: Fundamental Principles of Revolutionary Marxism*, 32.

[51] Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, 3.

[52] Gilbert, *Love and Struggle*, 126.

[53] It is worth also noting that Meir Kahane’s manifesto *Never Again!* is a diatribe against the internationalism of the New Left and a call for Jews to embrace Zionism.

[54] Richard Saks, interview with author, March 2021.

[55] Rudd quoted by Michael R. Fischbach, “The New Left and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

in the United States,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 11.

[56] Susan Eanet/Klonsky, interview.

[57] Susan Eanet, “History of Middle East Liberation,” *New Left Notes*, 6.

[58] Larry Hochman, “Zionism and the Israeli State,” 4.

[59] Horowitz, “The Revolution in the Arab East since 1967,” 7.

[60] Ibid., 17.

[61] Ibid., 13.

[62] Ibid., 17-18.

[63] Ibid., 18.

[64] Steve Goldman, interview with the author, November 2020; Saks, interview.

[65] Linda Loew, interview with the author, February 2021.

[66] Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 204-372.

[67] Dollinger, *Black Power, Jewish Politics*, 3.

[68] Howard Fast, *Peekskill USA: Inside the Infamous Riots*, 95.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 33.

[71] Ibid., 89.

[72] Ibid., 118-119.

[73] Ibid., 24-25.

[74] Ibid., 61.

[75] Ibid., 70.

[76] Gerald Horne, *A Communist Front? The Civil Rights Congress 1946-1956*, 74-99.

[77] Stanley Aronowitz, *Honor America: The Nature of Fascism, Historical Struggles Against it, and a Strategy for Today*, 9.

[78] Ibid., 23.

[79] Hyman Lumer, “Zionism: It’s Role in World Politics,” *Anti-Semitism and Zionism: Selected Marxist Writings*, 135.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 136.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Peter Seidman, *Socialist and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism: An Answer to the B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation League*, 24.

[84] Ibid., 7.

[85] Ibid., 19.

[86] Ibid., 21.

[87] Ibid., 10.

[88] George Novack, “Isaac Deutscher and the non-Jewish Jew,” *The Militant* 33.6 (February 7 1969), 8-10.

[89] Herbert Marcuse, *Counter Revolution and Revolt*, 1, 28.

[90] Gilbert, *Love and Struggle*, 21; Phil Passen, interview with author, September 2020; Linda Loew, interview with author, July 2020; Geoff Mirelowitz, interview with author, August 2020.

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