

# **UCLA**

## **UCLA Previously Published Works**

### **Title**

Muscular Judaism, The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5gf5b57t>

### **Author**

Presner, Todd Samuel

### **Publication Date**

2007

### **DOI**

10.4324/9780203961865

### **Copyright Information**

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License, available at

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

# MUSCULAR JUDAISM

The Jewish body and the politics  
of regeneration

*Todd Samuel Presner*

First published 2007  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN  
Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa  
business*

© 2007 Todd Samuel Presner

Typeset in Times New Roman by  
Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
MPG Books, Bodmin, Cornwall

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or  
reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical,  
or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including  
photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval  
system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*  
A catalogue record for this book is available from  
the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*  
Presner, Todd Samuel.

Muscular Judaism: the Jewish body and the politics of regeneration/  
Todd Samuel Presner.

p. cm.—(Routledge Jewish studies series; no. 24)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Jews—Identity.
  2. Jews—Attitudes.
  3. Group identity.
  4. Zionism—Philosophy.
  5. Stereotypes (Social psychology)
  6. Attitude (Psychology)
  7. Body image—Social aspects.
- I. Title.  
DS143.P717 2007

305.892'4—dc22

2006035120

ISBN10: 0-415-77178-1 (hbk)

ISBN10: 0-203-96186-2 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-77178-8 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-96186-5 (ebk)

FOR JAIME AND BRAD

# CONTENTS

<i>List of illustrations</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
Introduction: visions of muscle Jews	xv
1 The origins of muscular Judaism	1
2 The rhetoric of regeneration: “clear heads, solid stomachs, and hard muscles”	24
3 The aesthetics of regeneration: Martin Buber, E. M. Lilien, and the aesthetic state	65
4 The gymnastics of regeneration: the anatomo-politics of the Jewish body	106
5 The land of regeneration: seafaring Jews and the Zionist colonial imaginary	155
6 Soldiers of regeneration: the military might of old-new Maccabees and the Great War	187
Concluding remarks	217
<i>Notes</i>	219
<i>Index</i>	267

# ILLUSTRATIONS

0.1 <i>Life</i> magazine cover	xvi
0.2 The ink-drawn national flag of Israel flying at Um Rashrash (Eilat)	xviii
0.3 Adi Nes, “Untitled” (1999) from <i>Soldiers</i> series	xxi
0.4 Adi Nes, “Untitled” (1996) from <i>Soldiers</i> series	xxii
1.1 E. M. Lilien, frontispiece for the journal <i>Altneuland</i>	5
1.2 Anonymous caricature in <i>Kikeriki</i>	6
2.1 “From the World of Jewish Gymnastics”	59
2.2 “What does Gymnastics Mean for us Jews?”	62
3.1 Jehuda Epstein, <i>Die Makkabäer</i>	66
3.2 Lesser Ury, <i>Jerusalem</i>	67
3.3 Alfred Nossig, “The Eternal Jew”	80
3.4 E. M. Lilien, <i>Gedenkblatt des fünften Zionisten-Kongresses</i>	89
3.5 E. M. Lilien and Baron Börries von Münchhausen, “To You”	96
3.6 E. M. Lilien, “Samson”	98
3.7 E. M. Lilien, <i>Trugland</i>	99
3.8 E. M. Lilien and Morris Rosenfeld, “What is the World?”	104
4.1 “Gymnastics Exercises”	124
4.2 “Well-trained back and arm muscles”	125
4.3 “Outstanding Jewish Gymnast”	126
4.4 “Outstanding Jewish Gymnast”	127
4.5 “Free Exercises” (Women’s gymnastics club of Bar Kochba, Berlin)	130
4.6 “On the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Death of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn”	133
4.7 “Main room of ‘Der Mensch’”	142
4.8 “View of the Egyptian Room”	146
5.1 E. M. Lilien, “Palaestina”	176
5.2 Map of Palestine and neighboring regions	177
5.3 Map of railway lines through Palestine	178
5.4 “Modern Jerusalem”	181
5.5 “Typical Large Arab Town”	182

## ILLUSTRATIONS

5.6 “Jewish Field Workers”	183
5.7 “Gymnastics Hour in the Girls’ School”	184
6.1 “Jacob as Recruit and Jacob as Poet”	188
6.2 Cover of <i>K.C. Blätter: Monatsschrift der im Kartell-Convent vereinigten Korporationen</i>	197
6.3 Ernst Jünger, “Motor”	209
6.4 Jacob Ledermann	210
6.5 Jacob Ledermann	211
6.6 Flying Officer Friedländer	213
6.7 Crashed biplane	214

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ideas in this book were first developed in the context of analyzing the *fin de siècle* visual culture of Judaism. I owe a significant debt to the guidance given to me by two preeminent art historians, Tim Clark and Anne Wagner. Their willingness to engage with the visual dimensions of this project and its complex expressions of corporeality helped make this project into what it has become. I would also like to thank Amir Eshel, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Tony Kaes, Hinrich Seeba, and Jeffrey Schnapp for helping me flesh out the arguments in this book while they were still in their rudimentary stages.

Over the years, I have had the benefit of presenting parts of this book at numerous conferences, and I would like to single out two interlocutors who have positively shaped my thinking and research: Sander Gilman and Steven Aschheim. I would like to thank Sander for his genuine excitement, interest, and support of my cultural studies approach to the muscle Jew, and I would like to thank Steven for his gift of conversation, both his enthusiasm for and criticisms of this project. Next, I would like to thank my colleagues and friends in the field, many of whom have spent hours with me at conferences or over coffee talking about muscle Jews: Leslie Adelson, Carol Bakhos, John Efron, Ann Goldberg, Cora Granata, Atina Grossman, Deborah Hertz, John Hoberman, Gil Hochberg, Thomas Hunter, Paul Lerner, John Maciuika, Frank Mecklenburg, Ofer Nur, Andrew Patner, Jeffrey Peck, Na'ama Rokem, James Steakley, John Tortorice, and Meg Worley. I would like to express special gratitude to Sharon Gillerman for reading large portions of the manuscript and generously offering many constructive critiques. I would also like to acknowledge the support and wisdom of my editors at Routledge, Joe Whiting and Oliver Leaman, the latter of whom suggested the book's title. At UCLA, my departmental colleagues in Germanic Languages and the Program in Jewish Studies have been particularly supportive of this project. I would like to single out Andrew Hewitt, David Myers, and Jim Schultz, each of whom contributed to this project in countless ways. Finally, I thank Adi Nes for graciously allowing me to reproduce two of his extraordinary photographs in this book.

This book would not have been possible without the tremendous support of my family. I thank my parents, Harvey and Susan, for always inspiring me



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

to reach higher; I thank my brother Brad and his wife Kiesha for their sheer curiosity and interest in muscle Jews; and I thank my life-partner, Jaime, who has, once again, given me the greatest gifts of all. I dedicate this book to the two iron men in my family.

An earlier version of parts of Chapters 1 and 2 was published by Johns Hopkins University Press as “‘Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles’: Max Nordau and the Aesthetics of Jewish Regeneration,” 10.1 *Modernism/Modernity* (2003): 269–96.

# INTRODUCTION

## Visions of muscle Jews

The preeminence given to intellectual labors throughout some two thousand years in the life of the Jewish people has, of course, had its effect. It has helped to check the brutality and the tendency to violence which are apt to appear where the development of muscular strength is the popular ideal. Harmony in the cultivation of intellectual and physical activity, such as was achieved by the Greek people, was denied to the Jews. In this dichotomy their decision was at least in favor of the worthier alternative.

Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939)<sup>1</sup>

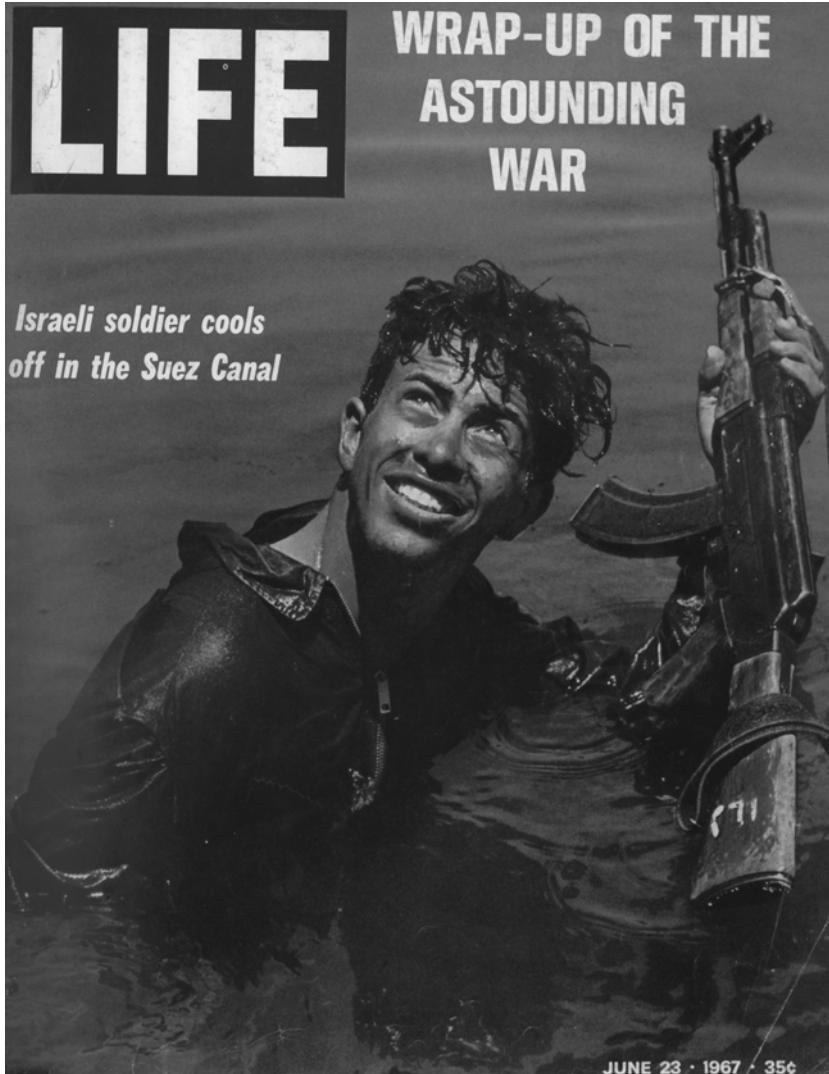
Shortly after Israel's "astounding" victory in the Six-Day War of 1967, *Life* magazine published a photograph on its June 23 cover of a smiling Israeli soldier cooling off in the Suez Canal while toting an AK-47 assault rifle and gazing upward to the sky (Fig. 0.1). The bronzed soldier—a 22-year-old platoon commander named Yosef ("Yossi") Ben Hanan—had just emerged victorious from desert combat: he is still wearing his combat uniform, and his face has dirt on it; his hair is tousled, and he triumphantly holds onto his gun. His glistening white teeth punctuate the center of the image, while his blue eyes match the color of the water. The photograph was reproduced the world over and quickly became an iconic image of Jewish might and Israeli power.

Perhaps part of the popularity of the photograph had to do with the ostensible simplicity of the image. It consists of just three things: a soldier, water, and a gun. The Israeli soldier, armed with an assault rifle, is enjoying the newly conquered territory of the Suez Canal. Viewers could easily unpack the message: the individual soldier, with a single gun, stood for the collective strength, prowess, and bravery of the Israeli nation. In effect, any Jewish man could become a Yossi Ben Hanan, and it is toward this ideal that he should strive. After all, the lightning-fast results of the Six-Day War seemed to confirm the value of cultivating these ideals: Israel decimated the Egyptian air force in a single day, took the Golan Heights and the old city of Jerusalem, and routed the Egyptian army throughout the Sinai Peninsula, reaching the

## INTRODUCTION

Suez Canal in less than a week. Of course, this was not done by a single soldier; it was achieved by an army of Yossi Ben Hanans, each of whom embodied the same Jewish strength, prowess, and bravery.

Prior to the 1967 war and the *Life* magazine cover, no image in the Israeli collective imaginary better represented the “Jewish” ideals of muscularity,



*Figure 0.1* *Life* magazine cover (June 23, 1967). LIFE® used by permission of Life, Inc. Photograph by Denis Cameron.

masculinity, and patriotism than Micha Perry's photograph of Israeli soldiers raising a handmade flag in front of the police station of Um Rashrash (Eilat) on March 10, 1949 (Fig. 0.2). The picture celebrated the last operation of the Israeli War of Independence: the completion of the occupation of the Negev Desert. Explicitly reenacting the raising of the American flag in the Battle of Iwo Jima, emblematically captured by Joe Rosenthal's famous picture of four American soldiers raising the flag atop a heap of rubble in February of 1945, the Israeli brigades created an analogous staging for their victory. Armed with assault rifles and dressed in military fatigues, a group of Israeli soldiers erected a hand-dyed, Israeli flag on a white sheet while a single soldier climbed to the top of the pole. The picture immediately came to stand for the realization of the Zionist dream of a unified Jewish state.

As historically decisive moments in the development of Israeli national identity, both of these photographs bear witness to the popular ascendancy of a new ideal: the muscle Jew. And while the associated ideals of muscularity and masculinity have certainly become internalized as part and parcel of Israeli identity, they have also come to define a more widespread, contemporary mode of being-Jewish-in-the-world, one which is characterized by toughness, aggressiveness, and battle-readiness. After World War II and the Holocaust, many a generation of Jews growing up in Israel and the United States have been weaned on this ideology of muscle. Never again, we are told, will Jews go like lamb to slaughter.<sup>2</sup> Never again, we are told, can we let down our guard. As Paul Breines has amply demonstrated in his cultural analysis of "tough" American Jews, the image of the combat-ready, gun-toting warrior has come to replace that of the bookish intellectual or the gentle schlemiel.<sup>3</sup> The image of the meek, Yiddish-speaking Jew of the Eastern-European shtetl has become supplanted by the Hebrew-speaking "Sabra" Jew who is always prepared to fend off would-be attackers and secure the perimeters of his land.<sup>4</sup> The Six-Day War proved to many American and Israeli Jews that the Jewish people were now decisive and powerful agents on the stage of world history. After 2,000 years of victimization, a regenerated "muscle Jewry" will fight back and retake the land that was once theirs.

Recognized by his muscularity and imbued with a Zionist ideology, "a new type" of Jew seemed to emerge in less than a generation. An Israeli army physical fitness book marketed to Americans shortly after the 1967 war explained the transformation as follows:

The Israeli Army is producing a new type of man in this young, energetic Middle Eastern country. By means of tough, well-planned physical training, the army is contributing to the change in the physiognomy of the modern Israeli and to the transforming of the immigrants from seventy different countries into one, homogenous type. The "traditional Jew" of Eastern Europe was known, in the past, for his capability to bear mental sufferings and moral tortures and



*Figure 0.2* Photograph of the ink-drawn national flag of Israel flying at Um Rashrash (Eilat) by Micha Perry (March 10, 1949). Courtesy of Government Press Office, Jerusalem.

for his physical weakness. Subjected to racial discriminations, the Jew of Eastern Europe was not conscripted into the army, nor did he engage in manual work. His main activity was in commerce and the educational field. This had resulted in the Jew having weak arms and soft back and belly muscles. . . . But with the new Israel it is quite different. The citizen is taller, he has broad shoulders and his muscles are stronger. The physical fitness of the average Israeli was one of the most important elements which led to the lightning victory of the Israeli army in the Six-Day War of June 1967.<sup>5</sup>

Breaking from the stereotypical Eastern-European Jew who is small in stature, weak in physical constitution, and busily engaged with commerce and speculations, the authors proclaim the birth of a new Jewish “type,” one who was incubated in the Israeli army’s fitness regiments and battlefields. The manual explains that through physical training, “close combat” such as judo and boxing, and basic fitness exercises, both soldiers and civilians will gain self-confidence, courage, and aggressiveness, resulting in “more toughness in daily behavior.”<sup>6</sup> The book goes on to detail six basic exercises for men and women to increase their back and leg muscles, their lateral muscles, their abdominal muscles, their arm muscles, and their circulatory and respiratory systems. Because the exercises are simple enough for anyone to learn regardless of age, gender, or ability, the authors insist that everyone can become a muscle Jew. In essence, the physical weakness of the Eastern-European Jew is to be consigned to the distant past.

As Paul Breines and Warren Rosenberg have shown, images of tough Jewish males now permeate contemporary American culture, comprising a subgenre that Breines playfully calls “Rambowitz literature” for its glorification of violence and machismo.<sup>7</sup> It includes authors as diverse as Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Lewis Orde, and Leon Uris, who variously glorify Jewish courage, aggressiveness, and militancy. Indeed, these representations of muscle Jews in the cultural imaginary—Jews fighting terrorism, Jews killing enemies in hand-to-hand combat, Jews infiltrating into Palestinian society, Jews squelching neo-Nazis—are not only meant to reflect but also to produce these very ideals and, thereby, lay the groundwork for a new, militant and decidedly masculinist Jewish identity.<sup>8</sup>

This is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the institutionalization and spread of Krav Maga throughout the United States and the world. Krav Maga, Hebrew for “contact combat,” is the system of self-defense developed for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the 1940s. It was created by an Eastern-European Jew named Imi Sde-Or (Lichtenfeld), who went on to become the Chief Instructor for Physical Fitness and Krav Maga at the School of Combat Fitness in Israel.<sup>9</sup> Born in Budapest in 1910, Lichtenfeld grew up in Bratislava, where his father founded the country’s first athletic and weight-training club

called “Hercules.” Far from the stereotype of the weak Eastern-European Jew, Lichtenfeld excelled at gymnastics, wrestling, and boxing, winning numerous national and international sporting competitions in the 1920s and 1930s. After immigrating to Palestine in 1942, he began training Jewish fighters in physical fitness and self-defense, eventually serving in the IDF for nearly 20 years. According to Lichtenfeld, the motivation behind Krav Maga was to develop an efficient and highly effective fighting system to control and negate a would-be attacker. The techniques of Krav Maga were honed through frequent street fighting and combat situations in close quarters where the defense against an attack with a knife, gun, or hand grenade is common. In the late 1970s, Lichtenfeld, together with some of his students, founded the Israeli Krav Maga Association, with the goal of disseminating its self-defense techniques to the civilian population in Israel and abroad. A few years later, Krav Maga was introduced to the United States, where it quickly became adopted by law enforcement officials. In the late 1990s, Krav Maga organizations sprouted up across the United States, and it is commonly hailed as the most effective self-defense system in the world.

While official “training centers” now exist globally, the ideological history of Krav Maga is largely sidestepped or erased, especially in the United States. Krav Maga is not simply a form of physical fitness and self-defense; it came into being as a critical part of the founding violence of state formation: following the Israeli War of Independence, Krav Maga was supported and developed by the Israeli military in order to fight and suppress Palestinian opposition. It was introduced to the civilian population by way of the educational curriculum, and it quickly became a tool for extending Zionist ideology into everyday life. Today, Krav Maga essentially inculcates “muscle Jews,” playing a vital role in the rearing of Israeli children on principles of self-defense, physical aggressiveness, and contact combat.

In the late 1990s, around the time Krav Maga began to gain an international reputation, an Israeli artist by the name of Adi Nes sought to deconstruct the ideals of muscular Judaism and the figure of the muscle Jew by remaking some of the key images of Israeli self-fashioning. He decided to restage both the 1967 cover of *Life* and the 1949 Micha Perry photograph as part of a critically revisionist photography series entitled *Soldiers* (1994–2000). Born in Kiryat Gat in 1966 to a family of immigrants from Kurdistan and Iran, Nes wanted to uncover the roots and allure of these powerfully totemic images of Jewish masculinity and military might. To do so, he decided to mimic the original photographs with a crucial difference. Believing that “behind every image, there is much more going on,”<sup>10</sup> he revealed what was excluded, erased, or unspoken in these historically significant pictures. In the first, Nes takes the emblematic image of Yossi Ben Hanan in the Suez Canal raising his gun at the end of the 1967 war and recasts it as a homoerotic celebration, with the protagonist conjoined arm and arm with a bevy of shirtless, muscular young men frolicking about him (Fig. 0.3). In the other photograph, Nes

## INTRODUCTION

restages the heroic raising of the Israeli flag at Um Rashrash, but he omits the flag and leaves only the soldiers with a pole to climb (Fig. 0.4).

Nes's photographs are complicated meditations on the Israeli State, Jewish identity, and male body politics. In both of these photographs, Nes draws attention to the masculinist culture of the Israeli military and the ways in which male-bonding rituals are essential to both Israeli self-fashioning and state formation. Women are conspicuously absent in the photographs, despite the fact that they are conscripted into the Israeli military.<sup>11</sup> As Micha Perry's photograph shows, it is men who found a state and raise the flag. The phallocentrism of Perry's image, something that is almost passed over in its cultural redundancy, is blatantly underscored by Nes when the flag is removed: we are simply left with soldiers climbing a giant phallus erected on the ground and pointing skyward. Just like the topography where Nes shot the



Figure 0.3 Adi Nes, "Untitled" (1999) from *Soldiers* series. Courtesy of Adi Nes.





Figure 0.4 Adi Nes, “Untitled” (1996) from *Soldiers* series. Courtesy of Adi Nes.

image, the phallus is placeless—meaning that it can reappear anywhere, at any time. The soldiers decide where to put the phallus and, then, proceed to hold it in place. Women are superfluous in this act of male parthenogenesis, for only men give birth to a state.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was a German thinker by the name of Hans Blüher, one of the founders and theoreticians of the German Youth Movement, who first articulated the relationship between male-bonding (*Männerbünde*) and state formation in his book, *The Role of the Erotic in the Male Society: A Theory of State Formation Based on Essence and Value*.<sup>12</sup> According to Blüher, societies for male-bonding—such as sporting and hiking organizations, fighting clubs, and military units—cultivate a specifically male Eros constitutive of state formation. The state, he argues, comes into existence by way of the erotic, masculinist bonds created between men. While the family for Blüher is fundamentally a heterosexual

construct, the state is fundamentally a homosexual construct. As Blüher writes: “Wherever nature has created a species that is really capable of establishing a state, this has only been achieved by smashing the dictatorship of the family as well as the male–female sexual urges themselves.”<sup>13</sup> For him, homosexuality is in no way effeminizing or weakening; rather it is the culmination of masculine strength. In effect, women reproduce the species, while men reproduce the state.<sup>14</sup>

By adding Yossi Ben Hanan’s male compatriots to his restaging of the *Life* magazine cover and by removing the Israeli flag in his restaging of Micha Perry’s photograph, Nes reveals precisely these homosocial, masculinist rituals of male-bonding at the center of state formation. In the former, Nes stages the watery celebration in the dark, perhaps underscoring the homosexual acts that occur under the surface and that cannot be made explicit in broad daylight. The circle of men hold on to each other tightly while the beautiful protagonist—cleanly shaven, with his hair coiffed and his face almost powdered dry—holds the assault weapon that he can publicly display above the surface of the water.<sup>15</sup> In the latter photograph, Nes essentially foregrounds the phallus by removing the flag from its pole, thereby allowing us to recognize the interrelationships between patriotic duty, state-formation, and same-sex masculine desire. Setting up the phallus is a means of laying claim to the land, while the unspoken and all-too-often erased results are the expulsion and subjugation of the other. Through his seductive images of masculine celebration, Nes reveals the violent contours of both contemporary Jewish identity and the Israeli landscape. In effect, he not only counteracts the “straight male” machismo of the military culture, but he also underscores the danger of phallocentrism by deconstructing and reconfiguring the trajectories of masculine, military desire.

The purpose of this book is to examine the cultural and social origins of this desire through the figure of the muscle Jew. It is to probe the images of Jewish masculinity and militancy, and it is to press on the various self-legitimizing discourses of muscular Judaism. While 1948–49 and 1967–73 are certainly key dates for the consolidation and dissemination of the Israeli ideal of masculinity, I argue that we must look a bit earlier to understand the origins of the muscle Jew. We must turn back to the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, a period in which the body politics of modernity were radically transformed in light of the “regenerative” discourses of race science, physical fitness, hygiene, eugenics, colonialism, and militarism. Not only can the birth of the modern Zionist idea be traced to this period, but the rise of pan-nationalism, the heyday of modern imperialism, the birth of the racial state, and the emergence of the eugenicist paradigm can also be found in this period—in short, the seedbed of fascism. It at this time—the European *fin de siècle*—that the modern Jewish male, as Daniel Boyarin rightly indicates, was “invented.” This, I contend, is the birthplace of the muscle Jew.

In his book, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Boyarin provides an incisive and alternative history to the ideal of an aggressive Jewish masculinity. He argues that the rabbinic tradition of the gentle male was undone at the end of the nineteenth century with “the heterosexualization of Jewish culture” and the Zionist response to the pressures of modernity.<sup>16</sup> By drawing on Talmudic sources, he reconfigures modern notions of Jewish masculinity in line with ancient practice. My own work—essentially the flipside to the history he reconstructs—owes a debt of gratitude to his bold and path-breaking book. As we will see, Boyarin and I both pinpoint the origins of the “muscle Jew” in the European *fin de siècle*, the period in which I situate my own cultural study. But instead of tracing back a lost tradition of gentleness, I seek to examine the roots of contemporary aggressiveness. Thus, in order to understand the images of the muscle Jew from 1948 to 1949, and from 1967 to 1973 (not to mention those of present-day Israel), we must turn our attention to the so-called Jewish question in European modernity more than one hundred years ago.

While the issues that my book sets out to address certainly stem from contemporaneous acts of Jewish aggression and violence, my concern is more historical: Where did the tradition of the muscle Jew originate? To what extent was it a specifically masculinist ideal? How, when, and why did it gain explanatory power? What kind of cultural and national discourses did it call upon and ally itself with? To put it bluntly, I want to know how Jews became “muscle Jews.” In much the same way that Adi Nes reveals what is hidden, erased, or forgotten in those iconic images of Israeli soldiers, I, too, want to examine what is hidden, erased, or forgotten in the tradition of muscular Judaism. To do so, we cannot take the Holocaust and the birth of the state of Israel as our historical starting points. Instead, we must look earlier to examine the origins of the Zionist idea and modern Jewish body politics in relationship to other European discourses of regeneration, ones that served dubious and dangerous ends. The muscle Jew emerged out of and in dialogue with these discourses.

## THE ORIGINS OF MUSCULAR JUDAISM

In his opening speech at the Second Zionist Congress in Basel on August 28, 1898, Max Nordau invented one of Zionism's most famous, most fraught, and most challenging ideals: the muscle Jew.<sup>1</sup> Although Nordau did not start exploring the political implications of his initial call for a "muscular Judaism" until a couple of years later, he did, in this early speech, clearly allude to the necessity of creating a new type of Jew who is corporeally strong and morally fit as the very presupposition of realizing the national goals of Zionism. After providing an overview of the steadily deteriorating situation of Jews in Russia, Romania, and Galicia—what he terms "the classic countries of Jewish suffering" (SP, II:15)—Nordau turns to France and details how the widespread anti-Semitism that sparked the Dreyfus Affair was also a fatal affront to the Enlightenment ideal of universally recognized human rights. Nordau suggests that the Jews themselves must change their historical situation by both overcoming the apathy of assimilated Jews and thawing the "coldness" of the anti-Semitic "winter landscape" like "a spring sun" (SP, II:23–24). He argues that "Zionism awakens Judaism to new life" and continues: "It achieves this morally [*sittlich*] through the rejuvenation of the ideals of the Volk and corporeally [*körperlich*] through the physical rearing of one's offspring, in order to create a lost muscular Judaism [*Muskel-judenthum*] once again" (SP, II:24).

Nordau's idea of muscular Judaism was not only consistent with the national goals of the Zionist movement as simultaneously the spiritual and the corporeal rebirth of the Jewish people, as articulated by Theodor Herzl<sup>2</sup> and other earlier proponents of Jewish regeneration, such as Christian Wilhelm Dohm and Moses Hess<sup>3</sup>; it was also the crystallization of these goals on the individual body of the Jew. National regeneration would come through moral and physical rebirth and, recursively, moral and physical regeneration would be achieved through nationality. Not entirely unlike the "muscular Christianity" movement in Victorian England, which called for a new Christian masculinity rooted in physical strength and moral grounding,<sup>4</sup> Nordau's idea of "muscular Judaism" can also be understood as a call for corporeal and spiritual regeneration.<sup>5</sup> Although fundamentally connected to

the Jewish body, “muscular Judaism” was not about weight-training or bodybuilding *per se*; rather it was about the cultivation of certain corporeal and moral ideals such as discipline, agility, and strength, which would help form a regenerated race of healthy, physically fit, nationally minded, and militarily strong Jews.<sup>6</sup>

According to Nordau, the great masses of so-called *Ostjuden* (Eastern Jews), although often considered more “authentically” Jewish than their Western counterparts, must no longer passively accept their fate as impoverished, weak, and powerless ghetto Jews or mere *Luftmenschen*.<sup>7</sup> Instead, they must rise up and reform their individual bodies in order to reform their people as a whole; the “*Luftvolk*” of the Diaspora must become grounded as a “*Nationalvolk*.” And, at the same time, the assimilated, Western Jews—many of whom, Nordau observes, had long since “fallen away” from Judaism and go to synagogue but once a year (SP, II:25)—must reclaim the richness of their Jewish heritage and resist the rabid anti-Semitism gripping Western Europe.<sup>8</sup> Nordau sees the urgent modernity of Zionism appealing directly to these Jews:

Let’s go! Pull your courage together [*ermannt euch*]<sup>9</sup>! Do something!  
Work for yourself and make a place for your people under the sun!  
Don’t rest until you have convinced the indifferent and downright  
hostile world that your people have a right to live and enjoy life just  
like other peoples.

(SP, II:25)

Despite their significant economic, cultural, linguistic, and, perhaps most noticeably, religious differences, Western and Eastern Jewry were, in Herzl’s famous words, “one people,” and, hence, the work of Zionism was not confined to preexisting national borders.<sup>10</sup> As Nordau had argued in 1897 at the First Zionist Congress and, once again, at the Second Zionist Congress, Jewish suffering—like anti-Semitism—knew no borders. A reunited Jewry of muscle could fight back.

Nordau’s muscular ideal resonated widely because it brought mythic elements of the Jewish tradition to bear upon the turbulent historical reality of *fin de siècle* Europe marked by both a raging political uncertainty and a paradoxical condensation of intellectual currents ranging from decadence to Social Darwinism.<sup>11</sup> He called upon both a great Jewish past and a redeemed future, two things that would give the fledgling Zionist movement its present direction and historical rationale: contrary to contemporary anti-Semitic representations of Jews as scrawny, weak, and inferior (something that was also internalized by many Jews through the violent mechanisms of self-hatred<sup>12</sup>), Jews were at one time, Nordau reminded his readership, muscular and heroic, as the mythic story of Bar Kochba attested.<sup>13</sup> Not fortuitously, “Bar Kochba” and the “Maccabees” also became two of the namesakes

adopted by the newly formed Zionist gymnastic associations. In fact, Nordau would publish the first complete expression of his call for “muscular Judaism” in an article in the second issue of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (*The Jewish Gymnastics Journal*), the central organ of the “Bar Kochba” gymnastics association and a key organ for the dissemination of German Zionism up through the end of World War I.<sup>14</sup> In this seminal article, he described Bar Kochba as “the last world-historical embodiment of a war-hardened, weapon-happy Judaism” as well as “a hero who refused to know defeat” (JTZ, 1900, 2:10).

The muscle Jew, certainly in Nordau’s articulation of the figure, was a resolutely masculine warrior, characterized by the drive for Jews to once again become heroic warriors. It is here that he underscores the masculinity of the battle-ready Jew:

Our new muscle Jews [*Muskeljuden*] have not yet regained the heroism of their forefathers . . . to take part in battles and compete with the trained Hellenic athletes and strong northern barbarians. But morally speaking, we are better off today than yesterday, for the old Jewish circus performers of yore were ashamed of their Judaism and sought, by way of a surgical pinch, to hide the sign of their religious affiliation . . . while today, the members of Bar Kochba proudly and freely proclaim their Jewishness.

(JTZ, 1900, 2:11)

In other words, the male members of the Bar Kochba gymnastics association are no longer ashamed of the sign of their Jewishness, namely their circumcised penis; instead, they show off their “surgical pinch” with pride.<sup>15</sup> The organ of Jewish virility evokes national pride.<sup>16</sup> As we will see, although the phallocentrism of Nordau’s Zionist ideal cannot be overlooked in his characterization of the muscle Jew, a well-developed, semi-balancing discourse surrounding “the need for female gymnastics” and female muscle Jews (JTZ, 1902, 5:76–80) also emerged on the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* around the overlapping themes of fertility, family, and sexual reproduction.

Over the formative and tumultuous two decades between 1898 and the end of World War I, Nordau’s re-invented muscle Jew would become arguably the most emblematic figure of Jewish regeneration and Zionism’s “body culture.” Iterations of the muscle Jew would appear in a fascinatingly wide-range of discourses on corporeal regeneration, which simultaneously addressed the reformation of the individual body and the reconstruction of the body politic of the desired nation. Beyond Nordau and the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, these intersecting discourses ranged from the aesthetic and the therapeutic to the eugenic and the colonial. In art, for example, the iconography of E. M. Lilien, the most important and prolific

Zionist artist of the early twentieth century, is inseparable from the “Hellenic” athletes that inspired Nordau’s competitive muscle Jew; in medicine and eugenics, the muscle Jew represents a radically hygienic and racially charged counter-image to any form of Jewish degeneracy; and in Jewish colonial and military discourses, the strength of the muscle Jew is the prerequisite of a successful colonization effort in Palestine. What these seemingly diffuse group of discourses share, I will argue here, is an investment in the modern body politics of regeneration.

Yet it is precisely here, at the confluence of these discourses of regeneration, that things become particularly difficult for writing a cultural history of the muscle Jew: *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* was part of a broader, modernist obsession with “*Lebensreform*” (life reform), physical fitness, health, and “*Körperkultur*” (body culture), and, therefore, physical rejuvenation cannot in any way be limited to a Zionist project.<sup>17</sup> If anything, the first decades of Zionism bear out an affinity with some of the more unsavory “regenerative” discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly Social Darwinism, eugenics, nationalism, and colonialism, precisely because Zionism—partly as a project of self-legitimacy—was both a Jewish response to and extension of these very same discourses.<sup>18</sup> In this respect, the muscle Jew was a paradoxical figure of regeneration, partaking in and drawing upon a number of seemingly contradictory and decidedly problematic discourses. It epitomized the rebirth of the strong Jew as drawn from Jewish history and mythology; but, at the same time, many of the anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jewish degeneracy were internalized in its conceptualization. Moreover, the muscle Jew was a deeply conflicted ideal: even while it sought to engender a counter-image to the *Ostjude*, Western perceptions of Eastern Jews, including those of Nordau himself, as Steven Aschheim elegantly argued, condemned the regressiveness of the Eastern Jews yet simultaneously glorified their authenticity.<sup>19</sup> And, strangely enough, the greatest visual expressions of the regenerated muscle Jew—namely, those produced by E. M. Lilien—would be created using the visual vocabulary and stylistic signs of decadence.

To briefly illustrate this convergence of discourses, let me draw attention to two overdetermined images produced during the first decade of Zionism. The first image (Fig. 1.1), produced and printed in Berlin in 1904, is an illustration by E. M. Lilien for the first edition of the journal *Altneuland* (Old-new Land). The second, “Auswanderung nach Palästina” (Emigration to Palestine), was published around the same time in the anti-Semitic, satirical journal, *Kikeriki* (Fig. 1.2), based in Vienna.<sup>20</sup> Both images, which can be read productively in dialogue with one another, depict Jews migrating to Palestine. In Lilien’s illustration, we see two muscle Jews, rendered as gigantic Hellenic athletes, carrying a bounty of grapes to the Promised Land. The two Jews are walking barefoot across the top of the earth, which is itself shaped by the rounded word “Altneuland” and gently accented by blades of protruding grass. Their muscular figures are silhouetted in front of two spheres

No. 1.

**ALTNEULAND**  
 MONATSSCHRIFT  
 für die wirtschaftliche Erschliessung Palästinas  
 Organ der zionistischen Kommission zur Erforschung Palästinas.

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON  
 F. OPPENHEIMER · S. SOSKIN · O. WARBURG.

INHALT:

· Kommission zur Erforschung Palästinas	· · · · ·	Altneuland
· Prof. Dr. O. Warburg	· · · · ·	Palästina als Kolonisationsgebiet
· H. Struck	· · · · ·	Zwei Originalzeichnungen
· A. Aaronsohn, und Dr. S. Soskin	· · · · ·	Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt

Palästina und Nachbargebiete. Neue Literatur  
 Jüdische Kolonien Vermischtes · Marktbericht

Redaktion: Dr. S. SOSKIN, Berlin W. 50, Regensburgerstrasse 20

Figure 1.1 E. M. Lilien, frontispiece for the journal *Altneuland* (1904).



Zuswanderung nach Palästina.



Jafete, geh' Du voran, Du hast die großen Stiebel an.

204. Kikeriki. Wien

Figure 1.2 Anonymous caricature in *Kikeriki* (Vienna, c. 1905).

outlining the vault of the heavens. In the caricature from *Kikeriki*, we see a band of seven Jews crammed together front-to-back holding a crudely carved, pointed spear labeled “Zionismus.” The grotesquely distorted Jews have bodies marked by exaggerated “Jewish” features including small statures, large noses, and flat feet.<sup>21</sup> Their ugly countenances emerge directly from the anti-Semitic imagination: the first and third Jews display profiles of vapid eagerness; the second Jew appears conniving and mischievous; the fourth and fifth appear learned but petty; the sixth looks wide-eyed and greedy; the last bespectacled Jew has a countenance of unspeakable haughtiness. Together, this motley crew wends its way through a dense forest—populated by preying vultures, giant insects, and exotic foliage—on the way to Palestine.

Lilien’s illustration was published at the height of his popularity as the

foremost artist of Zionism, and the drawing shares some stylistic resemblance to other pictures that he created during this period for the Zionist cause.<sup>22</sup> Although he had created many prior images of Jews with bulging muscles, this illustration was unique for the way in which he brought the masculinity of Hellenism together with the Zionist colonial project. Except for a wreath of leaves in his hair, the leading, bearded man stands naked, his clenched fists and taut muscles exhibiting a sculpted, perhaps Dionysian, male beauty; the second, wrapped in a partly diaphanous cloth, follows behind him. He is slightly taller, younger, and somewhat more androgynous. The spear that runs diagonally from the shoulder of the one muscle Jew to that of the other not only penetrates the fertility of the lush bunch of grapes but also establishes a trajectory of erotic desire between the two men. Whereas the *Kikeriki* illustration completely de-eroticizes the Jewish body by depicting the Zionist Jews as lowly cowards, Lilien's illustration might be read as the eroticization of desire, both the desire between men for one another and the desire of men for a state.

Within the tradition of Greek pederasty, as Daniel Boyarin and Michel Foucault point out, the beard signifies manhood and generally codes the erotic relationship in a certain direction: the bearded man, a *hoplite* (spear-bearer), is the subject and the young boy is the object of desire and thus penetration.<sup>23</sup> In Lilien's illustration, however, the trajectory of erotic desire is reversed: even though the bearded man leads, the adolescent is essentially the spear-bearer and the bearded man, with his exposed posterior, seems to be awaiting penetration. Interestingly, a similar precedent for such a reversal within the Jewish tradition can also be found in the story of Rabbi Yohanan and Resh Lakish in the Talmud, a story Boyarin discusses in *Carnal Israel*. But rather than culminating in the virility of the muscle Jew, Boyarin sees the story as depicting an "effeminate" ideal for Jewish masculinity. Rabbi Yohanan is "beautiful, nearly androgynous, beardless and so sexually attractive to the masculine Resh Lakish that the latter is willing to perform prodigious athletic feats to get to him."<sup>24</sup> However, once the adolescent learns Torah from Rabbi Yohanan, he, too, assumes a "feminizing" ideal of masculinity. Boyarin interprets the story "as an almost exact reversal of the pattern of Greek pederasty": "It is the beardless, androgynous one who takes the virile *hoplite* under *his* wing, educates him and makes him a 'great man,' sapping, however, his physical prowess and disempowering his 'spear' in the process."<sup>25</sup> Although reversing this trajectory of Greek pederasty, Lilien's illustration does not yield a sapped, disempowered manhood; instead, masculine prowess seems to be doubly fortified by the homoerotic, masculinist bond. But, just as in the Talmudic story, the homoerotic implications are also duly displaced: in the story, they are displaced onto Rabbi Yohanan's sister, while in Lilien's illustration they are displaced by the feminine fertility of the grapes.

In terms of its specific iconography, Lilien's illustration is a reworking of the biblical story of the return of the spies from the land of Canaan, a story that had been famously depicted by many artists before him, including Nicolas

Poussin and Gustav Doré. In Poussin's "Autumn, The Grapes from the Promised Land" (1660–64) as well as Doré's "Return of the Spies from the Promised Land," two men are shown carrying a giant cluster of harvested grapes from the Promised Land, proving that it is, in fact, the "land of milk and honey."<sup>26</sup> In Lilien's rendition, the men carry the grapes back to Palestine, something that not only signifies the futurity of the land's cultivation but also repeats—with a difference—its initial reconnaissance by the spies sent by Moses. Significantly, the spies were sent to the Land of Canaan to find out about the land and its inhabitants:

"Are the people who dwell in it strong or weak, few or many? Is the country in which they dwell good or bad? Are the towns they live in open or fortified? Is the soil rich or poor? Is it wooded or not? And take pains to bring back some of the fruit of the land."—Now it happened to be the season of the first ripe grapes.<sup>27</sup>

When the men return after 40 days to the wandering Israelite community, they report that the "people who inhabit the country are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large" (Numbers 13:28). Forgoing their faith in God, ten of the spies exclaim that "we cannot attack that people, for it is stronger than we," that in comparison to the inhabitants, the Israelites look like mere "grasshoppers" (Numbers 13:33).

It is precisely this story that Lilien is updating and reconfiguring in his "Altneuland" illustration. Far from depicting the Zionists as mere grasshoppers, Lilien has turned the settlers into powerful and brave muscle Jews who will bring fructification back to the "old-new land." Unlike Poussin and Doré who depicted the spies returning to the desert with the grapes of the Promised Land (the spies are shown moving from right to left, or from east to west), Lilien renders the Zionists as *already* bearing the fruits of regeneration and, therefore, reverses their trajectory from left to right, or from west to east. Not only are the Zionist settlers already physically regenerated, they are also already in possession of the territorial fruits of the land. As we will see, it is no coincidence that Lilien's illustration was featured on the cover of a journal dedicated to "the economic tapping of Palestine," for these "muscle spies" were preparing to undertake its second reconnaissance mission, as it were, and assure the conquest of the land.

By stark contrast, the Jews in the *Kikeriki* caricature are coded as lowly cowards, as the inscription at the bottom makes clear: "Jakele, geh du voran / Du hast die grössten Stiefel an" (Jakele, go forward / You have the biggest boots on). Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, the story of a certain soldier named "Hannemann," the dastardly leader of a band of "stick soldiers," became famous through the bungling legend of the "sieben Schwaben" (seven Schwabians): seven soldiers—fitted with big boots and a single spear—embarked on ill-fated adventures, which eventually cost them their lives

because of their inherent cowardice. Their slogan went like this: “Hannemann, geh du voran! / Du hast die grössten Stiefel an, / Dass dich das Tier nicht beissen kann” (Hanneman, go forward! / You have the biggest boots on / So the animal won’t bite you).<sup>28</sup> In a seventeenth-century illustration of their grand adventures, the “sieben Schwaben” hunt down a rabbit hiding in some bushes. And later, at the end of the Brothers Grimm tale of the same name, the seven soldiers all drown in a muddy part of the Mosel river because they don’t have boats to cross.<sup>29</sup> In the “Jewified” version of this story, the Zionist Jews are led by “Jakele” on an adventure, one which is doomed to end in failure and death for the whole group.

Lilien’s illustration, then, not only depicts the desire between men for a state but also links the regeneration of the individual body of the Jew to the larger and longstanding project of state formation. After all, these Hellenic muscle Jews are in the process of relocating both their desire and their reproductive fertility (“the grapes”) to the “old-new land” of Palestine, while the Jews of the *Kikeriki* caricature are viciously mocked as silly degenerates for their whimsical attempt to found a state. If the latter even survive the hostile terrain populated by wild mushrooms, flocking vultures, and insects as big as their noses, surely, we are made to believe, they could never establish a state like the great European countries.

In giving a visual representation to Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s race-based, anti-Semitic argument in his magnum opus, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, the *Kikeriki* caricature shows Jews as anything but “world-historical” people. Not only are present-day Jews unfit for nation building, but Jews have, according to Chamberlain’s version of history, always been so. In this respect, after describing the physical, religious, and cultural deficiencies of the Jews in his chapter “On the Entrance of the Jews into Western History,” Chamberlain turns back to the history of the Judeans to show how Jews, unlike Germans, have never been able to found a great nation:

They were so unwarlike, such unreliable soldiers that their king had to trust his protection and the protection of their land to foreign troops; that they were so unwilling to undertake any endeavors that just looking at the ocean . . . horrified them; that they were so slothful that for every task at hand one had to hire designers, production managers, and even handworkers for all the delicate work from neighboring countries; that they were so unfit for agriculture that (as it says in many places in the Bible and the Talmud) the Canaanites were not just their teachers but were the only ones up until the end who worked the land; yes, even in a purely political respect, they were such opponents of all stable, well-ordered conditions that no rational form of government could come about by them and they felt best from early on under the pressure of foreign rule, something that did not prevent them, however, from burrowing underneath of it.<sup>30</sup>

Through their scheming, their “materialistic worldview,” and their “demonic genius” (1:455), the Jews have, despite (or perhaps because of) their laziness and other deficiencies, nevertheless managed to survive as a race under the rule of other nations; however, they remain nothing more than “a foreign element,” as he quotes Herder with approbation (1:463). Because of these trans-historical racial qualities, Jews can never know the greatness of their own nation. Even Zionism, because it is always already too “Jewish,” as Otto Weininger argues, would be condemned to fail.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, the Germans, Chamberlain maintains as he builds on Hegel’s quadripartite structuring of history, represented the pinnacle of “world history” because their cultural and national strength was the outgrowth of that of the great colonial empires of Greece and Rome. That the little Jews are depicted sauntering along on foot—rather than traveling by ship—is not insignificant: after all, as we will see in Chapter 5, reckoning with the ocean, traveling by ship, and cultivating the new land were world-historical achievements that, according to both Chamberlain and Hegel, assured a colonial claim to national greatness, something that Jews fundamentally lacked.<sup>32</sup>

Lilien’s Hellenic depiction of two muscle Jews walking on top of the earth with the bounty of fertility thus represents a very different history of Judaism. The Jews are great, as indicated by their sheer scale, and quite capable of domesticating nature and cultivating the land. But even more striking are the colonial tasks that the journal, with Lilien’s frontispiece, envisioned for itself: After all, the name “Altneuland” was a direct reference to Herzl’s utopian travel novel of 1902, in which Jews settled Palestine and transformed it from a “desert wasteland” into a vibrant, technologically modern nation-state.<sup>33</sup> Not only did Jews cultivate the soil, they arrived by ship—just as Herzl did in 1898 for his famous visit to Palestine with the German Kaiser—to civilize this supposedly backward land. “Jewish settlers who streamed into this country brought with them the experiences of the whole cultured world [i.e., Europe],”<sup>34</sup> Herzl writes in his novel. In other words, as we will see in more detail later, the European idea of civilization, somehow able to be differentiated and divorced from anti-Semitism, was still worthy of emulation when it was imported into the service of corporeal and national regeneration.<sup>35</sup>

While Herzl imagined his novel to take place in 1923, some two decades after it was written, the journal *Altneuland* was founded in 1904 (the year of Herzl’s death) with the expressed purpose of scientifically and economically investigating the conditions for the Jewish colonization of Palestine. As the frontispiece indicates, the journal was to serve “the economic tapping of Palestine.” The first edition laid out the tasks as follows:

The dream of millions floated and floats above the land through which the Jordan flows, of millions who have been and still are denied their

home because of ancient hatred and callousness. To live a full life, to establish roots in one's own ground—this is the goal of every human being. How can the poorest not dream of a fatherland when they only know a step-motherland?? The dream turned into longing and the longing into will: That is the Zionist movement. So that this will become a salvational, redeeming deed, it must, above all else, serve what represents the strongest power of our time: Science. We have to know the land precisely on which the house of Ahasver will stand . . . The journal shall collect and examine what those who know the land best know about its climate, its soil, its fruits and products, its laws and their operation, the customs of its inhabitants, its health conditions . . . it will collect reports about agriculture, business, and trade with all neighboring areas and countries with similar natural resources and composition . . . It shall collect and examine what is well-known by all colonial enterprises [*kolonisatorische Unternehmungen*] across the world . . . Like a focal point, the journal will bring together all of the thousands of scattered rays into a single bundle of light in order to enlighten the half-darkened land of two thousand years of desire, which is today only illuminated by shadows.<sup>36</sup>

As the mission statement of the journal makes clear, one of the critical prerequisites of the successful colonization of Palestine was extensive scientific knowledge about the land, its inhabitants, and their customs. Moreover, utilizing the rhetoric and metaphors of the enlightenment, the Jewish colonial effort would be consistent with the European philosophy of colonization as the spread of “civilization,” the domestication of nature, and the dispensing of knowledge to the shadowy darkness of the land. At the same time, as Lilien's frontispiece shows, Palestine was not just to be scientifically studied and objectively analyzed but also actively populated and civilized by muscle Jews who were arriving from Europe—by foot, by train, and by ship—in the “old-new land.”

Lilien's illustration thus condenses a number of intersecting discourses around the iconography of the muscle Jew: first of all, he takes the muscular Hellenism of the European tradition of empire building and turns it into a Jewish colonial destiny, thereby extending the racially charged history of *Bildung*, Enlightenment, and civilization. At the same time, he attempts to combat the racial anti-Semitism prevalent in *fin de siècle* Europe by depicting the Jew's strong and healthy body as the antithesis of degeneracy. He offers a Zionist vision of redemption in which Jewish destiny is already fulfilled as the muscle Jews enter the Promised Land in possession of its fruit. Moreover, he creates a particular aesthetic form that is fully and confidently part of the secessionist new wave: through his strongly Hellenizing, sharply simplifying, decorative pictorial style, Lilien renders the visual vocabulary of decadence compatible with the Zionist idea. Finally, his illustration helps us identify the

particular modernism and the particular masculinity of the muscle Jew: as the emblem of discipline and social progress, the muscle Jew is the embodiment of Nordau's "true modern" who rises to defend society from the woes of degeneracy. Lilien, like Nordau, created a specifically masculinist ideal for the "true modern," and, therefore, it must be interrogated as such.

This begs one of the central questions under investigation in this book: Is the muscle Jew a masculinist ideal? The short—but incomplete—answer is yes. But as we will see, this does not mean that women foreswore or did not participate in "muscular Judaism." There were female gymnastics associations, fencing teams, sports clubs, and farming collectives, all of which were established, more or less, side-by-side with their male counterparts.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, we absolutely must not assume that men are the only muscle Jews.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, we must ask why women are conspicuously absent in the vast majority of discursive practices and representations of the muscle Jew. It is not simply that the vast majority of the literature was written by men. It is the fact that the theoretical models, cultural ideals, and practices of social transformation betray a problem fundamentally rooted in and originating from modern Jewish masculinity. Simply put, it was Jewish men who were supposedly not strong enough, healthy enough, and fit enough—as measured by the European benchmark—to build a modern nation.

As the comparison with the *Kikeriki* caricature indicated, the Zionist imagination emerged as a purposeful political response to a virulent European anti-Semitism that embraced ever-newer forms of disenfranchisement, hatred, and expulsion. But the discourses supporting the deployment of the muscle Jew cannot be adequately elucidated by explaining the phenomenon as simply a responsive antidote to anti-Semitism (although it certainly was that). Muscular Judaism also claimed and extended some of the more dubious components of the European idea of regenerative nationality through a dangerous investment in the ideals of military masculinity. As we will see in more detail, this played out not only in the struggle against anti-Semitism but also in the fight against degeneracy, the imagination of a Zionist form of artistic representation, the reformation of the Jewish body and body politic, the historical eugenics of Jewish hygiene and race-science, and, finally, the articulation and justification of Jewish colonialism and militarism. All of these intersecting discourses, I will argue here, bear witness to a variation on a common figure, namely the muscle Jew.

I would now like to indicate the parameters and aims of this study. *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* is a discursive cultural history of the regenerated Jewish body: that is to say, it is an analysis of how the muscle Jew—as both an imaginary construct and a historically grounded ideal—emerged from, participated in, extended, and justified a range of discourses concerned with the politics of regeneration. I should say unequivocally that I am not attempting to write an overarching history of the Jewish body; instead, I am attempting to articulate a specific

problem—namely, the modern origins and invention of the muscle Jew—through a synchronic cultural critique. To do so, I draw on many histories of Zionism and hope that this project of cultural criticism will both resonate with and complement these studies by illuminating the connections between the Zionist politics of regeneration and the emergence of the muscle Jew discourse.<sup>39</sup> Until recently, however, the connection between Zionism and body politics has not been seriously explored and goes by almost completely unrecognized in the classic histories of Zionism, such as those by Nahum Sokolow, Adolf Böhm, and Walter Laqueur.<sup>40</sup>

While my book is much more than an iconographic study of representations of the muscle Jew, I argue throughout the book that “regeneration” was an eminently political and aesthetic project, effected through a wide variety of visual representations and disseminated in both scientific and non-scientific arenas, in both high and popular culture. As Michael Berkowitz rightly argues, this is because Zionism not only emerged in a highly visual era—in the European *fin de siècle*—but also because it conceived of the complexity and efficacy of the visual to articulate the ideals of the muscle Jew and the concomitant concept of regeneration. For my purposes here, I am especially interested in the multiple, paradoxical, and sometimes fragmentary ways that Zionism emerged as a politic obsessed with imagining—particularly through visual means—the regeneration of both the Jewish body and the Jewish people. I argue that the regeneration of the Jewish body was an aesthetic project of modernism, and I situate the origins of the muscle Jew and the Zionist imaginary within the complex visual culture and political discourses of the *fin de siècle* up through World War I.

Historically speaking, my book is limited to about 30 years beginning with the European *fin de siècle* and ending with the aftermath of the Great War. After starting with an analysis of the contradictory aesthetic discourses of regeneration in the *fin de siècle* using the work of Julius Langbehn and Max Nordau, I examine the cultural origins and political deployment of the muscle Jew within artistic, national, medical, colonial, and military discourses from the First Zionist Congress in 1897 through the end of World War I and into the Weimar Republic. My study ends with a focused examination of Jewish eugenics, population politics, colonial fantasies, and militarism in order to articulate the complex political and cultural origins of the regenerated Jewish body. Nordau’s cultural criticism represents an exemplary starting point for understanding the relationship between regeneration and degeneration or cultural production and societal “sickness,” something that will also be important—although articulated quite differently—to cultural Zionists, such as Martin Buber and E. M. Lilien, interested in the renewal of Jewish national art and the mythology of the muscle Jew. From there, my analysis turns to what I term, following Michel Foucault, the logic of “bio-power” that informs how sexuality was deployed for both reforming the individual body and securing the legitimacy of the greater body politic. Here, I analyze a number



of intersections between representations of the new Jewish body (particularly in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*) and the idea of the Zionist state in discourses concerned with regulating fertility, studying demography, applying racial science, and managing populations. I conclude by examining the militaristic “steeling” of the Jewish body and demonstrating how the Great War was the first real proving ground for the new muscle Jew.

Over the past couple of decades, a highly ramified and interdisciplinary literature on the cultural and social history of the body has been produced, building on the conceptual, methodological, and historical insights of feminist studies, gay and lesbian studies, ethnic studies, and, most recently, disability studies.<sup>41</sup> Rather than simply considering the body as an additional lens through which to understand historical phenomena, these studies demonstrate that social, political, and cultural reality cannot be understood apart from the history of the body and the various technologies of regulating and policing sex, gender, race, and ability. Within German historiography, a number of important works have argued for the importance of studying the gendered and racialized body in order to illuminate the multiple paths and variegated landscape of German modernity.<sup>42</sup> Although Nordau’s invention of the muscle Jew is fairly well-known and often mentioned in passing in German and German-Jewish social histories of the body,<sup>43</sup> it is strange that no book-length study has ever been written on the figure of the muscle Jew and its constitutive relationship to other regenerative discourses—such as eugenics, population politics, colonization, and nationalism—that also served and were part of the Zionist idea. In fact, when the muscle Jew is discussed, the concept is either largely confined to Nordau’s idiosyncratic intellectual biography (such as in the work of Michael Stanislawski) or cited as a suggestive but highly localized phenomenon within Zionism or Jewish body culture. For this reason, while the concept of the muscle Jew has received a kind of iconic status within cultural studies of the Jewish body, the muscle Jew—as both a specific figure and a complex discourse—has, amazingly, not been seriously studied. This book seeks to redress this conspicuous lacuna. To do so, I argue that the “muscle Jew” cannot be adequately understood apart from the paradoxical condensation of multiple discourses concerning the corporeal politics of regeneration such as sexual reform, physical fitness, health, hygiene, and eugenics as well as the particularities of European (specifically, German, British, and French) nationalism, colonialism, and militarism. I consider the muscle Jew as a discursive formation, one that initially emerged from Nordau’s aesthetic reflections on regeneration, but that lived on in a wide range of cultural discourses that extended and justified the corporeal politics of early Zionism from the *fin de siècle* up through the Weimar period.

Methodologically, my study is a discursive cultural history: I bring together the widest possible range of cultural material—from journals, demographic reports, and scientific studies to literature, philosophy, and visual culture—to illustrate the imaginative investment and explanatory power of the muscle

Jew. In this regard, my book owes a debt of gratitude to the work of Sander Gilman, George Mosse, Steve Aschheim, and John Efron. Mosse certainly produced a substantial corpus of work dedicated to exploring the cultural-political intersections between the body and ideology, particularly the relationship between masculinity and the modern conception of the nation-state and nationalism.<sup>44</sup> In a seminal article on the hundredth anniversary of the publication of Nordau's *Degeneration*, Mosse points to the connection between Nordau's relentless criticism of "degenerate art" and his Zionist project of cultivating "respectability" and "middle-class standards of masculinity" for Judaism.<sup>45</sup> But what Mosse does not do—and this applies to all the studies that I have encountered in which the muscle Jew is discussed—is examine the phenomenon of muscular Judaism as a complex of discourses that were simultaneously embedded in, supporting, and justifying the politics of regeneration as well as the diversity of the Zionist investment in these modern body politics.<sup>46</sup> This book attempts to do just that.

By reinscribing the muscle Jew into the general cultural history of this period, I consider Zionism to be an important (but not unique) expression of the dialectic of modernity. Modernity, as I have argued elsewhere, must be considered a dialectical concept<sup>47</sup>: on the one hand, it built upon and disseminated certain universalist values stemming from the Enlightenment<sup>48</sup>; it facilitated the attendant ideals of progress through modernization and the production of a strong, autonomous, rational subject; and it engendered new possibilities of emancipation and freedom, which had a decisively positive effect on the course of Jewish assimilation in Europe. On the other hand, modernity fostered the growth of disciplinary power and surveillance, the fragmentation of the subject, the capacity for destruction and mass death on a scale never before possible, and the creation of ever newer ways of constricting freedom and administering social control.<sup>49</sup> The latter critique owes much to the work of Michel Foucault, and, as Geoff Eley has pointed out, the relatively recent reception of the work of Foucault by historians has "helped change and unsettle the ways we have come to think about politics, power, knowledge, and their relationship to the ordering of the social world."<sup>50</sup>

Over the past decade, a number of new cultural and social histories, many of which are informed by an explicit or implicit Foucauldian methodology, have emerged that examine the complex, discursive conditions of possibility for the modernity of Imperial Germany and the Nazi State (as opposed to its backwardness or irrationality) with a specific interest in articulating the dialectic of modernity or "modernity's dark side."<sup>51</sup> Some of the key works to initiate this paradigm shift include: Kevin Repp's *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914*; Paul Lerner's *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930*; Richard F. Wetzell's *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880–1945*; Thomas Rohkrämer's *Eine andere Moderne? Zivilisationskritik, Natur und Technik in Deutschland, 1880–1933*;

and Michael HAU's *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890–1930*.<sup>52</sup> These new historiographies “stress the coherence of the years between the 1890s and the 1930s,” to use Eley’s words, “as a unitary context in which definite themes of national efficiency, social hygiene, and racialized nationalism coalesced.”<sup>53</sup> Moreover, they not only call for a new periodization of German history, but also demand an investigation of the specific modernity of Imperial Germany and the Nazi state, thereby further undermining the explanatory power of the so-called *Sonderweg* theory. As Repp and Wetzell point out, the *Sonderweg* theory, which maintained that the Nazi regime was the result of Germany’s incomplete modernization process and failure to undergo a proper bourgeois revolution, has lost almost all of its cogency in light of recent German historiography.<sup>54</sup> Historians such as Geoff Eley, David Blackbourn, Detlev Peukert, and Kevin Repp have argued instead for the decidedly modern features of Imperial Germany and the Nazi state, rather than explaining Nazism as the product of a “pre-modern” irrationality or “anti-modern” relapse, which, in turn, sought to explain the failures of a normative historical-developmental process.<sup>55</sup>

In the newer historiography, the contradictions and visions of German modernity are articulated by examining the cultural and social projects of reform, policing, and regulation, projects that are repeatedly and significantly realized on the racialized body. My book, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration*, fits within this critical trend. I consider the period from the *fin de siècle* through the beginnings of the Weimar Republic as a “discursive regime” in which modernity’s dialectical underbelly becomes inscribed on and indissociable from the racialized body. But rather than show how the strategies of social policing and regulation (eugenics, hygiene), bio-politics (sexual science, race science), and corporeal reform (sport, “body culture” movements, militarism) laid the discursive ground for Nazi policy,<sup>56</sup> I am interested in demonstrating how Jews participated in, extended, and variously adopted these strategies of “bio-power” for reforming the Jewish body and conceiving of the regeneration of the Jewish state. This is what distinguishes my work from other cultural and social histories of this period: I show how Jews—especially, but not exclusively, Zionist Jews—participated in the discourses of bio-power and actively formulated policies, programs, and strategies for creating a new, racially strong, physically fit, muscle Jew. They often invoked, cited, and extended the very discursive strategies and intellectual strains that would later be used by the Nazi state to exclude and annihilate them. Of course, this does not alter the fact that Nazi eliminatory anti-Semitism radicalized the well-established eugenicist paradigm; however, it does add an important layer of complexity to our understanding of the history of the bio-politics of modernity in Germany. Very much in line with Repp’s discussion of “alternative modernities,” I consider the muscle Jew discourse as part of an open field of visions and possibilities that emerged in the richly complex

and shifting landscapes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Repp writes: “Without losing sight of the ‘ideology of radical nationalism’ that ultimately won out in 1933, historians need also to chart the other competing visions . . . that pushed in many directions at once, as indeed did Wilhelmine modernity.”<sup>57</sup> Muscular Judaism is one such “alternative modernity” that pushed in a direction that did not lead to the purifying ideology of the Nazi state, even while some of its intellectual, cultural, and social strains in the field of bio-politics emerged from the very same seedbed that gave rise to fascism.

For this reason, it is no longer sufficient to see the Jewish body as simply “degenerate,” weak, and effeminate and the fascist body as “regenerate,” strong, and masculine<sup>58</sup>; instead, as I argue in this book, the “muscle Jew” is the prototype of the hardened, strong, hygienic, and resolutely masculine warrior. Indeed, most of the major studies of “degeneration”—particularly newer cultural and social histories such as those by Daniel Pick, Paul Weindling, and Kevin Repp—are quite sensitive about the risks of collapsing history into a reductive and inevitable procession toward the Final Solution. Nevertheless, there are still many cultural studies of degeneracy, which maintain an implicit teleology stretching from nineteenth-century conceptions of race and degeneracy to the Final Solution.<sup>59</sup> While Pick speculates that it may be “impossible . . . to avoid teleology altogether in the reading of nineteenth-century degenerationism,”<sup>60</sup> the more problematic issue is the fact that Jews are given little agency in these histories of modernity. Instead, the rise of the purity and strength of the fascist male body is posited as the end-point of the dialectic of degeneration/regeneration, while the Jewish body is condemned to its perennial formlessness and passivity.

My book problematizes this antithesis by showing that the birth of the muscular, healthy, and masculine Jewish body had some of the same cultural, social, and intellectual origins as the fascist body. We must ask ourselves: What does it mean that Jewish militarism and its body ideals (aggressive, steeled, warrior-like) overlapped with other, more dangerous regenerative movements that also posited the birth of a “new man,” including fascism? What does it mean—especially from our twenty-first-century vantage point—that the “muscle Jew” and the “fascist body” draw, at least in part, from the same discursive well?<sup>61</sup> Let me be unequivocally clear: this does *not* mean that Zionism and fascism are in any way equivalent, as there was no external enemy that Zionism sought to annihilate. The purpose of this book, then, is to probe the discursive well of muscular Judaism, namely the intellectual, cultural, and social currents that gave rise to modern Jewish body politics between the years of 1890 and 1930, years that also gave rise to the logic of fascism and the armored fascist body. In this respect, one of my implicit goals is to examine the origins of the popular—and decidedly problematic—ideal of muscularity and militancy that has come to define contemporary Jewish (especially, Israeli) identity. Zionism, I argue, must be seen as a manifestation

of the dialectic of modernity, both its progressive ideals and its dark sides. It is my hope that we might gain a more balanced historical consciousness, which might enable us to better assess and understand how we got to where we are today.

In line with the new social and cultural histories of German modernity, Foucault's work on bio-power provides an important conceptual framework that I will apply (with some amendments) to my analysis of the modernity of Zionism's bio-politics. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that sexuality began to be deployed in the Classical era (the beginning of the seventeenth century) around two poles: the first centered on the disciplining of the individual body, what he calls "an anatomo-politics of the human body." The second, growing out of it in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, focused on "the species body" and was concerned with knowing, monitoring, controlling, and regulating the health of the body politic or the greater population.<sup>62</sup> Foucault writes: "Through the themes of health, progeny, race, the future of the species, the vitality of the social body, power spoke of sexuality and to sexuality."<sup>63</sup> He uses the term "bio-power" to describe how these two poles—the disciplining of the individual body and the regulation of the population—came together through the deployment of sexuality as a form of state power. For my study, Foucault's concept of bio-power will help us connect together the various imaginary constructs and discourses of muscular Judaism by focusing on the ways in which the muscle Jew was deployed by the Zionists in the service of securing the legitimacy of the Jewish state.

In applying his conceptual structure to my work here, I am not interested in trying to confirm or reinforce the historical stages that Foucault claims to track genealogically. In fact, to accept them out of hand would undermine the very specificity and uniqueness of Zionism's deployment of sexuality since, in my application of his term, the logic of bio-power served to found a state rather than maintain, extend, or police a pre-given state's population. At the same time, Foucault's claim about what is new with regard to sexuality in the nineteenth century—namely, its modes of deployment and strategic alliances that cast the political in terms of spheres of bio-power—does confirm the Zionist belief that the problem of Jewish degeneracy could only be resolved via state formation. For the case of Zionism, I argue, the intersecting discourses of the muscle Jew—the aesthetic, the therapeutic, the hygienic, the colonial, and the militaristic—gave form to a state through the logic of bio-power. This logic motivates Max Nordau's cultural critique of degeneracy as well as his steadfast investment in the politics of regeneration as the prerequisite of achieving a healthy body politic. It can be found in the strategy of reclaiming the visual arts and a Jewish art historical tradition for the purposes of regenerating the Jewish people. And, most pointedly, the logic of bio-power informs the deployment of sexuality in the service of regenerating the individual body of the Jew and, thereby, the population as a

whole in gymnastic associations, colonial politics, and military organizations. This played out most impressively in the discourses dedicated to studying the demography of Palestine and generating extensive statistics for documenting, understanding, and improving every aspect of Jewish life, ranging from fertility, birth rates, and life expectancies to racial characteristics, muscle composition, hygiene practices, and military fitness.

In his study of two late nineteenth-century paradigms for scientifically investigating human development, sexology and psychoanalysis, Sander Gilman makes the important point that “no realm of human experience is as closely tied to the concept of degeneracy as that of sexuality.”<sup>64</sup> Not only are degeneracy and sexuality “inseparable within nineteenth century thought” (72), but I hasten to add that the counter-concept of regeneration is inseparable from the regulative economies for policing sexuality that emerged in the same period. To the same extent that degeneration was a labile term for designating the pathology of the other through “sexual opprobrium” (89), regeneration was a similarly elastic term for consolidating and extending the power of the “normal” by way of sexual fitness and vitality. Both concepts are important to my analysis insofar as they were simultaneously employed to designate and manage the pathology or health of both individual bodies and that of the greater body politic, species, or population. Indeed, as I have already indicated, the dialectic of degeneration and regeneration cannot in any way be limited to the Zionist imaginary, an argument which speaks, I think, to the necessity of integrating the muscle Jew discourse into general cultural histories of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European modernity.

Through the writing of this discursive cultural history of the muscle Jew, I have developed four methodological theses, which I will briefly explicate. The first thesis is the intersectionality of discursive formations, the fact that multiple discourses—racial, national, colonial, eugenic, and aesthetic—related to and build off one another. These discourses of regeneration were not exclusively “Jewish” but were internalized and variously redeployed, often for the sake of gaining greater legitimacy, within the context of European body culture. The second thesis is the embrace of paradox and contradiction in writing cultural history. Muscular Judaism cannot be reduced to a singular, developmental narrative; instead, the discourse of regeneration and the history of the muscle Jew are fraught with contradiction and complexity, perhaps the most glaring being the extension of certain European structures of hegemony (the nation-state, the concept of civilization, racial and colonial models) even while these very structures were often responsible for the anti-Semitism that gave rise to Zionism in the first place. This is, in part, because the Zionists internalized the anti-Semitic stereotypes of degeneracy and abnormality and, then, created a program of regeneration for establishing Jewish normalcy and national legitimacy.

The third thesis is the use of conceptual history to avoid the danger, as much as possible, of mixing cultural history with contemporary ideology:

“Begriffsgeschichte” (conceptual history) has a long and venerable tradition in Germany, particularly by its practitioners such as Reinhart Koselleck in Germany and in a related, tropological tradition, Hayden White in the United States.<sup>65</sup> The idea is to trace the history of concepts or governing tropes in cultural discourses: When did certain concepts enter into language? How were they deployed and with what sorts of explanatory power? For my purposes, when I make use of loaded concepts such as “race,” “colonization,” or “degeneration/regeneration,” I am interested in how these concepts or tropes were deployed by particular people, in particular places, at particular times, for particular ends, not how they are used today to justify (often problematically) certain ideological stances, as in the facile equation of Zionism with colonialism or fascism.

The fourth and final methodological thesis is to conceive of Zionism as an expression of the German/Jewish dialectic of modernity. Although the origins of muscular Judaism cannot be limited strictly to Germany or to German language sources, it is striking that the German sources are arguably the richest and most telling.<sup>66</sup> Rather than providing a distorted picture of the muscle Jew discourse, I think that this fact necessitates reflection on its own terms: might it be that the “body culture” of German modernity uniquely supported the invention and spread of muscular Judaism? If this is the case (and I think it is), then there is no such thing as “German” or “Jewish” modernity pure and simple; instead, “German” is always mixed together, for better and for worse, in splendor and in horror, with “Jewish.” For this reason, we have to move beyond historiographic models that presuppose a structure of traumatic loss, failed dialogue, questionable symbiosis, or retrospective commemoration and consider the constitutive ways in which Jewish cultural history is entangled with German cultural history. We must make sense of the slippages, tensions, encounters, relationships, and movements of the German/Jewish dialectic of modernity, its hopes and its catastrophes, both of which are embodied by Zionism.<sup>67</sup> As a discursive cultural history of the origins of the muscle Jew, this book illustrates the deeply ambivalent and complicated entanglement between muscular Judaism and German intellectual history and culture.

Let me now introduce briefly the chapters that follow. Each chapter is structured around a different axis of Jewish regeneration: the rhetoric of regeneration in the *fin de siècle*, the aesthetics of regeneration in discourses around art and culture, the gymnastics of regeneration in body reform movements, the land of regeneration in Zionist colonial discourses, and soldiers of regeneration in military discourses. The second chapter, “The Rhetoric of Regeneration,” begins by providing an intellectual and cultural context for both Nordau’s *Degeneration* (1892) and his turn to Zionism (after 1895) within the critical diagnoses of “degeneracy” and anxious calls for “regeneration” of the late nineteenth century. By placing Nordau’s *Degeneration* in dialogue with Julius Langbehn’s *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Educator, 1890), I argue that Nordau’s conceptualization of

the muscle Jew is informed by the same aesthetic logic of “education,” “discipline,” and “regeneration” found not only in the project of *Degeneration* but also Langbehn’s decidedly more “*völkisch*” cultural criticism and his rhetoric of regeneration. I show how all the traits that Nordau attributed to the “true modern” in 1892—the health and originality of race, clarity of vision and purpose, strength of body, depth of discipline, and ability to adapt—were transposed to the muscle Jew and adopted as part of the intersecting Zionist discourses that emerged in the following decade.

The third chapter, “The Aesthetics of Regeneration,” examines the role of Jewish artistic production in the creation of the idea of nationality. I begin with an analysis of the first Zionist art exhibit of 1901 and show how Buber and Lilien, the chief curators and exponents of the exhibition, reconceived of the very idea of Jewish art vis-à-vis the longstanding tradition of Jewish aniconism and cultural degeneracy. Here, I examine how Buber, reformulating the hegemonic modernist tradition that maintained that Jews were “artless,” considered art to be a critical kind of “*aesthetische Erziehung*” (aesthetic education) that undergirded the vitality and productivity of the nation. It is this pedagogical function of art that the nineteenth-century anti-Semitic imagination, exemplified best by Richard Wagner, used to doubly exclude Jews: simply put, because Jews do not have a nation, they do not have an artistic tradition; and, recursively, because Jews do not have an artistic tradition, they do not have a nation. Rather than extending this tradition, Buber, I argue, turned back to Friedrich Schiller’s concept of “aesthetic education” and re-imagined Jewish art in the service of state formation. In the second part of the chapter, I look at how this functioned in practice. Here, I focus on the early work of the best-known Zionist artist, Lilien, and discuss how his challenging work made use, seemingly paradoxically, of the techniques and visual styles of “decadence” to regenerate Jewish mythical traditions and national art.

In the fourth chapter, “The Gymnastics of Regeneration,” I turn to the concept of bio-power within muscular Judaism. I begin by placing the muscle Jew within the broader European “body culture” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the rise of “muscular Christianity” in England, the physical fitness boom in Europe and the United States, and the birth of race science and eugenics. Throughout the chapter, I demonstrate how the fashioning of the muscle Jew in both *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* and the public exhibition of Jewish hygiene drew on and were an integral part of the German *Lebensreform* movement. Applying Foucault’s concept of “bio-power” to the culture of German Zionism, I examine how the rhetoric of corporeal reform in gymnastics discourses, indebted to and inspired by the German nationalism of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, moved from a project of individualized rejuvenation to a broader project of state formation. The second part of this chapter looks at Jewish population politics, focusing on two, not fortuitously connected events of 1911: the publication of Felix Theilhaber’s



apocalyptic book, *Der Untergang der deutschen Juden* (The Destruction of the German Jews) and the Jewish section of the International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden. Theilhaber, a committed Zionist, argued that Jews would perish as a race if drastic social and biological measures were not taken immediately to stave off what he saw to be the rapid population decline of the German Jews. His argument, in many ways quite consonant with the Jewish section of the 1911 hygiene exhibition organized by Max Grunwald, posited that modern Jews had to urgently reform their bodies and, by extension, their race through time-honored principles of hygiene and modern-day eugenics. Through this new emphasis on the management of reproduction, fertility, population politics, and ethnic demography, the muscle Jew discourse also became a kind of Zionist race science.

In Chapter 5, “The Land of Regeneration,” I turn to the beginnings of Zionist colonial discourse in order to show how the muscle Jew was connected to the geographic possession of the land. Using travelogues, scientific reports, land surveys, and reconnaissance studies published in the journals *Palästina* and *Altneuland*, I examine points of contact as well as points of divergence between the Zionist colonial idea and European colonialism. Here, I give special attention to the discourse of seafaring, a discourse whose lineage is characterized by voyages of discovery and conquest. By re-inscribing Hegel’s famous argument that world-historical people have a relationship to the sea, I show how the seafaring discourse was integrated into muscular Judaism by Max Grunwald, Theodor Herzl, and Davis Trietsch. In the last part of the chapter, I turn to the photo documentary, *Bilder aus Palaestina* (Pictures from Palestine), and discuss how photography was deployed in imagining, reconnoitering, regenerating, and, ultimately, possessing both the territory and people of Palestine. In drawing explicitly from the German, French, and British models of colonialism, I indicate some of the ways in which Zionism created an aestheticized politics of regeneration that sought to elevate muscle Jews into agents of the European Universal.

The final chapter, “Soldiers of Regeneration,” examines how Jews—both Zionist and non-Zionist—made the Jewish body fit for military service by embracing an “old-new” Maccabean rhetoric of heroism, bravery, and military masculinity. The Great War contributed to the “steeling” of the muscle Jew, resulting in a new image of the Jewish male fit for combat and able to defend the European idea of nationality (in both Europe and Palestine). Here, I study how Jewish soldiers, particularly airmen, emerged as exemplary antidotes to the so-called “stab-in-the-back” legend and, ultimately, as the justification of a renewed militarism during the Weimar period. For Jewish soldiers, unlike most of their German counterparts, World War I was a critically enabling moment and even a sort of proving ground for a regenerated Jewish masculinity—not its destruction or degeneration. Not unlike the arguments of “reactionary modernists” such as Ernst Jünger who embraced the war for bringing about a technologically reinvigorated

masculinity, many Jews saw the war as a regenerative opportunity for the Jewish body. With World War I, the muscle Jew was “hardened” in a way that not only fought anti-Semitism but also galvanized the struggle for nationality in both Germany and Palestine in the tumultuous years that followed.

## THE RHETORIC OF REGENERATION

“Clear heads, solid stomachs, and hard muscles”

### **The dialectic of Jewish regeneration/degeneration**

In 1781, Christian Wilhelm Dohm, a virtually unknown German archivist and councilor in Frederick the Great’s department of foreign affairs, published an extraordinary treatise called *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (On the Civic Improvement of the Jews).<sup>1</sup> The treatise represented Dohm’s attempt to find both an explanation for and a way to fix what he, along with many of his contemporaries, perceived to be the “degeneration” of the Jewish people. He saw this degeneration exemplified by the fact that the vast majority of Jews throughout Western and Eastern Europe were ailing, itinerant hagglers, wed to rigidly archaic religious laws, who barely eked out a living on the edges of the modern, civilized world. Inverting traditional explanations for their condition, Dohm argued that the degeneracy of the Jews cannot be blamed on the Jews themselves but rather on the Christian rulers who refused to grant Jews civil rights and equality before the law. If these rights were granted to the Jews, they would become morally, spiritually, and physically regenerated.

Almost immediately after its publication, Dohm’s book was widely read and debated, prompting responses from some of Germany’s foremost intellectuals, including the Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, the Protestant theologian, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, and Germany’s leading Orientalist scholar, Johann David Michaelis.<sup>2</sup> The following year it was translated into French and inspired many French treatises, most notably Abbé Grégoire’s *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des Juifs* in 1788, a work that played a critical role in facilitating the emancipation of the French Jews shortly after the Revolution.<sup>3</sup> In Dohm’s homeland of Prussia, Jewish emancipation came in 1812, and his treatise is often cited as a key turning point in the debate over Jewish civic equality.<sup>4</sup>

Although Dohm, like Grégoire, bought into the contemporary anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews as morally corrupt, spiritually bankrupt, and physically inferior (something for which Mendelssohn would take him to task), the revolutionary significance of his argument was to be found in the fact that he shifted the discourse away from the belief that these “degenerate” traits

naturally inhere within individuals or within the Jewish people as a whole and, instead, refocused attention on what he perceived to be the social, economic, and political causes and conditions for the disenfranchisement and subsequent corruption of the Jews. But more than this, Dohm pointed out that the Jewish people were not always degenerate:

Moses had wanted to found a lasting, flourishing state . . . and up until the fifth century, the Jews were good citizens of the Roman Empire. It was only afterward, when all civil societies on earth excluded them, that they forgot how their religious teachings related to civil society.

(D 1:143)

If the laws of the state were reformed to grant full civil rights to the Jews, the Jewish people themselves, Dohm believed, would regain their moral rectitude, spiritual richness, and physical strength in just a couple of generations: “They will return to the freer and nobler ancient Mosaic constitution” (D 1:144) and thus become productive members of civil society. In effect, the Jewish people could be regenerated.

Dohm was particularly concerned about the Jews’ singular investment in “trade” and “speculations” (D 1:143) and their apparent inability to become good citizens who served the state as disciplined soldiers, productive farmers, and conscientious artisans. This was not always the case, Dohm insisted, and argued that during the Roman Empire, “Jews earned confidence and commendations through their military service . . . and that the many privileges and celebrated declarations by the Roman Senate represent the irrefutable proof of the bravery and loyalty that they demonstrated in war” (D 1:140). Only when Jews were declared “unfit” for military service in the fifth century did the prejudice become grounded that the Jews were not able to fight as citizens on behalf of the state (D 1:141). “One and a half millennia later, it is natural,” Dohm explains, that the Jews have “become unaccustomed to war” and that the “martial courage and strength of the body” (D 1:145) would not immediately return without the proper guidance, support, and training.

Once the Jews are granted civic equality, Dohm proposes a program of regeneration that focuses on making them fit for military service, agriculture, and manufacturing. This approach, he believed, would stem the “degeneration” (*Ausartung*) and “corruption” (*Verderbtheit*) that has resulted directly from their “condemnation and persecution” (D 1:149). In the same way that he shows that Jews used to be exemplary soldiers, Dohm argues that Jews also used to be engaged in agriculture and artisanship: “In their Asiatic fatherland, Jews used to live almost completely from agriculture and their whole state was founded on agriculture” (D 2: 220). The same anti-Semitic laws that prevented Jews from serving in the military also restricted them to certain occupations, and this took its toll on their physical and psychic composition. Dohm,

however, is optimistic about the regenerative prospects of the Jewish people: “The necessary strength of body and the consistent diligence will reliably come back in a couple of generations” (D 2: 259), thus enabling Jews to reenter the professions from which they were barred and restoring the Jewish people to their original strength and vitality.

Shortly before the French Revolution, when Dohm published his treatise, the concept of “regeneration” had already come to designate moral, spiritual, physical, and political rebirth. As Antoine de Baecque has demonstrated in a remarkable study of corporeal metaphors during the French Revolution, the concept of regeneration first referred to the impetus to return or restore a body to its original vitality.<sup>5</sup> Up until 1730, regeneration primarily referred to rebirth and resurrection within religious discourses and to the physiological processes of healing within medicinal discourses. But by the middle of the eighteenth century, it was explicitly linked with its antonym, “degeneration,” and gained explanatory power as part of the Enlightenment ideology of progress and the concomitant belief in the perfectibility of the human race.<sup>6</sup> Not only could individual bodies be regenerated and perfected, but the larger social or political body could also be reborn, renewed, and revitalized. Regeneration thus gained a revolutionary corporeal meaning: it now signaled the possibility of political and social reform, in which degeneracy—in all its backward facing forms—could be permanently overcome. Strong, robust, and vital individuals would form a strong, robust, and vital body politic. For Dohm, Jewish degeneracy was not merely the prerequisite of their regeneration but also the proof of the Enlightenment idea of social and political progress. Anything and everyone could be “improved” and perfected. What makes Dohm’s argument unique is that he is the first German thinker to propose a civic rationale for Jewish emancipation together with a program of regeneration for the Jewish people.<sup>7</sup> As we will see, his arguments concerning the physical, moral, and spiritual regeneration of the Jews anticipate many of the ideas of Zionism, including its most important figure of self-refashioning: the “muscle Jew.”

Before moving to the synchronic context for the invention of the muscle Jew, I want to underscore the diachronic history of the concept of regeneration by indicating how its meaning emerged from the political history of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. The reason that this is important is the fact that precisely during this period the concept of “regeneration” changed in two decisive ways, both of which are important for its modern usage. First, it moved from being a term used primarily in theological and medical contexts to one applicable to virtually any sphere of social and political development; and, second, it gained a new, active meaning as a human potentiality. These shifts in meaning are closely bound to one another. As Sepinwall and de Baecque point out, prior to the mid-eighteenth century, the term regeneration (in French, *régénérer*) had a limited use primarily in theology as the equivalent of resurrection, baptism, and rebirth.<sup>8</sup> The word was almost never used as an active verb since only God, not human beings, had

the power to regenerate. But over the course of the eighteenth century, the term came to be secularized and was used to designate rebirth in any sphere, whether physical, moral, or political. Moreover, it became a human potentiality: not only could human beings and their political structures be reborn, but they have the power to regenerate themselves.

To see what this shift in meaning signified in practice, let me cite a portion of a text written in 1789 on the regeneration of the French people. In its urgent description and historical justification, it bears an uncanny resemblance to the Zionist program of Jewish regeneration. The author is Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve:

The free man does not walk with his head bent; nor is his gaze haughty or disdainful, but rather assured; his walk is proud; none of his movements proclaims fear; full of confidence in his own strength, he sees no one around him of whom he need be afraid and before whom he might have to abase himself. His joy is pure, it is honest, his affections are gentle and good; these sentiments of the soul give his body the most perfect development, the most beautiful proportions. . . . How much do constraint, how much do depressing and irritating ideas attack our temperament, disturb our health, ravage our external form: the cheeks cave in, the complexion becomes livid, the eye dims, our limbs shrivel, we are without strength and courage. The least moral revolution occasions a physical upheaval. . . . [The] men of the free nation will be physically larger, more handsome, more courageous; morally, they will be more virtuous and better. . . . Make man free if you desire his happiness, if you wish to see him handsome, strong, and virtuous. The deeper we go into this truth, the more we follow it in its developments, the more striking it will seem.<sup>9</sup>

Although written more than a century before the birth of Zionism and the invention of the muscle Jew, the French author is calling for the creation of a reinvigorated, revolutionary man who is free, self-confident, and strong. The reborn body is the site upon which the revolutionary ideals of political regeneration are to be realized. Not unlike the body of the “new Jew,” the new Frenchman will develop “perfect” forms and “beautiful proportions,” which correspond directly to his moral probity and political freedom.<sup>10</sup> The degeneration of body and mind will be permanently overcome by the liberating powers of regeneration.

As both Grégoire and Dohm would thus argue, regeneration was effected first and foremost on the individual body and, thereby, the body politic. The new deployment of the term brought together a whole range of social meanings and political possibilities for rebirth and human agency, all of which were used by Grégoire and Dohm in their respective essays on Jewish regeneration: the physical correction of the Jew’s weak body and the mastery

of degeneracy; the moral rectification of the Jews and the normalization of their participation in civil society; and, finally, the overcoming of Jewish particularity through intermarriage, conversion, and assimilation. In a word, Jewish regeneration was to be proof of the Enlightenment's ideology of progress and belief in human perfectibility. And at the same time, as David Sorkin has shown, German Jews brought the Jewish tradition of *Haskala* together with these Enlightenment ideals of progress, secular knowledge, *Bildung*, and acculturation, all of which were embodied by its "mythic hero" Moses Mendelssohn:

The symbol of *Bildung* unified and represented this cultural system [of the radicalized *Haskala*] through its ideal of man (moral individualism), and the program of regeneration (occupational restructuring; reform of religion, manners, and morals) showed how the ideal could be attained.<sup>11</sup>

Enlightenment, *Bildung*, and emancipation would facilitate Jewish regeneration.

