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From the New World to the Third World: Generation, Politics, and the Making of Argentine
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By

Beatrice Dora Gurwitz

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Margaret Chowning, Co-Chair

Professor Mark A. Healey, Co-Chair

Professor John M. Efron

Professor Estelle Tarica

Fall 2012

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Abstract

From the New World to the Third World: Generation, Politics, and the Making of Argentine Jewish Ethnicity

by

Beatrice Dora Gurwitz

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Margaret Chowning, Co-Chair

Professor Mark Healey, Co-Chair

This dissertation traces the interplay between understandings of the Argentine nation and constructs of Jewish ethnicity between 1955 and 1983. It begins with the celebrations surrounding the supposed triumph of the “liberal nation” after the overthrow of Juan Perón in 1955, and continues through the years of rapid transitions between civil and military rule, massive labor unrest and social protest, escalating violence, and finally the brutal military dictatorship of 1976-1983. It argues that these were crucial years in which Jewish activists forcefully discarded previous understandings of the nation and radically reformulated, several times, what it meant to be Jewish and Argentine.

This process echoed wider debates about the Argentine nation, but Jewish activists consistently ascribed particular meanings to different visions of the nation, whether liberal, national populist, revolutionary, or authoritarian. These understandings formed the basis for new articulations of membership and constructions of Argentine Jewishness. Through this all, the dissertation contends, the community’s own complex generational politics catalyzed change. Beginning in the early 1960s, Jewish youth activists launched a rebellion against the community’s central institutions, claiming that ethnic values must be made compatible with mentalities of native-born Argentines and new understandings of the nation. Rather than rejecting these innovations, the older generation often grappled with them, forcing the meanings of Jewishness in Argentina to the fore over and over again. At the height of revolutionary foment, the older generation even embraced the youth’s radical definitions of Jewishness, though it later worked to silence them as social violence escalated in the mid-1970s. While the national context and the community’s own dynamics are thus fundamental, this work also underscores many ways that the process of constructing ethnicity and rethinking the nation were tied to trends in the broader Jewish diaspora, involved in its own processes of remaking the meaning of Jewishness and Zionism after the establishment of the State of Israel.

With the interplay between national, communal, and diasporic processes, this dissertation offers three key contributions. The prevailing myth surrounding Argentine immigration is that by World War II the “melting pot” had forged a new Argentine culture and made ethnic identity irrelevant. By contrast, this project contends that the rapid political changes and shifting national consciousnesses in the years after 1955 created particularly fertile ground to debate, remake, and reformulate the intersection between being Jewish and Argentine. This project also speaks to ongoing debates about the relative importance of nation and diaspora in the making of ethnic identity: even as Jewish activists were keenly attuned to constructions of ethnicity emanating from other parts of the diaspora, they consistently accepted or rejected them in accordance with their understanding of themselves as Argentines. Finally, it adds the ethnic community to the realms where Latin American youth activists remade cultural categories in the 1960s and 1970s, but also complicates the image of rebellious youth and recalcitrant elders by pointing to a varied interplay between the two.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJC : American Jewish Committee

AMIA: Asociación Mutual Israelita de Argentina (Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Association)

CJJA: Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina (Jewish-Argentine Youth Confederation)

CJL: Congreso Judío Latinoamericano (Latin American Jewish Congress)

DAIA: Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas de Argentina. (Delegation of Jewish Associations of Argentina)

GRN: Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista (National Restoration Guard)

IJA: Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información (Argentine Jewish Institute of Culture and Information)

JJS: Juventud Sionista Socialista (Socialist Zionist Youth)

JP: Juventud Peronista (Peronist Youth)

MJDH: Movimiento Judío por los Derechos Humanos (Jewish Movement for Human Rights)

OSA: Organización Sionista Argentina (Argentine Zionist Organization)

SHA: Sociedad Hebraica Argentina (Argentina Hebraica Society)

WJC: World Jewish Congress

WZO: World Zionist Organization

UCR: Unión Cívica Radical (Radical Civic Union or Radical Party)

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INTRODUCTION

In 1969, Argentine Jewish youth activists staged a revolt at the yearly convention of the *Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas* (DAIA), one of the Argentine Jewish community's central institutions. This rebellion had the trappings of many others across the globe in these years. The young rebels made references to Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the famed leader of the 1968 French student rebellion, and to Herbert Marcuse, a theorist associated with the Frankfurt School theorist revered by many in the transnational New Left.¹ One weekly newspaper noted that the neologism “establishment,” a word imported directly from English, was the word most frequently used at the convention.² At the core, however, this rebellion was a response to particular communal concerns. The youth contended that their elders failed to grasp the realities of Latin America and the “third world,” and failed to create a Jewish community and a Zionist ideology appropriate to this context. The repercussions of such a failure, they argued, were grave: mass assimilation among Jewish youth who were drawn to revolutionary movements and attacks on the Jewish community for being the enemy of major change in Argentina.³ The response of the older generation, meanwhile, was surprisingly accommodating. One young reporter recounted that “after a tense session, one could overhear an elegant and older gentleman ask: “Who is this Marcuse? Where can I get a book of his?”⁴

