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# American Jewish Identity and Newspapers: the medium that maintained an imagined community through a change in identity

Joanna Merrill

*University of Colorado Boulder*

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**American Jewish Identity and Newspapers:**  
*the medium that maintained an imagined community through a  
change in identity*

By: Joanna Merrill  
History  
University of Colorado, Boulder

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Thesis Advisor: David Sneer, HIST  
Honors Advisor: John Willis HIST  
Outside Reader: Paul Voakes JOUR

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**Abstract:**

This thesis will demonstrate the crucial role English-language Jewish newspapers, originally founded to foster Zionism among American Jews, played in maintaining an imagined American Jewish community while American Jews were rapidly assimilating the 1930's and the 1940's. This thesis will trace the transition of American Jewish identity in the 1930's and 1940's, from an exclusive community feeling embattled in Depression-era America to a postwar group of Jews proud to be 'American,' using English-language American Jewish newspapers as a guide. The overall change in the American Jewish cultural identity lead to the creation of the Judeo-Christian society we live in today.

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**American Jewish Identity and Newspapers:***the medium that maintained an imagined community through a change in identity*

Joanna Merrill

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, American Jews, as a people, were an embattled community confronted by anti-Semites like the Catholic Father Coughlin, who vociferously spouted hate on the radio and local German clubs, who waved Nazi flags on the streets with impunity.<sup>1</sup> By 1945, those same American Jews were part of something that came to be called “Judeo-Christian society” in America. Jews, many of them just one generation in the United States, had become American Jews, invested in the United States; no longer as guests, but now as full-fledged members of American society. At the same time as Jews became fully invested in American society, they nonetheless maintained a sense of difference from non-Jewish Americans. One of the key ways American Jews articulated a sense of belonging but difference was in the publication and circulation of Jewish newspapers, in particular, those in English aimed at reaching an already Americanized Jewish audience.

This thesis will trace the role that English-language, but specifically Jewish newspapers played in the reflecting and shaping of the American Jewish collective identity and the in fostering of an American Jewish imagined community. American Jewish newspapers, in particular those published between 1933-1945, played a crucial role in the maintenance of a collective identity. The thesis will also

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<sup>1</sup> Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), 53.

demonstrate that because these newspapers, which were originally founded to introduce Zionism to an assimilating American Jewish community, both shaped and reflected the American Jewish identity of the time, which was both deeply and patriotically American and was also profoundly Zionist, with great pride in the accomplishments of American Jews. In the darkest hours of World War II, these newspapers cultivated Zionism among Americans by advocating for European Jews to migrate to Palestine, but they never suggested same migratory path for America's Jews. English-language newspapers created by and for American Jews served as the repository for what I am calling, following Benedict Anderson, an *imagined American Jewish community*.

In early twentieth-century America, a new and vital institution emerged in the Jewish community—a network of English-language newspapers written by and for Jewish Americans. As the United States integrated successive waves of diverse immigrant cultures, many cultures developed their own imagined community using tools such as newspapers to create connections amongst their members, who were often spread out across a large geographic area.<sup>2</sup> Institutions such as newspapers expressed common community values.<sup>3</sup> This led to the creation of a newspaper for nearly every subculture in the United States. For example, African Americans had been creating newspapers for their community since 1827 in an attempt to combat

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<sup>2</sup> “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Thus, the members of the community, though geographically separated, “invent nations where they do not exist,” within a larger nation. Benedict Anderson, *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Else G. Cohen, “Afro-American Periodicals,” *The Hudson Review*, vol. 5.1 (1971), 29.

racism.<sup>4</sup> Like their African American counterparts, whose newspapers were also written in English, English-speaking Jewish Americans created newspapers to promote a Jewish American imagined community. These newspapers became an important carrier of news of specific interest to American Jews. Once adopted and widely read by their intended audience, English-language Jewish newspapers effectively maintained the imagined Jewish community by promoting Zionism amongst a Jewish population, which was rapidly substituting English for Yiddish as their primary language.

The period from 1881 through World War II was the heyday of Yiddish-speaking newspaper culture amongst the newly emigrated Jews in the United States, yet even though, during this time, the majority of American Jews were fluent in English, they obtained daily news from mainstream American newspapers like the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*. Unlike the vast number of immigrant newspapers, including the Jewish newspapers, that were geared to create cultural connections amongst their readership, these newspapers created connections among all American readers, Jews among them. Jewish-American newspapers, written in English, however, were key tools in fostering the Jewish cultural connection- what Benedict Anderson defines as an *imagined community*. Imagined communities hold communities and nations together because the nation is always “conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”<sup>5</sup> Even in the smallest community, the members will only know a fraction of the other members, but they are all

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<sup>4</sup> Else G. Cohen, “Afro-American Periodicals,” 28.

<sup>5</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 7.

connected because of their relationship to the whole. American Jewry created, in the words of Benedict Anderson, an “independent nation” within the United States, united by their common religion and culture, which separated Jews from other Americans.<sup>6</sup> According to Anderson’s theory, American Jews, who, while self-identified on the one hand as Americans, felt alienated due to cultural prejudices, and as a result created their own separate sub-culture. Thus, without this alienation, a subculture would not have been created.<sup>7</sup> Never was this cultural alienation more evident in American for Jews than in the 1930s.

When Adolf Hitler first became the Fuhrer of Germany in 1933, American Jewish newspapers, both in English and in Yiddish, began to feverishly print articles to advertise protests and create an overall awareness of the desperate condition of European Jews within the American Jewish community. Despite their calls for more action on the part of the US government to make policy changes directed at Germany, their pleas were met with silence, leaving American Jews feeling impotent. Once the United States joined the war in December 1941, there was a change in attitude among Jews from one of impotence to one of effectiveness. American Jews could finally enlist in the armed forces to fight Hitler and the Nazis as well as protect European Jews. Even if the war was initially declared against Japan, American Jewish soldiers’ ability to fight in the war to defeat Hitler, a new-shared enemy, led to an overall change in American Jewish identity by the end of the war in 1945. America’s participation in the war made it both possible and necessary to be a part

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<sup>6</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, *G.I. Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 11-12.



of an American and a Jewish culture in the public sphere. On the home front, the American Jewish press printed articles that described the conditions of American Jewish soldiers, their victories, and acts of heroism in order to bind together the American Jewish imagined community by gaining a sense of pride in Jewish soldiers' activities on the front.

By the end of the war, there was a change in American culture, which became more accepting of Judaism. With the defeat of Nazi Germany and the revelations of Nazi atrocities against Jews, American society was more welcoming to Jews than it had been in the past. Changes had occurred simultaneously within the Jewish and non-Jewish American imagined communities on both the home and military fronts. At war, American soldiers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, shared and fought against common enemies, which forced them to ignore religious prejudice in order to reach a common goal. This common acceptance within the military incorporated American Jewish soldiers into the American community. At the same time the assistance received from the United States helped American Jews properly punish Nazi elites after the war in Europe was over. American Jews finally had faith that the American government would support them in bad situations, and, at the same time, American Christendom had become more understanding and accepting of the Jewish culture. This dual agreement ultimately led to the emergence of a Judeo-Christian culture in America. The transition of American Jews from an alienated subculture to one of strong identity, which was a vibrant part of the emerging "Judeo-Christian" American culture, can be charted by reading editorials and articles in the English-language American Jewish newspapers of the time.

Historians disagree on the origins of the change to America's Judeo-Christian culture. Some historians, such as Deborah Dash Moore, argue that the militarization of the American Jews during World War II and their ability to fight against and defeat the Nazi regime fostered a new American Jewish cultural identity. In her book, *G.I. Jews*, Moore makes the argument that militarized Jews cultivated a new Jewish identity while fighting in the war against the Nazis that they promoted once they returned home. Many American Jewish men, who were fully aware of Jewish oppression in Germany enlisted into the armed forces once the United States, joined the war after the Japanese attack in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. While Japan was America's primary enemy, America was a part of the allied forces, and thus, they had joined the war against Nazi Germany. With a common enemy, the American Jewish men enlisted, as Americans, to fight America's war. While in the military, these Jewish men, who sought acceptance from their fellow American soldiers, had to closet their Jewish identity, and not allow it to be a "public dimension of their culture."<sup>8</sup> They also attempted to disprove Jewish stereotypes, such as the notion that Jewish men were weak. According to Moore, after the Jewish soldiers returned home, their influence spread and Jewry living in America became both Jewish and American. After the war, American Jews became immersed into American culture, but maintained their Jewish traditions in the private sphere. However, Moore ignores the national change amongst American Jews that occurred simultaneously on the home front while Jewish soldiers were fighting in Europe, Asia and North Africa. She also does not note the other factors that contributed to

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<sup>8</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, *G.I. Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation*, 20.

American Jewish identity change, such as an increase of employment and housing that became available to Jewish Americans after World War II, the discovery of the genocide of 6 million European Jews, and the importance of English-language American Jewish newspapers as the repository for the American Jewish identity.

Other historians, such as Edward S. Shapiro, assert that a change of collective identity took place on a national level, not just within the military, and was caused by a decrease in anti-Semitism after World War II. Edward S Shapiro, in "World War II and American Jewish Identity," argues that before World War II, American Jewry was separated from the American culture because of American anti-Semitism. According to Shapiro, American Jews faced limited housing and employment opportunities and quotas on enrollment to universities. Because they had no other options, American Jews lived in Jewish neighborhoods and worked in Jewish businesses. While the Nazis were in power in Germany, many American Jews were infuriated with the Congress's refusal to change immigration quotas set up in the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, to allow European Jewish refugees to escape Nazi oppression. Shapiro notes that 50% of Americans blamed Hitler's early Jewish oppression on the Jews themselves.<sup>9</sup> American Jews were distanced from American culture because of their lack of opportunities and their animosity towards the American government for denying assist to their European brethren.<sup>10</sup> Shapiro argues that after World War II, once Americans had been fully informed of Hitler's atrocities, there was a movement to end public anti-Semitism in America in the

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<sup>9</sup> Edward Shapiro, "World War II and American Jewish Identity" in *Modern Judaism* vol. 10, no. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, Feb. 1990), 71.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Shapiro, "World War II and American Jewish Identity," 68.

general public. As a result, there was an increase of Jewish employment, housing and educational opportunities for American Jews. It became inappropriate to be outwardly anti-Semitic because, it was believed, that anti-Semitism led to Auschwitz.<sup>11</sup> The contempt that American Jews had previously faced from other Americans was significantly decreased and American Jewry was invited into the American culture.

Other historians, such as Elizabeth Imhof and Hasia Diner argue that Holocaust remembrance and the creation of Israel as a sovereign Jewish country fueled American Jewish leaders' desire to become more immersed into American culture, and to influence other American Jews to become further assimilated in American culture.<sup>12</sup> The two historians downplay American Jewish impotence before the United States joined the war, but instead argue that Holocaust remembrance fostered the change in American Jewish identity. In *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962*, Diner argues that American Jews who memorialized the Holocaust along with American sympathizers fostered the new change in American Jewish culture.<sup>13</sup> Imhof, in her dissertation, "The Transformation of American Jewish Political Identity," agrees with Diner that Holocaust memory assisted in a post-war change in American Jewish identity, but argues that the participation was a rejection of Jewish liberal values. Instead Imhof argues that the active participation was part of a larger

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<sup>11</sup> Edward Shapiro, "World War II and American Jewish Identity," 71-72.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Imhof "The Transformation of American Jewish Political Identity" Ph.Diss., University of Chicago, 2012, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009), 321.

1960's movement, claiming that their parents had preached a rhetoric of equality and justice in the 1950s, but hadn't acted on it and wanted to make America live up to its values and emphasis on civil rights.