Following the French Revolution, the rhetoric of regeneration not only engendered a modicum of progressive change that led to the emancipation of the Jews throughout most of Western Europe and the liberalization of anti-Jewish laws over the next few decades, it also contributed to a backlash in which Jews were considered in need of redemption from their original fate as Jews, often—although not always—through the salvific logic of Christianity. As Paul Lawrence Rose has argued in his genealogy of modern anti-Semitism, the resolution of the Jewish question in the first half of the nineteenth century meant both the redemption of the Jews from being Jewish and the redemption of humankind from what came to be seen as the disease of Judaism, namely egoism and capitalist greed.<sup>12</sup> Karl Marx, for example, concluded his notorious tract, "On the Jewish Question" (1843), with the following pithy formulation, which plays off the double meaning of "*Judentum*" in the mid-nineteenth century as both "Judaism" and "commerce": "The social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from Judaism."<sup>13</sup> Marx, of course, did not want to regenerate the Jews as Christians but rather overcome Judaism entirely, both the affliction of religion and the affliction of capitalism.

With the emergence of race science and Darwinism in the mid-nineteenth century, the questions of "blood" and "race" took center stage in the debate over diagnosing national degeneration and imagining the possibility of regeneration.<sup>14</sup> In 1853–55, Arthur Comte de Gobineau published his treatise *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, in which he argued that "racial vitality" was the key determinant of human history. For Gobineau, degeneration is a problem of impure blood:

The word degenerate, when applied to people, means (as it ought to mean) that the people has no longer the same intrinsic value as it had

before, because it has no longer the same blood in its veins, continual adulterations having gradually affected the quality of the blood.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike Grégoire or Dohm who viewed intermarriage and racial mixing as a desirable way for Jewish particularity to be overcome, Gobineau considered the intermixing of races to be dangerous because it would defile and thus weaken the vitality of a given nation:

So long as the blood and institutions of a nation keep to a sufficient degree the impress of the original race, the nation exists . . . But if, like the Greeks, and the Romans of the later Empire, the people has been absolutely drained of its original blood, and the qualities conferred by the blood, then the day of its defeat will be the day of its death. It has used up the time that heaven granted at its birth, for it has completely changed its race, and with its race its nature. It is therefore degenerate.<sup>16</sup>

For Gobineau, degeneration was a problem of mixed blood and, hence, mixed races.

Although Gobineau's ideas were not initially well received in Europe, his argument for the supremacy of the "Aryan race" was widely accepted by the Wagner circle in the 1870s and later became the basis of many ultra-right, nationalist ideologies. Karl Eugen Dühring, for example, one of the most influential proponents of racial anti-Semitism in Germany, applied many of Gobineau's ideas in his book, *Die Judenfrage als Racen-, Sitten-, und Culturfrage* (The Jewish Question as a Racial, Moral, and Cultural Question).<sup>17</sup> Dühring argued fervently against the mixture of Jewish blood with German blood, considering the dilution of German racial strength to be a Jewish scheme:

The diverse admixture of our modern cultures, or in other words, the sprinkling of racial-Jewry in the cracks and crevices of our national abode, must inevitably lead to a reaction. It is impossible that close contact [between Germans and Jews] will take effect without the concomitant realization that this infusion of Jewish qualities is incompatible with our best impulses.<sup>18</sup>

In 1876, Gobineau befriended Richard Wagner who was a leading subscriber to the latter's theories of Aryanism, and Cosima Wagner later used Gobineau's theories to articulate the relationship between anti-Semitism and Aryan superiority.<sup>19</sup> The Gobineau Society was established in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, and its founder, Ludwig Schemann, asserted that "only Germany can be the receptacle for Gobineau and his ideas."<sup>20</sup> The Society was comprised of aristocrats, philologists, and artists, including,



perhaps most famously, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899) helped popularize Aryan mythology and establish race as the driving principle behind historical greatness.<sup>21</sup> After 1902, the nationalist pan-German League joined the Gobineau Society, something that led, according to Paul Weindling, to “the linking of Aryan theories with the ultra-nationalist and anti-Semitic right” in the decade prior to World War I.<sup>22</sup>

With the ascendancy of the Darwinian view of social evolution and human progress in the second half of the nineteenth century, the concern over racial degeneracy caused by modernization and industrialization took on new significance.<sup>23</sup> Here, a wide range of practices were instituted throughout Europe and the United States for “scientizing” cleanliness, professionalizing hygiene, administering public health, and monitoring social disorders.<sup>24</sup> The principles of Darwinism assumed a chief role in social and political affairs, and new fields emerged to track deviations and stop their dangerous proliferation.<sup>25</sup> In psychiatry, for example, Bénédict-Augustin Morel explained imbecility within a Darwinian framework: over the course of several generations, he maintained, mental neuroses would express themselves somatically and gradually worsen, such that the enfeebled descendants would eventually die out.<sup>26</sup> In criminology, Cesare Lombroso characterized the deviant type of the so-called born criminal as “an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals.”<sup>27</sup> By measuring parts of the criminal’s body, such as his skull and facial features, Lombroso assembled a massive criminal anthropology for tracking pathology and, thereby, he believed, protecting society. His work helped introduce new policing practices, most notably preventive detention, to fight criminality, social deviancy, and moral degeneracy.

In this new context of “racial” explanations for degeneracy, the question of Jewish regeneration—in both its individual and national dimensions—was given a significant first expression by a Jewish thinker in 1862: it is in this year that Moses Hess, the most important precursor to modern Zionism, published a book on “the last nationality question” called *Rom und Jerusalem* (Rome and Jerusalem).<sup>28</sup> He dedicated it “to the generous pioneers of all the historical people fighting for national rebirth.” Not unlike Grégoire and Dohm, Hess argued vigorously for the “rebirth” and “resurrection” of the Jewish people through the reclaiming of their ancient strength and original vitality.<sup>29</sup> But in contrast to Dohm or any other late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century thinker reflecting on the stakes of Jewish regeneration, Hess believed that the Jews were already world-historical agents in and of themselves and that their redemption was tied to the redemption of all of humankind. The Jewish people thus had a critical role to play in the history of humankind: far from being condemned to the first stage of world history, as Hegel famously posited,<sup>30</sup> the Jews have “defied the storms of world history” through “the secure racial instinct of their cultural-historical calling”

and stand ready to “unite the world and all of humanity in the name of the eternal creator” (H, xiv–xv). With the “rebirth of Israel” (H, 94) and, hence, the answer to “the last nationality question,” Jews will be able to “take their place in world history next to other historical peoples” (H, 102). This, in turn, will redeem both Jews and humankind as a whole.

Like other “world historical races” (*welthistorische Racen*) such as the English, the French, the Germans, and the Americans, Hess believes that the Jews are endowed with a special significance in human history. Yet at the same time, the Jews are also unique in that they are “the only ancient people who still exist today, just as in days of yore, with undiluted strength and integrity [*ungeschwächten Kraft und Integrität*]” (H, 60). He cites two important reasons for their uncanny survival as a people: first, the fact that the Jews cannot change their racial composition or physical features because of the purity of their race. He explains:

The Jewish nose cannot be reformed and the black, wavy Jewish hair cannot be transformed into blond hair through baptism or made straight with a comb. The Jewish race is an original race, which has reproduced itself in its integrity despite climatic influences.

(H, 12)

And second, he cites the sheer fact of their survival over the millennia while scattered across the world as both an indicator of racial strength and a testament to their decisive role in world history. In effect, the seeds of Jewish regeneration are to be found within: far from being degenerate, the Jewish race is characterized by an astounding regenerative capacity—“the ability to acclimatize under any circumstances” (H, 13)—and “the fertility and indestructibility of the Jewish tribe” (H, 12). It is this inhering, transhistorical strength that will secure Jewish national regeneration. As we will see in more detail in Chapter 5, Hess transformed the Hegelian philosophy of world history into a positive Jewish destiny by appropriating the hygienic claims of the emerging field of race science as a testament to the unlimited regenerative capacity of the Jewish people.

In the decades leading up to the founding of the modern Zionist movement, the German discourse on regeneration and *Lebensreform* (life reform) became explicitly linked to *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene) and eugenics. Racial hygiene was a broad movement, which not only included biological and medical programs for ‘improving the race’ but also measures for increasing the population, fighting social ills, creating healthy living and work environments, and generally increasing the standard of living.<sup>31</sup> As Sheila Weiss points out, “race hygiene in Germany was far more heterogeneous in its politics and ideology than is generally assumed,”<sup>32</sup> and its origins were quite distinct from Nazi ideology. While some of its founders (such as Alfred Ploetz, Max von Gruber, Ernst Rüdin, and Fritz Lenz) were undeniably

“Aryan enthusiasts,” others, most notably Wilhelm Schallmayer, were “uncompromising in their critique of all Aryan ideologies.”<sup>33</sup> The common denominator was not Aryan supremacy but rather the formation of a new science, which was concerned with the health and well-being of the race, as opposed to just the health and well-being of the individual.

Alfred Ploetz coined the term “Rassenhygiene” in 1895 in a book called *Die Tüchtigkeit unserer Rasse und der Schutz der Schwächen* (The Fitness of our Race and the Protection of the Weak). Since 1879, when Ploetz founded the League to Reinvigorate the Race, he was interested in the ethical and social issues raised by Social Darwinism, namely the question of what happened to the weak and infirm under the cruel pressures of natural selection. Ploetz, like some of his colleagues interested in social reform, advocated for a program of “rational selection,” in which a strong government would create social policy focused on hygiene and sanitary reform in order to improve the race.<sup>34</sup> Ploetz founded the influential journal, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* (Archive for Race and Societal Biology), in 1904, the first journal in the world dedicated to eugenics. It had the avowed platform of using the scientific advances of eugenics and racial hygiene (terms that would be used virtually interchangeably at this time) to regenerate the family and the *Volk*. Significantly, Ploetz did not see the Jews to be inherently “degenerate” or “polluting” the Aryan race; rather, he considered “the Jewish race [to be] quite probably overwhelmingly Aryan in composition,” and Aryans to be “the cultural race par excellence.”<sup>35</sup>

In 1892, the same year as Max Nordau published his massive study of degeneration, *Entartung*, Alfred Damm, a physician from Wiesbaden whose ideas played a significant role in forming the intellectual basis of the German *Körperkultur* movement, established the League for Regeneration (*Liga der Regeneration*). He was responsible for much of the content of two monthly journals, *Die Wiedergeburt der Völker* (The Rebirth of Peoples) (1892–95) and *Regeneration* (1896–1901), both of which formed the intellectual groundwork for *Kraft und Schönheit* (Strength and Beauty), the major journal of the *Körperkultur* movement.<sup>36</sup> In a series of lectures that he delivered in Berlin in 1895, *Die Entartung der Menschen und die Beseitigung der Entartung* (*Regeneration*) (The Degeneration of Humankind and the Elimination of Degeneration (Regeneration)), Damm sought to understand how the “health and blossoming strength” of German men and women in their twenties and thirties was lost.<sup>37</sup> He asks: “Why are almost all colorless and pale in the face? . . . Why is everyone in their best, strongest years ailing, the men suffering from poor digestion, nervousness and so forth, the women from chlorosis and other disorders specific to women?” (Damm, 9). The answer that he gives is that the exigencies of modern society have resulted in physical, mental, and spiritual degeneration and that a full-fledged program of regeneration is necessary to rejuvenate the German people and re-cultivate their wholeness: “The goal of regeneration is to make humankind more

perfect, and not just the perfection of one side but rather the perfection of body, mind, and soul” (Damm, 50). To do so, he argues, the criminal and sick elements of society must be separated from the rest of the population and steadily removed by state intervention (Damm, 60), while the strong and healthy are given a properly balanced education accompanied by both intellectual and physical training, such as “hiking trips, gymnastics, rowing, and ice-skating” (Damm, 77). In the end, Damm is confident that the “rebirth of our German people must come” and urges his audience to join his recently founded “League for Regeneration” (Damm, 82).

It was precisely this rhetoric of regeneration that was explicitly taken up by Jewish thinkers of the *fin de siècle* who sought to rejuvenate the Jewish people using the experiences of other Europeans as a model. In a short article entitled “Degeneration—Regeneration” (1901) published in the Jewish cultural periodical, *Ost und West: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für modernes Judentum* (East and West: Illustrated Monthly for Modern Judaism), during its first year, an anonymous author posited that “all the adherents of the theory of degeneration underestimate the boundless regenerative capacity of human nature.”<sup>38</sup> Not unlike Hess who connects the “national rebirth” of revolutionary France with the contemporary struggle for Jewish nationality (H, 8), the optimistic author of “Degeneration—Regeneration” points out that world-historical nations have always had to emerge from turmoil and rebuild themselves from destruction: “After the Thirty Years War, Germany found itself in deep economic ruin, just as England did in the first half of the 19th century. The human material of both nations was demoralized, weakened, and corrupted” (DR, 609). Yet each of these nations has become world-historical powers, variously reborn and regenerated. Today, although the Jews in Eastern and Western Europe are “psychically and physically hindered in realizing their strengths,” they, too, will soon experience “a new upswing” due to “the elasticity of human nature itself and Jewish elasticity in particular as well as the wealth of slumbering strength and eager talents” (DR, 611–612).

It is no coincidence that later the same year *Ost und West* featured an article on the burgeoning Jewish gymnastics movement in Europe written by Hermann Jalowicz, one of the strongest proponents of the regenerative powers of gymnastics. Jalowicz points out that “the corporeal degeneration of the Jewish nation” and the “degeneration process” itself can be effectively counteracted by physical exercise and the healthy benefits of light, air, and nutrition.<sup>39</sup> He cites the rapid growth of the “Jewish gymnastics movement” throughout Europe as a signal of the successful regeneration of the Jewish body:

The skills, muscular strength, and sinews of the gymnast are increased through training, while marching and formation exercises aim at cultivating a strict discipline (something that Jews need particularly). Gymnastics contributes to evoking a love of nature,

to making the body more resilient in responding to stress and accustomed to small privations. The shared experiences strengthen and bring about a feeling of comradeship.<sup>40</sup>

In the spirit of other advocates of body reform and racial hygiene, Jalowicz concludes by drawing a connection between the regeneration of the individual body and the reform of the race as a whole: “The Jewish gymnastics movement can fulfill its goal of elevating the race [*volkserziehlicher Zweck*]: It will contribute to the strengthening of the body, to the consolidation of the will, and the recovery of the Jewish people.”<sup>41</sup>

More than a century after Dohm and Grégoire published their initial calls for the physical, moral, and spiritual improvement of the Jewish people, the discourses of regeneration, particularly the ideas of corporeal reform and racial hygiene, would be taken up by a host of Zionist thinkers such as Max Nordau, Theodor Herzl, Martin Buber, Felix Theilhaber, Max Grunwald, Arthur Ruppin, Elias Auerbach, Alfred Nossig, and Davis Trietsch, each of whom variously contributed, as we will see over the next several chapters, to the creation of muscular Judaism. As a program of national, spiritual, and physical regeneration, Zionism can hardly be said to be unique or even original since virtually all of the regenerative movements across the political spectrum posited the birth of a “new man”<sup>42</sup> and the revitalization of the nation. Zionism essentially accepted the anti-Semitic stereotypes, many of which were solidified by the political disenfranchisement of the Jews, and internalized them: ‘We are, in fact, degenerate’, and thus pursued a radical project of regeneration, rebirth, and normalcy. The “muscle Jew” emerged as the emblem of the Jewish “*homo novus*,” epitomizing the attempt to reinvigorate the individual Jewish body and the body politic by endowing them both with “the most perfect development, the most beautiful proportions.” The intellectual origins of the muscle Jew and the modern Zionist idea are to be found in the discursive period of the 1890s, and it is here that we will now turn.

### **Julius Langbehn, Max Nordau, and the crisis of the 1890s**

It is not surprising that “critique” and “crisis” come from the same Greek root, *krino*, which means to cut, select, decide, and judge. The term “*krino*” was first used in the domains of law, medicine, and theology in order to indicate the pressure of two pointed alternatives and the necessity of making a decision one way or the other. The concepts of critique and crisis, as the philosopher of history, Reinhart Koselleck, has demonstrated, “aim at an irrevocable decision,” which, when made, will result in success or failure, right or wrong, life or death, salvation or damnation.<sup>43</sup> Crisis, then, refers not only to the assessment of a critical state of misfortune, struggle, and test, but it also necessitates a measured critique, an informed judgment, and a decisive action.

For this reason, as Koselleck argues, crisis implies a theory of time suffused with an eschatological dimension: the time for decision is now and, once the decision is rendered, there is no going back.

In the tumultuous final decade of the nineteenth century, it was precisely this necessity of deciding between two critical alternatives in a time of inescapable crisis that structured the logic of Julius Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Educator) and Max Nordau's *Entartung* (Degeneration). Although the content of their arguments and their political diagnoses are quite distant from one another, both books emerged out of the same *fin de siècle* culture and shared an uncanny number of similarities with respect to their belief in "education" (*Erziehung*) for the salvation of the nation as well as their urgent calls for regeneration. For both, overcoming cultural decline—with all its perils of degeneracy, loss, and valuelessness—was the order of the day. Langbehn's book, published anonymously "by a German," first appeared in 1890 and was an instant bestseller, going through more than forty printings and well over 60,000 copies in its first two years.<sup>44</sup> Nordau's *Degeneration* appeared in 1892 and was also an instant success, becoming one of the most hotly contested and ten best-selling books of the decade. Both authors posited grandiose cultural critiques of their "decaying" age and argued that there was no more time for passively contemplating the future because the corrupt *Zeitgeist* of the *fin de siècle* demanded immediate action, an irrevocable decision. The alternative, in their view, was degeneration.

In 1888, in his last completed work before collapsing in Turin, Nietzsche emblematically summed up the anxieties of the late nineteenth century with the following words: "Nothing is better known today, at least nothing has been better studied, than the protean character of degenerescence."<sup>45</sup> Through the figure of Wagner, Nietzsche mounted a choleric critique of modernity and its vogueish nihilism, arguing that decadence and degeneracy—ranging from cultural decline to physical sickness and moral turpitude—are the truest signs of this "nervous age." As Nietzsche suggests, signs of degeneracy were detected and studied everywhere: the fast pace of modern life rendered the nerves of city dwellers weak<sup>46</sup>; the "natural" borders of races and classes had become porous, causing them to breakdown and merge together; the spread of venereal diseases and prostitution evidenced the loosening of codes for policing sexuality, while the eager embrace of the rhetoric of sickness and decadence in art and literature displaced traditional moral authorities.<sup>47</sup> But most of all, the birth of the discipline of race science and eugenics in the mid-1850s turned the regulation of degeneracy into an urgent social imperative, which, by the 1890s, had become indistinguishable from the enforcement of a normative understanding of race and sexuality.<sup>48</sup>

It is precisely this confluence of discourses around the concept of degeneracy—medical, socio-economic, political, and racial—that fed the apocalyptic tone of Langbehn and Nordau's *fin de siècle* cultural criticism.

Across Europe, the crisis years of the 1890s would be marked by social instability as well as fierce political backlashes and nationalist fragmentation, from the dismissal of Bismarck and the introduction of the social reform decrees of the Kaiser in Germany to the Panama Scandal and the Dreyfus Affair in France, to the election of the rabidly anti-Semitic Christian Democrat Party in Austro-Hungary. In his classic study of “the rise of the Germanic ideology,” Fritz Stern famously characterized the 1890s as a period of “cultural despair,” in which political turmoil resounded with cultural discontent, and the pangs of modernity produced a veritable chorus of fear and disenchantment.<sup>49</sup> For historians such as Stern and Mosse, these years of cultural despair and anti-modernism marked the “ideological origins” of Nazism because it was at this time that the pathologies and irrationalities of later German history were first consolidated.<sup>50</sup>

Following in the wake of Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn’s critique of the German *Sonderweg* argument, many of the recent historiographies of this period have taken issue with the developmental pattern articulated by Stern and Mosse. These new historiographies attempt to show how the 1890s saw the flourishing of many reform movements across the political spectrum, resulting, as Kevin Repp has argued, in a wide range of divergent, open-ended, and alternative modernities.<sup>51</sup> As Eley has shown in his history of the German right, Stern and Mosse essentially perpetuate the *Sonderweg* argument of Germany’s mis-development: They fail to recognize the modernity of the *Kaiserreich* and refuse to see how many of the ideas of this turbulent period were composed of “a complex amalgam of ‘progressive’ and ‘reactionary’ motifs,” which did not inevitably lead to Nazism.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, the conditions of possibility for Nazism certainly began to congeal in this period and thus modernity’s “dark side” must be recognized in the discursive regime of the 1890s. It is in this context of multiple modernities, I maintain, that Langbehn and Nordau formulated and positioned their own cultural politics of regeneration.

Before attempting to reconstitute and resurrect what he believes to be essential “German” virtues—individuality, originality, devoutness, and simplicity, among others—in the figure of Rembrandt, Langbehn introduced his diagnosis of his age with the following understated words: “It is no secret that the spiritual [*geistige*] life of the German people finds itself today in a state of slow (some say rapid) decay.”<sup>53</sup> Over the next 300 pages, Langbehn repeats over and over again that the German people are facing a final spiritual “battle” between *Kunst* (art) and *Wissenschaft* (science) and that only with a return to the nearly lost “German” values exhibited, seemingly paradoxically, by Rembrandt can the German people survive. The alternative is to perish into the atomizing, valueless sterility of science. Nordau, not one for understatement, couched his shrill diagnosis like this:

The feeling of the time is curiously confused, a compound of feverish restlessness and blunted discouragement, of suspicious fear and

forsaken gallow-humor. The prevailing sense is that of destruction and extinction . . . In our days there has awakened in the minds of the more highly developed a dark fear of a dusk of nations (*Völkerdämmerung*) in which all the suns and stars are gradually burning out and humankind with all its institutions and creations is perishing in the midst of a dying world.<sup>54</sup>

Nordau's solution, while definitely motivated by the preservation of traditional, classical values and forms, does not look backwards to reclaim a lost personage but rather prognosticates an evolutionary break, imbued with the ideology of Social Darwinism, in which the "degenerates" shall perish and those who are strong, disciplined, and well-adapted will come forward to preside over a new world.

For Langbehn, the solution to the *fin de siècle* malaise was an adamant rejection of all intellectual activities that "democratized, leveled, and atomized" (R, 1) the true uniqueness of the German spirit. In place of what he thought to be the atomizing rationality of science, he sought to revive the mystery and creative powers of art. The figure of Rembrandt represents the redemption of the "scientized" world. Also employing the meta-concepts of art and science, Nordau diagnosed and attempted to overcome the same *fin de siècle* malaise but in almost the opposite fashion: condemning virtually every contemporary artistic or literary movement as proof of "degeneracy" (his unforgiving criticism jumps effortlessly from particular figures such as Manet and Tolstoy to the pre-Raphaelites, Symbolism, and "Ibsenism"), Nordau argues that only the calm rationality and disciplined logic of scientific progress can save humanity from the woes of degeneration and its attendant horror, formlessness. While their diagnoses and solutions are ultimately at odds with one another, both Nordau and Langbehn see a definitive need to break out of the degeneracy of the present through a logic of regeneration, and in this respect, their cultural critiques can be understood as emblematic of the crisis of the 1890s.

The purpose of this chapter is less to analyze the particular logic (or lack thereof) of these *fin de siècle* desires to break with the decay of the European present and more to understand how these desires are structured by the same apocalyptic "decisionism"<sup>55</sup> and ideology of a redemptive regeneration. More specifically, I want to interpret Nordau's *Degeneration* by placing it within the same apocalyptic discourse as the regenerative project of Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* and, from there, to show how these ideas for national regeneration formed the critical, conceptual groundwork for his articulation of the "muscle Jew." In what follows, then, I give a careful reading of Nordau's *Degeneration*, taking seriously the terms of his analysis, in order to distill the corporeal and aesthetic concepts that will later return and inform his understanding of the tasks of Zionism.<sup>56</sup> Although critics are somewhat split between those who view Nordau's Zionism as a "sudden eruption" and those



who see “no real division in his thought between his Zionism and the worldview he outlined in his non-Zionist and earlier writings,”<sup>57</sup> I want to argue that Nordau’s articulation of the muscle Jew is informed by the same logic of “education” and “regeneration” found not only in the “social Darwinian” project of *Degeneration* but also that found in the “*völkisch*” cultural criticism of Langbehn. As will become clear, Nordau’s Zionism—especially his conceptualization of the muscle Jew—was hardly a “sudden eruption.” If anything, the invention of the muscle Jew, grew out of the cultural crisis of the *fin de siècle* and epitomized the dialectic of German/Jewish modernity.

I would like to start by looking more carefully at some of the obvious differences between Langbehn and Nordau in order to characterize their responses to the crisis of the 1890s. To do so, I will begin with Nordau’s own dismissal of Langbehn and, then, discuss their opposing approaches to the question of regeneration by showing how both make use of the same decisionist logic to structure and justify the legitimacy of their arguments. After analyzing the arguments of Langbehn and Nordau, I will turn to Nordau’s conceptualization of the muscle Jew and connect it to both of the foregoing projects of regeneration.

In a chapter dedicated to demonstrating the “degeneracy” of Symbolism, Nordau contextualizes Langbehn’s *Rembrandt als Erzieher* next to the work of Charles Morice, “the theorist and philosopher of the Symbolists” (E, I:190), and, later in the chapter, the “emotionally degenerate” (E, I:228) poetry of the chief Symbolist poet, Paul Verlaine. Symbolist or decadent poets, he argues, are characterized by the fact that their language evidences “all the signs of degeneracy and imbecility: overweening vanity and self-conceit, strong emotionalism, confused and disconnected thoughts, garrulity (the logorrhea of mental therapeutics), and complete incapacity for serious sustained work” (E, I:182). But Nordau’s real problem with the Symbolists, the same problem that he accuses Langbehn of suffering from, is their compulsive need to write about the rejection of science in favor of the mysticism and subjectivity of faith. It is in this respect that Nordau mentions and just as quickly dismisses Langbehn:

Another graphomaniac, the author of that imbecilic book, *Rembrandt as Educator*, drivels in almost the same way. “Interest in science, and especially in the once so popular natural science, has widely diminished of late in the German world. . . . There has been to a certain extent a surfeit of induction; there is a longing for synthesis; the days of objectivity are declining once more to their end, and, in their place, subjectivity knocks at the door.”

(E, I:191)

The rejection of the scientifically disclosed world was, according to Nordau, not a sign of re-enchantment but rather a sure sign of mental debilitation.

Although this is the only time he engages with Langbehn's work, Nordau's argument, driven forward by an unflagging investment in the lucidity of science and the rationality of the Enlightenment, can be seen to repudiate Langbehn's investment in Rembrandt's mysticism. For Nordau, healthy and sane people—those who see clear forms, articulate rational ideas, and defend the truth of science and progress—stand radically opposed to those who are degenerate and give expression to their confused mental states through emotional mysticism, acute self-centeredness, and feeble-minded impressions of the world. He sums up his “portrait of the most famous leader of the Symbolists,” Verlaine, with the following words, which might just as well apply to Langbehn:

We see a repulsive degenerate with an asymmetric skull and a Mongolian face, an impulsive vagabond and dipsomaniac, who, because of crimes against morality, was placed in a penitentiary; an emotional dreamer of feeble intellect, who painfully fights against his bad impulses and in his misery sometimes utters touching words of complaint; a mystic, whose qualmish consciousness is flooded by thoughts of God and saints; a dotard, who displays the absence of any definite thought in his mind by incoherent speech, meaningless expressions, and frizzy images.

(E, I:228)

In other words, degenerates can be recognized not only by the confused content and chaotic structure of their thoughts or artistic expressions, but they also suffer from race-based, physical deformities (such as an “asymmetric skull” and “Mongolian face”) that prevent them from adapting to the demands of civil society. Instead of engaging in productive labor, rational activities, and deliberate moral standards—the cornerstones of an enlightened society—the degenerate is lost, desperate, overly emotional, drunk, and sex-craved. Nordau, not one for restraint (although, ironically, he considers restraint to be a critical characteristic of the healthy and sane), spends the next 300 pages of his book mercilessly castigating an astonishingly wide range of artists, literati, critics, and philosophers, as well as anyone else who dares to question the truths of science and the rational foundations of civil society.

To be sure, Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* is not an argument about (let alone informed by) the clear rationality of science, but, then again, Nordau's *Degeneration* can hardly be adduced as the model of clarity and objectivity. Fritz Stern once characterized Langbehn's book as “wild,” “breathless,” and “chaotic,” as “a shrill cry against the hothouse intellectualism of modern Germany which threatened to stifle the creative life, a cry for the irrational energies of the folk, buried so long under layers of civilization.”<sup>58</sup> Much the same could certainly be said of Nordau's *Degeneration*. In my opinion, Langbehn's apocalyptic tone is actually more subdued than Nordau's, although the organizing structure of his argument is far from

apparent. Langbehn's book is divided into five sections, each with some 30 to 70 subsections on disparately juxtaposed themes. The five sections are German art, German science, German politics, German education, and German humanity and include short subsections on diverse topics such as individuality, personality, blood, *Japonisme*, and the German rule of the world. The leitmotiv of the book is Langbehn's fictionalized image of Rembrandt as the embodiment of authentic (although lost) German ideals and the struggle to recover them through art.

In approaching Langbehn, certainly the most obvious opening question is: Why Rembrandt? Are there not any *German* artists—perhaps Matthias Grunewald, Albrecht Dürer, or Lucas Cranach—who Langbehn can use to make his argument? Langbehn addresses this objection right from the start. Let me quote him at length:

If the Germans are primarily an individual people, then in the area of art only the most individual of their artists can serve as their spiritual guides . . . Of all the German artists, the most individual is Rembrandt. The Germans want to blaze their own trails and no one did that more than Rembrandt; in this sense, he has to be considered the most German of all German painters and even the most German of all German artists. . . . Rembrandt is the prototype of the German artist; he and he alone is the perfect model for the wishes and intellectual needs of the German people today. . . . Because the Germans suffer from specialization and triteness in their education [*Bildung*], only the most expressive universalist and individualist can help: namely, Rembrandt. He can lead us back to ourselves. He is the concerned, historical ideal for the time to come; he is the fixed point to which new forms of education, rich in their futurity, can connect. Rembrandt, however, was Dutch. It is significant and an external confirmation of the eccentric character of the Germans that their national artist only belongs to them internally and not even politically. The spirit of the German people [*der deutsche Volksgeist*] turned the body of the German people [*der deutsche Volkskörper*] inside out, so to speak. Now that has to change. Spirit and body, in both the people and the individuals, have to be reunited. . . . Rembrandt is the person [to do so].

(R, 9)

This is the unbeatable logic of Langbehn's entire book. The German people have certain inhering, spiritual qualities, such as individuality and simplicity, which, although largely contaminated by modern science, nevertheless still survive throughout and beyond the national borders of Germany. Sometimes, as in the case of Rembrandt, these spiritual qualities can be found to endure even more gloriously in others than in German artists. Therefore,

Rembrandt—as the model for and embodiment of “Germanness”—can help the Germans to recover and reconstitute their lost spirit.<sup>59</sup>

Langbehn’s Rembrandt bears little relation to the historical Rembrandt, and, for this reason, he spends very little time with accurate biographical details about Rembrandt’s life or, for that matter, with discussions of his painting.<sup>60</sup> Instead, Langbehn is concerned with the myth of Rembrandt, the refined qualities and superhuman ideals for which he believes Rembrandt to have stood, and how these qualities match up with mythological German qualities. These qualities are neither geographically nor historically bound, and, hence, Langbehn can invoke Rembrandt as a German:

Music and genuineness, barbarism and piousness, childlike sensibility and independence are outstanding qualities of the German character. To the degree that Rembrandt reckoned with them in the domain of art, he reveals himself as a true German. Loyalty to oneself, loyalty to the native and narrow piece of German earth, loyalty to the capacious spiritual life of the German people; in short, the preservation of the most beautiful German virtue of all—loyalty—this is what Rembrandt can and shall teach us.

(R, 26)

Here, Langbehn is not only reaching back to the mythology of German bravery, strength, and loyalty immortalized in German song and verse, such as in the *Nibelungenlied*, the battle of Hermann, the *Song of the Germans*, and the myth of Barbarossa; he is also pointing forward to the enduring, transhistorical, and transnational nature of these qualities. The spiritual life of the German people lives beyond the finite bounds of human space and time. This is why he believes that “a return to Rembrandt means a forward step into the future at the same time” (R, 35). Rembrandt represents both the transnationality of the German spirit (after all, Langbehn never denies the fact that he is Dutch by birth, while insisting that he is German by character) and the transhistoricalness of the German spirit (it can be resurrected from the greatness of the past in order to move forward out of the crisis of the present). Rembrandt will teach the German people how to overcome their current “spiritual sickness [*geistige Krankheit*]” (R, 29), which wrongly exalts the rationality and objectivity of science above all else and, in so doing, reduces the mystery of the world to “colorlessness and monotony” (R, 65).

In a rare mention of one of Rembrandt’s works, Langbehn augments his argument by citing Rembrandt’s picture of “Abraham visited by three angels” as “perhaps the most religious picture ever painted” (R, 89). It represents “human spirit set against divine spirit . . . in which God is entirely made human and the human being is entirely made into God. . . . Art has performed a wonder once again; inner life has turned into outer life; thoughts have transformed themselves into history” (R, 89). In other words, the picture

embodies the mystery and enchantment of art as a kind of religious transformation. “Abraham visited by three angels” represents the religious world before its destruction by the Enlightenment and the rationality of science; it captures the moment of the miraculous, the revelatory, and the wondrous, precisely that which cannot be explained by or reduced to the objectivity of science. For Langbehn, to return to the world depicted in this painting would mean the spiritual regeneration of his nation.

As the master of chiaroscuro, Rembrandt also created a visual technique of painting that is, according to Langbehn, true to the German spirit. His pictures offer an alternative to the triumph of Enlightenment clarity and rationality, symbolized by the light of science, by the way in which they unequally mix together darkness and light. As Langbehn argues, the clarity of thought preached by professors, scientists, and specialists has poisoned the depth and mystery of the German spirit: “A generous dose of darkness would do today’s German *Bildung* quite good; mixed with the Enlightenment, it would result in a light-dark, pregnant with the future, for the spiritual being of the Germans” (R, 290–291). In other words, the mystery and play of light and dark are better suited to the complexity of the German spirit than the democratizing clarity of the all-too-French Enlightenment.

Langbehn discusses very few of Rembrandt’s actual works of art in his book, just mentioning some of his religious images, portraits, and self-portraits in passing. Instead, he is much more concerned with endowing Rembrandt with mythological qualities that could, at one time, be detected in the German people and be emulated, in the future, by Germans once again. With respect to the latter, it is in this way that Langbehn considers Rembrandt to be an “educator” (*Erzieher*), that is to say, one who helps raise and regenerate “the people” (*Volkstum*). Both of these concepts—*Erzieher* and *Volkstum*—must be briefly explained, since they form the hinge upon which Langbehn’s entire book turns. Langbehn sees Rembrandt within the tradition of “*Erziehung*” (literally translated as “pulling up” or “raising”) exemplified by the likes of Lessing and Schiller and, in fact, makes passing references to the former’s “*Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*” (Education of the Human Race) and the latter’s “*Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*” (Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Human Beings).<sup>61</sup> For both Lessing and Schiller, education or rearing represented a formative process wherein the moral qualities of the human being were cultivated and refined. Langbehn situates the concept of “*Erziehung*” within this field of usage and considers it as a kind of “*Bildung*” (education) or process of formation. Here, he makes reference to the concept’s original theological and sculptural meanings, namely “*Bildung*” as that which is formed in the image of God and the essence of artistic practice as creation.<sup>62</sup> The concepts of *Erziehung*, *Bildung*, and regeneration thus share a common background meaning rooted in theology.

Extending this model to politics, he then makes the surprising point that “the axis of true German *Bildung* runs from Bismarck to Rembrandt and

Shakespeare!” (R, 165). In other words, beginning in his present with the leader of Germany who unified the fragmented people (*Volkstum*) through blood and iron, Langbehn sees the history of “true” *Bildung* stretching back not to Goethe, Lessing, or Schiller, but rather to Rembrandt and Shakespeare. Once again, Langbehn’s point is not that Rembrandt and Shakespeare are really “German,” but rather that both exhibited the highest of German ideals—namely, “*Volksthümlichkeit*”—and can, therefore, be said to be “educators,” even saviors of the presently sick, German spirit. For Langbehn, “*Volksthümlichkeit*” is a mythic quality best exemplified by German peasants because they connect the piety and simplicity of the people most closely with the cultivation of the land. His logic runs as follows:

The peasant, as master of the house, is an economic king in small; the king, as master of the land, is an economic artist in large; the artist, who forms (*bildende*) and intuits, stands between both: As with the peasant, the artist has instinctive feelings about the soul of the people [*Volkseele*] and shares the autocratic right to give them form [*Recht ihrer Ausgestaltung*] with the king.

(R, 127–128)

He mentions Shakespeare and Frederick the Great, as well as Rembrandt and Bismarck, as examples of artists and rulers who “gave form”—as educators—to the spirit of the people. He includes a paeon to Rembrandt: “In his own way, Rembrandt, the peasant-like and kingly artist, is an iron rock, a fixed and unmovable point on which the soul of the German people can crystallize in new and more beautiful forms” (R, 129).

We can now understand why Langbehn isolated Rembrandt’s picture of Abraham visited by the three angels as emblematic of the wonder of art. The picture depicts the origins of a people, who, as peasants, are rooted in the fertility of the ground. Rembrandt shows the miraculous moment when God tells Abraham that he and Sarah will be the progenitors of a multitude of nations. About the painting Langbehn writes: “The figure of the patriarch [*Erzvater*] is the only instance in all of art history which is equal to Phidias’ Zeus” (R, 89). In other words, through its representation of the originary moment of the birth of a people, the picture is an expression of true *Volksthümlichkeit*. Langbehn’s Rembrandt is thus a “true educator” because his art teaches Germans what it means to be German.

Here, it is worth mentioning that Langbehn was somewhat sympathetic to certain strands of Judaism, particularly Orthodox Judaism, because he thought orthodox Jews exhibited “*völkisch*” qualities similar to those of the original Germanic people or the progenitors of all nations, Abraham and Sarah. “Rembrandt’s Jews,” he writes, “were true Jews, who did not want to be anything else but Jews and, therefore, they had character” (R, 42). On the other hand, those Jews who wanted to become German-Jews or otherwise

assimilate had committed, in Langbehn's opinion, "the crime of all crimes" (R, 42). In an updated edition of his book published in 1892, Langbehn introduced unambiguously anti-Semitic arguments against the modern, assimilated Jew: "The modern Jew has no religion, no character, no home, no children. He is a piece of humanity that has become sour."<sup>63</sup> For Langbehn, nothing could be more important than preserving, protecting, and redeeming the "*Volkstümlichkeit*" of one's people, their "völkisch" purity.

In the conclusion of his book, this insistence on redeeming the *Volkstümlichkeit* definitely took on more violent, more apocalyptic, and more racialized forms, which certainly call to mind early formulations of the *Blut und Boden* ideology. In a chapter dedicated to the origins of German "blood," for example, Langbehn prognosticates that the German peasant, the embodiment of Rembrandt's most original and authentic qualities of character, "will beat the Professor [the man of science] to death" (R, 227). In other words, the decisive battle between science and art will be settled when the German artist-peasants defeat the representatives of the atomizing objectivity of science and return to "rule over the world" (R, 230). But this will only happen successfully if the German people emerge from the "spiritual misery of their present" (R, 329) and look back to Rembrandt—"a true Aryan" with "Aryan blood" flowing through his veins (R, 328)—in order to foster the rebirth of the German spirit. He concludes by thrusting this mandate for rebirth back onto the German people: "Art and science will have to battle themselves out to establish which of them is the master of the German spiritual life; the fight must be honestly conducted and the German people will determine its outcome. Their word decides!" (R, 329).

Most commentators who mention Julius Langbehn or discuss his ideas vis-à-vis the crisis of the 1890s tend to place his "mysticism" and "anti-modernism" within a developmental lineage of *völkisch* nationalism that led to the Nazi regime. Langbehn's ideas for overcoming moral decay can certainly be read next to those of Paul de Lagarde, Heinrich von Treitschke, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, all of whom were anti-Semitic ideologues of German nationalism and advocated for the regeneration of the spiritual and racial integrity of the German people.<sup>64</sup> Stern, as I indicated earlier, sees Langbehn's ideas as both the product of a "nervous age" of rapid modernization and the harbinger of a decidedly more dangerous pan-Germanism that gave rise to, among other things, the instrumentalization of Nietzschean ideas of superiority, the spread of popular notions of eugenics and race science, national reforms in education and in the arts, and, perhaps most saliently, the *völkisch* elements of the German Youth Movement.<sup>65</sup> In Mosse's analysis, Langbehn's call "for the regeneration of the individual through membership in the Volk" gave rise to a Germanic religion of romantic, mystical longing grounded in a rudimentary *Blut und Boden* ideology that later "provided a systematic framework for future *Völkisch* ideas."<sup>66</sup> Langbehn and Lagarde were "two *Völkisch* prophets [who]

transformed this crisis, actually the birth pangs of modernity, into a crisis of ideology."<sup>67</sup> In their most racist, romantic, and nationalist incarnations, these calls for regeneration gave root, according to Mosse and Stern, to the ideology of National Socialism.

My point, however, in examining Langbehn and Nordau next to one another is not to extend the *Sonderweg* argument by tracing out a diachronic lineage for understanding later incarnations of Langbehn's *völkisch* nationalism or probing the "irrationalist" origins of Nazism; rather my goal is to show how the crisis of the 1890s—with all its conceptual fallacies and cultural apocalypticism—engendered two synchronic and dialectically related critiques of modernity that illuminate one another by the ways in which they simultaneously sought national regeneration. Both Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* and Nordau's *Entartung* emerged, at roughly the same time, from the very same confluence of intellectual currents that responded to the pressures of modernity and sought to overcome racial, cultural, and national degeneracy. And more significantly, they are both structured by a violent, decisionist logic that mandates the redemption of a new beginning. That is to say, both works are theories of apocalyptic time, as Koselleck's conceptual history of crisis makes clear, which posit the urgency of deciding between two absolutely pointed alternatives—right or wrong, salvation or damnation, healthy or degenerate, science or art—in order to escape the crisis of the present.

While Langbehn's ideas probably did, in fact, contribute to the ideology of *völkisch* nationalism, it is important to recognize that Imperial Germany was not simply an incubator of Nazi ideology. This is revealed by the comparison with Nordau, and this is also why we have to situate the origins of Zionism—as an alternative modernity—within this period. As Eley explains in his *Reshaping the German Right*:

The desire to make Wilhelmine intellectual history obey an iron logic of proto-Nazi development is clearest and most pernicious in Anglo-American discussions of the idea of the Volk, which have normally reflected the belief in a peculiar mystical tradition of thinking about racial or national matters in Germany linking Nazism to early nineteenth-century romanticism.<sup>68</sup>

In this historiography, the crisis of the 1890s is located midway on a continuum from romanticism to Nazism. What it fails to account for is the alternative modernities and divergent visions that this period engendered, not all of which were the precursors to Nazism. Zionism was one such vision, which exemplified the hopes and dangers of the dialectic of modernity.

Both Nordau and Langbehn imagined the urgency of spiritual, national, and physical regeneration as the cure for the degeneration of the present. Whereas for Langbehn science is to blame for the degeneracy of the German



spirit and art represents its singular redemption, for Nordau, just the opposite is true: modern art is the expression of society's degeneration and scientific rationality represents the only chance for its redemption. The decisive battle, as we have already seen with Langbehn, pits art against science, and, in the case of Nordau, trumpets the vanquishing of degenerate art (and thereby the degenerates themselves) by the evolutionary logic of science. Although their arguments for overcoming the degeneracy of the 1890s were divergent in terms of the specific solutions proffered as well as in the politics of their subsequent reception histories, both Langbehn and Nordau sought to effect national regeneration through an apocalyptic, decisionist logic. The issue that I want to tackle in the next section is how this logic informed the conceptualization of Nordau's "true moderns" in *Degeneration* and, a few years later, the figure of the muscle Jew.

### Muscle Jews as "true moderns"

In the first part of *Degeneration*, Nordau begins by mocking the uncritically pervasive use of the term "*fin de siècle*" to describe virtually anything, from *fin de siècle* moods of sickness and feelings of exhaustion to *fin de siècle* kings, bishops, officials, weddings, and girls. To illustrate the wild deployment of the concept, he cites a number of instances from French journals and books where the concept had recently been invoked. To quote three of his examples:

After his execution, the body of the murderer Pranzini underwent an autopsy. The head of the secret police cuts off a large piece of skin from the corpse, has it tanned, and the leather made into cigar-cases and card-cases for him and some friends. *Fin-de-siècle* official. An American gets married in a gas-factory, then boards a hot-air balloon with his bride, and goes on a honeymoon in the clouds. *Fin-de-siècle* wedding. An attaché of the Chinese embassy publishes clever works in French under his own name. He negotiates with banks for a large loan for his government and draws large advances for himself on the unfinished contract. Later, it comes out that his French secretary composed the books and that he had swindled the banks. *Fin-de-siècle* diplomat.

(E, I:8–9)

Although the examples are admittedly silly and barely help to illuminate the concept of *fin de siècle*, they do share a common feature and indicate something important for Nordau, namely "contempt for traditional views of respectability and morality" (E, I:10).<sup>69</sup> Established customs, traditional moral authorities, and conventional ways of doing things have been glibly displaced. Expressed by Nordau with an even finer point, *fin de siècle* indicates the "practical release from conventional discipline [*Zucht*]" (E, I:10).

The idea of “discipline,” arguably the central concept in Nordau’s lexicon, had, at one time, insured the reliability of moral authorities, the stability of values, the containment of lewdness, the steadfastness of ideals in art, and the sublimation of base desires and greed. Historically, through the discipline of their form, artists, poets, and musicians taught us what is good, valuable, beautiful, enviable, and inspirational. But this is no longer the case in the *fin de siècle*, which announces “the end of an order to the world that for thousands of years satisfied logic, fettered depravity, and in every art matured something of beauty” (E, I:11). Forms have become blurred, order forsaken, boundaries upset, logic and values abandoned—all in favor of undisciplined chaos. The catchall term for this breakdown is “degeneration.”

Nordau’s concern is less about properly defining “*fin de siècle*” and more about untangling the contemporary symptoms and etiology of degeneracy and its attendant horror of formlessness. He proclaims at the start of this chapter that, when we speak of *fin de siècle*, we “ought to correctly say *fin-de-race*” (E, I:5) since what is taking place is not simply the end of a century, but rather the degenerative end of a race, something that—for various historical reasons—is occurring in the 1890s. To understand his point, we should dwell briefly on the etymology of “degeneration” or “*Entartung*.” In German, the verb “*entarten*” (“to degenerate”) means “*aus der Art schlagen*,” approximately, “not true to form or kind” (*Art*). It implies a process of withdrawal (*ent-arten*) or movement away from an ideal or, at least, normative type. In English and French, the word “degenerate” (from the Latin “*degenerates*”) also contains the idea of a debased movement away from a norm as well as the idea of a “natural” form, namely a “race” or genus. Thus, to be degenerate, means “to deviate from one’s race or kind.”

To explain his idea that degeneration is a “*fin-de-race*,” he cites the seminal text of the French psychiatrist Bénédict-Augustin Morel, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l’espèce humaine et des causes qui produisent ces variétés maladives* (1857), the first articulation of degeneration as a hereditary, race-based problem:

Degeneration has to be spoken of as a pathological deviation from an original type (*Typus*). This deviation, even if, at the outset, it was ever so slight, contains transmissible elements of such a nature that anyone bearing them becomes more and more incapable of fulfilling his tasks to humanity; moreover, intellectual progress [*geistiger Fortschritt*], which is already inhibited in his own person, finds itself endangered in his descendents as well.

(E, I:32)

Building on Morel’s work, Nordau argues that degenerate organisms—as pathological deviations from the norm—produce offspring, which, to an even greater degree, suffer from debilitation and malformations.<sup>70</sup> As examples of

physical degeneracy, he names various deformities such as stunted growth, asymmetry of the face and cranium, protruding ears, squinted eyes, pointed or flat palates, syn- and polydactylia, all of which are meant to establish the power and value of the norm over the deviation.<sup>71</sup> These offspring, living among “us” today at the *fin de siècle*, represent the “end of race”: although Nordau is optimistic that they will “fortunately soon become sterile” (E, I:32) and die out, the societal risk is that degenerates will be “imitated,” rather than shunned, as if their deviations somehow represented new social norms. Here, we can detect the first expression of Nordau’s Social Darwinism, something that runs throughout the entire book and will, later, become an essential part of his conceptualization of the tasks of Zionism. It is no coincidence that “*Zucht*” (Nordau’s term for “discipline”) and “*Zuchtwahl*” (natural selection) are terms from evolutionary biology that Nordau uses to assess social phenomena.<sup>72</sup>

The task of his cultural exposé is not simply to confirm that the originators of the *fin de siècle* movements in literature and art—from Ibsen and Zola to Symbolism, Decadence, and so-called Mysticism—are physical degenerates, but rather to argue that these dangerous works of art and literature themselves provide sufficient grounds for tracing the etiology of degeneracy in Europe and expecting it to be completely overcome through the evolutionary logic of Social Darwinism. For the next 400 pages, Nordau cites case after case of cultural degeneracy, placing virtually every artist or movement of the contemporary, European avant-garde under one of his three rubrics of degeneration: mysticism, egomania, or pseudo-realism or naive naturalism. In the final analysis, only the calm rationality of science, with its normalizing rules and clarity of perception, can save humanity from the corrupt morality and undisciplined forms of the degenerate artists.

Nordau’s book is essentially a moralizing treatise on the loss of form and its dire social consequences. By building on Morel’s definition of degeneration and cataloguing the undisciplined excesses of his day, Nordau warns his readership about the loss of original “types” through the blurring of boundaries and the haphazard mixing of unconventional or unnatural traits. He writes, “Forms lose their outlines and are dissolved into floating fog” (E, I:12), unprecedented stimulations and new combinations of qualities dazzle the senses, and an anything-goes morality displaces traditional social customs and laws. In the same way that previously reliable laws and stable forms for organizing social reality have disintegrated into nothingness, Nordau argues that the physiology of the body of the degenerate confirms this loss of form: the degenerate man cannot correctly order his perceptions of the world and, instead, “allows his brain-centers to produce semi-lucid, nebulously blurred images and scarcely formed, embryonic thoughts” (E, I:40). Through their delusional perceptions of the world, skewed by emotional outbursts, physical deformities, and mystical reverie, the degenerate can only render quivering, inaccurate impressions of the world.

Degenerates are nothing more than “intellectual eunuchs” [*Geisteseunuchen*] (E, I:58) who, through their weakened minds and feeble perceptions, produce works of art and literature that ultimately have the effect of destroying the social and moral fabric of civil society.

This is why so-called degenerate artists are to be loathed. They bring new, blurred, and hybrid forms into being and thereby disrupt the authority of traditional, binary distinctions for ordering the world. The “trembling eye” of the degenerate artist not only produces painterly “derangements” under spuriously intellectual rubrics such as impressionism, pointillism, and colorism (E, I:51), but also produces a chaotic world devoid of moral and social discipline.<sup>73</sup> Such works, he argues, can only become “intelligible” if we consider them within the context of the “visual disturbances of degenerates and hysterics studied by researchers at the Charcot school” (E, I:51). He uses the broad category of “mysticism” to group together these disparate painters with other artists and authors who he believes—due to their hysteria or degeneracy—have abandoned, willingly or not, the clarity and order of the scientifically disclosed world: “The mystic dissolves the firm outlines of phenomena; he spreads a veil over them and conceals them in blue vapor. He muddies what is clear and makes what is transparent opaque” (E, I:109–110).

But the ultimate danger, Nordau asserts, comes from the fact that degenerates throw the binary organization of the world into disarray: good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly become nothing more than empty, “arbitrary distinctions” (E, I:35). This anxiety becomes particularly evident in his discussion of the literary decadence of the novels of Joséphin Péladan and J.-K. Huysmans. In commenting on Péladan’s ideas and the content of his novels, Nordau explains that for Péladan:

the highest intellectual aim of humankind is to hear and thoroughly appreciate Wagnerian music; the highest development of morality consists in renouncing one’s gender attributes and in transforming oneself into a hermaphrodite (Androgyne and Gynander); he can give up and retake his body at will, soar into space as an “astral being,” and subject to his will the entire supernatural power of the world of spirits, both the good and the bad.

(E, I:393)

Here, Nordau condemns Péladan alongside Wagner for incorrectly understanding the concept of evolution: the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) is a mystical amalgamation of everything, rather than a scientific process of critical differentiation. The figure of the hermaphrodite or androgyne represents the breakdown of the binary male/female. The spiritual mysticism of “soaring” into space is a testament to the rejection of science and the world of the Enlightenment. In effect, Péladan represents the wild destruction of the disciplined grounds for ordering and preserving civil society.

But he saves the brunt of his vitriol for Huysmans, certainly the best-known decadent artist of the *fin de siècle*. In his novel *À rebours*, we not only find a radical reevaluation of traditional binary categories for ordering experience—male/female, right/wrong, progress/decline, health/sickness, moral/immoral, true/false, and so forth—but we also encounter the representation of a world in which binary categories themselves are no longer the reliable structuring matrices for organizing experience. The novel portrays the perceptions and experience of a physically anemic and nervous man by the name of Duke Jean des Esseintes, who can no longer distinguish between dreams and reality, right and wrong, near and far, present and past; he is, instead, nothing more than the embodiment of an endless array of monstrous sensory experiences. Nordau sums up his description of Esseintes with these overblown words:

We now have him, the “super-man” of whom Baudelaire and his disciples dream, and whom they wish to resemble: physically, sick and feeble; morally, an arrant scoundrel; intellectually, an unspeakable idiot who passes his days choosing the colors of things to artistically drape his room, observing the movements of mechanical fish, sniffing perfumes and sipping liqueurs. . . . His complete inability to adapt reveals itself in the fact that every contact with the world and other human beings brings pain. Naturally, he heaves the blame of his discomfort on his fellow men and rails at them to no end. He classes them altogether as scoundrels and blockheads and hurls horrible, anarchic maledictions at them. . . . A parasite of the lowest level of education [*Rückbildungsstufe*], a sort of human sacculus [a parasite, Nordau notes, that is virtually indistinguishable from the “diseased excrescence of its host’s intestines”], who would be condemned, if he were poor, to die miserably of hunger, provided society did not, through a misguided charity, afford him the necessities of life in an idiot asylum.

(E, II:110–120)

The degenerate hero of Huysmans’s novel thus stands radically opposed to Nordau’s ideal of the “sane” and “healthy” man who sees clear forms, articulates sensible ideas, acts with purpose, restrains his emotions, adapts easily to new situations, and is physically disciplined and strong. In stark contrast to Huysmans’s figure of degeneracy, Nordau posits the ideally formed body and the disciplined behavior of the “true moderns,” which, as we will see shortly, are exemplarily embodied by the Zionist muscle Jew.

As Barbara Spackman has argued in her compelling article on Huysmans, “Interversions,” decadence and degeneration do not merely signal the reevaluation of inherited binaries but rather the disruption of the very system or logic of absolute difference that authorizes the tools for organizing the world into binaries.<sup>74</sup> In her words, “permutations of ‘male’ and ‘female’

produce figures of androgynes, hermaphrodites, eunuchs, and unequivocal creatures *sans sexe*" (36), resulting in a system of monstrosity, contamination, and "diversity" rather than a logic of binary difference. Her formulation helps clarify the structuring decisionism of Nordau's argument. Nordau considers degeneration to be a crisis of formlessness: degeneracy blurs outlines, contaminates structures of difference, and disintegrates the binary logic of the world. His book is an assault on degeneracy, executed through the binary logic of scientific rationality. He insists that "the concepts healthy and sick, moral and immoral, social or anti-social are as valid for art as for every other human activity, and there is not a scintilla of reason for regarding a work of art in any other light than that in which we view every other manifestation of individuality" (E, II:148). In other words, the argument is structured—as a critical decisionism—by the very logic that decadence and degeneracy upset.

As a good social Darwinist, Nordau ends the book on a note of "therapeutic" optimism, directed at the "highest educated classes" (E, II:545), who are not yet entirely seduced by the "ravings" of the degenerate artists:

The people will recover from their present fatigue. The weak, the degenerate will perish; the strong will adapt themselves to the achievements of civilization or will subordinate them to their own organic capacity. The aberrations in art have no future. They will disappear when civilized humanity has triumphed over its condition of exhaustion. The art of the twentieth century will connect itself at every point to that of the past, but it will have a new task to fulfill: to bring a stimulating variety to the uniformity of cultured life, an influence that probably just science, many centuries later, will be in a position to exert over the great majority of humankind.

(E, II:544)

In other words, Nordau predicts that the twentieth century will bring an end to both degeneracy and degenerate art; art will return to its traditional, canonical forms, and science will combat superstition and mysticism through enlightenment and the force of its truth. In the end, only the "true moderns" (E, II:562)—those who are best adapted to the demands of modern society through discipline, rationality, and clarity of vision—will survive.

Whereas for Langbehn the return to the art of Rembrandt marked the safe passage out of the crisis of the 1890s, for Nordau, it is the triumph of science over degenerate art. For both authors, however, the final battle comes down to a do-or-die struggle between art and science, wherein the respective victor will sow the seeds of redemptive regeneration. Both of their apocalyptic fantasies conclude with an invocation of violence—organized and orchestrated according to the binary logic of a final decision—to describe the resolution of the crisis. Langbehn's reinvigorated artist-peasant beats the professor of science to death in a bloody battle for the future of German blood;

Nordau's apocalyptic fantasy ends with the degenerate "vermin" being crushed and beaten to death by the "true moderns."

Mystics, especially ego-maniacs and filthy pseudo-realists, are enemies to society of the worst kind. Society must unconditionally defend itself against them. Whoever believes with me that society is the natural organic form of humanity, in which alone it can exist, prosper, and continue to develop itself to higher destinies; whoever considers civilization to be a good that has value and deserves to be defended, must mercilessly crush the anti-social vermin [*Ungeziefer*] under his thumbs. . . . We cry: "Get out of our civilized society [*Gesittung*]! Rove far from us! . . . There is no place among us for such lusting rapiers and if you dare return to us, we will pitilessly beat you to death with clubs."

(E, II:556–57)

The degenerate artists are no better than vermin and must be expelled or clubbed to death in order for Nordau and the ranks of the true moderns to found a new, regenerated society based on the mechanisms of social evolution. It is here that Nordau's own ideas for violent social exclusion evidence a decidedly uncomfortable resemblance to a whole host of racist ideologies obsessed with ridding society of its so-called "anti-social vermin." In Nordau's formulation, the anti-social vermin are not simply to be separated from the rest of society, as Alfred Damm suggested in his Berlin lectures, but rather they are to be mercilessly crushed to death and beaten with clubs. The violence of this image of social purification cannot be easily exaggerated.

In Nordau's wake, the concept of the "*Ungeziefer*" has consistently indicated the abject of society, the absolutely vile deviation from the norm. Franz Kafka famously thematized this in his short story *Die Verwandlung* (The Metamorphosis), in which Gregor Samsa wakes up to find himself transformed into an "*Ungeziefer*" and is ultimately killed by his family for the sake of preserving bourgeois society.<sup>75</sup> More ominously, the association of Jews with parasites and vermin was a persistent topos of Nazi propaganda, something that was given a direct visual association in the virulently anti-Semitic Nazi film *The Eternal Jew* (1940). Although I am not suggesting that the ideas expressed in Nordau's *Degeneration* led to the purifying ideology of National Socialism, it is worth remembering that Nordau's critique of degeneracy as well as the violence of his Social Darwinism and cultural decisionism did have an afterlife in the fervid adoption of race-science and eugenics in the service of state formation. Indeed, it is one of the ironies of history that Nordau has to be saddled with the responsibility for popularizing the very term "Entartung," a concept that was—in its violently normalizing corporeal dimensions—later elaborated and staged by the Nazis in their infamous exhibition of 1937, "Entartete Kunst" (Degenerate Art), in a way that closely parallels Nordau's 1892 critique.

While one can certainly argue that key elements of National Socialist ideology were first conceptualized around the *fin de siècle*—one might cite Langbehn as an originator of *völkisch* nationalism, or Nordau’s diatribe against “degenerate art” and the eugenics of Social Darwinism—I am not interested in attempting to trace the reception history of Nordau’s ideas past his turn to Zionism in 1895 and his own formulation of the muscle Jew a few years later. In what follows, then, I want to show how Nordau conceived of the muscle Jew according to the same logic as the “normal man,” who, rising to the challenges of modernity, does not degenerate but rather reembodies his race by becoming a “true modern.” To do so, I will turn to how Nordau and Herzl conceptualized the early Zionist project as a politics of the regenerated Jewish body. I will focus on their descriptions of the body at the first Zionist congresses and in several short articles that they published during the first years of Zionism, concluding with a detailed analysis of Nordau’s muscle Jew vis-à-vis the project of *Degeneration*. What we will recognize is that all the traits attributed to the “true modern”—the health and originality of race, clarity of vision and purpose, strength of body, discipline, and adaptability—have been transposed to the muscle Jew. Applying the ideas of Social Darwinism and the decisionist logic of the crisis of the 1890s to his critique of anti-Semitism, Nordau conceives of Zionism as a project of regeneration effected on the body of the Jew.

In the speech that he delivered at the First Zionist Congress in 1897, Nordau described two kinds of Jewish suffering: the first, material suffering, encompassed the great majority of orthodox, Eastern Jews who lived in poverty and were legally disenfranchised, second-rate citizens of their “host” countries; the second, moral suffering, referred to the minority of assimilated, Western Jews, who had, by and large, abandoned Judaism but were still not fully welcome in their respective countries of birth or residence.<sup>76</sup> They suffered even more bitterly, Nordau argued, because they were forced to hide their Jewish heritage and nevertheless were still subject to anti-Semitic aspersions. He concludes the speech with a strangely veiled threat—directed foremost at the Jews attending the Zionist Congress who might act as ambassadors to Jews and Christians in general—that Jews could destructively “degenerate,” like lethal microbes, if the Zionist cause is not supported:

Neither Christians nor Jews can indifferently ignore Jewish suffering. It is a great sin to let a people degenerate [*verkommen zu lassen*] in mental and physical need . . . it is a sin to the work of civilized society [*Gesittung*], and the Jewish people could and would gladly be energetic partners. And it can turn into a great danger for everyone if strong-willed people, whose size extends beyond the average in good and bad, become embittered through undignified treatment and, through embitterment, become enemies to the existing order [*Ordnung*]. Microbiology teaches us that microorganisms that



are harmless as long as they are living in open-air turn into terrible, disease-causing pathogens, if one deprives them of oxygen and, to use the technical language, transforms them into anaerobes. Governments and peoples had better beware of making the Jews into anaerobic beings. They could have a high price to pay, regardless of what they do, to get rid of these Jews who they turned into pests [*Schädling*] by their own guilt.

(SP, I:20)

Unlike the racist, anti-Semitic arguments of the day, there was nothing inherently “degenerate” about Jews, at least not in the sense that Nordau articulated in his cultural exposé of 1892. But he does warn, however, that Jews could degenerate into particularly destructive pests, should their disenfranchisement continue.

What makes this warning so striking (besides the fact that it was uttered as part of an opening speech at the First Zionist Congress) is that Nordau has clumsily imported the conceptual terminology of *Degeneration* into the Zionist cause but with a defiant, Jewish twist: “Civilized society,” with its rules of discipline and order, is still the goal; but now, if Jews are not allowed to participate in its construction as partners, at the very least, through their own efforts at nation building, Nordau admonishes both assimilated Jews and Christians alike that the embittered Jews, through their strong wills, might be transformed into disease-causing pathogens who will undermine its very foundations. Whereas a few years earlier parasites, microbes, and vermin were exclusively identified with the “degenerates” who were to be shunned and crushed by the “true moderns”—as the only rational defenders of civil society—now degeneracy could be reembodied, as it were, by Jews working to subvert the anti-Semitic hegemony. Far from the weak and ineffectually degenerate Jews of the anti-Semitic imagination and equally far from the degenerate artists crushed to death by the true moderns, these microbe-like “pests” would vigorously exact revenge on civil society.

Needless to say, this formulation of the embittered Zionist Jew as destructive anaerobe would not be Nordau’s greatest claim to fame within the Zionist movement. In fact, at the Second and Third Zionist Congresses in 1898 and 1899, he would entirely forgo this revaluation of parasitic degeneracy in favor of a mythically heroic figure of regeneration, namely the muscle Jew. To be fair to Nordau, he—very much unlike contemporary anti-Semitic ideologues such as Houston Stewart Chamberlain or the self-hating Otto Weininger—never considered Jews inherently “degenerate” nor did he endorse the racial determinism and popular conspiracy theories of the anti-Semitic imagination. Whereas Weininger, for example, gladly co-opted Chamberlain’s arguments of Jewish inferiority in his *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Sex and Character), considering the Jew to be “a spreading parasite, straggling all over the earth and finding true root nowhere, . . .

[able] to adapt himself to every circumstance and every race, becoming, like the parasite, a new creature in every different host, although remaining essentially the same,”<sup>77</sup> Nordau only invoked the concepts and arguments that he introduced in *Degeneration* in order to describe the range of Jewish suffering and to advocate for a national solution. As Anita Shapira has pointed out with respect to Nordau and his contemporaneous German Zionist colleagues, his “acceptance of the anti-Semitic diagnosis did not entail concomitant acceptance of the racist deterministic prognosis preached by anti-Semitic ideologues.”<sup>78</sup> Jews would only behave like “parasites” if they were working to undermine the oppressive social and political structures that treated them as such.

Nevertheless, in the founding years of Zionism, Nordau and Herzl sometimes legitimized the anti-Semitic diagnosis of Jewish degeneracy through their increasingly nationalistic rhetoric of moral, physical, social, and even linguistic regeneration. In 1898, for example, shortly after the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Nordau published an essay entitled “Die Aufgaben des Zionismus” (The Tasks of Zionism) in which he argued that Zionism had two fundamental goals: the first is “to conquer” Palestine for the Jewish people and the second is “to prepare” the Jewish people for Palestine.<sup>79</sup> He considers the second to be the absolute prerequisite of the first and urges Jews to begin to think of themselves simultaneously as a single “people” (*Volk*) and autonomous citizens who, with the discipline of a soldier, could contribute to the reformation of the fragmented whole. By depriving Jews of “organic coherence” and “unity,” Nordau argues, “the Galut [exile] made a chaos out of us,” creating a people completely without the knowledge, ability, and experience for establishing the necessary infrastructure (from police headquarters and juridical organizations to administrations for taxation, postage, engineering, and education) to build a civil society (AZ, 323). The first thing that every single Jew had to learn was:

to feel the affairs of the entire Jewish people as one’s own personal concern and to listen to the leaders that they chose with iron-like obedience; in other words, the most engaged possible participation in the affairs of the people and manly discipline [*Mannszucht*].

(AZ, 324)<sup>80</sup>

Through discipline, always a masculine quality for Nordau, Jews could relearn lost physical ideals, moral principles, social behaviors, worthy customs, and a serious work ethic before immigrating to Palestine. In order to “become, once again, a fully entitled citizen [*Bürger*] of his own people” (AZ, 325), the body and behavior patterns of the Jew had to be reformed in accordance with the standards of bourgeois civil society. Although he concedes that it took Moses “forty years to educate his people” (AZ, 327), Nordau is confident that the Zionist program of disciplined regeneration will

take place much faster. Through a rigorous work ethic that entailed the creation of order, unity, and harmony of purpose, Jews could act “like good soldiers” (AZ, 326) charged with vigorously reconstituting their race and methodically establishing a new society in Palestine.

Elaborating on the transformation of the Jew into a soldier of regeneration, Nordau gave a rousing speech to Jewish college students the following year in which he allied his own Jewish heritage with a triumphal strain of Greek history: far from being condemned to historical oblivion like the routed Helots, Zionist Jews—as masculine fighters—would now reembody the heroic, martial tradition of the Spartans.<sup>81</sup> In this deeply personal account of his own path to Zionism, Nordau recounts how, in his childhood, he learned about the defeated Helots and even planned, at one time, to write his own “Helot tragedy” (HS, 376). This never happened, he tells his listeners, and he forgot about the Helots until “the war howls of anti-Semitism” (HS, 376) at the *fin de siècle* thrust them back before his eyes: Jews, he feared, might become nothing more than modern-day Helots. Zionism, he adamantly retorts, is precisely why Jews will never become like the poor Helots; Zionist Jews, he concludes, “are Spartans. . . . For to be a Zionist means to be doubly and triply a fighter” (HS, 378). Through “manly discipline”—the keyword in his lexicon for combating the ills of degeneracy—and military dominance, Nordau fashioned Zionism into an ideology of the Jew–Greek warrior.<sup>82</sup>

But it would be Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, who fully articulated the violently “degenerate” counter-image to the new heroism of the Zionist muscle Jew through his description of the figure of “*Mauschel*,” the hapless “*Ostjude*.”<sup>83</sup> About a month and a half after the First Zionist Congress, Herzl wrote an infamous article in which argued that “*Mauschel*”—speaking Yiddish or speaking German with a Jewish-Yiddish accent—was “anti-Zionist.”<sup>84</sup> Zionism, in this early formulation, is exclusively allied with the Western-European traditions of nationality and culture, whereas Yiddish and Yiddish speakers are denigrated as antithetical to this project:

The Germans are a nation of poets and thinkers because they have produced Goethe, Schiller, and Kant. The French are brave and brilliant because they have brought forth Baynard, Duguesclin, Montaigne, Voltaire, and Rousseau. We are a nation of hagglers and crooks because *Mauschel* practices usury and speculates on the stock exchange. . . . *Mauschel* is the curse of the Jews!<sup>85</sup>

Here, Herzl conflates the speech with the person speaking. Since national languages have great cultural traditions, Zionism was conceived—in Herzl’s German—as the origin of Jewish cultural and national greatness. It sought to transform the Jew speaking *Mauschel* in the Eastern European ghetto and living-off the expanding world system of capital into the culturally refined Jew

speaking German and living in a civil society derived from the ideals of the Enlightenment.

Indeed, Herzl never hid his dislike and distrust of Yiddish. In *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State) (1895), the founding text of modern-day Zionism, for example, he imagines the new nation to be a “federation of tongues,” but not including the “stunted and crumpled jargons of those ghetto languages.”<sup>86</sup> Yiddish, always already a non-national language, would not be given any space—whether literal or figurative—in Herzl’s state, for it was nothing “but the stealthy tongue of prisoners.”<sup>87</sup> Arguably co-opting some of the nationalist and anti-Semitic rhetoric prevalent in contemporary right-wing political ideologies of pan-Germanism, Herzl peremptorily declares that “*Mauschel*” and “the Jew” are not from “the same race [*Rasse*]”<sup>88</sup> and ascribes the pantheon of anti-Semitic stereotypes to *Mauschel*: insolence, arrogance, deceit, and greed. *Mauschel* is nothing but “a distortion of character, something unspeakably low and repugnant [*etwas unsagbar Niedriges und Widerwärtiges*].”<sup>89</sup> Zionism, then, became a task of trying to separate them, a separation enacted in terms of language and on bodies. Herzl conceded that it is “difficult to prove that they are not [of the same race]”<sup>90</sup>; however, alongside Max Nordau, he endeavored to do precisely that. If *Mauschel* could somehow be severed from the Jewish people—if not through racial sophistry and assertion then through linguistic, corporeal, and national regeneration—the Jewish state would be one step closer to realization.

In perhaps the most violent, nationalist image he ever gave to the Zionism, he ends his article on “*Mauschel*” with an admonition that Zionism “could act like [Wilhelm] Tell”:

When Tell got ready to shoot the apple from the head of his son, he had a second arrow in waiting. If the first missed, the second was to serve as revenge. Friends, the second arrow of Zionism is meant for the chest of *Mauschel*.<sup>91</sup>

Schiller’s legendary play, *Wilhelm Tell*, to which Herzl was undoubtedly alluding, is a call for nation formation, motivated by the recurring mantra, “*Wir sind ein Volk, und einig wollen wir handeln*” (We are one people, and as one we will act).<sup>92</sup> In Herzl’s modern incarnation, the potential failure of Zionism will seek revenge by scapegoating the repugnant, Yiddish-speaking, ghetto Jews.

By 1899, Herzl declared—somewhat more compassionately—that Zionism was “a kind of new Jewish care for the sick,” quoting its justification from a poem by Heinrich Heine, “Das neue Israelitische Hospital zu Hamburg,” in which Jews suffer from “that thousand-year old family affliction” of living in the Diaspora.<sup>93</sup> As Herzl says, “We have stepped in as volunteer nurses, and we want to cure patients—the poor, sick Jewish people—by means of a healthful way of life on our own ancestral soil.” He conceives of his work

as a kind of altruistic deed for the sake of the helpless: “People should never forget that the cause which we have championed was once the most hopeless, the most lost, the most despised thing in the world.”<sup>94</sup> Here, once again, Herzl extends the anti-Semitic stereotype of the “degenerate” Jew in order to articulate the “regenerative” project of Zionism. In fact, a few years before becoming a Zionist, Nordau had concluded *Degeneration* with a similar call for healthy, truly modern men to step forward and help those who had not yet entirely degenerated:

It is the sacred duty of all healthy and moral men to take part in the work of protecting and saving those who are not already too deeply diseased. Only if everyone does his part will it be possible to dam up the mental sickness.

(E, II:556)

In quite the same way, Herzl and Nordau now considered Zionism to be a salvational movement predicated on the urgency of regenerating and redeeming both the Jewish body and, by extension, the Jewish people.

Both Nordau and Herzl thus urged Jews to become physically stronger, healthier, and more disciplined in order to achieve a decidedly European concept of nationality. Building on the ideal of the disciplined Jewish soldier, it was Nordau who most famously called forward a new “race” of Jews who, through their special adaptation, are capable of realizing the national goals of Zionism. Exactly unlike Herzl’s description of *Mauschel*, the celebrated new genus—*Art* or “type”—was the “muscle Jew” (*Muskeljude*). Nordau first mentioned the need for “muscular Judaism” at the Second Zionist Congress in 1898. A couple of years later, he fully articulated the concept in two articles published in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, and, in 1902, Herzl even imagined the future Palestine to be populated by strong, German-speaking muscle Jews in his colonial travel narrative, *Altneuland*.<sup>95</sup>

Whereas earlier Jews and non-Jews of the Enlightenment such as Dohm and Grégoire called for cultural “*Bildung*” (education) and social “*Verbesserung*” (improvement) to achieve assimilation within German society, Nordau shifted attention to what he perceived to be “a missing corporeal upbringing” [*eine fehlende, körperliche Erziehung*] (JTZ, 1902, 7:110). He urges Jews—in his case, male Jews—to become strong and muscular by participating in athletic associations and argues that exercise, specifically gymnastics (*das Turnen*), is of the utmost importance for the health of the Jewish race.<sup>96</sup> Due to a range of historical reasons largely connected to anti-Semitism and the challenges of life in the Diaspora, the Jewish body had been “destroyed” (*abgetötet*): in the cramped quarters of the Jewish ghetto, Jews forgot how to move their limbs freely; in dark houses, their eyes blinked nervously; out of fear of persecution, their formerly strident voices turned to mere whispers (JTZ, 1900, 2:10). As a redemptive figure, then, the muscle Jew represents

both a future ideal and the return to a heroic Jewish tradition characterized by the likes of Bar Kochba and the Maccabees. In his rally-cry for “muscular Judaism,” Nordau proudly touts the idea that Zionists are rejoining “our oldest traditions by becoming strong-chested, tautly-jointed, boldly-looking men” (*tiefbrüstige, strammgliedrige, kühnblickende Männer*) (JTZ, 1900, 2:10). Far from the hunched-over body, nervous disposition, and underdeveloped musculature of the degenerate, the muscle Jew exhibits elegant posture, decisive confidence, and, most of all, physical strength (Fig. 2.1).

Nordau’s muscle Jew not only built upon the heroism of Jewish history, but the concept was also suffused by a social ethos of survival of the fittest, in which Jews, overcoming the extenuating circumstances that rendered them weak and adapting to the new challenges of nation building, could now become “true moderns” in order to thrive. As Nordau writes in his call for all Jews to practice gymnastics:

Our muscles are outstandingly capable of development. . . . No one need be satisfied with the muscles they are given. Everyone can have the muscles that he wishes for. Methodical, persistent exercise is all that is necessary. Every Jew who is or believes himself to be weak can attain the musculature of an athlete.

(JTZ, 1902, 7:112)

*Figure 2.1* “From the World of Jewish Gymnastics,” *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (January 1902).

Although a cursory reading may render these ideas more like a kind of self-help guide for achieving the body you've always wanted, the adaptability of the Jew through the cultivation of discipline and physical musculature explains precisely why the Jew is not "degenerate." After all, adaptability, as Nordau argued in *Degeneration*, is both the prerequisite of social evolution and the critical characteristic for becoming a "true modern."

Nordau's 1892 argument is thus quite consistent and continuous with his Zionist call for the re-creation of muscle Jews: through their heroic traditions, Jews embody precisely what degenerates are not. As he distinguishes in *Degeneration* between organisms and races that are degenerate and those that are capable of adapting themselves to historical circumstances:

As long as the vital powers of an individual as well as of a race are not entirely consumed, the organism makes efforts, actively or passively, to adapt itself by seeking to change injurious conditions or by adjusting itself in such a way that conditions that cannot be changed cause as little damage as possible. Degenerates, hysterics, and neurasthenics are not capable of adaptation. Therefore, they are fated to disappear. They will become irretrievably destroyed because they do not know how to come to terms with reality.

(E, II:528)

Jews, on the other hand, just like their muscles, are entirely capable of development and adaptation. Despite the historical challenges presented by anti-Semitism, Jews are not innately degenerate and cannot be classed among hysterics and neurasthenics. In fact, precisely because of their discipline and commitment to the ethical and social principles underlying civil society, they are capable of embodying the social-Darwinistic spirit of the "true moderns."

Although Nordau conceded that he was at first willing to accept the anti-Semitic stereotype of the weak Jew as a national-racial characteristic given the fact that some historical evidence exists that proves that Jews are "small" in stature and that present-day Jews are "on average somewhat smaller than Germans, Russians, Anglo-Saxons, and Scandinavians," he was convinced that Jews were not racially "degenerate" and that Jewish self-improvement was both possible and desirable (JTZ, 1902, 7:111). Their small size and ostensible physical weakness—something that may, upon first sight, appear to be "evidence of degeneration" (*Entartungserscheinung*)—can easily be explained, Nordau says, by the fact that Jews have "necessarily lost their ability for physical fitness, having lived for a thousand years deprived of exercise in the ghetto" (JTZ, 1902, 7:110). To regain it, all that is necessary is disciplined training.<sup>97</sup> At no point does Nordau ever situate Jews—whether assimilated, Western Jewry or so-called "*Mauschel*"-speaking Eastern Jewry—under the rubric of degeneracy that he developed in his 1892 book.

If Jews have “deviated from their race or kind,” to invoke the conceptual history of the term “degeneration,” then it is because the “original type”—namely, the heroic muscle Jew of the likes of Bar Kochba and the Maccabees—has been temporarily “destroyed” through the violent, historical mechanisms of anti-Semitism. Far from replicating the racial grounds for explaining the pervasiveness and expected death of both degenerate art and the degenerate artists themselves, Jews, Nordau maintains, represent a latent race of “Spartan” fighters who will not perish by the challenges that modernity presents. Instead, through their discipline and adaptability—the two, fundamental traits of the “true moderns”—the weak Jews will evolve back into muscle Jews, uniting, in turn, their scattered people and founding a new nation with all the scientific solidity, social order, and racial strength of the greatest European civil societies.

Articulated around a paternal picture of himself (Fig. 2.2), Nordau’s 1902 article, “What does Gymnastics Mean for us Jews?”, specifies precisely why gymnastics is central to the Zionist project: gymnastics not only makes one healthier “by facilitating the physical development of strength as well as beauty,” but it also “teaches manly discipline [*Manneszucht*], reciprocal adaptation to different personalities, and carefully constructed combinations of many efforts leading to a single, common goal” (JTZ, 1902, 7:109). Besides its corporeal benefits, gymnastics also embodies certain ideals—such as intellectual clarity, moral rectitude, and social competence—that correspond with races that are well-adapted, disciplined, and healthy. It is the perfect way of training individual Jews to strengthen their own bodies and work together for the attainment of a shared national goal. Jews thus gain in physical strength and moral character: muscle Jews are known for their “ruthless boldness,” “complete mastery of the muscle groups,” “energetic exclusion of inhibitions of an anxious or doubting nature,” and, finally, “mental nimbleness, clarity, and sharpness” (JTZ, 1902, 7:112). In the muscle Jew, intellectual acuity is matched by physical prowess—and it is this ideal which is to be cultivated through the propagation of the race.<sup>98</sup>

It is, therefore, no coincidence that Nordau’s description of the muscle Jew is diametrically opposed to his descriptions of the degenerate characters in the novels of Péladan or Huysmans. Conceptually, the muscle Jew is essentially the outgrowth of Nordau’s “normal man,” who, rising to the challenges of modernity, transforms himself into a “true modern” and crushes the degenerates to death. This is how Nordau described the prototype of the muscle Jew in 1892:

The normal man, with his clear mind, logical thought, sound judgment, and strong will, sees, where the degenerate only gropes; he plans and acts where the latter only dozes and dreams; he drives him effortlessly from all the places where the life-springs of nature bubble up, and, in possession of all the good things of this earth, he



leaves to the impotent degenerate at most the shelter of the hospital, lunatic asylum, and prison, in contemptuous pity. Let us imagine the driveling Zoroaster of Nietzsche, with his cardboard lions, eagles, and serpents from a toyshop, or the noctambulist Des Esseintes of the Decadents, sniffing and licking his lips, or Ibsen's "solitary powerful" Stockmann, and his Rosmer lusting for suicide—let us imagine these beings in competition with men who rise early, and are not weary before sunset, who have *clear heads, solid stomachs, and hard muscles*: the comparison will provoke laughter.

(E, II:529, my emphasis)

## Jüdische Turnzeitung.

No. 7.

Juli 1902.

III. Jahrg.

### Was bedeutet das Turnen für uns Juden?

Von Dr. Max Nordau, Paris.

Dass das Turnen die Gesundheit stärkt, die körperliche Entwicklung zur Kraft wie zur Schönheit fördert, das Selbstgefühl steigert, das ist bereits so oft wiederholt worden, dass es wie ein Gemeinplatz klingt. Es ist auch hinreichend betont worden, dass

das Turnen Manneszucht, gegenseitige Anpassung verschiedener Individualitäten, sorgfältig gefügtes Zusammenwirken vieler Anstrengungen zu einem einzigen gemeinsamen Ziele lehrt und dadurch einen ganz besonders hervorragenden erziehlischen Wert für uns



*Max Nordau*

dem man meines Erachtens nicht genug verweilt hat, und das ist unsere ungewöhnliche Eignung zu Leibesübungen aller Art.

Mancher Leser wird hier vielleicht verwundert blicken und den Kopf schütteln. Er wird mir möglicherweise missbilligend Neigung zu Paradoxen vorwerfen. Das macht: wir haben nur allzusehr die Gewohnheit, uns selbst unbewusst mit den Augen der

Juden hat, deren grösser Fehler Eigensinn, Steifnackigkeit und Widerwillen gegen die Anerkennung des Stammgenossen und nun gar gegen die Unterordnung unter ihn ist. Es giebt aber bei der Betrachtung des Turnens der Juden einen Gesichtspunkt, bei

Gesichtspunkt, bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

bei

Figure 2.2 "What does Gymnastics Mean for us Jews?" *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (July 1902).

Just like the “normal” Jew, the normal man—able to adapt to the exigencies of modernity and become both potent and muscular—is characterized by clarity of perception, discipline, adaptability, and, most of all, physical strength. He rises early and works diligently all day long; he maintains focus and acts decisively; he works out and has washboard abs to show for it. He is the reembodyment of the strength of his race.

We can now conclude by once again foregrounding Nordau’s description of the muscle Jew against the argument in *Degeneration* and the decisionist logic structuring both this book and Langbehn’s *Rembrandt als Erzieher*. As we have seen, the muscle Jew redeems a past, mythological hero as well as embodies a future ideal; moreover, and perhaps even more importantly, the muscle Jew also represents the resolution of a crisis. The founders of Zionism imagined the movement as a regenerative project that radically broke from the present by, at once, harkening back to old ideals and positing the absoluteness of a forward-facing evolution. We might even say, then, that the muscle Jew represents the critical synthesis of two opposing, decisionist logics. On the one hand, the muscle Jew turns back to a bygone, mythological time as the embodiment of “true Jewishness,” something that is not entirely unlike Langbehn’s call for a return to Rembrandt as the embodiment of “true Germanness.” Langbehn uses Rembrandt as an “educator” in order to help regenerate the scattered German people and cultivate “*Volksthümlichkeit*,” a feeling of belonging and rootedness that is tied to the fertility of the ground. Indeed, Nordau’s call for the Jewish people to cultivate their own sense of *Volksthümlichkeit* is entirely compatible with this logic of national regeneration. And, on the other hand, the muscle Jew—through his discipline, adaptability, and strength—represents an evolutionary break in which the achievements of civilization are elevated, following the logic of Social Darwinism, to a higher, more refined level. As Nordau concludes *Degeneration* with these fateful words, which might just as well describe the tasks of Zionism and the duties of the muscle Jew:

The criteria by which the true moderns can be recognized and distinguished from impostors calling themselves modern are the following: Whoever preaches absence of discipline is an enemy of progress; whoever worships his “I” is an enemy to society. Society’s first premise is love of one’s neighbor and the capacity for sacrifice; progress is the effect of an ever more rigorous subjugation of the beast in man, of an ever tenser self-restraint, of an ever keener sense of duty and responsibility.

(E, II:562)

It might well be that the muscle Jew is modernity’s most emblematic expression of discipline, social progress, and regeneracy.

The origins of the muscle Jew are thus to be found within the field of competing visions emerging from the discursive regime of the 1890s, visions that include the decisionist structure of Langbehn and Nordau's apocalyptic critiques and their injunctions for regenerating both the nation and the body of the individual according to the logic of Social Darwinism. But the ultimate efficacy of their critiques rests not so much upon the temporal direction in which regeneration is realized or upon the specific program for regeneration; instead, it rests upon the necessity of founding violence to effect the decision: Langbehn's Rembrandt beats the professor of science to death in order to cultivate a *völkisch* return to the piety of the peasant; Nordau's true moderns crush the degenerate artists to death like vermin in order to cultivate the progressive ideals of an enlightened, civil society; and, finally, Zionism's soldiers and Nordau's muscle Jews shoot their arrows through the chest of *Mauschel*, the Eastern-European ghetto Jew, in order to cultivate heroic roots within a renewed people. In each case, the founding violence enacts regeneration by cutting off or stamping out its degenerate other. This, after all, is what crisis implies.