This “DAIA Rebellion of 1969,” as the youth-publication *Nueva Sión* referred to it, was just one moment in an ongoing and often self-conscious effort within the Argentine Jewish community to rethink the Argentine nation, Jewish membership in it, and the nature of Jewishness itself.⁵ This project traces the interplay between understandings of Argentine nation and constructs of Jewish ethnicity from 1955 through 1983. It begins with the celebrations surrounding the supposed triumph of the “liberal nation” after the overthrow of Juan Perón in 1955, and continues through the years of rapid transitions between civil and military rule, massive labor unrest and social protest, escalating violence, and finally the brutal military dictatorship of 1976-1983. It argues that these were crucial years in which Jewish activists forcefully discarded previous understandings of the nation and radically reformulated, several times, what it meant to be Jewish and Argentine.

Generational tensions lay at the center of this process of re-imagining ethnicity and the nation. Within the Argentine Jewish “community”—defined by those who chose to

¹ “DAIA: Crónica de una convención diferente,” *Nueva Sión*, August 22, 1969, 2.

² “Signó a la convención de la DAIA un nivel de singular profundidad, estuvieron presentes 300 delegados de todo el país,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 23, 1969, 10, 15;

³ For further reporting on this conference, see DAIA: Boletín de Informaciones # 17; October 1969, # 17; “Convención DAIA 1969, Tema Central: La Juventud,” *Raíces*, September 1969, 82.

⁴ “La culpa no es de Marcuse,” *Nueva Sión*, August 22, 1969, 2.

⁵ Raanan Rein and Jeffrey Lesser have noted that the term “Argentine Jew” implies that the national identity is secondary to the Jewish diasporic identity. They contend that in certain situations the term “Jewish Argentine” would be more appropriate to suggest the opposite and in others “Jewish-Argentine” to make clear that neither identity is dominant (Jeffrey Lesser and Raanan Rein, eds., *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans* (University of New Mexico Press, 2008). This dissertation endorses their overall agenda of not assuming the dominance of one identity over the other, and, in fact, revolves around the interplay between diasporic and national identities. Nonetheless, subject to the caveat that no phrase could adequately capture this complexity, it employs the terms “Argentine Jew” and “Argentine Jewish” for simplicity’s sake rather than as a comment on the weight of each identity.

affiliate with Jewish institutions in Argentina—Jewish youth activists rebelled against what they saw as stale constructs of Jewishness and outdated ideas about the Argentine nation. Generally in their late teens and twenties, they conceived of themselves as part of the global youth rebellion and the national version of that rebellion in Argentina.⁶ Nonetheless, the “*viejos*” (adults) were often sympathetic to the innovations the youth proposed as both were concerned with articulating membership in the nation while maintaining Jewish particularity. Thus the Jewish community became a unique site where, despite tensions, the youth and the older generation interacted and exchanged ideas and ultimately influenced each other profoundly. These interactions forced the meaning of Jewishness in Argentina to the fore over and over again and catalyzed rapid and dramatic change.

The connection between constructing ethnicity and articulating inclusion in the nation also make this, fundamentally, a story about the Argentine nation. In the years after the fall of Perón, the Jewish community celebrated Argentina as a “New World” liberal nation, which had welcomed immigrants and allowed for their integration by means of the liberal democratic order and an open society. By the early 1960s, political instability and often-virulent antisemitism led many Jewish activists to question Argentina’s liberal credentials as on-going labor unrest led them to reckon more seriously with Peronism and the national populism more broadly. Rejecting the “New World” framework, Argentina seemed increasingly defined by its “Latin American” and then later “third world” attributes. This did not mean that Jews felt any less Argentine, but rather that they struggled to articulate inclusion and Jewish ethnicity in new ways. At the height of revolutionary foment in the late 1960s and early 1970s Jewish youth activists first, and then later members of the older generation reinvented the Jewish tradition and Zionism in radical terms and framed the Jewish community as supportive of “national liberation” in Argentina. This was a powerful but relatively short-lived innovation: as violence escalated in the mid-1970s, giving way to brutal military dictatorship that seized power in 1976, Argentine Jews rejected these radicalized formulations, this time with the older generation taking the lead. In this new context, they struggled again for new ways of thinking about Jewishness and for articulating their belonging to the nation.