There is also a debate among historians over the lack of coverage of the Nazi oppressive legislation, atrocities, and the Holocaust in American newspapers such as the *New York Times*. Between 1933 and 1945, the American Jewish press printed numerous articles highlighting Nazi anti-Semitic discrimination, while the *New York Times* did not, isolating American Jews from the greater non-Jewish American population. The few *New York Times* articles that were printed after the United States joined the war that described the Nazi anti-Semitism, were, according to historian Max Frankel, "buried inside its grey and stolid pages, never featured, analyzed or rendered truly comprehensible."<sup>14</sup> This led to an overall oblivion to the Nazi anti-Semitic legislation among the majority of the American population before the United States entered World War II. However, American Jewry knew about anti-Semitic legislation well before the war and wartime atrocities came to public light, and pleaded for help from their fellow countrymen. Deborah Lipstadt argues in her book, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945* that the American Press did not cover Nazi oppression because the United States was geographically displaced from Germany, and with a large anti-Semitic readership, editors did not see the necessity of printing stories of German Jewish oppression. During the war, editors of American newspapers thought that the

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<sup>14</sup> Max Frankel, "Turning Away From the Holocaust: *The New York Times*", as found in Shapiro, Robert Moses, ed. *Why Didn't The Press Shout? American & International Journalism During the Holocaust*, (New ark, Yeshiva: Yeshiva University Press and KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 2003), 79.

massacre of European Jewish civilians did not compare to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of American and other Allied soldiers. The editors focused their reader's attention on stories of American soldiers fighting the war, not the massacre of the European Jewry. Immigrant American Jews were frustrated because they were frantically trying to create awareness of the German Jewish oppression, but were overall unsuccessful. It became even more important for the American Jewish press to print stories of the Nazi anti-Semitic discrimination against German Jews in their newspapers.

Laurel Leff argues in her book, *Buried by The Times*, that the *New York Times* did not blatantly ignore Nazi anti-Semitism, but refused to print content on the front page that could not be absolutely confirmed. The *New York Times* received news of German Jewish oppression from propaganda printed from the Allies and Axis powers, various Jewish organizations, and sometimes, eye-witness accounts. However, the *New York Times* did not think these were reliable sources, and thus kept the stories of Nazi anti-Semitic discrimination off of the front page.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike American newspapers, Jewish newspapers, in both Yiddish and English, feverously printed articles to make their communities aware of German Jewish oppression. Abraham Brumberg, in "Towards The Final Solution: Perceptions of Hitler and Nazism in the US Left-of-Center Yiddish Press, 1930-1939," asserts that Yiddish-speaking newspapers such as the widely distributed *Forvertz* also began printing stories of Nazi discriminatory oppression against the

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<sup>15</sup> Laurel Leff, *Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*, (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, San Paulo: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4.

German Jews even before Hitler was elected.<sup>16</sup> These articles warned American Jewry of the dangers of a government run by Adolf Hitler. Brumberg focuses on the Yiddish press, which reached a community that obviously had deep ties to European events and consumed its culture in another language. As this thesis will look at the change in the American Jewish cultural identity, as seen through the plethora of articles printed in English-language Jewish newspapers, there was a keen focus on Nazi atrocities before and after the United States entered, and won, World War II, which catered to an audience already invested in and part of American society, while still desiring a sense of imagined Jewish community in America. This thesis will use articles from English-speaking American Jewish newspapers to witness the evolution of America's Judeo-Christian society that was credited to the depletion of Jewish isolationism, and America's acceptance of American Jews because of military action against the Nazis and the creation of strong bonds between Jews and non-Jews on the home front.

## **I. The Birth of English-Language American Jewish Newspapers**

By the end of the nineteenth century, American Jewish newspapers, which were generally written in a particular Jewish language, such as Yiddish, served the Jewish community in the United States and abroad. As Anderson shows, newspapers help bind a community together and lead to the fostering of national identity. The

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<sup>16</sup> Brumberg, Abraham and Chase, Chevy, MD. "Towards The Final Solution: Perceptions of Hitler and Nazism in the US Left-of-Center Yiddish Press, 1930-1939," as found in Shapiro, Robert Moses, ed. *Why Didn't The Press Shout? American & International Journalism During the Holocaust*. (Newark: Yeshiva: Yeshiva University Press and KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 2003).

appearance of newspapers produced in the American *lingua franca*, but targeting specific communities, is a phenomenon that stretches Anderson's theory of imagined communities. But it is useful to think about these newspapers as a tool for fostering an imagined community, but not with the goal of nation-formation. Rather, English-language Jewish newspapers maintained a Jewish imagined community in the United States during a time of rapid assimilation without undermining their status as Americans.

The influx of eastern European Jewish immigrants led to the phenomenon of daily Yiddish newspapers in America, which provided a forum for daily news, community activism, and Americanization for the new immigrant community. For Yiddish immigrants, reading Yiddish newspapers became a new cultural practice.<sup>17</sup> By 1915 there were 600,000 copies of American Jewish newspapers, written in both Yiddish and English, that circulated the United States. By World War II, while still popular, circulation had dropped to 400,000 as the radio became a popular news medium.<sup>18</sup>

The Yiddish press of the time secluded the Jewish imagined community among Yiddish speaking Jews within the United States. But how would English-speaking

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<sup>17</sup> Tony Michels, "Speaking to Moyshe": The early socialist Yiddish press and its readers," *Jewish History*, vol. 14, issue 1, (Nederland: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 52.

<sup>18</sup> Abraham Brumberg, "Towards The Final Solution: Perceptions of Hitler and Nazism in the US Left-of-Center Yiddish Press, 1930-1939," 18.  
 "...in 1915-16, the circulation of the daily Yiddish press, excluding the number of weeklies, monthlies, and other periodicals, was half a million in New York City alone and 600,000 nationally. Even by the time the Second World War broke out, the combined circulation of the Yiddish press was 400,000..."



Jews maintain a sense of Jewishness as a group of Americans dispersed across large cities? In fact, many started to assimilate and stopped maintaining a distinct Jewish identity. This worried some Americans, who wanted to find a way to shore up Jewishness in America, while fostering Jews' integration into America. Answering this challenge were American Zionists, who created English-language Jewish newspapers, in order to keep assimilating Jews Jewish as they acculturated by continually connecting them to an American Jewish imagined community. Many of these newspapers were created to foster an American Zionist ideal. In general, Zionism was the national ideology among Jews, who believed that Jews needed sovereignty to normalize their status in a world of sovereign nations, and most thought that a sovereign Jewish state should be located in the Jews' historic homeland in Palestine, then a province of the Ottoman Empire, and after World War I, to become part of the British Mandate.<sup>19</sup> American Zionists believed Palestine was the promised land for all Jews with one important exception, Jews in America.<sup>20</sup> While American Zionists believed in their "perceptions of the pioneering enterprise in Palestine," and advocated for other Jews to migrate to Palestine, they were themselves content living in the United States, and had no plans to join the migration.<sup>21</sup> But in order to build support for Zionism in America, these Zionist launched the first English-language Jewish newspapers.

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<sup>19</sup> David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East, 1914-1922*, (New York: H. Holt, 1989), 25.

<sup>20</sup> Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 203-204.

Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 138.

<sup>21</sup> Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 69, 203.

In April 1887, 43 members of the Philadelphia Jewish community got together and founded the first English-language Jewish newspaper in the country, *The Jewish Exponent*. The newspaper attempted to reflect the diverse opinions, views, and goals of the entire community, but its founders first and foremost strove to devote the newspaper to the “interests of the Jewish people.” According to *The Jewish Exponent’s website*, in an American Jewish environment generally satisfied in America and, therefore, hostile to Zionism, only after Zionism gained some popularity in the early twentieth century United States did the paper become more explicit in its goals by dedicating its editorial section to be a “voice of Zionism.”<sup>22</sup>

Similar to *The Jewish Exponent*, *The Jewish Advocate* was founded in 1902 in Boston in order to galvanize the Jewish community in Boston by creating a medium that disseminated local and national news underpinned by Zionist ideology to a wide range of American Jews. Theodor Herzl, the founder of the modern Zionist movement and a celebrated Austrian journalist, instructed his assistant, Jacob deHass, to create *The Jewish Advocate*. A long time journalist himself, Herzl had previously created the Vienna newspaper, *Die Welt*, a German-language Jewish paper to galvanize the Zionist movement and create an imagined Jewish community in Austria based in Zionism. Similarly, Herzl also saw a need to encourage Zionist advocacy within the Jewish community of the United States. He sent deHaas to Boston to create *The Jewish Advocate*. With Herzl’s guidance and expertise, deHaas founded a Jewish newspaper in Boston to inspire support for the idea of the Jewish state and, perhaps more importantly for the American Jews producing the

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<sup>22</sup> “About Us.” *The Jewish Exponent*, <http://www.jewishexponent.com/aboutus.aspx>. Accessed March 2012.

newspaper, to bring together the New England Jewish community in the United States by means of support for Zionism. According Brumberg, by the 1930s, the number of readers, who read Jewish newspapers, such as *The Jewish Advocate* and *The Jewish Exponent* was as large as the readership of non-Jewish American newspapers, and thus, very influential in galvanizing Zionism ideals amongst Jewish readers.<sup>23</sup>

The creation of *The Jewish Exponent* and *The Jewish Advocate* cultivated a readership in Philadelphia and Boston that quickly spread throughout New England. This extensive readership fostered an imagined community among Jewish subscribers. Because both newspapers sought to galvanize support for Zionism, the readerships of both papers were subjected to pro-Zionist news articles and editorials. The newspapers propelled the Zionist movement in the United States and helped foster a particularly American form of Zionism, because they kept their Jewish readers informed as to current events and opinions surrounding Zionism. Later, during the Nazi period, the newspapers galvanized the anti-Nazi movement among Jewish communities in the same fashion.

During the first half of the twentieth century Jewish newspapers, and later radio, became the voice of Jewish news opinions.<sup>24</sup> Not only did the creators of the newspapers strive to propel the Zionist movement; they wanted to connect the Jewish community within the United States by convincing American Jews of the importance of a Jewish state. And using Anderson's notion of creating an

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<sup>23</sup> Abraham Brumberg and Chevy Chase, "Towards The Final Solution: Perceptions of Hitler and Nazism in the US Left-of-Center Yiddish Press, 1930-1939," 17.

<sup>24</sup> Ari Y. Kelman, *Station Identification: A Cultural History of Yiddish Radio in the United States* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 18.

independent Jewish nation within the US, newspapers also created a common understanding of an American Jewish world or an American Jewish imagined community. Along with pro-Zionist material, the newspapers actively promoted pro-Zionist members of the American Jewish community.

The English-language Jewish press was put to the test at one of the darkest hours in modern history with the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party in Europe. American Jewish newspapers written between 1933 and 1945 both reflected and helped foster a change in the American Jewish community. Throughout this time the Jewish press focused on anti-Nazi content, and strove to create awareness of German Jewish oppression. The cause of defeating the Nazis, seen as an American cause, not just a Jewish one, gave the American Jewish press a new-found feeling of empowerment. In the newspapers written before 1941, there was an overall feeling of impotence in the Jewish community, because American Jews felt ignored by the United States government. After the United States joined the war, and especially during the final summer of the war in 1945 when the Nazis had been defeated, the air of impotence and alienation, changed to one of efficacy, and a new identity that was both Jewish and American. Because American Jewish newspapers were representative of American Jewish culture from 1933-1945, they can be used to observe the changes of the American Jewish culture.

## II. 1933-1941 The Rise of Nazism, Anti-Semitic Legislation, and American Jews' Cry for Assistance

After Hitler rose to power in 1933, American Jewish newspapers frequently printed articles highlighting Hitler's anti-Semitic politics and ideology as well as the suffering of German Jews in order to promote awareness among American Jews, with the intent that this information be disseminated throughout the greater American population. Between Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and the United States' entry into World War II in December 1941, American Jewish newspapers were constantly filled with lengthy articles describing Germany's oppression of its Jewish population.<sup>25</sup> By reading these articles, American Jews were well informed of Nazi discrimination and the eventual violence against German Jewry. This posed a sharp contrast to the general American readership, who solely read newspapers like the *New York Times*, whose coverage of Nazi anti-Semitism was infrequent and buried in the pages.<sup>26</sup> The American Jewish press was not content to merely inform its readership about German anti-Semitism; it encouraged readers to actively organize against it. The press called for protests of the Nazi regime and boycotts of German goods in hopes of crippling the German economy and Nazi power. However, no matter how hard American Jewish protestors tried to gain attention to German Jewish suffering, the United States government ignored their pleas, and their activism enjoyed little success. The very

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<sup>25</sup> These articles that ranged anywhere from one page to seven pages adorn the front page of the issues...such as Schneiderman, Harry. "The German-Jewish Catastrophe and Its Repercussions: A Review of the Jewish Year 5693 Part I, *The Jewish Advocate*. (September 19, 1933), 1-7.

<sup>26</sup> Laurel Leff, *Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*, 2-4.

act of being an ineffective activist, however, helped crystallize an American Jewish imagined community.