## THE AESTHETICS OF REGENERATION

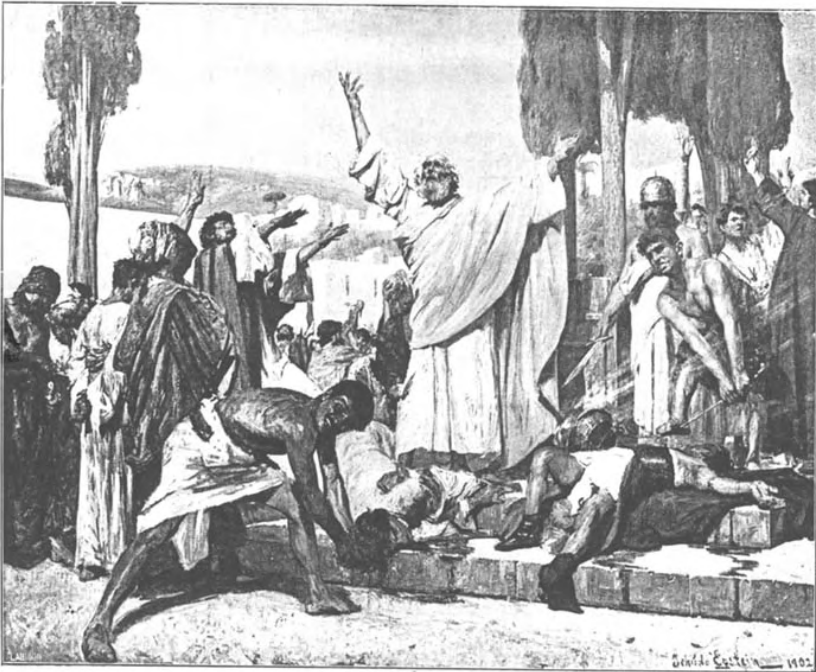
### Martin Buber, E. M. Lilien, and the aesthetic state

The birth date of Jewish national art can be quite precisely specified: December 26, 1901. It is on this date that the Fifth Zionist Congress began in Basel, and Max Nordau announced the opening of an unprecedented Jewish art exhibition in the congress hall. Consisting of 48 works of art by 11 Jewish artists, the exhibition, which officially opened the following day, included etchings, feather-pen drawings, lithographs, tempera and oil paintings, and even two sculptures. The works were created by an international group of Jewish artists, among them Jehuda Epstein (Vienna), Jozef Israels (The Hague), Alfred Lakos (Budapest), E. M. Lilien (Berlin), Oscar Marmorek (Vienna), Alfred Nossig (Berlin), Hermann Struck (Berlin), and Lesser Ury (Berlin).<sup>1</sup> Martin Buber, together with Lilien and Berthold Feiwel, curated the exhibit, with an expressed purpose of highlighting the need for the cultural regeneration of the Jews.<sup>2</sup> By and large, the works of art depicted Jewish themes along one of two trajectories: the authentic, heroic tradition of Jews in antiquity and the contemporary situation of Jews in exile. The former were fairly traditional figurative renditions of Jewish kings such as Saul and David, the heroic resistance of the Maccabees, and the integrity of Jewish prophets such as Jeremiah; for the latter, the artists produced a number of portraits of present-day Jews, often downcast and displaced, embodying a sense of longing for a lost greatness.

To illustrate these trajectories more concretely, I would like to begin this chapter by discussing two of the paintings featured in the exhibit: Jehuda Epstein's *Die Makkabäer* (1902) (Fig. 3.1) and Lesser Ury's *Jerusalem* (1896) (Fig. 3.2). Epstein's 1902 painting was the finished version of the oil painting that he exhibited at the congress in December of 1901. It depicted a moment of Jewish resistance to Hellenic paganism under the rule of King Antiochus IV. When the Jewish priest, Mattathias, was forced to make a sacrifice to a pagan God, he murdered the official and destroyed the pagan altar in order to preserve the monotheistic tradition. He stands in the center of the painting with outstretched arms and one foot on the fallen victim. Fellow Jews proudly display the bloody bodies, while other fighters and onlookers praise their victorious leader, who, in turn, praises God. By contrast, Lesser Ury's

oil painting, *Jerusalem*, depicts a dour group of Jews sitting on or around a bench, seemingly resting while on a journey. The nine figures, male and female, young and old, are heavily cloaked in dark robes and oppressively crunched toward the ground. There is no victory to be celebrated in Ury's painting, only the solemn awareness of pensive longing, mixed with prayer and forlorn transition. At the Congress, Ury showed the centerpiece of *Jerusalem* (1896) and one or two studies he made for this painting.<sup>3</sup>

Stylistically and conceptually, Ury's painting and his studies for it evidence a clear historical debt to Ferdinand Hodler's paintings of the early 1890s, particularly his great painting *Die Nacht* (Night) of 1891 and two pictures he made the following year, *Die Enttäuschten* (The Disappointed Ones) and *Die Lebensmüden* (Those Who are Exhausted of Life). In each of these paintings, there is a group of partly clothed figures resting in a landscape with countenances of anxiety, disappointment, and sheer exhaustion. As the titles make clear, *Enttäuschten* and *Die Lebensmüden* refer to those figures who have become downtrodden and exhausted of life. The sullen figures, reproduced in a serial fashion across the picture plane, stare hopelessly at



Die Makkabäer. (Ölgemälde.)

Figure 3.1 Jehuda Epstein, *Die Makkabäer* (1902).



Jerusalem (1896) Oelgemälde.

Figure 3.2 Lesser Ury, *Jerusalem* (1896).

the ground. Like Ury's painting, they are seated on a bench in a landscape that is ultimately as placeless as their desires. Their despair, isolation, and longing are highlighted by the fact that their gazes never intersect those of the spectator.<sup>4</sup>

Epstein's painting, on the other hand, presents the viewer with an exhilarating moment in a decisive battle, wherein two followers of King Antiochus lay dead or dying in the foreground, while Jews triumphantly celebrate their victory over paganism. As evidenced by the commotion on the right-hand and in the background behind the Jewish spiritual leader in the center of the painting, the battle, however, is not yet over. Of course, spectators at the Fifth Zionist Congress who saw Epstein's rendition of the Maccabees knew how things would turn out: after failed attempts to make the Jews abandon monotheism and introduce idols into their temples, the Seleucids went to war with the Maccabees<sup>5</sup> for some three years, until the Jews eventually regained the Temple in Jerusalem and, nearly two decades later, in 142 BCE, drove the Seleucids entirely from Palestine. The victory marked the start of a renewed Jewish independence in Palestine, the first in more than 500 years, a victory that is celebrated by Hanukkah, a very important holiday, as Schmidt notes, for the Zionists.<sup>6</sup> Whereas Epstein's depiction of the Maccabees commemorates the triumph of monotheism and the return of the Second Temple to the Jews of Jerusalem, Ury's painting of "Jerusalem" depicts a vague, desolate landscape, layered between sky, ocean, and ground.

Nothing in the painting—architectural, geographic, or historic—suggests the city of Jerusalem, save the title.<sup>7</sup> It is a painting of frozen despair and meditative longing, far from the Jewish victory celebrated by Epstein.

Indeed, when these paintings were first exhibited at the start of the twentieth century, the triumphal stories from Jewish antiquity had long been displaced by despair and longing. We can trace this quite clearly in the identificatory gazes of the central figures in the two paintings. In Ury's painting, four of the figures stare at the ground; three gaze toward the left at the oceanic emptiness before them; and two face in opposite directions: the face of the shrouded woman sitting on the bench at the right-hand side is completely obscured by her robe, while the crouched man at the bottom-left stares directly at the viewer, his vacant gaze extending far beyond the finitude of the picture plane. They represent two sides of the same coin of hopelessness. But, more significantly, a comparison of the protagonists—in Epstein's painting, the "muscle Jew" in the foreground and Mattathias, the spiritual leader; in Ury's painting, the haggard man on the left gazing at us and the woman in the center with her head in her hand—reveals, I would contend, the Zionist vision of Jewish history: the glorious past, the desperate present, and the redeemed future. This can be elucidated by looking at the attendant mechanisms of identification built into each of the paintings.

Due to their prominence and sheer size, the viewer first notices and identifies with the central figures in both paintings. In Ury's painting, it is the woman sitting on the bench with her hand holding up her frail head; in Epstein's painting, it is the spiritual leader, draped in a lush, white robe. While the woman's knobby body sinks into despair, Mattathias stands perfectly erect and reaches for the sky, raising both of his hands toward the heavens. He even steps on the dead body of a fallen Hellene to gain extra height. But upon further observation, there is only one figure in each painting that actually looks directly at the viewer. In Ury's painting, it is the crouched man at the bottom with his bent legs and sullen stare. His blank gaze intersects with our own. According to Buber, he represents the physical "degeneracy" and spiritual homelessness of the contemporary, exilic Jew. In Epstein's painting, it is the heroic, shirtless muscle Jew in the foreground of the painting. His strong legs are spread far apart, giving him the extra leverage to drag the bloody body of the fallen pagan down the last stair by the head. He smiles at us with the enthusiasm of a war hero, perhaps hoping that we will be moved to join him. Here, this image of the muscle Jew appears to be deliberately pushed to the edge of an almost hysterical glorying in death, something that, at first glance, seems to be at odds with Nordau's insistence on discipline and clarity. The muscle Jew, however, was not only a regenerative figure of discipline but also the embodiment of a renewed, historically and theologically justified militarism.

In 1903, Buber published a celebratory essay on the work of Lesser Ury in a multi-artist study of Jewish art called *Juedische Kuenstler* [Jewish

Artists].<sup>8</sup> The 170-page book featured short essays on six contemporary Jewish artists, Josef Israels, Lesser Ury, E. M. Lilien, Max Liebermann, Solomon L. Solomon, and Jehuda Epstein, with copious illustrations of their work. In his discussion of Ury's "Jerusalem" painting, Buber made one of the most scathing indictments of the Galut Jew that he ever penned. Building directly on the arguments of Nordau's 1892 cultural critique of degeneration and reciting the repertoire of anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jewish degeneracy, he wrote:

In the foreground on the left-hand side, a figure crouches on the ground, a disheveled, tormented one around whose neck hangs insanity. Here is degeneration, the specific degeneration of the Jews [*die spezifische Entartung der Juden*], which gave rise to a sick, half-clever, half-crazy desire for life and a sick mysticism. Here we see the horrible wounds of millennia and the frenzy that shook Sabbatai [Zevi]. This is the clearest representation of the Galut-type, in his peculiar pathology; he is completely filled with stunted possibilities, a horrible inner field of corpses. In the sketches, the fatalities of an hour lie on the ground alongside the millennia of destruction of our people's spiritual powers. He who looks into the face, inspired by the mercilessness of the great artist, understands that next to Jewish decadence [*jüdische Décadence*], every other decadence looks almost like a harmless game.<sup>9</sup>

Buber essentially adopted the conceptual language of Nordau's *Degeneration* and applied it mercilessly to his characterization of the exiled Jew and the Jewish people in exile. Unlike Nordau, who never directly assigned his topology of degeneration to Jews, Buber freely transferred this language of degeneracy to his assessment of the Galut Jew. Indeed, this description resonates quite closely with contemporary anti-Semitic stereotypes of the Jew as physically, mentally, and morally degenerate. While Nordau stopped short of equating the "sick mysticism" and "decadence" of *fin de siècle* Parisian culture with the Jewish people in exile, Buber has not only done precisely this, but he has also gone a step farther: The Galut Jew exhibits a pathological investment in mysticism that goes back, at the least, to the messianic fervor surrounding Sabbatai Zevi in the seventeenth century and extends right up through the present day with a decadence that is more decadent than any other. The Galut Jew is on par with Huysmans's *des Esseintes*, unable to rationally perceive the world around him, let alone decisively act and overcome the monstrosity of his own degeneracy.<sup>10</sup>

But do the Maccabees in Epstein's painting exhibit the masculine resoluteness, discipline, and battle-readiness of the muscle Jew, to employ Nordau's terminology? To be sure, the jubilant battle scene in Epstein's painting is quite unlike the blank stare, crumbled body, and "decadent" mysticism



of Ury's depiction of the Jew in exile. Even if Epstein's Maccabees—painted several years after Nordau first articulated the idea of muscular Judaism at the Second Zionist Congress—are the exemplars of “strong-chested, tautly-jointed, boldly-looking men,” they seem to have entered a new phase or, perhaps more precisely, actually returned to an old phase: muscularity as militarism. After all, the grin of the central figure verges on an unrestrained hysteria, something that seems to confound Nordau's singular insistence on discipline. In fact, it might be said that both of these paintings represent the dangers inherent in a polarized vision of degeneracy and muscularity. As we will see, it was Lilien who imagined a hybrid visual form for the Zionist corporeal ideal in which decadence and muscularity were rendered compatible with, not antithetical to, one another.

In terms of the aesthetics of regeneration, these paintings, when considered together, represent a progressively cyclical theory of Jewish history, something that certainly would have been recognizable to the congress members. Taking the despair of present-day exile as the starting point, Zionism posited the rebirth of the Jewish people and the Jewish nation according to a logic that was motivated, at once, by the cyclicity of return and the linearity of progress. As Yael Zerubavel argues in her study of the production of collective memory in Israel, Zionism created:

a master commemorative narrative that outlines three periods—Antiquity, Exile, and the modern National Revival. . . . This semiotic system presents a basic conception of linear progression through historical time. But its segmentation into three periods also suggests some notion of historical recurrence that transcends this linearity. This does not imply a fully circular movement through time, but rather a spiral thrust forward to the future with a symbolic incorporation of certain features of the ancient past.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the Zionist conception of regeneration does not simply entail a return to the greatness of Jewish antiquity; rather, it demands a progressive movement forward through the present that is inspired by and builds upon the greatness of the past. The paintings exhibited at the Fifth Zionist Congress emblematically distilled this theory of history through their evocation of a need to move beyond the despair of the present, reviving ancient heroism as a prerequisite for imagining the strength of the future Jewish nation. This is evident when we place the paintings in a “historical dialogue” with one another.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how Jewish national art not only disseminated the Zionist ideology of Jewish history as both heroic return and civilized progress, but was also predicated upon the regeneration of the Jewish body and body politic. Building on my discussion of the art of Epstein and Ury, I will first turn to Buber's articulation of the idea of Jewish national

art in order to specify how his conceptualization of the visual marks a significant break from the history of art within modern Judaism. As we will see, in view of the tradition of the *Bildverbot*—the Second Commandment forbidding the production of images<sup>12</sup>—the production of art for the sake of regenerating the nation is a radically new understanding of the domain of the visual within Jewish history. Far from simply replicating the stale, nineteenth-century arguments about Jewish aniconism (arguments that range from the anti-Semitism of G. W. F. Hegel and Richard Wagner to the moral superiority espoused by Heinrich von Graetz), I will argue that Buber invents a concept of “aesthetic education” that leads to the restoration of the Jewish State. In this respect, the brute fact that he turns to the domain of the “aesthetic” and argues for the creation of “Jewish national art” has to take priority over the analysis of the specific content of the art and its attendant mythologies. Buber, I suggest, looks to Friedrich Schiller’s idea of “aesthetic education” and applies it to cultural Zionism such that the very production of art serves to ground a state and overcome the degeneracy of the present. In the second part of this chapter, I will look more intensively at the ways in which E. M. Lilien, certainly the most famous Zionist artist, created a “national art” by reformulating elements of both decadence and the so-called degeneracy of the Galut Jew into a progressive potential for Jewish history. I will focus on the early illustrations made by Lilien for the books of poetry, *Juda* (1900), *Juedischer Almanach* (1902), and *Lieder des Ghetto* (Songs of the Ghetto) (1902/03) and attempt to articulate the paradoxical nature of his Zionist art of “Jewish Decadence.” To anticipate my argument, Lilien’s decadent style—far from simply opposed to the modern idea of progress—used and revalued the visual vocabulary of decadence to call for and facilitate an aesthetics of Jewish regeneration.

### The Jewish aesthetic state

I will begin with the speech that Buber gave to the members of the Fifth Zionist Congress on December 27, 1901. It is here that he provided the first theoretical and historical rationale of the necessity and urgency of producing Jewish national art. Up until this point in Jewish history, he argued, the Jewish people did not create art because they lacked the vital connection to the spiritual and physical fertility of the nation:

For thousands and thousands of years we were a barren people [*ein unfruchtbares Volk*]. We shared the fate of our land. . . . The very thing by which the essence of a nation expresses itself to the fullest and purest extent, the sacred word of the soul of the people [*Volksseele*]*—artistic creativity—was just about completely lost to us.*<sup>13</sup>

Buber explicitly ties the production of art to the consciousness of nationality, such that the very possibility of a national art is predicated upon the

stability and fertility of the ground. The 48 works of art on display at the congress could not yet be understood as the expression of a national art, he argues; instead, they signified the makings of a consciousness of nationality, for “a national art needs a soil from which to grow and a sky to strive for” (SP, 155). For this reason, the reclamation of the Jews’ geographic and historical homeland was the critical prerequisite of a true national art. In so arguing, Buber drew attention to a vicious circle that characterized Jewish life in exile: Without a nation, the creativity and productivity of the Jews was grossly stunted and, hence, they could not make great works of art. But without artistic production—the way in which a nation expresses its cultural uniqueness and beauty—the Jews could never become a great nation.

Through their perennial struggles within Western civilization for religious freedom, social recognition, and political emancipation, Jews of the Diaspora, Buber argues, came face-to-face with the “full seriousness of our degeneration [*Entartung*]” (SP, 153). But, at the same time, it was precisely the “marriage to Western civilization which made it possible to unfold our ancient desire for national existence and life . . . what we call Zionism” (SP, 154). Not unlike the arguments put forth by Dohm for the “civic improvement of the Jews,” their disenfranchisement was not only to blame for their degeneracy but also represented the possibility of their regeneration. Of course, unlike Dohm, Buber and other early Zionist thinkers considered the return to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish nation to be the ultimate cure for the degeneracy endemic to life in exile. As with Nordau and Herzl, this acceptance of the anti-Semitic diagnosis of Jewish degeneracy did not, however, entail the concomitant acceptance of racial determinism or other race-based explanations of inherent immutability. Instead, Buber took the binary terms of the diagnosis and sought, through the logic of progressive regeneration, to revalue and redeem Jewish existence.

To do so, Buber first articulated the history of Jewish experience within Western civilization in binary terms. On the one side, there was the Galut and everything negative that came with being uprooted and displaced from one’s homeland. Here, he cites the uncertainty of living in the ghetto, the sickness that comes from cramped quarters, the barrenness that stems from stunted possibilities, and the degeneracy that results from the absence of one’s own soil and sky. On the other side, he sees the organicism of a healthy nation, the productivity of culture, the vitality of the ground, and the capaciousness of the landscape. Ultimately, having one’s own “home soil [*heimatliche Erde*]” and sky would foster the growth of “the cultural and artistic buds”; but until then, the immature buds “must be cultivated on foreign soil with a gentle, loving hand” (SP, 155).<sup>14</sup> To effect this movement from the ghetto to the homeland, from sickness to health, from degeneracy to regeneracy, Buber sees Jewish art as a kind “great educator [*ein grosser Erzieher*]” (SP, 156) precisely because it fosters a consciousness of nationality. The cultivation of art—even

on foreign soil—represented the start of the education and regeneration of the Jewish people.

Buber then proceeds to discuss the range of contemporary Jewish contributions to the arts, including music, painting, sculpture, and literature. He places a specific emphasis on the visual arts and mentions the importance of the paintings of Josef Israels, Max Liebermann, Lesser Ury, E. M. Lilien, and Jehuda Epstein, as well as the sculptures of Marc Antokolsky, Henryk Glitzenstein, Alfred Nossig, and Boris Schatz, among others, for cultivating what he, invoking Schiller's seminal concept, calls "the aesthetic education of the people [*Aesthetische Erziehung des Volkes*]" (SP, 167). Quite clearly alluding to Schiller's 1795 letters on aesthetic education, *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man), Buber suggests that artistic production and, more generally, the realm of the aesthetic, can play an important role in the "formation" and even the "redemption" of the Jewish people by serving the Zionist project of state formation. Artistic production—beginning on foreign ground—becomes an essential means for creating a unified sense of nationality. As we will see, Schiller's notion of the aesthetic as both the restoration of a lost unity and the prerequisite of the moral State played a critical—although largely unrecognized—role in the development of Buber's theory of Jewish national art.<sup>15</sup>

What has been well studied is Buber's intellectual development during this period and his involvement with the intellectual avant-garde in Vienna, including the Symbolists, the "Young Vienna" literary scene, and the inheritors of "decadent" philosophy.<sup>16</sup> In terms of the latter, Buber was intensely engaged with the work of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, particularly through the Young Vienna group, and had even attempted to translate Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* into Polish just before entering the University of Vienna.<sup>17</sup> As Buber wrote in an article he published on Nietzsche in December of 1900, Nietzsche represented—to both himself and his generation—the herald of a new age, the embodiment of "the heroic human being who creates his own self and beyond his self."<sup>18</sup> For Buber and the Young Vienna intelligentsia, Nietzsche's philosophy, coupled with the aesthetics of decadence, was the glorification of modernity's most rarified possibility: the dialectic of destruction and rebirth. The modernism of Zionism—that is to say, its investment in this very dialectic—can be explicated cogently within a Nietzschean framework.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, Buber was hardly immune to organicist, proto-nationalist concepts such as soil, blood, and resurrection to explain the Zionist concept of Jewish regeneration.<sup>20</sup> In a programmatic essay entitled "Juedische Renaissance" that appeared in the first edition of *Ost und West: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für modernes Judentum*, Buber argued that Jews, like other nations coming into their own, were at the threshold of rebirth.<sup>21</sup> He posits that the development of a universal sense of beauty is becoming linked with the growing individuality of nationality and the specificity of national production.

Invoking Goethe's concept of "*Weltliteratur*"—a late coinage of Goethe's in which he saw the increase in cultural commerce and exchange resulting in "nations . . . [becoming] stronger, by more quickly benefiting by each other's advantages"<sup>22</sup>—Buber suggests that the emergence of a Jewish renaissance was part of a "deep unity of evolution" (JR, 7) that resurrected the Jewish people's unique form of nationality. Far from subulating nationality through the spread of aesthetic education or the universalizing of beauty, the consciousness of nationality would actually be strengthened according to "the specific characteristics of one's ethnic blood [*die spezifischen Eigenschaften eines Blustammes*]" (JR, 7). It was the Zionist movement, he argued, that—for the Jewish people—brought together the aesthetic universals with the specificity of national strength and tribal unity. Here, Buber is not hesitant to invoke the *völkisch* concepts of blood, race, and nation, concepts that Moses Hess had introduced decades earlier to justify the urgent modernity of the Jewish project of regeneration. As Mark Gelber provocatively and rightly indicates:

While it is true that the German words for race and blood, "Rasse" and "Blut," are polysemic signifiers that, given specific contextualizations, may be free of racist or genetic connotations, these terms are employed by Buber and an entire segment of German Cultural Zionist writers precisely in their racialist sense.<sup>23</sup>

In so doing, he draws the conceptual antecedents of regeneration into clearer focus, while underscoring the specificity of the Zionist program: "[t]he Jewish people's participation in nationality has its own particular character: *muscle flexing, looking up, and raising up*. The word resurrection comes to mind" (JR, 7, my emphasis). This corporeal concept of Jewish renaissance, very much in accord with the Zionist theory of history discussed by Zerubavel, is neither a simple return nor a naive progression; rather, it is "a rebirth of the whole human being" (JR, 8), "a new creation from ancient material" (JR, 9), and a national movement composed of "latent energies" (JR, 9) in which Jews "feel themselves to be organic and strive for the harmonious unfolding of their powers" (JR, 10). Zionism thus represented the harnessing of these newly resurrected energies, coupled with a drive toward physical health, racial strength, national unity, and aesthetic productivity: "Through the training [*Erziehung*] of a vivacious seeing and through the collection of creative powers, [the Zionist movement] will reawaken the gift of Jewish painting and sculpting" (JR, 10). In this respect, the creation of Jewish art was part and parcel of cultural Zionism's racialized concept of a vital body and body politic.<sup>24</sup>

Emphasizing the affinity of Buber's Zionist writings with certain *völkisch* conceptions of nationality, Margaret Olin recently summed up the conceptual tensions in his idea of "Jewish renaissance" in the following way:

His conception of culture . . . was nourished, like his philosophical interests, directly by the philosophy of Nietzsche and in turn resembled the *völkisch* ideas of German nationalists, which contrasted a nationally based “culture,” expressing the soul of a nation, to an internationalist and strictly Unitarian “civilization.” Jewish art played a part in this “renaissance” because of the symbiotic relationship between nationalism and art. Art needs a nation from which to grow; Zionism needs art to express Jewish nationality.<sup>25</sup>

Olin draws our attention back to the culturally heterogeneous, if not politically unsavory, conditions of possibility for the emergence of the Zionist concept of Jewish regeneration, a territory that was first mapped out explicitly by George Mosse.<sup>26</sup> In order to understand the origins of the Zionist concept of regeneration, this affiliation with *völkisch* conceptions of nationalism needs to be clearly recognized: among other things, it was a strategy of self-legitimacy that places the Zionist imaginary squarely within the cultural context of modernist conceptions of the racial and aesthetic state.

In order to understand the emergence of Buber’s specifically racial aesthetic state, we need to turn our attention to how he thought the cultural “barrenness” and spiritual “degeneracy” of the Jews would be overcome in favor of the creative productivity and regeneracy of national art. It is here that Buber’s ideas engage with the modern debates over the supposedly perennial problem of Jewish aniconism, the idea that Jews do not engage with the domain of the visual. As Kalman Bland has argued in his highly suggestive book, *The Artless Jew*, Jewish aniconism, something that Buber directly addressed, is actually a modern invention and probably began with Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics*, in which the latter rebuked Judaism for its refusal to represent God.<sup>27</sup> In fact, prior to the sixteenth century, Bland points out, no Jew or Gentile ever remarked that Judaism was comprehensively aniconic, that all visual images were prohibited, or that Jews had a constitutional deficiency vis-à-vis aesthetics and the domain of the visual.<sup>28</sup> Hegel, however, consciously transforming Kant’s awe of the Second Commandment in his third critique from a “sublime” injunction<sup>29</sup> into a spiritual deficit, posited that the Christian God, unlike the Jewish God, “is set forth in his truth, and therefore as thoroughly concrete in himself, as person, as subject, and more closely defined as spirit.”<sup>30</sup> After Hegel, Jewish aniconism remained a touchstone for determining both Jewish racial degeneracy—exemplified, for example, by Richard Wagner’s anti-Semitic tirades over the so-called lack of creativity inherent to Jews—as well as (decidedly more rarely) Jewish racial supremacy—exemplified, for example, by the Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz, who saw Jews as “morally superior” to all other races precisely because they did not produce visual works of art.<sup>31</sup>

Wagner’s anti-Semitism has been analyzed judiciously in recent years, most notably by Paul Lawrence Rose and Marc Weiner, and I will not

reproduce their arguments here.<sup>32</sup> It is, however, worth pausing on Wagner's "Judaism in Music," an essay that he first published in 1850 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, because it catalyzed the racial imagination perhaps more than any other nineteenth-century treatise on the so-called artless Jew.<sup>33</sup> In this essay, Wagner attempts to articulate the difference between "Jewishness" and "Germanness" with respect to the fateful question of culture and creativity. His argument is as simple as it is malicious: Jews are guilty of reducing culture to the valuelessness of commerce and money; through their unbridled egoism, they negate the spiritual depth and greatness of German culture (something that extends back to the Greeks) by turning Christian values and artistic beauty into units of monetary exchange. In his infamous words:

The Jew turns [everything] into money. . . . What the heroes of the arts, with untold strain consuming all of life, have wrested from the demonic enemy of art of two millennia of misery, is converted by the Jew into artistic objects of exchange [*Kunstwarenwechsel*] . . . It is not necessary to substantiate the Jewification [*Verjudung*] of modern art; it springs to the eye . . . But if emancipation from the yoke of Judaism is seen to be the greatest of necessities, it will be most important to check our forces for this liberation. We will not, however, gain these forces by an abstract definition of the phenomenon itself, but only from precisely knowing the nature of the inhering, unchanging sense of ourselves which expresses itself as an instinctive repugnance to the essence of the Jews.<sup>34</sup>

He continues by citing the fundamental lack of artistic creativity among the Jews as evidence that they are incapable of contributing to cultural development:

The Jew's sensory perceptual talent [*die sinnliche Anschauungsgabe*] has never been sufficient to give rise to plastic artists [*bildende Künstler*]: From time immemorial, their eyes have been busy with far more practical things than beauty and the spiritual content of the formal world of appearances. We know nothing of a Jewish architect or sculptor in our times.<sup>35</sup>

In a word, Jews are constitutionally incapable of producing art and, instead, through their engagement with the world of commerce and exchange, "Jewify" the German world of art.<sup>36</sup>

Wagner concludes his vitriol with a "solution" to the so-called Jewish question that requires the Jew's redemption from being a Jew. He cites the case of Ludwig Börne, who he believes found "redemption" from his accursed Judaism through baptism, and calls for Jews to follow his lead and "quit being

Jews.”<sup>37</sup> Addressing a presumably Jewish readership in the final lines of his essay, Wagner says:

Without looking back, take part in this regenerative work of redemption [*Erlösung*] through your own self-annihilation [*Selbstvernichtung*]. In this way, we will be one and undivided. But beware, only one thing can be the redemption from your burdensome curse: The redemption of Ahasverus—destruction! [*Untergang*].<sup>38</sup>

In these famously violent lines, Wagner transformed the longstanding Christian myth of the “wandering” or “eternal” Jew, Ahasverus, whose salvation would only come on Judgment Day upon confessing his love for Jesus, into a present call for Jewish redemption by self-sacrifice. It is only through the death of the Jew by his own hand—something that cannot be understood as simply metaphorical—that the Germans and the Jews can become “one and undivided.”

In articulating his own account of Jewish aniconism in the introductory essay to the collection *Juedische Kuenstler* of 1903, Buber begins by citing Wagner and inquiring into the historical conditions explaining the absence of Jewish art. Buber writes: “It was still possible for Richard Wagner to deny Jews the sensory perceptual talent [*sinnliche Anschauungsgabe*] for producing plastic artists. . . . [But w]hen we today point to the dearth of Jewish artists, we are obliged to inquire into the causes of that unproductivity.”<sup>39</sup> Like Wagner, Buber recognizes the lack of Jewish art and even suggests that it may have something to do with “the racial characteristics” [*Rasseneigenschaften*] of the people (JK, 1). However, very much unlike Wagner, Buber insists that such characteristics:

are not something final and unchangeable but merely the product of the soil and its climactic conditions, of the economic and social structure of the community, of the life forms and of the historical fate created at the time of the formation and determination of the race, developed over thousands of years, strengthened through heritage, and, finally, matured into an almost unchangeable power.

(JK, 1)

In other words, the Jews’ creative efforts have been stifled for thousands of years due to the historical, socio-economic, religious, and demographic conditions of the Diaspora, but there is nothing inherent to the Jewish people—either religious or racial—that explains their alleged aversion to all things visual.

Not only has the Galut and the misery of life in the ghetto physically enfeebled the Jews and squelched artistic productivity, but the rigidity of Jewish Law itself, Buber insists, has also contributed to the degeneration



of the Jews. The reification of religious traditions brought with it the shunning of the human body and the refusal to appreciate beauty:

To look is sinful. Art is sinful. And the law of this concept reaches a power as no law possessed it in any people, at any time. Education [*Erziehung*] of the generations happens exclusively as a tool of the Law. All creative effort is stifled from the start.

(JK, 4–5)

Only recently, Buber maintains, has this outlook changed with the rejuvenation of Hasidism and the birth of Zionism.<sup>40</sup> The liberation of the modern Jew—physically, spiritually, economically, and politically—has resulted in the production of works of visual art that now bear “national characteristics” [*Volkseigenschaften*] (JK, 6). The six artists profiled in the collection *Juedische Kuenstler* and the eleven artists who exhibited their work at the First Zionist art exhibit in 1901 thus represent the makings of a national-racial consciousness effected by means of the visual.

Buber and other early Zionist ideologues of regeneration thus rooted their ideas in Enlightenment notions of progress and improvement: Jews could change, develop, and evolve. As we have already seen with Nordau, the ghetto Jews could become “true moderns” or “muscle Jews” through manly discipline and physical training. In the same way that Nordau addressed “a missing corporeal upbringing” (*eine fehlende körperliche Erziehung*), Buber’s early work addressed a missing “aesthetic education” (*aesthetische Erziehung*). Although they both accepted the anti-Semitic diagnosis—whether that of weak Jews or of artless Jews—Nordau and Buber espoused a program of rejuvenation that simultaneously built upon the heroism of the past and projected the progressive regeneration of the Jewish people as a whole. For Nordau and Buber, the definitive solution to Jewish degeneracy was the formation of a state.

This logic played out consistently in the way in which Buber discussed the significance of Jewish artists and the way in which the cultural Zionists, especially in the early years of *Ost und West*, used Jewish art to stimulate an appetite for national rebirth and unity.<sup>41</sup> In his brief discussion of two of the paintings by Jozef Israels that were exhibited at the Fifth Zionist Congress, Buber argues, for example, that the light of redemption lay hidden in the melancholy landscapes and forlorn figures that Israels painted. For example, Israels’s oil painting, *The Son of an Ancient People*, depicts a squalid room in a Jewish ghetto house. A despondent Jew sits on the doorstep, with clothes hanging above him, cleaning supplies on his left-hand side, and the symbols of his Judaic faith, Sabbath candles, placed on a stool alongside the objects of everyday life—an umbrella, pitcher, and plate. *Saul and David*, the other painting Buber discusses, refers, of course, to the first two great kings of Israel.<sup>42</sup> In Israels’s painting, Saul is bathed in darkness, hunched

over and turned away from the landscape, while David plays the harp and casts his gaze upon the expansiveness of the renewed nation. It is the leadership of the young David that redeems the sins of his predecessor. Buber's analysis reads like this:

Millennia speak out of these silent, motionless individuals and a yearning that is trampled by fate. Yes, it is the giant, dark-as-death hand of fate that hovers above them like a heavy, gray cloud that consumes all light. But beyond that cloud, invisible to our eyes, present to the master's most secret dreams, the first light of redemption [*Erlösung*] begins to stir, one that will be victorious.

(SP, 161)

This idea of redemption—the unification of the Jews, the resurrection of their creative talents and physical strength, the rebirth of the Jewish state—thus presents a very different “solution” to the Jewish question than the kind of destructive redemption demanded by the likes of Wagner. Here, once again, we sense echoes of the Nietzschean idea of rebirth and renewal on a higher, revolutionary level.<sup>43</sup>

Not only, then, do these paintings illustrate the ideals of the Zionist project and its theory of redemptive history, the brute fact that they are paintings—that they are works of Jewish art—already disproves the stereotype of Jewish aniconism and combats the Wagnerian strain of racial anti-Semitism. This is perhaps even more evident by another work on display at the Fifth Zionist Congress, a sculptural work by Alfred Nossig that explicitly thematizes and transforms the anti-Semitic stereotype. Rather than depicting the triumphal, ancient history of the Jews or the pensive longing of the Galut Jew, Nossig created a remarkable sculpture, “Der ewige Jude” (The Eternal Jew), that appeared—as a photograph—in the first edition of *Ost und West* in January 1901 (Fig. 3.3) and, later that year, was exhibited at the Fifth Zionist Congress. In this piece, Nossig is calling upon and revaluing Michelangelo's famous sculpture of “Moses,” arguably the most canonical and deeply problematic representation of Jewish self-determination (given the horns growing out of Moses's head). What makes Nossig's sculpture so extraordinary is that he has taken up one of the most persistently anti-Semitic inventions of the modern era—the myth of Ahasverus, the eternally wandering Jew—and transformed it, through a cultural revaluation of Michelangelo's sculpture, into a Zionist ideal. The eternal Jew, condemned to wander the earth until the end of time,<sup>44</sup> is now depicted to be the protector of the Torah, clutching it firmly against his breast with his muscular biceps and large hands, and, hence, is the redeemer of the Jewish lineage. But even more than this, Nossig has, perhaps with some irony, made this anti-Semitic emblem of the wandering, artless Jew itself into a work of art. The eternal Jew is now a Zionist hero in sculptural form.



Figure 3.3 Alfred Nossig, "The Eternal Jew" (undated), from *Ost und West* (January 1901), 5–6.

It was Wagner, after all, who promulgated the historical absence of Jewish sculptors while simultaneously calling for the self-destruction of Ahasverus, the Jew who poisons the culture of Germany by turning art into the monetary logic of commerce and exchange. Nossig's sculptural rendition can thus be understood as the nullification of both the stereotype of the artless Jew and the myth of the eternally wandering Jew. Nossig "Jewifies" the Christian legend by turning the eternal Jew into a redemptive figure who is bringing the Torah back to the Promised Land. And, then, perhaps more importantly, he turns the aniconic tradition of the unproductive, uncreative Jew on its head by the sculptural instantiation of that very myth.

The journal itself, *Ost und West*, in which a photograph of Nossig's sculpture was first published, also reflected this Zionist revaluation of the anti-Jewish stereotype: the picture of Nossig's sculpture was framed, on the one side, by an introductory essay calling for "Jewish solidarity" and advancing a cross-cultural Jewish dialogue. A poem by Ben Israel entitled "The Eternal Jew" followed. And on the other side, Nossig's sculpture preceded Buber's programmatic essay "Jewish Renaissance."<sup>45</sup> Like Nossig's sculpture and Buber's concept of rebirth, Israel's poem reformulated the Christian legend by turning it into a Zionist allegory. Rather than being punished by Jesus, the wandering Jew has actually saved the Torah from the destruction of the Temple, as the poem's refrain goes, "The Torah, save the Torah!" The final stanza reads:

Hosianna! The day of redemption has come:  
 Soon he turns back to the Promised Land.  
 And the head that never found rest,  
 laying on the wall of the Temple,  
 Is covered with tears on holy sand –  
 The Torah, the Torah has been saved!<sup>46</sup>

In effect, the wandering Jew is now a Zionist hero who returns in sculptural form to bravely and defiantly found a regenerated nation.

Prior to Buber and Nossig, the absence of Jewish art and the apparent aniconism of the Judaic tradition were used to justify a wide range of arguments about Jewish uniqueness, ranging from anti-Semitic "proofs" of Jewish inferiority vis-à-vis the artistic achievements of the Greeks to an anti-Hellenism that proclaimed the Jews to be morally superior to all other nations, something that happened to explain the uncanny survival of the Jewish people. Buber, however, was the first thinker to connect the "regeneration" of the visual with that of the Jewish nation. In so doing, he did not simply extend the modern tradition of Jewish aniconism—as something to be detested or celebrated; rather, he reformulated the very tradition itself in terms of an "aesthetic education" that was directed at the regeneration of both the Jewish people and the Jewish nation. As he concluded his 1901 essay, "Jewish Renaissance":

This national movement [Zionism] is the form in which the new culture of beauty announces itself to our people. Before we can follow in the footsteps of other nations, we must first face an internal battle. Many a sickness has to be removed and many a hindrance eliminated before we are ready for a rebirth of the Jewish people.

(JR, 10)

Not unlike the rationale for Nordau's regenerated "muscle Jew," the way to overcoming this "sickness" was an "aesthetic education" and the espousal of Jewish national art. The Jews would then be prepared to return to their homeland.

It is precisely this connection between art and nationality, something particularly manifest in his articulation of the Zionist version of the "aesthetic state," that most commentators who speak about Buber's turn to the visual downplay or entirely miss in subsuming Buber into the modern tradition of purveyors of Jewish aniconism. For this reason, I would like to indicate how Buber's Zionist conception of "aesthetic education" is drawing on quite another tradition within aesthetics, namely Schiller's tripartite theory of history and state formation that he articulated in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795). Schiller's letters represent a fundamental treatise on aesthetics that Buber could not have failed to read in his doctoral program in art history at the University of Vienna.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, this connection to Schiller's concept of "aesthetic education" has gone by surprisingly unremarked.

As Schiller makes clear in the first letters, his belief in the salvational role of art and the concept of the aesthetic owe much to the present-day "course of events," which "threaten to distance the guiding spirit of the age ever more and more from the art of the ideal."<sup>48</sup> In hardly veiled terms Schiller is alluding to the Reign of Terror in France, something that unquestionably gave an urgency to his calls for "freedom" and the creation of the "aesthetic state."<sup>49</sup> The letters, penned between 1793 and 1795, urge for a restoration of social order by way of the domain of the aesthetic. Disillusioned by the brutality of the French Revolution, Schiller argues that enlightened European states cannot simply be transformed by physical willpower and violence, however much this violence appears to be in the service of some future rationality, without also changing the nature of individuals. The ideal state cannot be imposed from above or violently brought into being from below; instead, the "moral state"—Schiller's highest ideal—can only be achieved after humankind itself is fundamentally transformed by means of beauty and art.

Schiller's argument is structured by a tripartite theory of history and state formation, something that turns out to be quite compatible with the Zionist conception of history articulated by Buber and analyzed by Zerubavel. Succinctly put, humankind must move from the domain of the merely physical and sensuous to that of the moral and free by way of the aesthetic. This movement is effected on both the level of the individual and that of the people

as a whole through the processes of “Bildung” and “Erziehung,” two of the fundamental terms of Schiller’s concept of education and state formation.<sup>50</sup> He considers the Greeks to have exhibited a harmony of nature that combined a fullness of form with a fullness of content, “[uniting] all the attractions of art and all the dignity of wisdom without, however, becoming the victim of them” (AE, 352). Unfortunately, this harmony is now lost, and the present bears witness to disorder and fragmentation, as humankind strives in vain to restore this way of being:

State and church, laws and morals were now torn asunder; enjoyment was separated from work, the means from the ends, effort from the reward. Eternally chained to but a single, tiny fragment of the whole, human beings taught themselves [*sich ausbilden*] only to be fragments . . . [and] never developed the harmony of their being.  
(AE, 354)

But through art, Schiller argues, the “aesthetic state” will create the possibility of overcoming the degradation of the present and restore humankind to a harmonious, unified state of beauty and freedom. For Schiller, this is a concept of history and state formation, which is structured by a classically theological, tripartite model of unity, fall, and redemption.

The thrust of Schiller’s letters concerns the redemptive value placed on art and, more generally, the domain of the aesthetic. His argument, much like Buber’s, plays out simultaneously on two levels, that of reforming the individual and that of reforming the people as a whole. In the fourth letter, Schiller employs an important metaphor—that of an artist shaping or giving form to a block of stone—in order to explicate his theory of state formation. He cites three kinds of artist: the first is a “mechanical artist” who does a stone violence in his concern for the parts for the sake of the whole, or, in other words, the individuals over the people; the second kind—the “fine artist”—does the same violence but with the opposite concerns. The third kind of artist—the “pedagogical and political artist”—brings both together: “only because the whole serves the parts, may the parts submit to the whole” (AE, 348). In the same way, Schiller argues, the State is an organization in which the parts must be properly attuned to the whole. For this reason, his argument necessitates the transformation of single individuals—steeped in division and personal gain—into ideal, moral beings. At the same time, an aesthetic state can only be formed when beauty, as he proclaims in the final letter, also “resolves the conflicts of nature . . . in the intricate totality of society” (AE, 429). The pedagogical and political artist resolves these tensions, at once individually and socially.

Indeed, the metaphor of the artist forming the people is a fundamental part of the history of the German concept of “Bildung,” which contains theological and aesthetic resonances of formation and cultivation on both the level of the

individual and the greater society.<sup>51</sup> As Schiller makes clear in the final letter, the goal of “aesthetic education” is the cultivation of a new, ideal humanity in a new, ideal state. In this respect, *Bildung* is not simply tantamount to “education” but rather refers to the active processes of self- and social-formation. The aesthetic state, a kind of utopian society in which humankind is redeemed and restored to its prior unity, “carries out the will of the whole through the nature of the individual,” establishing harmony and wholeness through beauty (AE, 430). It is art alone that can help humankind “recover from its deep degradation” (AE, 359) and, thus, aesthetic education [*aesthetische Erziehung*] is central to this process of redemptive regeneration: “Humanity lost its dignity, but art has rescued and preserved it in significant stone; truth lives on in the midst of deception, and from the copy [*Nachbilde*] the original [*Urbild*] will once again be created” (AE, 363). Here, as throughout the letters, the “Bild” metaphors serve to underscore the primacy placed by Schiller on the creative elements of art for both educating and restoring humankind.

On a note of poetic optimism, he concludes his meditations with a vague conjuring of the ideals of the aesthetic state:

In [the realm of artistic taste], even the mightiest genius must give up his sovereignty and trustingly bend down to the sense of a child. Strength must let itself be bound by the graces, and the haughty lion yield to the bridle of a cupid. . . . Given wings by it, even cringing mercenary art rises from the dust, and at the touch of its wand, the chains of thralldom drop away from the lifeless and the living alike. Everything in the aesthetic state, even the subservient tool, is a free citizen [*ein freier Bürger*] having equal rights with the noblest.

(AE, 431–32)

Schiller’s aesthetic state is thus the utopian resolution of all possible tensions and violent excesses of his day; it is characterized by the highest moral ideals of freedom and equality. Although he was not the first to instrumentalize art in the service of state formation, his letters on aesthetic education represent a critical distillation of the Enlightenment paradigm of aesthetic autonomy. After all, it was the realm of art—in its purity, simplicity, and, ultimately, beauty—which he believed could revolutionize both human nature and the state.<sup>52</sup> Fredric Jameson, for example, considers Schiller’s aesthetic letters as “one of the first meditations on the antinomies of cultural revolutions,” but only after demonstrating that his utopian ideal is basically “a hypothetical systematization” that “aimed at nothing less than the creation of a new, national, middle-class culture . . . the education of the German bourgeoisie to political unity and autonomy” through art.<sup>53</sup> After all, the utopia of the aesthetic state is, for all practical purposes, the universalization of the middle-class values of beauty, dignity, and harmony.

In December 1901, just one week before the Fifth Zionist Congress in which Buber articulated his own call for “aesthetic education,” he published a short essay in the Jewish weekly, *Die Welt*, entitled “Ways to Zionism.”<sup>54</sup> In much the same fashion that Schiller employed the metaphor of sculptural creation to articulate his notion of the ideal form of social Bildung, Buber uses the same metaphor to articulate his understanding of Zionism. He writes:

This approach [of struggling to find one’s self] means to seek our people because we love them and not to recoil from any unpleasantness that we find. To see in our people the material for a statue and not be confused because the material is not marble from Paros or Carrara, but tough, clumsy stone which resists. This approach means to want a life for our people, but not a life that is satisfied with just being life, rather a rich, full, creative, continually productive life. . . . the Zionists, who carry within themselves more than Zionism, . . . are the Jewish people. This people is the material for our sculpture. They do not at all become unpliant because of their Zionism. But they are enveloped in a great white light that resembles that of marble.

(WZ, 107–108)

Here, Buber links the Zionist concept of regeneration with the metaphor of artistic creation: the Jewish people, far from condemned to their degeneracy, are the malleable stone used by a Zionist sculptor. His notion of the aesthetic is unique within modern Judaism precisely because he reformulates the tradition of aniconism by likening the Jewish people to the material for creating a “sculpted image.” After all, Buber does not hesitate in considering one of the tasks of Zionism to be the creation of “statues” from the raw material of the Jewish people.

But in order to create the very best statues—and, hence, realize the Zionist ideal of a state—the Jewish people have to be properly “formed” and “educated.” In much the same way that Schiller sees art as helping humankind “recover from its deep degradation,” Buber sees art as helping the Jewish people to overcome their particular “degeneration.” Before the Zionist state can be realized, aesthetic education is thus critical to the regeneration of both individuals and the people as a whole. As he argued in his speech to the Fifth Zionist Congress, Jewish art is important precisely because it is “a great educator” [*ein grosser Erzieher*]:

[Art] is a teacher of the living perception of nature and of people, a teacher for a living sensitivity of all that is strong and beautiful, of perceiving and feeling what we have lacked for so long and now what will be recovered through the pictures and poetry of our artists. And it is essential to us Zionists that this living perception



and feeling are regained by our people. For only fully developed, complete human beings can be complete Jews who are capable and worthy of creating their own homeland [*Heimat*].

(SP, 156)

Much like Schiller, art helps humankind overcome its disunity and fragmentation by resurrecting the essential values of strength and beauty, and it is this process of restoring harmony that represents the prerequisite of achieving the ideal, “aesthetic State.” In Schiller’s words, “beauty . . . restores harmony in the tense man and energy in the languid man, and in this way, in accordance with its nature, brings back to the condition of limitation an absolute one and makes of man a whole, complete in himself” (AE, 389). And in the final letter, he writes that the cultivation of “the beautiful makes something whole of man . . . and only the communication of the beautiful unites society” (AE, 430). For both Schiller and Buber, then, art restores a lost harmony by helping the fragmented people become complete and vital beings once again. This is the essence of the “aestheticized politics” of regeneration.

The process of aesthetic education—at once the regeneration of individuals and the restoration of the state—rests upon a theory of history that for both Schiller and Buber could be characterized as a kind of “progressive regeneration.” Schiller’s model of aesthetic education, as we have seen, is organized by a tripartite structure of unity, fall, and redemption, a narrative structure that Buber and other Zionists consistently applied to their own articulations of Jewish history. Whereas for Schiller ancient Greece represented the unified world before the fragmentation of the present, Buber and the Jewish artists look to the heroism of the ancient Jews and the foundation of Israel by its early kings. However, the point is not to return to a past greatness; rather it is to take the myths of the past as a foundation for “[building] a new beauty . . . [from a] block of marble that waits for our hand and our chisel” (SP, 154–155). The new society—achieved by way of the aesthetic—is, at once, the rebirth of a lost harmony and the creation of a future state marked by a new cultural and social productivity. In Zerubavel’s apposite analysis, it is “a spiral thrust forward to the future.” For Buber, then, the cultivation of the aesthetic, especially Jewish national art, served not only to educate the Jewish masses and redeem their particular degeneration, but it also served to create the possibility of an ideal state. Drawing explicitly on Schiller’s notion of aesthetic education and thereby reformulating the history of Jewish aniconism, Buber applied Schiller’s argument for the creation of the aesthetic state to his articulation of the Zionist cause. In so doing, he aestheticized the politics of regeneration.

In the second part of this chapter, I want to turn to the early work of one particular artist—E. M. Lilien—in order to examine more carefully how Buber’s concepts of “Jewish national art” and “aesthetic education” played

out in practice. Lilien, as I already noted, was one of the co-curators of the 1901 Zionist art exhibit and was by far the best-represented artist, showing 12 of his feather-pen drawings at the exhibit. Having also designed the official postcard of the Fifth Zionist Congress and illustrated a major book of poetry, Lilien's work was very well known and respected by congress members. His signature style, however, differed markedly from the other Zionist artists that I have already discussed due to his use of the visual techniques of *Jugendstil* and the symbolism of decadence. The question that I now want to address is how Lilien could create works of art using the visual vocabulary and signs of decadence, which, seemingly paradoxically, served the Zionist aesthetics of regeneration and sought to overcome Jewish degeneracy.

### **E. M. Lilien and the art of decadent Judaism**

In his speech delivered at the Fifth Zionist Congress, Buber mentioned the work of six Jewish painters by name: Jozef Israels, Moritz Gottlieb, Max Liebermann, Lesser Ury, Ephraim Moshe Lilien, and Jehuda Epstein. He briefly discusses the qualities of "Jewishness" within their work, variously emphasizing the "mystery," "living power," or "tragedy" of the figures that these artists depicted. He describes Lilien and his artwork with the following words:

He penetrated deeply into the miracle of our people; he has recognized the meaning and value of our old themes and made them into his own. He experienced Zionism within himself and internalized it completely. Precisely because he belongs to the young generation, he is one of us. And, indeed, I expect much more of him than what he has already accomplished. He has drawn wonderful sketches. His technique is rich and mature. Yet his art is more promise than fulfillment, like the striving of our new generation in general. Certainly, his book *Juda* and his Hebrew ex libris have earned him our full admiration, and we put our hope in him, which is more than the greatest praise. He is more than an honored master; he is our friend, our brother.

(SP, 162–163)

Hearing this laudatory, although somewhat vague description of Lilien, listeners at the Zionist congress who were not already familiar with the avant-garde style of his work might have assumed that, technically and historically, Lilien's sketches and feather-pen drawings were no different from the paintings of Epstein, Ury, or Israels that were also on display. Indeed, the relatively traditional oil paintings by Epstein, Ury, and Israels (and we can add Liebermann and Gottlieb, too) essentially depicted Jewish themes such as antique heroism and exilic longing through conventional, figurative renditions

of Jews and Jewish history. Although Buber detected “a Jewish decadence” more decadent than any other in Ury’s portrait of the degeneracy of the Galut Jew, Ury’s paintings themselves can hardly be called “decadent.” Indeed, none of these Jewish painters—except for Lilien—utilized the artistic techniques and iconographic innovations of *fin de siècle* decadence, art nouveau, and symbolism to render the “richness” and “mystery” of Judaism. Strangely, however, Buber completely elides mention of this in his description of Lilien and his “wonderful sketches.” After all, how could decadence and degeneracy be compatible with his Zionist call for Jewish renaissance and aesthetic regeneration?

Before turning to Lilien’s work, we should briefly clarify the terms of our analysis. By “decadence” I am referring to a convergence of certain literary, medical, philosophical, and visual discourses during the last decades of the nineteenth century that reflected upon, embraced, and variously represented notions of decline and sickness. As we have already seen within the literary domain, Huysmans’s *À Rebours* (Against Nature) might serve as an anchor-point for the attempt to invert and revalue the traditionally recognized, “positive” side of structuring oppositions such as health and sickness, true and false, normal and pathological, regeneracy and degeneracy, and so forth. In medicine, one could cite the work of Nordau, Charcot, and Lombroso and their attempt to conceptualize the consequences of pathology for racial integrity; in philosophy, the late work of Nietzsche, particularly his reflections on Wagner, illustrates an attempt to come to terms with degeneracy vis-à-vis the dialectic of life and death. Within the visual arts, art nouveau (and its contemporaneous German incarnation, *Jugendstil*) and symbolism represent the two *fin de siècle* movements that internalized and embraced these discourses of decline, sickness, and cultural pessimism.<sup>55</sup>

Since Buber avoided any mention of Lilien’s “Jewish decadence,” I want to begin my discussion of Lilien by underscoring how different his art looked when compared to the other Zionist artists who also exhibited their work at the fifth Congress. If, for example, we take Lilien’s *Gedenkblatt des fünften Zionisten-Kongresses* (Memorial postcard of the Fifth Zionist Congress) (Fig. 3.4), one can immediately place its stylistic features—the intertwining, arabesque forms of the frame; the organic lines of the thorns and the rising sun; the androgyny of the angel of salvation; the anti-industrial, artisan landscape with a plough; the interplay between sinuous lines and spiritual forces in the redemptive image of Zion—within the lineage of the visual techniques and cultural criticism pioneered by William Morris, Walter Crane, Aubrey Beardsley, Henry van de Velde, and other artists of the *fin de siècle* avant-garde. Although Lilien’s illustrations were stylistically unique in the context in which they were shown at the Fifth Zionist Congress, his art evidences a clear debt to the stylistic innovations of Beardsley and Crane, the latter of whom also conceived of a regenerative political movement—namely, Socialism—as compatible with the visual styles of decadence.



Gedenkblatt des 5. Zionisten-Kongresses.

Figure 3.4 E. M. Lilien, *Gedenkblatt des fünften Zionisten-Kongresses* (1901), from *Ost und West* (January 1902): 17–18.

In Lilien’s illustration, a Galut Jew—hunched-over, aged, and forlorn—is given direction by an androgynous angel who points him in the direction of the rising sun. Enveloping the old Jew with his magnificent wings, the angel, with his erect, muscular posture and youthful beauty, represents the Zionist ideals of corporeal strength, clarity of vision and determined purpose, even while his masculinity is far from certain. Far in the distance, a man with a plough and oxen tills the fallow ground of what is supposed to represent the homeland of Palestine. The Hebrew inscription at the bottom of the postcard reads: “Our eyes will behold your return to Zion in mercy.” Zionism and decadence are—seemingly paradoxically—mutually constitutive.

Thematically speaking, the 12 illustrations that Lilien showed at the Fifth Zionist Congress certainly had much in common with the paintings and sculptures produced by the other Zionist artists. He, too, utilized stories and rituals from the Jewish tradition, such as the prophet Isaiah and the celebration of the Sabbath, side-by-side with representations of the urgent desperation of Jews wanting to return to Palestine. As for the latter, in addition to his *Gedenkblatt*, the vignette *Palaestina* (later used as the masthead for the colonial journal of the same name edited by Alfred Nossig and Davis Trietsch, Fig. 5.1) and his illustration *Heimatlos* (homeless) both convey the Zionist determination to overcome the Diaspora and reestablish the Jewish nation.

But what makes Lilien's art so unique is not its extension of these well-established Zionist themes; rather, it is his particular iconography, what Michael Stanislawski playfully—but not incorrectly—termed Lilien's "Judenstil."<sup>56</sup> By "Judenstil," Stanislawski means:

Lilien's extraordinary mélange of decadence and Jewishness—the admixture of *Jugendstil* and *Judentum* . . . a nationalist Jewish art that would at once decry the sterility and unnaturalness of bourgeois Jewish society, celebrate sexuality and physicality as well as the life of the workingman, and promote the rejuvenation and potential freedom of the Jewish people.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, Stanislawski is not the first to point out the strange convergence of Jewish themes and the visual techniques of decadence, symbolism, and *Jugendstil* in Lilien's art.<sup>58</sup> As early as 1901, in the first article to appear about Lilien in *Ost und West*, M. Hirschfelder articulated precisely this convergence of *Jugendstil* and Jewishness in situating Lilien's work vis-à-vis the historical pressures of the *fin de siècle*:

Sobriety and brutal striving for reality are the necessities of our day. And here, too, this autonomous phenomenon comes forward, even if not entirely a succinct form, as in these nerve-racking [*entnervten*] times. And in the same way that the searching soul fled to religious themes in times past, it turns there today—I would almost say to make melodies. The characteristic trait of modern painting is indeed symbolism . . . And can one wonder why in our disharmonious time a whole range of outstanding artists stroke their harps to sing precisely such tones out of natural reaction? In an audacious pleasure to create, . . . Lilien stands out as one of the most engaging young representatives, particularly as the only one within new Jewish art.<sup>59</sup>

He continues by emphasizing how Lilien emerged from "the night of disadvantaged and poor circumstances" in the Eastern Galicia ghettos of Drohobycz to arrive at Vienna's Academy of Art in 1894.<sup>60</sup> Shortly thereafter he moved to Munich, "the painter's Mecca," and became one of the most prominent *Jugendstil* artists of Jewish heritage, publishing 14 of his illustrations in the movement's key journal, *Jugend*.<sup>61</sup>

Published primarily in 1897 and 1898, Lilien's illustrations in *Jugend* clearly evidence an engagement with the organicism of art nouveau and the prelapsarian, anti-industrial simplicity imagined by its exponents in *fin de siècle* Europe. At the same time, the undecidability of the hybrid forms—"counter to nature"—evidence his engagement with the discourses of decadence. Like his colleagues, Lilien made use of hybrid human-animal forms that brought together the carnality of the human body with a decadent

animal sensuality and the lushness of fertility. This can be clearly seen in many of his illustrations during this period, in which the sensuous eroticism of decadence is characterized by sinuous lines, fleshy forms, and hybrid bodies. As Charles Bernheimer argued, this ‘non-natural’ hybridity is a critical touchstone of the decadent subject,<sup>62</sup> and, as we will see, the stylistic innovations—the organicism of the landscape, the hybridity of the figures, the innocent irrationality of the scene—will form the fundament of Lilien’s Zionist drawings over the next years.

But what is missing in the literature on Lilien—and this is true of all the critics that I have encountered, both Lilien’s contemporaries (such as Buber and Hirschfelder) and present-day critics (such as Gelber, Stanislawski, and Heyd)—is an explanation of how Lilien’s decadent art was compatible with and even furthered the Zionist project of regeneration. Although Stanislawski introduced the useful concept of “Judenstil” to describe Lilien’s art, he actually gives scant attention to the concept of decadence and its relationship to Zionism, focusing his attention instead on Lilien’s anti-bourgeois thrust and the ways in which he, applying Mosse’s critique, drafted late nineteenth-century ideas of masculinity “into the service of national symbols or stereotypes.”<sup>63</sup> Indeed, he is not wrong, but what I want to propose is that Lilien’s art requires a reevaluation of conventional understandings of decadence as simply tantamount to decline, sickness, and senescence precisely because he placed his iconography of decadence in the service of the Zionist concept of progress and Jewish rejuvenation. Lilien seems to be searching for a new type of figuration adequate to the Zionist leap into the future, one that forges a compatibility between the aesthetics of regeneration and the aesthetics of decadence. In so doing, his art takes him away from his orthodox Viennese origins and into the strange realm of a new kind of cosmological physicality.

To show this, I will first examine a significant strand of the conceptual history of decadence, namely its derivation from eschatology and its antithesis to the concept of progress. I argue that Lilien’s art, however, deploys decadent forms within Zionism to support a decidedly modern, non-eschatological understanding of Jewish history, one which is defined preeminently by Enlightenment conceptions of progress. In this respect, conventional definitions of decadence as the strict antithesis of progress, such as those of the art historian Edward Lucie-Smith, are of little use in understanding the historical and political significance of Lilien’s art. According to Lucie-Smith:

Decadence was not a mere renewal of the Byronic obsession with the “great, bad man”, the spoilt hero who is somehow superior to this unflawed counterpart; nor was it simply a perverse revival of the early Romantic fascination with death and suffering. Decadence involved a renunciation of the idea of progress, spiritual as well as material, which had sustained intellectuals ever since the eighteenth century.<sup>64</sup>

In the case of Lilien's Zionist art, decadence, on the contrary, actually fosters this notion of progress.

To see how this thesis necessitates a reconsideration of conventional understandings and histories of decadence, let me briefly provide some background of the history of the concept. In his seminal book, *Five Faces of Modernity*, Matei Calinescu shows how decadence was originally connected to an eschatological notion of temporality as the last epoch before the end of the world.<sup>65</sup> Far from being a late nineteenth-century invention, decadence, he argues, is an antique concept, well-established within the Judeo-Christian tradition, signifying decline and decay. In the eschatological world-view, the future was already determined by the past, such that experience and expectation were bound to one another in a cyclical fashion, with a predetermined element of decay. That is to say, what would happen in the future—namely, the end of the world and Judgment Day—was already fixed, and human beings, as temporal animals, had simply to wait out their own misery and the decline of the world itself: “The approach of the Day of Doom is announced by the unmistakable sign of profound decay—untold corruption—and, according to the apocalyptic prophecy, by the satanic power of the Antichrist” (FF, 152–53). The greater the decadence and misery of the world, the closer the day of reckoning.

In an important essay on the conceptual history of the terms “progress” and “decline,” Reinhart Koselleck, largely in accord with Calinescu's account, demonstrates that “progress” is a modern, eighteenth-century invention, while its antonym—decline, decadence, and/or decay—goes back to Antiquity and the Judeo-Christian idea of the eschaton:

According to the Christian teaching of the interim time between creation and the end of the world, people found themselves, since the coming of Christ, in principle within the last time period, within the last *aetas*, namely the *senectus*, within which nothing else fundamentally new could occur.<sup>66</sup>

Although one sometimes spoke of progress or, more often, of perfection throughout the Middle Ages, secular progress or change did not in anyway countermand the overarching, eschatological world-view, namely that the world itself was rushing toward its end. In Koselleck's words: “The more misery there is in the world, the nearer the salvation of the elect. However, the future is not the dimension of progress but rather that of the end of the world.”<sup>67</sup> In other words, decadence is the pre-modern world's most ineluctable feature.

Up until the eighteenth century, then, progress and decline were, in Koselleck's terms, correlational concepts, in which all coefficients of change were determined by the view that this world was rapidly decaying. Both progress and decline made use of metaphors derived from biology and natural life cycles: on the one hand, decadence was associated with twilight,

senescence, putrefaction, sickness, and exhaustion, while, on the other hand, progress was associated with rebirth, dawn, germination, health, and vitality. The modern concept of progress, however, overcame and denaturalized the strictly biological, correlational relationship between renewal and imminent demise. Exemplified, among other places, in the ideas of Condorcet, Wieland, and Kant, the modern notion holds that “progress is general and constant while every regression, decline, or decay occurs only partially and temporarily.”<sup>68</sup> As Koselleck cogently argues in another essay, “The Eighteenth Century as the Beginning of Modernity,” our contemporary understanding of progress—a collective singular built upon the openness of the future—is intimately connected to a non-eschatological experience of time.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, the epochal category of “*eine neue Zeit*” (literally, “a new time”) or “modernity” was not only conceived in the century of Enlightenment, but it represented the first time that the “horizon of expectation” (the future) became detached from the “space of experience” (the past).<sup>70</sup> In modernity, the eschatological world-view was displaced by the openness of the future such that progress is not simply balanced by decline but could very well surpass the latter through revolution or acceleration, two of the fundamental characteristics of “modern time.”<sup>71</sup> “What was new was that the expectations that reached out for the future became detached from all that previous experience had to offer . . . The future could be different from the past, and better, to boot.”<sup>72</sup>

According to Calinescu and Koselleck, then, the modern concept of progress, at least since the eighteenth century, displaced the eschatological world-view, which had held that decadence was the inevitable way of the world. The decadence of the Roman Empire may have been preordained, at least within this world-view; however, Zionism was a politic that was fundamentally about self-assertion, evolution, and the belief in progressive change. For this reason, we might say that the very conditions of possibility for the Zionist view of regenerative history may be found in the eighteenth century: in the same way that science, medicine, technology, governments, and societies were now imagined to progress, Jews, too, could change for the better. Once again, we recognize the ideas of Christian Wilhelm Dohm who applied the Enlightenment ideology of progress to the possibility of Jewish “improvement,” something that was fully embraced by Zionist thinkers at the end of the nineteenth century. For both Dohm and the Zionists, there is nothing inherently “decadent” or “degenerate” about Jews; their “degeneration” and “barrenness,” as Buber argued, is the product of historical and socio-economic circumstances, all of which could be changed by the modern logic of progress. In other words, the Zionist conception of history is predicated on the possibility of an unknown and open future in which evolutionary change could occur.

As I argued earlier with respect to Nordau and Buber, the Zionist conception of Jewish history posited a progressive rebirth of the Jewish nation through, among other things, “physical” and “aesthetic” education. This



conception of historical change is not a cyclical return, nor is it simply a linear progression forward; rather, it is, to use Zerubavel's words again, "a spiral thrust into the future," building upon the greatness of the past and reclaiming—in the present—the heroic tradition of Judaism for the sake of the future state. For Buber, as well as his cultural Zionist colleagues, art was the critical means for moving from the chaos of the Galut to the redemption of the state. Although the cultural Zionists (represented at the fifth Congress by "Democratic faction" members Buber, Lilien, Feiwel, and others) never fully convinced the "political Zionists" (those members, such as Nordau, who were unequivocally behind Herzl) about the necessity of art for state formation, both groups conceived of the historical tasks of Zionism to be the progressive regeneration of the Jewish people. Despite the break between the two groups that historians of early Zionism have often emphasized, the cultural Zionists—in their prioritizing of the question of culture and cultural productivity—and the political Zionists—in their prioritizing of the practical issues of financing and land acquisition—shared an unequivocal and overlapping investment in the modern concept of progress.<sup>73</sup> Both believed that Jews could change, evolve, and move forward, overcoming the degeneracy of the Galut and the ghetto.

At the fifth Congress, Lilien, a representative of the "culture" faction, underscored Buber's advocacy of "aesthetic education" as the means of realizing the Zionist idea of the State. On the last day of the Congress, he argued that:

culture will make us into complete Jews and will also enrich our Judaism. In times past, when a Jew was a *Culturmensch*, he belonged to foreign nations. Since the rise of Zionism, when a Jew makes a mark on science or art and is a Zionist, he belongs to his own people. He creates a Jewish culture.

(SP, 396)

In the same way that Buber, drawing on Schiller's notion of the aesthetic, argued that art could make Jews into "fully developed, complete human beings," Lilien—as the foremost Zionist artist—echoed this sentiment, arguing that "culture" would foster a sense of unity and identity among the Jewish people. This becomes even clearer when we turn to the three major projects that he worked on during this period: his illustrations for the book of poetry, *Juda* (1900); his editorial work and artistic contributions to the *Juedischer Almanach* (1902); and his illustrations for the German translation of Morris Rosenfeld's Yiddish poetry, *Lieder des Ghetto* (Songs of the Ghetto) (1902/03). In these illustrations, we can see how Lilien revalued the visual language and aesthetics of decadence to give form to the Zionist concept of progressive regeneration.

In the first book-length study of *Lilien* published in 1903, Stefan Zweig posited that *Juda* “is a document [that represents] not only one of the most perfected works of German book illustration but is also the first page of the history of a nationally conscious art.”<sup>74</sup> This was not an overestimation of its significance. *Juda* was the product of an artistic collaboration between Lilien and Baron Börries von Münchhausen, a German poet who was a member of the avant-garde artist group *Die Kommenden* in Berlin.<sup>75</sup> The 82-page book consists of 15 philosemitic, ballad poems written by Münchhausen and luxuriously illustrated by Lilien. The poems, composed in a simple, rhyming verse, were primarily derived from stories and figures from the Old Testament, including Sodom and Gomorrah, the harlot of Jericho, Moses, Job, and Samson and Delilah. Lilien, in Zweig’s words, “paraphrased the poems and enveloped them in a decorative unity, which embraced the ancient-national [*altvölkisch*], blue-white colors of home, interwoven with thorns and illuminated by silver stars of Zion” (SZ, 21). Together, Lilien and Münchhausen—a Jew and a German—created a consciously national art for the Jewish people.

When *Juda* was published in 1900, it was immediately praised in both the Jewish and the non-Jewish press across Europe and quickly became a collector’s item. As Hirschfelder wrote, for example, about *Juda* in 1901, “All the symbols of Jewish worship and spirit shine forth and blow upon us like distant winds from home . . . in a richly changing fashion, pictures from a sunken time long ago come over us like in a panorama.”<sup>76</sup> Lilien and Münchhausen juxtaposed ornate illustrations of Torah scrolls, Jewish angels, candelabras, and images of the Holy Land with poems that sang about the heroic traditions and myths of the ancient Hebrews. As both Hirschfelder and Zweig remarked, the book evoked a sense of pride insofar as it was perhaps the first work of Jewish national art to illustrate the Zionist desire to return home.

The Zionist orientation of the book is, in fact, quite explicit from its first poem, “Euch” (To you). Surrounded by more than two dozen Jewish faces drawn by Lilien (Fig. 3.5), Münchhausen’s poem calls—in no uncertain terms—for the “lost tribe” of Jews to “go back” to their ancient homeland:

Respected people, I will show you the bridge  
 Away from hate and scorn to your youthful joy  
 Lost tribe, I know the way  
 And the way is: back!  
 Back to the beauty of once sung psalms  
 . . . Back to your great, ancient God! . . .  
 Be what you are, ancient Israel  
 Your God still lives, and his columns  
 go forth even today—hear O’ Israel!<sup>77</sup>

Not fortuitously, the following two pages illustrate a determined, but internally conflicted Jew about to make the decision to return to the Zionist utopia. The winds of change blow against this lost Jew, who, with his arms crossed and head bowed down, is cloaked in a long robe adorned with flaming hearts falling toward the ground. Far in the distance is the ancient land of Israel, and a joyous group of men and women dance in celebration of their return.



Figure 3.5 E. M. Lilien and Baron Börries von Münchhausen, "To You," *Juda* (1900), 2.

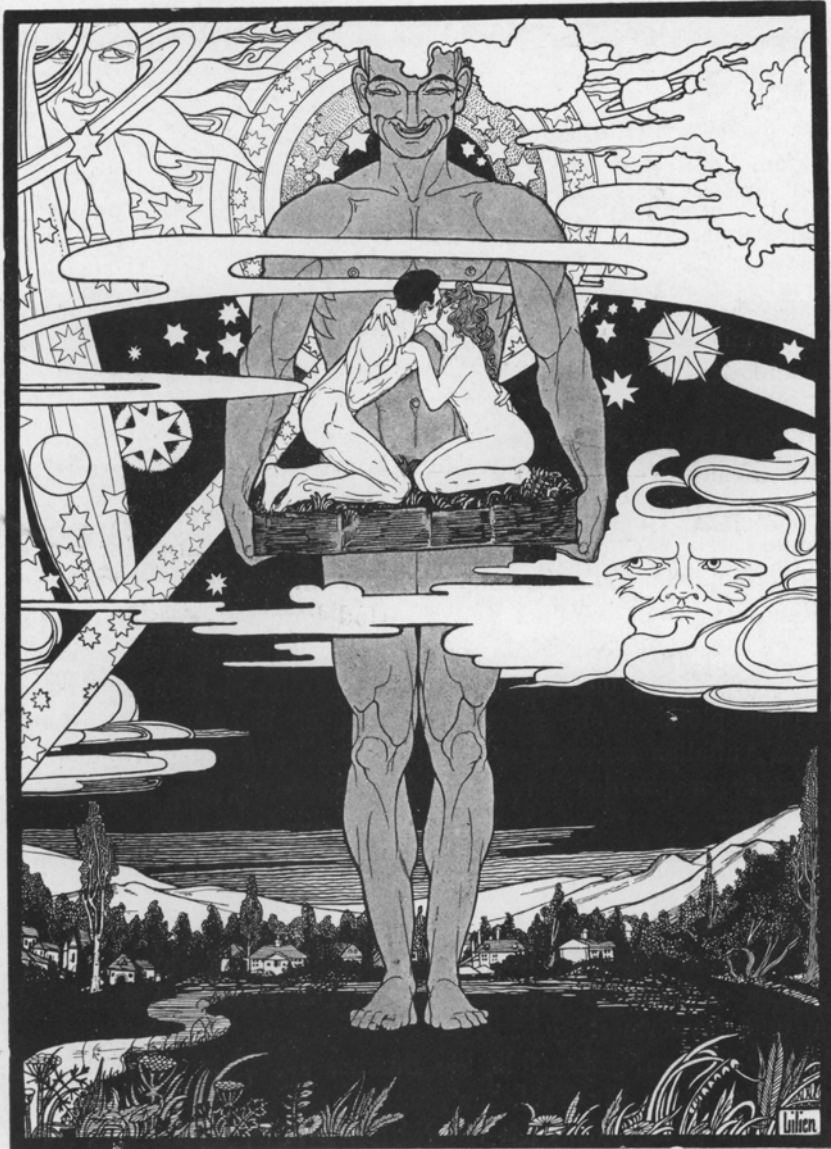
Indeed, throughout the book, this theme of return is emphasized over and over again. In another illustration, Lilien depicts a forlorn Jew, wrapped in thorns that cover his skullcap, arms, and chest. He is in Egypt, where the Jews were once enslaved, something that can be interpreted contemporaneously as their enslavement in the European and Russian ghettos of the Diaspora. Across a precipitous chasm and sinuous body of water, a radiant sun rises, with light that shines forth from the Jewish homeland. Ultimately, the decision to return home—something that simultaneously represents physical, spiritual, and national rejuvenation—rests only upon him. It is through art and the domain of the aesthetic that this decision is given form and even catalyzed.

As a “national” work of art, *Juda* functioned by coupling the Zionist idea of imminent return with the heroic strain of ancient Jewish history. This is highlighted, for example, by Moses’s liberation of his people from Egypt as well as various myths, including Samson’s killing of the lion with his bare hands and Münchhausen’s celebratory poems, “The Triumphal Song of the Jews” and “The Sabbath of all Sabbaths.” Lilien’s extraordinary illustration of Samson tearing apart the head of a lion (Fig. 3.6) underscores the ancientness of the “muscle Jew” tradition, while also using the visual techniques of *Jugendstil* to depict the sensual eroticism of Samson’s sinewy body and the verdant organicism of the enveloping foliage. Samson’s muscular heroism, an emblem of past national greatness, is now transported to the fantastic space of the *Jugendstil* landscape.<sup>78</sup>

To further demonstrate this intersection between Zionism and the stylistic innovations of decadence, let me turn to Lilien’s work immediately after *Juda*. On the last page of Hirschfelder’s article on Lilien, the editors of *Ost und West* included a photograph of the artist in his atelier. Lilien is smartly dressed in a suit, with his arms crossed, looking at the photographer. He is surrounded by at least 13 of his illustrations, as well as several photographs and two small lion sculptures on a mantle. On the easel, we can make out one of his most challenging illustrations from this period, *Trugland* (Land of Deception) (1901), a mystical depiction of the cosmological mysteries of love (Fig. 3.7). This illustration, originally conceived as part of a cycle called “Liebe” (love), was published the following year in the *Juedischer Almanach*, a 300-page compendium of Jewish art and literature produced to evoke Jewish national pride. The literary part of the almanac was edited by Berthold Feiwel and featured short stories, poems, critical essays, and dramatic pieces by some of the best-known Jewish modernists, including Buber, Bialek, Scholem Aleichem, Peretz, Herzl, and Zweig.<sup>79</sup> Lilien was responsible for editing the artistic part of the Almanac, which featured many of the artists whose work had been shown the year before in the first Zionist art exhibit. Three of Lilien’s drawings (two illustrations from *Lieder des Ghetto* and *Trugland*) were also included in the book.



Figure 3.6 E. M. Lilien, "Samson," *Juda* (1900), 54.



E. M. LILIEN.

TRUGLAND.

BERLIN.

Figure 3.7 E. M. Lilien, *Trugland* (1901).

I would like to pause on *Trugland* because I think it represents a particularly important example of Lilien's decadent Judaism and will allow us to recognize the limits of conventional understandings of decadence as simply synonymous with sickness, decline, and degeneracy. The picture depicts a gigantic musclemán standing firmly on the earth, holding a piece of ground that he has torn free, upon which two lovers, probably Adam and Eve, are embracing. All three are naked, and the musclemán smiles deviously, with tiny animal fangs protruding from his mouth, while the sign of the sun smirks and that of the moon frowns. The strangeness of this fantastic scene is mirrored by the equally strange space of the illustration itself, which is, at once, highly compressed and indefinitely deep, depending on what part of the drawing a viewer privileges: if one looks only at the bottom, the earth appears to recede back beyond the houses, trees, and mountains; but if one looks at the starry sky, it appears almost flat, like an unfurled backdrop, even while the clouds provide a vague sense of depth as they envelop the musclemán. But because the scale makes no sense, a simple rational explanation of the scene before us is immediately foreclosed. What appears perfectly ordinary on the ground—houses, trees, rivers, and mountains—becomes decidedly otherworldly upon entering the celestial realm above.

*Trugland* is a mystical, phantasmagoric drawing, one that betrays a definite relationship to Lilien's earlier work published in *Jugend* and his affiliation with the Berlin avant-garde movement, "Die Kommenden." Hirschfelder, for example, described the musclemán as "a gigantic, satanically laughing demon," and he considered this illustration, with respect to Lilien's oeuvre as of 1901, to be his most characteristically "symbolist" achievement.<sup>80</sup> And Alfred Gold, in his study of Lilien for Buber's series, *Juedische Kuenster*, considered *Trugland* in the same vein as some of his hybrid human-animal pictures, such as *The Woman and the Faun*, a decadent vignette that Lilien produced for "Die Kommenden" in 1898. In both, the inversion of scale, the hybrid imagery, and the compression of space follow the reversal of a natural order: Lilien couples the ordinary with the otherworldly, the horror of the modern night with the sign of the artistic avant-garde, all in a space that refuses to be rationalized or logically adjudicated. Because of their Symbolist references, irrationality, and use of hybrid figures, Lilien's pictures would easily fall under Nordau's rubric of degeneration; however, I contend that he is using the stylistic innovations of decadence in an attempt to concretize the leap into the future.

Unlike the other two illustrations that Lilien published in the *Juedischer Almanach*, *Trugland* is not an overtly "Jewish" picture: the studious Jew of *The Light of Exile* and the Jewish gravestones of *After our Years* (both incorporated into his illustrations for *Lieder des Ghetto*) are nowhere to be found in *Trugland*. Instead, *Trugland* seems to represent the paradoxes and pitfalls of the Zionist idea, both the redemptive hopes and dangerous deceptions of rebirth, ones that could only be articulated using the contradictory stylistic features of decadence. As a kind of allegory of the Garden

of Eden resurrected in a new space of physicality and purity, *Trugland* represents the Jewish people beginning anew, propagating the world with a regenerated and revitalized race. But the illustration is not simply a mythic celebration of a primordial heterosexuality; it is also a recognition of the danger—articulated on a seemingly demonic plane—of the aesthetic dimensions of rebirth and regeneration.<sup>81</sup>

We might push this further by considering Lilien's illustrations within the ideological apparatus of the *Juedischer Almanach* itself, particularly as outlined by its literary editor, Berthold Feiwel. As the first publication of the newly founded "Jüdischer Verlag" (Jewish Press) in Berlin, the *Juedischer Almanach* was intended, according to Feiwel's introduction, to highlight the power of the Zionist "Jewish renaissance."<sup>82</sup> Together with Lilien, who solicited and arranged the artworks published in the volume, Feiwel saw its tasks in September 1902 as follows:

The Jewish people, once the bearers of an unforgettable culture, have been subject to two thousand years of unparalleled physical and spiritual misery, hampered by the curse of homelessness and scattered in every kind of creation; in the future, they will transfer the liberated strengths of their race [*Rassenkräften*] to a new culture. The melding of the people [*Volk*] with the motherland [*Mutterboden*] will grow out of the new spirit [*Geist*], which, at the same time, shall be the unfettered, original spirit of the nation and the spirit of the new times [*der fessellose, ureigene Geist der Nation und der Geist der neuen Zeiten*].

(JA, 11)

By assembling the work of Jewish artists, authors, and scholars, the Almanac (and, more broadly, the Jewish Press) would serve "the preservation and development of Jewish racial strength [*jüdische Rassenkraft*] and Jewish *Volkspersönlichkeit*" (JA, 13), what he later calls "*Volksthum*" (JA, 15). Here, cultural production was clearly connected to racial and national destiny, a destiny that Zionist Jews could and must determine. Applying the *völkisch* concepts of contemporary pan-Germanism—"race," "strength," "ground"—to the Jewish cause, the goal, according to Feiwel, was to establish a Jewish culture that is both "national" and "modern." After all, "the spirit of the new times"—a decidedly modern spirit—simultaneously called upon a mythic past while moving to a future destiny. The way to do so, according to Feiwel, who presumably represented the views of many of the artists and authors collected in the almanac, would be to cultivate a kind of Jewish racial-ethnicity, or "*Volkstümlichkeit*," one that unequivocally cited and relied upon certain elements of the incipient *Blut und Boden* nationalism forming at this time in Germany.

The goal of the almanac, then, was to catalyze Jewish racial strength and bring this strength to bear upon cultural production. This, in turn, would



cultivate a sense of nationality and Jewish *Volkstümlichkeit*, something that had been lacking, according to the diagnosis of the editors, for thousands of years. Feiwel's application of *völkisch* rhetoric thus served to support the Zionist belief that the domain of the aesthetic and artistic production itself could secure nationality. Building on Buber's call for "aesthetic education," the *Juedischer Almanach* represented the very instantiation of the aesthetics of regeneration. In this respect, Lilien's decadence was rendered compatible with the Zionist concept of progressive regeneration, for what mattered first and foremost was that there was Jewish national art at all, that Jews had the "sensory perceptual talent" that Wagner had categorically denied them. In effect, because Feiwel and Buber believed that art created racial and national strength, even decadence—when situated within the Zionist call for return and its ideological apparatus of progress—was subsumed under the modernist rubric of regeneration.

Finally, let me turn briefly to the second book of poetry that Lilien illustrated during this period, *Lieder des Ghetto*, in order to draw some conclusions about how he brought *Jugendstil* and the visual rhetoric of decadence to bear on explicitly Zionist ideas and themes. Published in Berlin in 1903, *Lieder des Ghetto* is a fascinating and wide-ranging collection of feather-pen drawings created by Lilien for the German translation of a selection of Morris Rosenfeld's Yiddish poetry. The translation was done by Feiwel, who also wrote the introduction to the volume just one month before he penned his introduction to the *Juedischer Almanach*. *Lieder des Ghetto* was the first compilation of Rosenfeld's poetry to appear in German translation. The poems and pictures depict the suffering of Jews living in the ghettos and working in the sweatshops during the *fin de siècle*, focusing on the plight of the exploited worker and the utopian hope of Zionism. The poems are divided into three parts: "Songs of Work," "Songs of the Jewish People," and "Songs of Life."

Rosenfeld, born in Buksha, Poland, in 1862, immigrated to New York City in 1886 and worked most of his life in sweatshops on New York's East Side. During this time, he began composing Yiddish poetry about class struggle, the horrors of industrialization, and the misery of the Jewish ghettos in both America and in Europe, becoming actively involved in the burgeoning labor movement.<sup>83</sup> His poems, such as "Desperation," "The Workshop," and "At the Sewing Machine," depict—in the most brutal imagery possible—the dehumanization and humiliation of working in the sweatshop and living in the ghetto. Enframed by the tools of a garment worker and a punctured, bleeding heart, these poems detail the process of dehumanization in which workers, sick and near death, are transformed into nothing more than machines by greedy bosses who suck out their very lifeblood. In one such oft-reproduced and truly horrific image, Lilien literalizes the wealthy factory boss with a bulging stomach sucking the blood of the haggard worker, a picture that represents a clear citation of Beardsley's grotesque "Ali Baba."

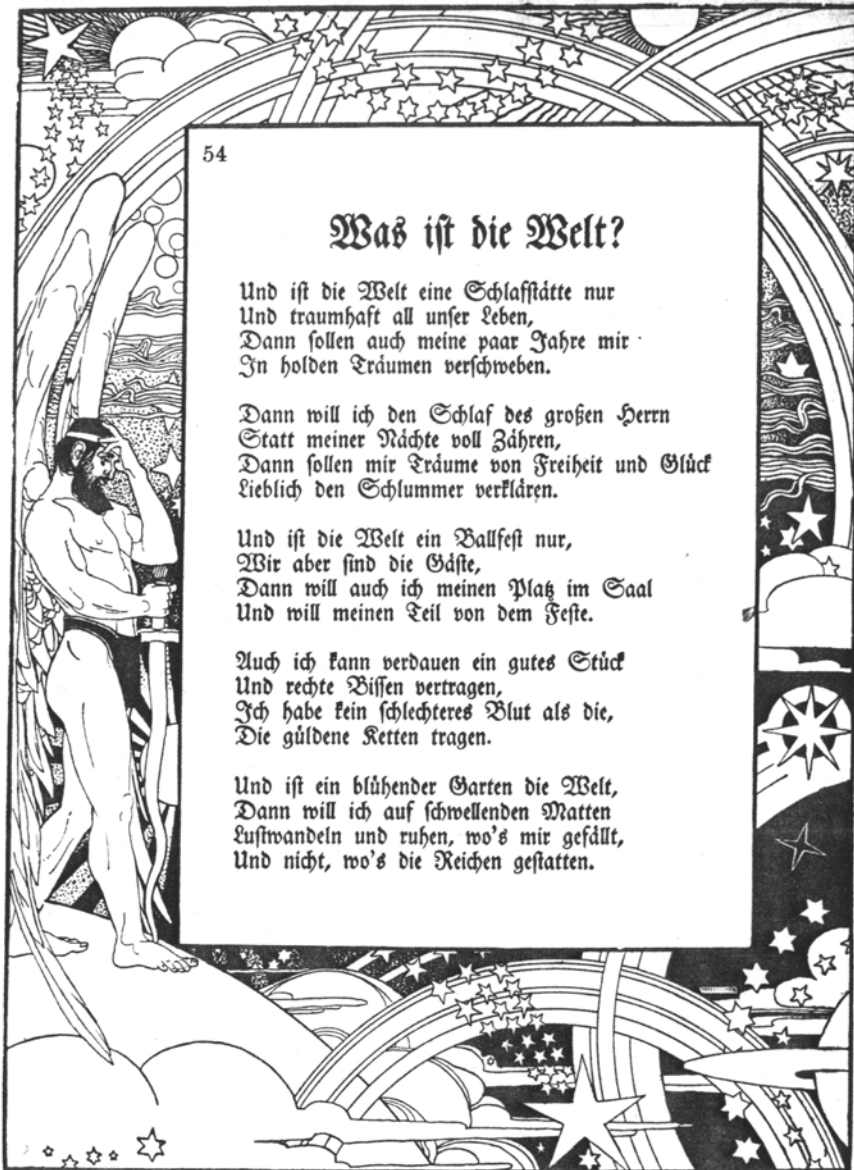
Lilien's factory boss is a hybrid figure, in this case an androgynous, vampire-man, with giant black wings that hideously envelope the hunched-over worker.<sup>84</sup> Through a pipe that runs directly into the worker's neck, the boss nourishes himself on the blood of the (Jewish) proletariat.