The nation is thus central to this story, but it is a story that is by no means confined to national borders. Throughout, Argentine Jewish activists were deeply connected to the broader Jewish diaspora, which was involved in its own (transnational) processes of remaking the meaning of Zionism and Jewish ethnicity after the establishment of the State of Israel. Israel’s shifting geo-political position, events like the Six-Day War and the Yom-Kippur War, and the question of Palestinian rights all played a key role in how Argentine Jews defined Zionism, and by extension, Jewish values. Constructions of ethnicity emanating from other parts of the diaspora, meanwhile, were adapted, adopted, or rejected.

The constellation of these processes—the communal, the national, and the diasporic—all facilitated rapid change as various meanings of ethnicity were constructed, called into question, and then reformulated. It also makes this at once a story about the complex politics of generation and youth culture of the 1960s and 1970s, the contested imaginings of the Argentine nation, and the interplay between the Argentine nation and the Jewish diaspora. As such, the dissertation builds on, contributes to, or calls for revision in the

⁶ For a consideration of the range of age-based definition of youth, varying from 13 to 30, in Argentina in these years, see Valeria Manzano, “The Making of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality, 1956--1976” (PhD, Indiana University, 2009), 6–7.

literature in various fields: Argentine political and cultural history; ethnic and diasporic studies; Jewish history; and the transnational history of youth in the 1960s and 1970s.

Theory and Historiography

Catalyzing Innovation: Generation Reconsidered

Generational analysis is at once promising and problematic in considering the dynamics within an ethnic or diasporic community. There is, on the one hand, a common assumption that each subsequent generation reworks its relationship with its ethnic heritage and its membership in the nation. “First generation” and “second generation” and so on are common monikers. Children or grandchildren of immigrants speak the new language fluently and generally attend schools with children of different ethnic heritages. Nonetheless, the use of generation as an analytical category for thinking about ethnic identity, or the subjective experience of being ethnic, has been problematic. Some of the older theories of generation, particularly that of Marcus Lee Hansen, emphasized a mechanistic change, whereby the second generation’s “forgetting” of ethnic identity gives way to a reborn “interest” within the third generation, thereby leading to ethnic revival.⁷ In critiquing this framework, scholars have noted that significant diversity exists within any given generation of any ethnic group and that a phenomenon like ethnic revival is contingent on much more than distance from immigration.⁸ Other critiques of generational analysis have contended that it obscures other contestations within an ethnic group, whether based on gender, class, or ideology.⁹

These critiques are certainly valid even in considerations of the Argentine Jewish experience. There were moments in the history of Argentine Jews when generational divisions were less central than class or gender based ones.¹⁰ Even in the 1960s and 1970s,

⁷ Marcus Lee Hansen, “The Problem of the Third Generation,” Speech Delivered to the Augustana Historical Society, Rock Island, Ill., in Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck, eds., *American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis After Fifty Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 191–213.

⁸ See the collected essays in Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck, eds., *American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis After Fifty Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990). In this collection, Nathan Glazer highlights the “importance of the contrast between specific and unrepeatable historical experiences versus the general and always repeated passage of generations.” To illustrate this claim, he looks at generations of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the United States and argues that the rejection of ethnic identity among the second generation was likely due to the nativist moment of the 1920s and 1930s, whereas the ethnic revival of the 1960s and 1970s was linked to the reaction to the Six-Day War between Israel and Syria and Egypt (Nathan Glazer, “Hansen’s Hypothesis and the Historical Experience of Generations,” 104–109).

⁹ See, for example, Lisa Lowe’s critique in “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (1991): 24–44.

¹⁰ Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: a History of Argentine Jewish Women, 1880-1955* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2010); Mollie Lewis Nouwen, “Oy, My Buenos Aires”: *Jewish Immigrants and the Creation of Argentine National Identity, 1905-1930* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2013). In his study of Perón’s first presidency, Lawrence Bell compellingly argues that the fundamental division was between the Zionist sectors of the community and the Communist sectors (Lawrence Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955” (PhD, Ohio State University, 2002).

there were important differences within each generation. Most obviously, there were *youth activists* committed to the Jewish cause and reinventing Jewish identity, on the one hand, and *assimilating youth* who swore off their Jewishness as incompatible with their political allegiances or were simply uninterested. There were also key divisions among the youth activists and the activists of the older generation. That being said, I contend that, within the dominant Ashkenazi and Zionist segments of the Argentine Jewish community, generation became the key means of understanding difference among Argentine Jewish activists beginning in the early 1960s and continuing through the mid-1970s. At times the community invoked “second generation” and “third generation,” to explain this conflict, denoting distance from immigration. Much more frequently, however, the members of the community categorized the divide as the “youth” versus the “adults” or just simply, the “older generation.”