Given its readers' personal interest in events in Europe as well as the newspapers' own Zionist predisposition to highlight European anti-Semitism, American Jewish newspapers printed articles that exposed Nazi anti-Semitism. This distinguished them from other Americans, who did not have access to the same information from the general American press. American Jews, granted, had a heightened interest in this information since they were fearful of the fates of their European families and brethren, and sought to assist them. From the onset of Hitler's appointment as chancellor in January 1933, *The Jewish Advocate* and *The Jewish Exponent* described Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, a Nazi boycott of Jewish stores, loss of Jewish employment in both business and government, anti-Semitic legislation, and anti-Semitic violence and murder. Jewish readers were informed of German Jews getting fired from their jobs, lawyers losing their licenses, Jewish doctors losing their ability to treat "Aryans," and Jewish government employee's expulsion from their positions.<sup>27</sup> What's more, these articles began appearing as early as a March 1933 article, which was printed just over a month after Hitler took power, and argued that that there was no decrease "in the volume of Jewish expulsions from employment and official positions."<sup>28</sup> The loss of Jewish jobs and the ability to provide a stable livelihood for their families in Germany moved

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<sup>28</sup> "The Situation In Germany: Two Jews Brutally Murdered in German Provinces," *The Jewish Advocate*, (March 28, 1933), 1.

American Jews to advocate for changing the US government's policies toward Germany.

The rest of America was not moved to act on behalf of German Jewry. The *New York Times* printed few stories about Nazi discriminatory legislation until 1939-1942, long after the creation of policies that segregated and punished the German Jewry, and the instillation of work camps.<sup>29</sup> The few articles about Nazi anti-Semitism that the *New York Times* did print appeared after the United States joined the war, and were, according to historian Max Frankel, "buried inside its grey and stolid pages, never featured, analyzed or rendered truly comprehensible."<sup>30</sup> The word "Kristallnacht" did not appear in the *New York Times* between 1938 and 1945. If the *New York Times* reported about Kristallnacht, it must have used a different name. However, American Jewry knew about anti-Semitic legislation well before the war and wartime atrocities came to public light, and pleaded for help from their fellow countrymen. Both English-language and Yiddish Jewish newspapers printed stories of Nazi anti-Semitism from the onset of Hitler's appointment to Chancellor of Germany, other non-Jewish American newspapers did not. English-language Jewish newspapers repeatedly printed these articles to inform their communities. Without the stories about Nazi oppression, American Jews, many of whom were

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<sup>29</sup> Max Frankel, "Turning Away From the Holocaust: *The New York Times*," 79. The *New York Times* did print stories of German Jewish oppression, but not as means to foster community action. In fact, an April 1933 article covering the American Jewish response to Hitler inadvertently suggested that this was a Jewish, not American, issue.

<sup>30</sup> Max Frankel, "Turning Away From the Holocaust: *The New York Times*," 79.

getting letters from family in Europe reciting current events, would not have known that their personal issue was, in fact, a community-wide problem.<sup>31</sup>

The *Forvertz's* articles about Nazi anti-Semitism *before* Hitler's rise to power points to the larger issue of German anti-Semitism, which Adolf Hitler did not invent. In the 1880's anti-Semitic organizations created propaganda to "prevent—subsequently, to revise and undo- the legal equality of the Jews."<sup>32</sup> Early anti-Semitic German propaganda called on the German state to make all Jews living in Germany constitutionally alien by forbidding Jewish immigration into Germany, and expelling Jews that had been living in Germany for hundreds of years.<sup>33</sup> German Anti-Semitic propaganda reached its heyday in the 1930s. Josef Goebbels was appointed as head of Nazi propaganda in 1929. From that point, he began creating propaganda that, simultaneously, praised the Nazi Party (and later the Nazi state), and demoralized Jews in Germany. Goebbels used the radio, newspapers, pamphlets, and fliers to send out Nazi anti-Semitic messages.<sup>34</sup> All Jewish newspapers in America started publishing extensively about anti-Semitism with the rise of Hitler to create awareness within the American Jewish imagined community.

In September 1933, *The Jewish Advocate* published "The German-Jewish Catastrophe and its Repercussions," which gave an annual account of the events that occurred that year.<sup>35</sup> Rather than print an annual account of the new miseries of

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<sup>31</sup> Max Frankel, "Turning Away From the Holocaust: *The New York Times*," p. 80.

<sup>32</sup> Wolfgang Benz, Dunlap Thomas, trans., *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, (Berkeley, London, Los Angeles, University of California Press: 2006.), 134.

<sup>33</sup> Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, 133-135.

<sup>34</sup> Benz, Wolfgang, *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, 60-66.

<sup>35</sup> Harry Schneiderman , "The German-Jewish Catastrophe and Its Repercussions: A Review of the Jewish Year 5693," *The Jewish Advocate*, (September 19, 1933), C1-C7.



German Jewish life that corresponded with the Gregorian calendar, used in the US, the article used Jewish time, whose year ends in September to foster a sense of difference from the American mainstream. Using the Jewish calendar to mark time, rather than the Gregorian calendar, in fact, heightened the importance of time defined by religion, which further cemented, what Anderson would call, an independent Jewish nation within the greater United States. This article also provides details about Hitler's rise to power and subsequent legislation passed through September 1933. The American Jewish newspapers saw this early threat as the beginning of a mass movement against German Jews. By the end of the year, the press even published first-hand accounts of German anti-Semitism and the effects of anti-Semitic legislation.<sup>36</sup>

There were so many new laws passed that the Jewish press was unable to know or report every single legal action made against the German Jewry. However, it made special efforts to ensure that its readers were well informed of the most significant ones. The Nuremberg Laws, which deprived German Jews of citizenship in 1935, were of particular interest. The *Advocate's* article "Jews to Be Only Guests In Germany, Say Nazis," was written immediately after the Nuremberg Laws were passed, and highlights the fact that German Jews had become aliens in their own country, unable to own land and excluded from obtaining civil rights.<sup>37</sup> The article is

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<sup>36</sup> Alexander Brin, "My Observations Abroad: The German Platform Under Hitler and What Has Been Done in Pursuance of it to Uproot 600,000 Jews Who Have Contributed to Upbuilding the Fatherland," *The Jewish Advocate*, (December 1, 1933), 1, 6.

<sup>37</sup> "Jews to Be Only Guests In Germany," *The Jewish Advocate*, (September 24, 1935), 2. See also "Planned Purge of Jews in Germany: Goebbels to Move against "Enemies of State," *The Jewish Advocate*. (August 9, 1935).

short and gives a brief description of the law before moving on to discussing new anti-Semitic laws that were expected to emerge in Germany. An article titled “The German Tragedy” described the Nuremberg Laws as “the culmination of this attack and a milestone in the retrogression of Germany.”<sup>38</sup> A longer piece than usual, the article described the concept of a pure Aryan race, and its horrifying repercussions on German Jewry.<sup>39</sup>

The American Jewish press was especially outraged at physical violence against Jews, beginning as early as March 1933. The *Advocate* published “The Situation in Germany: *Two Jews Brutally Murdered in German Provinces. Anti-Jewish Pamphlets Distributed in Streets –Nurseries, School Closed—Dismissals Continue Unabated,*” just two months after Hitler was appointed Chancellor. This was the earliest article to be found that described Nazi physical violence against German Jews. The article begins by describing the brutal murders of two Jews: one was shot and killed while entering his parents’ house, and the other was “dragged out of bed and spirited away in a motor car. Subsequently he was found on the road dead, with two bullet holes in his body and with his skull battered.”<sup>40</sup> While the American Jewish press continuously printed articles to bring attention to German Jewish suffering, American Jews did not know the Nazis would eventually turn to

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<sup>38</sup> Neville J. Laski, “The German Tragedy: A Comprehensive Review of Nazi Terrorism During the Past Three Years,” *The Jewish Exponent*, (December 6, 1935), 1.

<sup>39</sup> “Aryan” is a term the Nazis used to describe a person of true German blood. Nazi propaganda shows a true Aryan to have blond hair and blue eyes. This description did not include Communists, Socialists, Gypsies, and most importantly Jews. Hitler’s goals to create a pure Aryan race in Germany ultimately lead to the Holocaust, and systematic murder of millions of Jews, gypsies, and other “undesirables.”

<sup>40</sup> “The Situation In Germany: Two Jews Brutally Murdered in German Provinces,” 1.

systematically murdering German Jews. American Jews felt that “even a Nazi regime cannot afford to tolerate at the present time a general massacre of any element of the population.”<sup>41</sup>

In 1938 German Jewry’s few remaining Jewish rights were eliminated, and the American Jewish newspapers began reporting on the beginnings of systematic murder of the German Jewry. Jewish hate crimes began to erupt throughout Germany. Most hate crimes were propagated by Nazi propaganda, directed by Josef Goebbels. The propaganda that was used in the discrimination of German Jews heightened after the infamous fire at the Reichstag. The Reichstag was the beloved government building in Berlin. All government proceedings took place in this building. Although a radical Hungarian caused the fire, Hitler and the other heads of the Nazi party blamed the Communists, and, through propaganda, were able to gain support to pass the Reichstag Fire Decree, which suspended the democratic processes that had defined the Weimar Republic.<sup>42</sup> According to the article, the propaganda created after the Reichstag fire facilitated anti-Semitic oppression further, including but not limited to a boycott on Jewish stores, shop keepers, and businesses.<sup>43</sup> The anti-Semitic propaganda later orchestrated events such as Kristallnacht, or “the night of broken glass,” in which Nazi anti-Semites attacked

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<sup>41</sup> “Chesterton Brands Hitler A Barbarian And A “Menace To Europe,” *The Jewish Exponent*, (October 6, 1933), 2.

<sup>42</sup> Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, 24-25, 142-143.

<sup>43</sup> “Nazis Spread New Terror: Wild Outbursts of Anti-Jewish Demonstrations; 2000 Jews Reported Arrested after Mass Round-Ups. The Nazi Beast at Its Worst, *The Jewish Exponent*. (June 24,1938).

Jewish homes, businesses, and even a few Jewish people.<sup>44</sup> During this time there was still anti-Jewish legislation being passed. One of the final anti-Jewish laws that were passed dictated that Jewish babies had to be named from a list of 185 male names and 91 female names.<sup>45</sup> The Jewish press in Germany was also completely suppressed by this time. There had already been no regularly circulated German Jewish newspapers, and the three remaining periodicals that were suppressed had had a combined circulation of 120,000.<sup>46</sup> The American press wrote articles that described each of these events as soon as the information became available, which was usually very timely.

By the end of 1938, the Jewish press began printing articles that reported on Jewish work camps, and Jewish death in work and other Nazi camps. Because the Jewish press was very current with its reporting of Nazi anti-Semitic legislation and oppression, it comes as no surprise that coverage of deportation and systematic murder of the Jews began shortly after the murders began in 1939 and 1941.<sup>47</sup>

As a voice of American Jewry, the American Jewish press saw coverage of Nazi anti-Semitism as the first step in mobilizing its readership. American Jews felt compelled to do something to protect their German brethren, but the United States was not yet at war with Germany, and American Jews could not enlist in any army to

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<sup>44</sup> Alan E. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht 1938*, (Cambridge, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 19-20, 59.

See also Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, 200.

<sup>45</sup> "Special List of Names Drawn Up for Use of All Jews in Germany; Others Banned," *The Jewish Advocate*, (August 26, 1938), 1.

<sup>46</sup> "Jewish Press in Germany Now Completely Suppressed," *The Jewish Advocate*, (December 23, 1938), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Wolfgang Benz, Dunlap Thomas, trans. *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, 217, 219.

combat Hitler militarily. Instead American Jews and American Jewish organizations turned to protests against the Nazi regime and boycotts of German goods.

After the Jewish press informed the American Jews of the oppression of the German Jews, it called them to action, asking for help protesting the Nazi regime and boycotting German goods. *The Jewish Advocate* and *The Jewish Exponent* were filled with articles calling for help to save their European brethren. The newspapers even printed fliers that advertised meetings to discuss the situation in Germany, helping turn the imagined community of readers into a force for political change. The 1933 article "Boycott on German Goods, Shipping and Service Organized at New York Conference," promotes a boycott against German goods until "all the anti-Jewish laws, edicts, and policies have been wholly repealed and renounced."<sup>48</sup> The article first promotes a boycott against German goods, shipping, and service. Then it explains its call for a boycott by giving a description of the current situation in Germany, which highlights Jewish oppression. The article closes with a dramatic conclusion that "Germany cannot be affected by moral suasion, and that the only means of combatting the policies and acts of the present regime in Germany is an economic boycott of goods, products, and services emanating from Germany."<sup>49</sup> By closing the article in such a manner the Jewish press hoped to leave the reader feeling responsible to protect their European brethren and motivated to take any measures necessary to do so.