Here, Lilien's poems do much more than simply "paraphrase," to use Zweig's word, the poems that he illustrates. Lilien not only concretizes the exploitation through recourse to the imagery of decadence, but he also uses this very same visual vocabulary—particularly its mystical, utopian elements, such as those that we observed in *Trugland*—to imagine another world and another future. Lilien's Zionism thus operates as a kind of aesthetics of regeneration precisely in this gap between historical outrage and imminent redemption. In his illustrations for Rosenfeld's poem "What is the World?", Lilien places an erect "muscle Jew" on the edge of the earth against the starry backdrop of the cosmos (Fig. 3.8). In one hand, the muscle Jew holds a decidedly phallic (but strangely warped) sword, while the other hand props up his pensive head. The mystical backdrop—full of radiant stars, wild orbits, and gleaming rainbows—offers a peak into a celestial realm that transcends the gravity, dehumanization, and despair of this world. It is here that one can recognize the decidedly hybrid form of Lilien's techniques of representation: on the one hand, his illustration is indebted to the organicism of art nouveau and, on the other, a kind of crystalline, cosmological abstraction. The Zionist utopia is derived from the desperation of this world but seeks its transcendence by hurling the heroism of the past into a redeemed and regenerated future.

As Feiwei quite aptly writes in his introduction, *Lieder des Ghetto* depicts:

both the poor slave and the great hero who carries with him the burden of the Galut, the most terrible weight that presses down on human necks. It is not human beings who live in the ghetto, only the most tortured human life instincts . . . and the inextinguishable hope for the Messiah, for the redemption through Zion.<sup>85</sup>

This collection of images and poems thus presents Western-European, German-speaking Jewry with the reality of "the soul of ghetto-Judaism," in all its desperation, hopelessness, and degeneracy. Far from simply a "lionization" of the authenticity of the Yiddish-speaking, "ghetto Jew," as Stanislawski argues, the book is an urgent answer to the question, "Why Zionism?" It confronts assimilated, German-speaking Jews with the suffering of the vast majority of impoverished Jews and urges them to become Zionists for the sake of the Jewish people who are scattered the world over. And it does this by appealing to a decidedly *völkisch* conception of nationality and race. At the same time, by employing the domain of the aesthetic, it combats one of the most prevalent stereotypes of all: that the Jews are a culturally barren people who cannot make art because of the degeneracy of their race. In this



## Was ist die Welt?

Und ist die Welt eine Schlafstätte nur  
Und traumhaft all unser Leben,  
Dann sollen auch meine paar Jahre mir  
In holden Träumen verschweben.

Dann will ich den Schlaf des großen Herrn  
Statt meiner Nächte voll Zähren,  
Dann sollen mir Träume von Freiheit und Glück  
Lieblich den Schlummer verklären.

Und ist die Welt ein Ballfest nur,  
Wir aber sind die Gäste,  
Dann will auch ich meinen Platz im Saal  
Und will meinen Teil von dem Feste.

Auch ich kann verdauen ein gutes Stück  
Und rechte Bissen vertragen,  
Ich habe kein schlechteres Blut als die,  
Die güldene Ketten tragen.

Und ist ein blühender Garten die Welt,  
Dann will ich auf schwellenden Matten  
Lustwandeln und ruhen, wo's mir gefällt,  
Und nicht, wo's die Reichen gestatten.

Figure 3.8 E. M. Lilien and Morris Rosenfeld, "What is the World?" *Lieder des Ghetto* (1903), 54.

way, Lilien's decadence, redeployed as evidence of national progress and racial talent, directly serves the Zionist cause as both political rejuvenation and cultural redemption.

Feiwei makes this Zionist interpretation of *Lieder des Ghetto* even more explicit in his introduction where he argues that Rosenfeld's poems not only justify Zionist ideology but that the very structure of the book follows the Zionist philosophy of progressive history:

From far away comes a light, a sound, and a smell: The shimmer of the sun and the sea, the sound of birds, and the smell of the forest—all the beauty, which he [a Galut Jew], happier than millions of his brothers, can still take in before the power of the ghetto envelopes him. But then it happens: This unbelievably sad melancholy carries him out of the past, through the pain and misery of the ghetto, to the incredibly marvelous empire of the future. . . . And the poet of the modern ghetto turns into a singer of modern Zionism, living Judaism's monumental movement for freedom, which will lead the Jews out of their current captivity into their old homeland in peace and in freedom.<sup>86</sup>

Zionism—as a modern, non-eschatological philosophy—conceives of Jewish history as a process of evolutionary progress, a movement into the future that overcomes the misery of the present and rediscovers the greatness of the antique past. The “spirit of the ghetto”—in all its horror and desperation—will be transformed into a redemptive, celestial wonder called Zionism. And it is precisely for this reason, then, that Lilien's Jewish decadence—in its searching hybrid forms of the desolate and the boundless, the sensual and the abstract, the organic and the cosmological—has to be understood within the modern, Zionist ideology of progress and state formation, not within the eschatological rubrics of sickness, decay, decline, and degeneracy. He produced “Jewish national art,” and, within the Zionist imaginary, this irreducible fact was what undergirded Jewish physical strength, progressive regeneration, and, ultimately, a kind of Jewish ethnic-racial *Volkstümlichkeit*. In this regard, Lilien's decadence ultimately represents the regeneration of aesthetics and the aesthetics of regeneration.

## THE GYMNASTICS OF REGENERATION

### The anatomo-politics of the Jewish body

In May of 1909, the publishers of *Die jüdische Turnzeitung* (Jewish Gymnastics Journal) issued a commemorative volume called *Körperliche Renaissance der Juden* (The Physical Renaissance of the Jews), which celebrated the tenth anniversary of the founding of “Bar Kochba,” the Jewish Gymnastics Association in Berlin.<sup>1</sup> Adorned with a lithograph of a young, muscular rendition of Bar Kochba by the artist Hermann Struck, the volume consisted of twelve essays by various sports experts and medical doctors, who attested to the benefits of gymnastics, fitness, sports, farming, and military service for the regeneration of the Jewish people. A little more than a decade earlier, Richard Blum, Rabbi Wilhelm Lewy, and a number of their students and colleagues who were interested in promoting gymnastics for the improvement of the Jewish body established the first Jewish gymnastics association (*Turnverein*) in Germany. According to its membership charter, the purpose of the association was to sponsor and support Jewish gymnastics in order to strengthen the individual Jewish body as well as a broader sense of Jewish nationality. Calling upon the history of German gymnastics in the nineteenth century<sup>2</sup> as well as the history of Jewish heroism in antiquity, the founders believed that gymnastics would not only discipline and develop the body, but that it would also cultivate a sense of nationality, all things that would be important for the regeneration of the Jewish people as a whole. As Richard Blum recalled the ambitious goals of the Jewish gymnastics association and its “striving for corporeal regeneration” (*die körperlichen Regenerationsbestrebungen*): “We wanted to establish contact with our brothers in every country in order to bring us together in the cultivation of our national spiritual life and our national character [*Volkstum*].”<sup>3</sup>

In the foreword to the commemorative volume, Georg Arndt pointed out the tremendous successes enjoyed over the past decade in “training a race of upright and strong Jews” (KR, 1). Although “the haunt of degeneration” still lurked, the motivating question—“How do we create a healthy Jewish race?”—had been successfully answered: through “ironclad self-rearing” in gymnastics associations, extensive involvement with sports, and military training, Jews would become “muscle Jews” (KR, 1). In one of the

programmatic articles in the volume, “Muscle Jews and Nervous Jews,” M. Jastrowitz of the Berlin “Medical Council” tells the readership that “the desired results could be reached through fitness exercises, running, jumping, climbing, swimming, discus throwing, archery, and gymnastics” (KR, 14). As another contributor confidently declared: “The Jews shall become muscle men instead of nervous men [*Muskelmenschen statt Nervenmenschen*]” (KR, 12). Because of “the elasticity of our race” (something that Nordau had also pointed out), “the bent over, cowardly [Ghetto Jew] with a small chest and shortness of breath, with stunted bone growth and withered muscles” would be reborn in a heroic fashion and, through the power of “modern *Volks-hygiene*” (KR, 16), bring about a new race of Jews with “healthy nerves and healthy muscles” (KR, 13).<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate goal, as many of the contributors indicated, was not simply the cultivation of individual muscle Jews; rather it was the creation of a “muscle Jewry,” a new race of physically fit and mentally agile Jews. As Max Zirker argued:

The Jewish gymnastics associations do not want to create muscles of steel, sharpen mental presence, and increase courage and self-confidence for the sake of the individual. They are fighting for an idea . . . The Jewish gymnastics movement will serve Judaism in its entirety . . . and, therefore, carries a national-Jewish character.

(KR, 2)

The goal is to make the Jewish people as a whole “brave,” “courageous,” and “fertile” by cultivating the strength of the coming generations (KR, 2). To this end, in addition to sports, the Jewish people must develop a “class of farmers” who can till the ground, something that will counterbalance their “mostly intellectual work” (KR, 8). As such, they will develop the bones, musculature, and posture necessary for serving in the military and becoming national citizens able to defend a future homeland, while also honing their intellectual prowess and “mental hygiene” (KR, 14). Repeatedly citing the Germans as the precedent to be emulated, the authors point out how “the hardening and steeling of the body creates a powerful protecting wall” against the stresses of everyday life and any sort of physical or mental degeneration. The decisive Prussian victories at Königgratz and Sedan that led to German unification are invoked by Julius Moses as proof of the importance of learning mental and physical toughness for the sake of “Nationalbildung” (KR, 12).

In effect, what *The Physical Renaissance of the Jews* celebrated was not only the beginnings of muscular Judaism but also the beginnings of the age of modern Jewish bio-politics. While Michel Foucault famously traced the origins of European bio-politics to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a time in which the individual body began to be scientifically monitored and

interventions were made on behalf of the population,<sup>5</sup> Jewish bio-politics did not begin in earnest until the very end of the nineteenth century with the creation of a discourse around muscular Judaism and the founding of the first Jewish gymnastics associations. According to Foucault, while “an anatomo-politics of the human body” focused on the disciplining, the optimization, and the usefulness of the individual body in order to assure its efficiency and docility, the regulation of the “species body” focused on the health and vitality of the race; and while the former is “individualizing,” the latter is “massifying” because it “is directed not at man-as-body but at man-as-species.”<sup>6</sup>

It is in this regard that we can make sense of Nordau’s extraordinary statement at the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901 on the necessity of knowing the vital signs and statistics of the Jewish people. Moving away from a strict attention to the individual body of the muscle Jew, he argued that the success of the Zionist movement was dependant upon knowing the birth and death rates of the Jewish people, their life expectancies, their patterns of diet and habituation, their marriage regulations, their susceptibility to illness, their contraceptive practices, and other statistical indicators of the population’s vitality. In his words:

A thorough statistical analysis of the Jewish people is of utmost importance for the Zionist movement. . . . We must reliably find out what the material of the people [*Volksmaterial*] is made of, to know what we will have to work with. We need exact anthropological, biological, economic, and intellectual statistics of the Jewish people. We need quantitative answers to the following questions: How are the Jewish people physically composed? How big are they on average? What are their anatomical characteristics? What are their sickness and mortality statistics? How many times per year is a Jew sick on average? What is their lifespan? From what diseases do they die? What are their figures for marriage and childbirth? How many criminals, mentally ill, deaf, crippled, blind, and epileptics do the Jewish people have? Do they have a particular kind of criminality? How many Jews live in the city and how many live in the country? What do the Jewish people do for a living? How do they work and what do they own? What do they drink and eat? Where do they live? How do they dress? How much of their income do they spend on food, clothing, housing, and spiritual needs? All this has to be known if one wants to really understand a people.<sup>7</sup>

Nordau’s questions thus refocused attention on the Jewish population as a whole—its composition in terms of vitality, productivity, living standards, and reproductive capacity. The discourse of muscular Judaism thus emerged from the desire to, at once, rejuvenate the physical body of the individual Jew and recreate a long-lost muscle Jewry. Not only did Nordau thus argue

for individual corporeal improvement through gymnastics, he was also the first modern Zionist thinker to articulate the necessity of knowing and monitoring the Jewish people as a whole, precisely in order to change and correct their constitution.

His questions about knowing the constitution of the Jewish population would be vigorously pursued over the following years, with numerous studies, journals, and associations emerging to analyze and document Jewish population statistics. In fact, in 1902, Alfred Nossig founded the Association for Jewish Statistics, and the following year issued the first compendium of “scientific” statistics of the Jewish people, *Jüdische Statistik*.<sup>8</sup> In 1905, the first volume of the *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden* (Journal for Jewish Demographics and Statistics) was published in Berlin under the editorship of Arthur Ruppin. It existed until 1931, when the bureau for Jewish statistics was closed. The purpose of the journal was to cull statistics about the Jewish body—for example, its typical racial features, muscularity, mentality, and even average brain size—and, in a comparative fashion, begin to understand the composition of the scattered Jewish population. As for the latter, the journal sought to document marriage rates, criminality, suicide rates, education levels, lifespans, and drug and alcohol use, among other things, in major German and European cities, especially in comparison with Christians. The predominantly Zionist emphasis on statistical analysis of the Jewish population played an important role in the development of Jewish race science and hygiene discourses in the first decades of the twentieth-century,<sup>9</sup> discourses that would later be taken up by state administrators and governmental bodies in Israel.<sup>10</sup> As Mitchell Hart points out:

The establishment of institutions of Jewish social scientific research by practical Zionists can be understood . . . as one expression of the impulse to assume the role of a ‘government of the Jews,’ undertaking those tasks—census taking, the shaping of economic and social policy, concern over public health and hygiene—usually associated with political and official administrative bodies.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, Nordau’s questions not only illustrate how he believed that “Jewish statistics” could help improve the Jewish people, but also point to the ways in which Zionism was to make use of the logic of bio-power to legitimize its claims to a state. Rather than beginning with the preexistence of the state as both an object of knowledge and dispenser of power, Nordau and his Zionist colleagues called for the study of the anatomo-politics of the scattered Jewish people precisely in order to form a state. Because Nordau’s call for the development of Jewish bio-politics adds a missing chapter to the history of bio-power, I would like to briefly summarize Foucault’s argument from the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* before proceeding with my discussion of the corporeal politics of Jewish regeneration.



In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault attempts to recast the repressive hypothesis by arguing that sex, far from being passed over in silence, is a powerful discursive fact that has been and continues to be openly regulated, administered, and controlled for the sake of preserving and perpetuating the state. Foucault famously seeks to displace the hegemonic explanatory power of the repressive hypothesis, which maintains that the history of sexuality is the history of its repression and confinement to specific private realms through denial, silence, and exclusion. Rather than chart the history of sexuality, then, as simply tantamount to the history of its prohibition and repression, Foucault shows how the hypothesis was a contingent formation that came into existence at a certain time and served specific social ends.<sup>12</sup> In short, it was a function of new linkages between knowledge and power, and that the history of sexuality bears witness to the wide-ranging and downright dangerous ways in which “sex is ‘put into discourse’ . . . [through] ‘polymorphous techniques of power’” (HS, 11). He proposes the term “bio-power” to describe this new discursive regime that, at once, combines sex, power, the body of the individual and the body politic of the state.

During the seventeenth century (what Foucault calls the Classical Age), sex began to be deployed as a discursive formation, one that was analyzed and, for the first time, according to Foucault, administered by the state. The state took an interest in “the manner in which each individual made use of his sex” (HS, 26) and, therefore, a whole web of discourses emerged around the ways in which sex was critical for maintaining “the population.” Legal, medical, moral, hygienic, and pedagogic discourses analyzed sex and, with the help of state institutions, intervened in its conduct. Foucault asks rhetorically:

All this garrulous attention which has us in a stew over sexuality, is it not motivated by one basic concern: to ensure population, to reproduce labor capacity, to perpetuate the form of social relations: in short, to constitute a sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative?

(HS, 36–37)

Far from being simply repressed, sex was medicalized, legalized, and, ultimately, normalized such that desires, behaviors, and “new types” could be productively isolated and tightly controlled. Through its vociferous, discursive deployment, sex became inextricable from power.

In sketching out this genealogy of sexuality in Europe over some four centuries, Foucault turns to “the deployment of sexuality” in order to underscore the multiplicity of ways in which techniques of power proliferated, annexed, penetrated, and controlled both individual bodies and populations as a whole (HS, 107). Here, he introduces the critical concept of “bio-power” to illuminate how the “anatomy-politics” of the human body came together with the administration of the species body or the body politic. Technologies

of discipline and disciplinary power, as analyzed, for example, in *Discipline and Punish*, are shown to operate in ever more subtle ways to create “docile bodies,” subjugating both the sex of the individual and that of the population. From the seventeenth century on, this process of subjugation is the touchstone of “the era of bio-power” (HS, 140): sex was not only “a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species” but was also “put forward as the index of a society’s strength, revealing both its political energy and its biological vigor” (HS, 146). And it is for this reason that the state took such an interest in the harnessing, calculating, and regulating of sex. At the same time, information about the state’s environment, resources, demography, climate, and geography all played a critical role in administering the population within “this new complex of power and knowledge.”<sup>13</sup> In Foucault’s words:

It was essential that the state know what was happening with its citizens’ sex, and the use they made of it. . . . Between the state and the individual, sex became an issue, and a public issue no less; a whole web of discourses, special knowledges, analyses, and injunctions settled upon it.

(HS, 26)

This web of discourses and injunctions addressed the bio-politics of the population through analyses of births and mortality, propagation, life expectancy, health and disease, progeny, racial characteristics, hygiene practices, fertility, and eventually eugenics. In effect, the state’s power became both a function of and contingent upon how effectively it administered sex.

In invoking Foucault’s argument here, I am interested in how his genealogy of bio-power can help illuminate the specifically historical—and, to a certain extent, unique—ways in which early Zionists sought to know and regulate both the individual Jewish body and the Jewish population as a whole. In the case of *fin de siècle* Zionism, of course, a state cannot be presupposed; yet, at the same time, a multiplicity of Zionist organs—ranging from gymnastics associations and statistical bureaus to scientific journals and medical exhibitions highlighting the uniqueness of Jewish hygiene, body types, corporeal practices, and race science—emerged to deploy sex explicitly *for the purpose of state formation*. In this respect, bio-power functions not only according to how the state extends its power over a given population through forms of regulatory knowledge, but also according to the ways in which regulative discourses on sexuality consolidate the will to a state. Indeed, to the extent that these discourses have participated in the formation of a state, Foucault’s point about the violent and destructive capacities of bio-power has been proven over and over again: in the post-1948 incarnation of the Jewish state, there is but a small step between muscular Jewry and militarized Jewry. As I mentioned in the introduction, perhaps this attention to the cultural and

social origins of the muscle Jew might shed some light on the tragic and grim consequences of any investment in the disciplinary governing structures of bio-power.

Using Foucault's analysis of bio-power as the conceptual-historical background that points to the tragedies of the present day, I argue that Zionist thinkers in the first part of the twentieth century were not only interested in physical fitness and the re-creation of the muscle Jew but were also interested in studying, exhibiting, monitoring, and, ultimately, correcting and disciplining the Jewish population as a whole. In this respect, muscular Judaism constitutes an unwritten and largely overlooked chapter in the history of bio-politics. In what follows, I contextualize this discourse by showing how it drew upon and was in contact with several other international movements of corporeal regeneration: first, the European-wide fitness, health, and hygiene movement throughout the nineteenth century and its relationship to the cultivation of nationality; second, the emergence of "muscular Christianity" in England and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century; and, third, the "Lebensreform" movement in Germany, of which the *Körperkultur* movement was a key part. As we already saw in Chapter 2, each of these discourses was suffused with racial determinations variously invested in social Darwinian principles.

After that, I turn to the emergence of the muscle Jew discourse on the pages of German Zionism's most significant publication on body culture, *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*. Here, I show how a range of discourses on regeneration and physical rejuvenation—including biological, therapeutic, nationalist, and colonial discourses—deployed sex to reform and regulate both the individual body of the Jew and the "species" as a whole. In the last part of this chapter, I turn to the emergence of Jewish hygiene and eugenics discourses prior to World War I. Here, I focus on the controversial work of Felix Theilhaber, arguably the most important Zionist race scientist, alongside the staging of the first International Hygiene Exhibition in 1911. Not entirely fortuitously, Theilhaber published his apocalyptic book on the end of the Jewish race, *Der Untergang der deutschen Juden* (The Destruction of the German Jews), in the same year that Max Grunwald organized the "Jewish section" of the International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden. The Zionist engagement with bio-power received one of its most significant pre-war expressions with the controversy surrounding Theilhaber's book and the display of the history of Jewish hygiene at the exhibition. I conclude by returning to Foucault and summing up how Zionists deployed sex and the techniques of bio-power in order to legitimize the founding of the Jewish state.

### **Cultivating the body/cultivating the nation**

Shortly after the fall of Prussia to Napoleon in 1806, Johann Gottlieb Fichte gave a series of famously chauvinistic speeches: *Reden an die deutsche Nation*

(*Addresses to the German Nation*).<sup>14</sup> Delivered during the winter of 1807–08 to standing-room-only crowds in Berlin’s Academy of Sciences, Fichte argued that despite their present suffering and fragmentation, the German people were actually “a single body” (A, 96) and “a single nation” (A, 3). German unity already existed, he maintained, because Germans shared a common cultural tradition, a common language, a common history, and a common place. Using an extraordinary metaphor of the body, he tells his defeated and demoralized audience that the present age is fixated on “weeping over its own corpse,” when in fact the body of the nation is already being reassembled, resurrected, and given new life (A, 18). To illustrate this, he juxtaposes a telling passage from Ezekiel on corporeal regeneration with his own belief in the resurrection of the German nation: in the same way, he declares, that God breathed new life into dead bones, laying them with muscles, flesh, and skin such that they “stood upon their feet, [as] an exceeding great army,” the scattered “bones” of the German nation would soon have new life breathed into them, such that “the quickening breath of the spiritual world . . . will take hold, too, of the dead bones of our national body [*Nationalkörper*], and join them together, that they may stand glorious in new radiant life” (A, 51). In other words, the dead bones of the German people will be resurrected—muscles and all—such that the new Germany will be strong enough to exact revenge on France.<sup>15</sup>

What is striking about Fichte’s rhetoric is his use of the metaphor of the *Nationalkörper* or “body of the nation,” a metaphor that would return throughout the nineteenth century in various nationalist movements and later be taken up as the central metaphor of the Zionist project of Jewish regeneration.<sup>16</sup> As Hinrich Seeba has cogently argued in his analysis of Fichte’s speeches, this linkage of “nation” and “body” was not only tied to Fichte’s belief in the Christian concept of resurrection, but it also represented “the founding eschatological metaphor of German nationalism.”<sup>17</sup> This is because the German national body was analogous to a “real” body, able to be broken, die, and, ultimately, be resurrected. Of course, what differentiated the “national body” or the “people’s body” (*Volkskörper*) from a human body was precisely the fact that the former lived on beyond the singular death of the individual.<sup>18</sup>

Literalizing Fichte’s metaphor, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, the “father” of German *Turnen* (gymnastics<sup>19</sup>), turned his attention to the actual bodies of individual German citizens in order to “resurrect” the body politic of the German people. Not unlike the Zionists at the end of the nineteenth century, Jahn developed a theory of bio-power linked to the practice of gymnastics that did not begin with the state or extend its control but rather abetted the formation of the state itself. For him, a new citizenry of ‘muscle Germans’ would produce a new, unified national body. Because the ideas of Jahn exerted such a formative influence on the development of Zionism’s “body culture” (*Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* even ran a commemorative tribute to Jahn on the

fiftieth anniversary of his death in 1902), I would like to provide a brief background of the genesis and development of his ideas. Later in the chapter, I will discuss how his ideas were taken up and celebrated by Zionist gymnastics associations.<sup>20</sup>

Born in 1778, Jahn was trained as a schoolteacher and assumed a post at a *Gymnasium* in Berlin shortly after witnessing the fall of Prussia to Napoleon. Imbued with nationalistic fervor after hearing Fichte's speeches, Jahn instituted and developed physical training programs for young men who were interested in cultivating their patriotism. He opened the first German gymnastics facility in Berlin on June 18, 1811, with the belief that physical fitness went hand-in-hand with a sense of national duty. Coinciding with the War of Liberation (1814–16), Jahn's *Turnen* quickly spread beyond Berlin, to places throughout Prussia and the Germanic states, with major facilities set up in Leipzig, Jena, Frankfurt, Mainz, Cologne, and many other cities. By 1818, there were nearly 150 German gymnastics associations (*Turnvereine*), with over 12,000 members.<sup>21</sup> Berlin's *Hasenheide* alone trained more than a thousand gymnasts. It was also during this time that he wrote his major works on corporeal development and nationality, *Deutsches Volksthum* (1810), an examination of "Germanness" very much in the spirit of Fichte's speeches on nationalism, and *Die deutsche Turnkunst* (1816), a major treatise on German gymnastics, which argued that *Turnen* not only promoted the central virtue of bourgeois civility—self-discipline—but that it also cultivated national subjects.<sup>22</sup> *Die deutsche Turnkunst* quickly became the authoritative guide for establishing German gymnastics schools, and it was circulated widely among politicians and school administrators. Like Fichte before him, Jahn went on to deliver lectures on German unity and national regeneration in Berlin and was even awarded honorary doctorates by the University of Kiel and Jena.<sup>23</sup>

Although Jahn's reputation suffered during the 1820s due to his alleged involvement in a political scandal and the *Turnen* movement lost some of its momentum, the ideals of national unity and patriotism espoused by the *Turnvereine* were taken up in German fraternities (*Burschenschaften*) and somewhat later by dueling societies, both of which were intended to promote physical vigor, mental acuity, and moral probity.<sup>24</sup> In the 1840s, *Turnen* made a comeback in Germany and was even "formally recognized as a necessary and indispensable part of male education and received into the circle of means for popular education," according to a cabinet order of June 6, 1842.<sup>25</sup> The *Turnen* movement espoused a unique program of corporeal and moral *Bildung*, in which physical fitness, bodily conduct and appearance, and health inculcated morality.<sup>26</sup> Physical inactivity and weakness were associated with disease and degeneracy; licentious behavior and excess in any sphere of life were considered an affront to masculinity, morality, and patriotism.<sup>27</sup> Advocating the values of restraint, discipline, and self-regulation, "the moral masculinity of the imagined nation [was to be] made to perfection in the

physical exercise of the *Turnen*.”<sup>28</sup> It is precisely this strain of the German *Turnen* movement that Nordau and his Zionist colleagues would later pursue in their quest for the discipline of the muscle Jew.

As Svenja Goltermann has shown in her book, *Körper der Nation*, the German *Turnen* movement reached a zenith in terms of popularity shortly before German national unification in 1871.<sup>29</sup> At this time, hundreds of *Turnen* festivals, some of which attracted tens of thousands of spectators, were held throughout Germany, with performers showcasing their talents in massive displays of public exercise. The Leipzig “Turnfest” of 1863, for example, was attended by 22,000 gymnasts and more than 100,000 spectators.<sup>30</sup> Through elaborate stagings of precisely synchronized movements, the ideals of order, discipline, and virtue were performed, all things that were considered necessary for German national unity. Although women participated in the festivities as flag-bearers, wreath layers, and spectators, they were not allowed in the *Vereine*, and, hence, *Turnen* became a domain for the cultivation of masculinity and patriotism.<sup>31</sup>

It was only after the Prussians soundly defeated the French in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 that gymnastics and sporting clubs began to be seriously entertained in France “pour rendre aux français des muscles.”<sup>32</sup> As Eugen Weber points out:

Everyone knew that Prussian schoolmasters had been the real winners at Sedan and, somehow, Father Jahn’s gymnastics seemed easier to imitate than the playing fields of Eton. So, after 1871, rifle clubs, gymnastic societies, and enterprises devoted to preliminary training spread to fulfill their patriotic mission.<sup>33</sup>

Explicitly drawing on the teachings of Jahn and the German *Turnen* movement, the idea was to render the French youth “more virile, more apt to bear military life, more prepared to face a long conflict without discouragement.”<sup>34</sup> By the 1890s, gymnastics and sport not only became the means to create virile French soldiers but were also considered critical for the French colonial enterprise in Africa. As one chronicler put it: “Ce ne sont pas les beaux spirits qui partiront pour coloniser Madagascar. Il nous faut *du muscle*.”<sup>35</sup>

In addition to this martial cultivation of virility, the confluence of the ideals of physical strength, masculinity, and virtue also became a paradigmatic part of another, virtually synchronic movement of corporeal reform: “Muscular Christianity” in Victorian England.<sup>36</sup> The term “muscular Christianity” originated in a review of Charles Kingsley’s *Two Years Ago* (1857) published in *The Saturday Review* by T. C. Sandars. In the review, Sandars underscores a new ideal of masculinity, which brings together the moral teachings of the Christian faith with physical strength and moral grounding. As Sandars wrote:

We all know by this time what is the task that Mr. Kingsley has made specially his own—it is that of spreading the knowledge and fostering the love of muscular Christianity. His ideal is a man who fears God and can walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours—who, in the language which Mr. Kingsley has made popular, breathes God's free air on God's rich earth, and at the same time can hit a woodcock, doctor a horse, and twist a poker around his fingers.<sup>37</sup>

Although considered by some contemporaries to be a derogatory term, “muscular Christianity” quickly came to signify a new Victorian ideal of masculine potency. Kingsley's writings emerged as the focal point of the movement to cultivate a “healthy and manful Christianity.”<sup>38</sup>

As Norman Vance pointed out in his seminal study, *The Sinews of Spirit*, the historical conditions of possibility for the emergence of the movement are particularly important since they reflect a threat to British potency: “The sense of national emergency which was registered during the Napoleonic Wars was reawakened by a series of cholera epidemics, by the threat of French invasion in 1853, by the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny.”<sup>39</sup> These political conditions, coupled with the social and economic stresses of industrialization, including the reconfiguration of both the bourgeoisie and the working place as well as threats to the strength of the nation and the purity of the family, created the need to revitalize a weakened English identity.<sup>40</sup> And while these threats were certainly central to the development of “muscular Christianity,” the movement also gained a significant amount of momentum with the rise of modern nationalism and imperialism, both of which posited the regeneration of the nation and the race. Here, as C. J. W.-L. Wee points out, Kingsley sought to redeem “England's effete and fragmented condition” by looking for a “primitive vigor” from non-European lands and, thereby, “propagate the potent but unstable image of a masculine, charismatic, and authoritative Englishman who stands as a representative of a resolutely Anglo-Saxon and Protestant nation-empire.”<sup>41</sup> In this regard, Kingsley and the masculinist ideal of the “muscular Christianity” movement cannot be separated from the rise of British expansionism, the imperial nation, and the image of the noble savage.

Vance, however, sees the movement as more of a religious one, and for this reason he underscores its chivalrous and moral traditions, ones which go back to medieval hunting and falconry and were variously reworked in the writings of figures such as Rousseau, Carlyle, Scott, Coleridge, and Hughes. According to Vance, “the trouble with the phrase ‘muscular Christianity’ is that it draws attention more to muscularity than to Christianity,” thereby downplaying the Christian virtue of discipline and an ethic of service at its core.<sup>42</sup> What gets lost, however, in Vance's account is the very discourse of “muscularity”—that is to say, its ambivalently masculinist associations with physical fitness, health, hygiene, racial strength, and regeneracy. For this reason, very much

in line with Hall's decision to explore the "muscular" side of "muscular Christianity," my own study of muscular Judaism focuses on the ideology of muscle, something that is analogous to the "aggressively poised male body as a point of reference in and determiner of a masculinist economy of signification" in muscular Christianity.<sup>43</sup>

Outside of England, "muscular Christianity" emerged as a cultural ideal in the United States during roughly the same period. It was taken up by the Protestant churches under the leadership of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a Unitarian minister, who recognized the connections between Anglicanism, health, and sanctity.<sup>44</sup> Higginson criticized what he saw to be the American "deficiency of physical health" and called for "more health and manliness in the churches." Together with Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, an early advocate of building gymnasiums in YMCAs, Higginson sought, in no uncertain terms, to rid the ministry of "pallid, puny, sedentary, lifeless, joyless little offspring" and, instead, fill it with "the ruddy, the brave, and the strong."<sup>45</sup> Through muscle-building sports, such as gymnastics, American men could be made more robust and the trend toward effeminacy and degeneracy could be curtailed. Here, we also see the beginnings of a connection between the cultivation of "Christian manliness" and the emerging science of race.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the emphasis on physical health and muscularity became inextricably linked with the medical discourses of hygiene and racial fitness.<sup>46</sup> This connection is recognizable throughout Western Europe and the United States. As Robert Nye has shown in his study of the concept of national decline in *fin de siècle* France, the French "reacted favorably to a 'hygienic' physical culture that promised some hope of national regeneration" in light of the ever "deepening sense of anxiety about the biological (and therefore moral) health of the national stock."<sup>47</sup> Degeneracy was no longer considered to affect just the poor, inferior, or disenfranchised; rather it could strike any individual, class, or nation. With the anxiety over degeneration in almost every sphere of social and culture life, the attack on disease, weakness, effeminacy, deviancy, and criminality also prompted a renewed attention to the possibilities of national regeneration, which were most often articulated in racialized terms.<sup>48</sup> Far from a uniquely "German" phenomenon, as we already saw in Chapter 2, the discourse on health and fitness turned into a discourse on blood and racial hygiene through the logic of Social Darwinism.<sup>49</sup> Muscularity no longer simply signified fitness and strength but also racial superiority and the right to survive. As one speaker at the American Physical Education Association maintained in 1910: "We need in America an aristocracy of blood . . . the aristocracy of strength, of health and of efficiency."<sup>50</sup>

Harkening back to Jahn's emphasis on cultivating both the individual body and the body of the state or nation, we now see—in the European and American *fin de siècle*—a racial foundation for thinking about the vitality



of the body politic. As Foucault argued, the shift in emphasis focused on monitoring and correcting the strength and vigor of the population and, hence, the themes of progeny, racial fitness, the future of the species, birth and death rates, and other statistical indicators of social health took center stage.<sup>51</sup> Extensive statistical studies of national and non-national populations followed, all with the goal of determining the vitality of the population and the threats to its constitutive health.<sup>52</sup> In Germany, the Society for Racial Hygiene (*Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene*), established by Alfred Ploetz in 1905, put forth a proactive plan for regenerating the German people as a whole, which included, among other things, the opposition to the two-child system (in order to foster larger families and, hence, more offspring), the means to support “the reproduction of the fit” while preventing “the reproduction of the inferior,” the introduction of measures to fight disease (such as tuberculosis and syphilis) as well as social diseases (such as alcoholism), the protection of the population from “inferior immigrants,” the preservation and increase of the peasant class, the institution of favorable hygienic conditions in urban and industrial areas, the elevation of the fitness and strength of the individual, and the expansion of the military capacity of the nation.<sup>53</sup>

Significantly, degeneration—far from simply a “Jewish” problem—was considered to be an issue for everyone and, hence, the politics of the German “Lebensreform” (life reform) movement were directed at the German people as a whole. As Matthew Jefferies indicates:

[The] origins of *Lebensreform* lay in the numerous closely related strategies for self-improvement that emerged in Europe during the nineteenth century: abstinence, dietary reform, vegetarianism, natural health, and homeopathy. The reformers therefore began with the idea of reforming society through the individual, and as such reflected the enduring influence of both the Reformation and of German Idealism, with its notion of the perfectibility of the individual through self-cultivation (*Bildung*).<sup>54</sup>

Between 1880 and 1933, an extensive and varied series of reforms were introduced in domains as wide-ranging as nutrition, hygiene, clothing, sexuality, schooling, and land.<sup>55</sup> They included individualized practices such as abstinence and vegetarianism as well as broader reforms to protect nature and the environment, to create sanitary living conditions and cleaner working spaces, and to promote natural health. Although ultimately concerned with the regeneration of the population as a whole, “lifestyle reform,” as Friedrich Landmann, a Wilhelmine reformer put it, “has to begin with one’s own body and in one’s own home.”<sup>56</sup> Although many of the “life-reformers” were anti-capitalist and even anti-modernist in their advocacy of a return to nature and restoration of lost harmonies, the reform movement itself, as Kevin

Repp has elegantly shown, cannot be dismissed as simply “backward facing” or presaging the extremes of the Nazi state.<sup>57</sup> Instead, Imperial Germany generated many possibilities and “alternative modernities,” which did not lead inevitably to fascism. The muscle Jew discourse, as I have already indicated, is one such “alternative modernity” and, therefore, must be reintegrated not only into the cultural histories of modern Germany but also into the cultural histories of modern bio-politics.

Within Germany, the “*Körperkultur*” (body culture) movement, as Michael Hau has shown, was a significant part of the broader life-reform movement of bourgeois culture during the *fin de siècle*.<sup>58</sup> By focusing on diet, health, sex, marriage, exercise, cleanliness, and hygiene, the ills of “degeneration,” supporters maintained, could be staved off. In this regard, the *Körperkultur* movement was significantly broader than the German *Turnen* movement, which focused exclusively on gymnastics; the former embraced the latter but was also interested in all-round physical reform, which included a holistic approach to exercise, health, mental well-being, and beautification. As the central journal of the German *Körperkultur* movement, *Kraft und Schönheit* (Strength and Beauty), articulated the goals:

We see the corporeal degeneration of a large portion of our people, and we want to work against it, to the extent possible. In gymnastics, performed in the nude, we see the best means for hardening the skin, strengthening the nerves, and steeling the muscles. Through targeted education of all available facilities, we strive for a harmonious corporeal strength and beauty. We fight all harm from our one-sided culture and hold up “body culture” as one of the decisive demands of individual and state life. We work for explaining the important questions of physical being and promote every healthy life-reform. In the framework of our progressive culture, we demand a “human culture,” which does not bring about mental or technological progress at the cost of corporeal development, but rather allows us to achieve an ever higher development of the self.<sup>59</sup>

For the advocates of *Körperkultur*, the well-being and strength of the individual body are the prerequisites of the well-being and strength of the national body.

At the same time that the *Körperkultur* movement supported a broad range of proactive, life reform measures focused on the physical health of the body, the rhetoric of reform also moved in a direction that embraced the benefits of racial hygiene and eugenics. As Michael Hau writes:

Few life reformers would have found something wrong with the eugenicists’ utopian goal of rationalizing reproduction in order to create a society in which people could live free of disease and mental

or physical impairments. Life reformers therefore advocated positive eugenic measures in order to encourage the reproduction of the fit as well as negative eugenic measures to prevent the reproduction of the unfit.<sup>60</sup>

Once again, it is the specter of degeneration that motivated these measures to preserve and strengthen the vitality of the race and secure the fitness of the progeny. Far from univocally pointing toward the violent deployment of the eugenicist paradigm by the Nazi state, the bio-politics of modernity, particularly the “life reform” movement in Germany, engendered a wide field of possibilities and responses, including being taken up by Zionist thinkers who would extend its ideals to the cause of Jewish regeneration.

Given the incredibly rich, international development of the regenerative discourses of fitness, health, and racial hygiene in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is no coincidence that the Zionist calls for Jewish regeneration were inspired by and cited their European and American predecessors to establish an extensive network of Jewish gymnastics associations and a broad array of corporeal reforms focused on the Jewish body and the Jewish body politic. At the center of the movement for Jewish regeneration was the discourse around the muscle Jew, something that adds another layer of complexity to the historiography of modern “body reform” movements. Surprisingly, however, the muscle Jew is almost completely ignored in studies of *Körperkultur* and body reform, including, for example, the otherwise comprehensive collection edited by Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke, *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen, 1880–1933*, as well as recent studies such as that of Michael Hau.<sup>61</sup> In this respect, one of my ambitions is to write the missing “Jewish” chapter of the *Körperkultur* movement and integrate it back into the complex cultural and social history of regeneration and the bio-politics of modernity. I will now turn to the discursive organs of muscular Judaism in Germany.

### **The anatomo-politics of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung***

Preceding Nordau’s call for “muscular Judaism” by some three years, the first Jewish gymnastics association was founded in Constantinople in 1895. In fact, Jewish athletic associations had already existed in England and the United States for decades, something that indicates that Jewish corporeal regeneration was not limited to or strictly defined by an ideological affiliation with Zionism.<sup>62</sup> But what Nordau’s call for “muscular Judaism” did in 1898 was to give a name to and help catalyze a broader trend of Jewish regeneration that sought to articulate a national and decidedly modern solution to the Jewish question. Almost immediately, gymnastics associations began to spring up across the European continent and beyond. By 1903, when the Jewish Gymnastics Federation was established, nearly 30 Jewish

gymnastics associations existed throughout central Europe, from Berlin, Vienna, and Munich to Bucharest, Sofia, Cracow, and Bern, many with a strong Zionist constituency. Altogether, by 1903, the associations had about 2,000 members. Although men made up the vast majority of the members during the first decade, by 1912 80 percent of the Jewish sports clubs affiliated with the Federation had women members.<sup>63</sup> At this time, overall female membership was about 38 percent (JTZ, 1912, 7/8: 142). Berlin's Bar Kochba organization had set the precedent for female membership with more than a third of its members being women as early as 1903. As we will see, the articulation of a kind of "female muscle Jew" tradition originated from members of Bar Kochba and was first expressed on the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*.

By the tenth anniversary celebration of Bar Kochba in 1909, there were already 57 Jewish gymnastics associations, with 18 in Germany and 19 in Austro-Hungary (KR, 6). Following the German model, Jewish gymnastics associations rapidly spread across Western and Eastern Europe, the near East, and North America, with several eventually developing membership numbers in the thousands. At this time, broad-based Jewish sports clubs were also established throughout Central Europe, the most famous being the Hakoah Club of Vienna. Established in 1909, it opened the door to Jewish participation in competitive sports throughout the world, including soccer, polo, swimming, fencing, and wrestling.<sup>64</sup> In the United States, the first Young Men's Hebrew Association was founded in the mid-nineteenth century, and the first independent Young Women's Hebrew Association came about in 1902. In England there was the Jewish Lads Brigade and the Jewish Athletic Association.<sup>65</sup> With nineteen companies in London alone, the Jewish Lads Brigade, modeled after British infantry regiments, sought to "inculcate military discipline" to the youth (KR, 25).

As an umbrella organization, the "Jewish Gymnastics Federation," a general body representing most of the individual gymnastics associations, was created on March 22, 1903, "with the goal of [supporting] the corporeal rebirth of the Jewish people."<sup>66</sup> The second paragraph of its constitution read:

The purpose of the Jewish Gymnastics Federation is to cultivate gymnastics as the means of corporeal improvement of the Jewish people in the sense of the national-Jewish idea. By the term national-Judaism [*National-Judentum*], we mean the consciousness of belonging together of all Jews due to their shared descent and history as well as the will to preserve the Jewish racial community [*die jüdische Stammesgemeinschaft*] on this basis.<sup>67</sup>

In other words, Jewish gymnastics will not only facilitate corporeal improvement; it will also cultivate a shared sense of heritage through racial and national pride.

In the same year that the Federation was created, members began performing regularly at Zionist congresses, showcasing their talents for the delegates across Europe and also making regular trips to Palestine. International “Jewish Gymnastics Days” were organized by member associations, with the first occurring in Basel at the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903 and the second in Berlin in 1905. In front of the delegates and distinguished guests at the Sixth Zionist Congress, including Nordau, Herzl, Bodenheimer, and Mandelstamm, several dozen young Jews performed various gymnastics feats “with agility” and “ease,” according to the report published in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (JTZ, 1903, no. 11:189). Quite in contrast to both the anti-Semitic stereotype and the Zionist diagnosis of Jewish “degeneracy,” the young gymnasts did “not have pale faces, hunched-over backs, and broken hearts and chests; instead, they were healthy, ruddy men with strong muscles, young men whom, up until now, we were used to encountering only among the non-Jewish people of the world.” Characterized by their exemplary strength, courage, and discipline, these performers embodied “muscular Judaism.” Their physical prowess and individual “inner strength” were seen as the prerequisites of the Jewish people as a whole “becoming a nation like all others” (JTZ, 1903, 11: 189).

In tandem with such live performances of Jewish gymnastics, the most important discursive organ for disseminating the ideas of Jewish corporeal and national regeneration was *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, founded in Berlin in May of 1900.<sup>68</sup> As the “official organ” of Berlin’s Jewish Gymnastic Association, Bar Kochba, *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* would become the most widely read and circulated journal dedicated to Jewish corporeal regeneration. Over the course of more than three decades of existence, the monthly journal published a wide range of materials—from historical, scientific, and sociological articles to exercise programs and documentation of muscle Jews—all of which was meant to inspire and evoke Jewish heroism, strength, health, and potency. After 1903, it carried the subtitle “monthly for the corporeal improvement of the Jews,” a subtitle that was dropped in 1913 when the journal sought to mainstream its focus. It changed its name to *Jüdische Monatshefte für Turnen und Sport* (Jewish Monthly for Gymnastics and Sport). During World War I, the journal came out sporadically and changed its name again in 1919 to *Jüdische Turn- und Sportzeitung*. After another hiatus between 1920 and 1922, the journal was resurrected in 1923 under the name *Makkabi Blätter* and, after 1925, continued to exist as *Der Makkabi* until 1935.

In the opening statement of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* published in May 1900 (which actually predated the opening statement of *Kraft und Schönheit* by about a year), the editors, Hermann Jalowicz, Richard Blum, and Max Zirker, articulated the goals as follows:

What we want! Healthy minds live in healthy bodies! Although we never contested it, this old Latin word never found suitable observance by us Jews. It was recognized in theory, but thought never

became deed. The one-sided education of the mind, which caused our nervousness and mental fatigue, is what we are fighting! We want to give the limpid Jewish body back its lost vigor, to make it fresh and robust, agile and strong. We want to achieve this in a Jewish association, so that at the same time we can strengthen our unity and raise our self-consciousness, two things that have been dwindling. We want to show how old Jewish ideals, which in our young people seem to have been almost entirely lost, can once again give us an advantage and bring honor upon us. We want to stand up to anti-Semitism with courage and energy . . . We want to cultivate a noble national feeling, which is free from every sort of arrogance and in no way excludes work for all of humanity.

(JTZ, 1900, 1: 1)

As the first journal dedicated specifically to the physical improvement of the Jewish body, the editors of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* articulated a clear program for corporeal regeneration that not only included the cultivation of Jewish strength but also entailed the fighting of anti-Semitism and the development of latent feelings of Jewish nationality. The one-sided cultivation of the mind—to the detriment of the body—had taken its toll: Jews had become mentally fatigued, constitutionally nervous, and physically enfeebled.<sup>69</sup> A new consciousness of health and physical fitness would strengthen the unity of the people and tap latent feelings of national belonging. Significantly, the editors of the journal expressly avoided the articulation of any sort of nationalist platform and, instead, sought to place the journal's ideals within an open, universalist framework. In their vision for both the journal and the establishment of Jewish gymnastics associations, the strengthening of the Jewish body did not entail a dogmatic adherence to nationalist doctrines, something that certainly countermanded the contemporary political climate in both Germany and Austro-Hungary.<sup>70</sup>

In its fourth year, upon adopting the new subtitle—"monthly for the corporeal improvement of the Jews"—the editors exclaimed that the "bold origins" of journal were "to educate an entire people [*ein ganzes Volk erziehen*] by cultivating and improving its corporeal strengths" (JTZ, 1903, 1: 1). The corporeal improvement of the Jews was now considered "a national task," which began with the individual gymnasts learning the rudiments of "discipline" and ended with the "spread of the important doctrines of hygiene" to the Jewish people (JTZ, 1903, 1: 2). In so doing, the health and strength of the individual was explicitly linked with the health and strength of the Volk, race, tribe, people, or nation, terms that would all be deployed (often interchangeably) to designate the new Jewry of muscle. Not far from Foucault's analysis of bio-politics and "the future of the species" (HS, 147), the concern was "the future of our tribe" (*die Zukunft unseres Stammes*) (JTZ, 1903, 1: 3).

Up through the outbreak of World War I, *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* would distinguish itself by disseminating an extraordinary range of articles and ideas on Jewish “body culture,” many of which (but not all) were in accord with the emergence and development of Zionist politics. Over more than three decades, the journal published historical articles on ancient Jewish greatness, heroic personages, exercise and training routines for the improvement of musculature (Fig. 4.1), photographs of the gymnastic associations and muscle Jews (Fig. 4.2), inspirational fitness stories, military battle songs, schedules and results of various gymnastics competitions, hygiene programs, and medical discussions of the benefits of sun, light, and movement for a healthy body and a potent sexuality. In 1902, the journal profiled three “outstanding Jewish gymnasts”—Max Abraham, Alfred Flatow, and Richard Genserowsky (Figs 4.3 and 4.4)—each of whom had distinguished himself in world gymnastics competitions. Flatow had received the most acclaim, having won the gold medal on the parallel bars in the 1896 Olympics in Athens and first place in the German Gymnastics Festival in Hamburg in 1898 (JTZ, 1902, 6: 101).<sup>71</sup>

A leitmotiv that ran throughout the journal was the “physical improvement” of the Eastern European Jew, often pejoratively characterized as the *Jammergeschlecht* (wretched race), with a hunched-over body, crooked posture, awkward gait, underdeveloped musculature, and nervous disposition. Pictures of strong Jewish gymnasts with upright postures, elegant movements, developed muscles, and assured confidence were not only meant to provide inspiration and reclaim an ancient, heroic ideal; the bodies they depicted were also hailed as the precondition of a successful project of nation building.

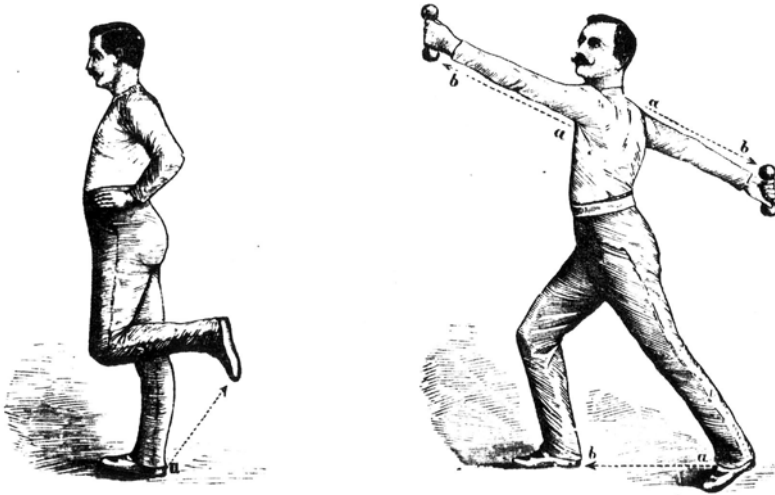
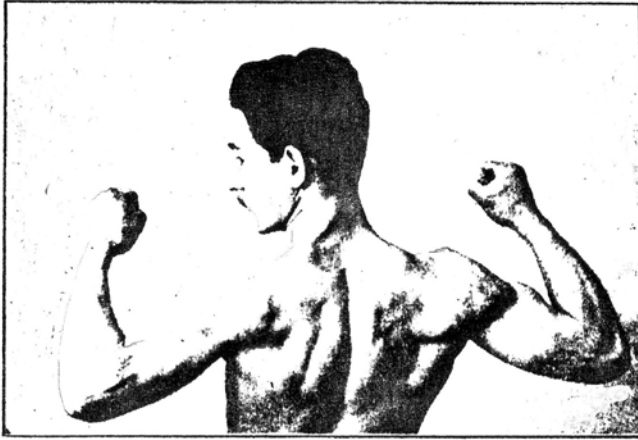


Figure 4.1 “Gymnastics Exercises,” *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (May 1907).



Gut durchgebildete Rücken- und Armmuskulatur.  
(Max Cohn, „Bar Kochba“-Berlin).

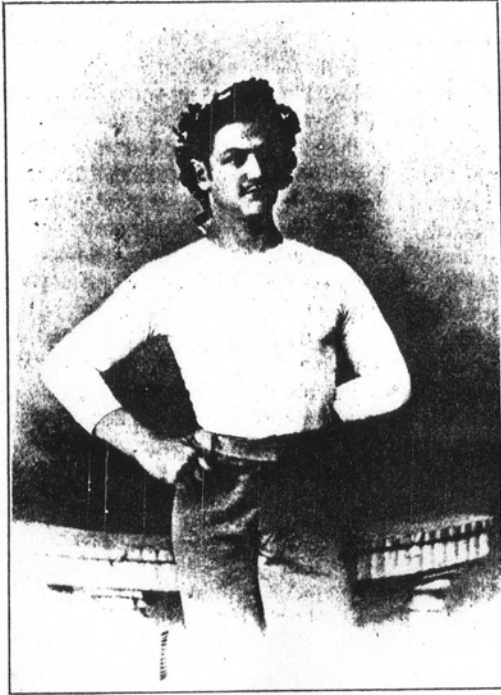
Figure 4.2 “Well-trained back and arm muscles,” *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (May 1904).

A strict binary thus emerged on the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*: on the one side was degeneracy, characterized by diasporic wandering, physical weakness, disease, mental nervousness, and particularity; on the other side was regeneracy, characterized by national groundedness, physical strength, health, mental agility, and universality.

Together with a number of Zionist thinkers engaged with the “question of the Eastern Jew,” the editors wrote a series of short articles that brought the diagnoses of degeneracy and nervousness to bear upon the corporeal reform of the Jewish race. Richard Blum, the first member of the Jewish Gymnastics Association in Berlin to pass the state exam for becoming a gymnastics instructor in 1902,<sup>72</sup> published an article entitled “Discipline” in which he argued that gymnastics combated nervousness by teaching military discipline, order, and strength (JTZ, 1900, 2: 14–15). The following month, Max Zirker published an article on gymnastics trips, arguing that such outdoor journeys not only strengthened lung capacity and increased blood circulation but would also, in the words of Jahn, the early nineteenth-century German patron of gymnastics, cultivate a “renewed masculinity [*Männlichkeit*]” (JTZ, 1900, 3: 21). The Jewish gymnastics associations—although politically distant from their German counterparts due to the prevalence of



## Hervorragende jüdische Turner.



**Richard Genserowsky.**

*Figure 4.3* “Outstanding Jewish Gymnast,” *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (June 1902).

anti-Semitism and outright legislation banning Jewish participation—often drew explicitly, as we will see, on the German national tradition of gymnastics and hiking clubs as articulated by men such as Jahn and Hans Blüher.<sup>73</sup>

But the most trenchant critique of the “degeneracy” of the Eastern Jewish body came from Mandelstamm, a Zionist delegate and Professor from Kiev, in a three-part article entitled, “The Question of the Corporeal Improvement of the Eastern-European Jews.” In this article, he describes how the body of the so-called ghetto Jew “vegetates” in a wretched, filthy environment, “teeming with millions of microbes,” without freedom, light, or air (JTZ, 1900, 5: 52). According to Mandelstamm the historical circumstances of the

cramped ghetto cannot bear all the blame for the “corporeal misery” of the Eastern Jew; the exacting nature of the orthodox Jewish tradition, from its methods of schooling to its dictates about early marriage, is also culpable<sup>74</sup>:

The narrow, stinking room, the lack of adequate ventilation, the awful lighting, the absence of hygienic school benches, and, as a consequence, the crooked body posture, the bent-over head while reading; and, on the other hand, the enormous number of hours in the classroom—often from nine in the morning until nine at night —, with scarcely an hour for recreation. All this would have been enough to ruin the gentle body of these little cosmopolites [*Weltbürger*], but on top of this, is the teaching itself . . . the instruction without plan, the regurgitation of the Bible.

(JTZ, 1900, 6: 63–64)



**Hervorragende jüdische Turner.  
Alfred Flatow.**

Figure 4.4 “Outstanding Jewish Gymnast,” *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (June 1902).

All this is to blame for “the exhaustion of the Jewish brain and that of the entire nervous system.” It also explains “the significantly higher number of nervous diseases and mental disturbances” among Jews in comparison with other races (JTZ, 1900, 6: 66). Extending Nordau’s critique of degeneration directly to Jews, Mandelstamm calls upon vitalist discourses, particularly the notions of energy and exhaustion popularized by psychologists and scientists during the *fin de siècle* such as Charcot, Bergson, and Freud, to critique the corporeal constitution of the Eastern Jew. The “pathological curvature” of the spinal cord that was studied, for example, by Charcot is not only used to explain nervousness and mental diseases but was now linked explicitly to the Jewish corporeal condition.<sup>75</sup> Although Mandelstamm believed that a multi-faceted program of economic, social, and educational reform would ultimately be necessary to overcome degeneracy, it was precisely through “obligatory gymnastics” that the Jewish body could become upright and strong, such that, one day, even Eastern Jews could become “competent soldiers” and, at last, “devote themselves to the colonization of Palestine” (JTZ, 1900, 7: 77, 78). From the journal’s very first year, then, corporeal regeneration was connected to nation building and colonization.

In discussing “The Tasks of the Jewish Gymnast” in November of 1900, Emanuel Edelstein, echoing Nordau and Mandelstamm’s ideas, also postulated that Jewish strength is the prerequisite of the “favorable solution to the Jewish question.” He situates the Jewish question—“at once a social, racial, and national question”—within a neo-Hegelian framework, which holds that world history, as it plays out in its particular national inflections, is nothing but a history of opposition, “a battle for nationality and a race war” [*ein Nationalitätskampf und ein Racenkrieg*] (JTZ, 1900, 7: 73–74). He sees these battles for recognition occurring all over the world: in Asia, China, the Philippines, as well as the Spanish–American War, the impending war between England and Russia, and, of course, the Zionist cause. Citing Nordau’s concept of muscle Jewry directly, he places the solution to the Jewish question within these historical lineages of bellicosity. In order to overcome the nervousness, degeneracy and weakness of the Jewish race and form a robust nation, Jews needed to “become men!” [*werdet Männer!*] (JTZ, 1900, 7: 74). Edelstein calls upon the heroic male tradition in ancient Judaism, but in contrast to the singular phallocentrism of Nordau’s muscle Jew, he is also the first author in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* to draw attention to the heroic female tradition, something which he links to a historical argument for creating a stronger Jewish race:

Daughters of Israel, whose beauty has radiated across all time since Sara and is still today uncontested, recognized, and sung; there is a Miriam, a Deborah, a Judith, a Ruth and an Esther for you to emulate, names that can never be erased. Take part in everything that endows your body with power, agility, and grace. Become a strong and

healthy sex [*ein starkes und gesundes Geschlecht*] and you, too, will play an important part in helping to solve the Jewish question.<sup>76</sup>

(JTZ, 1900, 7: 75)

Although the discourses of Jewish regeneration and nationality were almost completely dominated by men, the necessity of “female gymnastics” was recognized in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* from the very start. In answering the charge that “gymnastics is unfeminine . . . [that] we don’t need strong females [*weibliche Kraftmenschen*],” the editors retorted:

Is it unfeminine to improve the functioning of the heart and lungs, the circulation of the blood and the metabolism through purposive, strength movements (if possible in the open air), to toughen the muscles, and awaken an enthusiasm for movement, a sense of well-being, and a gaiety in play and hiking?

(JTZ, 1901, 9: 118)

Although the editors demurred somewhat with respect to the question of creating female muscle Jews, they did argue unequivocally that “it pays off for everyone when we recognize that one of the first tasks of today is to strengthen and preserve the health of the female sex by giving the most serious attention to gymnastics” (JTZ, 1901, 9: 119–120).

Support for female gymnastics among the male representatives was never, however, entirely liberatory since the discussions in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* quite clearly limited the social role of women to healthy reproduction and motherhood. Richard Blum, for example, in comparing antique and modern gymnastics, explained that female gymnastics was important to the Spartans because, like today, “the strength and health of the nation is vitally dependent upon the strength and health of the mother” (JTZ, 1902, 2: 32). In a follow-up article entitled “Girl’s and Women’s Gymnastics” (1902), he argued that gymnastics was crucial for the health and strength of the female body and, by extension, the Jewish nation. Blum’s concern was not with women’s liberation per se but with the role of women for the fertility of the nation. Women needed to “liberate” themselves, he argued, from the crutch of the “corset” by strengthening their own “back muscles” and assuming a healthy posture; this would enable, in his medical opinion, healthy Jewish women, with strong back muscles, powerful lungs, and freely circulating blood, to produce stronger children, in turn, “serving your sisters, your families, your communities, and your nation!” (JTZ, 1902, 5: 80) (Fig. 4.5).

Indeed, for the majority of the first decade of the journal’s existence, the theory of female gymnastics was primarily articulated by men. In fact, it was not until 1911 that the journal published a speech by Betti Eger of the women’s division of the Jewish Gymnastics Association in which she argued, on behalf of the female members: “We want to contribute to the health of



Figure 4.5 “Free Exercises” (Women’s gymnastics club of Bar Kochba, Berlin), *Ost und West* (November 1901).

our people’s body [*Volkskörper*]. We want to become strong muscle Jews [*kräftige Muskeljuden*]” (JTZ, 1911, 4: 75). Confirming the significant health benefits of gymnastics that her male colleagues consistently emphasized, Eger argued that gymnastics would not only produce healthier mothers but also beget stronger children. For this reason, she maintained, female muscle Jews were just as important as male muscle Jews for the creation of the new state.

Within the *fin de siècle* German context, it was Gertrud Bäumer who most fervently advocated for the necessity of producing strong mothers in order to strengthen the German nation. Bäumer, elected the Chairwomen of the *Bund deutscher Frauenvereine* (League of German Women’s Associations) in 1910, articulated a platform of liberal humanism coupled with social Darwinian principles and the science of eugenics. In a programmatic article of 1913, “To What Ideals Should the Modern German Woman Strive?”, Bäumer argued that female gymnastics would create women who:

could no longer stand fearful, helpless, and faint-hearted before the challenges of life. The energy, the consciousness of one’s strength, the self-assurance that would come to them through this command of their bodies, all this would harden them and guide them in the intellectual tasks before them.<sup>77</sup>

Gymnastics would essentially inculcate female “true moderns,” who could adapt to and confront the pressures of modernity. As she wrote in another article shortly before World War I: “In its connection with eugenics, this old ideal [liberal humanism] becomes more corporeal, more concrete. Even now it retains its universally valid, all-encompassing significance. Because the improvement of the race means the improvement of all.”<sup>78</sup> Bäumer placed motherhood within a universalist framework derived from the Enlightenment investment in social progress: the improvement of the strength and vitality of the progeny would, in turn, strengthen the vitality of the nation. It was through a specifically feminine attentiveness to the maternal instincts of life and culture that would be necessary, she thought, for Germany to overcome the sterility and degeneracy of modern civilization.<sup>79</sup>

Very much in line with its twentieth-century German counterpart, muscular Judaism explicitly linked corporeal training—of both men and women—to nationality, whether through overcoming nervousness and mental diseases or through strengthening musculature in order to give birth to and rear stronger children. Within German Zionism, this connection between corporeal regeneration and nationality consistently derived both its theoretical program and historical legitimacy from the German “father” of gymnastics, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Applying Jahn’s ideas of nationality and nationalism directly to the Jews, Blum points out that modern Jews cannot afford “to close their eyes to the successes which the German people recorded with its gymnastics associations.” To support his point, he quotes Jahn with approbation: “Only the beneficial education [*Ausbildung*] of the entire human being [through gymnastics] protects against any sort of corporeal and mental crippling and deformation” (JTZ, 1900, 6: 62). In the same way that Jahn believed gymnastics to be necessary for the “inner elevation of the German fatherland and people . . . in order to build up a new Germany,”<sup>80</sup> Zionist members considered gymnastics to be necessary for the rebirth of their own heroic nationality and the prerequisite for the colonization of Palestine.

It was this notion of “embodied” nationality stemming from Fichte and Jahn that the Zionists adopted and applied to their own cause. Transferring Jahn’s ideas of German fraternity, unity, and nationality to Zionism, Felix Meyer, in an article entitled the “Hygienic Value of Gymnastics,” quite clearly connects the anatomo-politics of German nationality to that of Jewish nationality:

After Prussia was defeated by the hand of the great Napoleon . . . men like Jahn came forward . . . [and] recognized that the foundation for a moral rebirth of the people was to be found in personal self-defense, that a strengthening of the courage of the individual [would do the same] for the nation.

He then draws a parallel between the situation of the German people after 1806 and that of contemporary Jews who “have a right and a duty to be a nation” (JTZ, 1901, 4: 46). The scattered Jewish “national body” would similarly be reassembled and resurrected once the individual bodies of the Jews were strengthened and regenerated.

This parallel between the development of German nationality and Jewish nationality vis-à-vis gymnastics is nowhere more pronounced in the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* than in the commemorative article written by Theobald Scholem honoring the fiftieth anniversary of Jahn’s death in 1902. Although the article itself is hardly an unreserved paean to Jahn’s greatness (in contrast to the legions of tributes paid to Jahn in 1902 by German gymnastics associations), Scholem clearly posited that “the father of universal, strictly nationalist gymnastics” paved the way for the development of Jewish gymnastics and the cultivation of Jewish nationality. He concedes that Jahn “never spoke good of Jews”; however, he does point out that Jahn’s book, *Die deutsche Turnkunst*, provided “systematic instructions for all branches of gymnastics,” instructions that are now being carefully followed by Jewish gymnasts (JTZ, 1902, 10: 167). And if there was any doubt about his influence, the article was typeset around a photograph of nine muscle Jews posing on the parallel bars with a Star of David banner emblazoned with “JTVBK,” Jüdischer Turnverein Bar Kochba (Fig. 4.6). Like the defeated Germans before them, Jews would rise up—first by strengthening their individual bodies through gymnastics—to become a unified and formidable national body.

Not only were the ideas of Jahn adopted to achieve national unity, the staging of the photographs and the gymnastics performances themselves fostered a kind of male-bonding among the Jewish gymnasts, which represented an important means of achieving unity. We must take these photographs as snapshots of a greater and more complicated phenomenon, namely the way in which Jewish gymnastics associations participated in the creation of male-oriented and, as was predominantly the case, male-centered social formations that, like their German counterparts, were meant to stir patriotic feelings precisely through their homoerotic impulses and bonds. Jewish gymnasts exercised and performed in same-sex groups as well as undertook same-sex hiking trips and other outdoor journeys while singing military songs that celebrated their masculinity. Moreover, a whole array of male-centered, Jewish “Wanderklubs” came into existence all over Europe during this period, many of which took the German youth and body reform movements, such as the *Wandervogel*, as their shared starting point. As Hans Blüher, the founder and the primary exponent of the German *Wandervogel* movement, later argued in his book, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft* (The Role of the Erotic in the Male Society), “erotic,” male-bonding experiences such as those experienced in sports competitions and the German youth movement, were a necessary prerequisite for both patriotism and state formation.<sup>81</sup> Despite Blüher’s well-known anti-Semitism,

## Zur 50. Wiederkehr des Todestages von Friedrich Ludwig Jahn.

Am 15. Oktober des Jahres sind es 50 Jahre, seitdem der Vater der deutschen Turnkunst Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, in's Grab gesunken ist. Überall wo es Turner giebt, wird dieses Tages gedacht und dieses Mannes dankbar Erwähnung gethan; daher ist es auch eine Pflicht für uns jüdische Turner, dem Gedächtnisse des „Alten im Barte“ einige Worte der Erinnerung zu widmen.

Es ist schwer, die turnerische und politische Wirksamkeit Jahn's streng von einander zu trennen. Beides geht so sehr bei ihm in eins auf, dass man seine Persönlichkeit nicht von der einen Seite allein betrachten kann. Die Zeit seiner Grösse und



allgemeinen, streng volkstümlichen Turnens. Seine Persönlichkeit war eine absonderliche, nicht nur für uns heute, sondern auch für seine Zeitgenossen. Jahn war ein Mann von rauen Sitten, streng gegen sich selbst und gegen andere, von ungestümer durchaus eigenartiger Beredsamkeit. Sein Äusseres bekundete den Sonderling, der sich an so nebensächliche Dinge wie Moden nicht kehrte. Seinen turnerischen Grundsätzen ist er stets treu geblieben bis an sein Lebensende. Mochte ihn auch das Schicksal schwer heimsuchen, und die Unduldsamkeit seiner zahlreichen Feinde ihm Gefängnis und Verbannung bringen, er ist nicht schwankend geworden in seinen Thun. Rücksichtslos ist er seinen Widersachern entgegengetreten und hat mit ihnen mehr als drei Jahrzehnte gekämpft. Ein harter, starrer Sinn, ein durchaus unpolitischer, unnachsichtiger und unnachgiebiger Kopf war ihm

Bedeutung fällt in die Jahre 1806 bis 1819. Nachher hatte sein Wirken keine grundlegende, einschneidende Bedeutung mehr. Als er den Turnplatz in der Hasenheide zu Berlin eröffnete, wurde er in Wirklichkeit der Vater des

Figure 4.6 "On the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Death of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn," *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (October 1902).



Jewish gymnastics associations nevertheless applied these aspects of his theories about hiking clubs, physical fitness, and the erotic development of patriotism to the Zionist cause.

In trying to elucidate the multiplicity of ways in which sex was put into political and social discourse during the *fin de siècle*, Magnus Hirschfeld, the Jewish cofounder of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, the first homosexual rights organization in the world, placed the birth of the German homosexual emancipation movement in the context of several other “body” reform movements at the end of the nineteenth century:

It is no coincidence that the Wandervogel movement and the first country boarding schools were founded during the same brief time span when, quite independent of one another, a number of sexual reform movements took shape. We might mention: the Society for the Control of Venereal Diseases, which dared to call an evil by name when it was almost considered worse to mention it than have it; the movement for the protection of maternity, which took up the cause of unwed mothers and illegitimate children, regarded as social pariahs no less than those afflicted with venereal diseases; the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, which took up the struggle for the justification and defense of congenital homosexuals against legal and social persecution . . . And above all there appeared on the scene the pioneers, then called “radical,” of women’s emancipation.<sup>82</sup>

Although Hirschfeld was never a committed Zionist, it is striking that he fails to mention the ways in which Zionism and Jewish gymnastics associations attempted to reform the Jewish body, and were, therefore, also part and parcel of this *fin de siècle* lineage. As we have already seen, Zionism emerged in a richly complicated period in which body reform movements—from the more general “life-style” reform movements to the homosexual and women’s emancipation movements and the youth, sports, fitness, and nudist movements—were gaining both social recognition and political momentum.<sup>83</sup>

It should come as no surprise, then, that Jewish hiking trips organized by and for the male members of the Jewish gymnastics associations started to become popular during the same years that the German youth movement took off. In one of its first descriptions of a Jewish “Gymnastics trip,” *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* published a short travelogue of Bar Kochba’s journey to the Harz mountains in Thuringia. After concluding with a tribute to the “most important men” who came from this region—von Scheffel, Goethe, and Bismarck—a song celebrating their masculinity was reproduced. This so-called “Männerlied,” first dedicated in 1896, was a typical military song replete with socially appropriate images and expressions of masculinity and was probably sung by both Jewish gymnasts and members of the German youth movement. Its last stanzas, meant to evoke a masculine heroism, went like this:

Men, even then,  
 we will not despair like cowards,  
 but take the punches of destiny  
 we will be patient, without complaining.  
 Strong is the man.  
 Step forward men!  
 Don't tremble before the future!

(JTZ, 1901, 7/8: 101)

Virility was a function of how well men absorbed “the punches of destiny” without complaint, fear, or trembling. In this way, masculine bravado, patriotism, and male-bonding were historically linked on the pages of the journal.

Over the course of the next decade, as the German youth movement burgeoned, Jewish gymnastics associations established their own “Wanderklubs.”<sup>84</sup> Although Jews were not always outright banned from the German youth movement, the prevalence of anti-Semitism kept most Jews from participating in German gymnastic associations and hiking clubs. In 1908, Georg Arndt officially called for the establishment of Jewish hiking clubs in a lead article published in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, “Gründet Wanderklubs!” (Found Hiking Clubs!), in which he argued that such clubs would extend “the kernel of a disciplined, goal-conscious team,” something that was important for “every national gymnastics” group (JTZ, 1908, 7). The same year, Theobald Scholem argued that Jewish “body culture” (*Körperkultur*) must not restrict itself to indoor activities since the “gymnastics hall is only a substitute means” for nature: “Above all, we need light and air and forest and fields.” Responding to some reservation on the part of Jewish gymnastics associations to support patriotic hiking trips analogous to their German counterparts, Scholem critically asked:

We Jews are scattered throughout the world and forced, because of our fate, to eternally wander. Why do we not go outside in nature? Is it that we have lost the desire to wander because of our incessant search for a home, because wandering has become a symbol of our misfortune? . . . There must not be any Jewish gymnastics association which refuses to undertake hiking trips . . . In the forests and fields, in rain or in sun, the Jew will get to know what he has lost for millennia, namely love of mother earth.

(JTZ, 1908, 6: 112)

He emphasizes light, air, and free movement in nature, all things that were constitutive of the rhetoric of contemporaneous German body reform movements. In essence, he is calling for a Jewish version of the *Wandervogel*.

In the years immediately preceding World War I, a significant backlash against Jews developed within the German *Wandervogel* movement, leading Zionist Jews to establish their own version of the *Wandervogel*, “Blau-Weiss” (Blue-White), a youth association dedicated to scouting, fitness, and Jewish patriotism.<sup>85</sup> Although Felix Rosenblüth maintained in 1913 that the initial impetus for founding “Blau-Weiss” was not anti-Semitism but rather “to awaken a Jewish community consciousness in children at an early age,” he argued that it had recently become clear to him that the *Wandervogel* conceived of “German nationality” more and more as tantamount to being anti-Jewish (JTZ, 1913, 7: 213, 209). In describing the founding of the “Blau-Weiss” hiking club in Vienna, Otto Gersuny argued that the new group fits within “a series of institutions whose goal is the corporeal and national education of the Jewish youth and thereby fulfills one of the most noble tasks of the Jewish renaissance movement.” Not only will “the body be strengthened” through Jewish hiking and scouting trips, he maintains, but a sense of nationality will also be cultivated in “an ever more perfect system of Jewish-national welfare for the youth” (JTZ, 1913, 7: 214).

Although a full-fledged theory of male-bonding and Jewish state formation never emerged on the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, the homosociality of the hiking clubs—both the Jewish and the German incarnations of the *Wandervogel*—cannot be denied. After all, the cultivation of masculinity and male-bonding was always a significant part of muscular Judaism, from its very first conceptualization by Nordau in 1898 through its various permutations in the Jewish gymnastics associations and hiking clubs of the early twentieth century. This is evident in the belief that gymnastics promotes masculinity and nationality, the songs to manhood, the photographs of muscle Jews and male-bonding, and the modeling of Jewish hiking clubs after their German antecedents vis-à-vis same-sex groupings and the erotics of patriotism.

Perhaps even more telling, it was in 1912—the year in which the Jewish *Wandervogel* association Blau-Weiss was founded—that Hans Blüher published his influential and highly controversial history of the German youth movement, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen* (The German Wandervogel Movement as Erotic Phenomenon), in which he asserted that homoerotic bonding explained the exclusivity and popularity of the movement. His words could arguably apply to Blau-Weiss as well: “The youth in the *Wandervogel* can do without women” because “the friendship between [men] of the same sex gains an erotic tone, which enters the consciousness and also turns into desire there.”<sup>86</sup> Linking women with weakness, Blüher later asserts the *Wandervogel* was “a *völkisch* occurrence” that, with its “heroic tone,” “contradicted all hasty associations with femininity or softness” and instead “represented a strongly emphasized Germanic racial type.”<sup>87</sup> In other words, the cultivation of masculinist, same-sex desire—far from feminine, weak, or unheroic—is the central way in

which Blüher historicized the movement's popularity and described its inhering "Germanic" strength. Here, völkishness and homosexuality are deeply intertwined.

By 1917, in his magnum opus, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft*, Blüher argued that the "Männerbund" (male-bond) was the critical fundament for establishing a State. For Blüher, the "männliche Gesellschaft" (male society)—not the heterosexual family—creates the only possibility of supporting a state structure through its institution of homosocial bonds:

The family can be a constitutive element of the State but nothing more. Wherever nature has created a species that is really capable of establishing a state, this has only been achieved by smashing the dictatorship of the family as well as the male-female sexual urges themselves.<sup>88</sup>

In other words, neither women nor heterosexual relationships, according to Blüher, form the basis of the state. As Andrew Hewitt has argued in his analysis of the masculinist tradition, this is because "Blüher dissociates the structure of the State from the structure of the family and resituates homosocial relations within the field of an Eros constitutive of the State."<sup>89</sup> Homosocial male-bonding—as exemplified by the *Wandervogel* or the male gymnastics associations—is necessary for state formation.

In an extraordinary footnote in the second volume of his book, Blüher argues that Jews do not have a state precisely because they "suffer from a weakness of male-bonding [*Männerbundschwäche*] and at the same time, a hypertrophy of the family. . . . allegiance, alliances, and bonds are not Jewish affairs" (RE, II:170). This overemphasis on the family—and under-emphasis on male-bonding, homosexuality, and institutions of homosociality—has condemned Jews to have strong familial, racial, and ethnic ties, but no state: "World history has cursed them always to be a *race* and never a *Volk*" (RE, II:170).<sup>90</sup> In other words, far from being too homosexual, as Weininger and other anti-Semites consistently labeled Jews,<sup>91</sup> Blüher posited that Jews were not homosexual enough! He continues by describing certain "characteristics" of the Jewish race, including their refusal to obey a leader as well as their penchant for monetary exchange and hedonism, characteristics that he attributes to Jews being merely a race. Blüher points out that with Herzl's famous declaration, "Wir sind ein Volk!" (We are a people!), which he quotes, and the founding of Zionism, Jews have begun to awaken their "male-bonding instinct" (RE, II:172). Although he does not mention muscular Judaism or the Jewish gymnastics associations and "Wanderklubs," new organizations of male-bonding that were not centered on the heterosexual family had already begun to develop. Perhaps because of his anti-Semitism, Blüher, however, is not exactly optimistic about the prospects that

Jews will become a “Volk” and form a Jewish state through the institutions of male-bonding since he sees Zionism as “already on its way to being jewified [*verjuden*]” by ethnic Jews who are “organizing, making deals, politicizing, and speculating” (RE, II:172). By this logic, then, Zionism is actually “un-Jewish” because it not only calls for the rootedness of a state but also awakens the homosocial “Männerbund.” Blüher predicts that Zionism will fail precisely by becoming “Jewish,” that is, in his terms, by becoming speculative, exchange- and money-oriented, racial, familial, and, ultimately, heterosexual.

Although the Jewish gymnastics associations and hiking clubs certainly drew inspiration from the male-bonding activities of the *Wandervogel* and its patriotic homosociality, German Zionism never “awakened male-bonding” in quite the way that Blüher thought necessary for Jews to become a Volk.<sup>92</sup> On the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, for example, the theorization of sex was primarily limited to debates over how early marriage should take place and how healthy, heterosexual reproduction paralleled the fertility of the future Jewish state. Far from the homoerotics of the state, these issues were largely thematized under the overlapping rubrics of sexual hygiene and colonization, the latter of which I will explore in Chapter 5. In the last part of this section, I want to indicate how it was heterosexuality—not male-bonding, despite the important alliances with the German *Wandervogel*—that was redeployed for state formation. Then, in the second part of this chapter, I will turn to the discourses of Jewish hygiene and reproductive sexuality in more detail by focusing on Jewish race doctors and the Jewish section of the Dresden Hygiene Exhibition.

As muscular Judaism moved from the regeneration of the individual body to that of the Jewish people as a whole, the logic of bio-power likewise shifted to address questions of monitoring, administering, and maximizing the fertility and strength of the Jewish population. That is to say, the emphasis moved from the regeneration of the individual to the regeneration and relocation of the “species body.” This is because the corporeal preparation of the Jewish people had to precede the colonization of the new land. In an article entitled “The Colonization of Palestine,” which appeared in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* of 1908, Aron Sandler discussed the importance of “fertility” [*Fruchtbarkeit*] for both the colonizers and the cultivation of the land. The Jewish settlers would first have to be strong and sexually potent as a “people” to cultivate the arid land, and, later on, the cultivation of the land would keep the colonists strong and sexually potent. The creation of muscle Jews was not an end in itself, he maintained, but rather a means toward permanently overcoming the affliction of degeneracy and building a new nation through fertility, colonization, and agriculture.

Indeed, this ideological association of reproductive sexuality with the cultivation of the land has received a kind of iconic status in Israeli-Zionist discourses, perhaps most emblematically represented by strong, Jewish

farmers tilling the arid ground.<sup>93</sup> In fact, these representations can be found as early as 1900 in the official postcards of the Zionist congress.<sup>94</sup> Here, representations of salvational female figures often appear side-by-side with muscular, male farmers, visualizing the Zionist colonial dream of returning to Palestine together with the ideology of fertility and sexual reproduction. The Jewish state emerges simultaneously from the cultivation of the Jewish body and the ground for the population to prosper.

It was precisely this concept of fertility—understood both as the cultivation of the land and as an ideal for the strengthening of the Jewish family and the Jewish people through the ideology of reproduction and sexual hygiene—that provided the rationale for Jewish race doctors, such as Elias Auerbach, Albert Baer, and, most famously, Felix Theilhaber, to consider Zionism as a form of “hygiene” for the Jewish people.<sup>95</sup> The male and the female muscle Jew, brought together by the strictures of early marriage, increased birth rates, and monogamy, would be, according to Theilhaber and other doctors who published in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, necessary if the Jews were to produce progeny who would prosper as a colonial Volk. With respect to muscle Jews and Zionist gymnastics associations, Theilhaber affirms, “we have a true movement which is seriously interested in the corporeal well-being of the Volk” (JTZ, 1911, 10: 189). However, he insists that “the national [*völkisch*] health of the Jews” is nevertheless endangered by many things, ranging from mental and physical diseases to socio-economic conditions, sexually transmitted diseases, and even “the two child system of modernity,” that latter of which he considers to have “racially-damaging [*rassenschädigende*] consequences” (JTZ, 1911, 10: 191). In effect, he calls for a scientifically systemic approach to regenerating the Jewish race and its reproductive sexuality. In no uncertain terms, he labels this approach “Jewish eugenics [*jüdische Eugenik*]” (JTZ, 1911, 10: 190).

In what follows, I will examine Theilhaber’s theory of “Jewish eugenics” within the context of the “hygiene” movement before World War I, with a particular focus on the 1911 International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden. What I want to probe in the second part of this chapter is how the muscle Jew discourse moved from the regeneration of the individual body to the regeneration of the population as a whole. The Zionist concept of bio-power did not emerge from a preexisting state but rather developed—through the condensation of multiple, *fin de siècle* discourses that put sex into discourse—precisely in order to give form to the Jewish state.

### **Jewish population politics: Felix Theilhaber and the International Hygiene Exhibition**

Shortly after completing his doctorate degree in medicine, Felix Theilhaber published an alarmist book in 1911 called *Der Untergang der deutschen Juden* (The Destruction of the German Jews), in which he prophesied the

extinction of the German-Jew.<sup>96</sup> Using statistics to study population trends and Jewish demography, Theilhaber argued that, since the nineteenth century, German Jews were essentially committing race suicide. Due to, among other things, their high rates of assimilation, intermarriage, conversion, infertility, degeneracy, and sexual practices, the German Jews would probably not last through the twentieth century. Prior to modernity, Theilhaber argued, Jews had been the exemplars of a sound eugenic tradition, with codified practices of sexual hygiene and reproduction, which explained their uncanny survival throughout the millennia. Indeed, he was not alone in this belief. Many other contemporaneous Jewish race doctors such as Elias Auerbach, Ignaz Zollschan, and Alfred Nossig also stressed the uniqueness and the importance of Jewish health and hygiene during the pre-modern period for the perpetuation of the Jewish people.<sup>97</sup> But at the start of the twentieth century, Theilhaber maintained, the Jewish population in Germany (as well as other Western European countries) found itself in a steady decline due to the seemingly ineluctable pressures of modernity, the abandonment of their religious traditions, and the rapid spread of degenerative diseases. In Theilhaber's apocalyptic words, "the German Jews are a people going under [*ein untergehendes Volk*]" (U, 154).

Indebted to other, roughly contemporaneous studies of populations (such as those pioneered by Alfred Nossig and Arthur Ruppin<sup>98</sup>), Theilhaber's methodology for studying the so-called "destruction" of the German Jews was strictly quantitative and relied on the seemingly objective certainty of scientifically determined numbers and statistical analyses. It was exactly a decade earlier that Nordau first called for the statistical analysis of the Jewish population at the Fifth Zionist Congress, demanding answers to scores of questions including Jewish marriage and fertility rates, child-bearing statistics, demographic trends, mortality rates, and so forth. And in January of 1905, the Bureau for Jewish Statistics began publishing the *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, replete with comparative statistical analyses of Jewish physical and racial characteristics as well as Jewish demographics, education levels, religious practices, migration trends, and population data. In terms of methodology, Theilhaber's quantitative-scientific approach in *The Destruction of the German Jews* was anything but innovative. But what was new and decidedly influential about his book was the way in which he synthesized a fascinatingly wide-range of material on Jewish "bio-power" in order to give tacit credence to the Zionist project of forming a Jewish state. By placing a renewed emphasis on the study and management of the Jewish population, Theilhaber showed that sex is not only something deployed to reform the individual Jewish body but also to regenerate the hygienic potential of the Jewish people as a whole. As we will see, his warning of imminent destruction must also be interpreted as the legitimization of the Zionist state.

When Theilhaber published his argument that the German Jews were on the verge of extinction, the study of hygiene had already turned into a

“science.” The health of both individuals and the population as a whole was something that could be medically studied, sociologically known, and even historically determined. Sexual hygiene, fertility, reproduction, racial strength, eugenics, and physical and mental fitness were all part of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses on scientifically managing populations. For this reason, as John Efron has pointed out, Theilhaber’s own ideas about “sexual hygiene must be seen in the context of contemporary developments in German and, more broadly, European medicine at the time.”<sup>99</sup> Indeed, it is no coincidence that Theilhaber’s scientific study of Jewish hygiene was published in the same year that the doors to the International Hygiene Exhibition opened in Dresden, and the curators of the exhibition trumpeted Franz von Stuck’s depiction of a giant, knowing “eye” as the symbol of the study of hygiene. The gigantic eye, which both looks and knows at the same time, stared directly at visitors from the transcendental perspective of the infinite sky and starry heavens. On the ground, a classically symmetrical building with Ionic columns—what is certainly meant to be a reference to the classical idea of perfect architecture reflecting perfect human dimensions—housed the exhibit. By replacing superstition and divine intervention with the knowing eye, the science of hygiene exemplified the convergence of power and knowledge. Hygiene was now a modern science built upon the resurrection of the classical order of perfection.

While Theilhaber’s thesis of imminent destruction caused an immediate stir within the Jewish community, the International Hygiene Exhibition opened on May 6, 1911, to eagerly curious crowds.<sup>100</sup> In fact, by the time the exhibition closed at the end of the year, more than 5.5 million visitors had come through its doors. Having been in the planning since 1903, the exhibition was the largest and most comprehensive display of the history and importance of hygiene ever undertaken in Germany. Its 320,000 square meters of ground included more than 50 exhibition buildings and halls divided into 6 general areas: science, history, popular hygiene, sports, statistics, and industry. The individual displays explored the historical, medicinal, and sociological aspects of comparative hygiene, and included information about health and well-being, the etiology and spread of diseases (such as cancer, tuberculosis, syphilis, alcoholism, and even tooth decay), the nourishing of the body through proper diet and exercise, the proper care and preparation of food, and appropriate hygiene practices at home, in school, in the military, and in colonial lands. Historical and national pavilions detailed the uniqueness of hygiene practices from antiquity to the present and featured country-specific exhibits ranging from Hungary, Spain, and Brazil to Russia, China, and Japan. Finally, there was also ample space for athletics and physical fitness, with gymnastics and sports halls, tennis courts, swimming pools, and even bowling lanes available to visitors.

In the same way that Stuck’s poster for the exhibition depicted the knowing “eye” of hygiene gazing onto classical architecture, visitors who came to the



exhibition entered the grounds through neo-classical colonnades, ready to discover what the science of hygiene could reveal. Beyond the entrance colonnades, visitors could see the circular architecture of the monumental “popular hall,” housing an exhibit on “Der Mensch.” Inside the main room, at the end of the symmetrical corridor was an apse, upon which a sculpture of a nude man raising his head and hands toward the sky was installed (Fig. 4.7). The classically perfect musculature—with a sculpted chest and hard abdominal muscles, powerful arms and muscled legs—illustrated the ideal man of hygiene. On the sculpture’s pedestal was an inscription that read: “No richness compares to that of health.” As a kind of religious icon set above and dwarfing the eager masses, the “hygiene man” represented both the health of the individual and a regenerative injunction for the health of the species body.