The centrality of this generational divide must be understood in the contexts of the moment of transnational youth rebellion, but also the particular form that rebellion took in the Jewish diaspora and in Argentina. The scholarship on 1960s and 1970s youth in North America and Europe has been quite rich.¹¹ In the Latin American context, in-depth studies of the culture and politics of these youth and on youth as a cultural category are just beginning to emerge, even though it has long been assumed that youth and students were political and cultural key actors at this moment.¹² Valeria Manzano, particularly, has highlighted the rise of youth as a cultural category in Argentina beginning in the 1950s, and even more forcefully in the 1960s. This undoubtedly manifested itself within the Jewish community. Increasingly, Jewish activists of both generations grappled with the “youth mentality,” in their efforts to remake Jewish ethnicity in a way that might resonate with assimilating youth. The Jewish youth activists, meanwhile, framed themselves as the vanguard of change, often mirroring the culture of youth activism in Argentina more broadly. This study, then, adds another dimension to scholarship on Latin American youth at this moment, adding the ethnic community to the realms where youth became a key category and where youth activists themselves reshaped politics and identities.

Nonetheless, the focus on the dynamism of youth should not obscure the often-complex generational interplay. Within the Jewish community, the youth activists and the older generation were very much in dialogue with each other, even as they generally defined themselves in contrast. While partisans of different political styles or different ideologies,

¹¹ Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (Basic Books, 1997); Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, C.1958-c.1974*, First ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 1998); Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*, 1st ed. (University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 1997); Richard Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France After the Second World War*, 1st ed. (Stanford University Press, 2007); A. Schildt and D. Siegfried, eds., *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (Berghahn Books, 2006). There is also a rich literature on Jewish youth at this juncture, which will be discussed directly below.

¹² Valeria Manzano, “The Making of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality, 1956--1976” (Indiana University, 2009); Patrick Barr-Melej, “Siloísmo and the Self in Allende’s Chile: Youth, ‘Total Revolution,’ and the Roots of the Humanist Movement,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 86, no. 4 (November 1, 2006): 747–784; Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture*, (University of California Press, 1999); Benjamin Arthur Cowan, “The Secret History of Subversion: Sex, Modernity, and the Brazilian National Security State” (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2010); Victoria Ann Langland, “Speaking of Flowers: Student Movements and Collective Memory in Authoritarian Brazil” (Ph.D., Yale University, 2004).

both generations were engaged in the same project of making ethnic and Argentine identities compatible and were similarly engaged with national and diasporic trends. Ultimately, this dissertation treats the Jewish community as a site where political, national and ethnic identities were thought about in tandem, and where they were made and remade as a result of inter-generational interactions. In doing so, it seeks to complicate the image of radical youth and a resistant or indifferent older generation by pointing to the ways that the politics of one generation bled into the politics of the other.

Ethnicity and Nation

The definition of “ethnicity” has inspired significant debate, most fully among scholars of immigration to the United States and the ethnic groups their descendants formed. Rather than adopting on the one hand a primordial definition of ethnicity, suggesting purely blood-based linkages, or, on the other, a purely constructed definition of ethnicity, this dissertation takes a middle ground as articulated by Kathleen Conzen, et al: that the making of ethnic identities is “a process of construction or invention which incorporates, adapts, and amplifies preexisting communal solidarities, cultural attributes, and historical memories. That is, it is grounded in real life context and social experience.”¹³ This definition allows us to focus on the efforts of Jewish activists in Argentina to appropriate different elements of the Jewish tradition—whether they be humanistic precepts of the Bible, a prophetic tradition of social justice, or the triumph of the “pioneers” in the State of Israel—at different junctures depending on their shifting understandings of how to perpetuate Jewish particularity but also membership in the nation. Still, it is worth noting that the Jewish activists considered here did have a primordial understanding of Jewishness: they considered everyone born to a Jewish mother to be Jewish, even those who disavowed this identity. At the same time, they actively endeavored to construct Jewishness in such a way that would encourage others to embrace the identity and join Jewish institutions.¹⁴

This dissertation also treats the making of ethnicity as deeply intertwined with the making of the nation. While the scholarship on other Latin American nations has long grappled with the mixture of European, indigenous, and black populations in the making of the nation, the trajectory in Argentine scholarship, and in national myths, has been far different.¹⁵ In Argentina, the long reigning assumption has been that Argentina’s many immigrants, of whom there were approximately six million between 1871 and 1930, entered

¹³ Kathleen Neils Conzen et al., “The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1 (October 1, 1992): 5.