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<sup>48</sup> "Boycott of German Goods, Shipping and Service Organized at New York Conference," *The Jewish Advocate*. (May 16, 1933), 1.

<sup>49</sup> "Boycott of German Goods, Shipping and Service Organized at New York Conference," 2.

The other articles that described the aforementioned German Jewish oppression were simply descriptions of the oppressive acts that occurred in Germany. There is very little analysis within the articles. The goal of the articles was to quickly inform the Jewish readers of Nazi anti-Semitism and to call readers to action to protest the German government. This summary format differed from the informative articles that were long in length and gave great detail about current Nazi anti-Semitism and its repercussions against the German Jewry. Similar to “Boycott on German Goods, Shipping and Service Organized at New York Conference,” the article “Nazis Crushing German Jewry” lists only the first few signs of Nazi anti-Semitism including German Jews losing their jobs, the boycott against German Jewish businesses, the burning of Jewish literature, and the expulsion of Jews from universities.<sup>50</sup> However, this description only takes up about a paragraph of a two-page article. Having given the description of Jewish oppression, the rest of the article is filled with other items of interest, including passages, which describe the current activity of one of the most visible Jewish organizations in the United States, the American Jewish Congress (AJCongress). It focused on the AJCongress’ calls for protests, boycotts, and its lobbying of the US government to protect German Jews.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> “Nazis Crushing German Jewry: Governmental Edicts Demolish Jewish Cultural and Scientific Achievements. A Rigid Censorship Has Apparently Been Placed Upon News of Recent Anti-Semitic Happenings in Germany. Specially Prepared From Jewish Telegraphic Agency and Other Press Dispatches”, *The Jewish Exponent*, (April 21, 1933), 1.

<sup>51</sup> The American Jewish Congress was a committee dedicated to protecting their European brethren by through vocal activism. The American Jewish Congress was an active voice, planning the protests and boycotts against Nazi Germany.

The articles asked for American Jewish readers to pressure the US government to help European Jews. They called for protests, and asked the United States Congress to pass legislation to protect European Jews. The *Advocate*, serving as a platform for the AJCongress, believed that boycotts and protests would lead to a liberated Germany because “the boycott movement, thus conceived, shall in time become an effective blockade against the lunatic asylum of Nazi-contaminated Germany, that there may soon dawn upon its ruins a new Germany- a country of liberty, equality, and justice for all.”<sup>52</sup> They also asked Congress to repeal the immigration quotas to allow European Jewish refugees passage into the United States.<sup>53</sup> There was some positive response from the articles from American Jews who became active in protests and boycotts. The article was written by Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, who, by 1933, had become a well known American Zionist and author of several books about Jewish nationalism. As part of his awareness campaign he published *Races, Nations and Jews* as a defense of Jewish nationalism with a simultaneous harsh critique of Nazi racism.<sup>54</sup> While, in general, both the mainstream American press and the US government dismissed much of what was written in the Jewish press at the time, some of the pleas of Jewish journalists, who became active in protests and boycotts, were met with some positive response.

Because the United States was not yet at war with Germany, American Jews could not physically stand up to Hitler’s oppression, but different groups had

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<sup>52</sup> Joseph Tenenbaum, “Boycott Hitlerism To Save Humanity: Chairman Executive Committee American Jewish Congress,” *The Jewish Advocate*. (October 17, 1933), 2.

<sup>53</sup> Edward Shapiro, “World War II and American Jewish Identity,” 68.

<sup>54</sup> Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, *Races, Nations and Jews*, (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1934).

divergent approaches to protest Hitler's anti-Semitic legislation. The three most significant Jewish organizations serving as the representatives of American Jewry were the American Jewish Committee (AJCommittee), The American Jewish Congress (AJCongress), and The American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights (ALDJR). Their activism was carried out with two different approaches: outward, public protest and behind-the-scenes diplomatic petitioning. The AJCommittee was created in 1906 in order to fight anti-Semitism in America. Before and during WWII, the AJCommittee worked quietly behind the scenes to create legislation to protect European Jews.

In 1933 the AJCommittee submitted an article titled, "The Jews in Nazi Germany: The Factual Record of the Persecution by the National Socialists," to periodicals in New York and across the Atlantic such as *New York Times* and *The New York Evening Post* as well as *the Manchester Guardian* (London). The article was intended to bring Jewish oppression in Germany from its onset to the mainstream press, with the intent to inform the US of events that were well known to American Jews.<sup>55</sup> They were unsuccessful in placing the article and did not capture the American public's attention. In response to the seeming failure of the AJCommittee's newspaper-writing approach, a new generation of angry American Jews emerged to vocally and publicly protest Nazi anti-Semitism. By the 1930's, fueled by consistent reporting in Jewish newspapers, the AJCongress became a vocal and integral part of the Jewish community. The AJCongress and the ALDJR called on American Jews to organize and advertise protests and boycotts against the German government. Advertisements

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<sup>55</sup> Harry Schneiderman, "The German-Jewish Catastrophe and Its Repercussions: A Review of the Jewish Year 5693," 2.



for meetings and protests were submitted to the Jewish newspapers. It is unknown if the AJCongress paid for the advertisements or if the Jewish press printed the flyers *pro bono* in order to gain public attention to Nazi anti-Semitism. The actions of the AJCongress can be found in numerous newspaper articles suggesting a close relationship between the English-language Jewish press and its early Zionist inclinations and the AJCongress' more public, vocal forms of effecting change. In fact, coincidentally almost every article that promoted protests and boycotts mentioned the AJCongress. Aspiring for active protest against the Nazi regime, the AJCongress called out to American Jews, "To all the Jewish Organizations in New York and vicinity: The AJCongress call upon all the Jewish Organizations and Lodges to renew the protest movement of American Jewry against the persecutions in Germany."<sup>56</sup> This call was printed in an article in the *Exponent*, and included details of the call to action.

Throughout this time there were numerous articles about the actions of the AJCongress, but very little about the AJCommittee, which makes sense since the Zionist orientation of the newspapers aligned with the Congress's more aggressive approach to public Jewish activism. From all the articles found that were written between 1933 and 1941, only one article mentioned the AJCommittee.<sup>57</sup> This suggests that the *Advocate* and *Exponent* politically believed that the actions taken by the AJCongress were more impactful than writing letters to government as the AJCommittee had done.

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<sup>56</sup> "Nazis Crushing German Jewry: Governmental Edicts Demolish Jewish Cultural and Scientific Achievements." 1.

<sup>57</sup> Harry Schneiderman, "The German-Jewish Catastrophe and Its Repercussions: A Review of the Jewish Year 5693," 2.

Ultimately, these Jewish defense committees in the end helped foster a new American Jewish identity, working with newspapers, because, according to Elizabeth Imhof, they attempted to “convince American society that Jews were good Americans and convince America’s Jews that Judaism was inherently democratic and, because of this fact, that they were essential to American society and fully belonged in America.”<sup>58</sup> Good American Jews, then, protested issues on behalf of their European brethren, but they did so as Americans.

Although the Jewish press, along with the AJCongress, the AJCommittee, and the ALDJR, pushed to cripple the Nazi regime and protect German Jewry, an overall lack of efficacy led to widespread feelings of impotence within the Jewish community. The announcements for the protests and boycotts were printed in Jewish, not mainstream, newspapers. The Jewish press was unable to foster an overall awareness of the Nazi discriminatory legislation and hold events to combat Nazism on the home front that were popular among non-Jewish Americans. The American Jewish community was well informed of German Jewish oppression and ready to act to protect their brethren, but their activities had no impact on United States policies. The article, “Boycott Hitlerism To Save Humanity,” reads, “There were weighty grounds for this apparent neglect of Congress to heed the wishes of the masses.”<sup>59</sup> This article highlights Congress’s tendency to neglect the pleas of the American Jewish protestors. Their sense of impotence can be felt in this quote, because while the Jewish advocates tried as hard as they could to protect their European brethren,

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<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Imhof “Between Home and Homeland: The Transformation of American Jewish Political Identity,” 2.

<sup>59</sup> Tenenbaum, Joseph. “Boycott Hitlerism To Save Humanity,” 1.

the press perceived that America ignored its Jews. Even when the United States joined the war after Pearl Harbor in 1941, there was still little awareness of Nazi oppression or the Holocaust in the United States, outside of the Jewish community.

There was little that Jews could do to secure the US government's attention. This feeling of disappointment and denial from the American government further fostered a sense of distinct identity amongst American Jews. The Jewish press realized that protests and boycotts were not enough to cripple the Nazi regime. To do that, American Jews needed to physically fight Hitler's regime in order to defend the European Jewry. However, before the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor, the United States had no interest in joining the War.<sup>60</sup> This intensified American Jewry's feelings of powerlessness. Tenenbaum said in his article printed in 1933, "Boycott Hitlerism" article, "Were we in war today against Germany, I am sure that hundreds of thousands of Jewish youths would voluntarily enlist to shed their blood in the defense of their outraged honor."<sup>61</sup> The American Jewish press fostered this sense of responsibility to protect German Jewry as an obligation of American Jews. Now American Jews were ready to fight for their Jewish brethren. They were just waiting for the opportunity to do so.

On September 1, 1939 Hitler invaded Poland, breaking the Munich Accord, which marked the beginning of what was to become known as World War II. Wherever the war went in Europe became a very hostile and dangerous place to live

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<sup>60</sup> "The Great War," was a term used during the 1940's to describe the war that is now called World War II.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph Tenenbaum. "Boycott Hitlerism To Save Humanity," 1.

for Jews as well as non-Jews.<sup>62</sup> American Jews waited for the US to join the war in order to give American Jewish soldiers the opportunity to physically fight Hitler.

### **III. December 7, 1941-May 8, 1945 Active, Yet Effective and America Goes to War**

After the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States immediately entered the war, finally giving American Jews the chance to fight Hitler and protect their European brethren. The United States entered the war to settle the score with Japan, and consequentially, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.<sup>63</sup> While Hitler was not the United States' ultimate enemy, the U.S. government and American Jews finally had a shared enemy.<sup>64</sup> American Jews eagerly joined the armed forces as Americans.<sup>65</sup> While the soldiers maintained their Jewish goals, they were integrated into American military culture. Meanwhile, the American Jewish press continued to inform its readers of Nazi wartime policies, which came to mean mass murder, against the German and then the rest of Europe's Jews. In particular, second generation American Jewish immigrants, whose roots traced to Poland, had something very direct to fear.

As horror gripped the American Jewish imagination when reflecting on Europe, the American Jewish press now had the dual task of informing readers about the powerlessness of their European brethren, while finally highlighting American

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<sup>62</sup> Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, 170, 190-212.

<sup>63</sup> Dr. Spencer C. Tucker, *Encyclopedia of World War II: A Political, Social, and Military History*, vol. 1, (Santa Barbra, Denver, Oxford: ABC-CLIO, inc., 2005), 16-17.

<sup>64</sup> Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, 55.

<sup>65</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, *G.I. Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation*, 41.

Jewish soldiers' efficacy in defending them. Beginning in 1942, the US government began to acknowledge and support ending Nazi atrocities, a policy inspired by President Roosevelt.<sup>66</sup> The Jewish press continued to inform and advocate, but the papers no longer expressed a sense of impotence. American Jews were finally able to fight Hitler militarily, and their cause was now finally the U.S. government's cause. The change from impotence to effectiveness as well as Jewish soldiers fighting as Americans against a shared enemy ultimately led to the American Jewish press finally expressing a sense of pride in being American because they knew America shared its enemies and goals.

During the war, Hitler's anti-Jewish politics became more intense as he began to systematically deport and then murder European Jews, who were conquered by the German territorial war. The Jewish press tracked the radicalization of Hitler's anti-Jewish policies and their expansion across the continent. As more and more details of the persecution of European Jews surfaced, the language in the Jewish newspapers moved away from "anti-Semitic legislation" or "Jewish oppression" towards describing "atrocities." By the 1940's the non-Jewish American press also wrote stories on Hitler and referred to his acts against the Jews, as "atrocities." However "Nazi Atrocities" were only presented on the front page of the *New York Times*, when those atrocities described general war crimes, not crimes against European Jewry.<sup>67</sup> According to Laurel Leff in her book, *Buried by The Times*, articles

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<sup>66</sup> "Roosevelt Promises U.S. Ad to End Nazi Massacres of Jews: Jewish Delegation Present Memorandum to Chief Executive Dealing with Brutal Atrocities Perpetrated Upon European Jews," *The Jewish Advocate*. (December 11, 1942).