In his foreword to the official catalogue, Karl Lingner, the chief curator and organizer of the exhibition, pointed out that hygiene—far from a technical matter reserved for scientists and doctors—impacted everyone since the health and welfare of the individual directly correlated with the health and welfare of the people and the state. This is because “a State is nothing more than a community of human beings, whose well-being, happiness, and longevity is dependent upon the composition of its individuals.”<sup>101</sup> The health

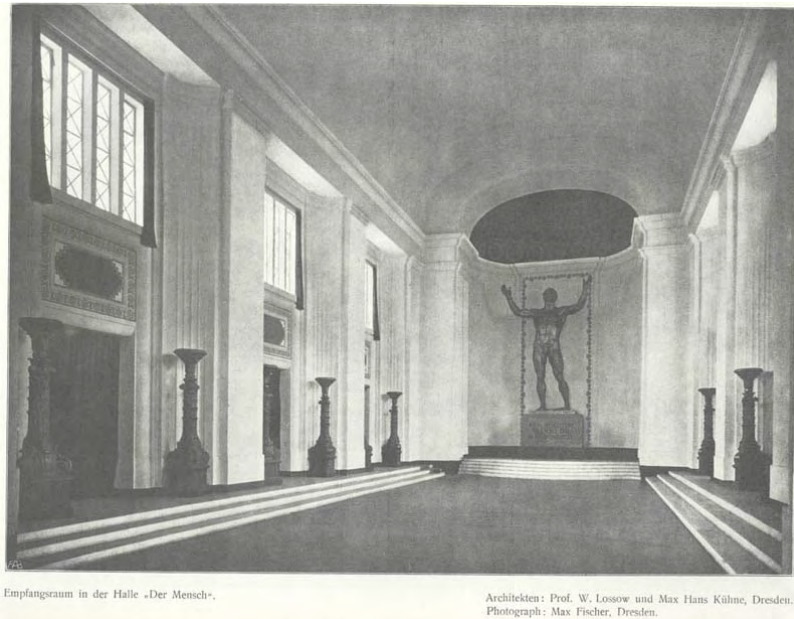


Figure 4.7 “Main room of ‘Der Mensch,’” Dresden Hygiene Exhibition, 1911.

of the individual members, their life spans, fertility rates, and codes of conduct and behavior—in short, what Lingner terms their “hygienic system” (OK, 11)—determine the health, lifespan, fertility, and conduct of the state. Much as Foucault would later propose in his discussion of the sexual roots of bio-power, Lingner argued that the health and longevity of the state was a function of the health of both the population as a whole and its composite individuals.

However, unlike Foucault, Lingner did not limit the discourses of hygiene and the deployment of sex to the administrative domain of a preformed state. In both his program for the planning of the hygiene exhibition written in 1910 and in his reflections on the exhibit composed in 1912, Lingner argued that Jews—a people without a state—have survived for so long “thanks to their physical composition and their racial-hygienic [*rassenhygienisch*] laws.” Without mentioning Zionism by name, he continues by positing that Jews “exist today in full splendor, with an undiluted national strength [*ungeschwächter Volkskraft*] and—one can think what one wants—take a strong interest in the rule of the world.”<sup>102</sup> Because of his definitive support for a “Jewish section” of the hygiene exhibition, Lingner’s comments, I believe, should be interpreted as a clear acknowledgment of what he considered to be a kind of racial and hygienic strength worthy of emulation. In this respect, he makes an important, although almost completely forgotten, break with the dominant tradition of racially-motivated anti-Semitism espoused by the likes of Wagner, Dühring, and Chamberlain. For Lingner, Jews “take a strong interest in the rule of the world” not because of their wily racial characteristics or monetary interests but rather as a people with a long and important tradition of care for the body and hygiene, something that has, in turn, placed them on par with other great peoples.

Both Theilhaber and Lingner were thus concerned with how individuals make use of specific hygiene practices and, simultaneously, how the health and well-being of a given population is a function of those practices. Although Theilhaber and Lingner certainly recognized the agency of the state in enforcing, regulating, and administering hygiene and in deploying sexuality, neither limits the purview of “bio-power” to a preexisting state. This is evident in Lingner’s recognition of the history of the Jews’ “strict racial-hygienic laws,” something that was highlighted in the two separate rooms dedicated to Jewish hygiene as part of the “historical section” of the Dresden Hygiene Exhibition. It is also evident in Theilhaber’s argument that pre-modern, pre-Zionist Jews actually exhibited some of the highest levels of hygiene and racial strength of any people, with or without a state. It can be perceived as an ironic reversal, then, that it is Theilhaber—the Zionist race doctor—who argues that the German Jews are rapidly becoming extinct due to their abandonment of hygiene practices, while Lingner—the German curator of the international hygiene exhibition—suggests that stateless Jews are, in fact, still the exemplars of a hygienic, racially fit people. Despite this strange reversal, which I will discuss in more detail below, Theilhaber and Lingner both deploy sex in order

to stress the importance of hygiene for the maintenance of the health of the population as well as the “fitness” of a given race.

Indeed, it was Lingner’s idea to feature “Jewish hygiene” in the historical section of the International Hygiene Exhibition. In a letter written on November 30, 1909, to Max Grunwald, a rabbi and historian from Vienna, Lingner invited Grunwald to curate this part of the exhibit on the “history of the hygiene of the Jews.”<sup>103</sup> Grunwald’s initial suggestion was to construct a separate “Jewish pavilion” in which Jewish hygiene would be displayed from the biblical and Talmudic times to the post-Talmudic period and into the modern era. He was convinced that “the hygiene of Jews in antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity had to be represented in a coherent fashion,” concluding with “the Jewish gymnastics and sports movements, the entire area of modern Jewish health, and the achievements of modern hygienicists of Jewish descent” (MG, 5). However, for various reasons (including the lack of material and political support), a free-standing Jewish pavilion was ultimately not possible; instead, only two exhibition rooms illustrating Jewish hygiene in biblical times and Jewish hygiene in the Middle Ages were constructed. As for the first, the hygienic customs of biblical Judaism were displayed in the area of “pre-antiquity,” alongside the “Pre-historic German-Celtic,” “Babylonian and Assyrian,” and “Egyptian” cultures. In the second room, Jewish religious rituals from the Middle Ages were illustrated alongside general hygienic practices of the medieval period, including living conditions (such as housing and heating), nourishment, clothing, the rearing of children, washing and bathing, health regulations, and state-sponsored regulations regarding hygiene (such as burial). Tellingly, although a couple of references were made to Jews in present-day Palestine, Jews were not featured in any portion of the exhibition dealing with “modern” and contemporary history.<sup>104</sup>

The two rooms dedicated to Jewish hygiene were housed in the expansive Steinpalast, the main building that featured the scientific and historical-ethnological exhibitions. Using nearly 150 objects, Jewish hygiene laws and traditions from the biblical period were displayed in Room 3. Beginning with the codification of Jewish hygiene as articulated in the Torah, its origins were presented using historical models, sketches, and contemporary photographs as well as authentic objects from various Jewish rituals. Maps showed the history of the region and traced the wanderings of the Semitic tribes throughout Egypt and Palestine. Historical plans of Jewish settlements, including the construction of the temples, canal systems, drainage, and water conveyance, were also highlighted. About 40 different models of various aspects of everyday living conditions and activities such as nutrition, housing, and burial were also part of the exhibit. These included models of corn presses, cooking and baking utensils, tools for harvesting crops, as well as the processes of wine distillation and storage. Models of burial chambers, graves, and catacombs were paired with biblical injunctions about the proper treatment and handling of the deceased.<sup>105</sup>

Although there is ample documentation of the contents of the Jewish section of the exhibition, unfortunately, no surviving photographs of it are known to exist.<sup>106</sup> Given the sheer quantity of material on display, we can nevertheless assume that the Jewish rooms were organized much like the rooms dedicated to other “pre-antique” peoples, such as the Egyptians (Fig. 4.8), with the walls covered with pictures and glass containers used for displaying objects and models. In the official catalogue, the short description of the “Jewish” room reads as follows:

Many biblical passages written on venerable Torah scrolls decorated with expensive ornamentation demonstrate the significance of ancient Jewish hygiene in their instructions regarding the treatment of food and its preparation, cultic bathing, rules for sexual intercourse, the handling of bodily waste, the burial of corpses, as well as much more, above all the regularly occurring day of rest on the Sabbath, which has spread across the world, and the prevention of illnesses . . . colorful sketches, photographs, and models tell us of great hygienic-technical undertakings. Three containers full of little models of houses, wells, baking rooms, and other devices used for the preparation and storage of food from the life of people in present-day Palestine provide us with forms that have changed little in over two or three thousand years.<sup>107</sup>

All in all, this part of the exhibit presented to a broad public the ancient tradition of Jewish hygiene laws regarding cleanliness, nourishment, religious ritual, sexual hygiene, and the care of the sick and deceased.

The second room dedicated to Jewish hygiene addressed the medieval period and was part of the same room as “the education of doctors.” Its nearly 250 objects were on display in Room 26.<sup>108</sup> Again, although no surviving photographs of the room exist, one can surmise that the organization of the material for the room was similar to that of an extant photograph of Room 28 on “nursing” and a photograph of a model of a medieval city, complete with a public bathing facility, also featured in this section. The main attraction of Room 26 was a replica of the Sabbath service, including Sabbath candles and lamps, table settings, inscriptions of the blessings, and information pertaining to “clean” and “unclean” animals. In addition to the Sabbath, the room also featured an extensive display on circumcision, including more than ten circumcision knives as well as numerous pictures and paintings depicting the procedure.<sup>109</sup> Finally, aspects of sickness and death were also treated, including the training of Jewish doctors, the treatment of lepers, the ritual cleansing of the body, and life in major Jewish ghettos, such as those of Vienna and Frankfurt (including some historical mortality statistics). Confirming the prevailing opinion that the particularity of Jewish

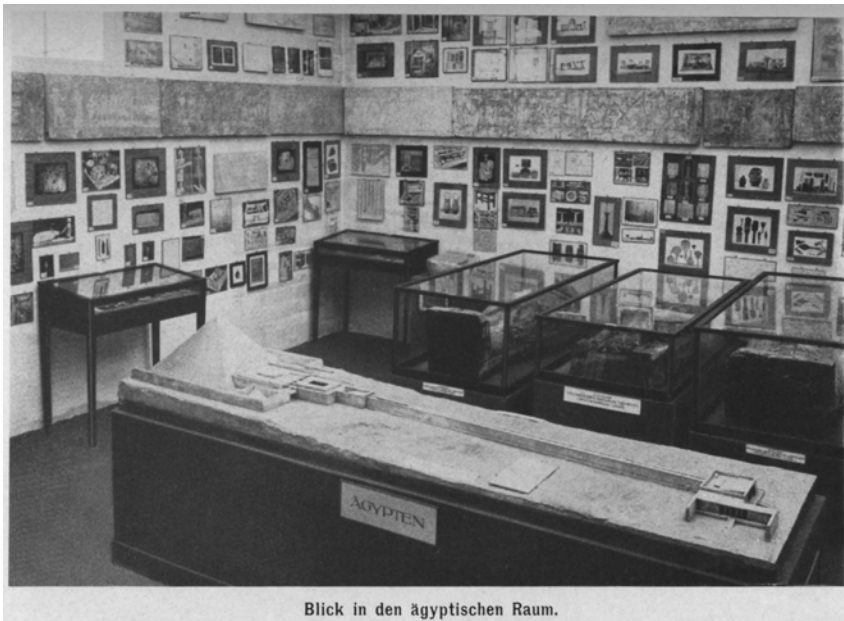


Figure 4.8 “View of the Egyptian Room,” *Historische Abteilung mit Ethnographischer Unterabteilung*, Karl Sudhoff and O. Neustätter, eds (Dresden: Verlag der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung, 1911), between pages 32 and 33.

hygiene practices helped Jews to survive throughout the ages, the editors of the catalogue wrote: “Despite all the obstacles and oppression, [Jews] still tried to preserve their uniqueness and follow the teachings of their great thinkers. One cannot deny that given the immense pressure on the people, the preservation of their particularity must evoke astonishment.”<sup>110</sup> As Lingner had also argued, it was their unique hygiene practices that accounted for their survival as a people.

Within the Jewish press, Grunwald’s curatorial skills were widely praised and numerous commentators pointed out that Jewish hygiene practices regarding cleanliness, health, and nutrition had in fact formed the fundament of Western hygiene. As one professor from Vienna put it:

[When considered] next to the Pavilion “Der Mensch,” . . . it is quite obvious that fundamental hygiene teachings were already a common good for the Jews, that they are completely contained in Mosaic law, that they took cleanliness as the highest principle, that they articulated and adhered to appropriate rules to protect against the spread of infectious diseases . . . In the same way that

they preserved monotheism in its purity and bequeathed it to the world, Jews are also the master teachers of hygiene.

(MG, 19)

Similarly enthusiastic, the cultural periodical *Ost und West* published a review of the Jewish section of the hygiene exhibition in June of 1911, arguing that the installations and teachings could very well cure present-day Jews of their degeneracy. Everything in the medieval hygiene room around the Sabbath service:

breathes calm, peace, and joy; to be really hygienically healing, our poor brothers who work the whole week with heavy bundles on their backs moving from town to town ought to spend twenty-four hours in this room; it would also be hygienically beneficial for our Jewish brothers in these nervous, agitated, and agitating times.<sup>111</sup>

In other words, modern-day Jews, having become nervous, degenerate, and even infertile, ought to spend some time in the medieval installation in order to revive their ancient therapeutic traditions of sexual and religious hygiene.

Although the Jewish sections of the International Hygiene Exhibition were limited to ancient and medieval times, it was clear from Lingner and Grunwald's remarks as well as the organization of the exhibition itself that the curators believed that the unique health, religious, sexual, and social practices of the Jews had not only ensured their survival as a people but probably strengthened their fitness as a race as well. Nevertheless, one has to ask: Why were Jews not featured in the "modern" and contemporary parts of the exhibition, as Grunwald had originally wanted? That is to say, why were Jews treated as strictly "historical"? After all, the exhibition could have featured contemporaneous Jewish gymnastics associations, the regenerative potency of Zionism, Jewish race doctors, or the strength of the modern Jewish population. Instead, Jews were conspicuously absent from other parts of the exhibition where they might have also been expected to appear, such as the halls dedicated to statistics, sports and hiking, gymnastics, sexual hygiene, and racial hygiene. Indeed, the muscled hygiene man in the pavilion "Der Mensch" was probably not a contemporaneous muscle Jew.

I would suggest that these decisive omissions can be explained by looking at the way in which the exhibition itself mirrored race-based philosophies of world history, such as those made popular in Germany by Herder, Hegel, and, most recently, Chamberlain.<sup>112</sup> In all three, Jews are circumscribed to a particular "place" in the progress of world history: they are an ancient people bound to Law, who, despite their survival throughout the millennia, do not qualify as "modern" precisely because they do not have a state based on the principles of civil society, the polis, the community of reason, and the development of a political subjectivity. As we will see in more detail in

Chapter 5, according to Hegel, because Abraham refused to enter into any kind of property or national ties, Jews are condemned to “their original fate,” namely to wander and remain forever at the first stage of world history, “in the mean, abject, wretched circumstances in which they still are today.”<sup>113</sup> Hegel considers Abraham’s “original” severance as an Israelite to be a transgenerational, “Jewish” trait that explains the pitiable state of Jews in nineteenth-century Europe. Jews may have survived because of their unique hygiene practices and strict adherence to Law, but they are anything but a “modern” people and must be ethnographically studied as strictly “historical.” They have never progressed past the first stages of world history. It is therefore no coincidence that this idea is reflected in the organization of the exhibition: due to their hygiene, Jews would not perish as a race, but they would not progress either.

In his *Der Untergang der deutschen Juden*, Theilhaber begins his argument by addressing precisely this curiosity: namely, the apparent fact that Jews—as a “species”—would never die out but, at the same time, could never become “modern” and establish their own state. Despite the millennia of anti-Semitism, the expulsions, the pogroms, and the growing tendency for Western Jews to assimilate into their “host” nations, both anti-Semitic thinkers such as Hegel, Wagner, Gobineau, and Chamberlain, as well as various stripes of Jewish and German intellectuals ranging from Marx and Heine to contemporary hygienicists and Zionists, maintained that Jews were “immortal” as a group, even though (or precisely because) they did not have a state. As to the latter, Theilhaber quotes Bernhard Münz on the astonishing survival of the Jews: “A people [*Volk*] walks right through the history of humankind, is reflected in the large part of its development, and always arises from all tests and upheavals of the time more toughened and strong” (U, 5). Echoing Lingner’s opinion, the Jews, as more than one professor of hygiene averred, “could not have survived these centuries of constant fighting for their existence if they did not have a naturally healthy instinct and an amazing capacity for self-sacrifice for the preservation of their people” (U, 6–7). Rather than calling upon the biblical injunction that God would not let the chosen people become extinct as evidence for their “immortality,” these thinkers sought to explain the survival of the Jews by appealing to their unique racial-hygienic disposition. In so doing, Jews were endowed with a hygienic quality, which, despite their seeming inability to adapt to modernity, found a state, and overcome their trademark “degeneracy,” was enviable and even worthy of display. Far from simply “degenerate,” Jews were also—as proven by history—the most regenerate of all people!

Theilhaber, however, did not subscribe to the thesis that Jews were immortal as a species due to their sexual hygiene, nor did he believe that Jews were merely “historical,” stateless people. In fact, his book caused such a stir precisely because he argued that Jews were on the verge of extinction and, within the foreseeable future, would not even be worthy of exhibition as a “historical” people. Due to a range of modern pressures, Jews had abandoned

the distinctive hygienic and sexual practices that had, up until then, preserved their fertility. The only solution that he sees is the cultivation of a population politic aimed at establishing a Jewish state. In so arguing, Theilhaber departs from the prevailing opinion that Jews are immortal as a race so that he can underscore the urgency and modernity of the Zionist project.

Although Theilhaber limits his analysis to German Jews, he is confident that his methods would yield similar results if applied, for example, to the Jewish communities of France, Denmark, Switzerland, Italy, and even Australia (U, 2). In Germany, even though the absolute number of Jews increased from 512,000 Jews in 1871, the year of German unification, to just over 600,000 in 1905, Theilhaber maintains that this growth actually belies several fundamental problems about the health of the Jewish population as a whole. In 16 German states, the percentage of Jews, when measured against the non-Jewish population, had actually decreased, as in the case of Hamburg where it fell from 4.07 percent to 2.24 percent, despite a modest growth in absolute numbers (U, 18–19). But even more telling is the dramatic decrease in the growth of the Jewish population in major German states such as Prussia: when examined in ten-year intervals from 1861 through 1900, the percentage by which the Jewish population grew went from a high of 22.5 percent in the decade before unification to a nadir of 2.4 percent between 1881 and 1890, to a rate of just about 5 percent for the following years (U, 21). In other words, despite the absolute increase in the number of Jews, something that Theilhaber rightly attributes to massive immigration of Eastern Jews to Germany due to widespread pogroms and expulsions,<sup>114</sup> the Jewish population was increasing at a far slower rate than it had previously grown and, moreover, when compared to the non-Jewish population, its rate of increase was markedly outstripped.

After discussing patterns of Jewish migration from the provinces to large cities, Theilhaber then turns to a discussion of birthrates and marriage statistics. In Prussia, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth, Jewish births steadily decreased from a high of 11,133 in 1875 to an absolute low of 6,854 in 1903, a level that they stayed at through 1908, a year with 6,876 births (U, 54). While the birthrates for Jews and Christians were about the same for the first half of the nineteenth century (between 35 and 40 births per one thousand people), after 1880 the number of Jews born decreased drastically to 24.81 per thousand through 1900 to 17.45 per thousand in 1908. By contrast, the number of births for Christians decreased only slightly to 35.44 per thousand at the beginning of the twentieth century (U, 54). Although Theilhaber mentions certain biological explanations for this decrease, such as impotence and female infertility, he believes that the socially enforced and economically necessitated “two child marriage” bears a large part of the blame for “the quantitative decrease [in the number of Jews] and the qualitative deterioration of the race” (U, 61). But not only did Jews have fewer children than their Christian counterparts, they were also getting married, if at all, at an older age than



Christians. Of the 16- to 30-year-olds in Berlin, for example, only 6.89 percent of the male Jews were married compared to 15.56 percent of the male Christians. Although not as pronounced as with men, fewer Jewish women in this age bracket were married than their Christian counterparts, 20.41 percent versus 24.34 percent (U, 72). All in all, Jews were remaining single for much longer than Christians and producing quantitatively fewer children than they had in decades past.<sup>115</sup>

Far from cultivating a uniquely protective sexual hygiene, then, German Jews, Theilhaber maintained, were actually well on their way to extinction. He explains the decrease in Jewish birthrates and marriages by pointing out how Jews had succumbed to many of the pressures of modernity, rather than becoming stronger and more physically fit as Nordau had imagined they would through their social-Darwinistic “capacity to adapt.” Intermarriage, conversion, late marriage, lifelong bachelorhood, mental and physical degenerative diseases, impotence, sexually transmitted diseases, suicide, and even the mechanistic structure of capitalism are some of the many reasons that he cites. Very much in line with the ideals espoused by the eugenicists in Alfred Ploetz’s Society for Racial Hygiene, Theilhaber directs the brunt of his critique at intermarriage, what he considers to have deadened the racial strength and the historically safeguarded hygiene of the Jews.<sup>116</sup> Traditionally, through religious decree and custom, Theilhaber writes:

inbreeding [*Inzucht*] guaranteed the only objectively Jewish characteristic, preserving what was racial about Jews . . . The preservation of the family of blood . . . was considered self-evident for centuries and was only overtaken in our own day by the strong movement to assimilate. But the recognition of the importance of inbreeding, which was only apathetically felt, resulted in no organized protective devices to maintain the unity of the race. Without a fight, the German Jews gave themselves over to intermarriage and thus their emasculation [*Entmannung*].

(U, 102–103)

In this extraordinary statement on the necessity of Jewish eugenics, Theilhaber argued that Jewish sexual hygiene, something that was secured through the strictures of Jewish marriage and child-bearing, was precisely what had preserved the integrity, unity, and purity of the Jewish race. Not only did intermarriage contaminate and weaken the Jewish race, but, astonishingly enough, it also resulted in the “emasculation” of the Jewish people. Jewish racial strength, preserved by the discipline (*Zucht*) of inbreeding (*Inzucht*), is connected to the phallus by way of the lineage of blood.

Although Theilhaber may have been one of the first eugenicists to explain the weakness of the Jewish race by way of their self-castration (after all, in

his opinion, Jews gave themselves over to intermarriage and, hence, “emas-culation” without a fight), the link between the strength of the Jewish people, particularly the ideal of the Jewish state, and the phallus has a long tradition that stretches back to antiquity. The “covenant of blood,” exacted on the penis, assures the perpetuation of the race across generations.<sup>117</sup> As we have already seen, it was precisely this tradition that Nordau referred to in his call for muscle Jews to show off their circumcised penis with pride. Moreover, male potency, exhibited by the great kings of Israel, was always connected with both the blood lineage and the right to rule the Jewish state. In the story of the last days of King David’s rule, for example, his “fitness” for being the King of Israel was determined by his ability to engage in sex. The fact that he could not have sexual intercourse with either a young virgin or Bathsheba indicated to Solomon that his father was no longer fit to rule. Giving up the throne to his son, David’s final words to Solomon were:

I am going the way of all the earth; *be strong and show yourself a man*. Keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in His ways and following His laws, His commandments, His rules . . . Then the Lord will fulfill the promise that He made concerning me: “If your descendents are scrupulous in their conduct, and walk before Me faithfully, with all their heart and soul, your line on the throne of Israel shall never end.”<sup>118</sup>

In other words, male potency was not only connected to the perpetuation of the Jewish lineage but was also a measure of the strength of the Jewish people.

In the modern era, however, Jewish sexual hygiene and Jewish potency have become contaminated through intermarriage, assimilation, degenerative diseases, and other “racially damaging” problems. In Theilhaber’s words:

The milieu of the big city, the peculiar social structure, capitalism (or prosperity), voluntary or involuntary celibacy, marriage at a late age, physical inferiority (mental and sexual diseases, impotence, alcoholism), individualism and feminism [*Feminismus*], susceptibility to suggestion or the moral laxity with respect to questions of family life and fertility, and countless other things are to blame for the degeneration of reproductive activity.

(U, 149)

According to Theilhaber, this motley group of problems accounts for the imminent destruction of the Jewish community in Germany predicted by his statistical analyses. Employing some of the same rhetoric and rationales that Nordau gives in *Degeneration* and applying them to the Jewish people, Theilhaber argues that the strength of the race has been compromised by moral laxity, the breakdown of the family, mental and physical degeneracy,

and even “feminism,” something that seemed to reflect his anxieties about the burgeoning women’s movement in Germany.<sup>119</sup>

And like Nordau, Theilhaber places his hopes for the regeneration of Jewish racial strength in a Zionist form of eugenics, something that certainly informs his argument throughout the book but only becomes explicit in the final chapter. Here, he explains to his readership that “eugenics (reproductive hygiene) is the science which occupies itself with all the influences that improve the innate characteristics of a race and tries to develop these characteristics to its greatest possible advantage” (U, 161). In order to return the Jewish people to their prior strength, he calls for “a system of inbreeding,” which fosters, among other things, “a rational birth-politic,” extensive financial support, including tax breaks, for families rearing children, and “the corporeal regeneration of the Jews,” while, at the same time, staving off conversion, intermarriage, and assimilation (U, 164–165). He believes that the infighting among contemporary Jews—something that always happens “in times of the decline of a people” (U, 159)—fails to recognize that “Zionism” is the only viable possibility for realizing these eugenic goals. As he remarks in a telling footnote on Zionism’s salvific potential:

One need only think of the hateful malice propagated precisely by Jews against the Zionists. It is obvious that the Diaspora conditions the destruction of the Jews, especially in the West, and, at the very least, creates a rotten, constantly decomposing body, which, with the loss of its uniqueness, is fundamentally mixed and also receives the internal legitimacy for its destruction. It can scarcely be contested that the repatriation of the homeless, Eastern-European Jews is a commendable job. One cannot do much for the Western Jews doomed to their own death.

(U, 159–160)

In effect, his polemic is that the Eastern Jews—those Jews who are more “authentic” because they are still wed to their medieval hygienic traditions—can still be saved, whereas the Western Jews may already be beyond help.

When Theilhaber’s book was published, its apocalyptic thesis set off a controversy throughout the Jewish communities in Germany and abroad. The book was copiously reviewed and debated in the popular press. It was dismissed by anti-Zionists Jews, while largely embraced by Zionists in its broad articulation of the importance of Jewish fertility and sexual hygiene for the founding of a Jewish state. As John Efron has shown in his discussion of the reception of Theilhaber’s book, the thesis was consistently critiqued for reducing the complexity of the Jewish people to a set of statistics.<sup>120</sup> Regardless of its possible statistical flaws and hasty conclusions, Theilhaber nevertheless succeeded—arguably better than any other contemporary Jewish race scientist—in shifting the focus of Jewish bio-power to the cultivation

and management of the population. He introduced a new way to put sex into discourse by applying the scientific methodology and conceptual terms of eugenics to the Zionist cause. This is both the originality of his argument and its discursive importance. It is also something that his critics participated in, precisely by engaging with Theilhaber on the question of Jewish population politics.

Theilhaber's argument for studying, analyzing, and ultimately managing the Jewish population must therefore be interpreted as a discursive confluence of power with sexuality. As Foucault argued in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*:

Through the themes of health, progeny, race, the future of the species, the vitality of the social body, power spoke *of* and *to* sexuality; the latter was not a mark or a symbol, it was an object and a target. Moreover, its importance was due less to its rarity or its precariousness than to its insistence, its insidious presence, the fact that it was everywhere an object of excitement and fear at the same time. Power delineated, aroused it, and employed it as the proliferating meaning that had always to be taken control of again lest it escape; it was an effect with a meaning-value.

(HS, 147–148)

Sex—both the sex of individuals and the regulation of the sexual hygiene of the population—was now an object of study, an effect of certain discourses that sought to deploy sexuality for particular ends, with a particular meaning. In the case of Zionism, sex was put into discourse precisely through the logic of bio-power in order to found a state. As I have argued here, far more interesting than whether Theilhaber was right or wrong is the irreducible fact that he put sex into discourse and that Zionism sought to give form to the future Jewish state via the management and deployment of a regulated reproductive body. This is also the significance of the Dresden Hygiene Exhibition: the practice of hygiene was part of a broader social and political discourse of deploying sex for strengthening the health of the individual and that of the population. Even though the exhibition of Jewish hygiene served to historically delimit the potency of the population, hygiene, fertility, population politics, and racial fitness were all things that could now be quantitatively studied, scientifically administered, and publicly exhibited through measurements, calculations, statistics, displays, and, most of all, interventions aimed at regulating the individual and the social body. It is here—in this expansion of bio-power—that the rhetoric of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* converges with that of both the hygiene exhibition and Theilhaber's population statistics: sex was deployed to regenerate the state, and Zionism became a vehicle for bio-power.

In this regard, the Zionist obsession with physical fitness, hygiene, population management, and eugenics betrays a deep imbrication with a whole network of *fin de siècle* ideologies of race and policing practices, all of which had their “dark side.” Indeed, the eroticized nationalisms and typologies of fitness and health would all be used to justify the purity of the German state and, later, the birth of the Israeli state. Foucault’s argument for the emergence of this confluence of discourses charged with regulating and disciplining sex is thus relevant not because of its strict application to Zionism but because it allows us to assess the ideologies of the twentieth century, particularly those concerned with corporeal regulation and discipline, from the perspective of the tragedies that they wrought. After all, bio-power is never innocent or free from destruction.

## THE LAND OF REGENERATION

### Seafaring Jews and the Zionist colonial imaginary

In a famously provocative article, “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,” Edward Said set out to detail the stark social, political, economic, and cultural consequences of Zionism for the non-Jewish population in Palestine.<sup>1</sup> He explained how Zionist policy changed from a *mission civilisatrice* at the start of the twentieth century in which the Arab population, alongside the Jewish people, was to be “regenerated” to a policy of population transfer, mass exodus, and violent disappearance after 1948. In elucidating the historical justification of Palestinian displacement, Said argued that Zionism did not simply “[draw] its force” from the idea of Jewish self-determination and “Jewish national selfhood” (ZSV, 56) but also—and, for Said, certainly more significantly—from “the historical context of nineteenth-century Europe” (ZSV, 57). The Zionist colonial mission—although different in a number of significant ways from the unchecked imperial ambitions of the modern European state—was nevertheless the product of the European imagination, in which overseas territories were to be variously inhabited, civilized, exploited, or conquered in the name of progress, culture, and Enlightenment. It is no coincidence, Said points out, that Zionism followed upon and even gained legitimacy through its comparison with the unprecedented expansion of European empires into Africa and Asia at the end of the nineteenth century.

Said defines “imperialism” as a political philosophy of territorial expansion and annexation, and he includes Zionism under this rubric. He explains:

Gaining and holding an *imperium* means gaining and holding a domain, which includes a variety of operations, among them constituting an area, accumulating its inhabitants, having power over its ideas, people, and of course, its land, converting people, land, and ideas to the purposes and for the use of a hegemonic imperial design.  
(ZSV, 73)

Before turning to the case of Zionism, Said cites the experiences of the British, the French, the Belgians, the Germans, and the Americans in their quest for

imperial expansion: land was to be properly cultivated, farmed, and exploited; native “savages” were to be civilized, enslaved, or killed; the “black, yellow, and brown people” in the colonized lands were considered to be “inferior” and “subhuman”—in short, in need of European civilization (ZSV, 68–69). Colonial expansion meant bringing European culture—in all its dialectical expressions—to the “uncultured” people of the world. As Joseph Conrad explained the logic of the European imperial imaginary in *Heart of Darkness* through the figure of Marlow: “The glories of exploration” meant filling in the “blank” spaces on the map of the world, of penetrating the “darkness” and bringing the bounty of “progress” to all.<sup>2</sup> In his novel, the River Thames represented “an interminable waterway . . . leading to the uttermost ends of the earth,”<sup>3</sup> with ships that sailed the world over in search of conquest and expansion. Indeed, nothing better-represented “the dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germ of empires”<sup>4</sup> in the nineteenth-century imperial imaginary than the enterprise of seafaring. As we will see later in this chapter, it was precisely the “European” trope of seafaring that Zionist Jews sought to appropriate in fashioning their own colonial history.

Even if we agree with Said that the Zionist colonial imaginary and the European imperial project should be placed in the same lineage and historical context, there are a number of significant differences between them that must be remarked straightaway. First and foremost, there was no Jewish imperial empire because there was no Jewish nation-state. The Zionist colonial project was not concerned with expansion, empire, or commonwealths but rather with the foundation of a singular state, something that nevertheless did involve an investment in discourses of progress and regeneration as well as conquest and displacement. Within postcolonial studies, the Zionist colonial idea challenges a basic structuring opposition in the field, namely the strict dichotomy between colonizer and subaltern. In the case of Zionism, it is the subaltern who becomes the colonizer: not in order to uniformly subjugate the native other or designate the other as degenerate but in order to regenerate both the diasporic Jew and the native Arab through a cultural-aesthetic politic of “Europeanization.” Although this history becomes more complex when Palestine comes under British rule in 1917, the postcolonial paradigm cannot be applied to the early history of Zionism without a number of significant amendments. There was no unified state as the agent of imperial expansion, and, hence, we must rethink the relationship between the colonizer and the subaltern. At the same time, I believe it still makes sense to evaluate the Zionist colonial imaginary within the purview of postcolonial studies, something that ought to add another layer of complexity to the ways in which we speak about and conceptualize colonialism and the history of imperialism. This needs to be done with attention to a discursive framework grounded in careful historical analysis.<sup>5</sup>

In her study of German colonial fantasies before the existence of the German nation, Susanne Zantop argued that a unified German state was not

necessary for the development of a vivid colonial imaginary.<sup>6</sup> I want to suggest that an analogous situation developed within Zionism: although a colonial state did not yet exist, the “imaginary formations” created in the early twentieth century—ranging from manifestos, travel literature, demographic studies, and scientific journals to photographs, paintings, and even films<sup>7</sup>—played a critical role in developing a Jewish colonial and national consciousness. Significantly, these imaginary formations constructed “Palestine” as a colonial territory by representing, reconnoitering, knowing, cultivating, and imagining the regeneration and possession of the land as well as its inhabitants. In this regard, early Zionism could be considered an eminently “aesthetic-political” project of modernity. However, unlike Zantop, I do not limit my analysis to fantasies, since many of the Zionist colonial desires and discourses were also wrapped up with and contingent upon actual visits to Palestine as well as the establishment of real settlements. Indeed, sporadic Jewish settlements had been taking place in Palestine since the 1870s, and, after 1882, under the financial support and political leadership of Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, they steadily grew throughout the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.<sup>8</sup> Inspired by the Zionist Congresses and the international gymnastics associations, many Zionist delegates and representatives visited Palestine after the publication of Herzl’s *Altneuland* (Old-New Land), undertaking demographic studies of the land and people, writing travelogues, taking photographs, mapping the territory, and cultivating the land.

What is unique and worth underscoring about both German and Jewish colonial desires is that they came into existence without the support of a unified nation-state. Of course, this stands in marked contrast to French or English colonialism where colonial territories were established to extend the hegemony of the universalizing state.<sup>9</sup> As Russell Berman writes, German colonial discourse looked:

different from the more emphatically universalizing claims of British and French colonial discourses, which in turn is a reflection of Germany’s ambivalent situation within Europe. It is emphatically within Europe but also on the margin of the economic and political centers in England and France.<sup>10</sup>

Rather than simply positing a sort of German “Sonderweg” (special path) with respect to “normal” European colonialism, Berman, like Zantop, attempts to articulate the “specificity” of German colonial discourse, something that, he argues, betrays differentiation, hybridity, and transgression.<sup>11</sup> In the same way that it makes little sense to approach German colonial discourse “solely as a Manichean segregation,”<sup>12</sup> Jewish colonial discourse cannot be approached as “Manichean” either. It is necessary to examine the specificity of Jewish colonial discourse by showing how it drew on the German model and also constructed



its own unique self-justification as an aestheticized politics of regeneration. As we will see, Jewish colonialism in Palestine imagined itself to be a revitalizing, culturally productive form of regeneration for both European (especially Eastern) Jews and non-Jewish (especially Arab) inhabitants of Palestine. It both drew on and was distinct from its European precedent.

Indeed, Said is careful on this point and does not, in fact, equate Zionism with the European colonial-imperial project. He says: “Zionism and European imperialism are epistemologically, hence historically and politically, coterminous in their treatment of resident natives” (ZSV, 83). If we accept this characterization of Zionism as epistemologically, historically, and politically “coterminous” with—as opposed to simply tantamount to—European imperialism, we not only have to indicate where the essential differences are to be found, but we also need to specify what exactly “coterminous” means: In what sense and in what ways does Zionism share its conceptual-historical borders with nineteenth-century European imperialism? To answer this question, I suggest that we look at the self-representation of the early Zionist colonial project, namely its purported goals, its means of achieving them, and its strategies of self-legitimization. Furthermore, we must look at the ways in which the Zionist imaginary came into contact with and built off of the European colonial imaginary. Here, we have to probe the discursive context in which the Zionist colonial idea arose and the various representational practices that ensued.

The institutional history of the early Zionist colonial idea has been meticulously researched by Derek Penslar in his book, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918*. Penslar uses the term “technocracy” to show how Zionist leaders, almost all of whom were inspired by German colonial models, engineered social-scientific programs and political-economic organizations aimed at “Jewish nation building.”<sup>13</sup> While the early leaders of the World Zionist Organization, Theodor Herzl and Max Bodenheimer, put forth many bold ideas for Jewish colonization—including possible plans to found a Jewish state in Argentina, East Africa (the so-called “Uganda” plan), and, of course, Turkish-controlled Palestine—it was not until after the death of Herzl in 1904 that reconnaissance and research projects began in earnest to learn about and acquire land in Palestine.<sup>14</sup> This work was undertaken by Zionist leaders such as Otto Warburg, the founder of the Palestine Commission who had a background in the German colonial service, Arthur Ruppin, a scientist trained in hereditary biology and the principles of Social Darwinism who was familiar with the Prussian Colonization Committee, Selig Soskin, an agronomist by training who had studied German agricultural colonies in Africa and South America, Alfred Nossig, one of the founders of Jewish statistics and demographics, and Davis Trietsch, a fervent supporter of agriculture colonization and one of the most committed advocates of and prolific writers on Zionist colonial policy. All five were variously involved with or inspired

by German colonial models, publishing many of their ideas in the newly founded Zionist colonial journals, *Palästina* and *Altneuland*.<sup>15</sup>

For all its merits, what Penslar's study does not do, however, is analyze the discursive origins of the Zionist colonial imaginary, particularly its representational practices and strategies of self-legitimization, practices and strategies that place it in contact with European colonial history as well as European intellectual and cultural history. As Said argues in *Culture and Imperialism*, the cultural imaginary, in all its diverse forms of expression, is fundamentally connected to geography through nation- and empire-building:

Imperialism and the culture associated with it affirm both the primacy of geography and an ideology about control of territory. The geographical sense makes projections—imaginative, cartographic, military, economic, historical, or in a general sense cultural. It also makes possible the construction of various kinds of knowledge, all of them in one way or another dependent upon the perceived character and destiny of a particular geography.<sup>16</sup>

The imaginative investment in and knowledge constructed about places and peoples is inextricable with the extension of the colonial power.

For Nathan Weinstock, Zionism represents “a deviant pattern of colonization” because it does not follow the usual logic of European colonization, which entails the exploitation of the indigenous people as a cheap source of labor.<sup>17</sup> From the perspective of 1973, Weinstock concluded that:

the Zionist movement intended to replace the Palestinian population, rather than exploit it according to the classical colonial pattern. . . . Zionist colonization, while unquestionably exerting a favorable effect on the standards of cultivation and health in the country, built a new society in which Hebrew capitalists exploited a Hebrew proletariat by implementing specific segregationist principles—at the expense of the Palestinians.<sup>18</sup>

While Weinstock is right to differentiate Zionist colonization from the European pattern of colonization, it is also important to point out that at the start of the twentieth century there was no plan to “replace” the native population in Palestine; on the contrary, there was a consistent recognition on the part of Zionist thinkers of the necessity of Jewish settlers living with and working side-by-side with the Arab natives.<sup>19</sup> The central discourse—as articulated by Herzl, Ruppin, Nossig, Soskin, and many others—did not concern replacement but rather “the peaceful acquisition” of the land and the regeneration of both the land and the people. As Nossig put it in a programmatic article on Jewish colonization published in *Palästina*: “We are not a great power, and we are not conquerors. We must and want to use

exclusively peaceful means.”<sup>20</sup> Soskin and Aaronsohn, for example, speak extensively of the populations inhabiting these regions east and west of the Jordan for the sake of working with them to establish centers of trade and commerce throughout the Middle East.<sup>21</sup> The Zionist rhetoric of a “land without people for a people without a land” only developed much later as a retrospective justification of Zionist colonial policy, which, by 1948, had turned into a violent politics of “replacement.”

What we find in 1902, however, is the depiction of Jews and Arabs working together to regenerate the land. In Herzl’s utopian travel novel, *Altneuland*, the Arabs are unequivocally gracious to the Jews for coming to Palestine—via the sea—and saving Palestine.<sup>22</sup> As Reschid Bey, the single Arab character in the novel, points out:

Nothing could have been more poor and wretched [*jämmerlicher*] than an Arab village at the end of the nineteenth century. The peasants’ clay hovels were unfit for animals. The children lay naked and neglected in the streets like dumb beasts. Now everything is different. . . . When the swamps were drained, the canals built, the eucalyptus trees planted, . . . the ground became healthy . . . The Jews have enriched us, why should we be angry with them? They dwell among us like brothers. Why should we not love them?

(A, 247–48)

Not only did the Jews cultivate the soil, we are told, they also civilized this formerly backwards land: “Jewish settlers who streamed into this country brought with them the experiences of the whole cultured world [i.e. Europe]” (A, 251). Zionists thus regenerated both Jews and Arabs in accord with the European Universal. At the upshot of the Zionist *Bildungsroman*, weak, Eastern, Yiddish-speaking Jews have become transformed into politically and physically strong, German-speaking Jews who reside in Palestine, the outpost of European civilization. And, at the same time, the unkempt, uncivilized “Orientals” have been transformed into polite, European-educated, German-speaking citizens of the “new society.” Herzl’s Zionism—as a colonial mission—touches everyone, forming them in the image of the European ideal of civilization. In Daniel Boyarin’s critical words: “Herzlian Zionism is thus itself the civilizing mission, first and foremost directed by Jews at other Jews and then at whatever natives happen to be there, if indeed, they are noticed at all.”<sup>23</sup>

Not only do we find an unquestioned faith in the absolute good of regeneration in the early Zionist rhetoric, but also—and decidedly more problematic—an unquestioned acceptance of the colonial enterprise itself. In a booklet published in 1912, *Palaestina als Judenland*, Elias Auerbach maintained that Jewish colonies were to thank for the regeneration of the “wasted, neglected land.”<sup>24</sup> He refers to Palestine as “Judenland” and states

apodictically: “Everywhere that Jewish colonies are to be found, they have directly increased the welfare of the Arab population.”<sup>25</sup> He admonishes the Jews that they must be careful not to proceed according to “an incendiary chauvinism,” which could result in strife between the colonists and the native population:

If the Jews are to really understand their task, they must try to become the leaders, advisors, and employers of the native people, to share with them the uses of the land that grow out of its economic activity, to let them enjoy its public institutions.<sup>26</sup>

However, he never explores whether the native Arabs want to be led, advised, or employed by the Jews; he simply assumes that they would want to be part of the European mission of progress brought to them by the Jewish colonists.

At the same time, early Zionist authors consistently attempt to differentiate Jewish colonization from its European counterpart, even while it drew its inspiration and justification from Europe. As Soskin points out:

If we look closely at the colonial goals of the European peoples over the last century, we find that only rarely does the ethnic moment come into the foreground, as it is the case with the Jews. . . . To the Europeans, [the colonized lands] represent objects of exploitation, tapped for their natural riches through the labor of the natives. The Europeans only bring their intelligence and material technologies, never their own physical labor into play. . . . [For the Jews,] the colonizing people send their own sons to work the land and give it a national character.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to European colonization, then, Jews have an ethnic-national connection to the land, something that, according to Warburg, also accounts for their unique corporeal success in Palestine: whereas German colonists in the Middle East “had already begun to degenerate [*degenerieren*] after one or two generations [due to the temperatures in Palestine],” the Jews—because of their racial ties to the antique land—are well-suited to adapt to the climate.<sup>28</sup> In another article, Warburg even maintained that “the traces of the ghetto-Judaism of earlier generations have disappeared in the youth who grew up in the Palestinian colonies.”<sup>29</sup> The great masses of European Jews would not only regenerate Palestine, both the land and its inhabitants, but, recursively, Palestine would also regenerate the great masses of European Jews. In effect, Palestine would, in the words of Nordau, re-create a long lost muscular Judaism.

By 1919, Arthur Ruppin was no longer convinced that Palestine would, in and of itself, regenerate the masses of Eastern-European Jews. In an article entitled “The Selection of Human Material for Palestine,” Ruppin argued that

the first waves of immigration were largely self-selecting because most of the immigrants who chose to leave Europe did so aware of the daunting physical challenges and mental tasks that lay before them in Palestine. While “every Jew was welcome to immigrate to Palestine, regardless of whether he was old, sick, incapable of work, or of antisocial character,” generally only the “healthy” came.<sup>30</sup> As Palestine enters a new phase of development, Ruppin argues that a more selective policy will be needed to safeguard the racial fitness of the population. Invoking social Darwinian principles, Ruppin proposes that “the level [of the people] can be raised by a sifting of the immigrants [*eine Siebung der Einwander*] . . . according to physical, occupational, and moral composition” (AM, 374). “The fear,” according to Ruppin, “is that Palestine, because it is the door to Eastern Europe, will become a free-for-all for many unwanted elements [*unerwünschte Elemente*]” (AM, 375). For Ruppin, the selection criteria that should be invoked are “profession, health, and character” (AM, 376). Not only is he concerned with “the health and strength” of the new generations but he also insists on “the possibility of working to keep pure the Jewish race in Palestine” (*die Reinhaltung der jüdischen Rasse in Palästina*) (AM, 381). In this respect, the colonial project of regeneration is not only entirely consonant with the history of Jewish bio-power, but Ruppin’s rhetoric of purity is also entirely consonant with the realization of the eugenic paradigm in the twentieth-century racial state—with all its grim consequences.

In what follows, I examine how the discourse of muscular Judaism impacted and was deployed by the early Zionist colonial imaginary. I ask: How and to what ends did the Zionist colonial imaginary cite and model itself after the European imperial-colonial project of the nineteenth century? To answer this question, I will attempt to concretize some of the key ways in which Zionism was “coterminous,” to use Said’s concept, with European imperialism. I begin by examining how the Zionists sought to elevate Jews into agents of the European universal and, thereby, transform them into a colonial people. Here, I argue that seafaring became both a critical discourse and trope of the Zionist colonial imaginary in the first part of the twentieth century. It did not simply emerge from the material reality of waves of European Jews immigrating to Palestine (although this was certainly its real, historical backdrop) but rather stemmed from the desire to elevate Jews into world-historical people capable of founding a model, European nation-state. In this regard, Jewish colonial discourse attempted to legitimize itself by (re)writing Jews into the history of expansion and conquest. With Hegel’s *Philosophy of World History* and Max Grunwald’s seminal essay, “Jews as Anchormen and Seafarers,” as my discursive starting points, I show how the Zionist imaginary sought to elevate Jews into a colonial people by endowing them with a seafaring tradition. That is to say, if Jews engage in seafaring, they not only have a claim to be national subjects (the journey by sea shores up subjectivity and nationality) but also world-historical (the journey by sea is

the condition of possibility for the spread of the universal World Spirit). Both were the prerequisites of a successful colonization project. After that, I return to the cultural history of regeneration, examining the intersection between discourses of colonization and photography in the work of Davis Trietsch.

### **Zionism and the European universal**

Judging by their absence in Helmut Pemsel's *Weltgeschichte der Seefahrt* (World History of Seafaring), a monumental, seven-volume study of seafaring from antiquity to the present, Jews have played virtually no part in the history of seafaring.<sup>31</sup> A review of approximately 400 of the most important seafaring personages shows that the greatest number come from England (107), followed by Germany with 45, the United States with 38, Italy and the Holy Roman Empire with 35, and France also with 35. After that, the formerly great colonial powers of Spain, Greece, and the Netherlands emerge with less than 20 each, followed by a spattering of other representatives across the world, ranging from Russia and China to Chile and Peru.<sup>32</sup> The vast majority of these personages were commanders of fleets or flotillas, followed by explorers and researchers, tradesmen, shipbuilders, and U-boat commanders. The "rule of the sea" (*Seeherrschaft*) was determined by these sea captains, admirals, sailors, cartographers, explorers, anchormen, engineers, and politicians who set sail across the seemingly boundless oceans to reconnoiter new lands, discover new trade routes, expand the colonial holdings of the motherland, and establish military dominance across the world. For better or worse, Jews did not partake in this history. As David Ben-Gurion seemed to confirm shortly after the birth of the State of Israel: "The Jewish people were never a seafaring nation."<sup>33</sup>

Of course, this might be easily explained by pointing to the fate of the Jews in the Diaspora: without a homeland, Jews wandered from nation to nation, where they were occasionally tolerated but more often than not restricted or expelled. Without the support and stability of a nation-state with ports along the sea, the social, economic, political, military, and geographic conditions of possibility for seafaring were denied to the Jews. But as Raphael Patai has shown in his extraordinary history of Jewish seafaring in antiquity, Jews played—at least at one time—a significant role in all aspects of seafaring up and down the Mediterranean coastline.<sup>34</sup> As Patai indicates: "Despite the paucity of biblical references, once their control extended to the Mediterranean coastline, the Hebrews engaged in shipping and fishing to no less an extent than the other peoples whose towns and villages bordered the Great Sea" (Patai, 19). Jews not only engaged in extensive maritime trade throughout the region, especially with the Romans and the Greeks, but they also engaged in naval warfare, mustering many a fleet of vessels to fight the Romans. They constructed ships, set sail across the region, penned seafaring lore, and developed an extensive network of port cities from Akhzibh in the

north to Rhinokorura in the south (Patai, 138). Not only did Jews lose their seafaring position in the Diaspora, but it seems that they also lost this once great history.<sup>35</sup>

It should come as no surprise, then, that the greatest seafaring nations correspond, more or less, to the greatest world historical empires in terms of geographic reach, historical duration, and sheer brutality. And, recursively, world-historical people, as Hegel argued in his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (Lectures on the Philosophy of World History) are intimately connected to the sea and seafaring.<sup>36</sup> Nations only become great colonial powers and, hence, world-historical when they undertake voyages of discovery and conquest, something that is certainly confirmed by Pemsel's study. According to Hegel, world history is divided into four, progressively higher stages based on geography: the "Oriental world," the "Greek world," the "Roman world," and the "Germanic world." Africa is actually the first geographical space that Hegel mentions; however, because the land has "remained impenetrable," "enveloped in the dark color of night," and filled with "the most thoughtless inhumanity and disgusting barbarism" (W, 120–21/91–2), the African people are "no historical part of the world" (W, 129/99). Hence, they are quickly dispensed by Hegel and are not a part of the narrative procession of world history.<sup>37</sup> The final stage, on the other hand, corresponds to the highest development of the family, civil society, freedom, and the Christian state, having emerged from abstract rights and mere law-based morality: "The Germanic nations, under the influence of Christianity, were the first to attain the consciousness, that man, as man, is free: that the freedom of Spirit constitutes his essential nature" (W, 31/18). This quadripartite formulation provides the geographic basis of the direction and movement of World Spirit (*Weltgeist*), which proceeds in a singular direction, toward a specific, predetermined goal until universal knowledge and the consciousness of freedom are attained: "World history travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of history, Asia the beginning" (W, 134/103).

Through a process of ever increasing glorification and purification, the crumbling of the Oriental world gave rise to the possibility of the Greek world; the destruction of the Greek world gave rise to the Roman world; and, finally, the ruination of the Roman world, set in motion the spread of Christianity and the advent of the Germanic world: "Spirit—consuming the envelope of its existence—does not merely pass into another envelope, nor rise rejuvenated from the ashes of its previous form; it comes forth exalted, glorified, a purer spirit" (W, 97–8/72–3). But the rise of the Germanic world is "entirely different from that sustained by the Greeks and Romans. For the Christian world is the world of completion [*die Welt der Vollendung*]; the grand principle of being is realized, consequently, the end of days is fully come" (W, 414/342).

To better understand the centrality of geography in Hegel's philosophy of world history, we need to focus on his comments about seafaring and the

expansive, outward spread of World Spirit in this process of purification.<sup>38</sup> World-historical people, he argues, are intimately connected to the sea because nations only become great colonial powers and, hence, world-historical when they undertake voyages of discovery and conquest. They have a connection to seafaring and ship travel, whereas non-historical people are basically landlocked and condemned to wander on the ground, not unlike the Jewish people in the Diaspora. In his discussion of the history of the Greek and Roman worlds of antiquity, Hegel shows how the Mediterranean Sea played a critical role in the development of these civilizations by facilitating the emergence of a national identity and civil society and, more expansively, by spreading the Universal outwards.<sup>39</sup> In Hegel's words, "The Mediterranean Sea is the heart of the ancient world, for it is what conditioned and vitalized it. Without it, world history is inconceivable, just as Rome or Athens would be unimaginable without the forum" (W, 115/87). In the Oriental world, where Hegel places the Jewish people, he explains: "The sea has no meaning for Asia; quite the opposite: The Asian peoples have closed themselves off from the sea." By contrast, "the relationship to the sea in Europe is important . . . [because] only through a connection to the sea can a European state become great."<sup>40</sup>

World-historical nations are characterized by their power to master the expansiveness of the sea and their ability to undertake voyages of conquest. As Hegel writes:

The sea gives us the idea of the indefinite, the unlimited, and the infinite, and insofar as man feels this infinite within himself, he is emboldened to go beyond limits. The sea invites man to conquest and plunder but also to trade and commerce . . . Courage must be contained within trade, and bravery is at the same time bound with cleverness. . . . the ship—that swan of the sea which cuts the watery plain in agile and arching movements or circles upon it—is an instrument whose invention does the greatest honor to the boldness of man and his faculty of reason.

(W, 119/91)

Hegel places colonial expeditions and voyages of discovery (*Entdeckungsreisen*) in a lineage of modern historical developments, including the invention of book printing and gunpowder. Western Europe emerges as the telos of world history because it is here that the highest levels of development and the expansive spread of World Spirit have been realized by these inventions and voyages of discovery:

The English have undertaken the weighty responsibility of being the missionaries of *civilization* to the entire world; for their commercial spirit urges them to traverse every sea and land, to form bonds with



barbaric peoples, to awaken needs and stimulate industry, and above all to establish the conditions necessary for commerce, namely the relinquishment of violence, the respect for property, and hospitality.  
(W 538/455)

In other words, the English have selflessly assumed the burden of spreading civilization to the dark, inhumane reaches of the globe, turning the barbarians into property-respecting civilians who will accommodate European colonists and facilitate the imperial project of spreading industrial capitalism across the world.

The Germanic world—by which Hegel seems to mean “Western Europe,” including England<sup>41</sup>—is thus the culmination of world history, the product of all the dialectical movements of Spirit from east to west, and itself the fount of an outwardly realized, civilizing, colonial mission. He considers the “Germanic world” to exhibit the highest level of development in world history, and it is here that the *Weltgeist* radiates outwardly from Europe in order to “bind” distant people to the universal. World history thus has a geographic fundament, culminating in the universality and absoluteness of the imperial European state. As Said wrote in *Culture and Imperialism*: “To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about.”<sup>42</sup> For Hegel, it is the decisive investment in seafaring that gives rise to the colonial imaginary and creates the conditions of possibility for the spread of the Germanic Universal.

Although Hegel spends very little time discussing the insignificance of Jews in Christian world history, his terse remarks are nevertheless telling and in complete accord with his notoriously anti-Semitic description of Judaism in “Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal” (The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate). In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Jews are confined to the first, “Oriental” stage of world history where they are incapable of reconciling individuality with universal thoughts and laws. They do not set sail. The Jewish religion cannot attain “universality” because “the [Jewish] subject never realizes freedom for himself . . . [and] the State is not consonant with Jewish principles and is alien to the legislation of Moses” (W, 243/197). As he argues in “Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal,” the first Jewish act was an act of “severance” (*Trennung*), in which “Abraham, the progenitor of a nation, completely tore himself from his family . . . severing the bonds of community and love.”<sup>43</sup> Hegel continues: “Abraham wandered here and there over a boundless territory, without bringing parts of it any nearer to him by cultivating or improving them . . . He was a stranger on earth, a stranger to the soil and men alike.”<sup>44</sup> Even though the notion was not conceived until the Middle Ages, Hegel anachronistically suggests that Abraham was already the first “wandering Jew.” Reckoning with the ocean, traveling by ship, conquering faraway places, and,

ultimately, returning to the motherland are world-historical achievements that are supposedly foreign to Jews.

Indeed, Hegel was not the only grand theoretician to consign Jews to a negative moment in world history because they lacked a seafaring tradition: Johann Gottfried Herder, for example, claimed that the Jews “dreaded the sea”<sup>45</sup> and Houston Stewart Chamberlain suggested that “just looking at the ocean . . . horrified them.”<sup>46</sup> But with the development of the Zionist imaginary at the beginning of the twentieth century, Hegel’s philosophy of world history—particularly his emphasis on the importance of seafaring—would be embraced and imaginatively rewritten in order to elevate Jews into world-historical people. Far from satirizing the grand, Hegelian historical narrative with its systematic claims of national belonging and teleological development, as the Jewish poet Heinrich Heine did so incisively in his contemporaneous *Reisebilder* (Pictures of Travel) of 1826–31,<sup>47</sup> the Zionist imaginary would attempt to secure a place for Jews in the history of seafaring and, thereby, bring them into the ranks of the European Universal.

Nine years before he curated the Jewish section of the Dresden Hygiene Exhibition, Max Grunwald, a well-known Hamburg Rabbi, published a significant article in *Ost und West* in which he insisted that Jews, despite popular opinion and ostensible historical evidence to the contrary, are in fact a seafaring people.<sup>48</sup> Far from being condemned to wander the earth on foot (as in the “wandering Jew” myth), Jews, he maintained, actually have a long and rich tradition of setting sail and, because of this, can claim to be great, world-historical people. Citing sources from the Talmud, Antiquity, and the Middle Ages, Grunwald shows that Jews—far from simply averse to traveling by sea or somehow constitutionally incapable of undertaking sea journeys—have always engaged in seafaring, including voyages of discovery, trade, adventure, and even conquest. Moreover, he argues, in the age of exploration, Jewish adventurers traveled right alongside their non-Jewish counterparts, sailing with Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and the East India Company. He tells his presumably astonished readership that there were even Jewish pirates, Jewish skippers, and Jewish sea captains at this time. In so arguing, Grunwald tries to debunk the prevalent idea that Jews—due to certain historical, social, and political circumstances—are restricted to traveling, or more precisely, wandering on land. Jews are not condemned to wander the earth, but they also set sail, like great explorers and pioneers.

Thematically speaking, the legend of the wandering Jew can be traced back to the New Testament, where it is the Jew’s longevity—the fact that he is condemned not to die—that is at issue, not the fact that he wanders. But with the publication of a German chapbook in 1602, *Kurtze Beschreibung und Erzählung von einem Juden mit Namen Ahasuerus*, the myth of the “eternal Jew” was transformed such that the Jew now wanders on land from country to country without a home, until his redemption at the end of time. Virtually all of the cultural representations of the myth of the wandering Jew emphasize

the fact that the Jew is wandering—by foot—across the world. He may walk across land and sea, such as in Gustave Doré's famous series of woodcuts, but he almost never sets sail, certainly not as a self-determined pioneer or explorer.<sup>49</sup> The wandering Jew visits village upon village as he travels the world, carrying nothing but a walking cane and a small bag. Significantly, he is the object of perplexed curiosity and is himself nothing but a spectator on the world: he never creates anything, he never changes anything, and he never leaves anything behind. He is condemned to wander the earth until he confesses his faith in Christianity on Judgment Day. In this respect, the modern myth's inherent anti-Semitism blends with the Jew's ostensible rejection of the Greco-world of seafaring. This is certainly the history upon which Hegel based his judgment of the Jews in both his early theological writings and lectures on world history.

In Grunwald's revision of the history of the landlocked, wandering Jew, he shows that Jews have always participated in seafaring, arguably the greatest—and most horrific—enterprise and institution of Western civilization. After all, travel by ship is not only a classically Greek mode of transportation, it is also one of the most persistent and specific metaphors of existence in the Western cultural tradition, connoting, among other things, knowledge, education, heroism, bravery, freedom, and statehood.<sup>50</sup> The ship journey, as both an actuality and an image, calls up a long history stretching back to antiquity with Homer and Virgil and, in various permutations and valuations, up through Dante, Goethe, Defoe, Melville, Du Bois, and Conrad. As Georges Van Den Abbeele astutely writes:

The dearest notions of the West nearly all appeal to the motif of the voyage: progress, the quest for knowledge, freedom as freedom to move, self-awareness as an Odyssean enterprise, salvation as a destination to be attained by following a prescribed pathway (typically straight and narrow).<sup>51</sup>

It is no wonder that Hegel considered the ship to be the central vehicle of history and seafaring to be the critical prerequisite of world-historical people. But what Hegel downplays is the dialectical complexity of the seafaring topos: side-by-side with the stock metaphors of self-discovery, progress, enlightenment, education, and statehood, one need only think of historical events such as colonial voyages of conquest and the horror of the middle passage.<sup>52</sup> In this respect, then, the history of Jewish seafaring is a testament to Jewish participation in both the noble and the dubious ideals of Western civilization: discovery and conquest, knowledge and colonialism, progress and enslavement.

Grunwald begins his remarkable essay by quoting a conversation between an eighteenth-century Provost of the Catholic Church and a Jew, wherein the

Provost asks the Jew, who prefers to travel from Königsberg to Amsterdam via land: “Why do Jews not like to travel by sea?” (JR, 479). In a tone of regret, Grunwald responds to this stereotype by saying: “In fact, even to this day, very little is known about the activities of Jews who were seafarers or even anchormen” (JR, 479). Without differentiation, he continues by citing references to seafaring among the ancient Israelites, particularly concerning trade with the Phoenicians and other seafaring peoples; he notes references to Jewish seafaring throughout the New Testament, in the books of Matthew, John, and Luke. He cites regulations concerning sailing in the Talmud, and points out that Jews were active in sea trade throughout the Mediterranean during the early Middle Ages, especially in the region of Southern France (JR, 481). As Grunwald enthusiastically writes:

Countless Jews undertook faraway journeys by sea on the model of Benjamin von Tudela, the [Jewish] world traveler in the twelfth century. Some pursued business interests, others the longing to see the land of their forefathers and its consecrated places, and still others sought the ten lost tribes of Israel about which adventure tales have been written. For many, it was also simply the desire to see something new and experience adventure.

(JR, 481)

He continues by emphasizing the fact that both Jewish and non-Jewish sailors encountered Jews in faraway lands, hence proving that Jews did, in fact, travel by ship.

And perhaps more significantly, he is anxious to write Jews back into the political and economic history of colonialism. I quote Grunwald again:

In the voyages of discovery and conquest undertaken by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English, Jews played a not unimportant role as seamen and pilots. The ship’s doctor on Christopher Columbus’s expedition was a Jew, and it is said to have been a Jew that first discovered land; a Jew was the first to found a settlement on the newly discovered land. . . . Vasco da Gama made use of Jewish seafarers, and his constant companion, Alfonsos d’Albuquerque, was a Jew. In 1334, Jayme IV, the last King of Mallorca testified that the Jew, Juceff Faquin of Barcelona, had sailed around what was then the known world. There were many Jews on the Portuguese expedition of 1415 which accepted Mauritians. A linguistically gifted Jew accompanied Captain James Lancaster on the first enterprise of the East-India Company in 1601 and was in charge of the negotiations with Sultan von Atschin of Sumatra.

(JR, 482)

Far from being condemned to aimlessly wander on the ground, Jews consistently set sail with their non-Jewish, national counterparts during the age of exploration. They helped to extend European knowledge, European economic opportunity, and, ultimately, European dominance. Without any embarrassment, criticism, or irony, Grunwald claimed that Jews not only engaged in seafaring but—like the great powers of Europe—also engaged in conquest and colonization.

Grunwald concludes his article with an overview of the history of autonomous, Jewish sea trade, something that originates in northern Europe in the seventeenth century and stretches right up to the beginning of the twentieth century, when Grunwald penned his piece. Jewish shipping companies, with Jewish sailors, engaged in trade throughout Europe, China, and the West and East Indies, while Jewish shipbuilding companies had offices in Hamburg and New York and manufactured cargo ships used across the world. While Jewish sea trade flourished during this period, it was never free from the specter of anti-Semitism and the dangerous dialectic of emancipation and assimilation.<sup>53</sup> Here, Grunwald cites a senate decision from the Hamburg state government of 1801 in which the members of a Jewish shipping company, after having been denied their passports because of their Jewish heritage, won an appeal to sail their ship under the flag of Hamburg. The senate decision, quoted in its entirety by Grunwald, argued that:

Seafaring is the first and foremost means of trade for this state. The more individual ships we have, the easier it is for merchants to sell their goods and the less we have to depend on foreign states and their ships. . . . Seafaring covers the widest scope and there is space for Christians and Jews here.

(JR, 484–485)

The senate concluded by granting the Jews the necessary passports and papers to continue their business—a decision which, as Grunwald remarks, predated the civic emancipation of the Jews. The state’s recognition of Jewish seafaring marks—at least in this single case—the elevation of the Jews into useful citizens for the state and, hence, their entrance into the “Germanic” stage of world history in which Spirit moves “outward” to the “universal” (W, 490). It is no wonder that Grunwald highlights this isolated decision because in 1902 the Zionist program was explicitly predicated on the transformation of Jews into civically useful citizens who would extend the idea of the European Universal to the creation of a Jewish state.

What makes Grunwald’s essay so important for our purposes here is that it represents a significant counter-history to both the myth of the wandering Jew and the strictly Hegelian concept of world history. He was the first Zionist thinker to reclaim the historical significance of Jewish seafaring vis-à-vis nation building and colonialism. Moreover, his essay comes, not

fortuitously, at a time when the Zionist imaginary began to actively conceive of Palestine as a Jewish-European, colonial territory. Indeed, Grunwald's ultimate point is that Jews—even though they may not have always been national subjects sailing under the flag of a nation-state—have always engaged in seafaring and, for better or for worse, thus have an incontestable, historically substantiated claim to be a world-historical people. Zionists would simply be continuing the Jewish tradition of seafaring by journeying to and resettling in Palestine. The Jewish state would, then, belong to the “Germanic” stage of world history.

A few years after Grunwald published his celebratory tract, Werner Sombart—one of Germany's leading national economists—gave a series of lectures in Berlin's *Singakademie* on “Jews and Capitalism.” Anticipating many of the ideas that he would develop in his notorious book, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (The Jews and Modern Capitalism) of 1911,<sup>54</sup> Sombart argued that Jewish people in the Diaspora were responsible for the spread of capitalism and that the birth of the modern nation-state was only possible because of the financial support of the Jews. Although ostensibly anti-Semitic in equating Jews with the spread of capitalism and the finance economy, Zionist thinkers such as Grunwald had already made precisely this argument in order to elevate Jews into world-historical agents. Even more significantly, his lectures were widely embraced and even celebrated by the Zionist organ, *Die Welt*, which published a series of self-congratulatory articles on Sombart's thesis.<sup>55</sup> The first raved: “According to Sombart, there is hardly a phenomenon more significant in world-history for culture and specifically economic culture than the history of the Jewish people” (Bedeutung, 1040). Not only were Jews responsible for the decisive shift in economic power from the southern nations (Italy, Spain, Portugal) to the northern nations of Holland and England in the early modern period, but they were also responsible for creating a “world market” for industry and instituting the world-wide trade of goods that “revolutionized the entire modern economy” (Bedeutung, 1041). But more than this, “Jews were the actual founders of the modern colonial economy,” which made possible the East India Company and the discovery of America (Bedeutung, 1041). In fact, the review continues, “Columbus's expedition was financed by Jewish money. The crew of his ship consisted of a large percentage of Jews. . . . The Jews created the material basis that enabled the construction of the state” (Bedeutung, 1041).<sup>56</sup>

Far from impotent or confined to the first stage of world-history, as Hegel would have it, Jews were actually to thank for the evolution of the modern state. Through their mobility, adaptability, and internationality, they represented the very embodiment of the “Geist” of capitalism, according to the Zionists: “Without the involvement of the Jews, the modern state could have never come into being . . . Above all, the Jews developed the spirit [*Geist*] of modern capitalism” (Bedeutung, 1041). As translators, traders, business partners, and interlocutors, the Jews developed “an international network of

connections” that was actually strengthened through their “dispersal” in the Diaspora (Befähigung, 1087). They developed certain qualities such as “powerful energy and vitality,” “restlessness,” “judgment,” and “intellectual agility” [*geistige Beweglichkeit*], which helped secure their claim to be the world-historical people, par excellence (Befähigung, 1088).<sup>57</sup> Far from being backwards, weak, or underdeveloped, Jews—according to the Zionist embrace of Sombart’s ideas—were actually the most modern, the savviest, and the strongest precisely because they were responsible for the revolution of capitalism and the ascendancy of the modern colonial-imperial state. It was their centrality in the expansive world economy of capitalism and the colonial sphere that made them the most “modern” and, hence, the most “muscular.”

In the early part of the twentieth century when Grunwald and Sombart produced their theories of Jewish world-historical power, Zionist colonial voyages to Palestine were already becoming commonplace by wealthy, European Jews, many of whom later published travelogues and photo-documentaries of their travels through the land.<sup>58</sup> Several years earlier, Theodor Herzl made his own highly publicized sea voyage to Palestine to meet with the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, in the hopes of convincing him to create a “German protectorate” for world Jewry in Turkish controlled Palestine. In a letter Herzl wrote to the Kaiser on October 18, 1898, a couple of weeks before their historic meeting in Jerusalem, Herzl argued that Zionism was a universally “regenerative” project that would not only remake Palestine in the image of the European state but also help save the insolvent Turkish Empire:

Even if his Majesty the Sultan does not immediately realize what aid the Zionists would bring to his impoverished, decaying state [*verarmte, verfallende Staate*], he will accept your Imperial Majesty’s advice in a personal discussion as to how his administration and finances could be regenerated [*regenerieren*].<sup>59</sup>

Anticipating a successful meeting with the German Kaiser, Herzl concludes his letter with a vaguely Hegelian description of world history: “God’s secrets hover over us in these world-historical hours. There is nothing to fear, if he is with us” (T, 2: 655).

While the Zionist idea of the modern Jewish state received its critical formulation by Herzl—most notably, in 1896 with the publication of his short tract, *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), and in 1902, with the publication of *Altneuland*—the Jewish concept of regeneration as a response to Hegel’s philosophy of world history goes back to Moses Hess’s 1862 book, *Rome and Jerusalem*. In this text, Hess believed that France would “restore [the Jewish] people to [their] place in world history [*Weltgeschichte*]” by helping them “found colonies that could extend from Suez to Jerusalem, and from

the banks of the Jordan to the coast of the Mediterranean.”<sup>60</sup> In the preface to his letters, Hess was even more pronounced in his attempt to rewrite Hegel’s philosophy of world history:

Among the peoples thought to be dead who after becoming conscious of their historic tasks will assert their rights to nationality are indisputably the Jews; they have defied the storms of world history for two thousand years and despite being carried to the ends of the world by the floods of history have always looked and continued to look to Jerusalem.<sup>61</sup>

Far from being a dead race condemned to the first stage of world history, the indestructibility of the Jewish people represented the precondition of their national regeneration. For Hess, the revaluation of the myth of the “eternal” Jew became the very means by which the “wandering” Jew was transformed into an agent of the Universal. From its very beginnings, then, the Zionist idea sought to overturn Hegel’s verdict by bringing Jews into the “Germanic world” of the present.

Like Hess and Grunwald, Herzl imagines the Jewish state as part of an expansive, European frontier, one which would spread European culture to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. He famously writes that Palestine “would form a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization opposed to barbarism.”<sup>62</sup> Echoing the thoughts of a speech that he composed for the Kaiser, Herzl noted in his diaries that the Jewish people have the right to return to their ancient homeland in order to colonize, improve, and cultivate it. Even though “many generations have come and gone since this earth was Jewish,” Herzl says:

This is the land of our fathers, a land suitable for colonization and cultivation [*Colonisirung u. Cultivirung*]. Your Majesty has seen the country. It cries out for people to build it up. And we have among our brothers a frightful proletariat. These people cry out for a land to cultivate. . . . Energies and material resources will be brought to the country; a magnificent fructification of desolate areas may easily be foreseen, and from this, more happiness and civility will grow for all human beings. . . . Our idea threatens no one’s rights or religious feelings; it breathes a long-desired reconciliation. We understand and respect the devotion of all faiths on this soil, upon which the beliefs of our fathers also arose.

(T, 2: 657–668)

Although couched in terms that emphasize religious tolerance, Herzl’s plan for national regeneration also involved a marginalization and displacement of the current population. He notes a couple of days later in his diary:



The musty deposits of two thousand years of inhumanity, intolerance, and uncleanness lie in the foul-smelling streets. . . . If we ever get Jerusalem back and if I'm able to still do something, the first thing I would do is clean it up. I would get rid of everything that is not sacred, set up homes for workers outside the city, empty out and tear down the nests of filth, burn the secular ruins, and move the bazaars elsewhere. Then, retaining the old architecture as much as possible, I would build a comfortable, well-ventilated, well-organized, new city around the Holy places.

(T, 2: 680–6681)

The Zionists would cleanse the foul-smelling streets, tear down the secular buildings, and get rid of the means of sustenance for the Arab people, while “cultivating” and bringing “fructification” to the impoverished land. Here, Herzl’s articulation of the Zionist idea was not only an answer to the “Jewish question” in Europe but, somewhat paradoxically, also an extension of the violence of the European Universal—the nation-state, the colonial power, the idea of civilization, and the concept of world history. In the vein of the great theoreticians of world history, Herzl described the project in a critical essay of 1899, “Jews as Pioneer People,” in the following understated terms: “the world is redistributed from time to time.”<sup>63</sup> In this deeply ambivalent essay, Herzl tries to elevate the Jews to world-historical people by placing Zionism on par with other expansionist, colonial discourses.

Although nothing concrete ultimately emerged from the negotiations between Herzl and Wilhelm II, the overdetermined, symbolic significance of the German Kaiser meeting with the Jewish founder of Zionism in Jerusalem is hard to overestimate. As Herzl justifiably wrote in his diary on that date: “This brief reception will be preserved forever in the history of the Jews” (T, 2: 688). In photographs published of his journey, Herzl’s disposition is that of a leader embarking on a journey to lay claim to his people’s land. Much like the German Kaiser, clad in a double-breasted Hussar uniform and a military hat with the insignia of the German empire, Herzl was undertaking a sea voyage with his own “imperial eyes.”<sup>64</sup> While sailing in the Sea of Marmara, Herzl recounted in his diary the first impression that he had of the Kaiser’s body, which he compares to his own body:

When I entered, the Kaiser looked at me with his great sea-blue eyes. He really has imperial eyes. I have never seen such eyes. A remarkable, bold, inquisitive soul shows in them. . . . He is exactly as tall as I am, and my first impression was that he is embarrassed about his short arm.

(T, 2: 664)

The German leader turns out to be the same size as the Jewish leader and even has a physical deformity, with one arm shorter than the other. Although the

German Kaiser still has his imperial eyes over the newly recognized Jewish leader, Herzl appears to know that the Jews have their own chance to achieve imperial greatness.

During his lifetime and especially after his death, Herzl's own vision for Zionism, his military-like disposition, and even his confluence of "Jew-Greek" beauty were often cited as emblematic of the newly regenerated muscle Jew. Elias Auerbach, for example, honored Herzl in his memorial speech delivered at Bar Kochba in 1904 by connecting his physical beauty to the Jewish-Greco heroic tradition:

He possessed a beauty of which one can only speak in the most modest words, a beauty that was so larger than life, that one looked at him like a Greek artist looked at a beautiful boy, as a masterwork of nature. . . . He stands there like Saul, a head taller than his people.  
(JTZ, 1904, 7: 116)

Several years after his death, Lilien even stylized a famous photograph of Herzl gazing across the Rhine into a vignette of a Jewish warrior. In Lilien's version, not only does Herzl now don a steel helmet and carry a giant shield (decorated with a Star of David) and a bayonet, but the landscape has also changed: Herzl no longer surveys the Rhine but has moved, presumably with Jewish colonial "troops," into Palestine.<sup>65</sup> In this respect, at least in Lilien's rendition, his 1898 trip to Palestine must be understood as a kind of reconnaissance mission that would later be followed by actual offensives. It is here that we can see the makings of a subtle—and, as proven by history, irrevocably decisive—transformation from muscular Judaism to militarized Judaism.

In 1902, the same year that Herzl published his colonial Bildungsroman, *Altmeuland*, the first journal dedicated to "the cultural and scientific tapping" of Palestine was published by Berlin's *Juedischer Verlag* (Jewish Press). The journal bore the name "Palaestina," and its masthead, a map of the fertility of the eastern Mediterranean, was designed by E. M. Lilien (Fig. 5.1). Framed by two columns wrapped in verdant foliage, the center of the earth is Palestine and the Mediterranean Sea. Just as Hegel argued that world history would have been "impotent" had the Mediterranean Sea not been the center of the antique world, Lilien places the potency of the sea at the center of the Jewish colonial vision. And in the same way that Grunwald recognized the importance of seafaring for world-historical peoples, the journal takes the possibility of seafaring as the basis of Zionism's colonial claims. In an article published in *Palaestina* outlining the goals of the "Juedische Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft" [Jewish Orient-Colonial Society], Davis Trietsch maintains that Palestine is "clearly the center" of the entire region, conveniently located on the Mediterranean Sea between Cyprus, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Egypt (Fig. 5.2).<sup>66</sup>



HERAUSGEGEBEN VON  
DR. ALFRED NOSSIG UND DAVIS TRIETSCH.

JAHRGANG I.



JUEDISCHER VERLAG BERLIN.

Figure 5.1 E. M. Lilien, "Palaestina" (1902).

Interestingly, the geographic centrality of Palestine was not only confirmed by its Mediterranean position but also something that was reflected in the development of the transcontinental railway. In a fascinating representation of the world, the editors of *Palaestina* imagined Palestine to be the hub of the world's four major railways, connecting together Europe, Africa, Russia, and South-East Asia (Fig. 5.3): the Orient Express, the Trans-Siberian railway, the Baghdad–India line, and the Cairo–Africa line would all go through Palestine. The caption underneath exclaims, "The great railway lines of Africa, Europe, and Asia can only be connected together here [in Palestine], the only land-bridge between the continents."<sup>67</sup> In other words, not only is Palestine the center of the Mediterranean region, it is also the point of convergence of all the world's commercial traffic, the center of the modern, capitalist world.

It is thus no surprise that as early as 1902, Trietsch and his colleagues are eager to purchase the land and transfer the ownership rights to Jews in order to secure the primacy of this strategic geographic position:

The ultimate goal of the colonization is to buy all the land for a joint co-operative of settlers (both colonists and workers) at a low price and under favorable purchasing conditions in order to preserve, on the one hand, the full rights of ownership for the settlers and, on the other hand, to keep the accumulated capital of the Orient-Colonization-Society available for more colonies, so that greater and greater numbers of Jews have the guarantee of nourishment and autonomy.<sup>68</sup>

Although the journal *Palaestina* only lasted for two years, it was immediately replaced in January of 1904 by a second Jewish colonial journal,

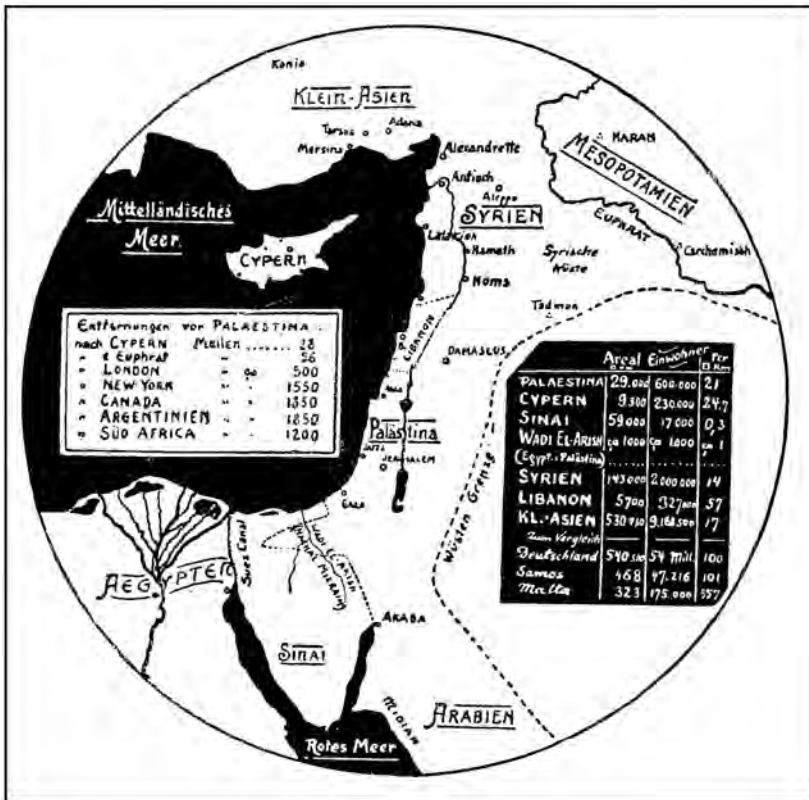


Figure 5.2 Map of Palestine and neighboring regions, *Palaestina* (January 1903), 50.



Figure 5.3 Map of railway lines through Palestine, *Palaestina* (January 1902), 38.

*Altneuland*, dedicated to “the economic tapping of Palestine.” *Altneuland* featured articles about the demography of Palestine, including the topographical features of the land, reports about agriculture and weather, statistics about its present inhabitants, information about traveling to Palestine, and updates about the technological development of the region, particularly concerning railways. In the journal’s first feature article, “Palestine as Colonial Region,” Otto Warburg explained the “civilizing” mission of Jews in Palestine:

We must prove what we learned in the cultural countries of Europe and America; but we must also attempt to find the right direction for the Orient, without simply transferring our methods there, where they are not necessarily useful without taking into consideration the uniqueness of the Orient. Rather, our task is to be the bearer of culture [*Kultur*] for the orient, in which we try to render the achievements of the Western nations into bite-size pieces for the Orient and look for the required modifications necessitated by the particular conditions of the East.<sup>69</sup>

Jews—as the bearers of Western culture and civilization—should not simply force what they have learned in the West onto the “Orient” but rather must

break it down into easily digestible pieces that are modified for the “Orient” as necessary. In so arguing, Jews are represented as the bearers of European culture, while the “Orient” is represented as a land in need of (European) cultivation, culture, and civility. Illustrating Warburg’s argument, two sketches by the Jewish artist Hermann Struck were also included in the article. They depicted the lushness of the Zionist colony Rischon le Zion, “a land infused with culture,” and the ruins of Antipatris, an Arab “wasteland.” German readers of the journal were meant to see that European culture—transferred to Palestine by Jews—would literally bring a flowering of plants in the desert.

Not unlike Grunwald and Herzl’s attempts to elevate Jews into world history by rewriting Hegel and reworking the trope of seafaring, Trietsch, the foremost expert on Jewish colonialism during the first decades of the twentieth century, also recognized the importance of the sea for the development of the Jewish state.<sup>70</sup> While Grunwald sought to recover a lost past by writing the history of Jewish seafaring and Herzl used the trope of seafaring to imagine the regenerated state of the future, Trietsch focused on the pragmatics of the present, arguing for the centrality of the Mediterranean Sea for the realization of the Jewish state in world history. Although Trietsch does not cite Hegel directly, it is hard not to hear an echo of the Hegelian philosophy of world history in which a European state can only become great through a connection to the sea. As Trietsch explains in a chapter called “Jewish Mediterranean Sea Positions,” Jewish entry into world history is bound to the sea:

The increasing closeness to the sea of the Jewish population in the Mediterranean regions eases transportation between Jews living in different lands of this area in an extraordinary way and may soon bring significant consequences. This development favors the participation of Jews in trade and transportation; it helps their “Europeanization;” and, above all else, is crucial for fulfilling the role of culture mediator between the Orient and the Occident, for which Jews are well-suited. . . . Jewish seafaring in the Mediterranean would result in the establishment of businesses in the most important port cities; this would lead to the foundation of an entire network of Jewish banking and trading institutions with branches and so forth; the Jews of the Mediterranean would have an increasing importance, analogous to that of the Greeks, the Maltese, and others.<sup>71</sup>

The cultural, political, and economic conditions of possibility of the Jewish state are determined by its geographic proximity to and world-historical reliance on the sea. In effect, the Greco-German trope of seafaring has been re-imagined as a Jewish national-colonial destiny. And just as significantly, this destiny depends upon spreading the universality of the European ideals of civilization to Jew and Arab alike.

It was precisely the representation of this “civilizing” process that undergirded the organization of Davis Trietsch’s best-selling book, *Bilder aus Palaestina* (1911), the first Zionist photo documentary of Palestine. The book was intended to disseminate knowledge about Palestine within German-speaking countries and, thereby, galvanize enthusiasm for the Zionist project of cultivating and modernizing the land and its people. It consisted of more than 100 photographs as well as several sketches, ranging from pictures of architecture, landscapes, and seascapes to portraits of Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land. Complemented by short thematic essays, the photographs were meant to render visible the colonial territory and the on-going process of its cultivation. In the introduction, Trietsch maintains that the photographs were put together “randomly” in order to reveal “the country’s wonderful diversity” (BP, 7). Yet, despite Trietsch’s disingenuous assertion to the contrary, the pictures in this book are far from indiscriminately thrown together; instead, they reveal and condense the Zionist ideology of progress, cultivation, and regeneration.

This is immediately evident from the first two photographs of ancient and modern Jerusalem. Trietsch juxtaposes the ancient ruins of the tower of David with a photograph of modern apartment buildings and storefronts in Jerusalem, one carrying a sign, “Deutsche Palaestina Bank” (Fig. 5.4). The point is not that the modern has simply replaced the ancient through the inexorable logic of progress but rather that Zionism—as a process of progressive rebirth and return—is a kind of “spiral thrust into the future,” to use Zerubavel’s words again. In effect, the Jewish state of the future is, at once, modern and ancient, the product of linear progress and cyclical revival.

In much the same way that Herzl represents Reschid Bey as a “European” Arab in *Altneuland*, Trietsch points out that the “sleeping Orient” has undergone revolutionary changes in light of modern technologies and the import of European culture:

The Bedouin on the trains, the Syrian farmer who uses a Thuringian milk separator to make butter, the Arab widow who goes to the city and buys a Singer sewing machine on credit, the brown lad who shines the bright yellow shoes of an Arab dandy in the Jaffa market with the newest American shiner—these are all images that do not correspond with the biblical stories nor the tales of a thousand and one nights.