¹⁴ Ewa Morawska, one of Conzen’s co-authors, offers a similar framework in an essay that considers Jewish ethnicity specifically, in which she suggests that “Changing economic, political, and social-cultural circumstances...induce social actors—here, ethnic group members—to give their ethnic practices and identities specific meaning, relevance, and functions; or...to form particular constellations of primordial, circumstantial, and constructed elements of their ethnicity in their interactions with the host environment” (Ewa Morawska, “Ethnicity as a Primordial-Situational-Constructed Experience: Different Times, Different Places, Different Constellations,” in *Ethnicity and Beyond: Theories and Dilemmas of Jewish Group Demarcation*, ed. Eli Lederhendler, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2011), 3–25.

¹⁵ The literature is extensive, but for a recent collection on race and nation in other Latin American countries, with particular (though not exclusive) attention to the shifting role of blackness and indigeneity in the national imaginary, see *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

a “*crisol de raza*” (literally the crucible of races), leading to a new national culture. While the pace of this process has been debated, the dominant assumption has remained that by the third generation, more or less by 1940, Argentina had become a homogenous “white nation with European culture.”¹⁶ This project is part of a new wave of scholarship that seeks to complicate this national myth by pointing to the way that various “others,” such as black and indigenous populations, have played a key role in defining the nation.¹⁷ With respect to Euro-descendants, scholars have complicated the ideas of the homogenous white nation by pointing to both enduring ethnic identities and the ways that certain ethnic groups, including Jews, have been used as an “other.”¹⁸

The interplay between imagining the nation and making ethnic identity has also been thoughtfully considered in the context of the United States, offering insight helpful in considering the Argentine case. Scholars have highlighted the various tactics employed by immigrants and their descendants, including Jews, to maintain particularity but also articulate inclusion in the nation. These included racial discourses that allowed various groups to frame themselves as both ethnic and white, a tactic similarly used in Brazil.¹⁹ Others claimed inclusion by defining the United States as benefiting from “cultural pluralism” and framed their own ethnic legacy in a particular way that seemed fitting with their definition of American values. This was a tactic famously employed by Jews in the United States, but also by other ethnic groups as well.²⁰ In his study of the cultural pluralism, Russel Kazal

¹⁶ Gino Germani pioneering work on immigration stressed a quick integration into a new national culture (Gino Germani, *Política y sociedad en una época de transición: de la sociedad tradicional a la sociedad de masas* (Editorial Paidós, 1968); Germani, Gino, *Estructura social de la argentina; análisis estadístico* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Raigal, 1955). For examples of work that question the rapidity of this integration, see María Liliana Da Orden, *Immigración española, familia y movilidad social en la Argentina moderna: Una mirada desde mar del plata (1890-1930)*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2005). For a discussion of the myth of a “white nation with European culture” see Quijada, Mónica, “El paradigma de la homogeneidad,” in *Homogeneidad y nación con un estudio de caso: Argentina, siglos XIX y XX*, ed. Quijada, Mónica, Bernard, Carmen, and Schneider, Arnd (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2000).

¹⁷ Mónica Quijada, Carmen Bernard, and Arnd Schneider, eds., *Homogeneidad y nación con un estudio de caso: Argentina, siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2000); Matthew B. Karush, “Blackness in Argentina: Jazz, Tango and Race Before Perón,” *Past and Present*, (Forthcoming); Oscar Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement: Sugar Elites, Criollo Workers, and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism, 1900-1955* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

¹⁸ The endurance of ethnicity for Euro-descendants has been gaining more attention in light of a recent “ethnic revival” (Devoto, Fernando and Otero, Hernán, “Veinte años después: Una lectura sobre el crisol de razas, el pluralismo cultural, y la histórica nacional en la historiografía argentina,” *Estudios migratorios latinoamericanos* 17, no. 50 (April 2003): 181–227.

¹⁹ Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-civil Rights America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White: the Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (Basic Books, 2006). On Brazil, see Jeff Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960–1980* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2007).

²⁰ Daniel Greene’s recent monograph charts a similar dual focus as this dissertation in considering Jewish thinkers and writers in the United States in the 1910s and 1920s who worked “on two fronts, arguing for an inclusive definition of American national identity to the larger American public while promoting a cultural definition of Jewish identity to Jewish students and readers.” He describes these intellectuals further as trying to “preserve Jewish distinctiveness by better synthesizing it with mainstream American political and intellectual

highlights both “high pluralism” articulated by intellectuals and academics, and “vernacular pluralism” found “at a more popular, grassroots level.”²¹ While the concept of pluralism itself gained traction among Argentine Jews only in the mid-1970s, the attention to popular understandings of the nation and of ethnic inclusion is particularly useful to this study.