<sup>67</sup> Raymond Daniell, "Big Four Indict 24 Top Nazis For Plotting Against Peace; Atrocities In War Charged," the *New York Times*, (October 19, 1945).

written about “discrimination, deportation, and destruction of the Jews made the *Times* front page just 26 times, and only in six of those stories were Jews identified on the front as the primary victims.<sup>68</sup> In most cases, stories that described Nazi atrocities against Jews were buried in the pages of the *New York Times*.<sup>69</sup>

The American Jewish press also changed its tone toward Hitler himself. He began to be portrayed as evil, the Devil incarnate, in the case, when the *Advocate* pulled a story off of the Soviet wires written by Ilya Ehrenburg, who was the most outspoken Soviet journalist, known for his damning, almost racist, statements about Germans, and simultaneous sympathies for European Jews.<sup>70</sup> He was also Jewish and wrote extensively about his personal identity as well.<sup>71</sup> The American Jewish press was, in fact, publishing translations of Soviet newspapers to get their anti-German message out at a time when the general American press resisted stories from the Soviet Union.

The American Jewish press’s editors repeatedly turned to Soviet wire stories, which often had the most visceral, anti-German journalism during the war period to make its point to its readers, who were living up close to the European front. In the article, “Jews and Non-Jews Stick Together in U.S.S.R.,” Soviet Yiddish writer David

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<sup>68</sup> Laurel Leff, “Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper, 2-3.

<sup>69</sup> “Atrocities by Nazis Shown Here In Photos,” the *New York Times*, (October 17, 1944), 11.

See also “Vicar Describes Atrocities,” the *New York Times*, (May 8, 1944), 8.

<sup>70</sup> Karel C. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda During World War II*, (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 162-163.

Ilya Ehrenburg, German Atrocities and Fears, *The Jewish Advocate*, 5,8.

See also “Rally Hears FDR Castigation of Nazi Atrocities Against Jews,” *The Jewish Exponent*. (July 24, 1942).

<sup>71</sup> Karel C. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda During World War II*, 162-163.

Bergelson compared “Hitlerites” to “cruel, wild beasts, peppered with a good deal of sadism.”<sup>72</sup> Bergelson was an “impressionist fiction” Yiddish writer in Yiddish in the Soviet Union before World War II. During World War II he became a wartime writer, who wrote essays describing the war and its implications on European Jews from its onset.<sup>73</sup> American Jews’ disdain for Hitler and Nazis can also be seen in these articles written by American Jewish journalists. In one of the articles titled, “Hitler’s Burial,” author David Schwartz compared Hitler to the Devil when he said, “Yes, the Devil himself who stood before us.”<sup>74</sup> By the 1940’s the American Jewish press notified its readers that Hitler was committing horrific atrocities against their European brethren, but without direct access to information, the editors relied on those closer to the action, frequently coming out of the Soviet Union, to make its point. The only other American mainstream press to regularly pull stories from the Soviet wires was *The Daily Worker*, the American Communist Party’s daily newspaper, showing that the ends to which American Jewish press would go in order to get its message across to its readers.<sup>75</sup> American Jews were less concerned about the politics of journalism than about the fact that Soviet journalists were up close to the violence in Europe, and gave first-hand accounts of the problems European Jews were facing.

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<sup>72</sup> David Bergelson, “Jews and Non-Jews Stick Together in U.S.S.R.,” *The Jewish Advocate*, (September 11, 1942), A4.

<sup>73</sup> David Shneer, “From Mourning to Vengeance: Bergelson’s Holocaust Journalism (1941-1945),” as found in Gennady Estraiikh, ed., Joseph Sherman, ed., *David Bergelson: From Modernism to Socialist Realism*, (Oxford: Legenda Studies in Yiddish, 2007), 248-251.

<sup>74</sup> David Schwartz, “Hitler’s Burial,” *The Jewish Advocate*. (September 6, 1945). p.15.

<sup>75</sup> David Shneer, *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and The Holocaust*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey, London: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 165.

Because of the Jewish press, American Jewry learned of European Jewish deportation to ghettos. The newspapers described the condition within the ghettos, including starvation, disease, and death, which were ubiquitous.<sup>76</sup> Soon the Nazis began to deport European Jewry from ghettos to extermination camps or “death factories”, where Jews of all ages, including children, were worked to death, starved to death, or systematically killed.<sup>77</sup> The Jewish press gave all of the details of the miserable conditions of the European Jewry. As the war raged on, and Hitler’s treatment of European Jewry grew more severe, the American press printed articles that gave horrifying details of the Jewish oppression. The article “German Atrocities and Fears,” written in 1944 again by Ehrenburg, gives personal examples of the suffering of individual people to personify the massacres in Europe. For example, the article describes a pediatrician named Doctor Druskin. According to the article, “The Germans killed this old man and buried hundreds of living children with him. And side by side lay their mutilated bodies in this fraternal grave.” The article goes on to say, “It is hard to conceive: millions of people, neat and quiet old women, mothers with infants at their breasts, beautiful young women and little girls with pigtails, massacred in these death factories.”<sup>78</sup> The American press left no gory detail out of its reports, and used the Soviet journalist most well known for his anti-German rhetoric to make its point. However, no matter how bleak the condition of

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<sup>76</sup> “Roosevelt Promises U.S. Aid to End Nazi Massacres of Jews: Jewish Delegation Present Memorandum to Chief Executive Dealing with Brutal Atrocities Perpetrated Upon European Jews,” *The Jewish Advocate*. (December 11, 1942).

See also M.Z. Frank, “Shaping Jewish Life In War-Torn Russia,” *The Jewish Advocate*. (January 13, 1944).

<sup>77</sup> “United Nations Join In Denouncing Nazi Slaughter of Jews,” *The Jewish Exponent*. (December 25, 1942).

<sup>78</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, “German Atrocities and Fears,” *The Jewish Advocate*, 5.



the European Jewry seemed, and like the Soviet Jewish press, the American press gave hope that American Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers would defeat Hitler, and end his murderous rule.<sup>79</sup>

Along with news of the Nazi atrocities, the Jewish press began to create content focused on informing Jewish readers about American Jewish soldiers, including their acts of heroism and their deaths. Because of the desire to assert a patriotic sense of American Jewish identity, American Jews were interested in being constantly updated with news of Jewish soldiers fighting abroad. It was also a tool to combat the anti-Semitic slander accusing Jews of cowardice. The newspaper articles reflected this interest, and ran features that depicted personal stories of the men and women, who were fighting in the effort to save the European Jewry.

After the United States declared war against Japan, which subsequently led Germany to declare war against the United States, American Jews eagerly and quickly enlisted in the armed forces to finally be able to fight Hitler. The article, "Heroes at Pearl Harbor," stated, "Thousands of Jews serving their country, hundreds more are daily enlisting in all branches of the armed service, eager to do their part in the great fight ahead as America marches to total war." The Jewish soldiers knew that not all of them would be sent to Europe to fight Germany, but it did not matter. American Jews enlisted in the war as Americans, and were willing to defend the United States after Pearl Harbor. In the beginning of the war Japan was the number one enemy to the United States, and it became an enemy to American Jews who were fighting to defend America's honor. Hitler continued to be the enemy

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<sup>79</sup> "Complete Text of Speech By Sen. Lodge: 'This Is a Warning!,' *The Jewish Advocate*. (July 24, 1942), 1.

of the Jews, but while the Jewish soldiers were enlisted as American soldiers, they embraced Japan as a common enemy with the United States.<sup>80</sup> One American Jewish soldier said in an article, “The Japs were hidden in every cave and cranny on the island. Every tree seemed to have one or two strapped in it. In all there were 1,200 Japs in the island, and when we were finished there weren’t any- alive.”<sup>81</sup> American Jewish soldiers embraced Japan as an enemy and part of the “axis of evil”, and proudly fought along with other non-Jewish soldiers.

Once American Jewish men enlisted to fight in the war, the American Jewish press began to print stories highlighting their accomplishments, acts of heroism, and tragic deaths, in order to inform the American Jews of the conditions of the Jewish soldiers fighting abroad and to instill patriotic American pride among its readers. American Jews on the home front were eager to be updated on other members of their community fighting abroad through newspapers, which served as the repository for an American Jewish imagined community. In the *Exponent* article, “In Uniform: Jewish Chaplains In Hawaii” there is a section called “Philadelphia Stories,” which highlights the accomplishments of local Jewish soldiers. In this section three different men from Philadelphia were featured including their triumphs in the war: one was a successful war photographer; one was swiftly climbing up the officer ranks in the US Army; and the third was one of three men promoted to hospital apprentice in the US Navy.<sup>82</sup> Each man’s story is told in detail. Not only did this

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<sup>80</sup> Martin Silver, “Heroes at Pearl Harbor,” *The Jewish Exponent*. (March 20, 1942), 1,5.

<sup>81</sup> Ben Samuel, “Jews In Uniform: Jewish Chaplains In Hawaii,” *The Jewish Exponent*, (June 11, 1943), 8.

<sup>82</sup> Ben Samuel, “Jews In Uniform: Jewish Chaplains In Hawaii,” 2.

article give the Jewish soldier a familiar face; it helped to continue to foster an imagined Jewish community because it connected the Jewish reader at home to the local Jewish soldier fighting in the war.

The articles were not solely dedicated to reporting about men; there were also articles that described the role Jewish women played in the war effort. The article, "Jewish Women's Role In The War," listed the variety of jobs women were involved in including working for the Red Cross, donating blood, creating victory gardens, and much more.<sup>83</sup> Women were not allowed to fight on the front against the Nazis, but they were still an integral part of the American Jewish community's need to be a part of the collective war effort to defeat Hitler and the Japanese. Any help at home helped the men abroad, which led to Hitler's demise.

Along with informing Jewish readers about the accomplishments of local Jewish soldiers, the Jewish press also reported on the heroism of other American Jewish soldiers, a set of stories, which maintained the Jewish imagined community on a national scale. The article, "Heroes at Pearl Harbor," depicts the story of the triumphant men who flew four-engine planes from Honolulu to the Philippines, an achievement, which was known at the time as the "greatest in aviation history." Every soldier involved in the operation was given a Distinguishing Flying Cross. The article was proud to announce that a dozen of the men involved were Jewish. The article also commends the heroic work of Jewish chaplains, who greatly assisted the war effort in any way they could, physically and spiritually. Chaplains also helped

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<sup>83</sup> Ruth Karpf, "Jewish Women's Role In the War, *The Jewish Advocate*, (September 11, 1942). p. B3.

Jewish soldiers maintain a specifically Jewish community and identity while fighting on the front as Americans.<sup>84</sup>

While the American press frequently printed stories that depicted the accomplishments of American Jewish soldiers, it was also responsible for informing the readers of the deaths of American soldiers, out of respect for their families and their triumphant effort fighting for the United States. The articles that spoke of the deaths of Jewish soldiers just listed the names of the dead after battles because there were too many to write a full description for each person.<sup>85</sup> Reading of American Jewish soldiers dying must have been particularly emotionally difficult for any reader, because the Jewish imagined community maintained a special connection between American Jews. Even if the perished soldier was not a close relative, he was still a distant relative within the imagined community. Reading about the accomplishments and deaths of the American Jewish soldiers also maintained the connection between the Jewish community on the home front and Jewish soldiers abroad.

The Jewish reader, who was unable to fight in the war, was able to be proud of the soldiers fighting abroad, both Jewish and non-Jewish. American Jews were confident that they were on the verge of the creation of a better world, "A world erected on the ruins of Hitlerism by a triumphant America and by a victorious United Nations."<sup>86</sup> The simple fact was that American Jews, who were unable to enlist in the armed forces due to age, infirmity, gender, etc., depended on both

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<sup>84</sup> Martin Silver, "Heroes at Pearl Harbor," *The Jewish Exponent*. (March 20, 1942), 1,5.

<sup>85</sup> Martin Silver, "Heroes at Pearl Harbor," *The Jewish Exponent*, 1.

<sup>86</sup> "Complete Text of Speech By Sen. Lodge: 'This Is a Warning!,' 1.

Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers to end the massacre of the European Jewry, and on the Jewish press to report about the soldiers' conditions.