(BP, 10)

Of course, Trietsch is right: these images of “Europeanized” Arabs—if true—would certainly strike a surprising chord in Western-European sensibilities. Strangely, however, these are precisely not the kind of pictures that Trietsch reproduces in his *Bilder aus Palaestina*. There are no photographs of Bedouins on trains or Arab widows sewing clothes using a Singer machine. In fact,



Figure 5.4 “Modern Jerusalem,” in Davis Trietsch, *Bilder aus Palaestina* (1911), 11.

when either Arabs or Arab lands are represented in the photo documentary, they are consistently shown in dilapidated and downright ramshackle settings, completely lacking in all modern amenities. “A typical large Arab town” (Fig. 5.5) has no provisions whatsoever for electricity, railway transportation, international postage, or banking. The houses, probably erected centuries upon centuries ago, have become substantially eroded by the elements. And the inhabitants, far from industrious, appear to be just mulling about or standing around, perhaps waiting, in Reschid Bey’s words, for the Zionist Jews to enrich them.

The Jewish colonists, on the other hand, are depicted hard at work, cultivating the arid land and harvesting its crops<sup>72</sup> (Fig. 5.6). They are the ones who brought the international banking institutions, European cultural enterprises, the German language, and modern agricultural technology to Palestine. In this respect, the photo documentary accords in many ways with Herzl’s colonial novel, *Altneuland*: Zionists first “civilize” other Jews and, then, civilize the native Arabs such that, in the end, everyone “returns” home



improved, enriched, and better off. The fact that there are no photographs of Bedouins on trains or Syrians using German-made milk separators in Trietsch's book is possibly a testament to the magnitude and the futurity of the task at hand. *Bilder aus Palaestina*, like Herzl's *Altneuland*, is not only a document of the present as a product of the past but also a document of the ways in which the present hoped for and desired the future. In this respect, the Zionist project is a modernizing, civilizing enterprise, which, in its realization, will Europeanize both Jew and Arab.

In the same way that agriculture became synonymous with an ideology of land cultivation, gymnastics, as we saw in Chapter 4, was synonymous with the cultivation of the Jewish body. German-Jewish gymnastics associations not only made regular trips to Palestine but also helped to establish gymnastics schools there. Muscle Jews not only tend crops but also work hard to train their bodies through gymnastics regimes, as shown in the picture of "Gymnastics Hour in the Girls' School" (Fig. 5.7). Even though the first Jewish gymnastics journey to Palestine sponsored by *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* and the Berlin-based gymnastics association, Bar Kochba, did not take place until 1913, as



Figure 5.5 "Typical Large Arab Town," in Davis Trietsch, *Bilder aus Palaestina* (1911), 38.

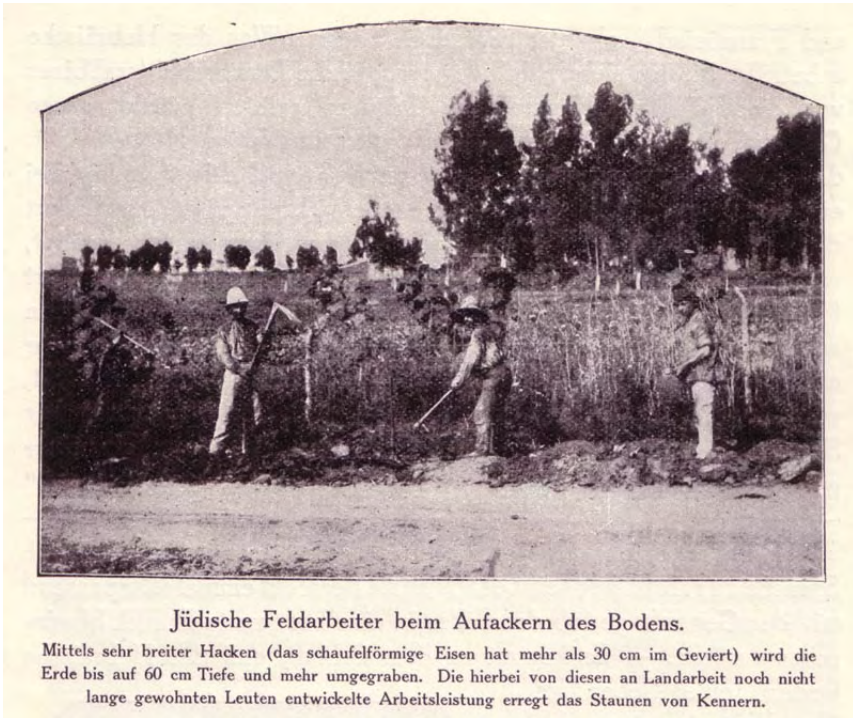


Figure 5.6 “Jewish Field Workers,” in Davis Trietsch, *Bilder aus Palaestina* (1911), 78.

early as 1901, Elias Auerbach articulated clear—and quite violent—colonial goals for the Jewish gymnasts who exhibit “the healthiest national feeling”:

Jewish colonists . . . who submit the ground to their difficult work and face off against Bedouins with shotguns in their fists are a reflection of this direct and personal national Jewry. No one who has spent a year doing gymnastics with us will tolerate anti-Jewish insults without raising his arms; and this defense of Judaism seems to me to be as noble as that with fists, pistols, or even with the pen. Inevitably, we are raising every Jew to become a national Jew, regardless of whether he calls himself such or even knows the word.

(JTZ, 1901, 10: 129)

For Auerbach, gymnastics was to prepare Jews to defend themselves and, if necessary, subjugate the native population in Palestine. This, it seems, is the conceptual-historical origin of Krav Maga.



Figure 5.7 “Gymnastics Hour in the Girls’ School,” in Davis Trietsch, *Bilder aus Palaestina* (1911), 128.

Several years later, when the gymnasts from Bar Kochba performed at the first Palestinian Gymnastics Day in 1913, *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* reported that they had returned to their homeland in order to “rediscover [their] primordial feeling. . . . [T]he home [*Heimat*] of Jewish strength and Jewish spirit had turned into the central force of all our future work” (JTZ, 1913, 1: 2). Indeed, Jewish national strength was still a central goal, although it was not articulated in the overtly violent terms used by Auerbach in 1901. The newspaper also published a map of Palestine, complete with Jewish colonies and settlements as well as railway connections between the major cities, in order to detail the day-by-day travel plans for both the gymnasts and the readership. Over 24 days, the gymnasts would travel back-and-forth from Jaffa to Jerusalem and, then, via ship, to Haifa in order to visit the numerous northern colonies. The schedule ends with the following: “Just as God wants, we will return home [not to Germany, but rather Palestine] freshly, happily, and richly, even if we have spent our last pfennig” (JTZ, 1913, 1: 5). The cultivation of muscle Jews was thus irreducibly linked to the colonization of Palestine.

In the final pages of *Bilder aus Palaestina*, Trietsch articulates “the Europeanization of Palestine” vis-à-vis technological developments, such as the expansion of the international railway system, the building of streets for automobiles, and the modernization of the major harbors in Jaffa and Haifa, as well as cultural developments, such as the adoption of European educational ideals (BP, 138–141). Once again, this process of cultivation as

Europeanization involves both Jews and Arabs shedding their “Oriental” qualities and “Europeanizing themselves” [*europäisiert sich*] (BP, 143). Here, Trietsch suggests that “the German language can serve as the conveyor of European *Bildung*,” something that he also recognizes—given the prevalence of European and particularly German anti-Semitism—is “an irony of fate” (BP, 146). Nevertheless, he augments this idea in *Juedische Emigration und Kolonisation* in a chapter entitled “The Jewish Cultural Mission in the Orient” (*Jüdische Kulturmission im Orient*), in which he argues that Jews will bring to Palestine European educational practices, the German cultural tradition, their extensive knowledge of hygiene and medicine, and general economic flourishing as the “cultural mediator” between Europe and Islam.<sup>73</sup> In this regard, the Zionist imaginary constructed Palestine as a colonial territory for extending European civilization and turning Jews into regenerated, world-historical people. For Zionist thinkers such as Grunwald, Herzl, and Trietsch, writing Jews into the history of seafaring and colonization meant writing Jews into the ranks of the European Universal. Said was not wrong: Zionism and European imperialism are not equivalent; however, they are epistemologically, historically, and politically “coterminous” (ZSV, 83), something that not only applied to their treatment of resident natives but also to their world-view and future development.

### Concluding remarks

Despite Ben-Gurion’s statement that Jews are not a seafaring people, the Zionist Jew arriving from the sea or even being born from the sea has been a critical part of Israeli self-fashioning: first the pioneer arrives from the sea and, then, proceeds to regenerate the desolate land. In so doing, he is turned into a new “Sabra” Jew. This recursivity of building and being rebuilt is captured in the opening line of S. Y. Agnon’s novel, *Only Yesterday* (1945): “Like all our brethren of the Second Aliya, the bearers of our Salvation, Isaac Kumer left his country and his homeland and his city and ascended to the Land of Israel to build it from its destruction and to be rebuilt by it.”<sup>74</sup> In his article, “We Have Not Arrived from the Sea: A Mizrahi Literary Geography,” Hannan Hever makes the argument that the culturally hegemonic Zionist narratives of immigration have been written by Ashkenazi Jews from Europe who arrived on the shores of Israel via the sea. These travel narratives are constituted by what he calls a “normative crossing” of the Mediterranean Sea in order to symbolically and geographically “deterritorialize” the Diaspora in the future state of Israel.<sup>75</sup> By contrast, he sees the immigration stories of the Mizrahi (Jews from Arab countries), published during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, as “sea-less” stories that have been excluded from the customary Zionist narratives precisely because they depict Arab–Jewish geographies of “continuity” and, thereby, offer a different story of Jewish immigration.<sup>76</sup> In effect, Jewish seafaring is a testament to the racial exclusivity of both the Zionist immigration narrative and the Israeli state.

Hever further points out that in these standard immigration narratives, the sea is something that has to be overcome and, therefore, assumes a subservient status vis-à-vis the territory: “The Zionist story is one of Ashkenazi immigration from Diaspora to Redemption, and the journey to Zion is a journey to a territory—a journey by sea, although the sea serves only as a means of passage, as a necessary stage to be crossed.”<sup>77</sup> Although I find Hever’s argument about the “sea-less” Mizrahi literary geography to be a compelling and defiant challenge to the European-Ashkenazi hegemony in Israel, he does not recognize the extent to which the seafaring discourse also constituted the very hegemony he seeks to displace and, for this reason, is more than just a means of passage. As I argued here, the trope of seafaring was appropriated by Zionist thinkers in order to extend the reach of the European Universal, and this is something that first-generation Zionist Jews such as Grunwald, Herzl, and Trietsch articulated precisely to gain the recognition of the great European powers. Seafaring was not simply a means of leaving the old Europe behind; it was also the means of extending—by way of the imaginary—the idea of Europe to the shores of Palestine. In his novel, *Only Yesterday*, S. Y. Agnon describes, for example, how the protagonist, an Eastern-European Jew named Isaac Kumer, catches his first sight of the sea on a train journey to Trieste: “People who were in the train with Isaac stood up and called out happily, That’s the sea. That’s our sea. Isaac stood up and looked at the sea. That is the sea which is a branch of the sea of the Land of Israel.”<sup>78</sup> Not unlike Herzl’s “rampart of Europe,” Palestine is a new territory, which is both different from and still fundamentally connected to Europe by virtue of the same sea and coterminous with many of its same imperial ideals.

In this regard, the early Zionist colonial imaginary employed the discourse of seafaring in order to elevate Jews into world history and place them in line with the European Universal. This meant creating narratives of travel in which Jews were endowed with a longstanding seafaring tradition that, in no apologetic terms, coincided with the history of European colonial-imperial expansion, even if Jews hardly played a role in this actual history. At the same time, it also meant rewriting the myth of the wandering Jew and, thereby, allowing Jews to make a claim to the “Germanic” stage of world history. And, finally, it meant spreading the European Universal to Palestine by applying the concepts of regeneration and muscularity to the creation of a new civil society. As the crown jewel on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the future Jewish state would bring *Bildung*—both civilization and culture—to Jew and Arab alike and, thereby, become an outpost of a new, imperial Europe. The Zionist seafaring narrative is, therefore, doubly a record of racial and cultural hegemony. In seeking legitimacy in the eyes of the European powers, the Zionist colonial imaginary not only bought into the Hegelian account of world history but also established an uncomfortably close alliance between Zionist ideals and those of the great apologists for empire and expansion. The muscle Jew is its discursive record and present-day incarnation.

## SOLDIERS OF REGENERATION

### The military might of old-new Maccabees and the Great War

At the end of the nineteenth century, when Nordau issued his call for the re-creation of a lost “muscular Judaism,” there was probably no stereotype as deeply imprinted on the Jewish body as that of the cowardly and un-soldierly Jew. Because of their small chest size, their flat-footedness, their ungainly gait, their hunched-over backs, their susceptibility to certain diseases (diabetes, tuberculosis, alcoholism), their dietary restrictions, their inability or unwillingness to abandon the world of abstractions and speculations, and their inherent cowardice, Jews could never become good soldiers.<sup>1</sup> Their unfit bodies, cowardly psychic disposition, and religious-cultural strictures supposedly prevented them from defending the countries in which they lived, consigning them to “unheroic conduct.”<sup>2</sup> In a scathing caricature from 1780, the year before Christian Wilhelm Dohm published his famous treatise advocating, among other things, for the “military” improvement of the Jews, a Viennese caricaturist by the name of Johann Löschenkohl published an illustrated poem called “Jewish Recruits Complaining About Learning Military Drills.” Condensing virtually all of the anti-Semitic stereotypes of the un-soldierly Jew, the poem consists of a dialogue between a Jewish recruit named “Mauschel”<sup>3</sup> and a corporal who is overseeing his training. Mauschel says:

Look out, oh German world! Watch with wonder. We’re going into the battlefield. Ach! Is this befitting? We have to become, all at once, a Mauschel and a soldier. We swear by our beards, the heavens and the earth: It’s not going to happen because we lack courage. And yet we’re called upon to be warriors. . . . We fear the smell of gun powder and the whistle of the bullets; we are so scared when the canons fire. Look at how deep it cuts to my heart when a great enemy stands before me . . . Oi Vey, Mr. Corporal, I’m going to pee in my pants. Oi Vey, Mr. Corporal, listen to my screaming. Free me from this pain. Oi Vey! Oi Vey! Oi Vey!<sup>4</sup>

In a somewhat later caricature of a Jewish soldier, “Jacob as Recruit and Jacob as Poet,” the physical inadequacies of the Jew come to the foreground

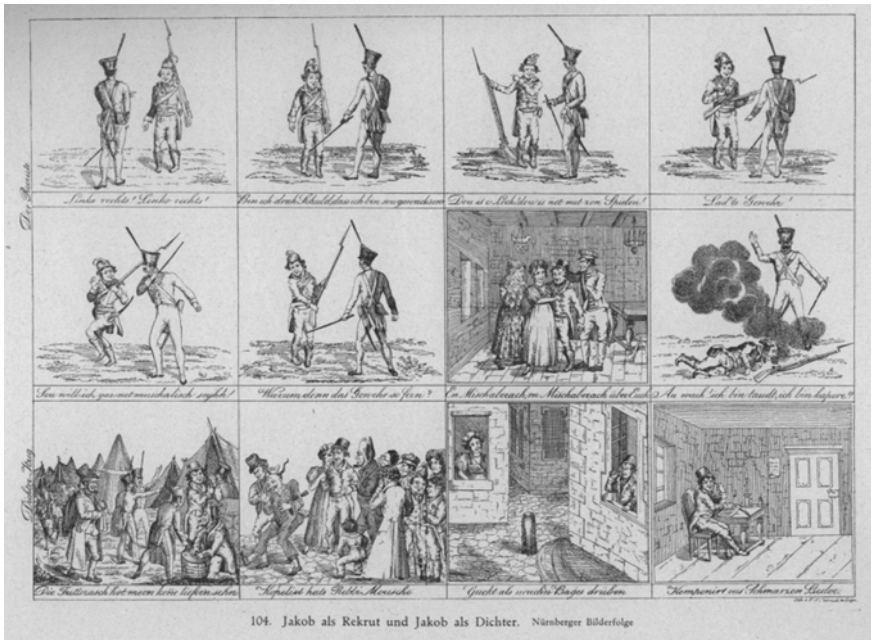


Figure 6.1 “Jacob as Recruit and Jacob as Poet,” in Eduard Fuchs, *Die Juden in der Karikatur*, 93.

next to his deep-seated cowardice (Fig. 6.1).<sup>5</sup> When the diminutive Jacob, with flat feet and misshapen legs, cannot follow the commands of the drill sergeant—“Left, right! Left, right!”—he asks: “Am I to blame for growing this way?” As the counterpart to the tall, muscular, serious, and erect standing German soldier, Jacob is small in stature, weak in physical composition, whimsical in demeanor, and downright terrified of his weapon. He cannot march straight due to his awkward gait; he does not know how to use his musket-bayonet; he falls prostrate on the ground in a plume of smoke. As the sergeant looms angrily above him, he cries out: “Ach! I’m dead. I’m kaputt.” The final scenes show Jacob, at home, ogling a girl from his window and sitting at his desk composing poetry. Military service, we are to conclude, is not a Jewish characteristic.

Since defense of the state demonstrated loyalty, military service became connected to the debate over Jewish emancipation and the extension of civil rights throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Of course, detractors found ample ammunition to bar Jews from serving in the military: not only were Jews physically unfit for military service, they argued, but Jewish religious strictures, particularly the Sabbath and kosher dietary requirements, made them less than ideal candidates for fighting side-by-side

with their Christian counterparts in battle. After the fall of Prussia to Napoleon in 1806, debates began to rage concerning the reform of “German” conscription, and the idea was entertained to extend citizenship to all subjects who fought on behalf of Prussia. In 1808, upon hearing about a Königsberg Jew who set up a volunteer division (*Freikorps*) and advanced to the head of a Cavalry regiment, the Prussian Minister Schrötter made the following laudatory comments about Jews in the military:

The Jew has oriental, fiery blood and a lively imagination, all indicators of a manly strength [*männliche Kraft*] when it is used and put into play. In antiquity and also in the Middle Ages, he was very brave, and even in the modern period, in both the American and French revolutions, there are many striking examples of Jews who distinguished themselves. The cowardice of the Jews came about, in my opinion, from the slavery in which they were kept and the disdain with which they were treated by all nations.<sup>6</sup>

Schrötter believed that the state should not forgo Jewish conscription and that Jews living in Eastern Prussia and Silesia should be called upon to defend Prussia. Almost immediately, policies were drawn up requiring Jewish conscription. And four years later, in 1812, Frederick William III signed the Edict of Emancipation, recognizing Jews as “Einlaender,” or native Prussian state citizens, thereby rendering them “subject to military conscription.”<sup>7</sup> In fact, more than 700 Jews—the majority of whom volunteered for military service—fought for Prussia during the Wars of Liberation (1813–15).<sup>8</sup>

After 1816, following the rise of German chauvinism in the era of restoration, Jewish emancipation was curtailed substantially by new restrictions placed on Jewish military service and the outright removal of Jews from civil servant posts. The burgeoning of the *Turnen* movement under the direction of Jahn brought about an anti-Semitic wave of Prussian nationalism, heroic virility, and ethnic German pride, resulting in a significant backlash with regard to Jewish civil rights. While the Prussian War Ministry never completely abandoned its position that Jews were physically inferior in comparison with the rest of the population, general conscription was reinstated in 1845, and Jews became eligible for promotions to non-commissioned officers. More than a thousand Jews fought for Prussia in 1866, prompting Theodor Fontane to remark that “it was as if they had vowed to put an end to the old notion that Jews are unwilling and unfit to fight in war.”<sup>9</sup> About 7,000 Jews fought in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 and hundreds were decorated, numbers that approximated the rate of service and decoration for the rest of the population.<sup>10</sup>

Although there was a significant record of Jewish military service in German-speaking lands prior to World War I, the stereotype of Jewish physical inferiority persisted in equal measure. An anti-Semitic pamphlet,



*Israel im Heere* (Israel in the Army), which was first printed in 1879, circulated widely at the end of the nineteenth century and resurrected many of the stereotypes of the Jewish body found in the earlier caricatures.<sup>11</sup> The author maintained that since the Jews “lived off other people as parasites” (13), they have never had to defend the nations in which they resided. Citing Herder’s assessment of their physical inferiority with approbation, Naudh writes that Jews:

do not have the complement of muscles as Northern people, and they lack the firm sinews of Arabs. . . . Their bones are not strong like those of the Germans . . . their entire bone structure is defective; the chest is not broad and developed, the shoulders are not straight and level, the neck and head are not upright.

(5–6)

He concludes that “physical inferiority is rarely the basis of warrior bravery” (7). Indeed, such stereotypes inflamed anti-Semitism and caused another backlash against Jewish civil rights.

More than a century after the debate over Jewish fitness for military service began in earnest, the negation of the stereotype of the un-soldierly Jew now became a central part of modern Jewish identity and the development of muscular Judaism. As we have already seen in earlier chapters, it is no coincidence that the names of Jewish war heroes from antiquity—particularly, Bar Kochba and the Maccabees—would now be resurrected as the models for regenerating the Jewish body and cultivating a martial manliness characterized by the soldierly values of bravery, courage, and aggression. Significantly, this embrace of militarism included but also extended far beyond Zionist discourses. In fact, as we will see in this chapter, it can be found in the rhetoric of Jewish student associations, fraternities, dueling societies, sporting clubs, and veterans associations, some of which embraced Zionism and others of which did not. Muscular Judaism and the militaristic Jewish body became a shared ideal of the regenerative politics of modernity.

Remarkably, as Sander Gilman has shown, the very stereotypes promulgated by the anti-Semites were internalized across the ideological spectrum, oftentimes through the mechanisms of Jewish self-hatred.<sup>12</sup> Here, Walter Rathenau, the assimilated German-Jewish industrialist who would become the foreign minister of Germany in 1922, provided one of the paradigmatic accounts of this transformation, citing his own “metamorphosis” from a “tribal” Jew into a “German” Jew. In 1897, the year before Nordau’s call for a “muscular Judaism,” Rathenau published a short essay in the influential Berlin journal, *Zukunft*, called “Höre, Israel!” (Hear, O Israel!), in which he appealed to Jews to “look at [themselves] in the mirror” and take the necessary steps to reform their bodies.<sup>13</sup> With regard to Jews living in a society imbued with Prussian military values, he writes:

You should be all the more careful not to walk about in an unkempt and lethargic manner, and thereby become the laughingstock of a disciplined race brought up in a strict military fashion. As soon as you have recognized your puny build, your hunched shoulders, your clumsy feet, your flaccid roundish shape, you will resolve to dedicate a few generations to the regeneration of your outer appearance.

(458)

In Rathenau's assessment, Jews—as a race—lacked the martial discipline and physical constitution of their German counterparts. Although Rathenau later withdrew this essay from circulation when it became clear that it abetted anti-Semitism, the critiques that he raised were vociferously debated in the years that led up to World War I and widely accepted as a justification of the Zionist politics of corporeal regeneration.

As early as 1901, a debate took place in *Die Welt*, the pro-Zionist weekly founded by Theodor Herzl in 1897, over the alleged “physical inferiority of the Jews.” On the one side, Balduin Groller argued that Jews are not, in fact, physically inferior when compared with other races, despite certain average size differences that exist between races. On the other side, a Jewish medical doctor from Posen, Karl Jeremias, argued that statistical evidence proves the opposite: that Jews have physically degenerated, thus making them inferior to other races. In terms of physical strength, skill, and stamina, Jews, Groller argues, have “performed outstandingly and have not been surpassed by any other people or race.”<sup>14</sup> As evidence, he cites the high number of Jewish athletes and acrobats, including the English weightlifter Sir Edward Lawrence Levy, the young Jewish fighter, Michael Mayer, the master cyclist, Maxime Lurion, the Olympic swimmers, Paul Neumann and Otto Herschmann, as well as makes reference to the countless number of Jews engaged in other sports such as gymnastics, running, soccer, tennis, and fencing. The reason for the stereotype of Jewish physical inferiority is easy to explain, Groller says: While “one generally sees more stunted Jews and physical misery among Jews, . . . what we are seeing there is not the physical inferiority of Jewry bur rather poverty, anxiety, sorrows, and malnutrition” (5). In other words, when given the environmental conditions to prosper, the Jewish people have proven to be physically equal or superior to other races.

Like Groller, Jeremias does not contest the role that poverty and persecution have played in causing Jewish degeneracy; however, he is not convinced that any substantial conclusions can be drawn from the experiences of the “maximal achievements” of a select group of Jews.<sup>15</sup> Groller's viewpoint is simply too optimistic given the overwhelming evidence that “the physical composition” of both Eastern and Western Jews “is not normal” (4). He cites the statistical records of a Russian military doctor, originally presented at the Fourth Zionist Congress by Mandelstamm, on the prevalence of Jewish degeneracy: the average size of an adult Jew is 162.7 centimeters versus

165–170 centimeters for a non-Jew; Jews have less developed chest bones and musculature, including a 60 percent smaller chest size when compared to the norm; Jews suffer from bad posture as well as a greater susceptibility to tuberculosis, skin diseases, eye infections, myopia, and nervous and psychological disorders; and, finally, they have a greater incidence of hernia (4). All in all, given this physical constitution, they are poor candidates for military service. But like his Zionist colleagues, Jeremias does not condemn the Jewish body as unfit for military service; rather, he is quick to point out that the solution is to be found in Nordau's famous slogan: "‘More muscular Judaism!’ with verve and dogged energy" (5). Jews could and would become soldiers of regeneration.

Jeremias's position would, in fact, be espoused by virtually all of the Zionists (and many non-Zionists) concerned with remaking the Jewish body in accordance with Nordau's muscular ideals. In the years leading up to World War I, this happened along two intersecting trajectories: first, Jews had to undertake a rigorous physical program of corporeal reform, which addressed the deficiencies that directly bore upon military fitness; and second, Jews had to return to their own heroic roots by resurrecting the martial traditions of their ancestors, which they had variously given up or lost in the Diaspora.<sup>16</sup> Both of these trajectories can be recognized in a number of articles published, for example, in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*. In 1907, Elias Auerbach published a short but programmatic piece "On the Military Fitness of the Jews" in which he argued that Jews are not inherently less capable of serving in the military than other people; rather, they are called up in smaller numbers because the quantitative indicators of their fitness—particularly, chest size measurements—are, on average, lower. He explains:

Chest circumference essentially depends upon two things: the size of the lungs and the strength of the chest muscles. Both are closely related to the intensity of breathing. This is obvious with regard to lung size, but it is also the case with the strength of the chest muscles, which are primarily breathing muscles and gradually strengthen with deep breathing, as will other muscles with regular training.

(JTZ, 1907, 10/11: 189)

People who work in the country (as opposed to the city) and who engage in manual labor will have larger chest muscles and, hence, appear to be more fit for military service. Among the Jews, he argues, there are very few farmers but lots of "accountants, traders, tailors, and academics" (JTZ, 1907, 10/11: 189). Hence, there are lots of Jews with small chests. The solution, which can hardly be surprising for the journal's readership, is physical training, exercise, and sports, with a specific attention to developing the chest muscles. The result, Auerbach predicts, would be more Jews selected for military service and more Jews distinguishing themselves in the military.

The following year, Heinrich Loewe, an avid supporter of Jewish ethnic pride and nationalist feeling, published an essay in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* called “Die Makkabäer” (The Maccabees). Loewe had been instrumental in organizing the first Jewish-nationalist student associations, particularly the *Vereinigung Jüdischer Studenten* (Association of Jewish Students) as a counterweight to the anti-Semitic *Verein Deutscher Studenten*.<sup>17</sup> He also edited the Jewish nationalist monthly, *Zion. Monatsschrift für die nationalen Interessen des jüdischen Volkes*, for a couple of years and, in 1902, became the editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, a position he held through World War I.<sup>18</sup> For Loewe, as with many of his Zionist colleagues, the Maccabees represented the quintessential paradigm of Jewish nationalist strength and bravery, a “heroic race” (*Heldengeschlecht*) that must be emulated today (JTZ, 1908, 12: 213). According to Loewe, the story of the Maccabees is important for multiple reasons, all of which bear upon Jewish regeneration in the present. First, the muscle Jews of the future are bound together with the decisive heroism of the past. When Mattathias led the Judeans against the seductions of paganism “with splendid tact and a great historical-political understanding,” he did so with the knowledge that “his task for the future could only be revealed with reference to the great past of his people” (JTZ, 1908, 12: 216). Very much in line with both the temporality and masculinity of the modern Zionist idea, the generations of the fathers and sons are linked together by their past and future military victories. Second, according to Loewe, the Maccabees demonstrated that “heroes [could be] created from a cowardly tribe,” proving that “even an inconsequential tribe is in the position, through national self-help, to defy a militarized world” (JTZ, 1908, 12: 217). And, finally, the facticity of the Maccabees’ defiance represents the incarnation of a Jewish “heroic race” characterized by “powerful and extraordinary heroic deeds,” including “the greatest courage and heroic martyrdom for people and freedom” (JTZ, 1908, 12: 218).

Loewe concludes his celebration of the Maccabees by citing what he imagines to have been their high level of physical fitness: “The first resistance of the heroic Maccabee race was probably due to gymnastics. . . . Their heroic deeds thoroughly proved that their bodies were trained in all the gymnastic arts and steeled for genuine battles” (JTZ, 1908, 12: 218). Not coincidentally, this was the same rhetoric that the *Vereinigung Jüdischer Studenten* had used for nearly a decade to call upon its members to reform their bodies: “By steeling our physical strength and increasing our dexterity, our bodies will be masculine and full of energy, ready to execute the orders of the mind.”<sup>19</sup> In sum, the Maccabees represented the “shining model” of Jewish strength, fortitude, and courage, a model of military masculinity that should be emulated, Loewe suggests, in all the Jewish gymnastics halls, student associations, and training centers of early twentieth-century Europe (JTZ, 1908, 12: 218).

Shortly after the start of World War I, the *Jüdische Rundschau*, under the editorial direction of Loewe, reprinted a rousing speech by Franz Oppenheimer

entitled “Alte und neue Makkabäer” (Old and New Maccabees).<sup>20</sup> The editor included a short prefatory note explaining the decision to reprint the speech nearly a decade after it was delivered by referencing the timeliness of the historical moment in which “the ideals of the fight for freedom in Russia, in which the blood of Jewish heroes has been spilt, can be realized” (353). Not only did the vast majority of Jews across the cultural and ideological spectrum entertain the hope that World War I would bring about better conditions and even liberate the masses of Eastern European Jews living in ghettos and miserable poverty, but they also believed that the war would be a proving ground for the emergence of an “old-new” Jewish race, one that was imbued with the heroic bravery and strength of the Maccabees. In his speech, Oppenheimer cites the spate of violent pogroms across Kishinev, Homel, Odessa, and Kiev, and wonders—not unlike the poet Haim Nahman Bialik<sup>21</sup>—whether “the Jewish masses have lost their Maccabee anger and Maccabee courage” (353). Perhaps it has been suppressed, he suggests, but even the poor “pants-selling youth”<sup>22</sup> of the Eastern European ghettos are, he maintained, “true descendants of the Maccabees” (354). Now, more than a decade later, World War I would be the decisive moment to reawaken this pride and regenerate the heroism of the “old” Maccabees.

Indeed, just days after the start of World War I, Loewe had already called upon the German Jews to defend their fatherland with the courage and bravery exhibited by the Maccabees.<sup>23</sup> Like Oppenheimer, he saw no conflict between this unflagging support of Germany and the ideals of the Maccabees: it was through Germany that “progress, freedom, and culture” would be preserved against the “terrible tyranny, bloody cruelty, and dark regression” (343) enveloping Europe. Fighting for Germany was essentially a Maccabean fight against a modern-day tyranny that sought to “annihilate ‘the land of culture’” and place a stranglehold on Jewish freedom and prosperity (343). Loewe’s call to German Jews, supported by the *Reichsverein der Deutschen Juden* and the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland*, reads as follows:

In these hours, it must be shown anew that we—as tribally proud Jews—belong among the best sons of the fatherland. The nobility of our millennia of history obliges us. We expect that our youth will voluntarily and cheerfully defend the flag. . . . We trust that our youth—strengthened by the cultivation of their Jewish consciousness and their physical education [*körperliche Ausbildung*] in ideal conviction and manly courage—will distinguish themselves in all war-like virtues.

(343)

Emboldened by their heroic fighting tradition and physically regenerated in the gymnastics halls of modern-day Europe, Jews would bravely serve the

German fatherland and prove, once and for all, that they were a muscular, military people.

Significantly, the vast majority of the Zionists (and Loewe was no exception) did not perceive a contradiction between their loyalty to the nations in which they lived and their ultimate desire for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the *Jüdische Rundschau* carried a permanent citation from the Basel Program across its masthead, which read: “The goal of Zionism is to establish a legally and publicly secure state in Palestine for the Jewish people.” In August 1914, printed just a few inches below this citation was Loewe’s call to German Jews “to give their entire heart, their entire soul, and their entire means to the service of the fatherland” (343). As Michael Berkowitz points out, “Zionists in both the Central and Allied powers . . . rationalized that their own country’s victory would hasten the conversion of Zionist dreams into reality.”<sup>25</sup> They did not perceive an issue of conflicted or double loyalties. According to Loewe, fighting for the German fatherland not only gave Jews the chance to showcase their loyalty and permanently negate the stereotype of Jewish cowardice, but it also allowed Jews to fight for a common goal, side-by-side with their German brothers:

When we fight as citizens of our fatherland, the bravery of our ancestors, the courage unto death of the Maccabees, the tremendous fight of Bar Kochba, and the heroic death of hundreds of thousands of our people throughout the ages comes shining through as a glorious example. We will be victorious. We have the confidence in the German Emperor that he is leading us right. We have confidence in the German people that they will fight to their last breath, and we have the unshakable confidence in the divine justice that will bring victory to our honest brothers in arms.

(343)

Jewish enthusiasm for the war and unequivocal support of Germany persisted across the ideological spectrum in a range of pro-Zionist, non-Zionist, and anti-Zionist publications, something that, once again, underscores the fact that muscular Judaism was part of a broader, European-wide project of modern body reform. While the pan-Jewish cultural magazine *Ost und West*, for example, never embraced an explicit pro-Zionist or a pro-German nationalist political platform, it came out actively in support of the war. In 1914, Benjamin Segel published an extraordinary lead article in the magazine called “Der Krieg als Lehrmeister” (The War as Master Teacher), in which he argued that the war was essentially caused by the “groundless hatred” of Germany by other countries and that German-Jewry would summon its own ancestral glory to defend its fatherland.<sup>26</sup> “Unlike any other historical event,” Segel writes, “war answers the question of how much bravery, contempt for death, discipline, organizational capacity, sacrificial courage, and physical

strength lies within a people” (635). Far from being “cowardly” or “unwarlike,” Jews have a long “warrior” tradition, including, among others, the warriors of Jephtha, Gideon, Saul, Job, Jehuda, and, of course, the Maccabees (635). Both ancestral Jews and present-day Jews embody the values of “coldbloodedness, determination, resourcefulness, heightened vigilance, and unconditional trustworthiness” (638), thereby negating the “fable of the Jew who is militarily inferior” (640). The War, Segel believed, would not only teach present-day Jews to be warriors but also teach the rest of the world to accept the regenerated muscle Jews as a legitimate warrior people.

On the other side of the ideological spectrum, the anti-Zionist *Kartell-Convent vereinigten Korporationen*, formerly the *Kartell Convent deutscher Studenten jüdischer Glaubens* (Association of German Students of Jewish Faith) also came out strongly in support of the war, publishing an array of articles on the success of the war effort and lists of its fallen brothers who “died a heroic death for the fatherland.”<sup>27</sup> The Kartell-Convent, or K.C. for short, was originally formed in 1896 when three Jewish fraternities established an interuniversity association to advocate for full academic equality for Jewish students and fight anti-Semitism.<sup>28</sup> The students of the K.C. proclaimed that they were German students of Jewish faith and supported activities, such as gymnastics, fencing, and dueling, that would showcase their physical fitness, honor, and ethnic-national pride.<sup>29</sup> Its main publication, the *K.C.-Blätter*, carried the following mission statement:

The bonds of the K.C. are tied to the ground and convictions of the German fatherland. Its goal is to fight anti-Semitism in the German student body and to educate its members to become self-aware Jews who are conscious of the fact that the German Jews form an indissolubly connected part of the German fatherland through history, culture, and law, and are always prepared to stand up for the political and social equality of the Jews.<sup>30</sup>

Beginning with its first issue in October 1910, the *K.C.-Blätter* also featured an extraordinary illustration on its cover depicting three naked youths engaged in battle (Fig. 6.2). The illustration was printed on the cover for its first year and then it was removed; it returned in the March–April 1915 issue and was carried on the cover of each subsequent “war edition.” In it, we see three highly stylized, muscular Jews lunging toward light with swords in their hands, as if engaged in a fight for their honor, with an enemy that is not or cannot be depicted. While the image may represent three Jews dueling for their honor against anti-Semitism in 1910, its reproduction in 1915 is certainly meant to illustrate Jewish military bravery in the fight for the German fatherland. Since the faces are partially or fully obscured, we are drawn directly to the musculature of their bodies: their strong arms, the build of their chest and breast, and the sinews of their buttocks and legs. Each figure is

shown from a slightly different angle revealing the side, the phallus, and the buttocks. Indeed, the left-most figure appears to have an erection as he lunges forward with all his virility into the depths of battle.<sup>31</sup> This, it seems, is how many German-Jewish men greeted World War I: as a proving ground for their muscularity and masculinity.

Many reasons have been given to explain the prevalent and widespread enthusiasm with which Jews—both Zionist and non-Zionist, German and



Figure 6.2 Cover of *K.C. Blätter: Monatsschrift der im Kartell-Convent vereinigten Korporationen* (1915).



non-German—welcomed the coming of the war.<sup>32</sup> Foremost among the reasons was the belief harbored that the war would finally bring about full acceptance and equality. According to Ludwig Geiger in 1914, Jews “felt themselves to belong to their respective countries” and would “fight and suffer for their fatherland.” In return, they expected to be treated “justly.”<sup>33</sup> As István Deán further explains:

World War I marked the apogee of Jewish participation in the life of Central Europeans. In the delirious enthusiasm of August 1914, Jews were among the greatest enthusiasts. They endorsed the war, in part because the enemy was the anti-Semitic Russian empire, in part because the outcome of the conflict promised to bring their final and complete acceptance.<sup>34</sup>

While this explanation is certainly true, I would hasten to add that the war represented something else as well: it was the ultimate proving ground for the regenerated muscle Jew. In essence, the war was a chance for European Jews to definitively prove that they were the legitimate descendants of their ancestral heroes and thus, particularly for the Zionists, capable of founding and defending a modern nation-state. The Jewish soldiers in World War I were the modern-day incarnations of the Maccabees or Bar Kochba, and it would be in the trenches and, as we will see below, in the air where they would demonstrate their muscular virility.

Even after 1916, the year the German War Ministry undertook its notoriously humiliating “Judenzählung” (Jew Count) to collect statistical information about the number of Jews serving in the German army, a census that spurred massive anti-Semitic attacks accusing Jews of shirking service and engaging in war profiteering, the war remained a proving ground for Jewish soldiers.<sup>35</sup> Instead of calling for protest, Martin Buber defiantly challenged the census takers to count the number of Jews serving in the military, arguing that “we are used to being counted.” He continued:

Russia counted the number of our children in schools; Poland counted our workers in its communal undertakings to make sure there weren’t too many. A few months ago, a German student association proposed counting the number of fallen Jews in Germany’s battlefields. It seemed to them that there weren’t enough. . . . Go ahead and count us!<sup>36</sup>

Buber was not alone in his defiance, and Jewish statisticians, including Felix Theilhaber and Jacob Segall, quickly published “Jew counts” of their own in order to rebuke the anti-Semites who accused Jews of shirking their duties, or worse, stabbing the German nation in the back.<sup>37</sup> Jewish war statistics were widely circulated: 100,000 Jews served Germany in the war, the vast majority

on the frontlines; 12,000 Jews died fighting; 35,000 Jews were decorated in the war; and 2,000 Jews became officers.<sup>38</sup>

Although the War Ministry never officially published its census findings, excerpts were widely used and manipulated by anti-Semitic ideologues, ushering in a tidal wave of propaganda that scapegoated Jews for Germany's defeat. Otto Armin's *Juden im Heere* (Jews in the Army), a statistical argument purporting to demonstrate Jewish responsibility for Germany's defeat, was published in 1919 and quickly circulated among right-wing, nationalist organizations.<sup>39</sup> Armin attempted to demonstrate that Jews fought in significantly lower percentages on the front, volunteered to serve in markedly smaller numbers than their non-Jewish counterparts, and, most damningly, could not distinguish themselves as war heroes because of their inhering "Händlergeist" (61). Jews, he argued, had a sneaky, business-like mindset, which predisposed them toward egoistic secrecy, money, espionage, and questionable morality; Germans, on the other hand, had a "Heldengeist," which predisposed them toward national heroism, courage, and self-sacrifice. In the war, Armin concludes, "the 'heroic spirit' of the Germans was driven into the ground by the 'business spirit' of the Jews" (61). In fact, this argument would be widely adopted and radicalized during the years of the Weimar Republic. Indeed, the very first paragraph of the by-laws of the *Deutsche Schutz- und Trutzbund* (Association to Protect and Shelter Germany), a rabidly anti-Semitic nationalist organization founded in February 1919, explained:

The association strives for the moral rebirth of the German people by awakening and supporting its healthy nature. It sees the main cause of the defeat in the subjugating and corrupting influence of Judaism and sees the removal of this influence as the prerequisite for rebuilding the state and economy as well as saving German culture. It is the task of the "Association to Protect and Shelter Germany" to expose the nature and extent of the Jewish danger and fight it using all political, state, and economic means.<sup>40</sup>

In light of the virulence of post-war anti-Semitism, it is all the more understandable that Jewish war veterans (both Zionist and non-Zionists) would see the war as the defining crucible for forging a heroic, nationally and ethnically proud, military masculinity. To this end, the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten* (National Association of Jewish Combat Veterans), or RjF for short, was established in 1919 and sought to rebuke the anti-Semitic lies by educating the public about the Jewish contributions to the war effort and cultivating a heroic, militaristic sensibility among Jewish youth. At its peak, the RjF had between 30,000 and 40,000 members (membership was restricted to Jewish war veterans in Germany), the majority of whom came from middle-class and working-class backgrounds.<sup>41</sup> It had an expressly

anti-Zionist platform and, like the German-Jewish student associations, sought to cultivate both a Jewish ethnic and German national pride. Leo Löwenstein, who authored the RjF's first call for members in January 1919, argued that Jewish war veterans cannot allow detractors to characterize them as "cowardly shirkers" (*Feige Drückeberger*): "We are too proud to stand by idly while our honor as Germans and Jews is besmirched."<sup>42</sup> Disassociated from political parties and religious convictions, the RjF fought for the recognition of Jewish war veterans and supported the regeneration of the German nation. It was to be composed of "every German Jew who put his life on the line to fight for the fatherland" and sought to work "to help it blossom with new strength" (221). The RjF existed up until 1938.<sup>43</sup>

Beginning in 1920, the RjF began publishing *Der Schild* (The Shield), a weekly news journal directed primarily at Jewish war veterans and Jewish youth. It specifically sought to combat anti-Semitic propaganda and change public perceptions about Jewish war service. At the same time, the journal carried an extensive array of articles on the regeneration of the Jewish body, focusing primarily on the nexus between sports and military heroism. Not limited just to gymnastics and fencing, the RjF supported a wide-range of contact combat "body exercises" including boxing, Jiu-Jitsu, wrestling, and judo, all of which were considered to "strengthen and steel the entire musculature."<sup>44</sup> Cognizant of the specifications of the body for military service, the RjF wanted its members and youth to "fully develop their respiratory system, increase their chest circumference through exercise, and open up the capacities of their lungs all the more." It also wanted the heart "strengthened and the blood pressure increased." Importantly, the RjF believed that sports would not only result in a body fit for serving in the military but also cultivate specific military qualities such as "striking power, determination, mental presence, complete mastery of the body, adroitness, agility, courage, bravery, cold-bloodedness, tenacity, endurance, the cultivation of reason and abstinence." As the author succinctly concludes: "Sport is battle!"<sup>45</sup>

To be sure, the link between sports and militarization was hardly new and, at least in Germany, extends back, as we have already seen, to Prussian military training and the birth of the *Turnen* movement in the early nineteenth century. Even in Jewish periodicals, such as *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, the connection between military training and gymnastics was evident years before World War I, with numerous articles articulating the relationship between sport and military fitness.<sup>46</sup> In fact, as early as 1907, Hebrew was introduced to Jewish gymnastics practices as a "commando" language (very much in contrast to Yiddish) in order to elicit ancient heroic traditions.<sup>47</sup> As Gideon Reuveni has pointed out, the drill commands of the Israeli army can probably be traced back to the Hebraicization of certain German phrases used in gymnastics practice<sup>48</sup>: "Eyes looking forward!", "Head high!", "Shoulders back!", and "Chest out!" were commands used by "the Hebrew gymnastics commando" to refer to both gymnastics exercises and military drills.<sup>49</sup> It

should come as no surprise, then, that the RjF firmly believed—not unlike German nationalist thinkers, such as Ernst Jünger—that “the most important condition of life remains the completely steeled body! [*der allseitig gestählte Körper*].”<sup>50</sup> Through sport and military activities, muscle would be transformed into steel.

It was precisely this rhetoric of “steeling” and “hardening” the Jewish body that emerged as the single most important leitmotif in *Der Schild*. In 1922, *Der Schild* called upon Jewish women to educate their children “in equal measure with respect to mental and physical strength.” Mothers and sisters would “fight along with” the male members of the RjF by preserving “the sublime source of our Judaism through the steeling of the body.”<sup>51</sup> Not only, then, would the members of the RjF act as “the living statistics of Jewish soldiers on the front,” but the organization would also support the development of a militaristic level of “physical fitness” in all the German-Jewish youth, thereby permanently “steeling body and mind.”<sup>52</sup> But after World War I, it was not gymnasts, boxers, wrestlers, or even front soldiers who represented the epitome of the steeled body; it was, as we will see below, aviators. As the masculine emblem of the Great War, the flier literally melded together man and machine in the destructive world of the technological sublime.

On the one hand, then, the project of “steeling” the Jewish body—of turning muscle Jews into military Jews, of transforming flesh into steel—was a response to the virulently anti-Semitic propaganda accusing German Jews of shirking their military duties and undermining the German nation. It was an attempt to prove that Jews were both militaristic and patriotic, regardless of their position with respect to Zionism. Moreover, it was an attempt to negate the stereotype of the Jew as bourgeois merchant or speculator, who deals in abstractions and leeches off the German people. On the other hand, the “steeling” of the Jewish body has to be seen as part of a broader social and cultural project of connecting the modern Jewish male body with both its heroic ancestral tradition and its future-oriented national redemption. In this regard, the steeled muscle Jew stands at the center of a tradition facing both ways at once.

For proto-fascist thinkers such as Ernst Jünger who put forward a new, heroic masculinity derived explicitly from the front experience, “war is a process that regenerates both the nation and the soldier male himself.”<sup>53</sup> Jünger, as Klaus Theweleit explains, rejected the same stereotypes—the merchant, the man of abstractions and speculations, the safety and security of the intellectual, the complacency and weakness of the bourgeoisie—in favor of an image of a new race of warriors who embraced an ethos of military masculinity, discipline, strength, and heroism. But what is remarkable is that Jews embraced these ideals as well and modeled their bodies after them. To be sure, we all know that the image of the German Jew that ultimately won out in the final years of the Weimar Republic was not the one that was muscular, nationalistic, and militarized; rather it was the one that was an exploiter,

a degenerate, a parasitic contagion who undermined the integrity of the German nation. Like a disease, the Jew was seen by the anti-Semites to be a corrosive force who brought criminality, degeneracy, and emasculation to Germany.<sup>54</sup> But there is another side of the story prior to 1933. In fact, in the first third of the twentieth century, it was German Jews who also sought to combat degeneracy, weakness, and emasculation by embracing the very same ethos of military masculinity, discipline, strength, and heroism. For this reason, we ought to give serious reconsideration to the “place” of the Jewish body within the historiography of the Weimar period.

According to the argument of Mosse’s acclaimed study, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, “the history of modern masculinity [reached] a climax” with the rise of the new fascist male in 1930s Germany and Italy.<sup>55</sup> He explains that:

physical exercise played a crucial part in forming the fascist man; fascism accepted the by then traditional notion that a fit body was the sign of a manly spirit. Physical exercise was not regarded as just preparation for wars to come; it was supposed to build character, and indeed all the justifications of sport . . . held the male body hostage for the qualities the new fascist man should possess. But, in the last resort, acquiring physical strength, discipline, and agility, and sculpting the body, were considered useless without strength of will.

(162)

While I do not contest Mosse’s view of fascism as the “climax” of modern masculinity, nor do I contest the “place” of the Jew within the fascist imaginary, it is striking that the same “physical exercise” also played a crucial part in forming the muscle Jew. It cannot be limited to the domain of fascism and the rise of the fascist male body. Physical strength, discipline, agility, and a strong will were the same heroic and masculinist qualities sought by the Zionists, the German-Jewish student organizations, and the members of the RjF, something that Mosse clearly indicated in his earlier analysis of the appeal of Volkish thought to German Jews.<sup>56</sup>

Permit me another example, this one from the field of art history: Hal Foster, building on the insights of Theweleit, shows how the artist Hans Bellmer, in creating disarticulated and dismembered dolls, subverts the “fascist armoring” emblematically embodied by Nazi sculptors such as Arno Breker and Josef Thorak. Bellmer’s dolls, he argues, confront “the masculine subject [with] his greatest fear: his own fragmentation, disintegration, and dissolution,” precisely the qualities exhibited by “bodies somehow deemed feminine (Jews, communists, homosexuals, ‘the masses’).”<sup>57</sup> As Foster points out, the Nazis reserved the greatest anathema:

for art that represented the body—but disfigured it, opened up its image to its own heterogeneous energies, impressed its form with its

own “feminine” forces of sexuality and death, and (most importantly) connected these forces to the social figures that threatened the Nazi male with “degeneration” (here not only the Jew, the communist, and the homosexual, but also the child, “the primitive,” and the insane).<sup>58</sup>

To be sure, Foster is not wrong in arguing that the specter of the effeminate, homosexual, and degenerate Jew haunted the integrity of the fascist male body and, thereby, helped to negatively define its contours; however, this argument fails to consider the very real ways in which Jews also sought to regenerate their own bodies and engineer their own forms of armoring, social administration, and eugenic virility. In so doing, such an argument considers the Jewish body to be a monolith of degeneracy, devoid of any agency, even one that served potentially dubious ends.

While Mosse, Foster, and Theweleit are not wrong about the fact that the stereotype of the Jew as puny, cowardly, and diseased ran counter to the German fascist ideal, Jews also embraced and embodied this very ideal of muscular militancy. The Great War was both the proving ground and the crucible for the creation of a militarized race of “old-new Maccabees”—Jews, who in their steeled bodies and warrior image, exhibited the same “heroic spirit” as their German counterparts. Perhaps the anti-Semitic stereotype of the weak Jew has held so much sway that it has prevented us from seriously assessing the very real (and not unproblematic) ways that Jews embraced the ideology of muscular militancy during and after the war. Jewish bodies, then, cannot be considered merely allegories of the weak, formless, and deviant in contrast to the armored heroism of German bodies, even if they were precisely that for the fascist imaginary. We must also inquire into what the Great War meant for Jewish masculinity by examining the representational and rhetorical practices of Jews.

Emerging out of the war and reaching a heyday during the Weimar Republic, there is no better image of the steeled Jewish body than that of the Jewish flier. As a combat ace, aviator, glider, and even world-record holder, the Jewish flier melded the muscled body with the technologically steeled body. Felix Theilhaber endowed the Jewish flier with its most enduring cultural expression in his 1924 book, *Jüdische Flieger im Weltkrieg* (Jewish Fliers in World War).<sup>59</sup> In the years that followed, countless paeans to Jewish fliers, many of which followed upon and referenced Theilhaber’s book, would be featured on the pages of *Der Schild*, including the story of Charles Levine, a New York Jew who broke Charles Lindbergh’s distance record in 1927. But before turning to Theilhaber’s book and the Jewish flier, we must first briefly contextualize the mythology of flying in the modernist imaginary. After a discussion of the machine-body complex in the years surrounding the Great War, I will, then, turn to Jewish aviation fantasies and Jewish fliers. The steeled muscle Jew, I conclude, is the embodiment of the dialectic of modernity, its corporeal hopes and technological catastrophes in the early twentieth century.

### Jewish aviators and the modernist imaginary

Shortly after the end of World War I, Max Ernst, the co-founder of Cologne Dadaism, produced an untitled collage, which is known today simply as *Airplane* (1920). The central image of the collage consists of portions of a biplane fused with strangely elongated human arms. Ernst foregrounded the machine-body amalgam in the center of an undifferentiated sky, and on the ground, in the lower right-hand corner, he placed two men clad in military uniforms evacuating a third who appears to be injured. Viewers who encountered this image in 1920 probably intuited the relationship between the three men in the corner and the anthropomorphic machine in the sky: after all, World War I was the first “material battle” (*Materialschlacht*) in which aviation technologies were widely used in reconnaissance missions, man-to-man combat, and, by the end of the war, bombing raids. Airplanes both extended and destroyed the integrity of the human body. In effect, men could merge with flying machines, and flying machines could annihilate the body. In Ernst’s collage, the human arms and bourgeois tie appear to naturally grow out of the airplane’s nose, while the plane’s front fuselage and tail have replaced a human head and legs. It is as if the body and the machine have become fused into a new machine-man via the double-logic of the prosthesis: the machine adds to (while destroying) and subtracts from (while creating) the body.<sup>60</sup> In the corner of Ernst’s collage, the tiny, broken body is carried away, while the machinic technology, melding with and also destroying the human body, looms larger than life from above. Walter Benjamin perceptively noted the significance of this historical shift with regard to the integrity of the human body. As he writes with regard to the Great War:

For never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power. A generation that had gone to school in a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body.<sup>61</sup>

When Ernst composed a short biographical sketch of the key dates in his life several years later, he indicated the significance of the war as both a destroyer and a creator, an assessment he shared with many of his dada colleagues<sup>62</sup>: “Max Ernst died on the 1st of August 1914. He resuscitated on the 11th of November, 1918 as a young man aspiring to become a magician and to find the myth of his time.”<sup>63</sup> The myth of his time, I would suggest, is embodied by the technologies of flight, and nowhere were its dialectical possibilities more fully expressed than in World War I. As a modern

mythology, flying not only elevated human beings into the air and unbound them from the seemingly mundane fetters of the earth, but it also transformed the very nature of time and space by reconfiguring the phenomenology of distance, speed, and duration.<sup>64</sup> And, at the same time, the technologies of flight unleashed massive, new means of destruction, ones that would become ever more radicalized as time and space were mastered. Indeed, there is probably no myth more central to the modernist imaginary than that of flying: one need only call to mind the unending panegyrics to the Wright brothers in the first decade of the twentieth century, the feat of Louis Blériot flying across the English Channel in 1909, the wild embrace of flying by the Futurists to liberate human beings from the facticities of time and space, or the celebrated image of the combat ace in the popular imagination. As the Russian Futurist writer, Vasily Vasilyevich Kamensky, recalled with respect to the period around 1910:

The airplane—that is the truest achievement of our time. The aviator is the man of worthy heights. If we are really Futurists . . . if we are people of the motorized present, poets of universal dynamism, newcomers and messengers of the future, masters of action and activity, enthusiastic builders of new forms of life—then we must be, we have no choice but to be, fliers.<sup>65</sup>

Human beings were heralding the emergence of a new race: a race of fliers.

Prior to the Great War, it was the Italian Futurist, Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, who most fervently celebrated the new body-machine amalgam of the flier in all its dialectical expressions of destruction and rebirth.<sup>66</sup> As the great apostle of speed and technology, he famously glorified war as “the world’s only hygiene” and hailed the emergence of a new race of “gay incendiaries with charred fingers.”<sup>67</sup> Inspired by his experience in an aircraft during the international air show at Brescia in 1909, a “momentous event” that launched “the aviation craze in Italy . . . and introduced the muses into an Italian aerodrome for the first time,”<sup>68</sup> Marinetti considered flying, as he wrote in the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature” (May 1912), “to break apart the old shackles of logic and the plumb lines of the ancient way of thinking.”<sup>69</sup> The manifesto, composed shortly after returning from the Battle of Tripoli, a colonial war in which he participated “in all the most violent, most virile, and most heroic actions,”<sup>70</sup> consists of an airplane propeller dictating laws for “[destroying] syntax” and creating a new form of subjectivity (84). Marinetti ends by claiming that “we will conquer the seemingly unconquerable hostility that separates out human flesh from the metal of motors” (89). In effect, the airplane will inaugurate a new mode of being-in-the-world, one which brings man together with machine, flesh together with motor.<sup>71</sup> Not without irony, it was the young Franz Kafka who made a similar observation about Blériot’s body, when he witnessed the



famous aviator take off in the 1909 Brescia air show: “One sees his straight upper body over the wings, his legs are stretched down like part of the machinery.”<sup>72</sup> Man and machine had become one.

It was this permanent melding together of man and machine that Ernst Jünger would later celebrate in his autobiographical chronicles of the Great War as well as in his essayistic reflections on the utopian possibilities of total warfare. In his book, *Das Wäldchen 125*, a diary of six weeks of trench warfare during July–August 1918 in an area known as Rossignol Wood or Copse 125 of the Western Front, Jünger proclaimed that the war brought forth a new kind of human being, one in which man and machine had become fused together in an amalgam of bloody flesh and dangerous explosivity:

I see in old Europe a new and commanding breed rising up, fearless and fabulous, unsparing of blood and sparing of pity, inured to suffering the worst and to inflicting it and ready to stake all to attain their ends—a race that builds machines and trusts machines, to whom machines are not soulless iron, but engines of might which it controls with cold reason and hot blood.<sup>73</sup>

And like Marinetti, it was the airmen, the combat aces who embraced “the ardor of speed” and become “dismembered by the rush of air if they are shot down by the enemy” (*Copse 125*, 88, 89), who represented “a new manifestation of mankind” (*Copse 125*, 87).

Jünger not only imagined war in the same hygienic terms as Marinetti, but he went even further: he conceived of a world in which the horror of technological warfare was its permanent fixture. As Walter Benjamin perceptively characterized his vision: the desire for an “endless war . . . is nothing other than an uninhibited translation of the principles of *l’art pour l’art* to war itself.”<sup>74</sup> That is to say, Jünger glorified war not for some other end, such as why and how war is waged, but only for the sake of war itself. Unlike other contemporary cultural commentators and critics, Jünger had no interest in working through or coming to terms with the trauma of war<sup>75</sup>; instead, the Great War was an absolute end in itself, a creative, downright regenerative force that brought a new race of men into the world.

Of course, the vast majority of soldiers who survived the war did not come back as the embodiments of Marinetti’s man-machine aesthetic or Jünger’s new race of technologically steeled soldier-workers.<sup>76</sup> Instead, they came back shell-shocked, with massively disfiguring injuries to their faces, arms, and legs, all of which undermined the integrity of their manhood and their ability to regenerate the German nation.<sup>77</sup> As Paul Lerner has shown in his illuminating study of war trauma, it was the figure of the male hysteric—“Hysteria virilis”—who haunted the German imagination and symbolized the nation’s various shortcomings and failures during World War I and its immediate aftermath. Because the male hysteric was unable to work or serve

in the military and, according to the argument of German psychiatrists, shirked his patriotic duties, he threatened Germany's economic power, political stability, and military strength. Male hysteria, according to Lerner, had less to do with an explicit feminization and more to do with "medically manufacturing proper German subjects" able to rise up and defend the nation due to their health, capacity for work, military service, patriotism, and ability to engage in biological reproduction.<sup>78</sup>

It was Ernst Toller, a German-Jew who fought in World War I, who composed the most damning indictment of how the war emasculated "German" men. His play, *Der deutsche Hinkemann* (written in 1921/22), thematized the trauma of war on the body of the German soldier. It was performed throughout Germany and across Europe in the following years. The main character, Hinkemann, returns home from the war to his devoted wife as a cripple, "as something monstrous," nothing but a "living corpse."<sup>79</sup> During the war, we find out, Hinkemann suffered an injury that left him without male genitalia, and he is now designated a "eunuch." Although he tries to claim his injury as his own—"Here stands a real-live eunuch!" (197)—and wonders how those who publicly ridicule him will be man enough to build a new society, his mortification eventually drives his wife to commit suicide at the end of the play. Before the final desperate scenes, Hinkemann searchingly poses a critical question that links his masculinity with social productivity: "When someone . . . who was in the war . . . for example . . . had one's sex . . . one's sex shot off . . . what . . . what would happen to him in the new society?" (192). In German, the term "*Geschlecht*" (sex) can refer to biological sex and gender as well as race or lineage. Hinkemann wonders whether someone without a "*Geschlecht*" can participate in—that is to say, reproduce—a society (*Gesellschaft*) in which men are supposed to be healthy, productive, and self-sufficient.

Jünger's response was simply to come up with a new creation myth, one which obviated biological reproduction. In *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (*The Battle as Inner Experience*) (1922), Jünger detailed the birth of a new race of "super men." It was none other than Nietzsche's "*Übermensch*" brought to the frontlines and left there forever.<sup>80</sup> In a paradigmatic statement of the war's uniquely generative sexuality, Jünger explains: "The war, father of all things, is also our father. He hammered us, chiseled us, and hardened us into what we are. . . . The war is not only our father but also our son. We gave birth to him and he to us."<sup>81</sup> Jünger's martial parthenogenesis is striking not only for its capacity to be an exclusively male domain but also for its total obviation of reproduction itself. If the war is our forefather and also our offspring, then the war not only gave birth to the men in the trenches, but they also, closing the circle, gave birth to it. Jünger considers the war to be the showcase of virility, charged to the limit with an "overflowing manliness [*überströmende Männlichkeit*]" (19).<sup>82</sup> In his unambiguous words:

The style of the material battle and trench warfare . . . gave birth to men that the world has never seen before. It was an entirely new race embodied by energy and loaded with the highest force. Supple, lithe, sinewy bodies, prominent faces, and eyes hardened under the helmets by a thousand horrors. . . . The battle is not only destruction but also the manly form of creation [*die männliche Form der Zeugung*].

(37, 50)

In 1933, Jünger published a photo anthology, *Flying is Necessary*, in which he hoped for the coming of “a complete race [*Geschlecht*] of fliers.”<sup>83</sup> He glorified the form of the well-oiled, metallic motor as the “embodiment of a new martialism” (LN, 9), and in his magnum opus, *Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt* (The Worker: Dominance and Form), even declared that “the motor . . . [is] the symbol of our time.”<sup>84</sup> The photograph anthology itself, by far the physically largest photo book that Jünger worked on during this period,<sup>85</sup> is filled with hundreds of pictures of airplanes, combat fliers, and shiny motors. He intimates a crucial connection between technology, war, and the virile body of the flier when he writes that “the person who flies is perhaps the most vivid manifestation of a new manliness. He represents a type who was already indicated during the war” (LN, 8–9). As the flipside to Ernst’s murderous airplane, in which both man and technology are broken apart, there is a strikingly unambiguous anthropomorphism in the staging of many of the photographs of motors in *Flying is Necessary* (Fig. 6.3). Not unlike Kafka in 1909, Jünger posed what he termed “the decisive question of nature” regarding the breakdown of the difference between machines and human beings: “Who flies then, the machine or me?” (LN, 9). The answer, it seems, judging by the photographs of airplane motors with outstretched, cylindrical “arms,” bolted “faces” that spurn individuality, and mechanical “torsos” composed of only the most efficient circuitry for routing blood, appears to be the sublation of the binary man/machine into the form of the “soldier-worker,” heralding a new race of combat fliers.

While the “steeling” of the Jewish male body was never expressed in terms that equal the extremity of Jünger’s technological fantasy, it is also worth noting that the Jewish male body was never represented (at least not in the Jewish press) as enfeebled, hysterical, or emasculated by the war. There was no Jewish “Hinkemann,” and certainly in the representations created by the RjF, there was no Jewish “hysteria virilis.” The Great War, we are to believe, had quite the opposite effect on Jewish men: it made them into military men. Even if a Jewish man was crippled by injuries sustained during the war, he still took to the air, as Felix Theilhaber indicates in his telling of the heroic story of Jacob Ledermann, a Jewish combat ace who was shot in the stomach, crashed in enemy camps, and suffered seemingly debilitating injuries (JF, 37–39). After the war, Ledermann returned to fly again, entering German gliding competitions at the Rhön.<sup>86</sup>

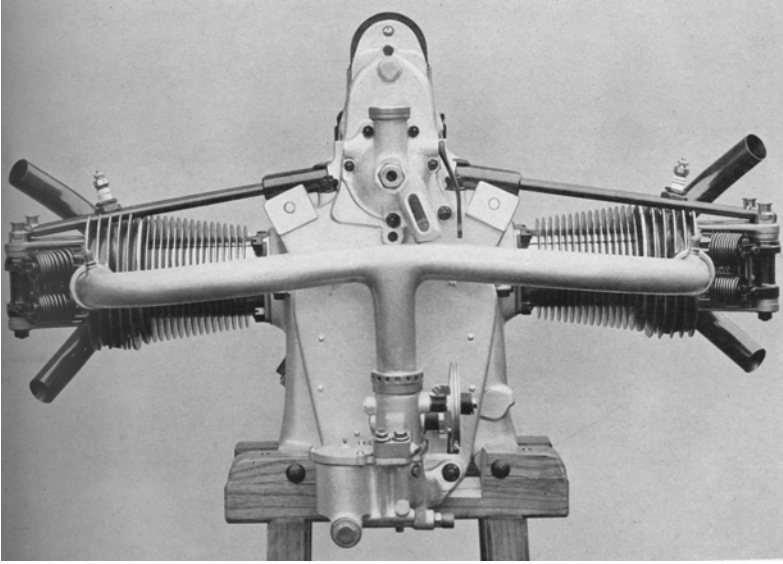


Figure 6.3 Ernst Jünger, “Motor,” in *Luftkrieg ist Not* (1933).

In his cultural history of Jewish aviators in the war, Theilhaber reproduces two pictures of the Jewish war hero (Figs 6.4 and 6.5). The first shows a boyish-looking Ledermann, outfitted in his flying gear and gazing into the space of the unknown with a decisive clarity of vision. The photograph captures his muscular torso, his strong arms and broad chest, but only intimates the presence of the flying machine. Prepared for aerial combat, Ledermann is the embodiment of the steeled muscle Jew. The second photograph, taken at a gliding contest in the Rhön in 1924, shows Ledermann’s plane shortly after its release. In this picture, the machine dominates, and Ledermann’s head can barely be made out in the cockpit. As a kind of sublation of the man-machine binary, the greatness of the new amalgam eclipses the mere mortals scattered on the ground, for Ledermann and his glider embodied a new kind of heroic masculinity, one that absorbed and perhaps even negated the injuries he suffered in the war. As proof of his heroism, Theilhaber cites a report from a German newspaper, which mythologizes his return to flight: “Ledermann, who was severely injured in the War, sat in a glider for the first time. Like a bird of prey with outstretched wings that defied gravity, his machine climbed a path into the blue ether” (JF, 38). He went on to win four prizes in the German gliding competition at the Wasserkuppe.

As Peter Fritzsche has indicated in his cultural history of German aviation, the combat ace was widely celebrated and deeply respected in the popular



Figure 6.4 Jacob Ledermann, in Felix Theilhaber, *Jüdische Flieger im Weltkrieg* (1924), 36.

imagination during and after the war because he represented a new ideal of individual courage in the face of the monstrous mass death on the ground. In Fritzsche's words:

In control of his fate, handling his airplane with great courage and skill but also with an envied recklessness, the aviator appeared to be a genuine war hero, comparable to cavalrymen in Napoleon's era or chivalrous knights in the Middle Ages. Beginning in 1915, aces found themselves lionized as hugely popular celebrities, particularly in France and Germany. And after the War, a steady stream of hagiography enhanced their heroic status.<sup>87</sup>

The combat ace—outfitted in a leather cap, flying goggles, and a scarf—became an instantly recognizable symbol of the heroic qualities of the nation, linking individual courage with military-technical precision. It is not by accident that Theilhaber reproduces pictures of Jewish aces that are meant to remind the German public of its favorite aces, Oswald Boelcke and Baron von Richthofen. Poised with an unflappable confidence in their deeds, in their

machine, and most of all in themselves, these men embodied a decidedly modern and masculine form of heroism.

While Jünger saw the worker-soldier and combat ace as fundamental breaks with the past, Theilhaber and members of the RjF believed that the new race of Jewish men who had emerged after the war was finally reunited with its ancestral heroes. It was a race that was hardened, chiseled, and steeled in the trenches and in the air. This is because the modern-day flier, like the ancient warrior family of the Maccabees, “is unquestionably of a soldierly, heroic nature.”<sup>88</sup> As one report from the RjF’s “gliding group” asserted with respect to flying: we will “toughen [*stählen*] our hearts and lungs, practice with our eyes and hands, raise our Jewish youth in the spirit of the Spartans, teach them courage, self-mastery, coldbloodedness, bravery, mental presence in the spirit of our heroic forefathers, [so that they] fight strongly and prove victorious!”<sup>89</sup> As Leo Löwenstein later wrote with regard to the importance of “gliding” for the German-Jewish youth: “From the beginning, the noble task of the RjF has been to assure the physical and moral fitness of the coming generations,” and it is through flying that “new sources of muscular and mental strength will be opened up for our youth.”<sup>90</sup> Jews will be tough because they fly, and they will fly because they are tough.



Figure 6.5 Jacob Ledermann, in Felix Theilhaber, *Jüdische Flieger im Weltkrieg* (1924), 39.

When Theilhaber published the first edition of his book, *Jüdische Flieger*, in 1919, picture books and magazines glorifying flying were already legion in Germany. Nearly all celebrated the transcendental possibilities of flight and coupled it with an evocation of nationalist feeling and achievement.<sup>91</sup> The title of one of the best known German aviation books published in 1915 leaves little question about the ideological and technological motivations: *Deutschlands Eroberung der Luft* (Germany's Conquest of the Air).<sup>92</sup> The book contained more than three-hundred glossy photographs documenting the history of flight in Germany up through the first year of the war, including the technological developments of different kinds of flying machines, aerial reconnaissance pictures, and scores of pilots, especially world-record holders. But as Theilhaber rightly pointed out, the feats of Jewish fliers remained considerably less well known. Due to the rise of anti-Semitism that "named Jews as cowards, shirkers, and saboteurs" (JF, 9), it was all the more important to draw attention to and celebrate this history.

As a committed Zionist (and, in this regard, quite different from the members of the RjF), Theilhaber was not interested in propagating nationalist hymns to the German fatherland; instead, he was interested in presenting an accurate picture of Jewish participation in the Great War and showcasing Jewish heroism. For the 1924 edition of *Jüdische Flieger*, Theilhaber solicited the non-Jewish Lieutenant Colonel Siegert, the officer who oversaw the German air force during the war, to write the introduction. Siegert not only points out the broad competencies required for flying (the fact that it brings technical and strategic skills together with knowledge of physics, aerodynamics, and meteorology) but also underscores the fact that Jewish fliers excelled in all of these areas: "The contributions that our Jewish citizens made to the War must be judged more highly and recognized more selflessly than those made during times of peace" (JF, 7). Theilhaber intended the book to be both a rejoinder to the anti-Semitic propaganda and a celebration of the "warrior existence [*Kriegerdasein*] of Jewish soldiers" (JF, 10).

Theilhaber begins the book by elucidating the qualities of "heroism" and "bravery" by attempting to unlock "the solitary world of the flier" (JF, 14). Illustrated by an aerial photograph of the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain covered in snow and bathed in clouds, Theilhaber immediately evokes the transcendental mythology of flying. Very much in line with the place of aviation in the modernist imaginary, Jewish fliers also partook in "the romance with the machine."<sup>93</sup> Soaring above the clouds elicits a profound greatness that breaks away from the everyday sense of being limited to the ground. It cannot be achieved by just anyone and certainly "a people of physically inferior elements will not produce a strong contingent of fit fliers" (JF, 15). But as we learn by reading Theilhaber's book, there were hundreds of Jewish fliers who partook in the widest range of activities during the war from aerial combat to reconnaissance missions. And they came from all walks of life—actors, school teachers, factory workers,

merchants, traders, and artists—something that proves, in Theilhaber's view, that Jews are not an inferior race (JF, 118).

Theilhaber's book is illustrated by numerous airplanes and aviators ready to undertake heroic missions over enemy territory (Fig. 6.6). And, interestingly, it also included a single picture of a mangled biplane that crashed in a heavily wooded area (Fig. 6.7). Far from undermining Jewish aerial skills, the photograph evokes the inherent risks of flying, something that accords with Jünger's celebration of danger. In fact, Jünger published an entire photo book, *The Dangerous Moment*, documenting crashing airplanes,



Figure 6.6 Flying Officer Friedländer, from Felix Theilhaber, *Jüdische Flieger im Weltkrieg* (1924), 41.





Figure 6.7 Crashed biplane, in Felix Theilhaber, *Jüdische Flieger im Weltkrieg* (1924), 25.

balloons, and automobiles in order to demonstrate how the bourgeois world of security had been displaced by a new world of technology, mobilization, and warfare. As he wrote in the introduction, “the increased intrusion of danger into daily life” is a sign that the “bourgeois epoch” of the past is receding and a new world, characterized by danger, uncertainty, and militancy, is unfolding.<sup>94</sup> Theilhaber considers the Jewish flier to be a part of this new world of danger.

He indicates in no uncertain terms what this meant for the Jewish bourgeoisie, who, in their traditional role, remained safely ensconced behind their desks “in the offices of the metropolis” (JF, 26): warfare placed new physical, intellectual, and emotional demands on Jewish men, which required them to show courage and fortitude in the face of hunger, cold, and extreme violence. “It is no wonder,” Theilhaber writes, “that the lethargic and weak Jewish merchant fell by the wayside all the more quickly” (JF, 27). Here, he

not only accepts the prevalence of the Jewish stereotype—the very same one that Jünger would rail against—but also indicated how it was radically dispelled and displaced by the militarization of the Jewish body in war. Unlike the work of the bourgeoisie, “service in the air force requires iron energy and a daily willingness to sacrifice one’s life” (JF, 32). The fact that Jews became exemplary pilots and combat aces, many of whom were decorated for their valor, indicates the extent to which they left behind the old stereotypes and embraced the new ideals of danger, militarism, and wartime heroism. Unlike Jünger, however, Theilhaber writes that Jews did not consider the war to be “sublime” (JF, 68); rather it was a duty in which they served loyally and heroically. The fact that they were honored for their service was not only “proof of their fitness” (JF, 32) but also proof of the fact that “Maccabean courage beat in Jewish hearts” (JF, 88). In effect, the war reconstituted a long-lost Jewish militarism, one which, in its modernist incarnation, transformed muscles into steel.

Theilhaber’s book was widely received and praised in both the Jewish and non-Jewish press when it was reissued in 1924. In *Der Schild*, it initiated an entire discourse around Jewish bravery and aviation fantasies, bringing ancestral pride and modernist triumphs to bear on the physical constitution of the new Jewish body:

Our Jewish youth can summon as much courage and mental presence to show the whole public that our new generations are strong enough in terms of body and soul to successfully undertake athletic competitions, including those in the air, that they are capable of putting forth their men as we [the members of the RjF] did in World War. The old spirit of the Maccabees has not died out!<sup>95</sup>

The RjF published scores of articles reviewing and referencing Theilhaber’s book and encouraged members to share it with their children. It was widely considered a befitting Bar Mitzvah present. Within the non-Jewish public, Paul Loebe, the President of the Reichstag, even added his own words of praise.

But perhaps the most unexpected reception of Theilhaber’s book on Jewish fliers came in the summer of 1927 when the RjF presented a copy to a Jewish businessman from New York City named Charles A. Levine. Together with his pilot, Clarence Chamberlin, Levine had just undertaken an extraordinary transatlantic flight and landed in a wheatfield in Germany, about 40 miles short of his intended destination, Berlin. Levine embarked on the 4,000-mile journey across the Atlantic Ocean on June 4, 1927, just weeks after Charles Lindbergh became a world sensation for having completed the first non-stop flight from New York to Paris. Chamberlin and Levine broke Lindbergh’s record, flying some 400 miles further and eight and a half hours longer. The RjF sung their praises:

Lindbergh established an absolute record. Chamberlin and Levine broke it repeatedly. First of all, they flew further. Second, they flew in tandem, thus becoming the first passenger flight over the ocean and demonstrating that air travel is ready to take off. If one is willing, there is also a third record: It consists in the fact that the first Jew flew across the ocean.

Although Levine was not the pilot, the RjF argued that it was still an “achievement of courage” and demonstrates the same “manly courage” as that of Jews who served on the front and in the air force.<sup>96</sup>

In Europe, Levine was greeted by dignitaries from Hindenburg to Mussolini. Back in New York, the Yiddish daily, *Der Tog*, explained the significance of his flight within the history of the Jewish people, making particular reference to the military spirit of the Jews in war and placing the achievement squarely within the modernist mythology of flight:

This is the record of Jewish bravery, courage, and fortitude . . . We are no longer obliged to prove that Jews are just as capable and strong on the field of physical bravery as they are on the field of intellectual achievement. Every front during the war from 1914–1918 could tell the story of Jewish courage and heroism. Every sport bears the names of Jewish players and record-holders. Until recently, however, we have heard little of Jewish pilots giving themselves over to flying. And so it has fallen upon a New York Jew, the son of immigrants from Vilna, to show that the Jew does not stand on the sidelines of the newest, noblest, and most important of human accomplishments.<sup>97</sup>

Levine emerged as a veritable Jewish hero and within days was immortalized in Yiddish songs that proclaimed him to be “the hero of Israel . . . like the patriarchs of old.” Two of the songs, one by Irving Grossman and the other by Joseph Feldman, even set their notes to what was then the unofficial Jewish national anthem, “Ha’Tikvah” (The Hope).<sup>98</sup> Levine, like the Jewish flyers before him, had embodied, however fleetingly, the modernist mythology of flight in all its dialectical manifestations of nationality and war, muscularity and militancy. It is here—squarely in the middle of European high modernism—that we can locate the cultural origins of the steeled Jewish body.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Several decades ago, Eugen Weber published an extraordinary book that traced the cultural and social transformation of “savage” peasants into “civilized” Frenchmen.<sup>1</sup> In the span of about half a century, policies were created, practices were put in place, and institutions were founded to turn peasants into respectable, educated, and productive middle-class citizens of France. Labor was glorified as a moral value; education became the great socializing agent; military training formed strong, patriotic men; and modern technology stitched together the nation and industrialized the economy. France not only became a modern, national culture by the beginning of the twentieth century, but it also extended its civilizing mission to colonial territories across the world. *Muscular Judaism* is the story of an analogous transformation of the constitution of a people, one that happened at roughly the same time, in little more than a couple of generations. European Jews, who had for centuries been considered weak, powerless, physically unfit, cowardly, and even degenerate, created and widely embraced a set of practices, ideals, and institutions for regenerating the individual body of the Jew and the Jewish body politic. In the span of a few decades around the *fin de siècle*, Jews transformed themselves into a muscular, modern people, able to found a nation-state based on and inspired by the European model.

Of course, the discourses of muscular Judaism and the politics of regeneration did not come to an end in the 1920s; they became part and parcel of the state of Israel. Today, in a world marked by aggression, militarism, and terrorism, it is hard to imagine a time when Jews were not muscular, let alone a way of being in the world that is not driven by muscle. But as much as this book is a product of the present, it is not an interrogation of Israel or contemporary muscle Jews. It is an attempt to understand how, when, and why Jews became muscular in the first place.

Ever since I encountered the phenomenon of the “muscle Jew,” I had wanted to read a book that detailed its cultural, intellectual, and historical origins. I wanted to know how it was possible for a people to change its entire physical constitution in the amazingly short span of a few decades. Although there are many outstanding books on aspects of the Jewish body written by

the likes of George Mosse, Sander Gilman, Daniel Boyarin, Paul Breines, and John Efron that address various parts of its history, I could not find a comprehensive and synthetic treatment of the origins of the muscle Jew and its constitutive discourses—aesthetic, corporeal, eugenic, colonial, martial—in the existing literature. This is why I decided to write this book. Although it is hardly the last word on the topic, I hope that readers will find that my book builds upon and expands previous scholarship on the muscle Jew as well as offers a cultural history that is engaging, serious, and timely.

To be sure, there is much more to the story of the muscle Jew than I was able to write for this volume. There is plenty of room for a study of muscular Judaism in Eastern-European literature and culture, particularly Yiddish modernism. Moreover, there is still work to be done to unpack the complex politics of the muscular and militaristic Jewish body in post-1920s Palestine and the early years of Israeli society. In what ways did the bio-politics of the first half of the century and the eugenicist paradigm enter into the Jewish concept of the racial state? How are we still living with the tragedies of these bio-politics today? And there is also more comparative, cross-cultural work that needs to be done in order to see how the ideals of muscular Judaism aligned with and grew out of other national and international contexts. My purpose was to unpack the significant German modernist strands—intellectual, cultural, social, and political—that fed into the conceptualization and popularization of the figure of the muscle Jew. This was a book on origins and contexts, so to speak, that points forward to the present day and takes the tragedies (and triumphs) of the present as the lens through which I saw and wrote.

As I worked on this book, I sometimes wondered what I would have done at the turn of the century. Would I have joined Bar Kochba? Would I have tried to immigrate to Palestine to found a new society? Would I have flown combat planes? Of course, these are impossible questions to answer, but they are not impossible questions to ask. They illustrate a dilemma I had with regard to my topic, for I found myself simultaneously sympathetic with and critical of muscular Judaism (both its original discourses and present day incarnations). How can one not be moved upon watching a film such as *Watermarks* (2004), which commemorates and reunites the championship women's swimming team of Hakoah Vienna? And how can one not be disturbed upon seeing the military excesses and suffering exacted by the Israeli army? It is this tension between sympathy and criticism that is at the heart of the project and finally motivates how I decided to write this cultural history of the regenerated Jewish body. Indeed, I am not as certain as Freud once was about which is the worthier alternative: intellectual labors or muscular strength. I do not know whether such alternatives are even to be had. For better or worse, they cannot be dissociated today.

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 Quoted from *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. XXIII (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), 115.
- 2 Meira Weiss points out that “the root metaphor of ‘a lamb to slaughter’ was not directed to the holocaust Jews alone; it was the cumulative conception of what was considered the Jews’ passive acceptance of their victimization, from the time of the crusades to the Russian empire’s pogroms.” *The Chosen Body: The Politics of the Body in Israeli Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 25.
- 3 Paul Breines, *Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).
- 4 The “Sabra” refer to the first generation of Jews, born in the 1920s and 1930s, to grow up in Zionist Palestine and fight for Israeli independence. Named for the desert cactus fortified by thorns on the outside, these native-born Israelis embodied the hardy ideals of the “new Jew.” For the most comprehensive account of the Sabra, see Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew*, trans. Haim Watzman (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).
- 5 Jesse Zel Lurie and Samuel Segev, eds, *The Israel Army Physical Fitness Book* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1969), 13.
- 6 Jesse Zel Lurie and Samuel Segev, eds, *The Israel Army Physical Fitness Book*, 14.
- 7 Breines, *Tough Jews*, Part 3, “The ‘Rambowitz’ Novels.” Warren Rosenberg, *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 2001). Significantly, Rosenberg locates the tradition of aggressiveness in the Hebrew Bible and cites Samson and David as paradigmatic examples of “violent” Jewish heroes of antiquity. Cf. 55–67.
- 8 As the antithesis of the “meek” Jews depicted in *Schindler’s List*, Steven Spielberg’s *Munich* (2005) represents the Israeli Mossad agents contracted by Golda Meier’s government as determined, muscular, and even bloodthirsty. But far from a celebratory account of violence, Spielberg probes the ethical implications of revenge by asking how terror can respond to terror.
- 9 The following account of the history of Krav Maga draws on the authorized guide by Imi Sde-Or (Lichtenfeld) and Eyal Yanolov, *Krav Maga: How to Defend Yourself Against Armed Assault* (Berkeley, CA: Frog and Tel Aviv: Dekel Publishing, 2001) and the official Krav Maga website: <http://www.kravmaga.com/history.asp> (accessed September 13, 2005).
- 10 Adi Nes, quoted in Jesse Hamlin, “Adi Nes Uses Classical Composition to Portray Israeli Soldiers,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 22, 2004.

- 11 Uta Klein argues that military service in Israel “must be understood as a rite of passage to *male* adulthood.” Due to unequal conscription rates, different lengths of service, and combat restrictions, women do not advance nearly as far as men in the Israeli forces. See her article, “The Military and Masculinity in Israeli Society,” in: *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*, ed. Paul R. Higate (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 191–200, esp. 195. In addition, see Uta Klein, *Militär und Geschlecht in Israel* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2001); the very informative essay by Eyal Ben-Ari and Edna Levy-Schreiber, “Body-Building, Character-Building, and Nation-Building: Gender and Military Service in Israel,” in: *Jews and Gender: The Challenge to Hierarchy, Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. John Frankel, vol. XVI (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 171–190; and Meira Weiss’s discussion of how female Israeli soldiers both affirmed and subverted the “manly and nationalist Zionist discourse” of Israel in her book, *The Chosen Body: The Politics of the Body in Israeli Society*, esp. Ch. 4. The quote comes from page 95.
- 12 Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft: Eine Theorie der menschlichen Staatsbildung nach Wesen und Wert*, 2 vols (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1917/19).
- 13 Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft*, 1:7. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are my own.
- 14 For a thorough discussion of Blüher in the context of “the philosophy of masculinism,” see Andrew Hewitt’s *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism, and the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), esp. Ch. 2.
- 15 By transforming the solitary image of Yossi Ben Hanan into a homosexual male-bonding ritual, Nes also counteracts the persistently heterosexual mythology around the war hero in the popular Israeli imaginary. As recently as 2003, Howard Blum frames the “untold” history of the Yom Kippur War of 1973 as a national love story between Yossi, the veteran of the 1967 war, and a younger woman named Nati. Married shortly before the Yom Kippur War, Yossi and Nati, according to Blum’s heavy-handed Zionist narrative, were hailed as the pride of the nation: “Look at Nati, at Yossi, these strong, beautiful children . . . Our new Davids, our new Sarahs. And look at the world, prosperous and fecund, we, with our own hands, our own labors, created for them.” When Yossi was severely wounded on the third day of fighting, Nati met him in the hospital. According to Blum, she “checked under the sheet” and exclaimed that it was “only a leg . . . Everything else is fine.” Yossi still had his penis and, hence, his manhood. *The Eve of Destruction: The Untold Story of the Yom Kippur War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003). The first quotation is from p. 21 and the second quotation is from the second-to-last photo caption between pp. 174 and 175.
- 16 Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 28.