Argentina, of course, is its own context, creating divergent ways of thinking about national inclusion, ethnicity, and, more specifically Jewishness. A small group of recent studies have turned to the intersection between making Jewishness and defining the nation but have focused on the first half of the century.²² The most rigorous studies of later years have focused less on the construction of ethnicity and more on how the Argentine Jewish community negotiated relationships with the Argentine government, the Israeli diplomatic corps, and transnational Jewish organizations at key political moments.²³ These studies, especially those of Raanan Rein and Leonardo Senkman, have been foundational to my own work, but I redirect the focus to the still-unfolding process of making of ethnicity and imagining the nation. The rapid political changes and shifting national consciousnesses in the years after 1955, created particularly fertile ground to debate, remake, and reformulate the

thought” (*The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism: The Menorah Association and American Diversity* (Indiana University Press, 2011), 2, 4. For articulations of cultural pluralism from other ethnic groups see Russel Kazal, “The Lost World of Pennsylvania Pluralism: Immigrants, Regions, and the Early Origins of Pluralist Ideologies in America,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 7–42; Diana Selig, *Americans All: The Cultural Gifts Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2011). Marc Dollinger takes a somewhat different approach in thinking about the relationship between American Jews and Liberalism, and how Jews used and reinvented liberalism at various points in their “quest for inclusion” (Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²¹ Kazal “The Lost World of Pennsylvania Pluralism: Immigrants, Regions, and the Early Origins of Pluralist Ideologies in America,” 9.

²² Alejandro Dujovne, “‘Los libros que no deben faltar en ningún hogar judío,’ la traducción como política cultural, 1919-1938,” in *Marginados y consagrados: Nuevos estudios sobre la vida judía en Argentina*, ed. Kahan, Emmanuel et al. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Lumiere, 2011), 239–263; Nouwen, “*Oy, My Buenos Aires.*” This dissertation is perhaps most similar to Sandra McGee Deutch’s recent work on Jewish women before 1955, which highlights “popular constructions of nationalism and democracy, the fluidity of liberalism, and the racial hierarchy,” Deutsch, *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation*, 12.

²³ On Perón’s first presidency, see Leonardo Senkman, “El Peronismo visto desde la legación Israelí de Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954),” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* II (1993): 115–136; Leonardo Senkman, “The Response of the First Peronist Government to Antisemitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment,” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* III (1997): 175–206; Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*; Ignacio Klich, “A Background to Perón’s Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations,” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* I (1988): 192–223; Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955.” On the years surrounding the Eichmann affaire, see Haim Avni, “Jewish Leadership in Times of Crisis: Argentina During the Eichmann Affair (1960-1962),” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 11 (1995): 117–135; Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*. On the 1976-1983 dictatorship, see Laura Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura: Estudio sobre las organizaciones judías durante el último régimen militar (1976-1983)” (PhD, University of Buenos Aires, 2012); Emmanuel Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento: Actitudes sociales, posicionamientos y memoria de la experiencia judía durante la última dictadura militar (1973-2007)” (PhD, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2010); *El legado del autoritarismo: Derechos humanos y antisemitismo en la Argentina contemporánea*, I. ed., Colección Estudios Internacionales (Jerusalem: Instituto Harry S. Truman, Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalem; Nuevohacer, Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1995); Edy Kaufman and Beatriz Cymberknopf, “La dimensión judía en la represión durante el gobierno militar en la Argentina (1976-1983),” in *Autoritarismo y antisemitismo: Los judíos durante la dictadura militar, 1976-1983* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986), 236–275; Ignacio Klich, “Política comunitaria cajo la junta militar, 1976-1983,” in *Autoritarismo y antisemitismo: Los judíos durante la dictadura militar, 1976-1983*, ed. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986), 276–296.

intersection between being Jewish and being Argentine.²⁴ The supposed triumph of political liberalism after the fall of Perón was comfortable for Jewish activists who had always imagined Argentina's liberal tradition to include cultural and religious tolerance. As they faced an unraveling political system and social unrest over the next years, Jewish activists and middle-class society more broadly rejected the myth of a fundamentally liberal and democratic political culture. They came to think of Argentina as part of Latin America, and themselves as Latin Americans. This was a politicized identity that came with aspiration for economic development or, at more revolutionary moments, "national liberation." It was these new ways of thinking about Argentine identity that facilitated the radical formulations of Jewish ethnicity and claims that they were on the side of radical change in Argentina.