Even though American Jews were able to enlist in the armed forces and fight Hitler and his government militarily, that did not mean that the American Jewish home front was completely satisfied with American wartime policies. After all, the US only entered the war in December 1941, long after German armies had conquered most of Europe and many Jews had already been deported or murdered in Europe. The AJCongress, The AJCommittee, and The ALDJR continued to hold massive rallies and protests to call attention to and push US military forces to stop Nazi atrocities.<sup>87</sup> The Jewish press also remained active in bringing attention to "the Jewish problem" in Europe. However, with the US government's eventual attention, the American Jewish press was finally successfully in bring attention Nazi atrocities to the attention of the US government.

In 1942, The AJCommittee, The AJCongress, and The ALDJR held a massive rally called "Stop Hitler Now," in Madison Square Garden. This rally was massive, numbering more than 20,000, and was filled with speeches written by President Franklin D. Roosevelt; Winston Churchill; New York Mayor F. H. LaGuardia; Governor Herbert H. Lehman; Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts; Bishop Francis J. McConnell; Samuel Margoshes, editor if the *Yiddish Day*; and Dr. Stephen S.

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<sup>87</sup> "Rally Hears FDR Castigation of Nazi Atrocities Against Jews: Says Hitler Will Be Held 'to Strict Accountability;' Message from Churchill Willkie, and LaGuardia," *The Jewish Exponent*, (July 24, 1942), 1-2.

see also "Big Demonstration in N.Y. Appeals to All Governments: 20,000 Crowd Madison Square Garden in Plea to Save European Jewry," *The Jewish Advocate*, (March 5, 1943), 1,10.

Wise, President of the AJCongress.<sup>88</sup> This was a varied cast of characters that included government representatives, American Jewish representatives, including representatives from the immigrant community, and a Bishop. The diverse group of Americans advocating for the protection of European Jews showed American Jews that non-Jewish Americans proclaimed Hitler as a shared enemy, not only because of its alliance to the Axis powers, but to bring Nazi atrocities to an end. Unlike the rallies reported on before 1941, influential leaders supported the rally at Madison Square Garden. During this time, the two different types of advocacy that were highlighted earlier merged. The AJCongress, The AJCommittee, and The ALDJR all began to be involved in both writing letters and memoranda to President Roosevelt, and, at the same time, participating in massive rallies, such as the “Stop Hitler Now” rally.<sup>89</sup> This was also the beginning of a new phase of effectiveness among the active American Jewish advocates. The United States government finally began taking notice of American Jewish pleas for protection for their European brethren, but argued that the best way to save European Jewry was ending the war.

By this time, the Jewish press was not solely concerned with the fate of European Jewry, but for the fate of all Europeans affected by Hitler’s rule. The *Advocate* ran the full text of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge’s speech, “This is a Warning.” The author stated, “All of Europe has become a hell hole of human agony and torture, with the

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<sup>88</sup> “Rally Hears FDR Castigation of Nazi Atrocities Against Jews: Says Hitler Will Be Held ‘to Strict Accountability,” 1.

<sup>89</sup> “Rally Hears FDR Castigation of Nazi Atrocities Against Jews: Says Hitler Will Be Held ‘to Strict Accountability,” 1-2.

see also “Big Demonstration in N.Y. Appeals to All Governments: 20,000 Crowd Madison Square Garden in Plea to Save European Jewry,” *The Jewish Advocate*, (March 5, 1943), 1,10.

Jews bearing the brunt of the suffering.”<sup>90</sup> The paper was also undoubtedly satisfied that Jews were mentioned in a speech by such an illustrious senator. While the Jewish press advocated enlisting in the war effort and taking action against Hitler to end all of the suffering in Europe, it maintained its opinion that European Jewry was most at risk, with two million people already murdered by Hitler’s orders.<sup>91</sup> Germany as a shared enemy to both American Jews and the rest of the American population created a connection between the two imagined communities as Jewish Americans became more proud to be part of American culture.

Given the horrors unfolding in Europe, many more American Jews, fueled by articles in the American Jewish press began holding Zionist beliefs than in the past because they believed that Zionism was the way to save European Jewry. During the war years, the English-language Jewish press, which was originally created to be a voice of Zionism among American Jews, continued to argue and promote the idea that Zionism was the necessary path *European* Jewry needed to follow to finally be safe. And now the majority of American Jews agreed. An article written in 1942 entitled, “4 Point Program to Aid World Jewry Is Submitted to FDR,” highlights a plan submitted by the National Council for Palestine to move Jews out of Europe to British-Mandate Palestine. The Council recommended that Palestine should welcome European Jews, as well as any other Jew that desired to immigrate. The article went on to say that Jews from Iran, Russia, and North Africa should also immigrate to Palestine, to ensure the nascent Jewish state had manpower for an organized Jewish army. Finally, the plan advocated: “the profound aspiration of the

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<sup>90</sup> “Complete Text of Speech By Sen. Lodge: ‘This Is a Warning!,’ 3.

<sup>91</sup> “Complete Text Of Speech By Sen. Lodge: This Is A Warning!,” 1.

Jewish people for the re-establishment of Palestine as a homeland be realized throughout action by the United Nations,” whereby Palestine would be established as self-governed by Jews.<sup>92</sup> Absent from the article was a call for readers, American Jews themselves, to migrate. Rather, the newspaper, as it had done since its inception forty years earlier, fostered an American Jewish identity built on American patriotism and Zionist Jewish activism.

Under the direction of American Jewish organizations, a resolution was created that highlighted a plan to help save European Jewry that was presented to President Roosevelt. The article “Big Demonstration In N.Y. Appeals to All Governments,” highlights the resolution. The leaders agreed that the newly formed United Nations should strongly urge the allied countries to open their borders to a few of the Jewish refugees who escaped from captivity. However, the leaders also wanted Great Britain, who, at the time, held imperial power over Palestine, to “open the doors of Palestine—the Jewish homeland—for the Jewish immigration and the offer of hospitality by the Jewish community of Palestine should be accepted.”<sup>93</sup> While the leaders wanted the allies to open their doors to a few Jewish refugees, they wanted to create a European Jewish movement to Palestine, which was believed to be the land of salvation, where their oppression would finally end, because Jews would finally have sovereignty. This view, which was the initial motivation to create the English-language Jewish press in America, to begin with, continued to remain a

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<sup>92</sup> “4 Point Program to Aid World Jewry Is Submitted to FDR: U.P.A. Asks United Nations to Abolish White Paper,” *The Jewish Exponent*, (December 11, 1942), 1, 10.

<sup>93</sup> “Big Demonstration In N.Y. Appeals to All Governments: 20,000 Crowd Madison Square Garden in Plea to Save European Jewry,” *The Jewish Advocate*, (March 5, 1943), 10.



prominent theme within the newspaper. While in the 1940s Roosevelt and the US government supported American Zionism, they felt the best way to deal with Jews was to end the war, and did not focus on the liberation of the Jews until the Nuremberg trials prosecuted Nazi elites.<sup>94</sup> American Jews had the US government's support, but the plan was never passed, and ultimately did nothing to protect European Jews.

American Jews at home were finally gaining some support from non-Jewish Americans. At the "Stop Hitler Now" conference, the various Jewish committees that were present gave Roosevelt a memorandum that explained in great detail about Hitler's atrocities against Jews. According to the article, "Roosevelt Promises U.S. to End Nazi Massacres of Jews," Roosevelt was "profoundly touched and shocked" by the report, and was motivated to assist American Jews in their plight to save their European brethren from Hitler's terror. After the rally, Roosevelt promised American Jews, "The American people not only sympathize with all victims of Nazi crimes but will hold the perpetrators of these crimes to strict accountability in a day of reckoning, which will surely come."<sup>95</sup> While the President did not say he, or the United States government, would do anything to help European Jews specifically, he acknowledged that there was a problem and that he was listening to American Jews. However, because Roosevelt as well as the majority of the US government believed

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<sup>94</sup> Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 210.

<sup>95</sup> "Roosevelt Promises U.S. to End Nazi Massacres of Jews: Jewish Delegation Presents Memorandum to Chief Executive Dealing with Brutal Atrocities Perpetrated Upon European Jews," *The Jewish Advocate*, (December 11, 1942), 1, 14.  
See also Muriel Levin, "Washingtonia," *The Jewish Advocate*, (December 2, 1943), 4-5.

that to end European Jewish oppression, the war had to end, and Hitler had to be defeated, plans created by American Jews, like the “4 Point Plan,” were never passed.<sup>96</sup> However, Roosevelt’s acknowledgement of European Jewish oppression gave American Jews faith in the president as well as the American system, which encouraged American Jews to feel connected to, rather than alienated from, America.

In 1944, President Roosevelt made true to his promise to help European Jews, which furthered American Jews’ faith and respect for the American president. The article, “Oswego Welcomes ‘Token Refugees’ In Their Arrival a Fort Ontario” describes the arrival of 918 European Jewish refugees into the town of Oswego, New York. According to the article these Jews were among 982 refugees who were allowed into the United States under the order of President Roosevelt.<sup>97</sup> While this mere 982 people may not seem to be much compared to the six million European Jews, who lost their lives, it was presented as a huge accomplishment for American Jews. Moreover, American Jews also did not necessarily want hundreds of thousands of European Jews to immigrate to the United States. As American Jewry became more Zionist during the war, the community wanted European Jewish refugees to go to Palestine. The President also appealed to the allied countries to allow Jewish refugees to enter their borders, which further increased the amount of respect

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<sup>96</sup> Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism*, 210.

<sup>97</sup> Lillian Morris, “Oswelgo Welcomes ‘Token Refugees’ On Their Arrival At Fort Ontario: Surviving Witnesses of Nazi Atrocities Brought Here From the Hell That Is Europe,” *The Jewish Advocate*, (August 10, 1944), 1, 12.

American Jews had for their president.<sup>98</sup> The US State Department also made a statement to Hitler: "If the German Government and Nazi officials carry out their reported plan to exterminate the Jews and other internees in Nazi concentration camps in Poland those guilty of such murderous acts will be brought to justice and pay the penalty for their heinous crimes."<sup>99</sup> While this threat did not stop the Nazis from systematically murdering European Jews, it was a gesture from the United States government that it supported American Jews and their fight to protect European Jews. These actions proved to American Jews that, just as American Jews supported the broader war effort against Japan, so too did the President and the United States government finally share their primary enemy, and were determined to help protect European Jews.

Finally in May 1945, World War II was over, and American Jews were able to celebrate the success of Hitler's demise. The end of Hitler and the Nazi regime meant the end of Nazi oppression of Europe Jews, and of American Jews' struggle to protect their European brethren. As Deborah Dash Moore has argued, American Jewish soldiers coming back from war were filled with a new sense of American identity from fighting the war alongside other soldiers as "Americans." The American Jewish newspapers made sure that this sense of pride was simultaneously felt domestically from American Jews working alongside President Roosevelt to help the European Jews through their sense of accomplishment.

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<sup>98</sup> "Roosevelt Appeals To Neutrals To Open Frontiers and Aid Jews: Warns Participants in Anti-Jewish Atrocities That None Shall Go Unpunished," *The Jewish Advocate*, (March 30, 1944), 10.

<sup>99</sup> "Warning to Germany," *The Jewish Advocate*, (October 19, 1944), 8.

#### **IV. May 8, 1945-September 2,1945 The Final Summer**

May 8, 1945 marked the end of World War II in Europe, and while American Jews celebrated their victory of Hitler's defeat, they still faced challenges as Americans, which were made known by the Jewish press. Although Hitler was defeated, America's war with Japan was far from over. Feeling content that the United States shared Hitler and his Nazi regime as an enemy, American Jewish soldiers now embraced Japan as a common enemy, and were dedicated to fighting for America's war, even though their foremost enemy had been defeated.<sup>100</sup> During the final summer of World War II the press continued to inform Jewish readers of American soldiers fighting abroad. Domestically, American Jews continued to advocate for action to protect European Jewry; however, with Hitler's defeat their focus on European Jewry changed. Refugees had to find homes and employment to rebuild their livelihoods, and Nazi leaders, who were responsible for the systematic murder of six million European Jews, needed to be punished. Bigotry against Jews had not disappeared with the demise of the Nazis and continued to require attention. But, in general, the mood amongst American Jews had improved, as reflected in the newspaper articles at the time. Hitler's demise marked one of many new positive acts that fueled a feeling of efficacy among American Jews. The articles no longer articulated a sentiment of impotence because American Jews finally secured attention from the US government and enjoyed success in defeating the

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<sup>100</sup> "Bronze Star Medal Memorial Service To Lt. Lee Banash At Iwo Jima," *The Jewish Advocate*, (May 3, 1945). p. 4.