## 1 THE ORIGINS OF MUSCULAR JUDAISM

- 1 Max Nordau, speech delivered at the Second Zionist Congress (Basel, August 28–31, 1898), *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des II. Zionisten-Congresses* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines “Erez Israel,” 1898), 14–27. All further references to the Stenographisches Protokoll will be documented parenthetically as SP, followed by the conference number and page number.
- 2 See, for example, Herzl’s classic “solution” to the so-called Jewish question: “Der Judenstaat” (1895), in: *Gesammelte Zionistische Werke*, ed. Theodor Herzl, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Hozaah Ivrit Co., 1934), 19–105. Also, the speeches by

- Herzl, Nordau, Nathan Birnbaum, David Farbstein, and Max Bodenheimer at the First Zionist Congress (August 28–31, 1897) in: *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des I. Zionisten-Congresses* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines “Erez Israel,” 1897).
- 3 As we will see in Chapter 2, Dohm and Hess played an important role in articulating the idea of Jewish “regeneration” prior to Zionism. Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Berlin: Friedrich Nicolai, 1781–83); Moses Hess, *Rom und Jerusalem: die letzte Nationalitätsfrage* (1862; Leipzig: M. W. Kaufmann, 1899).
  - 4 See Norman Vance, *The Sinews of Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). I discuss “muscular Christianity” in Chapter 4.
  - 5 I follow the precedents of translating Nordau’s term *Muskeljudentum* as “muscular Judaism,” even though he is less concerned with Judaism as religious doctrine and practice and more concerned with creating a “muscular Jewry” composed of “muscle Jews” (*Muskeljuden*). I will use the term ‘muscular Judaism’ to refer to the complex of discursive practices for creating muscle Jews. Cf. Haim Kaufman, “The National Foundations and Components of the Term ‘Muscular Judaism,’” *Batnu’ a*, III (1996):261–281 [Hebrew].
  - 6 On the relationship between “bodybuilding” and the Jewish body in the early twentieth century, see the introductory discussion by Sander Gilman in his book *Franz Kafka* (London: Reaktion, 2005), esp. 12–16.
  - 7 For the complex relationship between Western Zionism and the *Ostjuden*, see Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), esp. Ch. 4. The pejorative term “Luftmensch” (literally, person of the air) refers to Jews in the Diaspora without direction, grounding, or financial means. For a history of this term, see Nicolas Berg’s *Luftmenschen: Zur Geschichte einer Metapher* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).
  - 8 Herzl’s own Zionism emerges after having covered the Panama scandal, the start of the Dreyfus Affair, and the victory of the anti-Semitic Christian Social Party in municipal elections in Vienna as the Paris correspondent for Vienna’s daily, the *Neue Freie Presse*. For more on the historical and political context of the development of Zionism, see Carl E. Schorske, *Fin de siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981), Ch. 3. For one of the best studies of the body politics of the Dreyfus Affair, see Christopher Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).
  - 9 Literally translated, “ermant euch” means to “become masculine or virile.” As we will see, this “masculinization” of the tasks of Zionism is central to understanding Nordau’s muscular Judaism.
  - 10 Herzl writes in *Der Judenstaat*, “Wir sind ein Volk, ein Volk.” in: *Gesammelte Zionistische Werke*, 1:26.
  - 11 For a study of the intellectual context of Zionism, see Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001). For a critical assessment of European decadence, see Liz Constable, Dennis Denisoff, and Matthew Potolsky, eds, *Perennial Decay: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Decadence* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) and the seminal study by Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848–c. 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). In Chapter 2, I will explore Nordau’s intense disgust with decadence and how this contributed to and even confirmed his Zionist beliefs in the regeneration of the Jewish body.



- 12 Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
- 13 Bar Kochba led the Judeans in the revolt against the Roman Empire in AD 132, which was ultimately suppressed in AD 135. Yael Zerubavel argues, “[in] Zionist collective memory the Bar Kochba revolt symbolizes the nation’s last expression of patriotic ardor and the last struggle for freedom during Antiquity.” *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of the Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 48. The representation of the physically inferior and creatively stunted Jew can, of course, be found in countless late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anti-Semitic discourses, including scientific and pseudo-scientific literature, historical accounts, and popular imagery in the press and politics. Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 5th edn, 2 vols. (1899; Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1904) represents the racist historical-scientific imagination at its core. For a sourcebook of caricatures and representations of Jews, see Eduard Fuchs, *Die Juden in der Karikatur: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte* (Munich: A. Langen, 1921).
- 14 Nordau, “Muskeljudentum,” in: *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (June 1900, no. 2), 10–11. A follow-up article emphasizing the relationship between gymnastics and health appeared in July of 1902, “Was bedeutet das Turnen für uns Juden?” (What does gymnastics mean for us Jews?). Further references will be documented parenthetically as JTZ, followed by the year, volume, and page number. Both articles are also reprinted in *Max Nordau’s Zionistische Schriften*, ed. Zionistische Aktionskomitee (Cologne: Jüdischer Verlag, 1909), 379–381 and 382–388, respectively.
- 15 Not only did the Greeks consider circumcision to be a mutilation of the flesh, Greek athletes tended to tie and clasp the foreskin of the penis during athletic competitions. Jewish athletes, who, like their Greek counterparts, performed in the nude, could not, of course, do this and were often subject to public ridicule. However, with the development of an operation known as *epispasmós* (stretching), every Jew who performed nude in the Olympic games at Tyre had a remnant of his foreskin pulled over the crown of his penis. Cf. Allen Edwardes, *Erotica Judaica: A Sexual History of the Jews* (New York: Julian Press, 1967), esp. Ch. 9.
- 16 Michael Stanislawski has also offered a similar reading of this passage, highlighting the phallocentrism of Nordau’s muscle Jew. He writes, “the blatant and evocative image of the publicly displayed circumcised Jewish phallus [is offered by Nordau] as the ultimate symbol of Jewish national pride as well as newfound Jewish masculinity.” *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*, 93–94.
- 17 As we will see in Chapters 2 and 4, the discourses of physical regeneration were a European-wide phenomena in the second half of the nineteenth century, and included such reform movements as “muscular Christianity” in England and the United States, the physical fitness boom, and the health and hygiene movement throughout Western Europe and the United States. The essays collected in Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke’s *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen, 1880–1933* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer, 1998) demonstrate how *Lebensreform* in Germany was spawned by and a symptom of the pressures of modernity.
- 18 Although neither discusses Zionism, two of the best reconsiderations of the various projects of regeneration and “alternative modernities” produced during this period are: Paul Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

- 19 Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923*.
- 20 The exact date of the caricature is unknown but is probably between 1905 and 1910. According to Eduard Fuchs in 1921, *Kikeriki* was the oldest, still circulating anti-Semitic journal in Austria. It was founded in 1862 as “a general and political comic magazine with a specifically anticlerical critique . . . With the rise of the Christian-Social Party in Austria during the 1890s, the journal gave up its original character and placed itself more and more in the service of anti-Semitism.” *Die Juden in der Karikatur: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte*, 238–239.
- 21 For more on Jewish corporeal stereotypes, see the collection of essays, “*Der Schejne Jid*”: *Das Bild des “jüdischen Körpers” in Mythos und Ritual*, eds. Sander L. Gilman, Robert Jütte, and Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz (Vienna: Picus, 1998). Also, Klaus Hödl, *Die Pathologisierung des jüdischen Körpers* (Vienna: Picus Verlag, 1997). For a careful explication of the stereotype of the Jewish foot, among others, see Sander Gilman, *The Jew’s Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
- 22 The best contemporary overview of Lilien’s work through 1903 is Stefan Zweig’s *E. M. Lilien: Sein Werk, mit einer Einleitung von Stefan Zweig* (Berlin: 1903). For more recent criticism, Milly Heyd, “Lilien: Between Herzl and Ahasver,” in: *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, eds. Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1999), 265–293. Also, Michael Stanislawski’s chapter, “From Jugendstil to ‘Judenstil’: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in the Work of Ephraim Moses Lilien,” in: *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*, Ch. 5. Neither Heyd nor Stanislawski discusses the “Altneuland” illustration.
- 23 Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 215–216. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1986). He points out that “the first beard” was the “fateful mark” that severed the ties of man-boy love (199).
- 24 Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, 215.
- 25 Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, 216.
- 26 The lush grapes represent an iconic image of Jewish regeneration of the land. It was a stock motif in early Zionist art and can be found, for example, in numerous illustrations and murals produced by the Belazel art school in the early twentieth century. See the reproductions in *Die neuen Hebräer: 100 Jahre Kunst in Israel*, ed. Doreet LeVitte Harten with Yigal Zalmona (Berlin: Nicolai Verlag, 2005), esp. 352–357.
- 27 Numbers 13:19–20, quoted from *Tanakh* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985), 228.
- 28 Quoted in Lutz Röhrich, *Das grosse Lexicon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, vol. 2–3 (Freiberg: Verlag Herder, 1992), 660. I thank Hinrich C. Seeba for this kind reference.
- 29 Brothers Grimm, “Die Sieben Schwaben,” in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1982), 159–162.
- 30 Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1:454. Further quotations are cited parenthetically.
- 31 Otto Weininger writes:

Zionism is the negation of Judaism, for the conception of Judaism involves the world-wide distribution of the Jews. Citizenship is an un-Jewish thing, and there has never been and never will be a true Jewish State. The State involves

the aggregation of individual aims, the formation of and obedience to self-imposed laws; and the symbol of the State, if nothing more, is its head chosen by free election. . . . The true conception of the State is foreign to the Jew because he, like the woman, is wanting in personality; his failure to grasp the idea of true society is due to his lack of a free intelligible ego.

*Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903). Authorized translation of the 6th edn: *Sex and Character* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), 307–308.

- 32 For more on Hegel's views on Jews in his philosophy of history, see my article, "Jews on Ships; or How Heine's *Reisebilder* Deconstruct Hegel's Philosophy of World History," in *Publications of the Modern Language Association (PMLA)*, 118.3 (May 2003): 521–538.
- 33 Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland*, in: *Gesammelte Zionistische Werke*, 5:125–420.
- 34 Herzl, *Altneuland*, 251.
- 35 The Zionist formulation is exactly the opposite of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's anthropological analysis of the roots and persistence of anti-Semitism in their "Elements of Anti-Semitism." Far from opposed to civilization, they argue, "anti-Semitism is a deeply imprinted schema, a ritual of civilization; the pogroms are the true ritual murders." In other words, hatred of Jews forms the foundation of the European idea of civilization. Adorno and Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1993), 171.
- 36 *Altneuland: Monatschrift für die wirtschaftliche Erschliessung Palästinas*, eds F. Oppenheimer, S. Soskin, and O. Warburg (January 1904), vol. 1, no. 1:1–2.
- 37 See, for example, Gerald M. Berg, "Zionism's Gender: Hannah Meisel and the Founding of the Agricultural Schools for Young Women," *Israeli Studies* 6.3 (2001): 135–165; Gertrud Pfister and Toni Niewerth, "Jewish Women in Gymnastics and Sport in Germany 1898–1938," *Journal of Sport History*, 26.2 (Summer 1999): 287–325. For a discussion of women workers in pre-State Israel, see Deborah Bernstein, *The Struggle for Equality: Urban Women Workers in Pre-State Israeli Society* (New York: Praeger, 1987).
- 38 In this respect, I am mindful of the important interventions of Susannah Heschel and Marion Kaplan. See, for example, Susannah Heschel, "Sind Juden Männer? Können Frauen jüdische sein? Die gesellschaftliche Definition des männlichen/weiblichen Körpers," in: Sander Gilman, Robert Jütte, and Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz, eds, *'Der schejne Jid': Das Bild des 'jüdischen Körpers' in Mythos und Ritual*, 86–96; Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- 39 The first generation of Zionist history was written by Nahum Sokolow and Adolf Böhm: Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600–1918*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1919); Böhm, *Die zionistische Bewegung bis zum Ende des Weltkrieges* (Tel Aviv: Hozaah Ivrit, 1935) and Böhm, *Die zionistische Bewegung 1918 bis 1925* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1937). Walter Laqueur wrote what is widely regarded as the definitive history of Zionism up through the struggle for Israel: *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972). Other key histories include: Jehuda Reinharz, *Zionism and the Great Powers* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1994) as well as the studies of particular figures such as Steven J. Zipperstein's *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993) and Jehuda Reinharz's *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). More recently, studies of Zionism oriented around aspects of cultural and intellectual history have also emerged, such as Michael Berkowitz's *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World*

- War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Derek Penslar's *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), and Michael Stanislawski's *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*. Finally, a number of critical histories of Zionism (especially by Israeli scholars) have also emerged, such as Anita Shapira's *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force 1881–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1998* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999); and the essays collected in: Ilan Pappé, ed., *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London: Routledge, 1999).
- 40 Of the three, Laqueur is the only one who mentions the connection between Zionism's political aspirations and its corporeal program of regeneration. He briefly discusses the emergence of the Zionist youth movements in Europe, particularly in Germany and Austria, and notes that “the great emphasis put on physical education . . . was part of the Zionist campaign to normalize Jewish life.” *A History of Zionism*, 485. Laqueur explores the ideological and cultural history of the German youth movement in his *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984).
- 41 A short list of critical works would include: Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, eds., *The Making of the Modern Body* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990); Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2002); Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum, eds, *Defects: Engendering the Modern Body* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
- 42 See, for example, Christina von Braun, *Gibt es eine “jüdische” und “christliche” Sexualwissenschaft?* (Vienna: Picus, 2004); Sharon Gillerman, “Samson in Vienna: The Theatrics of Jewish Masculinity,” *Jewish Social Studies* 9.2 (Winter 2003): 65–98; Kevin Repp, “‘More Corporeal, More Concrete’: Liberal Humanism, Eugenics, and German Progressives at the Last Fin de Siècle,” *The Journal of Modern History* 72 (September 2000): 683–730; Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991); Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan, eds. *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984).
- 43 Steven Aschheim briefly mentions the muscle Jew in his discussion of Western Zionist conceptions of health and vitality, *Brothers and Strangers*, 87–88; Sander Gilman mentions the muscle Jew on one page dedicated to the birth of Zionist gymnastics societies in his *The Jew's Body*, 53; Michael Berkowitz gives a somewhat more detailed discussion of the same phenomenon in his chapter

- “Zionist Heroes and New Men,” *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War*, Ch. 4; John Efron ends his highly informative chapter, “The Jewish Body Degenerate?,” with a brief discussion of Nordau, *Medicine and the German Jews: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 149; David A. Brenner briefly discusses Nordau within the context of representations of the German-Jewish male in the journal *Ost und West* in his book, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost und West* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 145; Christopher Forth cites Nordau in the context of the body politics of the Dreyfus Affair: *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*, 57.
- 44 His most important works on this topic are: George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) and *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985).
- 45 George L. Mosse, “Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew,” in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27.4 (October 1992): 565–581. I think that Mosse’s argument in this article is exactly on target, even though he does not always ground his intuition in the range of available conceptual, textual, and visual evidence.
- 46 Although not centered on the muscle Jew discourse per se, Daniel Boyarin’s highly suggestive book, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), offers an exceptional and incisive critique of the Zionist discourses of masculinity while trying to reclaim the “sissy” tradition, to use his term, for Judaism.
- 47 See my *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
- 48 The seminal proponent of modernity as an unfinished project of the ideals of the Enlightenment is Jürgen Habermas. See his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).
- 49 The seminal proponent of modernity as engendering ever more subtle and dangerous mechanisms for monitoring individuals and regulating society is Michel Foucault. Among other works, see *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977) and *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, trans. and ed. by Colin Gordon, et al. (New York: Pantheon, 1980).
- 50 Eley, “German History and the Contradictions of Modernity: The Bourgeoisie, the State, and the Mastery of Reform,” in: *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1997), 67–103. Here, 78.
- 51 Eley, “German History and the Contradictions of Modernity,” *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930*, 103.
- 52 Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Richard F. Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Thomas Rohkrämer, *Eine andere Moderne? Zivilisationskritik, Natur und Technik in Deutschland, 1880–1933* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999); Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890–1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- 53 Geoff Eley, “Introduction: Is There a History of the *Kaiserreich*?” *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930*, 31.

- 54 The major proponent of the *Sonderweg* theory is Hans-Ulrich Wehler. Among other works, see his *Das deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871–1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1973), translated as *The German Empire* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1985). For further discussions of the deconstruction of the *Sonderweg* theory, see Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity*, 5ff. Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal*, 7ff.
- 55 The seminal work to challenge the *Sonderweg* theory is David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). Detlev Peukert's oft-cited essay, "Die Genesis der 'Endlösung' aus dem Geist der Wissenschaft," argues that Nazism cannot be explained away as a sudden eruption of the irrational; rather it must be seen as the systematic product of the modern eugenicist paradigm taken to the extreme. Peukert's essay appeared in *Max Webers Diagnose der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1989), translated as "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' and the Spirit of Science," in *Nazism and German Society*, ed. David Crew (New York: Routledge, 1994), 274–99. Also, see the discussion by Eley, "German History and the Contradictions of Modernity," 102–103.
- 56 Cf. Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945*; Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan, eds. *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
- 57 Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity*, 11.
- 58 See, for example, the classic studies of Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies: 1. Women, Floods, Bodies, Histories and Male Fantasies: 2. Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987–89). Also, George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, particularly Ch. 8 on "the new fascist man." The coding of the Jew as effeminate and homosexual was perhaps most notoriously solidified by Otto Weininger in his *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903). For a critical assessment of Weininger, see Nancy Harrowitz and Barbara Hyams, eds. *Jews and Gender: Responses to Otto Weininger* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1995), especially the chapter by John M. Hoberman, "Otto Weininger and the Critique of Jewish Masculinity," 141–153.
- 59 For examples of this kind of historiography, see George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1997); Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 2 vols; and Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993). Although not focused on degeneracy per se, Richard Weikart's book traces a similar development: *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave, 2004).
- 60 Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, 30.
- 61 To be sure, I am not the first to raise these questions. In fact, some four decades ago, George Mosse published an incendiary essay called "The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry," in which he sought to explain why certain Jewish intellectuals (both Zionist and assimilationist), just like certain fascist intellectuals, were attracted to *völkish* thought, including its ideals of rejuvenation, rootedness in nature, and the revitalization of the Volk. The essay is reprinted in *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left and the Search for a "Third Force" in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), 77–115.
- 62 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 139.

- 63 Ibid., 147.
- 64 Sander L. Gilman, "Sexology, Psychoanalysis, and Degeneration: From a Theory of Race to a Race to Theory," in: *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*, eds J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 72–96. Here, 72. Further citations from this essay are given parenthetically.
- 65 Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History/Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002); Hayden White, *The Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
- 66 To be sure, there is a large, non-German literature (very little of which I treat in this book) that began to emerge in Eastern Europe after the Kishnev pogrom of 1903, which valorized the fighting spirit of the *Ostjuden* defending the shtetl. In contrast to Haim Nahman Bialik's exaggerated characterization of Eastern Jews as passive and cowering, authors such as Sholem Asch, Micah Yosef Berdichevsky, Yosef Haim Brenner, and others began to create literary representations of "muscular" Eastern European Jews. For a discussion of the Hebrew "revival literature" (*Sifrut Hatehiya*) produced in Eastern Europe between the 1890s and World War I, see Hamutal Bar-Yosef, *Maga'im shel dekadens: Bialik, Berdits'evski, Brenner (Decadent Trends in Modern Hebrew Literature: Bialik, Berdichevsky, and Brenner)* (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University Press, 1997); Hamutal Bar-Yosef, "Romanticism and Decadence in the Literature of Hebrew Revival," *Comparative Literature*, 46.2 (Spring, 1994): 146–181. For a wide-ranging discussion of the ways in which the ancient Greek physical ideal was incorporated into Jewish culture, particularly in modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature, see Athena S. Leoussi and David Aberbach, "Hellenism and Jewish Nationalism: Ambivalence and its Ancient Roots," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25.5 (September 2002): 755–777.
- 67 For an extensive discussion of this, see my book, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains*.

## 2 THE RHETORIC OF REGENERATION

- 1 Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Friedrich Nicolai, 1781–83). All citations will be documented parenthetically as D, followed by the volume and page number.
- 2 For the reception of Dohm's treatise and a thorough discussion of Dohm's biography, see Jonathan M. Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), esp. Ch. 1; also David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 23–30. In what follows, I discuss some of the same passages from Dohm that Hess and Sorkin highlight, but I offer my own translations and analyses here.
- 3 Grégoire's *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des Juifs* was written as a response to an essay contest announced in 1787 by the Société Royale des Sciences et des Arts de Metz on the topic "Are there ways of making the Jews more useful and happier in France?" Grégoire shared the top prize with a Protestant lawyer named Claude-Antoine Thiéry. According to the biography of Grégoire by Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, Grégoire had been working on this topic since 1778 through the Société des Philantropes and made a pointed effort in his award-winning entry to underscore the originality of his thoughts on the regeneration of the Jews. For a discussion of the genesis of the essay, see Sepinwall's very informative book, *The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution: The Makings of Modern Universalism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 56–77.

- 4 The publication of Dohm's essay coincided with the Edict of Tolerance announced by Joseph II, the Emperor of Austria, on January 2, 1782. The Edict solidified the category of the "tolerated Jew," and required Jews to obey new restrictions regarding settlement, protection, schooling, and business with the ostensible goal of making "the Jewish nation useful and serviceable to the State." The text of the Edict can be found in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 36–40. It was not until March 11, 1812, that Jews were granted full civil rights in Prussia by Frederick William III. For the text of the emancipation of the Jews of Prussia, see *The Jew in the Modern World*, 141–142.
- 5 Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770–1800*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 131.
- 6 Reinhart Koselleck explores the history of the concept of progress and the idea of perfectibility in his essay, "'Progress' and 'Decline': An Appendix to the History of Two Concepts," *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), Ch. 13.
- 7 In terms of non-German reformers, one of the earliest pleas for the naturalization of the Jews and the granting of full civic equality was written in 1714 by John Toland of Great Britain: *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland, On the Same Foot with all other Nations. Containing also, A Defence of the Jews Against all Vulgar Prejudices in all Countries*. Part of the text is reproduced in *The Jew in the Modern World*, 13–17. To use Sepinwall's term, Toland represented the "unconditional discourse" of emancipation (Jews should be unconditionally emancipated), whereas Dohm and Grégoire represented the "conditional discourse" of arguments for Jewish emancipation. Both of the latter believed that Jewish persecution should end and that Jews should be granted civic rights; however, these rights would be conditional upon overcoming their particularity and becoming integrated into the state. See Sepinwall, *The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution*, 62ff.
- 8 See the short linguistic history of the term by de Baecque, *The Body Politic*, 131ff. and Sepinwall, *The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution*, 57–59.
- 9 Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve, *Advice to the French on the Salvation of the Country* (1789). Quoted in Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770–1800*, 139.
- 10 For a further discussion of the new French man, see Mona Ozouf, "The French Revolution and the Formation of the New Man," in: *L'Homme régénéré. Essais sur la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 116–157.
- 11 David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, 104.
- 12 Paul Lawrence Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question: Revolutionary Anti-semitism From Kant to Wagner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990). Rose does not mince words: "In these critical decades [of the 1830s and 1840s] we find the confluence of various mythological currents—the wandering Jew, the Damascus Blood Libel, the revival of the charge of Molochism [child sacrifice], the stamping of the Jews as loveless, egoistic worshippers, and the makers of an inhuman capitalistic society—all flowing together into a broad new river of modern anti-Semitism" (54).
- 13 Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in: *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 52.
- 14 The literature on this subject is enormous. For a comparative, interdisciplinary assessment of Darwinism, the best collection is David Kohn, ed., *The Darwinian Heritage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986). For an excellent



- overview of the German context for the rise of race science, see Paul Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). See also the introduction to Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848—c. 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- 15 Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of the Human Races*, trans. Adrian Collins (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967), 25.
  - 16 *Ibid.*, 34–35.
  - 17 Karl Eugen Dühring, *Die Judenfrage als Racen-, Sitten-, und Culturfrage* (Karlsruhe: H. Reuther, 1881). A small portion is translated by M. Gelber in *The Jew in the Modern World*, “The Question of the Jew is a Question of Race,” 333–334.
  - 18 Dühring, “The Question of the Jew is a Question of Race,” 334.
  - 19 Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism*, 107.
  - 20 Quoted in George Mosse, *The Crisis of the German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Universal Library, 1964), 91.
  - 21 Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (1899; Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1904).
  - 22 Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism*, 111.
  - 23 Germany’s foremost proponent of Darwinism was Ernst Haeckel who considered Darwin’s selection principle to be the biological basis of social change. See Alfred Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwin in Germany, 1860–1914* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Daniel Gasman, *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism: Social Darwinism in Ernst Haeckel and the Monist League* (New York: Elsevier, 1971); and Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York: Palgrave, 2004). The best comparative studies of the discourses of degeneration in Europe are: Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration* and Sander Gilman and J. Edwards Chamberlin, eds, *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
  - 24 For a discussion of the German context, see Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism*, Ch. 1, “Social Darwinism,” 11–59.
  - 25 It is not coincidental, as Michel Foucault argues, that the medical category of the homosexual was invented during this period. The homosexual, alongside a whole host of other “heresies” of nature, became a medicalized “species,” able to be studied, tracked, and corrected. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 43.
  - 26 In 1857, Morel published his *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l’espèce humaine et des causes qui produisent ces variétés maladives*. Morel believed that degeneracy would last three to four generations and, then, die out: the first generation exhibited a predilection for alcoholism, the second showed the signs of hysteria, the third was imbecilic and the fourth was sterile. For a discussion of Morel, cf. Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, 50–59; Robert A. Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 121ff.
  - 27 Lombroso, *L’Uomo delinquente* (Milan, 1876), quoted in Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 29. For an extensive discussion of Lombroso, see Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, 109–152; Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France*, 97–131.

- 28 Moses Hess, *Rom und Jerusalem: die letzte Nationalitätsfrage* (1862; Leipzig: M. W. Kaufmann, 1899). All citations will be documented parenthetically as H, followed by the page number.
- 29 Hess will consistently use the language of “Wiedergeburt” (rebirth) and “Wiederauferstehung” (resurrection) throughout the book. Although less often, he will also use the terms “restoration” and “regeneration,” for example, when he speaks of “die Restauration des jüdischen Staates” (H, 45) and “regenerirten Judenthum” (H, 73).
- 30 As I discuss in Chapter 5, Hegel expressed his pejorative opinion about Jews most prominently in his *Early Theological Writings* (1798/99) and *Philosophy of World History* (1822/23).
- 31 Many of the members of the German racial-hygiene movement were inspired by the utopian possibilities of sanitary reform and sought to tie state socialism to public health. Some of the models for new, healthy societies were created by utopian authors and social reformers such as Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1888); Benjamin Ward Richardson, *Hygeia, A City of Health* (1875); and Theodor Hertzka, *Freiland: Eine soziales Zukunftsbild* (Free-Land: A Social Picture of the Future) (1890). For a brief discussion, see Weindling (1989), 76–78.
- 32 Sheila Faith Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904–1945,” in: *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia*, ed. Mark B. Adams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 8–68. Here, 9.
- 33 Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904–1945,” 10. For a full discussion of Schallmayer, see Sheila Faith Weiss, *Race Hygiene and National Efficiency: The Eugenics of Wilhelm Schallmayer* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987). Robert Proctor also points out that the origins of German eugenics were not explicitly anti-Semitic or even reactionary. See his *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), Ch. 1, “The Origins of Racial Hygiene.”
- 34 Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904–1945,” 15ff. and Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, 21–22.
- 35 Weiss, “The Race Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904–1945,” 17. Also, see the discussion of Ploetz in Weindling (1989), 123ff.
- 36 Damm is surprisingly absent in much of the secondary literature on the “body reform” movement, including the pathbreaking work of Michael Hau and Kevin Repp. Mosse briefly mentions Damm in *The Crisis of the German Ideology* (115) but erroneously cites the foundation of the League for Regeneration to be 1902, not 1892. For an assessment of his influence, see Christopher Derek Kenway, “*Kraft und Schönheit: Regeneration and Racial Theory in the German Physical Culture Movement, 1895–1920*” (PhD dissertation, UCLA, 1996).
- 37 Alfred Damm, *Die Entartung der Menschen und die Beseitigung der Entartung (Regeneration)* (Berlin, 1895), 9. Further citations will be given parenthetically, as Damm followed by the page number.
- 38 “Degeneration—Regeneration,” *Ost und West: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für modernes Judentum* (August 1901), 609–612. Here, 609. All further citations are documented parenthetically as DR, followed by the page number.
- 39 Hermann Jalowicz, “Die juedische Turnbewegung,” *Ost und West* (November 1901), 855–858. Here, 856.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 858.
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 Cf. George Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- 43 Reinhart Koselleck, “Some Questions Regarding the Conceptual History of ‘Crisis,’” in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing*

- Concepts*. trans. Todd Samuel Presner, Ch. 14. For a more detailed discussion of this argument, see Koselleck's *Kritik und Krise: Eine Studie zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1973).
- 44 For the history and reception of Langbehn's book, I am indebted to Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study of the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1963), 155–156.
- 45 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 5. For a discussion, see Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology, and Metaphor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 115.
- 46 This has been thoroughly analyzed by Joachim Radkau in his *Das Zeitalter der Nervosität: Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler* (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1998).
- 47 Cultural and literary studies of degeneracy now comprise a genre in themselves. See, for example, William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture, and the Novel, 1880–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration in the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Charles Bernheimer, *Decadent Subjects* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and Barbara Spackman, *Decadent Genealogies: The Rhetoric of Sickness from Baudelaire to D'Annunzio* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 48 The connection between degeneracy and sexual politics is explored in the collection *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*. For more on the relationship between “degenerescence” and sexuality, see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, esp. 118–119.
- 49 Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*.
- 50 In addition to Stern's *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, see Mosse's *The Crisis of German Ideology*.
- 51 David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Also, see the work of Richard Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880–1945*.
- 52 Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 187.
- 53 Julius Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890; Leipzig: C. L. Hirschfeld, 1891), 1. This edition represents a revised version of his original book. Further citations will be documented parenthetically as R, followed by the page number.
- 54 Max Nordau, *Entartung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1892–93). I will quote from the following edition: *Entartung* (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1893), 5. Further citations will be documented as E, followed by the volume number and the page number. For translations, I consulted the following English edition, but found it necessary to often use my own translations: *Degeneration* (New York: D. Appleton, 1895).
- 55 The idea of “decisionism” is most closely associated with the work of Carl Schmitt, particularly his famous essay, “The Concept of the Political” (1927), in which he offers a definition of the political as the ultimate, irreconcilable antithesis between friend and enemy. I am using the term here to show how a similar logic is operating in the work of Langbehn and Nordau, one that reduces their understandings of culture to the pressure of an absolutely binary decision in the time of a final crisis. In Schmitt's words:

The political must therefore rest on its own ultimate distinctions, to which all action with a specifically political meaning can be traced. Let us assume that

in the realm of morality the final distinctions are between good and evil, in aesthetics beautiful and ugly, in economics profitable and unprofitable. . . . The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy. . . . The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation.

*The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab  
(New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 26.

- 56 For a good overview of Nordau's *Degeneration* and his turn to Zionism, see Peter M. Baldwin, "Liberalism, Nationalism, and Degeneration: The Case of Max Nordau," *Central European History* 13.2 (June 1980): 99–120.
- 57 Without coming down one way or the other, Michael Stanislawski, for example, writes that "it is only a slight oversimplification to claim that [critical] opinion has essentially been divided between those who see Nordau's Zionism as completely contradictory to his previous views and those who see his pre-Zionist views as seamlessly connected to his Zionism." *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*, 20. The quote comes from George L. Mosse, "Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27.4 (October 1992): 565–581. Here, 567.
- 58 Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 98
- 59 Rather than "Deutschheit" (Germanness), Langbehn uses the more inflammatory term "Deutschtum," with its loaded significance for future development. For more on this distinction, cf. Hinrich C. Seeba, "Deutschtum. Zur Rhetorik des nationalen Narzissmus beim sogenannten 'Rembrandt-Deutschen' (Julius Langbehn)," in: Henk de Berg, Matthias Prangel, eds, *Interpretation 2000: Positionen und Kontroversen. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Horst Steinmetz* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999), 215–222.
- 60 A contemporary of Langbehn, the German art historian Carl Neumann, for example, pointed out that Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* is not "an art historical book." Instead:
- it is a work that one cannot argue with because it was born out of feeling and is weak in logic; it is a lyrical work of didacticism which circles around a few central thoughts while always repeating new turns, and, since it lacks in systematic thought, constantly becomes immersed in a network of cabbalistic play and symbolic mysticism.
- Rembrandt* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1902), 28, 25–26.
- 61 With respect to the concept of *Erziehung*, Langbehn says, for example, "what Schiller wanted, Rembrandt achieved" (R, 162). Langbehn also dedicates several subsections to Lessing, including "Lessing als Erzieher" (R, 166–167) and "Lessing und Rembrandt" (R, 169–170).
- 62 For more on the close relationship between "*Erziehung*" and "*Bildung*" as well as the conceptual history of *Bildung* in the domains of theology and art, see the essay by Reinhart Koselleck, "On the Anthropological and Semantic Structure of *Bildung*," in: *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner, 170–207.
- 63 Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1892, 49th edn), 348. Quoted in Fritz Lang, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 141. In later editions of his book, Langbehn became increasingly more anti-Semitic, a tendency that also parallels the European political scene in the 1890s. Here, Jews were considered to be the embodiment of materialism and modernity, two things that were antithetical to the "Blut und Boden" ideals of German regeneration.

- 64 Modris Eksteins, for example, situates the work of Langbehn between that of Treitschke and Chamberlain in his article, "History and Degeneration: Of Birds and Cages," in: *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*, 17. George Mosse positions Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher* as the direct descendent of Lagarde's "Volkish" Germanic religious thought in *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 39–41. Louis L. Snyder considers Langbehn to have inaugurated "the tradition of irrationalism, mysticism, and intuition" that was also taken up by the likes of Chamberlain and Oswald Spengler. *Roots of German Nationalism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), 187.
- 65 Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, Ch. 10.
- 66 George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, 43 and 45.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 45.
- 68 Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right*, 185.
- 69 The most important work to discuss the ideology of respectability vis-à-vis the formation of bourgeois society is George Mosse's *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985).
- 70 For a discussion of the influence of Morel on Nordau, see Jens Malte Fischer, "Max Nordau, *Dégénérescence*," and Mark M. Anderson, "Typologie et caractère. Max Nordau, Cesare Lombroso et l'anthropologie criminelle," in: *Max Nordau: 1849–1923*, eds. Delphine Bechtel, Dominique Bourel, and Jacques Le Rider, (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1996), 107–119 and 121–131. For a general discussion of Morel, see Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, 50–59.
- 71 The best study of the history of the terms "norm" and "pathology" within the context of medical-scientific discourses of the nineteenth century is Georges Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological* (Cambridge: Zone Books, 1991).
- 72 For a brief discussion of the term "Zuchtwahl," see Jay Geller, "The Conventional Lies and Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation: Max Nordau's Pre-Zionist Answer to the Jewish Question," *Jewish Social Studies*, 1.3 (Spring 1995): 129–160.
- 73 In the visual arts, Nordau's targets include the Pre-Raphaelites, the Impressionists, and the Symbolists; by name, he mentions Manet, Puvis de Chavannes, and Besnard as examples of artists who suffer from visual defects and nervous disorders. Strangely, however, he fails to mention Seurat, van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, Bernard, or Lautrec, any one of whom might have made his argument more forceful. Among others, Patrick Bade has pointed out that Nordau's knowledge of modern painting appears to have been quite limited and often downright wrong. "Art and Degeneration: Visual Icons of Corruption," in *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*, 220–240, esp. 236–238.
- 74 Barbara Spackman, "Interversions," in: *Perennial Decay: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Decadence*, eds. Liz Constable, Dennis Denisoff, and Matthew Potolsky (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 35–49.
- 75 This is the famous first line of Kafka's story: "Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheueren Ungeziefer verwandelt." *Die Verwandlung* (1915), in: *Sämtliche Erzählungen*, ed. Paul Raabe (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1995), 56.
- 76 Max Nordau, "I. Kongressrede" (August 29, 1897), in: *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des I. Zionisten-Congresses* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines 'Erez Israel,' 1897), 9–20. All further references to the Stenographisches Protokoll will be documented parenthetically as SP, followed by conference number and page number.
- 77 Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903). Authorized translation of the 6th edn: *Sex and Character* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), 312 and 320. For an excellent analysis of the Jew as parasite topos, see Alex Bein, "The Jewish

- Parasite: Notes on the Semantics of the Jewish Problem, with special Reference to Germany,” *Leo Baeck Year Book* 19 (1964), 3–40.
- 78 Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948*, trans. William Templer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 13.
- 79 Max Nordau, “Die Aufgaben des Zionismus” (1898), reprinted in: *Zionistische Schriften*, 320–328. Here, 321–22. Further citations will be documented parenthetically as AZ, followed by the page number.
- 80 The history of the term “Mannszucht” goes back to nineteenth-century German nationalism, where discipline, obedience, and order in drill regimens and military exercises became central for creating modern German masculinity. See Ute Frevert, “Das Militär als ‘Schule der Männlichkeit’: Erwartungen, Angebote, Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ute Frevert (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1997), 145–173, esp. 159.
- 81 Max Nordau, “Heloten und Spartaner” (1899), reprinted in: *Zionistische Schriften*, 374–378. Further citations are documented parenthetically as HS, followed by the page number.
- 82 Daniel Boyarin provides an incisive analysis of the Zionist valuation of the image of the warrior in his *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). Anita Shapira demonstrates with remarkable cogency how the warrior ideal was a consistent, continuous, and central part of both the Zionist project and the foundation of the state of Israel. Cf. *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948*.
- 83 Etymologically, the term “*Mauschel*” is a variant on the Yiddish and Hebrew name Moyshe (Moses). As a nominative, the term was used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to refer to Eastern Jews in German-speaking regions and the verb (*mauscheln*) referred pejoratively to a particular manner of speaking German with Yiddish vocabulary, syntax, and accent. Sander Gilman has explored the complicated relationship between Jewish “speech” and identity in his *Jewish Self-hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
- 84 Herzl originally published this article pseudonymously in an early edition of *Die Welt* (October 15, 1897). It is reprinted as “*Mauschel*” in: *Gesammelte zionistische Werke* (Tel Aviv: Hozaah Ivrit, 1934), 1: 209–215. Here, 209.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 211.
- 86 Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat* in: *Gesammelte zionistische Werke*, 1: 19–105. Here, 94.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 88 Herzl, “*Mauschel*,” 212.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 210.
- 90 *Ibid.*, 212.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 215.
- 92 Friedrich Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell* (1804). Quoted in Hinrich C. Seeba, “Auferstehung des Geistes: Zur religiösen Rhetorik nationaler Einheit,” in: “*Nicht allein mit den Worten.*” *Festschrift für Joachim Dyck zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds Thomas Müller, Johannes G. Pankau, and Gert Ueding (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), 266–282. Here, 267.
- 93 Herzl, “The Family Affliction” (originally published in *The American Hebrew*) in: *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, vol. 2, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: 1975), 43–47. Here, 45.
- 94 *Ibid.*
- 95 See my discussion in *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), Ch. 5.

- 96 It is not coincidental that Jewish athletic and gymnastic associations began to spring up simultaneously with Zionism throughout many German-speaking cities. By 1903, just 6 years after the First Zionist Congress, *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* boasted that there are already 13 “national-Jewish Gymnastics associations” and that “we should strive to have every Zionist association develop a gymnastics division.” “Diskussionen über die Frage der körperlichen Hebung der Juden,” *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (January 1903), 1:3.
- 97 As we will see in Chapter 4, an entire discourse emerged around gymnastics, nation building, and regeneration on the pages of *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*. Nordau, certainly the father figure of the “muscle Jew,” was not alone in explaining what appeared to be Jewish “degeneration” and calling for a rebirth of Jewish heroism. See, for example, Hermann Jalowicz’s programmatic article, “Die körperliche Entartung der Juden, ihre Ursachen und ihre Bekämpfung,” in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (May 1901), 5: 57–65.
- 98 For an excellent analysis of how the “muscle Jew” was conceived as the strict antithesis to the anxiety and nervousness of the ghetto Jew, see Moshe Zimmerman, “Muscular Judaism: The Remedy for Jewish Nervousness,” *Zmanim* 83 (2003): 56–65 [Hebrew].

### 3 THE AESTHETICS OF REGENERATION

- 1 A complete list of the artists and works of art is provided in “Beilage D: Verzeichnis der in Zimmer Nr. 3 ausgestellten Kunstwerke,” in: *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des V. Zionisten-Congresses in Basel* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines ‘Erez Israel’, 1901), 459–460. Although the Stenographisches Protokoll lists the artists from predominantly German-speaking cities (possibly for political reasons), most of the artists were born in Eastern Europe and migrated to the art capitals of Vienna and Berlin during the late nineteenth century. Epstein, for example, was born in Sluzk, Russia; Lilien was born in Drohobycz, a town in Eastern Galicia; Ury was born in Birnbaum, Posen. According to the study of the exhibition by Gilya Gerda Schmidt, the exhibition actually took place in Room 2 of the Congress building. To date, Schmidt’s study is the most comprehensive reconstruction of the exhibition: *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901: Heralds of a New Age* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).
- 2 In the historiography of Zionism, the fifth Congress is often cited as the turning point of a developing division between “political Zionists,” such as Nordau and Herzl who prioritized a political and economic solution to the Jewish question, and the “cultural Zionists,” such as Buber and Lilien, who underscored the centrality of the cultural and moral improvement of the Jews. This tension provoked much debate and soul-searching within the fledgling Zionist movement. See the discussion in Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For an account of the diversity and vitality of cultural Zionism with a focus on the visual domain, see Mark H. Gelber, *Melancholy Pride: Nation, Race, and Gender in the German Literature of Cultural Zionism* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000).
- 3 Unfortunately, since the only description in the Stenographisches Protokoll is “Studienkopf” and “Studie zu ‘Jerusalem,’” there is no way to confirm which other pictures he actually exhibited.
- 4 As Dalia Manor shows in her study of art in Jewish Palestine, the paintings of Hodler—in their stylistic and compositional elements as well as in their subject matter and motifs—influenced a number of Zionist artists. She discusses Hodler’s influence on a slightly later group of Zionist artists, such as Rubin (Riven) Zelicovici, who discovered Hodler’s work in 1915; however, she does not mention

- Hodler's influence on Ury. See her *Art in Zion: The Genesis of Modern National Art in Jewish Palestine* (London: Routledge, 2005), 83–91.
- 5 Derived from the Aramaic word for “hammer,” the descendants of the Mattathias family are collectively known as the Maccabees.
  - 6 Schmidt, *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901*, 230. Schmidt further notes that Buber and his colleagues even called for Hanukkah to be the official Zionist festival.
  - 7 Buber remarks that earlier versions of this painting, particularly two sketches from 1881, show Jewish women and children sitting silent in mourning over the destruction of the Temple. Slain warriors litter the ground and a pillaged Jerusalem is depicted in the sketches on the right-hand side. In another version, Ury depicts a bench with several hunched-over women who are in shock and mourning over the destruction. Buber considers this to be an important precursor to the 1896 painting, which completely evacuates any painterly references to the city. cf. Martin Buber, *Lesser Ury* (Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1903), 51.
  - 8 Martin Buber, ed., *Juedische Kuenstler* (Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1903). The single volume was also available in six smaller, individually sold books. All quotes will come from the individual books (although the pagination in both is the same).
  - 9 Martin Buber, *Lesser Ury*, 58.
  - 10 Strangely, Schmidt sees this figure as signaling “not only withdrawal but also regeneration,” *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901*, 138. In line with Buber's interpretation, I would have to disagree with this assessment of “regeneration.”
  - 11 Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 31–32.
  - 12 The Second Commandment reads: “You shall have no other gods besides Me. You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them, or serve them.” (Exodus 20:3–5)
  - 13 Martin Buber, Speech at the Fifth Zionist Congress (December 26–30, 1901), *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des V. Zionisten-Congresses in Basel* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines ‘Erez Israel’, 1901), 151–168. Here, 152–153. All further references to the Stenographisches Protokoll will be documented parenthetically as SP, followed by the page number.
  - 14 Here, we recognize the break between the “cultural Zionists,” such as Buber, who wanted to cultivate *Bildung* and cultural production while still in the Diaspora, and “political Zionists” who believed that all efforts should be directed at the economic and political solution to the Jewish question. For a thorough discussion of the genesis of cultural Zionism, see Gelber, *Melancholy Pride: Nation, Race, and Gender in the German Literature of Cultural Zionism*, esp. 22ff.
  - 15 Strangely, the influence of Schiller and his concept of “aesthetic education” has not informed any of the criticism of cultural Zionism that I have encountered, including the most recent works to treat this topic such as those by Gilya Schmidt, Mark Gelber, and Michael Stanislawski.
  - 16 Margaret Olin, *The Nation without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Gilya Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1909* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1995).
  - 17 Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1909*, 24.
  - 18 Buber, “Ein Wort über Nietzsche und die Lebenswerte,” in: *Die Kunst im Leben*, 1 (December 1900): 13. Quoted in Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1909*, 24.



- 19 The influence of Nietzsche has often been discussed in situating both Buber's turn to Zionism in the last years of the nineteenth century and his persistent articulation of Jewish cultural regeneration. In addition to the work of Schmidt, see Paul Mendes-Flohr's *From Mysticism to Dialogue: Martin Buber's Transformation of German Social Thought* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989), esp. Chs 3–4. Moreover, the role of Nietzsche's philosophy in certain revolutionary strains of Zionist thought has been recently recognized. For an assessment of the influence of Nietzsche's concept of the "superman" on the creation of the ideal of the "New Hebrew" in the writings of Micah Yosef Berdichevsky, see David Ohana, "Zarathustra in Jerusalem: Nietzsche and the 'New Hebrews'" in *Israel Affairs*, 1.3 (Spring 1995): 38–60. For a discussion of the influence of Nietzsche on the development of early Zionist thought more generally (including the ideas of Herzl, Nordau, Buber, Berdichevsky, Zeitlin, and Ha' am), see Jacob Golomb, *Nietzsche and Zion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- 20 These *völkisch* notions of "blood" and "soil"—often delimited to fascist thought—receive their most thorough articulation in Buber's *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt: Rütten & Loening, 1911), although they can be found throughout his early work, such as "Die Schaffenden, das Volk und die Bewegung" (1902). For a discussion of the receptivity of Jewish intellectuals to *völkisch* thought, see George Mosse's essay: "The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry," in: *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left and the Search for a 'Third Force' in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970). Also, see the discussions by David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America* (New York: BasicBooks, 1992), 188ff; and Mark H. Gelber, *Melancholy Pride*, 134ff.
- 21 Buber, "Juedische Renaissance," in: *Ost und West: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für modernes Judentum*, 1 (1901): 7–10. All further references to this article will be documented parenthetically as JR, followed by the page number.
- 22 J. W. Goethe, quoted in Fritz Strich, *Goethe und die Weltliteratur* (Bern: Francke, 1957), 372.
- 23 Gelber, *Melancholy Pride*, 134.
- 24 For a provocative discussion of race in cultural Zionism, see Gelber's chapter, "The Rhetoric of Race and Jewish-National Cultural Politics: From Birnbaum and Buber to Brieger's René Richter," in *Melancholy Pride*, 125–60.
- 25 Olin, *The Nation without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art*, 109.
- 26 In his classic study, *The Crisis of the German Ideology* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), Mosse demonstrated the appeal of *völkisch* nationalism to German Jews. Michael Berkowitz and John Efron have further explored the specific nature of the national and nationalist paradoxes within early Zionism. See, for example, Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); John Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-siècle Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. Ch. 6. Their critical work stands in contrast to earlier apologists for Buber, such as Walter Laqueur's *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 167ff.
- 27 Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- 28 Bland, *The Artless Jew*, 59–60. To be sure, the Second Commandment forbidding the production of "graven images" was often discussed in terms of its scope and application; however, it was not until the modern period that Jews were ever considered "artless" or "aniconic." For an excellent collection of primary texts on the visual from both the pre-modern and modern period of Judaism, cf. Vivian Mann, ed., *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

29 Kant writes:

Perhaps the most sublime passage in the Jewish Law is the commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven or earth, or under earth, etc. This commandment alone can explain the enthusiasm that the Jewish people in its civilized era felt for its religion when it compared itself with other peoples, or can explain the pride that Islam inspires. The same holds also for our presentation of the moral law, and for the predisposition within us for morality.

*Critique of Judgment* (1790), trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1987), 135.

Bland briefly discusses this passage in his *The Artless Jew*, 15–16.

30 Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 1: 70. Quoted in Bland, *The Artless Jew*, 15.

31 In his introduction to *The Structure of Jewish History*, Graetz develops a binary opposition between Greek paganism and the Jewish concept of God. Jews, Graetz argues, do not produce visual art and this restraint explains all aspects of Jewish life, especially their moral superiority and sexual restraint:

artistic expression also develops differently according to the different concepts of God. The artistic act created in Greek paganism, in accord with its sensuous God-concept, the art of sculpture, that lovely fragrant blossom of the pagan form of perception. In Judaism, on the other hand, . . . the artistic drive, in harmony with this particular view of God, gave birth to music combined with religious poetry. . . . The sharp opposition of Judaism to a paganism sunk in idolatry and immorality, traits which are conspicuously evident in a single glance, is nothing but the broad antithesis between the religion of the spirit and the religion of nature, divine transcendence and immanence.

*The Structure of Jewish History and Other Essays*, trans. Ismar Schorsch (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of American, 1975), 68–69.

32 Paul Lawrence Rose, *Wagner: Race and Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

33 Richard Wagner, “Das Judentum in der Musik” (1850), in: *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, vol. 5 (Leipzig: 1907), 66–85. Wagner’s “explanation” to this essay, “Aufklärung über das Judentum in der Musik,” published in 1869, is reprinted in: *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, vol. 8 (Leipzig: 1907), 238–260.

34 Richard Wagner, “Das Judentum in der Musik,” 68–69.

35 *Ibid.*, 72–73.

36 The term “Verjudung” (Jewification) and “verjuden” (to Jewify) were both coinages of Wagner. For more on the conceptual history of these terms, cf. Steven Aschheim’s *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), Ch. 3, “‘The Jew Within’: The Myth of ‘Judaization’ in Germany,” esp. 56–58.

37 Wagner, “Das Judentum in der Musik,” 85.

38 *Ibid.*, 85.

39 Martin Buber, *Juedische Kuenstler* (Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1903). All further citations will be documented parenthetically as JK, followed by the page number. For translations, I consulted the following English version: “Jewish Artists,” in: *The First Buber: Youthful Zionist Writings of Martin Buber*, ed. Gilya G. Schmidt (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 100–105.

- 40 Buber would celebrate Hasidism and Zionism together for the remainder of his life. He considered Hasidism, a popular revival movement of the eighteenth century, to be a spiritual and sensual rejuvenation of Judaism. Zionism represented its physical and national rejuvenation. Buber spent a large part of his life writing and collecting the oral stories of the Hasidic tradition, published as *Tales of the Hasidim* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991).
- 41 For a fascinating cultural history of the magazine, cf. David Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost und West* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998).
- 42 Schmidt briefly discusses the genesis of this painting and its reception in her *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901*, 69–71.
- 43 See the discussion of Buber by Jacob Golomb in *Nietzsche and Zion*.
- 44 For a thorough discussion of the tradition, in its many cross-cultural variants, cf. *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*, eds. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington, IN: Indianapolis University Press, 1986). In particular, the essay by R. Edelman, “Ahasuerus, The Wandering Jew: Origin and Background,” 1–10.
- 45 Richard Cohen has also noted the significance of this placement of the photograph of Nossig’s sculpture in the journal. See his *Jewish Icons* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 227.
- 46 Ben Israel, “Der ewige Jude,” in *Ost und West*, 1 (January 1901): 3–4.
- 47 Schmidt discusses the influence of Schiller’s concept of the sublime on Buber, but does not refer to the *Letters on Aesthetic Education*. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Schiller’s ideas in both pieces are consistent with one another: art forms the moral being and the moral being forms the ideal of the State. Cf. Schmidt, *Martin Buber’s Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1909*, 32–33.
- 48 Schiller, “Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen,” in: *Werke in sechs Bänden*, vol. 5 (Zurich: Stauffacher Verlag, 1967), 341–432. Here, 343. All further citations will be documented parenthetically as AE, followed by the page number to this edition. For English translations, I consulted the following edition: *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. Reginald Snell (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965).
- 49 Lesley Sharpe’s *Schiller’s Aesthetic Essays: Two Centuries of Criticism* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995) gives a good summary of both contemporary interpretations of Schiller and his reception history.
- 50 For an overview of the conceptual history of “Bildung,” cf. Reinhart Koselleck’s essay, “On the Anthropological and Semantic Structure of Bildung,” in: *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Presner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 170–207.
- 51 Koselleck points out, for example, that Bildung had a theological meaning that preceded its artistic or sculptural sense of creation and imitation: from the idea that God created human beings in his image (*Bilde*), “followed the possibility of *imitatio Christi* or the *imago Dei* doctrine, or the requirement of Neoplatonism that the copy [*Abbild*] approach the original [*Urbild*].” The active meaning of molding (*Bildnerie*) that is central to the notion of Bildung is also found in sculpture or pottery. Koselleck, “On the Anthropological and Semantic Structure of Bildung,” in: *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 176.
- 52 The concept of the aesthetic state has, of course, come under relentless critique in light of the catastrophes of the twentieth century. As Walter Benjamin scathingly wrote about the glorification of war by the Futurists, something that he sees as leading straight to its glorification by Ernst Jünger and fascism: “The logical outcome of fascism is an aestheticizing of political life. With D’Annunzio,

- decadence made its entry into political life; with Marinetti, Futurism; and with Hitler, the Bohemian traditions of Schwabing. All efforts to aestheticize politics culminate in one point. That one point is war.” “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Reproducibility,” in: *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, ed. Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 101–135. Here, 121. In his analysis of the work of Jünger, Benjamin further argues that Jünger’s aesthetic utopia articulated in his photo-books such as *Krieg und Krieger* “is nothing other than an uninhibited translation of the principles of l’art pour l’art to war itself.” “Theories of German Fascism: On the Collection of Essays *Krieg und Krieger*, edited by Ernst Jünger,” in: *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, ed. Michael W. Jennings, trans. Jerolf Wikoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 312–321. Here, 314. For a discussion of Jünger’s utopia of the aesthetic state, see my article, “The End of Sex and the Last Man: On the Weimar Utopia of Ernst Jünger’s ‘Worker,’” in: *Qui Parle* 13.1 (Winter 2001): 103–136.
- 53 Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 91, 86, 90.
- 54 Martin Buber, “Wege zum Zionismus,” in: *Die Welt*, 51 (December 20, 1901): 5–6. Translated in: *The First Buber: Youthful Zionist Writings of Martin Buber*, ed. Gilya G. Schmidt, 105–109. Further citations will be documented parenthetically as WZ, followed by the page number of this translation.
- 55 For my discussion of decadence, I draw on the work of Charles Bernheimer, *Decadent Subjects* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848- c. 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Barbara Spackman, *Decadent Genealogies: The Rhetoric of Sickness from Baudelaire to D’Annunzio* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). I will not be discussing the complexity of art nouveau and symbolism here, but my historical overview is informed by Debora L. Silverman’s important work, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), as well as Carl Schorske’s classic, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).
- 56 Stanislawski, “From Jugendstil to ‘Judenstil’: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in the Work of Ephraim Moses Lilien,” in his *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle*, 98–115.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 100.
- 58 Milly Heyd, for example, has published two articles on Lilien in which she traces various aspects of his iconography: “Lilien and Beardsley: ‘To the pure all things are pure,’” *Journal of Jewish Art*, 7 (1980), 58–69; “Lilien: Between Herzl and Ahasver,” in: *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, eds. Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1999), 265–293; also see, Gelber, *Melancholy Pride*, Ch. 3.
- 59 M. Hirschfelder, “E. M. Lilien,” in *Ost und West*, 7 (July 1901): 517–528. Here, 517–518.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 519–520.
- 61 For more biographical details of Lilien’s life, see the introduction to Stanislawski’s chapter, “From Jugendstil to ‘Judenstil,’” esp. 102–105. For the first biography written by a contemporary, see *E. M. Lilien: Sein Werk mit einer Einleitung von Stefan Zweig* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1903).
- 62 Cf. Charles Bernheimer, *Decadent Subjects*.
- 63 Stanislawski, “From Jugendstil to ‘Judenstil,’” 113.
- 64 Edward Lucie-Smith, *Symbolist Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 51–52.
- 65 Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987). All further

- citations to this book will be documented parenthetically as FF, followed by the page number.
- 66 Reinhart Koselleck, “‘Progress’ and ‘Decline’: An Appendix to the History of Two Concepts,” in: *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History/Spacing Concepts*, 218–235. Here, 223.
- 67 Ibid., 224.
- 68 Ibid., 227.
- 69 Koselleck, “The Eighteenth Century as the Beginning of Modernity,” in: *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 154–169.
- 70 Koselleck explores these two terms in his essay, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 267–288.
- 71 The idea of “revolution” was originally connected to the natural orbits of the planets and celestial bodies, as the Latin term, *revolutio*, makes evident. It was an eschatological concept. During the French Revolution, the concept changed to connote “a radical break,” one in which the eschatological world was displaced by an open, unknown future. As for acceleration, the technological changes since the Industrial Revolution are often characterized by the “acceleration of time,” not in the revelatory sense of the foreshortening of time but rather in the sense that time itself is moving faster without a definitive endpoint or telos. In addition to the work of Koselleck, cf. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).
- 72 Koselleck, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories,” in *Futures Past*, 279–280.
- 73 Nordau had argued at the Fifth Congress that “the economic improvement of the Jews” had to take priority over everything else; hence, art and culture were considered secondary, something with which Buber and other “cultural Zionists” took issue. In accord with my argument here, Michael Berkowitz has contended that this “break” between the political and cultural Zionists may not have been as significant as previous historians considered it to be. Cf. *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War*.
- 74 Stefan Zweig, *E. M. Lilien: Sein Werk mit einer Einleitung von Stefan Zweig*, 21. Further citations will be documented parenthetically as SZ, followed by the page number.
- 75 Gelber discusses the genesis of *Juda* in his informative chapter, and I will not repeat his work here. See “Börries von Münchhausen and E. M. Lilien: The Genesis of *Juda* and its Zionist Reception,” *Melancholy Pride*, 87–124.
- 76 Hirschfelder, “E. M. Lilien,” in *Ost und West*, 526.
- 77 Lilien and Münchhausen, “Euch,” in: *Juda* (Berlin: Egon Fleischel, 1900), 2–3. Münchhausen comes out of a Romantic tradition where “return” was central to the tripartite concept of cyclical history. This idea of return is exemplified in poems such as in Novalis’s “Wenn nicht mehr Zahlen und Figuren” and Eichendorff’s “Mondnacht.” Interestingly, Münchhausen was later adopted by the Nazis as one of the major poets of the Third Reich.
- 78 For a discussion of the Biblical tradition of the “muscle Jew” with a focus on the themes of masculinity, bravery, and violence in the Hebrew Scriptures, see Warren Rosenberg, *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), esp. Ch. 2. Also, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God’s Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994).
- 79 The Yiddish works by Scholem Aleichem, Peretz, and others were translated into German for this volume. Here, we see an important—and not isolated—example

- of the attempt by Western, German-speaking Zionists to bring the “authenticity” of the *Ostjuden*, best exemplified by their language, together with the “modernism” of Western Jews. Readers could imagine that the new Jewish state, formed from the confluence of its cultures, would sublimate the East/West binary. For more on this complex relationship, see Steven Aschheim’s *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).
- 80 M. Hirschfelder, “E. M. Lilien,” in *Ost und West*, 521.
- 81 Thematically and stylistically, Lilien’s illustrations bear a striking resemblance to those of his German contemporary, the artist Fidus (1868–1948), known for his *Jugendstil* illustrations of the *Körperkultur* movement. By melding an erotic physicality with a notion of celestial rebirth, Fidus, like Lilien, used the stylistic techniques of decadence to articulate the calls for German regeneration. For an overview of his work, see the collection: *Fidus, 1868–1948: Zur ästhetischen Praxis bürgerlichen Fluchtbewegungen*, eds. Janos Frecot, Johann Friedrich Geist, and Diethart Kerbs (Munich: Rogner and Bernhard, 1972). For an astute discussion of the erotic dimension of cultural Zionism, see Gelber’s *Melancholy Pride*, Ch. 6.
- 82 Berthold Feiwel, “Gleitwort,” *Juedischer Almanach* (Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1902), 9–16. Here, 10. Further citations will be documented parenthetically as JA, followed by the page number.
- 83 This biographical information is drawn from Edgar J. Goldenthal, *Poet of the Ghetto: Morris Rosenfeld* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1998). This volume also contains a number of English translations of Rosenfeld’s poetry.
- 84 Milly Heyd has claimed that this image derives from Beardsley’s *Ali Baba* of 1897. Underscoring the decadent sexuality, both she and Stanislawski have also stressed the “hermaphroditic” nature of Lilien’s depiction of the sweatshop boss. Cf. Heyd, “Lilien and Beardsley: ‘To the pure all things are pure.’” Stanislawski discusses the image briefly in “From Jugendstil to ‘Judenstil’: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in the Work of Ephraim Moses Lilien,” 111.
- 85 Morris Rosenfeld, *Lieder des Ghetto*, trans. and introduced by Berthold Feiwel, with illustrations by E. M. Lilien (Berlin: Benjamin Harz Verlag, 1903), 2.
- 86 Berthold Feiwel, *Lieder des Ghetto*, 6.

#### 4 THE GYMNASTICS OF REGENERATION

- 1 *Körperliche Renaissance der Juden: Festschrift anlässlich des IV. Turntages der Jüdischen Turnerschaft und der Feier des 10jährigen Bestehens des Jüdischen Turnvereins Bar Kochba-Berlin* (Berlin: Verlag der Jüdischen Turnzeitung, 1909). All further citations will be documented parenthetically as KR, followed by the page number.
- 2 Following the fall of Prussia to Napoleon and the subsequent Wars of Liberation (1814–16), the German “father” of *Turnen* (gymnastics), Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, was the first to articulate a full program of physical fitness for the purpose of developing nationally conscious German citizens. As we will see below, *Turnen* became a critical part of “Nationalbildung” throughout the nineteenth century, cultivating bourgeois values and feelings of national unity. See Michael Krüger, *Körperkultur und Nationalbildung: Die Geschichte des Turnens in der Reichsgründungsära. Eine Detailstudie über die Deutschen* (Schorndorf: Hofmann, 1996) and Svenja Goltermann, *Körper der Nation: Habitusformierung und die Politik des Turnens, 1860–1890* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).
- 3 Richard Blum, “Geschichte der jüdischen Turn- und Sportbewegung, 1898–1914,” in: *Bar Kochba: Makkabi—Deutschland 1898–1938*, ed. Robert Atlasz (Tel Aviv: 1977), 6–7.

- 4 Cf. Moshe Zimmerman, "Muscular Judaism: The Remedy for Jewish Nervousness," *Zmanim* 83 (2003): 56–65 [Hebrew].
- 5 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990). All further citations will be documented parenthetically as HS, followed by the page number. Also, see the discussion of bio-power in Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), esp. 242ff.
- 6 Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, 243.
- 7 Max Nordau, Speech of December 27, 1901, in: *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des V. Zionisten-Congresses* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines 'Erez Israel,' 1901), 100.
- 8 Alfred Nossig, *Jüdische Statistik* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1903).
- 9 The most comprehensive study of the institutional and ideological development of Jewish statistics within Zionism is Mitchell B. Hart's *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). Also see John Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin de siècle Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. Ch. 6, "Zionism and Racial Anthropology," 166–174.
- 10 Cf. Meira Weiss, *The Chosen Body: The Politics of the Body in Israeli Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), esp. Chs 1–2.
- 11 Mitchell B. Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity*, 38.
- 12 For an analysis of Foucault's methodology, see Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983), Ch. 6.
- 13 Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 137.
- 14 J. G. Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808). *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. R. F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull (Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1922). All references will be documented parenthetically as A, followed by the page number.
- 15 Here, Fichte is reworking a biblical reference to the cutting up and distribution of the parts of the body to the 12 tribes of Israel, a reference that Kleist also used in his drama of nationalism, *Hermannsschlacht*.
- 16 The state as body metaphor has a long prehistory that goes back to Aristotle and plays a significant role in modern discourses on state formation, such as in Hobbes and Kant. In taking up this metaphor, Fichte and later the Zionists are building on its valences of regeneration. See the discussions by Jonathan Hess, *Reconstituting the Body Politic: Enlightenment, Public Culture and the Invention of Aesthetic Autonomy* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999); and Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770–1800*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).
- 17 Hinrich C. Seeba, "Auferstehung des Geistes: Zur religiösen Rhetorik nationaler Einheit," in: "Nicht allein mit den Worten." *Festschrift für Joachim Dyck zum 60. Geburtstag*, Thomas Müller, Johannes G. Pankau, and Gert Ueding, eds (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995), 266–282. Here, 278.
- 18 According to Detlev Peukert, this is a fundamental distinction later exploited by the Nazis as part of their program of eliminatory racism: The "Volkskörper," purified of its "less valuable" individuals, represented the "potentially immortal body of the Volk or race," while the "merely ephemeral body of the individual" was variously cured, admitted into the *Volkskörper*, or simply eliminated. Clearly, the Nazis were drawing upon and violently updating a much longer nationalist tradition. See his seminal article, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the

- Spirit of Science,” in: *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, eds Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993), 234–252. Here, 241.
- 19 “Turnen” is a German coinage and was used to displace the Latin word “gymnastics.” While the two terms have some overlap in terms of practice, they are not equivalent since “Turnen” had a specifically German nationalist bent.
  - 20 Aside from a few mentions of the influence of Jahn on Jewish gymnastics associations, the developmental parallels between Zionism and German nationalism vis-à-vis corporeal regeneration, especially in the work of Fichte and Jahn, have not been sufficiently articulated. Michael Berkowitz briefly cites Jahn in his discussion of the “new Jew” in his *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 108) but does not explore the connection. Even in the extensive articles tracing the worldwide influence of Jahn’s ideas beyond Germany—in Belgium, Poland, North America, and Japan—there is no mention of Jewish gymnastics and the “muscle Jew” tradition. Instead, the question asked is whether Jahn was an anti-Semite, not whether his ideas played a role in the development of a Jewish consciousness of nationality. Cf. Hartmut Becker, “War Jahn ‘Antisemit’?” in: *Internationales Jahn-Symposium*, eds Hajo Bernett, Heinz Denk, Josef Göhler, Manfred Lämmer, and Horst Ueberhorst, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), 121–135.
  - 21 Dieter Langewiesche, *Nation, Nationalismus, Nationalstaat in Deutschland und Europa* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000), 104.
  - 22 Cf. Langewiesche, *Nation, Nationalismus, Nationalstaat in Deutschland und Europa*, 115.
  - 23 This biographical information was culled from a number of sources: *Internationales Jahn-Symposium*; Horst Ueberhorst, *Zurück zu Jahn?* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Bochum, 1969).
  - 24 Cf. Helmut Asmus, *Studentische Burschenschaften und bürgerliche Umwälzung: Zum 175. Jahrestag des Wartburgfestes* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992); Kevin McAleer, *Dueling: The Cult of Honor in Fin-de-siècle Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Ute Frevert, *Ehrenmänner: Das Duell in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Munich: DTV, 1991); and Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991). Herzl’s first play, *Das neue Ghetto* (1894), culminates in a dueling scene for Jewish honor and masculinity. See the discussion by Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), esp. 290–295.
  - 25 Fred Eugene Leonard, “Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and the Development of Popular Gymnastics (*Vereinsturnen*) in Germany,” *American Physical Education Review*, X.1 (March 1905): 11.
  - 26 For a comprehensive study of the German *Turnen* movement and its cultivation of the “virtuous body,” see Svenja Goltermann, “Exercise and Perfection: Embodying the Nation in Nineteenth-century Germany,” *European Review of History* 11.3 (2004): 333–346, esp. 336–339.
  - 27 For a discussion of how the “bourgeois body” was to tame “excess,” see Philipp Sarasin, *Reizbare Maschinen: Eine Geschichte des Körpers, 1765–1914* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), Ch. 3, “Der Körper des Subjekts. Individuierung und Semiotik des bürgerlichen Körpers.”
  - 28 Goltermann, “Exercise and Perfection: Embodying the Nation in Nineteenth-century Germany,” 339.
  - 29 Svenja Goltermann, *Körper der Nation: Habitusformierung und die Politik des Turnens, 1860–1890*.
  - 30 Goltermann, *Körper der Nation*, 62.
  - 31 Goltermann, *Körper der Nation*, 65.



- 32 Eugen Weber, "Gymnastics and Sport in Fin-de-Siècle France: Opium of the Classes?" in: *The American Historical Review*, 76.1 (February 1971): 70–98. Here, 73. See also the discussion by Robert A. Nye, "Sport, Regeneration, and National Revival," in: *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 310–329.
- 33 Eugen Weber, "Gymnastics and Sport in Fin-de-Siècle France: Opium of the Classes?" 73.
- 34 The quote comes from the 1879 Presidential Address to the Club Alpin Français, which was founded in 1874 with the express purpose of cultivating French "physical energy" and "moral vigor." Quoted in Eugen Weber, "Gymnastics and Sport in Fin-de-Siècle France: Opium of the Classes?" 72.
- 35 Quoted in Eugen Weber, "Gymnastics and Sport in Fin-de-Siècle France: Opium of the Classes?" 97.
- 36 There is a fairly extensive body of literature on the spread of "muscular Christianity" in Victorian England and, somewhat later, the United States. See, for example, Norman Vance, *The Sinews of Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Donald E. Hall, ed. *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). For a classic study of the discourse of health and corporeality in Victorian England, see Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).
- 37 Merle Mowbray Bevington, *The Saturday Review, 1855–1868* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 188. Quoted in Donald E. Hall, "Muscular Christianity: Reading and Writing the Male Social Body," in: *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, 7.
- 38 Vance, *The Sinews of Spirit*, 2.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Donald Hall sees the roots of "muscular Christianity" in the social turmoil and political revolutions of the 1848 period around the issues of labor, productivity, and discipline. See his essay, "On the Making and Unmaking of Monsters: Christian Socialism, Muscular Christianity, and the Metaphorization of Class Conflict," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, 45–65.
- 41 C. J. W.-L. Wee, "Christian Manliness and National Identity: The Problematic Construction of a Racially 'Pure' Nation," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, 66–88. Here, 68 and 67.
- 42 Vance, *The Sinews of Spirit*, 2.
- 43 Donald E. Hall, "Muscular Christianity: Reading and Writing the Male Social Body," in: *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, 9.
- 44 See the discussion by Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920*, 19–25. Also, James C. Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 270–282.
- 45 Higginson published a series of articles on the benefits of muscular Christianity, including "Saints, and Their Bodies," *Atlantic Monthly* (1858), and "Barbarism and Civilization," *Atlantic Monthly* (1861). Quoted in Putney, *Muscular Christianity*, 21.
- 46 Cf. Mark B. Adams, ed., *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- 47 Robert Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France*, 328.

- 48 In addition to Nye's *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France*, see Richard F. Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880–1945* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
- 49 Cf. Philipp Sarasin, *Reizbare Maschinen*, 433–51; Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945*.
- 50 W. W. Hastings, "Racial Hygiene and Vigor" (1910), quoted in James C. Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness*, 294.
- 51 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 147–148. Also, see Nye's "Comparative Reflections on Great Britain and Germany," in *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France*, 330–339.
- 52 See, for example, the studies by Richard Soloway, "Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17 (January 1982): 137–164, and Robert A. Nye, "The Bio-medical Origins of Urban Sociology," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20.4 (October 1985): 659–65.
- 53 Sheila Faith Weiss, "The Racial Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904–1945" in: *The Wellborn Science*, ed. Mark B. Adams, 8–68. Here, 23–24.
- 54 Matthew Jeffries, "Lebensreform: A Middle-Class Antidote to Wilhelmism?" in: *Wilhelmism and Its Legacies: German Modernities, Imperialism, and the Meanings of Reform, 1890–1930*, eds Geoff Eley and James Retallack, (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 91–106. Here, 93.
- 55 I use these dates for the German reform movement based on: Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke, eds, *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen, 1880–1933* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1998).
- 56 Quoted in Matthew Jeffries, "Lebensreform: A Middle-Class Antidote to Wilhelmism?" 93.
- 57 Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
- 58 Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890–1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- 59 "Was Wir Wollen" from *Kraft und Schönheit: Monatschrift des Vereins für Körperkultur*. Reproduced in Rolf Koerber, "Freikörperkultur," in: Kerbs and Reulecke, eds, *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen, 1880–1933*, 104.
- 60 Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany*, 117–118.
- 61 Hau mentions the muscle Jew on one page, in the context of discussions of Jewish degeneracy: *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany*, 85. For Reulecke, the "muscle Jew" is not part of the history of the so-called "Männerbünde" tradition, although the *Handbuch* does contain an essay by Inka Bertz on "Jewish Renaissance," which argues that the latter is closely connected to the German *Lebensreform* movement.
- 62 This difference does not go by unrecognized by Berlin's Bar Kochba. As one commentator pointed out in *Körperliche Renaissance der Juden*: "Corresponding to the particular conditions of the English and American Jews, their gymnastic clubs do not carry the same pronounced national character as our gymnastics association" (KR, 25). Nevertheless, they still aim at corporeal regeneration and seek to cultivate a kind of Jewish "military discipline" through marches, drills, and exercises (KR, 26).
- 63 For the most comprehensive discussion, see Gertrud Pfister and Toni Niewerth, "Jewish Women in Gymnastics and Sport in Germany, 1898–1938," *Journal of Sport History* 26.2 (Summer 1999): 287–325. Here, 295–96.
- 64 For a history of the club, including its reestablishment after the Nazi period, see Arthur Baar, *50 Jahre Hakoah, 1909–1959* (Tel Aviv: Verlagskomitee Hakoah,

- 1959). The 2004 film, *Watermarks*, directed by Yaron Zilberman, documents the triumphs of the women's swimming team of Hakoah before and after the closure of the club in Nazi Austria. Beyond Hakoah, the literature on Jewish participation in sports is immense and will not be treated in any comprehensive fashion here. For an excellent overview, see the special issue edited by George Eisen, "Jews and Sport: A Century of Retrospect," *Journal of Sport History* 26.2 (Summer 1999). Also, Eisen's "Jewish History and the Ideology of Modern Sport: Interpretations and Approaches," *Journal of Sport History* 25.3 (Fall 1998): 482–531; *Sport and Physical Education in Jewish History: Selected Papers from an International Seminar Held on the Occasion of the 16th Maccabiah*, eds George Eisen, Haim Kaufman, and Manfred Lämmer (Netanya: Wingate Institute, 2003); *Emancipation through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, eds Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Allen Bodner, *When Boxing was a Jewish Sport* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997); Paul Yogi Mayer, "Equality—Egality: Jews and Sport in Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. 25 (London: Secker and Warburg, 1980), 221–241. Although not focused on Jewish sports per se, for one of the best histories of the relationship between sports and ideology, including an extensive discussion of modern masculinity, see John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1984). For a fascinating celebration of the aesthetic form of the athletic body, see Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In Praise of Athletic Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
- 65 See, for example, Tony Collins, "Jews, Antisemitism, and Sports in Britain, 1900–1939" in: *Emancipation through Muscles*, 142–155.
- 66 Robert Atlasz, ed., *Bar Kochba: Makkabi—Deutschland 1898–1938*, 16.
- 67 *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (1905, no. 12: 224). All further references to the journal will be documented parenthetically as JTZ, followed by the date, volume number, and page.
- 68 The journal was certainly inspired by its German counterpart, *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung*, which began in Leipzig in 1856.
- 69 An important part of the fin de siècle *Körperkultur* discourse in Germany also focused on the necessity of cultivating both the mind and the body in equal proportions. As one German physician put it in 1906, the German body had to be regenerated from its "one-sided cerebral culture" (*einseitige Gehirnkultur*). *Körperkultur: Illustrierte Monatsschrift für körperliche Vollkommnung* (October 1906): 1. Quoted in Christopher Derek Kenway, "Kraft und Schönheit: Regeneration and Racial Theory in the German Physical Culture Movement, 1895–1920" (PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1996), 121.
- 70 For the context of European mass movements and nationalisms—ranging from pan-Germanism to Christian Socialism—during this period, see, for example, Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981); and Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1976).
- 71 For a discussion of how Zionist ideals accorded with Olympic ideology, see George Eisen, "Olympic Ideology and Jewish Values: Conflict or Accommodation?" *Olympic Perspectives: Third International Symposium for Olympic Research* (October, 1996): 121–126, esp. 124–125.
- 72 Robert Atlasz, ed., *Bar Kochba: Makkabi—Deutschland 1898–1938*, 9.
- 73 See Yehoyakim Doron, "The Zionist Gymnastic Movement against the Back-ground of German Social Values in the Second Reich (1894–1914)," in: *Selected Chapters in the History of Physical Education*, ed. Yechiam Sorek (Netanya: Wingate Institute, 1986), 106–113 [Hebrew].

- 74 The father of modern Yiddish literature, Mendele Mocher Sforim, produced a similarly biting critique of Jewish orthodoxy in his classic tale, "The Calf." In this story, a boy flees "the stench of the yeshiva for the fresh air" of the meadows and pastures, only to lose his "Jewish refinement," something that had been sustained by the strictures of his study and endured on his "emaciated figure and sunken face." Now, in the open air, the boy gained "a sunburned complexion and a tremendous appetite" to eat and go into the woods. In the end, the boy's mother sends him back to the yeshiva "to become a proper man," devoted to his studies. *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, eds Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, trans. Jacob Sloan (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 97–111. Here, 107, 105, and 111.
- 75 For a discussion of Charcot and vitalism, see Debora L. Silverman's *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), esp. Ch. 5.
- 76 Here, the term "Geschlecht" oscillates in meaning between "sex" and "race" or "lineage."
- 77 Gertrud Bäumer, "Welchem Ideal soll die moderne deutsche Frau zustreben?" in *Körper und Geist* 21 (August 1, 1913): 190–195. Quoted in Kenway, "Kraft und Schönheit: Regeneration and Racial Theory in the German Physical Culture Movement, 1895–1920," 217.
- 78 Gertrud Bäumer, "Gedanken zur Jugendbewegung II," *Hilfe* 20.29 (July 16, 1914). Quoted in Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity*, 130. For a thorough discussion of Bäumer in the context of the development of the disciplines of racial hygiene, population policy, and eugenics, see Kevin Repp, "'More Corporeal, More Concrete': Liberal Humanism, Eugenics, and German Progressives at the Last Fin de Siècle," *The Journal of Modern History* 72 (September 2000): 683–730.
- 79 By emphasizing "the malleability of maternalist and eugenicist discourse," Repp, in line with other recent scholarship to reassess the modernity of Imperial Germany, shows how Bäumer's celebration of eugenics, while indicative of modernity's "dark side," did not simply point forward to the reproductive politics of the Nazi state. Repp, "'More Corporeal, More Concrete': Liberal Humanism, Eugenics, and German Progressives at the Last Fin de Siècle," 708. See also Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Workers in Germany, 1850–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996) and Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991).
- 80 Friedrich Jahn, "Dokument Nr. 4: Mainzer Zentral-Untersuchungskommission," quoted in Horst Ueberhorst, *Zurück zu Jahn?* 91.
- 81 Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft: Eine Theorie der menschlichen Staatsbildung nach Wesen und Wert*, 2 vols (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1917/19).
- 82 Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1926), 377. Part of this passage is also quoted in James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (Salem, NH: Ayer Company Publishers, 1975), 26.
- 83 For the best overview of the reform movements in Imperial Germany, see Kerbs and Reulecke, eds, *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen, 1880–1933*.
- 84 Cf. Walter Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1962).
- 85 For a history of the Jewish youth movement in Germany, cf. Jutta Hetkamp, *Die jüdische Jugendbewegung in Deutschland von 1913–1933* (Münster: Lit, 1994); Hamischmar, *Vom Leben der Jüngern im Blau-Weiss* (Berlin: Bundesleitung des Blau-Weiss, 1925).

- 86 Hans Blüher, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen* (1912; Prien: Kampmann & Schnabel, 1922), 33, 28–29.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 135.
- 88 Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft*, 1: 7. Further citations will be documented parenthetically as RE, followed by the volume and page number.
- 89 Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism, and the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 112.
- 90 Hewitt also mentions this passage and discusses it in the context of Blüher’s masculinist thought, *Political Inversions*, 123–125.
- 91 See, for example, Otto Weininger’s *Sex and Character* (1903). The association of Jews and homosexuals has a long history, both before and after the publication of Blüher’s book. For an overview, see Warren J. Blumenfeld, “History/Hysteria: Parallel Representations of Jews and Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals,” in Brett Beemyn and Mickey Eliason, eds, *Queer Studies: A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 146–162.
- 92 These ideals seem to have been realized (however briefly) in the Hashomer Hatzair youth movement in Palestine shortly after the end of World War I. As one participant, Moshe Hellenberg, wrote about the male-bonding rituals:
- I have wandered across the land. I was searching for the regenerated man who could find his way to another directly, without intermediary. . . . We offer each other everything, harmonizing our everyday life by working together . . . indeed by working together. This is how I felt my power and energy most intensely. Here, two men join together to roll a heavy boulder; we flex our muscles, pulling the boulder away together. In such a moment there is no need for talk—we only look, because there is a joint effort and we live together, we simply live.
- For a fascinating cultural history, see Ofer Nur’s “Hashomer Hatzair Youth Movement 1918–1924 from Eastern Galicia and Vienna to Palestine: A Cultural History” (PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 2004). Here, 196.
- 93 For a visual history of this imagery, see the exhibition catalogue, *Die neuen Hebräer: 100 Jahre Kunst in Israel*, ed. Doreet LeVitte Harten with Yigal Zalmona (Berlin: Nicolai Verlag, 2005). The classic history of the pioneer is Amos Elon’s *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971). For a more recent account, see Eric Zakim, *To Build and Be Built: Landscape, Literature, and the Construction of Zionist Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).
- 94 Michael Berkowitz discusses this imagery in his book, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War*.
- 95 For a discussion of Jewish race scientists, see John Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, and Mitchell Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity*, 84–95.
- 96 Felix Theilhaber, *Der Untergang der deutschen Juden: Eine volkswirtschaftliche Studie* (Munich: Ernst Reinhardt, 1911). All further citations will be documented parenthetically as U, followed by the page number.
- 97 For a contemporary sourcebook of Jewish hygiene practices, see the companion volume to the Jewish section of the International Hygiene Exhibition, *Die Hygiene der Juden*, ed. Max Grunwald (Dresden: Verlag der Historischen Abteilung der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung, 1912).
- 98 The same year that Nossig published his first compendium of Jewish statistics, Ruppin won second prize in the “Krupp competition” for his answer to the

- question, “What can we learn from the principles of evolution for the development and laws of states?” He published his answer as *Darwinismus und Sozialwissenschaft* (Jena: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1903). For the political context of this competition, which was organized by some of Germany’s leading exponents of Social Darwinism, including Ernst Haeckel and Heinrich Ernst Ziegler, see Weindling, *Health, Race, and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945*, 112–120.
- 99 Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 148.
- 100 My history of the 1911 International Hygiene Exhibition is culled from a number of primary sources, all of which were made available to me by the archivists and librarians at the Hygiene Museum in Dresden. These sources include the following: *Hygiene: Offizielle Monatsschrift der Internationalen Hygiene Ausstellung Dresden 1911*, nos. 1–3 (January–March, 1911); *Offizieller Katalog der Internationalen Hygiene Ausstellung* (Berlin: Rudolf Mosse Verlag, 1911); and *Historische Abteilung mit Ethnographischer Unterabteilung*, eds Karl Sudhoff and O. Neustätter (Dresden: Verlag der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung, 1911).
- 101 Karl Lingner, “Vorwort,” *Offizieller Katalog der internationalen Hygiene Ausstellung Dresden* (Berlin: Rudolf Mosse, 1911), 10. Further citations to the catalogue will be documented parenthetically as OK, followed by the page number.
- 102 Karl Lingner, *Programm für die geplante Internationale Hygiene-Ausstellung zu Dresden* (1910), 6. In his forward to the publicly available exhibition catalogue, Lingner forgoes these references to Jewish racial and hygienic strength. Interestingly, Lingner makes the same assessment, almost in the same words, as Moses Hess who also believed that the Jewish race represented “*ungeschwächten Kraft und Integrität.*”
- 103 Max Grunwald, *Bericht über die Gruppe “Hygiene der Juden” in der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung Dresden 1911*, 3 (unpublished manuscript courtesy of Dresden Hygiene Museum archives). All further references to this report will be documented as MG, followed by the page number.
- 104 This information comes from *Historische Abteilung mit Ethnographischer Unterabteilung*, eds Karl Sudhoff and O. Neustätter (Dresden: Verlag der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung, 1911).
- 105 A complete list of the objects displayed in Room 3 is provided in *Historische Abteilung mit Ethnographischer Unterabteilung*, 29–32.
- 106 This was confirmed to me by the librarians and archivists at the Dresden Hygiene Museum in April of 2002.
- 107 *Offizieller Katalog der internationalen Hygiene Ausstellung Dresden*, 43.
- 108 A complete list of the objects displayed in Room 26 is provided in *Historische Abteilung mit Ethnographischer Unterabteilung*, 223–228.
- 109 Cf. Robin Judd’s forthcoming book, *Cutting Identities: Jewish Rituals and German Politics*.
- 110 *Historische Abteilung mit Ethnographischer Unterabteilung*, 222.
- 111 M. S. Bamberger, “Die Juedische Abteilung in der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung in Dresden,” in *Ost und West* 6 (June 1911): 531–537. Here, 534.
- 112 For example, Johann Gottfried Herder’s *On World History*, eds Hans Adler and Ernest A. Menze, trans. Ernest A. Menze and Michael Palma (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of World History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956); Hegel, “Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal,” *Werke*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), 274–418; and Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*.
- 113 Hegel, “Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal,” 292.
- 114 In his seminal study of Eastern European Jews in Germany, Jack Wertheimer demonstrates that in 1890 about 20,000 Eastern Jews lived in Germany, the vast

- majority in Prussia, following the mass expulsions of the 1880s. By 1900, that number increased to 35,000 and by 1910, there were about 70,000 Eastern Jews in Germany. Cf. *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 79.
- 115 Theilhaber was not the only Jewish race doctor to emphasize the benefits of early marriage. In an article published in *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung*, “Körperliche Übung und sexuelle Hygiene,” Eisenstadt also argued that “the task before our youth is to reintroduce early marriage” (JTZ, 1911, 3: 50).
- 116 Like Theilhaber, Ploetz railed against the two-child system and advocated early marriage, the fostering of “fit” families, and the preservation of the “volkisch” ideals of the peasant class. Cf. Sheila Faith Weiss, “The Racial Hygiene Movement in Germany, 1904–1945” in: *The Wellborn Science*, ed. Mark B. Adams, esp. 22–24.
- 117 Cf. Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1996).
- 118 Kings I (2:2–4), in *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1988), 518 (my emphasis). The literal translation of the final part reads: “There shall never cease to be a man of yours on the throne of Israel.”
- 119 Strangely enough, by 1913, Theilhaber was actually working closely with the *Bund für Mutterschutz* (Alliance for the Protection of Motherhood) for the repeal of the abortion law and public access to contraceptives. Cf. Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 142.
- 120 I will not repeat the reception history of Theilhaber’s book here since Efron provides a thorough discussion in his *Defenders of the Race*, 144–147.