This re-imagining of the nation played a key role in the formulation of new Argentine Jewish identities, but it also is an important story in itself for understanding the Argentine nation. These were years when the definition of the Argentine nation was highly contested, but the question of ethnic particularity in the various national projects has barely been addressed.²⁵ The vantage point of Jewish activists highlights the exclusionary aspects of various political ideologies and national imaginaries. By the early 1960s, Argentine Jews began discarding their belief in the nation's liberal tradition, claiming that Argentina had never been as open to Jewish particularity as they had once imagined. Of the other ideologies that competed for dominance, some were patently exclusive, still emphasizing primordial, Spanish or Catholic views of the nation, but even those that imagined a more inclusive nation, were often quite hostile to the question of particularity. This was especially so within the revolutionary ideologies that flourished in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Beyond highlighting the exclusionary elements of liberal, populist, or revolutionary understandings of the nation, this project casts light on Jewish activists' efforts to modify or re-cast the dominant ideologies to make room for the perpetuation of a Jewish particularity.

The Jewish Diaspora

While this is at an important level a national story, it is at the same time dependent on the particular dynamics of the Jewish diaspora at this juncture. Over the past twenty years, studies of diaspora have proliferated. While the definition of diaspora is contested, Khachig Tölölyan has suggested helpfully that a dispersed group becomes a diaspora when "it is interpolated by a new discourse that directs its gaze beyond the ethnic enclave, to the homeland, to other dispersions, and to a more active collective engagement with the

²⁴ The one essay that considers constructs of ethnicity over the course of the whole twentieth century is Leonardo Senkman's "Ser judío en argentina: las transformaciones de la identidad nacional," in *Identidades judías, modernidad y globalización*, ed. Paul R Mendes-Flohr, Yom Tov Assis, and Leonardo Senkman, (Buenos Aires: Centro Internacional para la Enseñanza, Universitaria de la Cultura Judía; Ediciones Lilmod, 2007), 402–454.

²⁵ This is in accordance with Arnd Schneider's suggestion that future investigations should "insist on the understanding of different groups about the ongoing construction of the nation," Schneider, Arnd, "Inmigrantes europeos y de otros orígenes," in *Homogeneidad y nación con un estudio de caso: Argentina, siglos XIX y XX*, ed. Quijada, Mónica, Bernard, Carmen, and Schneider, Arnd (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2000), 164.

dominant national group and the state apparatus.”²⁶ While the Jewish diaspora is often used as a “classic” example of a diaspora and a point of comparison for thinking about the newer ones born of globalization, the recent scholarship on diaspora also offers great insight for thinking about the Jewish case.²⁷ Most importantly, diaspora scholars have emphasized that culture, even ethnic culture, is not made exclusively within the borders of a nation-state, but rather within the transnational diaspora.²⁸ While this was an essential insight, this dissertation is aligned with scholarship that insists that diasporic processes must be thought of in conjunction with more specifically national processes.²⁹ Thus I consider the Argentine Jewish community to be both “diasporic” and “ethnic,” the former in the sense that it was part of a broader diaspora, and the latter in that it was particularly concerned with constructing a unified identity, based on a common history, within the Argentine context.³⁰ It is only by considering the relationship of Argentine Jews to other parts of the diaspora and to Israel, on the one hand, and to the Argentine nation, on the other, that we move towards a fuller understanding of the making of Argentine Jewishness in these years.

This intersection was especially important in the case of Zionist ideology, and this project offers the first major study of the formation of particularly Argentine forms of Zionist ideology.³¹ After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Zionist segments of the

²⁶ Khachig Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 24. William Safran offers another helpful definition, whereby members of diaspora “have retained a memory of a cultural connection with, and a general orientation toward their homelands; they have institutions reflecting something of a homeland culture and/or religion; they relate in some (symbolic or practical) way to their homeland; they harbour doubts about their full acceptance by the hostland they are committed to their survival as a distinct community; and many of them have retained a myth of return,” (William Safran, “Deconstructing and Comparing Diaspora,” in *Diaspora, Identity, and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research*, ed. Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan, and Carolin Alfonso (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 10).

²⁷ For a discussion on the tensions between Jewish studies and diaspora studies, both political and substantial, yet the promise for them to complement each other, see Galchinsky, Michael, “Scattered Seeds: A Dialogue of Diasporas,” in *Insider/outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 185–212.