Nazi regime, while fighting on equal footing with other Americans.<sup>101</sup> After the war in Europe ended, Jewish soldiers continued to fight America's war in the Pacific as Americans, and American Jews in the US embraced their acceptance into the American culture.

Shortly before V-E day, when the news broke that Hitler had committed suicide on April 30, 1945, Jews were elated and celebratory. The article "Hitler's Burial," by David Schwartz tells a satirical story of Hitler's funeral. Schwartz describes the funeral as if it were a circus complete with a monkey act, stands full of spectators eating carnival food, and a visit from the Devil himself. When the Devil appeared he asked the spectators not to bury Hitler in the ground, because he would go to Hell. According to the Devil, if Hitler was in Hell, "Hell then won't be fit even for a Devil to live in."<sup>102</sup> The American Jewish press, reflecting the sentiment of the times, expressed such hatred for Hitler, that it portrayed him to be more evil than the Devil. The circus setting for the funeral, with a visit from the Devil, would normally be a completely disrespectful way to honor death; but for American Jews, who had spent twelve years hating and fearing Hitler's rule, his funeral was a joyous celebration. Hitler's death was victory for American Jews, but they were not to be satisfied until all of the leading Nazis were prosecuted.<sup>103</sup> First and foremost, American Jews wanted leading Nazis to be charged for war crimes, and have all of

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<sup>101</sup> "Outdoor Unity Rally at City Hall On May 15: Public Urged to Attend Dedication of Poster On 'Sacrifice of 4 Chaplains,'" *The Jewish Exponent*, (May 11, 1945), 9. See also Alfred Segal, "Plain Talk: Rabbi At Iwo Jima," *The Jewish Advocate*, (July 5, 1945), 6, 9.

See also "Bronze Star Medal Memorial Service To Lt. Lee Banash At Iwo Jima," *The Jewish Advocate*, (May 3, 1945), 4.

<sup>103</sup> David Schwartz, "Hitler's Burial," 15B.

the anti-Semitic legislation, oppression, and atrocities, that had been committed against the Jews since 1933 to be considered. Also, to insure that the Nazis did not receive any leniency, American Jews wanted to have a Jewish person act as an “amicus curiae,” or, “friend of the court.”<sup>104</sup> *Amicus curiae* are parties that are not direct parties to the litigation, but have a vested interest in the trial. The party of the *amicus curia* (a single party) has to send the court a brief that states that the *amicus curia* has an opinion that is necessary for the court to consider. Then it is up to the court to decide if it will allow a person to come into court and represent their party.<sup>105</sup> Because the Jewish press continually informed American Jews of Nazi atrocities throughout the Nazi’s time in power, American Jews felt that they had information that was important to the trials.

Interestingly, many of non-Jewish Americans did not fully understand the horrors of Nazi atrocities until the end of the war, when non-Jewish media sources began to print a series of articles that highlighted Nazi atrocities against European Jews. Once the Allied soldiers liberated Nazi concentration camps, shocking images of Nazi atrocities, including horrific living conditions, humans starved to the bone, wearing thin clothing, barely holding onto life, and of course, piles of dead bodies, appeared in the American non-Jewish press.<sup>106</sup> Tales of the “horror camps” were told, and Americans finally understood the suffering European Jews faced during Hitler’s time in power. Many Americans regretted, “the fact that they hitherto

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<sup>104</sup> Boris Smolar, “Nazi Horrors Stir Delegates At Peace Meet: Demands Made For Place For the Jews On War Crimes Court,” *The Jewish Advocate*, (May 3, 1945), 1, 15.

<sup>105</sup> “Amicus Curiae,” *Tech Law Journal*, <http://www.techlawjournal.com/glossary/legal/amicus.htm> (October 10, 2012).

considered news of Nazi mass extermination of Jews to be exaggerated atrocity propaganda.”<sup>107</sup> Reports of Nazi atrocities were printed in non-Jewish media sources, and Americans finally understood that of those who suffered from Nazi atrocities, “a large, if not largest percentage of those terminated were Jews.”<sup>108</sup> American Jews had been advocating for twelve years in order to gain America’s attention, and for the first time, they had it. With the Nuremberg Trials quickly approaching, American Jews needed all of the support they could receive to achieve their goal that leading Nazis would be properly punished. American Jews and American Jewish committees had been informed and had advocated for action to protect European Jews since 1933, and believed that their knowledge of the atrocities would add significant color to evidence from other parties to the court.

Finally in 1945, American Jews were able to read of the prosecution of some of the greatest Nazi war criminals, which were reported with zeal by the Jewish press. Of the Nazi leaders, 24 men and 6 organizations were prosecuted in the Nuremberg Trials, which were held from November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1946. There were other trials that followed, which prosecuted Nazi generals and other elite Nazis under other jurisdictions. The Allied forces judged the trials. Six of the Nazi elite were sentenced anywhere from fifteen years to life in prison, while all of the others were sentenced to death by hanging on October 16, 1946.<sup>109</sup> American Jews read with great interest any news of the punishment of Nazi officials, and the Jewish press devoted significant coverage to the outcomes of the trials. The end of

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<sup>108</sup> Boris Smolar, “Nazi Horrors Stir Delegates At Peace Meet: Demands Made For Place For the Jews On War Crimes Court,” 1.

<sup>109</sup> Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich*, 273-276.

the Nuremberg trials represented to many the end of American Jews' war against the Nazis.<sup>110</sup> While the horrors Nazism would haunt American Jews for years to come, they worked as hard as possible to ensure proper punishment to the Nazi leadership. Along with a spotlight on the trials, the American Jewish press focused on efforts to rehabilitate European Jews and all of the issues surrounding a displaced population as well as the condition of American Jewish soldiers, still fighting the war in Japan.

By the end of 1945, American Jews could count many accomplishments, but America's war with Japan was still raging. American Jewish soldiers physically fought and defeated the Nazis, while American Jews had gained America's attention to Nazi atrocities, which helped lead to the prosecution of their Nazi enemies. Both in the war and at home, Americans and American Jews were working together to solve common problems, and they were winning. Reports in the Jewish press, as a primary information source, continued to amalgamate American Jewry behind common causes. Even though American Jews had reached their primary goal of victory over Germany, the constant suffering of the liberated, but displaced and devastated, European Jews gave American Jewish journalists more reason to continually inform American Jewish readers of current events in Europe as well as in the Pacific. American Jews were determined to ensure that the high level of advocacy for Jewish causes did not waver simply because Hitler was dead. The information of the continual suffering of European Jewry as reported in American Jewish newspapers both reflected this sentiment and motivated American Jews to

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<sup>110</sup> Willy Brandt, "Nuremberg Trial Shows Goering Ordered Ghettos Prior To War," *The Jewish Advocate*, (November 29, 1945), A5.



keep advocating for action to relocate and aid European Jewry, and punish those who made European Jews suffer.

The war with Japan did not officially end until September 2, 1945.<sup>111</sup> While American Jewish soldiers were still fighting abroad, American Jews were proud of their soldiers in the Pacific and eager to hear news of their condition. The Jewish press responded and continued to printed articles that told stories of the Jewish American soldiers' accomplishments, acts of heroism, and deaths between 1941 and 1945. American Jews were proud to hear of the accomplishments made by American Jewish soldiers fighting in the Pacific. The Jewish press continued to print articles that told stories of American Jewish soldiers fighting America's war in Japan. Throughout the final summer, the American Jewish press continued to print articles describing American Jewish soldiers' victories, just as it has while American Jews were fighting Germany. The article "At Pearl Harbor," tells the story of three American Jewish soldiers. The first, Warrant Officer Sidney Shuman, who was rebuilding and maintaining Pearl Harbor, after it was destroyed in the Japanese attack in 1941 that originally brought the United States into the war. The next section was an announcement that Sgt. Henry B. Goldstein earned a Bronze Star for his valiant efforts during the last month of the war in Germany. The final section gave a brief mention of a 17-year-old boy named Franklin Davis, who joined the Navy after his high school graduation.<sup>112</sup> The hearts and minds of American Jews stateside followed these soldiers and events and were bonded by a common concern

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<sup>111</sup> Thomas B. Allen, Norman Polmar, *World War II: America At War 1941-1945* (New York: Random House, 1991), 50.

<sup>112</sup> "At Pearl Harbor," *The Jewish Advocate*, (July 26, 1945), 8.

and pride. Even though Hitler was defeated and the Nazi regime had collapsed, American Jews were still proud of American Jewish men, who enlisted in the armed forces. American Jews were proud to fight for the United States as Americans, because the United States helped defeat one of Jews' greatest enemies of the twentieth century.

Acts of heroism made by American Jewish soldiers abroad was welcoming news to Jewish America, and the "good news" reports in Jewish journals helped to bolster both pride and conviction in their readers. There were two uplifting events that American Jewish soldiers were depicted by the Jewish press. One article announced a rally that was to take place in honor the "sacrifice of the four chaplains."<sup>113</sup> The rally recalled an event from two years earlier. In February 1943 The *U.S.S Dorchester* was hit by enemy torpedoes, and quickly sank. There were four chaplains on board the ship, one Catholic priest, two Protestant pastors, and one Jewish rabbi, Alexander Goode. While the ship was sinking all four Chaplains first attempted to calm down the men on board and hand them life jackets. When all of the life jackets were gone, they gave away their life jackets to passengers who did not receive one, and then stood arm-arm, saying their respective prayers as the ship exploded.<sup>114</sup> The bravery of the chaplains, for Jews especially the Jewish rabbi, inspired American Jews and non-Jews alike to accept men who belong to different religions, at least to Judaism and Christianity. American soldiers, no matter their religion, were all fighting the war together against their common enemies. This

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<sup>113</sup> "Bronze Star Medal Memorial Service To Lt. Lee Banash At Iwo Jima," *The Jewish Advocate*, (May 3, 1945),4.

<sup>114</sup> "The Story of the Four Immortal Chaplains," *The Immortal Chaplains Foundation*, <http://www.immortalchaplains.org/Story/story.htm>.

rationality was further expressed after the battle at Iwo Jima. At the time, Rabbi Gittelsohn, an American Jewish Chaplain, gave the memorial speech to all of the American soldiers, who died in that battle. He did not have prejudice against the soldiers of other religions. Instead Gittelsohn gave an inspiring, ecumenical speech about accepting all men, regardless of their religion or race.<sup>115</sup> Both heroic stories depicted American Jewish Chaplains accepting soldiers of other religions and fostering Jews' integration into America. They were all fighting for the same goal and flew the same flag. The main characteristic that separated American soldiers was their religion. American Jews were ready to begin to accept other Americans, and to be assimilated into the American culture. During World War II, the American Jewish press was documenting the emergence of a more amalgamated Judeo-Christian Society in America, for one, because American soldiers were ready to identity themselves first by their American nationality followed by their religion.

As always, not all of the news from the war was joyous, and the Jewish press continued to print articles that informed American Jews of the deaths of their Jewish brothers fighting abroad. The article, "Bronze Star Medal Memorial Service To Lt. Lee Banash At Iwo Jima," begins with a brief description Lt. Lee Banash's background and an announcement and description of his honorable successes in the battle of Iwo Jima that earned him a Bronze Star Medal. The article contrasts the honorable news of Lt. Banash's medal with an excerpt from Rabbi Gittelsohn's speech given at the Iwo Jima memorial that recognized the soldiers that had been killed at the same battle where Lt. Banash earned his medal. Death in the war was

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<sup>115</sup> Alfred Segal, "Plain Talk: Rabbi at Iwo Jima," *The Jewish Advocate*, (July 5, 1945), 6,9.

common, but still significant in the minds of American Jews. While news of American Jewish death in the war was covered far less often than news of American Jewish success, it was important for American Jews to be informed of the condition of the American Jewish soldiers fighting abroad, both living and dead, and to recognize the sacrifice of a culture at war. In this case, they were dying as part of fighting, rather than as part of the Nazi plan of mass murder.