## 5 THE LAND OF REGENERATION

- 1 Edward Said, “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,” in: *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 56–114. All further citations will be documented parenthetically as ZSV, followed by the page number to this edition.
- 2 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 11, 12, and 13.
- 3 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 7–8.
- 4 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 8.
- 5 Palestinian scholars as well as scholars skeptical about the Zionist project have already undertaken significant work in this direction. Nevertheless, the assessment of the Jewish colonial project—in terms of its uniqueness and its similarity to European colonial practice—is far from complete. See, for example, the seminal work of Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*; Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds. *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London: Verso, 2001); Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); and Ella Shohat, “Notes on the ‘Post-Colonial,’” in: *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies*, eds Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).
- 6 Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).
- 7 The “First Film of Palestine” was created by an Englishman named Murray Rosenberg, who shot the film during his trip to Palestine. It was screened at the Tenth Zionist Congress in 1911 to an audience of more than one-thousand people. The film included a short sequence in Egypt of the pyramids and a Cairo bazaar,

- followed by scenes of Jewish life in Palestine, focusing particularly on the Bezalel Institute in Jerusalem and various images of the ancient city. This summary comes from Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 117.
- 8 In 1882, there were about 24,000 Jews in Palestine. Forty years later, by 1922, that number had grown to 84,000 Jews out of a total of 752,000 inhabitants. These numbers come from Nathan Weinstock, "The Impact of Zionist Colonization on Palestinian Arab Society Before 1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2.2 (Winter 1973): 49–63. Here, 55. For an extensive discussion of early settlements, see Ran Aaronsohn, *Rothschild and Early Jewish Colonization* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2000).
  - 9 The literature on this subject is enormous. For a useful study of the British Empire, see Catherine Hall, ed. *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). For a study of the discourses of the subaltern, see Vinayak Chaturvedi, ed. *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London: Verso, 2000).
  - 10 Russell Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 10.
  - 11 An extensive literature on German colonialism has developed in recent years. In addition to Zantop and Berman, some of the key studies include: Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds. *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1998); Alexander Honold und Oliver Simons, eds. *Kolonialismus als Kultur: Literatur, Medien, Wissenschaft in der deutschen Gründerzeit des Fremden* (Tübingen: A. Francke, 2002); John K. Noyes, *Colonial Space. Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa 1884–1915* (Reading: Harwood, 1992). For an argument showing the long-term development of German colonial discourse, see George Steinmetz, "Precoloniality and Colonial Subjectivity: Ethnographic Discourse and Native Policy in German Overseas Imperialism, 1780s–1914," *Political Power and Social Theory* 15 (2001): 135–228.
  - 12 Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 15.
  - 13 Derek Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 6. The background information comes from Penslar, esp. 60–79.
  - 14 For a collection of the documents relating to the "Uganda controversy," see: *The Minutes of the Zionist General Council: The Uganda Controversy*, vol. 1, ed. Michael Heymann (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1970) and *The Minutes of the Zionist General Council: The Uganda Controversy*, vol. 2, ed. Michael Heymann (Jerusalem: Hassifriya Haziyonit Publishing House, 1977). In a long article published in *Palästina*, "Das jüdische Kolonisationsprogramm," Alfred Nossig wrote one of the strongest and racially charged arguments against establishing a Jewish homeland in East Africa. He argues: "The indigenous population [in East Africa] is so thin, torpid, and lazy that despite every effort they still cannot be brought to do any structured work. . . . The blacks must be driven to work with a whip. The true Negro state: Is this the image of a regenerated people?" Later in the article he points out that East Africa will not regenerate the Jewish people but rather transform them into "a deviant Jewish race." vol. 2, no. 3–6 (1903/04): 171–211. Here, 189 and 192.
  - 15 Alfred Nossig notes, for example, that the Zionist colonization effort can learn much from "the German politic of expansion" and that "the research work of the Germans [in colonial territories] . . . should spur us on in a similar way, but wherever possible to proceed in an even more fundamental and rational



- manner.” “Ueber den Nutzen einer theoretischen Vorbereitung der Palaestina-Kolonisation,” *Palästina* (April/May 1902): 104–107.
- 16 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 78.
- 17 Weinstock, “The Impact of Zionist Colonization on Palestinian Arab Society Before 1948,” 50.
- 18 Weinstock, “The Impact of Zionist Colonization on Palestinian Arab Society Before 1948,” 62.
- 19 The necessity of cultivating a peaceful Jewish–Arab relationship was often discussed at the Zionist Congresses, especially around World War I. In an article published in *Der Jude*, Hugo Bergmann, for example, writes:
- A peaceful co-existence with [the Arabs] is for us a question of life. Our schools must be open to Arabs; we must speak to them in newspapers and in books in their language; a Jewish-Arab society should work to realize a thriving, fruitful life together through the profound commonalities of the history and the essential being of both people.
- “Die wahre Autonomie,” *Der Jude*, vol. 8 (1919): 368–373.
- For a discussion of Bergmann and the particular Zionism of the Prague Circle, see Scott Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka’s Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 135–142. After World War II, this ideal of co-existence disappeared with the drawing up of Plan Dalet, which called for the systematic expulsion of the Palestinians from Jewish territories. As Ilan Pappé has argued in an incendiary book, the politics of replacement and expulsion in 1948 Palestine fits squarely within the paradigm of “ethnic cleansing.” See his *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006).
- 20 Alfred Nossig, “Das jüdische Kolonisationsprogramm,” 178.
- 21 Selig Soskin and Aaron Aaronsohn, “Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt: Reiseeindrücke,” *Altneuland* (January 1904): 13–22.
- 22 Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland*, in: *Gesammelte Zionistische Werke*, vol 5 (Tel Aviv: Hazaah Ivrit, 1935), 125–420. All citations will be documented parenthetically as A, followed by the page number to this edition. For a more extensive discussion of Herzl’s novel, see my *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), Ch. 5.
- 23 Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, 303.
- 24 Elias Auerbach, *Palaestina als Judenland* (Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1912), 46.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 46.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 47.
- 27 Selig Soskin, “‘Gross’ und ‘Klein’-Kolonisation,” *Altneuland* (May 1904): 129–140. Here, 131.
- 28 Otto Warburg, “Die nichtjüdische Kolonisation Palästinas,” *Altneuland* (February 1904): 39–45. Here, 44.
- 29 Otto Warburg, “Die Juedische Kolonisation Palaestinas,” *Altneuland* (April 1904): 97–108. Here, 107.
- 30 Arthur Ruppin, “Die Auslese des Menschenmaterials für Palästina,” *Der Jude*, vol. 8 (1919): 373–83. Here, 374. All further citations will be documented parenthetically as AM, followed by the page number. For a critical account of Ruppin’s Zionism and his intellectual history, see Etan Bloom’s Ph.D. dissertation, “Arthur Ruppin and the Production of the Modern Hebrew Culture (1908–1942)” as well as his article, “‘The Administrative Knight’: Arthur Ruppin and the Rise of Zionist Statistics,” in: *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* XXXV (2007).

- 31 Helmut Pemsel, *Weltgeschichte der Seefahrt*, 7 vols. (Vienna: Neuer wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2003).
- 32 Pemsel, *Weltgeschichte der Seefahrt: Biographisches Lexikon*, 4:10.
- 33 David Ben-Gurion, "Israel and the Sea: Army and Security," in: *Israel and the Sea*, eds M. Newman, Z. Eshel, M. Pomruk, and S. Raviv (Haifa: Newman and Hevel Yamo LeIsrael, 1950) [in Hebrew]. Quoted in Hannan Hever, "We Have not Arrived from the Sea: A Mizrahi Literary Geography," *Social Identities* 10.1 (2004): 31–51. Here, 36.
- 34 Raphael Patai, *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). Further citations will be documented parenthetically as Patai, followed by the page number.
- 35 In the Middle Ages, there were a number of Jewish sailors, most notably the twelfth century explorer, Benjamin von Tudela, and Petachja von Regensburg. For an account of their world travels, see *Jüdische Reisen im Mittelalter: Benjamin von Tudela und Petachja von Regensburg*, trans. and introduced by Stefan Schreiner (Cologne: Parkland, 1998).
- 36 Hegel delivered these lectures at the University of Berlin in 1822–23. G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970). The English is *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956). All citations will be documented parenthetically as W, followed first by the page number to the German edition and then the page number to the English translation. I have consulted the English translation but have opted to give my own translations of Hegel throughout.
- 37 For a critical assessment of Hegel's relationship to colonialism and views on Africa, cf. Robert Bernasconi, "Hegel at the Court of Ashanti," in: *Hegel After Derrida*, ed. Stuart Barnett (London: Routledge, 1998), 41–63.
- 38 In my book, *Mobile Modernity*, I give a more extensive treatment of Hegel's philosophy of world history. Cf. Ch. 4.
- 39 Again, Patai's history of Jewish seafaring is instructive here since Hegel's assessment is made entirely on his lack on knowledge of (among other things) this extensive and, more of less, coeval history.
- 40 G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Karl Heinz Iting, Karl Brehmer, and Hoo Nam Seelmann, eds. vol. 12 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1996), 111. Although differing in some ways from the standard edition published by Suhrkamp, this edition is based upon a new reconstruction of Hegel's lectures from the winter semester 1822/23.
- 41 According to Charles Taylor, "the Germanic world" does not refer to Germany, per se, but rather to the "barbarians who swarmed over the Roman empire at its end and founded the new nations of Western Europe. There is no particular chauvinism in this use of the word German." *Hegel* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 398.
- 42 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 78.
- 43 Hegel, "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal" (1798–1800), in: *Werke*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), 277.
- 44 Hegel, "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal," 278.
- 45 Johann Gottfried Herder, "The Hebrews," in: *On World History: An Anthology*, eds Hans Adler and Ernest A. Menze, trans. Ernest A. Menze with Michael Palma (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 263.
- 46 Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols (1899; Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1904), 1: 454.
- 47 By turning the "Greco-German" seafaring voyage into a Jewish undertaking, Heine, I argue, subverts the absolutism of Hegel's philosophy of history and exposes the very metaphors upon which its progressive development relies. See

- my article, "Jews on Ships; or How Heine's *Reisebilder* Deconstruct Hegel's Philosophy of World History," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 118.3 (May 2003): 521–538.
- 48 Max Grunwald, "Juden als Rheder und Seefahrer," *Ost und West*, vol. 7 (July 1902): 479–486. The article was also published as a small pamphlet under the same title in 1902. Further citations will be documented parenthetically as JR, followed by the page number.
- 49 In 1856, Doré produced a series of twelve woodcuts that depicted the history of the wandering Jew: the first woodcut grounds the myth in the New Testament, with Jesus punishing Ahasverus, the Jewish cobbler, to wander until Judgment Day. In the last woodcut, the wandering Jew is saved when he confesses his belief in Christ. In Doré's representation, the wandering Jew not only walks on land but also walks across the oceans. At first sight, Richard Wagner's *Fliegender Holländer* appears to be a counter-example since the protagonist is a seafaring Jew; however, the opera is essentially a reinscription of the myth of the wandering Jew, condemned to sail the seas until the end of time and, hence, far from a self-determined pioneer on a voyage of discovery or conquest.
- 50 Cf. Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*, trans. Steven Rendall (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 1997).
- 51 Georges Van Den Abbeele, *Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1992), xv.
- 52 Paul Gilroy's important work, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), shows how the ship, as both an historical reality and literary metaphor, structures the dialectical underside of modernity. He argues that "the ship is the first of the novel chronotopes . . . to rethink modernity via the history of the black Atlantic and the African diaspora into the Western hemisphere" (17).
- 53 For an assessment of this dialectic, see David Sorkin, "Emancipation and Assimilation: Two Concepts and Their Application to German-Jewish History," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 35 (1990): 17–33; and Amos Funkenstein, "Dialectics of Assimilation," *Jewish Social Studies* 1.2 (Winter 1995): 1–14.
- 54 Werner Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig: Verlag Von Duncker and Humbolt, 1911). For a critical assessment of Sombart's anti-Semitism, see: Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Werner Sombart's *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*—An Analysis of its Ideological Premises," in: *Publications of the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* XXI (1976): 87–107.
- 55 The anonymously authored reviews appeared in the "Nachrichten" (news) section of *Die Welt*: "Die Bedeutung der Juden für das moderne Wirtschaftsleben," vol. 47 (November 19, 1909): 1040–1041; "Die Befähigung der Juden zum Kapitalismus," vol. 49 (December 3, 1909): 1087–1088; "Judaismus und Kapitalismus," vol. 50 (December 10, 1909): 1113–1114. Further citations will be given parenthetically as the title, followed by the page number. Mitchell Hart briefly discusses these lectures in his *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 208. For a more extensive discussion of Sombart and his Jewish reception, see Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economies and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), esp. 164–173.
- 56 Interestingly, *Der Schild*, the post-World War I periodical dedicated to German-Jewish military service (and a decidedly anti-Zionist organ), featured a number of extensive discussions covering the debates about whether Columbus was a Jew. In one such article, a Spanish historian is quoted as decisively proving that Columbus was a Jew. But more than that, the article maintains that "it was Jewish money that made possible Columbus's voyage, encouraged and supported

- Columbus's plans, and led to the discovery of the new world." "War Columbus jüdischer Abkunft!" *Der Schild*, no. 20 (August 21, 1925). Indeed, the centrality of voyages of discovery and conquest to muscular Judaism and modern Jewish identity was not limited to the Zionist imaginary, something that we will see in more detail in Chapter 6.
- 57 This is essentially the argument that Yuri Slezkine has made in his celebrated book, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). Jews are the most modern of people precisely because they embody the traits necessary for thriving in the modern world: mobility, adaptability, flexibility, and intellectual agility. To the extent that we are modern, we are all, to varying degrees, Jews. Hence, the modern age is essentially the Jewish age.
- 58 Willy Bambus, for example, published his travelogue, *Palästina: Land und Leute*, in 1898 (Berlin) and Adolf Friedeman published his "pictures of travel" (which included a number of etchings by Hermann Struck) in 1904: *Reisebilder aus Palästina* (Berlin). By the end of the first decade, scores of travel guides to Palestine had been published, with one of the most famous being Davis Trietsch's *Bilder aus Palästina* (Berlin: Orient Verlag, 1911), which I will discuss below. For a good study of the genre of German-Jewish travel writing about Palestine, see Wolf Kaiser, *Palästina—Erez Israel: Deutschsprachige Reisebeschreibungen jüdischer Autoren von der Jahrhundertwende bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1992).
- 59 Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher: Zionistisches Tagebuch, 1895–1899*, Alex Bein, ed. vols. 2–3 (Berlin: Propyläen, 1983). Here, 2: 655. All further references to Herzl's letters and diaries will be documented parenthetically as T, followed by the volume and page number.
- 60 Moses Hess, *Rom und Jerusalem: Die letzte Nationalitätsfrage. Briefe und Noten* (Leipzig: M. W. Kaufmann, 1899). Here, 77 and 79. Said also quotes Hess in his article, "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," 66–67.
- 61 Hess, *Rom und Jerusalem*, xiv.
- 62 Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, in *Zionistische Schriften*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Hozaah Ivrit, 1934).
- 63 Herzl, "Jews as Pioneer People," in: *Zionist Writings*, trans. Harry Zohn, vol. 2 (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), 72.
- 64 Cf. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).
- 65 Milly Heyd also discusses this phenomenon, particularly with respect to Lilien's representations of Herzl, in her article, "Lilien: Between Herzl and Ahasver," in: *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*, eds Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press), 279.
- 66 *Palaestina*, vol. 2 (January 1903), 49.
- 67 *Palaestina*, vol. 1 (January 1902), 38.
- 68 Louis Brisch, Franz Oppenheimer, and Davis Trietsch, "Der Prospekt der 'Juedischen Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft,'" *Palaestina* (January 1903): 52–57. Here, 54.
- 69 Otto Warburg, "Palästina als Kolonisationsgebiet," *Altneuland* (January 1904): 3–13. Here, 13.
- 70 Davis Trietsch, *Bilder aus Palaestina*, abbreviated hereafter as BP. Also, Davis Trietsch, *Juedische Emigration und Kolonisation* (Berlin: Orient Verlag, 1917). Although not published until 1917, the latter book was written, according to Trietsch's preface, five years earlier, in 1912.
- 71 Trietsch, *Juedische Emigration und Kolonisation*, 37–38 and 41.
- 72 Depictions of the muscular Jewish farmer tilling the ground are the most culturally redundant trope of the "muscle Jew" in Israel. For a good overview of this trope

- in the visual culture of Palestine and Israel, see: *Die neuen Hebräer: 100 Jahre Kunst in Israel*, Doreet LeVitte Harten and Yigal Zalmona, eds. (Berlin: Nicolai Verlag, 2005), esp. 200–209. Also see, Eric Zakim, *To Build and Be Built: Landscape, Literature, and the Construction of Zionist Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). Significantly, this “Jewish” trope of progress stands in diametrical opposition to the depictions of the Arab world as backwards-facing, anti-modernist, and stagnant. Decades later, this assessment would continue to inform anthropological judgments of Arabs, such those in Raphael Patai’s famous book, *The Arab Mind* (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002 [1973]). According to the judgment of a Muslim author cited by Patai: Arab humanity “belongs to the ‘abject, frustrated, ignorant, weak’ type, and not to the other type of humanity, which is ‘progress-minded, successful, knowledgeable, and strong’” (267). He concludes his chapter on “Arab stagnation” with the question of whether “a new Arab man” will emerge who has “[shaken] off the last vestiges of Arab stagnation and [will] take an honored place in the comity of nations of the modern world” (283). Through the embrace of the Western world of progress, nationality, and modernization, muscular Judaism and the muscle Jew are the implicit models for Arab self-transformation.
- 73 Davis Trietsch, *Juedische Emigration und Kolonisation*, 45.
- 74 S. Y. Agnon, *Only Yesterday*, trans. Barbara Harshav (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3. The trope of the pioneer arriving from the sea appears in countless works of literature and film, perhaps most emblematically articulated by Moshe Shamir who declares that his hero, Elik, “was born from the sea.” For a discussion of the seafaring Zionist Jew in Israeli cinema, see Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1989). For a timely reassessment of this trope, see Hannan Hever, “We Have not Arrived from the Sea: A Mizrahi Literary Geography.” For a history of the Sabra Jew, see Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew*, trans. Haim Watzman (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).
- 75 Hannan Hever, “We Have not Arrived from the Sea: A Mizrahi Literary Geography,” 34.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 41.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 36.
- 78 S. Y. Agnon, *Only Yesterday*, 21. Hever, however, reads this passage as an example of the sea as a means of passage to the territory. It is certainly that, but it is also a reference back to the idea of Europe and, hence, contributes to the very hegemony that he sees in contemporary Israel.

## 6 SOLDIERS OF REGENERATION

- 1 For a discussion of these stereotypes, see Klaus Hödl, *Die Pathologisierung des jüdischen Körpers* (Vienna: Picus Verlag, 1997), esp. 168–177, and Sander Gilman, *The Jew’s Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991). Also, see John Efron’s *Medicine and the German Jews: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), Ch. 4, “The Jewish Body Degenerate?”
- 2 Daniel Boyarin will celebrate this “unheroic conduct” as an indicator of a uniquely Jewish, “soft” manliness, which he sees to stand in contradistinction to the “macho” heroism of the warrior. Cf. *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).
- 3 “Mauschel” is a variant of the Yiddish word for “Moses” and is used here in a pejorative sense to refer collectively to hapless, Yiddish-speaking Jews. See my discussion in Chapter 2.

- 4 The poem and illustration are reprinted in Eduard Fuchs, *Die Juden in der Karikatur* (Munich: Verlag Albert Langen, 1921), 37.
- 5 Reprinted in Eduard Fuchs, *Die Juden in der Karikatur*, 93.
- 6 Quoted in Ludwig Geiger, *Die deutschen Juden und der Krieg* (Berlin: C. U. Schwetschke, 1915).
- 7 The full edict was republished in *Sulamith*, the first German-language journal aimed at a Jewish readership and the central organ of Jewish emancipation in Prussia, under the title: “Bürgerliche Verbesserung der Israeliten im Königreich Preußen” (1812), 54–63. An English translation of a portion of the “Edict of Emancipation” appears in: *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, eds Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 141–142. Here, 142.
- 8 For more on the history of Jewish military service in Prussia, see Horst Fischer, *Judentum, Staat und Heer in Preussen im frühen 19. Jahrhundert. Zur Geschichte der staatlichen Judenpolitik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1968), and Erik Lindner, *Patriotismus deutscher Juden von der napoleonischen Ära bis zum Kaiserreich: Zwischen korporativem Loyalismus und individueller deutsch-jüdischer Identität* (Frankfurt a. M: Peter Lang, 1998).
- 9 Quoted in Lindner, *Patriotismus deutscher Juden von der napoleonischen Ära bis zum Kaiserreich*, 311.
- 10 Cf. Geiger, *Deutschen Juden und der Krieg*, 52; Rolf Vogel, *Ein Stück von uns* (Mainz: v. Hase und Koehler, 1977), 35–6.
- 11 H. Naudh [J. Nordmann], *Israel im Heere* (Berlin: Otto Heutze Verlag, 1879). Citations will be documented parenthetically.
- 12 Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
- 13 Rathenau published the original essay pseudonymously under the name Walter Hartenau: “Höre, Israel!” *Zukunft* 18 (March 16, 1897): 454–462. A portion of the essay is translated by J. Hessing and appears in *The Jew in the Modern World*, 267–268. I provided my own translation with reference to Hessing’s.
- 14 Balduin Groller, “Die körperliche Minderwertigkeit der Juden,” *Die Welt* 16 (April 19, 1901): 3–5. All further citations will be documented parenthetically.
- 15 Karl Jeremias, “Die Fragen der körperlichen, geistigen und wirtschaftlichen Hebung der Juden: Die körperliche Minderwertigkeit der Juden,” *Die Welt* 18 (May 3, 1901): 3–5. All further citations will be documented parenthetically.
- 16 For an extensive discussion of Jewish military might and violence in antiquity, see Warren Rosenberg, *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), esp. Ch. 2.
- 17 See the discussion by Moshe Zimmerman, “Jewish Nationalism and Zionism in German-Jewish Students’ Organizations,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 27 (1982): 129–153, and Keith H. Pickus, *Constructing Modern Identities: Jewish University Students in Germany, 1815–1914* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 104–110.
- 18 For more on Loewe and the context of Jewish ethnic identity in this period, see David A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost and West* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998).
- 19 This is a quote from the Leipzig chapter of the Vereinigung Jüdischer Studenten from around 1900. Quoted in Pickus, *Constructing Modern Identities: Jewish University Students in Germany, 1815–1915*, 108.
- 20 The speech was originally delivered in 1905 at the Berlin Zionist Association and the title certainly plays off of Herzl’s utopian novel, *Altneuland*. Franz Oppenheimer, “Die alte und neue Makkabäer,” *Jüdische Rundschau* 35 (August 28, 1914), 353–355. Further citations will be documented parenthetically.

- 21 Bialik's 1903 poem, "The City of Slaughter," is perhaps the most famous indictment of Jewish passivity in the face of the pogrom in Kishinev. The poem ends with the following lines, aimed at the Jews themselves: "The scurrying of roaches was their flight; / They died like dogs, and they were dead!"
- 22 The reference is to an anti-Semitic phrase made famous by Heinrich von Treitschke who believed that Germany was being "invaded year after year by multitudes of assiduous pants-selling youths from the inexhaustible cradle of Poland, whose children and grand-children are to be the future rulers of Germany's exchanges and Germany's press." "A Word About Our Jewry" (1880), reprinted in: *The Jew in the Modern World*, 343.
- 23 Heinrich Loewe, "Feinde Ringsum!" *Jüdische Rundschau* 32 (August 7, 1914), 343–344. Further citations will be documented parenthetically.
- 24 The classic study to analyze this phenomenon is Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893–1914* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1975).
- 25 Michael Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7.
- 26 Benjamin Segel, "Der Krieg als Lehrmeister," *Ost und West* 9–12 (September–December 1914): 624–640. Further citations will be documented parenthetically. For a good discussion of Segel, see David A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities*, 145–158.
- 27 Cf. *K.C. Blätter: Monatsschrift der im Kartell-Convent vereinigten Korporationen* (November–December 1914).
- 28 The K.C. was preceded by the landmark establishment of an Association of Jewish Students at Breslau in 1886. In their manifesto, the regeneration of the Jewish body played a critical role in fighting both anti-Semitism and Jewish self-hatred. To quote from the manifesto:

Physical training has been since the time of the ancient Greeks the most powerful impulse toward forming body and mind. We saw the results in Jahn's and Friesen's training in the Wars of Liberation. We, however, have been barred from these exercises. Our association is to be, first of all, a place for physical training of every kind: gymnastics, fencing, rowing, and swimming. We have to fight with all our energy against the odium of cowardice and weakness which is cast on us. We want to show that every member of our association is equal to every Christian fellow-student in any physical exercise and chivalry. Physical strength and agility will increase self-confidence and self-respect, and in the future nobody will be ashamed of being a Jew.

Significantly, this manifesto precedes Nordau's call for muscular Judaism by more than a decade. Quoted in Adolph Asch and Johanna Philippson, "Self-Defence at the Turn of the Century: The Emergence of the K.C." *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 3 (1958): 122–139. Here, 124.

- 29 The literature on the student movement in Imperial Germany is quite extensive. For an overview, see Konrad Jarausch, *Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982). For Jewish student associations in particular, see Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*; Pickus, *Constructing Modern Identities*; Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Moshe Zimmerman, "Jewish Nationalism and Zionism in German-Jewish Students' Organizations." For more on dueling and honor, see Kevin McAleer, *Dueling: The Cult of Honor in Fin-de-Siècle Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University

- Press, 1994), and Ute Frevert, *Ehrenmänner: Das Duell in der Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991).
- 30 The journal carried this quote on every issue from October 1, 1910, onwards.
- 31 As we will see below, there is an intimately dialectical connection between warfare and masculinity in World War I. On the one hand, trench warfare was imagined by certain German nationalist proponents, such as Ernst Jünger, to give birth to new, technologically steeled men “loaded with overflowing manliness.” *Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis*, in: *Sämtliche Werke: Essays I, Betrachtungen zur Zeit*, vol. 7 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), 19. On the other hand, the war destroyed men and masculinity, creating what Paul Lerner has called “modern male hysteria.” *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 249. For a broad treatment of the topos of the military, war, and masculinity, see the essays in: Ute Frevert, ed., *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1997), esp. Frevert’s essay, “Das Militär als ‘Schule der Männlichkeit’: Erwartungen, Angebote, Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert,” 145–173. Also, see Gregory A. Caplan, “Germanising the Jewish Male: Military Masculinity as the Last Stage of Acculturation,” in: *Towards Normality? Assimilation and Modern German Jewry*, eds Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter, (Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 159–84.
- 32 See the essays in Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker, eds, *Deutsches Judentum im Krieg und Revolution, 1916–1923* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971); George Mosse, “The Jews and the German War Experience, 1914–1918,” *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 21* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1977); Paul Mendes-Flohr, “The Kriegserlebnis and Jewish Consciousness,” in: *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik / Jews in the Weimar Republic*, eds Wolfgang Benz, Arnold Paucker, and Peter Pulzer (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1998), 225–237.
- 33 Ludwig Geiger, “Der Krieg und die Juden,” *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* 34 (August 21, 1914): 297–298. Here, 298.
- 34 István Deán, “Jewish Soldiers in Austro-Hungarian Society,” *Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 34* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1990), 21.
- 35 For a thorough discussion of the “Jew Count,” see Werner T. Angress, “The German Army’s ‘Judenzählung’ of 1916: Genesis—Consequences—Significance,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (London: Leo Baeck Institute, 1978), 117–137.
- 36 Martin Buber, “Judenzählung,” *Der Jude* (November 1916): 564.
- 37 Felix Theilhaber, *Die Juden im Weltkrieg: Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verhältnisse für Deutschland* (Berlin: 1916) and Jacob Segall, *Die deutsche Juden als Soldaten im Kriege 1914–1918: Eine statistische Studie* (Berlin: 1921).
- 38 Cited in Rolf Vogel, *Ein Stück von uns*, 150.
- 39 Otto Armin, *Juden im Heere* (1919). Quotations will be documented parenthetically.
- 40 Paragraph 1 of the *Deutsche Schutz- und Trutzbund*, quoted in: Ulrich Dunker, *Der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten 1919–1938* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1977), 42.
- 41 Ulrich Dunker, *Der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten 1919–1938*, 32–33.
- 42 Leo Löwenstein, “Erster Aufruf zur Gründung des Reichsbundes jüdischer Frontsoldaten” (January 1919) reprinted in *Der Schild* (July 5, 1929): 221. Further quotations are documented parenthetically.
- 43 For the most thorough discussion of the history of the RjF, see Gregory Caplan’s PhD dissertation, “Wicked Sons, German Heroes: Jewish Soldiers, Veterans, and Memories of World War I in Germany” (Georgetown University, Washington DC, 2001).



- 44 Walter Friedländer, "Unsere Leibesübungen: eine Volks-Hygiene," *Der Schild* 3 (February 1, 1925): 54.
- 45 Friedländer, "Unsere Leibesübungen: eine Volks-Hygiene," *Der Schild*, 54.
- 46 See, for example, Julius Heilbrunn, "Militärische und turnerische Erziehung," *Jüdische Turnzeitung* 6 (1903): 102.
- 47 "Die hebräische Kommando," *Jüdische Turnzeitung* 11/12 (1907): 186.
- 48 Gideon Reuveni, "Sports and the Militarization of Jewish Society," in: *Emancipation through Muscles*, eds Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 44–61.
- 49 Johanna Thomaschewsky, "Das hebräische Turnkommando," *Jüdische Turn- und Sportzeitung* 1 (1919): 15.
- 50 Friedländer, "Unsere Leibesübungen: eine Volks-Hygiene," *Der Schild* 3 (February 1, 1925): 55.
- 51 "Jüdische Frauen!," *Der Schild* 10 (October 1922), n.p.
- 52 "Was will der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten?" (1924), advertisement reprinted in Dunker, *Der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten 1919–1938*, 209.
- 53 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies: Volume 2, Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, trans. Erica Carter and Chris Turner (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 88.
- 54 For a classic analysis, see Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, esp. 7–16.
- 55 George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 155. Further citations will be documented parenthetically.
- 56 In his famous essay, "The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry," Mosse argues that all of these groups shared a common affinity for German Volkish thought and the regeneration of the body. The Volkish-oriented German Youth Movement, the Volkish-oriented Jewish Youth Movement, the Zionists, and the war veterans of the *Reichsbund* were all:
- battling against the Jewish stereotype, and when this battle was elevated to an article of national faith, the battle took on added impetus. . . . Here we can see clearly the common Volkish base which the assimilationist groups shared with the young Zionists, if to a different purpose. The ideal Jew was aristocratic, rooted in the genuineness of the landscape, anti-urban, soldierly, and bound to his fellows by the Bund of a shared spiritual experience. Moreover, he was tough, sinewy, and well formed in body. This emphasis on physical form was a further feature of the German movement.
- Germans and Jews: The Right, The Left, and the Search for a 'Third Force' in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), 109.
- 57 Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 109 and 115.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 120.
- 59 Felix Theilhaber, *Jüdische Flieger im Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Verlag der Schild, 1924). A significantly smaller first edition was published in 1919: *Jüdischer Flieger im Krieg: Ein Blatt der Erinnerung* (Berlin: Louis Lamm Verlag, 1919). All citations will be documented parenthetically as JF, followed by the page number to the 1924 edition.
- 60 For a discussion of the logic of the prosthesis in interwar European art, see Hal Foster, "Prosthetic Gods," *Modernism/Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 5–38, and Hal Foster, "Armor Fou," *October* 56 (Spring 1991): 64–97. For a path-breaking treatment of the machine-body complex, see Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
- 61 Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in: *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books), 84.

- 62 From its beginnings at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich under the creative direction of Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings, Dada was a pointedly political anti-art, anti-war movement. This is perhaps nowhere clearer than in the First International Dada Fair of 1920 staged in Berlin. In addition to hanging a German soldier doll with a pig mask on his face from the ceiling, George Grosz, John Heartfield, and Otto Dix displayed some of their most stringent anti-war works, which depicted war veterans with horrendous injuries and deformations. The Fair was promptly shut down by the German authorities.
- 63 Max Ernst, *Max Ernst: Beyond Painting* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1948), 29.
- 64 For a brief discussion of the airplane vis-à-vis modern notions of temporality and spatiality, cf. Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), esp. 242–247.
- 65 Kamensky, *Put' entusiasta*. Quoted in Robert Wohl, *A Passion for Flying: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1908–1918* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 145.
- 66 Some of the key studies of futurism, war, and aviation are: Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Movement: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "Propeller Talk," *Modernism/Modernity* 1.3 (1994): 153–178; Bruno Mantura, Patrizia Rosazza-Ferraris, Livia Velani, eds, *Futurism in Flight: "Aeropittura" Paintings and Sculptures of Man's Conquest of Space (1913–1945)* (Rome: De Luca Edizioni d'Arte, 1990).
- 67 Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (February 1909), in: *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. R. W. Flint (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1972), 42, 43.
- 68 Schnapp, "Propeller Talk," 156. The most comprehensive history of the 1909 air show is Peter Demetz, *The Air Show at Brescia, 1909* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002).
- 69 Marinetti, "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," in: *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. R. W. Flint, 88. Further citations will be documented parenthetically.
- 70 Quoted in Schnapp, "Propeller Talk," 154.
- 71 For a wide-ranging and fascinating cultural history of the "human machine," see Anson Rabinbach's *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).
- 72 Franz Kafka, "The Aeroplanes at Brescia," trans. G. Humphreys Roberts, in: *The Metamorphosis, The Penal Colony and other Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 306. Translation modified.
- 73 Ernst Jünger, *Copse 125: A Chronicle from the Trench Warfare of 1918*, trans. Basil Creighton (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), 21. Further quotations will be documented parenthetically, as *Copse 125* followed by the page number.
- 74 Walter Benjamin, "Theories of German Fascism: On the Collection of Essays *Krieg und Krieger*, edited by Ernst Jünger" (1930), trans. Jerolf Wikoff. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2: 1927–1934, Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, eds (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999), 312–321. Here, 314.
- 75 For example, Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), or Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* (1929).
- 76 For a comparative discussion of the cultural and social implications of the mutilated male body, see: Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914–1939* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); Joanna Burke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996); Bernd Hüppauf,

- “Langemarck, Verdun, and the Myth of a New Man in Germany after the First World War,” *War and Society* 6 (1988): 70–101.
- 77 See, for example, Freud’s classic study of the repetition compulsion in shell-shocked veterans: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). For an anti-war photo book of bodily injuries suffered by war veterans, see Ernst Friedrich’s *Krieg dem Kriege* (1924).
- 78 Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 7.
- 79 Ernst Toller, “Hinkemann” (1922), in: *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1961), 167–219. Here, 172. Further citations will be documented parenthetically.
- 80 Ernst Jünger, *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (1922), in: *Sämtliche Werke: Essays I, Betrachtungen zur Zeit*.
- 81 The original reads: “Der Krieg, aller Dinge Vater, ist auch der unsere; er hat uns gehämmert, gemeißelt und gehärtet zu dem, was wir sind. . . . Nicht nur unser Vater ist der Krieg, auch unser Sohn. Wir haben ihn gezeugt und er uns” (11–12). In English, the last sentence can be translated to eliminate all reference to the German gendering: “We gave birth to it, and it to us.” Although the pronouns “er” and “ihn” probably refer to the war, the slippage between the father, the son, and the war is explicitly part of Jünger’s argument insofar as the masculinity of the war is to be equated with that of both forefathers and progeny. In this regard, the transmittal of martial militancy across the generations also accords with the Zionist argument given by Heinrich Loewe in 1908.
- 82 For more on Jünger and masculinity, see my article, “The End of Sex and the Last Man: On the Weimar Utopia of Ernst Jünger’s ‘Worker,’” in *Qui Parle* 13.1 (Winter 2001): 103–136.
- 83 Ernst Jünger, “Vorwort” to *Luftfahrt ist Not* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Andermann, 1933), 6–10. Here, 10. The first edition came out in 1928 and was expanded and reissued in 1933. The quote, “Flying is Necessary,” is from Heinrich Himmler and is a play on the double meaning of “Not” as “necessity” and “danger.” Further citations will be documented parenthetically as LN, followed by the page number.
- 84 Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt* (1932), in: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 8 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 41.
- 85 During the years in which he conceived of *Der Arbeiter*, Jünger was also writing extensively about photography and contributed to the editing and publication of at least five photograph anthologies documenting the visual “reality” of his time. In 1930, he contributed six short essays, including a paradigmatic statement on the relationship between war and photography, to a collection called *Das Antlitz des Weltkrieges: Fronterlebnisse deutscher Soldaten* (The Face of World War: Front Experiences of German Soldiers); in 1931, he contributed to the editing of two photo collections: *Hier spricht der Feind: Kriegerlebnisse unserer Gegner* (The Enemy Speaks Here: War Experiences of Our Opponents) and *Der gefährliche Augenblick* (The Dangerous Moment), the latter of which documented technological catastrophes, such as crashing planes and automobiles at the moment of impact; in 1933, he published a photo essay entitled *Die veränderte Welt: Eine Bilderfibel unserer Zeit* (The Transformed World: A Picture Guide to Our Time) and reissued a photo anthology of airplanes and the mechanics of flying, *Luftfahrt ist Not* (Flying is Necessary).
- 86 Following Germany’s defeat, severe restrictions were placed on motorized aircraft. In defiance of these restrictions, annual gliding competitions in the mountainous Wasserkuppe took place starting in 1920. With speed and endurance records smashed every year, the rallies quickly became “irrepressibly patriotic” and fostered a revival of German nationalism. For a fascinating discussion of this phenomenon,

- see Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), Ch. 3. Here, 109.
- 87 Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers*, 64.
- 88 “Die Juden als Soldaten,” *Der Schild* 5 (March 1, 1925): 93.
- 89 “Neues von der Segelfluggruppe des RjF,” *Der Schild* 28 (October 16, 1925): 386.
- 90 Leo Löwenstein, “Unsere Segelflieger: Die Alten und die Jungen,” *Der Schild* 29 (July 19, 1929): 233–234.
- 91 See Fritzsche’s *A Nation of Flyers* for a comprehensive bibliography.
- 92 Willi Hackenberger, *Deutschlands Eroberung der Luft* (Siegen: Verlag Herman Montanus, 1915).
- 93 Marjorie Perloff, “The Great War and the European Avant-garde,” in: *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*, ed. Vincent Sherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 146.
- 94 Ernst Jünger, “On Danger” (1931), trans. and reprinted in: *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 369–372. Here, 369.
- 95 “Neues von der Segelfluggruppe des RjF,” *Der Schild* 28 (October 16, 1925): 386.
- 96 “Der Luft übers Weltmeer: Chamberlins und Levines Flug New York-Kottbus,” *Der Schild* 22/23 (June 14, 1927).
- 97 “The New Jewish Record,” *Der Tog* (June 7, 1927). Translated and viewed on the Yiddish Radio Project website: <http://www.yiddishradioproject.org/exhibits/levine>, accessed June 1, 2006. I thank Erica Scheinberg for the kind reference.
- 98 Songs and lyrics accessed from the Yiddish Radio Project website, June 1, 2006.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

- 1 Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).



# INDEX

Numbers in **bold** type indicate illustrations.

- Abraham (Bible), 41–3, 148, 166  
Adorno, Theodor, 224n35  
aesthetic education: Buber on, 21,  
71–87, 93–4; state formation and, 21,  
71–87, 93–4, 237n15, 240–1n52  
aesthetic state, 71–87, 240–1n52  
aesthetics of regeneration, 3, 13, 14, 18,  
19, 20–1, 22, 65–105  
aggressiveness, violence and, xvii, xxiv,  
219nn7–8  
Agnon, S. Y., 185, 186, 258n74, 258n78  
Ahasverus (wandering Jew), myth of,  
77, 79, 81, 256n49  
“Alte und neue Makkabäer” (Old and  
New Maccabees) (Oppenheimer),  
193–4, 259n20  
*Altneuland* (Old-new Land), 4, **5**, 5  
8, 157, 159, 172–6, 180;  
colonialism and, 10–11, 22, 178;  
Herzl and, 58, 157, 172–5,  
180–2, 259n20  
anatomy-politics: in *Die Jüdische  
Turnzeitung*, 120–39; of the human  
body, 18, 108–10  
Antiochus IV, King, 65, 67  
anti-Semitism, 1; Chamberlain and, 44,  
54, 143, 148, 234n64; civilization and,  
10–11, 224n35; the Jewish question  
and, 28–9, 229n12; *Rembrandt als  
Erzieher* and, 44, 233n63; soldiers  
and, 187–91, 198–203; stereotypes of  
Jews and, 2, 4, **6**, 7–9, 12, 24, 187–91,  
201–3, 222n13; Wagner and, 21, 71,  
75–7, 79, 143, 148; Zionism and, 19,  
34, 53–8; *see also* Christian Social  
Party  
Arabs, Jews and, 159–61, 174, 179–82,  
185–6, 254n19, 257–8n72  
*Archiv für Rassen- und  
Gesellschaftsbiologie* journal, 32  
*À rebours* (Against Nature) (Huysmans),  
50, 88  
Armin, Otto, 199  
Arndt, Georg, 106, 135  
art, 3–12, **5–6**, 20, 21, 223n26; Buber on,  
13, 21, 65, 68–75, 77–88, 91, 93–4,  
97, 100, 102, 237n7; decadence and,  
21, 71, 87–105; degeneracy and, 15,  
21, 35, 37, 46, 48–53, 61, 71, 234n73;  
Feivel on, 65, 94, 97, 101–3, 105;  
Jewish themes in, 87–9; religion and,  
41–3; science and, 36–46, 51, 64;  
*see also* national art, Jewish; *specific  
artists*  
*The Artless Jew* (Bland), 75, 238n28  
Aryanism, 29–32, 32, 44  
Asch, Sholem, 228n66  
Aschheim, Steven, 4, 15, 225–6n43  
Association for Jewish Statistics,  
109  
athletes, 3, 191, 222n15; *see also*  
gymnastic(s)  
Auerbach, Elias, 34, 139, 160–1, 175,  
183–4, 192  
“Auswanderung nach Palästina”  
(Emigration to Palestine), 4, **6**, 7–9

- “Autumn, The Grapes from the Promised Land” (Poussin), 7–8  
 aviators, 201, 203–16, **210, 211, 213, 214**, 264n83, 264–5nn85–6
- Bar Kochba: gymnastics association, 3, 106, 122, 134, 182–4, 247n62;  
 heroism and, 2–3, 59, 61, 190, 222n13
- Bäumer, Gertrud, 130–1, 249nn78–9
- Beardsley, Aubrey, 88, 102, 243n84
- “Begriffsgeschichte” (conceptual history), 19–20
- Bellmer, Hans, 202–3
- Ben-Gurion, David, 163, 185
- Benjamin, Walter, 204, 206, 240–1n52
- Berdichevsky, Micah Yosef, 228n66, 238n19
- Bergmann, Hugo, 254n19
- Berkowitz, Michael, 13, 195, 225–6n43, 238n26, 242n73
- Berman, Russell, 157
- Bernheimer, Charles, 91
- Bey, Reschid (*Altneland* character), 180, 181
- Bialik, Haim Nahman, 97, 194, 228n66, 260n21
- Bible, 113, 219n7, 244n15
- Bilder aus Palaestina* (Pictures from Palestine) (Trietsch), 22, 180, **181–4**, 185, 257n58
- Bildung* (education): *Erziehung* and, 42–3, 83–4, 233nn61–2; *Haskala*, Enlightenment and, 28; Koselleck on, 240n51; morality, gymnastics and, 114; *Verbesserung* and, 58
- Bildungsroman*, 160, 175
- Bildverbot* (Second Commandment forbidding images), 71, 237n12
- bio-politics, 16–17, 120; bio-power and, 109–13; Foucault on, 107–8, 118, 123
- bio-power, 21; bio-politics and, 109–13; Foucault on, 13, 18, 21, 109–12, 143, 244n5; sexuality and, 13, 18, 109–12, 139–40, 143, 153–4; state formation and, 109–13, 140, 143, 152–4
- Bismarck, Otto von, 36, 42, 134
- Blackbourn, David, 36, 227n55
- Bland, Kalman, 75, 238n28
- “Blau-Weiss” (Blue-White), 136
- Blériot, Louis, 205–6
- blood: race science and, 28–9, 117, 150–1; soil, race and nation in Volkish thought, 73–5, 238n20, 238n26
- Blüher, Hans, xxii–xxiii, 126, 132, 134, 136–8, 220n14
- Blum, Richard, 106, 122, 125, 129
- Blut und Boden* ideology, 44, 101, 233n63
- Bodenheimer, Max, 122, 158
- body, mind and, 123, 248n69
- body and nation, cultivating, 112–20
- body culture, 3–4, 14; *see also Die Jüdische Turnzeitung; Körperkultur*
- body politics, xxiii, xxiv, 12–13, 27, 70, 217, 225–6n43
- body reform movements, 32–4, 117–20, 132, 134–9, 231n36
- Böhm, Adolf, 13
- Börne, Ludwig, 76–7
- Boyarin, Daniel, xxiii–xxiv, 218; on sexuality, 7, 226n46; on “unheroic conduct,” xxiv, 258n2; on Zionism, 160, 235n82
- Breines, Paul, xvii, xix, 218
- Brenner, David A., 226n43
- Brenner, Yosef Haim, 228n66
- Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man) (Schiller), 42–3, 73, 82
- Brothers Grimm, 9
- Buber, Martin, 34; on aesthetic education, 21, 71–87, 93–4; on art, 13, 21, 65, 68–75, 77–88, 91, 93–4, 97, 100, 102, 237n7; on Jew counts, 198; Schiller and, 21, 71, 73, 94
- Calinescu, Matei, 92–3
- capitalism, 28, 76, 171–2, 229n12
- Chamberlain, Houston Stewart: on anti-Semitism, 44, 54, 143, 148, 234n64; *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (*Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*), 9–10, 30, 222n13; Herder and, 10, 147, 167
- Chamberlin, Clarence, 215–16

- Charcot, Jean-Martin, 88, 128  
 Christian Democrat Party, 36  
 Christians, 1; *see also* muscular  
   Christianity movement; on eternal  
   or wandering Jew, 77, 79, 81, 168;  
   Hegel on, 164, 166; Jews and, 24–5,  
   28, 53–4, 149–50  
 Christian Social Party, 221n8, 223n20  
 circumcision, 3, 151, 222n15  
 civilization, anti-Semitism and, 10–11,  
 224n35  
 civil rights, Jewish, 24–5, 28, 188–9,  
 229n4, 229n7  
 colonialism, xxiii, 3–4, 13, 20;  
   *Altneuland* and, 10–11, 22, 178;  
   Nossig on, 159–60, 253–4nn14–15;  
   Palestine and, 4, 10–11, 19, 22, 128,  
   138–9, 155–63, 171–86, 195, 252n5;  
   regeneration and, 14, 20, 157, 161–2;  
   Ruppin and, 158, 161–2; seafaring  
   and, 10, 22, 155–86, 258n74, 258n78;  
   Trietsch and, 22, 89, 158, 163,  
   175–85  
 “The Colonization of Palestine”  
   (Sandler), 138  
 colonizer, subaltern and, 156  
 Columbus, Christopher, 167, 169, 171,  
 256n56  
 Conrad, Joseph, 156, 168  
 conscription, of Jews, 189  
 corporeal reform, 16, 21, 34; *see also*  
   gymnastic(s)  
 corporeal regeneration, 1–3, 10, 14, 26,  
 57, 74, 106, 113, 120, 122–3, 191  
 crisis of 1890s, Nordau, Langbehn and,  
 34–46, 51, 53, 63–4, 232–3n55  
 Dadaism, 204–5, 263n62  
 Damm, Alfred, 32–3, 52, 231n36  
 Darwinism: Haeckel on, 230–30n23;  
   race science and, 28–32, 52, 229n14;  
   social, 2, 4, 30, 32, 37–8, 48, 51–3, 60,  
   63, 64, 112, 117, 130, 162, 230n23,  
   250–1n98  
 decadence, 2, 4, 221n11; art and, 21,  
 71, 87–105; of novels, 49–51, 61;  
 symbolism and, 87, 88, 90,  
 241n55  
 decisionism, 37, 52, 232–3n55  
 degeneracy, 4, 11, 12, 232n47; art and,  
 15, 21, 35, 37, 46, 48–53, 61, 71,  
 234n73; Efron on, 225–6n43; fascism  
 and, 17, 201–3; of ghetto Jews, 72,  
 77–8; Jewish aniconism and, 21, 75,  
 77, 238n28; Morel on, 30, 47–8,  
 230n26; Nietzsche on, 35; physical  
 characteristics and, 39, 47–8, 191–2;  
 sexuality and, 35, 232n48  
 degeneration: etymology of, 47; Nordau  
 on, 15, 18, 20–1, 32, 35–64, 69, 72,  
 100, 151, 232n54; regeneration and,  
 13, 15, 17, 18–21, 24–34, 72, 93, 117,  
 228n3  
*Degeneration* (Nordau), 15, 20–1,  
 35–46, 69, 151, 232n54; true moderns  
 in, 21, 46–64; *see also* *Entartung*  
 “Der Krieg als Lehrmeister” (The War  
 as Master Teacher) (Segel), 195–6  
*Der Schild* (The Shield), 200–1, 203,  
 215, 256–7n56  
*Der Untergang der deutschen Juden*  
 (The Destruction of the German Jews)  
 (Theilhaber), 21–2, 112, 139–41,  
 148–53  
*Deutsche Schutz- und Trutzbund*  
 (Association to Protect and Shelter  
 Germany), 199  
 “Die Aufgaben des Zionismus” (The  
 Tasks of Zionism) (Nordau), 55–6  
*Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* (The Jewish  
 Gymnastics Journal), 3, 4, 14, 21,  
 58–62, 106, 120–39, 236n96;  
 anatomo-politics in, 120–39;  
 gymnastics in Palestine and, 182–4;  
 nation building, gymnastics and  
 regeneration in, 112, 113–14, 120–39,  
 236n97; Nordau’s articles in, 3,  
 58–62, **59, 62**; photographs in, **59,**  
**62, 124–7, 133**; soldiers and, 192–3,  
 200  
*Die Makkabäer* (Epstein), 65–70, **66**  
 “Die Makkabäer” (The Maccabees)  
 (Loewe), 193  
*Die Welt*, 85, 171, 191  
*Die Wiedergeburt der Völker* journal,  
 32



- discipline, 2, 12, 21, 33, 150, 201–2, 247n62; gymnastics and, 106, 114–15, 125; Nordau on, 46–8, 55–6, 60–1, 63, 68, 70, 115
- diseases, 128; hygiene and, 118, 139, 141, 145–7, 151
- Dohm, Christian Wilhelm von, 72, 187; on assimilation, 58; on intermarriage/ racial mixing, 29; on regeneration/ degeneration, 1, 24–6, 30, 34, 93, 221n3, 229n4
- Doré, Gustav, 8, 168, 256n49
- Dreyfus Affair, 1, 36, 221n8, 226n43
- Dühring, Karl Eugen, 29, 143
- Eastern-European Jews, xvii, xix, xx, 2, 4, 53, 217, 219n8; *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* on, 124–8; immigration to Germany, 149, 251–2n114; *Mauschel* and, 56–60, 235n83; in Palestine, 160
- Edelstein, Emanuel, 128–9
- Edict of Emancipation, 189, 258n7
- Edict of Tolerance, 229n4
- Efron, John, 15, 141, 152, 218, 225–6n43, 238n26
- Eger, Betti, 129–30
- Eley, Geoff, 15, 16, 36, 45, 227n55
- Enlightenment, 1; assimilation during, 58; modernity and, 15, 226n48; progress and, 26–8, 78, 91, 93, 155; science and, 39, 42, 49
- entarten* (to degenerate), 47
- “Entartete Kunst” (Degenerate Art), 52
- Entartung* (Degeneration) (Nordau), 32, 35–46, 232n54
- Epstein, Jehuda, 65–70, **66**, 73, 87, 236n1
- Ernst, Max, collage by, 204
- eroticism, Blüher on, xxii–xxiii, 132, 134, 136–8
- Erziehung* (education), 35, 42–3, 83–4, 233nn61–2
- eschatology, 91–3, 113, 242n71
- The Eternal Jew* (film), 52
- “The Eternal Jew” (Nossig), 79–81, **80**
- “Euch” (To You) (Lilien/Münchhausen), 95, **96**, 242n77
- eugenics, xxiii, 3–4, 12–14, 16; Proctor on, 231n33; race science and, xxiii, 21–2, 32, 35, 44, 52, 119–20, 139, 218; reproduction and, 131, 150–3, 249n79; *see also* racial hygiene
- explorers, 163, 167–8, 255n35; *see also* voyages of discovery and conquest
- family, xxi–xxiii, 3, 32
- fascism, xxiii, 20; blood, soil and, 238n20; degeneracy and, 17, 201–3; war and, 240–1n52
- Feiwel, Berthold, 65, 94, 97, 101–3, 105
- fertility, 3, 22; art and, 71–2, 91; of grapes, 7–8, 9, 10, 223n26; land and, 138–9; *see also* reproduction
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 112–14, 131, 244nn15–16
- Fidus (artist), 243n81
- First Zionist art exhibit of 1901, 21, 78, 87, 97
- Flatow, Alfred, 124, **127**
- Flying is Necessary* (Jünger), 208, **209**, 264n85
- Fontane, Theodor, 189
- Forth, Christopher, 226n43
- Foster, Hal, 202–3
- Foucault, Michel: on bio-politics, 107–8, 118, 123; on bio-power, 13, 18, 21, 109–12, 143, 244n5; on modernity, 15, 226n49; on sexuality, 7, 13, 18, 109–12, 153, 230n25
- France, 115, 217
- Franco-Prussian War, 115, 189
- fraternities, 114, 190, 196
- Frederick the Great, 24, 43
- French Revolution, 26–8, 82, 242n71
- Freud, Sigmund, xv, 128, 218, 264n77
- Fritzsche, Peter, 209–10
- Futurism, war and, 205, 240–1n52
- Gedenkblatt des fünften Zionisten-Kongresses* postcard (Lilien), 88, **89**
- Geiger, Ludwig, 198
- Gelber, Mark, 74, 91, 237n14, 242n75
- Genserowsky, Richard, 124, **126**
- German Youth Movement, 44, 262n56

- “Germanness,” 41, 233n59  
*Geschlecht*, 129, 207, 249n76  
*Geschlecht und Charakter* (Sex and Character) (Weininger), 54–5  
 ghetto Jews: degeneracy of, 72, 77–8; Mandelstamm on, 126–7; muscle Jews v., 60, 64, 236n98; Warburg on, 161  
 Gilman, Sander, 15, 218; on gymnastics, 225–6n43; on stereotypes, 190; on Yiddish, 235n83  
 Gobineau, Arthur Comte de, 28–30, 148  
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 74, 134, 168  
 Goltermann, Svenja, 115, 245n26  
 Graetz, Heinrich von, 71, 75, 239n31  
 Greek history, 7, 56  
 Grégoire, Abbé, 24, 27, 29, 30, 34, 58, 228n3  
 Grollier, Balduin, 191–2  
 Grunwald, Max, 34; International Hygiene Exhibition and, 112, 144–7; on seafaring, 22, 162, 168–71, 173, 175, 179, 185, 186  
 gymnastic(s): Jahn on nationalism and, 21, 113–15, 117, 126, 131–3, 189, 243n2; Jalowicz on, 33–4, 122; nationality and, 106–7, 112–20, 123–39, 243n2; morality and, 114; Nordau on, 3–4, 58–62, 108–9, 115, 136, 222n14; Palestine and, 122, 157, 182–4, **184**; of regeneration, 20, 21–2, 106–54, 225–6n43; women and, 12, 121, 129–31, **130**; *see also Die Jüdische Turnzeitung; Bildung*  
 gymnastic associations, 19, 147, 236n96; Bar Kochba, 3, 106, 122, 134, 182–4, 247n62; German v. Jewish, 125–6, 135; Jewish Gymnastics Federation and, 120–2; Zionist, 3, 114  
  
 Habermas, Jürgen, 226n48  
 Haeckel, Ernst, 230n23  
 Hall, Donald, 117, 246n40  
 Hanan, Yosef (“Yossi”) Ben, xv, **xvi**, xx, 220n15  
 Hannemann, legend of, 8  
  
 Hanukkah, 67, 237n6  
 Hart, Mitchell, 109, 256n55  
 Hashomer Hatzair youth movement, 250n92  
 Hasidism, 78, 240n40  
*Haskala*, 28  
 Hau, Michael, 16, 119–20, 231n36, 247n61  
 Hebrew, as “commando” language, 200  
 Hegel, G. W. F.: anti-Semitism and, 71; on Christians, 164, 166; history and, 10, 224n32; on world history and seafaring, 22, 162–8, 172–3, 179, 186, 255n39, 255–6n47  
 Heine, Heinrich, 57, 148, 167, 255–6n47  
 Herder, Johann Gottfried, 10, 147, 167, 190  
 heroism: Bar Kochba and, 2–3, 59, 61, 190, 222n13; exiled Jews and, 65; Maccabees and, 2–3, 22, 59, 61, 65, 190, 193–6, 198, 203; return and, 70, 95, 97; Samson, David and, 219n7; soldiers and, 190, 193–6, 198–201, 209–16; women and, 128–9  
 Herzl, Theodor, 137; *Altneuland*, 58, 157, 172–5, **176**, 180–2, 259n20; *Der Judenstaat*, 57, 172; Kaiser Wilhelm and, 10, 172, 174–5; on *Mauschel*, 56–60; Palestine and, 10, 157–60, 172–5, **176**, 186; on regeneration, 1, 34, 72, 172–6; on seafaring, 22, 173–6, 179; at Sixth Zionist Congress, 122; on solution to Jewish question, 220–1n2, 236n2; on Zionism, 2, 53, 55–8, 172–6, 221n8, 236n2  
 Hess, Moses, 251n102; on regeneration, 1, 30–1, 33, 74, 221n3, 231n29; *Rome and Jerusalem*, 30–1, 172–3, 231n29  
 heterosexuality, xxii, xxiv, 220n15  
 Hever, Hannan, 185–6  
 Hewitt, Andrew, 137  
 Heyd, Milly, 91, 241n58, 243n84, 257n65  
 Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, 117  
 hiking clubs, 126, 132, 134, 136  
 Hirschfeld, Magnus, 134  
 Hirschfelder, M., 90, 95, 97, 100

- The History of Sexuality* (Foucault), 109–12, 153
- Hodler, Ferdinand, 66–7, 236–7n4
- homosexuality: Foucault on, 7, 230n25; Hirschfeld on, 134; male-bonding and, 220n15; state and, xxiii, 7; Volkish thought and, 136–7, 202–3; Weininger on, 137, 227n58, 250n91
- “Höre, Israel!” (Hear, O Israel!) (Rathenau), 190–1
- Horkheimer, Max, 224n35
- Huysmans, J. -K., 49–51, 61, 69, 88
- hygiene, xxiii, 14, 16; diseases and, 118, 139, 141, 145–7, 151; Lingner on, 142–4, 146–7, 251n102; nationality and, 112; race science and, 12–14, 21–2, 30–2, 109, 111, 139–54; reproduction and, 118, 138–54; *see also* racial hygiene
- “Hygienic Value of Gymnastics” (Meyer), 131–2
- imperialism, xxiii, 155–6, 158, 159, 162, 185
- inbreeding, 150–2
- intermarriage, 28, 29, 140, 150–1
- International Hygiene Exhibition (1911), 112, 138, 139–54, **142, 146**
- Israel, state of, 154, 217, 235n82
- Israel Defense Forces (IDF), xix–xx
- Israel im Heere* (Israel in the Army), 190
- Israeli army, 218; Perry’s photograph of flag raising at Um Rashrash (Eilat), xvii, **xviii**, xx–xxi, xxiii; physical fitness book, xvii, xix; soldier after Six-Day War of 1967 on cover of *Life* magazine, xv, **xvi**, xvii, xx, xxiii; women in, xxi, 220n11
- Israeli War of Independence, xvii, xx
- Israels, Josef, 65, 69, 73, 78–9, 87
- “Jacob as Recruit and Jacob as Poet,” 187, **188**
- Jahn, Friedrich Ludwig, 21, 113–15, 117, 126, 131–3, 189, 243n2
- Jalowicz, Hermann, 33–4, 122
- Jameson, Fredric, 84
- Jeremias, Karl, 191–2
- Jerusalem* (Ury), 65–70, **67**
- Jew counts, 198–9
- Jewification, 76, 81, 239n36
- Jewish aniconism, 71, 79; aesthetic education and, 81–2, 85–6; degeneracy and, 21, 75, 77, 238n28
- Jewish body: bodybuilding and, 2, 221n6; gymnastics and, 106–54; regeneration of, xxiii–xxiv, 2, 12–17, 27–8, 33–4, 53–61, 70, 106–54, 200, 217, 222n11, 260n28
- Jewish features, 6, 223n21
- “Jewish Recruits Complaining About Learning Military Drills” (Löschenkohl), 187
- Jewish state: aesthetic, 71–87; regeneration of, 16; *see also* Palestine; Zionism
- the Jewish question, xxiv; anti-Semitism and, 28–9, 229n12; solution to, 76–7, 79, 120, 128, 220–1n2, 236n2
- Jews: Arabs and, 159–61, 174, 179–82, 185–6, 254n19, 258n72; assimilation of, 1, 2, 15, 28, 44, 53–4, 58, 60, 140, 148, 151; Christians and, 24–5, 28, 53–4, 149–50; disenfranchisement of, 34, 54, 72; emancipation of, 24, 26, 28, 170, 189, 229n4, 229n7, 259n7; eternal or wandering, 77, 79–81, **80**, 163, 166–70, 173, 186, 256n49; exiled, 65, 69–70, 72; Galut, 69, 71, 72, 77, 79, 89; “new,” xvii, xix, 1, 219n4; orthodox, 43, 127, 249n74; as parasites and vermin, 52, 54–5, 190, 201–2; purity of, 31, 150; as Sabra, xvii, 185, 219n4; as soldiers, xv–xxiii, 25, 58, 187–216; stereotypes of, 2, 4, **6**, 7–9, 12, 24, 57, 60, 69, 79, 103, 187–91, 195, 201–3, 215, 222n13, 223n21; tough, violent, xvii, xix, 219nn7–8; weak, xvii, xix, xx, 2, 4, 27, 78, 219n8; *see also* Eastern-European Jews; ghetto Jews; muscle Jews; *Ostjuden*; Western Jews: “Jews as Anchormen and Seafarers” (Grunwald), 162, 168–71

- Juda* (1900), 71, 94–7, **96**, **98**, 242n75, 242n77
- Judaism: Lilien and art of decadent, 87–105; paganism v., 193, 239n31
- “Judaism in Music” (Wagner, R.), 76–7
- Jüdische Flieger im Weltkrieg* (Jewish Fliers in World War) (Theilhaber), 203, 209, **210–11**, 212, **213–14**, 215
- Jüdische Rundschau*, 193–5
- Jüdische Statistik* (Nossig), 109
- Juedische Emigration und Kolonisation* (Trietsch), 185
- Juedische Kuenstler* (Jewish Artists) (Buber), 68–9, 77–8, 100
- Juedischer Almanach*, Lilien’s illustrations for, 71, 94, 97, **99**, 100–2
- “Juedische Renaissance” (Jewish Renaissance) (Buber), 73–5, 81–2
- Juedischer Verlag* (Jewish Press), 101, 175, **176**
- Jugend* journal, 90, 100
- Jugendstil*, 87, 88, 90, 97, 243n81
- Jünger, Ernst, 22; fascism and, 201, 240n52, 261n31; on war and aviators, 206, 207–8, **209**, 211, 213–14, 215, 264n83, 264n85
- Kafka, Franz, 205–6, 234n75
- Kaiser Wilhelm II, 10, 36, 172, 174–5
- Kant, Immanuel, 75, 93, 239n29
- Kartell-Convent vereinigten Korporationen*, 196, **197**
- Kikeriki* journal, 4, **6**, 7–9, 223n20
- kings, Jewish, 65, 78–9, 86
- Kingsley, Charles, 115–16
- Körperkultur* (body culture), 4; movement, 32, 112, 119–20, 135, 231n36, 243n81, 248n69
- Körperliche Renaissance der Juden* (The Physical Renaissance of the Jews), 106–7, 247n62
- Koselleck, Reinhart, 20, 34–5, 92–3, 229n6, 240n51
- Kraft und Schönheit* (Strength and Beauty) journal, 32, 119, 122–3
- Krav Maga (contact combat), xix–xx, 183, 219n9
- land: fertility and, 138–9; regeneration and, 7–9, 20, 22, 155–86, 223n26
- Langbehn, Julius, 13; Nordau and, 20–1, 34–46, 51, 53, 63–4, 232n55; *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, 20–1, 35–46, 63–4, 233n60, 233n64; Volkish thought and, 21, 38, 43–5, 64
- Laqueur, Walter, 13, 224n39, 225n40
- League for Regeneration, 32, 33, 231n36
- Lebensreform* (life reform), 4; movement, 21, 31, 112, 118–20, 222n17, 247n61
- Ledermann, Jacob, 208–9, **210–11**
- Lerner, Paul, 15, 206–7, 261n31
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, 42–3, 233n61
- Levine, Charles, 203, 215–16
- Lewy, Rabbi Wilhelm, 106
- Lichtenfeld, Imi Sde-Or, xix–xx, 219n9
- Liebermann, Max, 69, 73, 87
- Lieder des Ghetto* (Songs of the Ghetto) (Rosenfeld), 71, 94, 97, 100, 102–5, **104**
- Life* magazine, Israeli soldier on cover of, xv, **xvi**, xvii, xx, xxiii
- Lilien, E. M., 236n1; “Altneuland” illustration by, 3–12, **5**; art of decadent Judaism and, 87–105; “Euch,” 95, **96**, 242n77; *Gedenkblatt des fünften Zionisten-Kongresses* postcard, 88, **89**; Jewish national art and, 13, 21, 65, 69, 70–1, 73, 86–105; *Juda* and, 71, 94–7, **96**, **98**, 242n77; *Juedischer Almanach* and, 71, 94, 97, **99**, 100–2; *Lieder des Ghetto* and, 71, 94, 97, 100, 102–5, **104**; life of, 90, 241n61; in *Ost und West*, 90, 97; *Palaestina* and, 89, 175, **176**; Stanislawski on, 90, 91, 103, 241n61, 243n84; *Trugland*, 97, **99**, 100–1
- Lindbergh, Charles, 203, 215–16
- Lingner, Karl, 142–4, 146–7, 251n102
- Loewe, Heinrich, 193–5, 264n81
- Lombroso, Cesare, 30, 88
- Löschenkohl, Johann, 187
- Löwenstein, Leo, 200, 211

- Lucie-Smith, Edward, 91  
 Luftmensch (person of the air), 2, 221n7
- Maccabees, 236n5; Epstein on, 65–70, **66**; heroism and, 2–3, 22, 59, 61, 65, 190, 193–6, 198, 203
- male-bonding: of Hashomer Hatzair, 250n92; homosexuality and, 220n15; state-formation and, xxi–xxiii, 135–8; *see also Männerbünde*
- Mandelstamm, 122, 126–8, 191–2
- Männerbünde* (male-bonding), xxii, 137–8, 247n61
- Mannszucht* (manly discipline), 55, 235n80
- Marinetti, Filippo Tomaso, 205, 206
- marriage, early, 127, 138, 139, 252nn115–16
- masculinity: Blüher on, xxii–xxiii, 132, 134, 220n14; circumcision and, 3, 222n15; feminizing, 7; militarism and, xx–xxiv, 12, 14, 22–3, 193, 196–7, 201–3, 235n80, 261n31; Mosse on, 202, 203; muscularity and, xvi–xvii, 221n9; nationalism and, 15, 136; Nordau on, 1–3, 12, 221n9; patriotism and, 114–15
- Mattathias (Jewish priest), 65, **66**, 68, 193, 237n5
- Mauschel*, 56–60, 64, 235n83, 259n4; Herzl on, 56–60
- medicine, 88, 128
- Mendelssohn, Moses, 24
- Meyer, Felix, 131–2
- Michelangelo's "Moses" sculpture, 79
- militarism: masculinity and, xx–xxiv, 12, 14, 22–3, 193, 196–7, 201–3, 235n80, 261n31; muscularity and, 70, 111; women and, xxi, 201, 220n11; *see also soldiers*
- Mizrahi, 185–6
- modernity: alternative, 16–17, 119; Enlightenment and, 15, 226n48; Foucault on, 15, 226n49; materialism and, 233n63; muscle Jews and, xxiii, 2, 12, 17–18, 63, 148–50, 203; Nazism and, 15–17, 36, 45, 227n55; Repp on, 15–17, 36, 231n36, 249n79
- monotheism, 65, 67
- morality, 114, 115–17
- moral superiority, 71, 75, 81, 239n31
- Morel, Bénédict-Augustin, 30, 47–8, 230n26
- Moses and Monotheism* (Freud), xv
- Mosse, George, 15, 218, 226n45; on Damm, 231n36; on Langbehn, 44–5, 234n64; on masculinity, 202, 203; on nationalism and Zionism, 75, 238n26; on Nazism, 36; on Volk, 202, 227n61, 262n56
- Münchhausen, Baron Börries von, 95, **96**, 242n77
- muscle Jews, xv–xxiv, 3–10, 46–64, 106–10, 122–39, 151, 182, 184, 192–203, 217, 221n5; Epstein on, **66**, 68; ghetto Jews v., 60, 64, 236n98; Nordau on, 1–4, 21, 46–64, 68, 70, 78, 82, 120, 128, 151, 187, 192; origins of, xxiii–xxiv, 34, 64, 112, 217–18; as true moderns, 21, 46–64, 78; women as, 3, 12, 121, 129
- "Muscle Jews and Nervous Jews" (Jastrowitz), 107
- muscular Christianity movement, 1, 21, 112, 115–17, 222n17, 246n40
- muscular Judaism, xx, xxiv, 1–23, 34, 59, 70, 107–8, 112, 117, 120, 122, 131, 136–8, 161–2, 175, 190–5, 217–18, 221n5; origins of, 1–23
- muscularity: masculinity and, xvi–xvii, 221n9; militarism and, 70, 111
- mysticism, 38, 41–4, 48–9, 51, 69–70
- national art, Jewish, 13, 21, 65–105; Fifth Zionist Congress and, 65–73, 78–9, 85–9, 94, 242n73
- nationalism: Jahn on gymnastics and, 21, 113–15, 117, 126, 131–3, 189, 243n2; mass movements and, 248n70; Nazism and "völkisch," 44–5; Zionism and, 75, 131, 238n26

- nationality, 58; gymnastics/fitness and, 106–7, 112–20, 123–39, 243*n*2; regeneration and, 1, 10, 12–15, 14, 21–2, 37, 112, 113–14, 120–39, 131, 236*n*97
- Nationalkörper* (body of the nation), 113
- nation and body, cultivating, 112–20
- Naudh, H., 190
- Nazism, 31, 45, 52–3, 202–3; on Jews as parasites and vermin, 52; modernity and, 15–17, 36, 45, 227*n*55; Mosse and Stern on, 36; “*völkisch*” nationalism and, 44–5; *Volkskörper* and, 244*n*18
- Nes, Adi, photos by, xx–xxii, **xxi–xxii**, xxiv, 220*n*15
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 207; on degeneracy, 35; on rebirth and renewal, 79; on superiority, 44; on Wagner, 35, 88; Zionism and, 73, 75, 238*n*19
- Nordau, Max: on anti-social vermin, 52; on decadence, 221*n*11; on degeneracy and art, 15, 37, 46, 48–53, 234*n*73; on degeneration, 15, 18, 20–1, 32, 35–64, 69, 72, 100, 151, 232*n*54; *Die Jüdische Turnzeitung* articles by, 3, 58–62, **59, 62**; on discipline, 46–8, 55–6, 60–1, 63, 68, 70, 115; at Fifth Zionist Congress, 108, 140, 242*n*73; at First Zionist Congress, 2, 53–4; on gymnastics/athletics, 3–4, 58–62, 108–9, 115, 136, 222*n*14; Langbehn and, 20–1, 34–46, 51, 53, 63–4, 232–3*n*55; on masculinity, 1–3, 12, 221*n*9; on muscle Jews, 1–4, 21, 46–64, 68, 70, 78, 82, 120, 128, 151, 187, 192; on regeneration, 1–3, 13, 34, 221*n*9, 221*n*11; at Second Zionist Congress, 1–4, 54, 58, 70, 221*n*9; at Sixth Zionist Congress, 122; at Third Zionist Congress, 54; on Zionism, 37–8, 48, 53–64, 108–9, 233*n*56–7, 236*n*2
- norms, pathology and, 234*n*71
- Nossig, Alfred, 34, 65, 73, 79–81, **80**, 89; on colonialism, 159–60, 253–4*n*14–15; “The Eternal Jew,” 79–81, **80**; on population statistics, 109, 140, 158, 250–1*n*98
- Nye, Robert, 117
- Olin, Margaret, 74–5
- “On the Military Fitness of the Jews” (Auerbach), 192
- Only Yesterday* (Agnon), 185, 186, 258*n*74, 258*n*78
- Oppenheimer, Franz, 193–4, 259*n*20
- Ost und West* journal: Buber in, 73–4, 78; hygiene in, 147; Jalowicz in, 33–4; Lilien in, 90, 97; Nossig in, 79, 81; on WWI, 195–6
- Ostjuden* (Eastern Jews), 2, 4, 221*n*7, 228*n*66, 242–3*n*79
- paganism, 65, 67, 68, 193, 239*n*31
- Palaestina als Judenland* (Auerbach), 160–1
- Palaestina* journal, 22, 89, 159–60, 175, **176–8**, 253*n*14
- Palestine: colonialism and, 4, 10–11, 19, 22, 128, 138–9, 155–63, 171–86, 195, 252*n*5; films on, 157, 252–3*n*7; gymnastics and, 122, 157, 182–4, **184**; Herzl and, 10, 157–60, 172–5, **176**, 186; Jewish population growth in, 157, 253*n*8; migration to, 4, **6**, 7–9, 55–6, 161–2, 218; railways and, 176, **178**, 184; return to, 72, 89, 181–2; Sabra in, 219*n*4; travelogues and, 22, 172, 185–6, 257*n*58
- Panama scandal, 36, 221*n*8
- pan-Germanism, 44, 57, 101, 248*n*70
- pan-German League, 30
- Patai, Raphael, 163–4, 255*n*39, 257–8*n*72
- peasants, 43–4, 51, 217
- Péladan, Joséphin, 49, 61
- Pensel, Helmut, 163, 164
- Penslar, Derek, 158–9
- perfectibility, progress and, 26–8, 229*n*6
- Perry, Micha, photograph of Israeli soldiers by, xvii, **xviii**, xx–xxi, xxiii
- Peukert, Detlev, 227*n*55, 244–5*n*18

- phallocentrism, xxi–xxiii, 3, 128, 222n16
- physical fitness, xvii, xix, xxiii, 2–4, 14, 21–2, 60, 112, 114, 116, 123, 134, 193, 196, 201; *see also* gymnastic(s); Krav Maga
- Pick, Daniel, 17
- Ploetz, Alfred, 31–2, 118, 150, 252n116
- pogroms, expulsions and, 148, 149, 260n21
- population politics, 13, 21–2, 139–54
- population statistics, 109, 118, 140, 149–50, 153, 158, 250–1n98
- Poussin, Nicolas, 7–8
- Proctor, Robert, 231n33
- progress: art, decadence and, 71, 91–4; Enlightenment and, 26–8, 78, 91, 93, 155; perfectibility and, 26–8, 229n6; return and, 70, 72, 102
- prophets, Jewish, 65, 89
- Prussia: civil rights in, 24, 188–9, 229n4; emancipation of Jews in, 24, 229n4; fall to Napoleon, 112, 114, 189, 243n2
- race science, xxiii; blood and, 28–9, 117, 150–1; Darwinism and, 28–32, 52, 229–30n14; eugenics and, xxiii, 21–2, 32, 35, 44, 52, 119–20, 139, 218; hygiene and, 12–14, 21–2, 30–2, 109, 111, 139–54; state formation, eugenics and, 52, 119–20; Theilhaber and, 21–2, 112, 139, 252n115
- racial hygiene: laws, 143–54; movement, 31–4, 118, 231n31; Ploetz on, 31–2, 118, 150, 252n116
- racial state, birth of, xxiii
- railways, Palestine and, 176, **178**, 184
- Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene), 31–2
- Rathenau, Walter, 190–1
- reform movements, 32–4, 117–20, 132, 134–9, 231n36; *see also* Körperkultur; Lebensreform
- regeneration: aesthetics of, 3, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20–1, 22, 65–105; colonialism and, 14, 20, 157, 161–2; corporeal, 1–3, 10, 14, 26, 57, 74, 106, 113, 120, 122–3, 191; degeneration and, 13, 15, 17, 18–21, 24–34, 72, 93, 117, 228n3; gymnastics of, 20, 21–2, 106–54, 225–6n43; Herzl on, 1, 34, 72, 172–6; Hess on, 1, 30–1, 33, 74, 221n3, 231n29; of Jewish body, xxiii–xxiv, 2, 12–17, 27–8, 33–4, 53–61, 70, 217; of Jewish state, 16; land and, 7–9, 20, 22, 155–86, 223n26; multiple discourses of, 19; nationality and, 1, 10, 12–15, 14, 21–2, 37, 112, 113–14, 120–39, 131, 236n97; physical, 3–4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 222n17; religion and, 26–7; rhetoric of, 4, 20–1, 24–64; soldiers of, 20, 22–3, 56, 187–216; state formation and, 9–10, 13–19, 21–3, 113, 244n16; as term, 26–7; Zionism and, 1, 27, 34, 70, 91, 94
- Regeneration* journal, 32
- Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten* (National Association of Jewish Combat Veterans) (RjF), 199–201, 211–12, 215–16
- religion: art and, 41–3; regeneration and, 26–7; science v. mysticism and, 38, 41–4; *see also* specific religions
- Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Educator) (Langbehn), 20–1, 35–46, 63–4, 234n64; Abraham in, 41–3; anti-Semitism and, 44, 233n63; German spirit in, 41–6
- Repp, Kevin, 15–17, 36, 118–19, 231n36, 249n79
- reproduction, 3, 22; eugenics and, 131, 150–3, 249n79; hygiene and, 118, 138–54; of state by men, xxiii; by women, xxiii, 129–31
- resurrection, Christians and, 113
- return: heroism and, 70, 95, 97; to Palestine, 72, 89, 181–2; progress and, 70, 72, 102; Zionism and, 70, 72, 95–7, 242n77
- Reulecke, Jürgen, 120, 247n61
- Reuveni, Gideon, 200
- revolution, acceleration and, 93, 242n71
- rituals, Jewish, 89, 144–7
- Rohkrämer, Thomas, 15
- The Role of the Erotic in Masculine Society* (Blüher), xxii–xxiii, 132, 134

- Rome and Jerusalem* (Hess), 30–1, 172–3, 231n29
- Rose, Paul Lawrence, 28, 75, 229n12
- Rosenberg, Warren, xix, 219n7
- Rosenfeld, Morris, 94, 97, 100, 102–5, **104**
- Rothschild, Baron Edmond James de, 157
- Ruppin, Arthur, 34; colonialism and, 158, 161–2; on population statistics, 109, 140, 250–1n98
- Said, Edward, 155–6, 159, 162, 166, 185
- “Samson” (Lilien), 97, **98**
- Sandars, T. C., 115–16
- Schallmayer, Wilhelm, 32
- Schiller, Friedrich, 21; on aesthetic education and state formation, 21, 71, 73, 82–6, 94, 237n15; Buber and, 21, 71, 73, 94; *Erziehung, Bildung* and, 42–3, 233n61; *Wilhelm Tell*, 57
- Schmidt, Gilya Gerda, 67, 236n1, 237n6, 237n10, 240n42, 240nn47–8
- Schmitt, Carl, 232–3n55
- Scholem, Theobald, 132–3, 135–6
- science: art and, 36–46, 51, 64; Enlightenment and, 39, 42, 49; mysticism and religion v., 38, 41–4; mysticism v., 48–9, 51; *see also* race science
- seafaring: colonialism and, 10, 22, 155–86, 258n74, 258n78; Grunwald on, 22, 162, 168–71, 173, 175, 179, 185, 186; Hegel on world history and, 22, 162–8, 172–3, 179, 186, 255n39, 255n47; Herzl on, 22, 173–6, 179; Wagner on, 256n49
- Second Commandment, 71, 75, 237n12, 238–9nn28–9
- Seeba, Hinrich, 113
- Segall, Jacob, 198
- Segel, Benjamin, 195–6
- “The Selection of Human Material for Palestine” (Ruppin), 161–2
- self-defense *see* Krav Maga
- self-hatred, Jewish, 190, 260n28
- Sepinwall, Alyssa Goldstein, 228n3, 229n7
- sexuality, 13–14; bio-power and, 13, 18, 109–12, 139–40, 143, 153–4; Boyarin on, 7, 226n46; degeneracy and, 35, 232n48; Foucault on, 7, 13, 18, 109–12, 153, 230n25; state formation and, 18, 110–12; *see also* homosexuality; reproduction
- Sforim, Mendele Mocher, 249n74
- Shamir, Moshe, 258n74
- Shapira, Anita, 55, 235n82
- Sholem Aleichem, 97, 242n79
- sieben Schwaben (seven Schwabians), legend of, 8–9
- Six-Day War of 1967, xv, **xvi**, xvii, xix
- Slezkine, Yuri, 257n57
- social policing and regulation, 16; *see also* eugenics; hygiene
- socialism, 45, 52–3, 88, 231n31, 248n70
- Society for Racial Hygiene (*Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene*), 118
- Sokolow, Nahum, 13
- soldiers: anti-Semitism and, 187–91, 198–203; heroism and, 190, 193–6, 198–201, 209–16; Jews as, 25, 58, 187–216; of regeneration, 20, 22–3, 56, 187–216; “stab in the back” legend, 22, 198–200
- Soldiers* (1994–2000) (Nes), xx, **xxi–xxii**, xxiv
- Sombart, Werner, 171–2
- Sonderweg* theory, 16, 36, 45, 157, 227n54, 227n55
- Sorkin, David, 28
- Soskin, Selig, 158, 159–61
- Spackman, Barbara, 50–1
- Spielberg, Steven, movies by, 219n8
- sports, 106–7, 117, 121, 141, 144, 147, 191–2, 200; clubs, 12, 121, 190, 247–8n64, 260n28; militarism and, 200–1
- Stanislawski, Michael, 90, 91, 103, 222n16, 241n61, 243n84
- state: as body metaphor, 113, 117–18, 244n16; homosexuality and, xxiii, 7; Zionism and, xvii, 10, 223–4n31, 235n82; *see also* aesthetic state; Jewish state



- state formation: aesthetic education and, 21, 71–87, 93–4, 237n15, 240–1n52; bio-power and, 109–13, 140, 143, 152–4; Chamberlain on, 9–10; hygiene and, 142–3, 148–54; Krav Maga and, xx; male-bonding and, xxi–xxiii, 135–8; race science, eugenics and, 52, 119–20; regeneration and, 9–10, 13–19, 21–3, 113, 244n16; sexuality and, 18, 110–12; women, men and, xxii–xxiii
- Stern, Fritz, 36, 39, 44–5
- Struck, Hermann, 65, 106, 179, 257n58
- Stuck, Franz von, 141–2
- student associations, Jewish, 190, 193–7, 200, 202, 260n28
- Sulamith* journal, 259n7
- Symbolism, 37, 38, 100, 234n73
- symbolism, decadence and, 87, 88, 90, 241n55
- “The Tasks of the Jewish Gymnast” (Edelstein), 128–9
- Taylor, Charles, 255n41
- “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature” (Marinetti), 205
- Theilhaber, Felix, 34; on aviators, 203, 208–15, **210–11**, **213–14**; on Jew counts, 198; population politics, International Hygiene Exhibition and, 139–54; race science and, 21–2, 112, 139, 252n115; on women, 152, 252n119
- Theweleit, Klaus, 201–2, 203
- Toller, Ernst, 207
- Torah, 79–81, **80**, 144–5
- Treitschke, Heinrich von, 44, 234n64
- Trietsch, Davis, 34; *Bilder aus Palaestina*, 22, 180, **181–4**, 185, 257n58; colonialism and, 22, 89, 158, 163, 175–85
- true moderns, 21, 46–64, 78, 131
- Trugland* (Lilien), 97, **99**, 100–1
- Turnen* (gymnastics), 113–15, 119, 189, 243n2, 245n19, 245n26
- Turnvereine* (gymnastics associations), 106, 114
- Two Years Ago* (Kingsley), 115–16
- Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (On the Civic Improvement of the Jews) (Dohm), 24–6, 229n4
- Ungeziefer*, 52
- Ury, Lesser, 65–70, **67**, 73, 87–8, 236n1, 237n7
- Vance, Norman, 116
- Van Den Abbeele, Georges, 168
- Verein Deutscher Studenten* (student association), 193
- Vereinigung Jüdischer Studenten* (student association), 193
- Verjuden* (Jewify), 76, 239n36
- Verjudung* (Jewification), 76, 239n36
- Verlaine, Paul, 38
- Villeneuve, Jérôme Pétion de, 27
- Volkish thought: blood, soil, race and nation in, 73–5, 238n20, 238n26; Feiwel on, 101–2; homosexuality and, 136–7, 202–3; Langbehn and, 21, 38, 43–5, 64; Mosse on, 202, 227n61, 262n56
- Volkskörper* (people’s body), 113, 244–5n18
- Volksthümlichkeit* (Germanness), 43–4, 63, 101–2, 105
- Volkstum* (the people), 42–3
- voyages of discovery and conquest, 22, 164–70
- Wagner, Richard, 49; on anti-Semitism, 21, 71, 75–7, 79, 143, 148; on Aryanism, 29; on degeneracy and art, 21; Nietzsche on, 35, 88; on seafaring, 256n49; on solution to the Jewish question, 76–7, 79
- Wandervogel* movement, 132, 135–8
- Warburg, Otto, 158, 161, 178–9
- wars: fascism and, 240n52; Futurism and, 205, 240–1n52; of Liberation, 114, 189; veterans, 190, 199–200, 262n56; *see also specific wars*
- Watermarks* (film), 218, 247–8n64

- “Ways to Zionism” (Buber), 85  
 Weber, Eugen, 115, 217  
 Weimar Republic, 13, 14, 22, 199, 201–3  
 Weindling, Paul, 17, 30  
 Weininger, Otto: on homosexuality, 137, 227n58, 250n91; on Jews as parasites, 54–5; on Zionism, 10, 223–4n31  
 Weiss, Meira, 219n2, 220n11  
 Weiss, Sheila, 31  
*Weltgeschichte der Seefahrt* (World History of Seafaring) (Pemsel), 163, 164  
*Weltliterature*, Goethe on, 74  
 Wertheimer, Jack, 251–2n114  
 Western Jews, 2, 53, 221n7;  
   assimilation of, 2, 53, 60; hygiene of, 152; modernism of, 242–3n79  
 Wetzell, Richard F., 15–16  
 White, Hayden, 20  
 women: gymnastics and, 12, 121, 129–31, **130**; heroism, 128–9; in Israeli army, xxi, 220n11; men, state-formation and, xxii–xxiii; militarism and, xxi, 201, 220n11; as muscle Jews, 3, 12, 121, 129; reproduction by, xxiii, 129–31; Theilhaber on, 152, 252n119  
 world history: Hegel on, 22, 30, 147–8, 162–8, 172–3, 179, 186, 255n39, 255–6n47; stages of, 164–6, 170–1, 173, 186  
 World War I (WWI), 13–14, 22–3, 192–216, 261n31; injuries during, 206–7, 263–4nn76–7  
  
 Yiddish, 235n83; *see also* *Mauschel*; Rosenfeld, Morris  
 Yom Kippur War of 1973, Yossi/Nati love story during, 220n15  
 youth movements, 132, 134–7, 225n40;  
   German, 44, 262n56; Hashomer Hatzair, in Palestine, 250n92  
  
 Zantop, Susanne, 156–7  
*Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden* (Journal for Jewish Demographics and Statistics), 109, 140  
 Zerubavel, Yael, 70, 74, 82, 86, 94  
 Zevi, Sabbatai, 69  
 Zionism: anti-Semitism and, 19, 34, 53–8; birth of, xxiii, xxiv; Boyarin on, 160, 235n82; cultural, 78, 94, 236n2, 237nn14–15, 238n24, 242n73, 243n81; European universal and, 163–86; Hasidism and, 78, 240n40; Herzl on, 2, 53, 55–8, 172–6, 221n8, 236n2; histories of, 13, 224–5n39; Jewish state and, xvii, 10, 138, 223–4n31, 235n82; nationalism and, 75, 131, 238n26; “new” Jew of, xvii, xix, 1; Nietzsche and, 73, 75, 238n19; Nordau on, 37–8, 48, 53–64, 108–9, 233nn56–7, 236n2; political, 94, 236n2, 237n14, 242n73; regeneration and, 1, 27, 34, 70, 91, 94; return and, 70, 72, 95–7, 242n77; state and, xvii, 10, 223–4n31, 235n82; Weininger on, 10, 223–4n31; youth movements, 225n40; Zerubavel on, 70, 74, 82, 86, 94; *see also* colonialism; Palestine  
 “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims” (Said), 155–6, 185  
 Zionist Congresses: First, 2, 13, 53–4; Second, 1–4, 54, 58, 70, 221n9; Third, 54; Fourth, 191–2; Fifth, 65–73, 78–9, 85–9, 94, 108, 140, 242n73; Sixth, 122; Tenth, 252–3n7  
 Zirker, Max, 107, 122, 125  
*Zucht* (discipline), 46–8, 150  
*Zuchtwahl* (natural selection), 48, 234n72  
 Zweig, Stefan, 95, 97