Although American Jews wanted to read news of the American Jewish soldiers fighting abroad, and Hitler's terror had ended, American Jews clamor for news regarding the condition of their European brethren, who had faced unimaginable oppression, and the Jewish press reacted accordingly. After the liberation of the concentration camps, European Jews were still in desperate need of finding refuge and rebuilding their lives. Refugees often had no choice but to live in European displaced persons camps, which had conditions that mirrored concentration camps. The article "Liberated Jews Plead For Rescue From Misery" highlights the suffering of European Jewish refugees after the liberation of concentration camps. According to the article, the refugee camps had miserable conditions. In a large number of the refugee camps food rations were smaller than in concentration camps, European Jews were forced to wear the same tattered and thin clothing, and European Jews were unable to receive cigarettes or toothpaste. Finally, living in the refugee camps, which had strict rules, made it impossible for European Jews to find work and begin rebuilding their livelihoods.<sup>116</sup> It is safe to say that, "never have the Jews been so neglected and forgotten...Jews are living under

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<sup>116</sup> "Liberated Jews Plead For Rescue From Misery: Thousands of Them Are Still in Detention Camps," *The Jewish Exponent*, (July 20, 1945), 1,2.

conditions which they cannot help comparing to conditions under the Nazis.”<sup>117</sup> American Jews were also worried of the millions of Jewish children in Europe who were either orphaned or killed.<sup>118</sup> After hearing of the terrible conditions in the refugee camps, American Jews eagerly wanted to help their European brethren, particularly by Zionist means. Throughout the summer of 1945, articles were printed that asked the government to protect European Jewish refugees. In the same article, the Jewish press asked the allied governments to send Jewish liaison officers to the refugee camps, to “help meet the needs of the thousands of displaced Jews, whose situation is [was] described as deplorable.”<sup>119</sup> In reading these articles, American Jews felt responsible to provide aid where they could and continue to assert influence. In this way, Jewish newspapers continued to both inform and empower American Jews.

Although giving the European Jews protection in the refugee camps was necessary, to American Jews, finding their misplaced European brethren a place to settle, live, work, and have families was much more important to the survival of European Jews. After the war, American Jews, influenced by what they read in local Jewish newspapers, looked to the principles of Zionism for hope for European Jewry.<sup>120</sup> There were many conflicting opinions as to where to relocate European

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<sup>117</sup> “Liberated Jews Plead For Rescue From Misery: Thousands of Them Are Still in Detention Camps,” 2.

<sup>118</sup> “1,200,000 Jewish Children Perished In Nazi Europe,” *The Jewish Exponent*, (July 6, 1945), 8,11.

See also “GI Makes Plea for Aid For European Jewish Children,” *The Jewish Advocate*, (August 9, 1945),11.

<sup>119</sup> “Liberated Jews Plead For Rescue From Misery: Thousands of Them Are Still in Detention Camps,” 10.

<sup>120</sup> Mark A. Raider, *The emergence of American Zionism*, 208.

Jews. American Zionists followed their pre-1930's campaign to send European Jews to Palestine. American Zionists had believed that Palestine was a better home for European Jews from around the world.<sup>121</sup> American Jewish newspapers, reflecting the opinion of their authors and readership, continued to promote Palestine as the new homeland for the Jewish refugee's salvation. American Jews just needed Great Britain to allow the Jewish refugees to immigrate to Palestine.<sup>122</sup> However, it was not only American Jews who envisioned Palestine as a perfect new home for European Jews. In an article written by an American GI soldier in 1945 gives a detailed description of a brigade of 362 European Jewish children whose ages ranged from four to sixteen. This group had previously left Buchenwald, Dachau and "some other hell holes in Germany," leading a small migration to southern Italy, in hopes of one day reaching Palestine. According to the observing GI, these children were also facing traveling conditions that were similar to the Nazi trains that traveled to and from concentration camps. The children, traveling to Italy, were forced to cram into small box- cars on a train, which would have to stop occasionally to empty the dead bodies from the cars.<sup>123</sup> Even after the liberation of European Jews, their condition was still miserable. There were still a large number of European Jewish deaths from starvation, cold temperatures, and horrible and unsafe living conditions. American Jews wanted to help in any way necessary to

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<sup>121</sup> Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 138.

<sup>122</sup> "Big Demonstration In N.Y. Appeals to All Governments: 20,000 Crowd Madison Square Garden in Plea to Save European Jewry," 10.

See also "4 Point Program to Aid World Jewry Is Submitted to FDR: U.P.A. Asks United Nations to Abolish White Paper," *The Jewish Exponent*, (December 11, 1942), 1, 10.

<sup>123</sup> "GI Makes Plea for Aid for European Jewish Children," *The Jewish Advocate*, (August 9, 1945), 11.

ensure the salvation of the European Jews, including sending protection to assist the European Jewish refugees in the refugee camps. In the previously mentioned article, the GI author asks American Jewish readers to send money, canned food, clothes, and other supplies to better the living conditions among refugees.<sup>124</sup>

Similarly, American Jewish soldiers were crucial in the United States' victory over Japan. This cooperation led to a better understanding of the cultures, and a much stronger relationship. However, during the summer of 1945, American Jews were still fighting two wars one in the Pacific and one in Europe. American Jews still saw themselves as different from other Americans who believed the war in Europe was over. It was not until Japan had been defeated and the Nazi elites had been properly punished that American Jews settled into America and America welcomed its Jews. If World War II transformed Jews on the home front into Americans as well as being Jewish, the War also transformed American society from a Christian one into a Judeo-Christian one.

American Jewish soldiers returning from victory over Germany and Japan came back not only changed by war, but also changed by a new vision of themselves not as American Jews, a subculture, but as integrated Americans. Cooperation on the battlefield by soldiers of all backgrounds had led to a better understanding between cultures, and a much stronger association of the soldier as Americans. America began to welcome its returning Jewish heroes along with all other soldiers, and, slowly, American Jews found their way into mainstream American society. In this way, while World War II transformed American society in countless ways, one

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<sup>124</sup> "GI Makes Plea for Aid for European Jewish Children," 11.

obvious change occurred in the American Jews' vision of themselves as Americans. Jewish newspapers, still in publication today, still provide information pertinent to Jewish interests and causes, but no longer maintain the interest or readership of more than a fraction of American Jews. However, as American culture made the metamorphosis from what accepted to be a Christian society to what is now called the "Judeo-Christian" society of modern times, mainstream media could serve the integrated population. . Unquestionably, however, the American Jewish newspapers from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the mid-twentieth century served as both a reflection of Jewish thought and an amalgamation of Jewish culture, reflecting pervasive thought when Jews felt impotent as well as when they felt emboldened and empowered. It is through these newspapers that the history of American Jews in that time period can be read and understood.

### **Epilogue: New America and the New American Jews**

Out of World War II emerged a new Judeo-Christian society within America that was not just a change for American Jews, but for all Americans. According to William Wischstadt, "by the 1980's, the United States was widely believed to have a core Judeo-Christian culture;" however, the articles from the American Jewish newspapers suggest, that the evolution of America's Judeo-Christian society developed significantly between 1933 and 1945.

Although the aforementioned historians have valid points, the English-language American Jewish press suggests an earlier dating of this transformation, and one based as much on the home front as in Europe or Japan. With a common



enemy and a common goal to American soldiers, the change among American Jews certainly took place among the American Jewish soldiers within the military. The goal of defeating a common enemy led American soldiers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to fight together, regardless of their religion. Not only did the common enemies bring the soldiers together, but also a common goal to fight for democracy. With common enemies and a common goal, American soldiers were able to fight together regardless of their religion.

The change to a new Judeo-Christian society emerged from the military *and* domestic actions during the war. America and American Jewish soldiers shared common enemies during the war and worked together to defeat those enemies. Gittelsohn wanted an ecumenical society that focused on nationality before race. He wanted to remember the soldiers for their victory in battles fighting for America, not by prejudice or discrimination. This represents a sweeping change among American Jews, who wanted to be apart of the American imagined community, and not be constricted to their own exclusive imagined community. Simultaneously America's interest in Nazi atrocities and punishing the Nazi elites created a common enemy for American Jews who did not enlist in the war. Like on the front, American Jewish and non-Jewish citizens at home shared a common enemy. The war's end brought on an American Judeo-Christian society, as reflected in the English-language American Jewish press. The press also suggested the emergence of a new American Jew, one that was integrated in the American culture, had a love for democracy, and was not as centralized around religion.

Rabbi Gittelsohn's eulogy was printed in *The Jewish Advocate*. Within the speech Rabbi Gittelsohn first comments on the lack of prejudice within the armed forces. Gittelsohn stated, "Here no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color. Here there are no quotas of how many from each group are admitted or allowed. Among these men there is no discrimination, no prejudice, no hatred."<sup>125</sup>

American Jewish soldiers joined the war to physically fight and defeat Hitler, while American soldiers enlisted in the war to represent and defend America, and moreover, democracy. In his speech Gittelsohn went on to say, "We shall not foolishly suppose...that victory on the battlefield will automatically guarantee the democracy at home."<sup>126</sup> While American Jewish soldiers and American soldiers fought for democracy during the war, after the war, the battle was not over, and returning soldiers had a common love for democracy, and a common goal to continue to fight for democracy. American Jewish soldiers and American soldiers who returned to the United States after the war was over continued to have a common goal to defend democracy and a common pride in America.<sup>127</sup> American Jewish soldiers, with their new pride in America and democracy played a major role in the shift in American Jewish cultural identity. These soldiers went away to war as Jewish American soldiers, committed to the exclusive American Jewish imagined community, and developed into American Jews, who were proud to be included into the larger American imagined community.

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<sup>125</sup> Alfred Segal, "Plain Talk: Rabbi at Iwo Jima," *The Jewish Advocate* (July 5, 1945)," 6.

<sup>126</sup> Alfred Segal, "Plain Talk: Rabbi at Iwo Jima," 6.

<sup>127</sup> Alfred Segal, "Plain Talk: Rabbi at Iwo Jima,"

Simultaneously, in the United States, the combined effort of American Jews and Americans to ensure Nazi elites were properly punished inspired American Jews to also include themselves into the American imagined community. While the new transformation to a Judeo-Christian society was foremost fostered by American Jews, it would not have been possible without the acceptance of the American people. With the conclusion of the war in Europe, Americans were more sympathetic to American Jews, who were ignored for so long. The news of the systematic torture and murder of six million European Jews, which flooded other American news sources created, "considerable pro-Jewish sentiment," in the United States.<sup>128</sup> America was ready to welcome its Jews into its imagined community. In 1945, the *Exponent* covered an outdoor unity rally held by the Mayor of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission. This rally was created to honor the Four Chaplains who died on the *USS Dorchester*. In honor of their strength to push religion aside to work and die together, people of all religions were invited to attend.<sup>129</sup> Americans were becoming accepting of other religions, which differed from the past when Protestant Americans were prejudiced against immigrants and other religious groups. After the war, and seeing the horrors that came from prejudice, Americans became more tolerant of Judaism as an American religion. New employment, educational, and housing opportunities for American Jews became available.<sup>130</sup> Jews were welcomed into the American imagined community

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<sup>128</sup> Boris Smolar, "Nazi Horrors Stir Delegates At Peace Meet Demands Made for Place for the Jews On War Crimes Court," 1.

<sup>129</sup> "Outdoor Unity Rally at City Hall On May 15: Public Urged to Attend Dedication of Poster On Sacrifice of 4 Chaplains," 9.

<sup>130</sup> Edward Shapiro, "World War II and American Jewish Identity," 71-72.

like never before, and American Jews were eager to join the American imagined community. While there was still high prejudice against skin color, America was becoming a place where white people of all religions were accepted into the American imagined community.

Although Americans became more accepting of other religions, American Jews were deeply involved in the creation of a Judeo-Christian America. In fact non-Jewish Americans planned this rally, and the announcement was printed in *The Jewish Exponent*.<sup>131</sup> While there was still a large degree of Zionism in the United States, it was an “American Zionism,” which promoted assisting with the movement of Jews from around the world to immigrate to Palestine while supporting Jews’ Americanness at home. American Labor Zionists enjoyed the strong support of Americanized labor.<sup>132</sup> During this time Zionists tailored their ideals to “suit American tastes.”<sup>133</sup> At the same time, American Zionists were proud to live in America, and had no plans to immigrate to Palestine. Ultimately, the English-language Jewish press successfully fostered an American Jewish identity founded on Zionism while celebrating American pluralism.

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<sup>131</sup> “Outdoor Unity Rally at City Hall On May 15: Public Urged to Attend Dedication of Poster On Sacrifice of 4 Chaplains,” *The Jewish Exponent*, (May 11, 1945), 9, 15.

<sup>132</sup> Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 203.

<sup>133</sup> Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, 138.

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