²⁸ For one of the pioneers in the field see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (New York: Verso, 1993). For a recent review of the efforts towards transnationalism in diaspora studies, see Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, eds., *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, 1st ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2003). With the exception of a growing scholarship on Afro-Latin Americans (Ben Vinson III, “Introduction: African (Black) Diaspora History, Latin American History,” *The Americas* 63, no. 1 (July 1, 2006): 1-18.), the experience of diasporic groups in Latin America has not been well integrated into literature on diaspora. This is surprising given the very significant influx of European, Middle Eastern, and Asian immigrants to various Latin American countries, especially Brazil and Argentina, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

²⁹ Khachig Tölölyan claims that the emphasis on de-territorialized identities has led scholars to overlook the importance of place in diasporic identity. While he points to the importance of neighborhoods and cities, I foreground a claim about importance of nation (Khachig Tölölyan, “Restoring the Logic of the Sedentary to Diaspora Studies,” in *Les Diasporas: 2000 Ans D’histoire*, ed. Anteby-Yemini, Lisa, Berthomiere, William, and Sheffer, Gabriel (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 137 – 48. This is in line with Jeffrey Lesser and Raanan Rein’s contention that scholars of Latin American Jews have too often privileged the diasporic identity over the national (Jeffrey Lesser and Raanan Rein, eds., *Rethinking Jewish-Latin Americans* (University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

³⁰ This builds off Tölölyan’s discussion of ethnic versus diasporic groups in Khachig Tölölyan, “Rethinking Diaspora(s),” 16–19.

³¹ Haim Avni has noted that “while in the United States they have pioneered a diasporic Zionist ideology, both in the times of Justice Louis Brandeis and after, the ideological positions within the Argentine Zionist

Argentine Jewish community took over the central Ashkenazi institutions and continued to control them through the late 1970s.³² They brought with them a political style and ideology that challenges the schema set out in Ezra Mendelsohn's foundational work *On Modern Jewish Politics*. Within his political typology, Mendelsohn contrasts "integrationists" with Zionists, the former defining Jewishness as a religious or ethnic identity so as to make it compatible with membership in other nations and the latter defining the Jewish people as a nation.³³ The Argentine Jewish activists studied here, meanwhile, both defined the Jewish people primarily in national terms, celebrating the rise of Israel as the new center of the Jewish people, but also forcefully defined themselves as Argentines and worked towards articulating membership in the Argentine nation. This involved an on-going and evolving effort to define the values of the Argentine nation and of Zionism as compatible with one another.³⁴ Just as national processes played a key role in these negotiations, so too did Israel's shifting position in the world. Perhaps most notably, the 1967 Six-Day War, between Israel and the Arab States during which Israel's survival seemed precarious, fomented Zionist fervency (as it did in other parts of the diaspora).³⁵ In Argentina, this translated into widespread calls for *Aliyah*, or immigration to Israel, as the fundamental act of self-realization and revolution. This particular re-imagining of the proper relationship between Jews and Israel, however, must also be understood as an outgrowth of revolutionary foment in Argentina and the sympathy it inspired among many Jews. Similarly, the month-long Yom Kippur War in 1973, in which Israel fought Egypt and Syria, and the question of Palestinian rights throughout the 1970s created the impetus to rethink Zionist ideology, but always in a way that reflected the moment in Argentine politics.³⁶

camp still awaits an adequate monograph," (Haim Avni, "El sionismo en la argentina: el aspecto ideológico," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales V* (2005): 168. Despite this general trend, there are a few studies that have considered Zionist ideology at particular moments. Yossi Goldstein offers a close reading of the understanding of Zionism in the first years after the establishment of Israel (Iosi (Jorge) Goldstein, "El periodismo judío en castellano en la Argentina, 1948-1956. Sus posturas con respecto al sionismo e Israel," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales III* (1997): 303–318); Raanan Rein and Mollie Lewis, "Complementary Identities: Sephardim, Zionists, and Argentines in the Interwar Period," *Pe'amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry*, no. No. 111–112 (Spring-Summer 2007).

³² Silvia Schenkolewski-Kroll, "La conquista de la comunidades: el movimiento sionista y la comunidad ashkenazí de Buenos Aires (1935-1949)," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales II* (1993): 191–202; Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955."

³³ Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

³⁴ This effort to complicate Mendelsohn's framework is in line with the work of Noam Pianko's, which highlights the intellectual trajectory of three Jewish thinkers in the Interwar period who integrated a national concept of the Jewish people with an effort to not only integrate into various states but also reconfigure the terms of membership (Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Indiana University Press, 2010). This dissertation, meanwhile, runs counter to Daniel Elazar's contention that modern Jews identify primarily as a nation, ethnic group, or religion and that Jews in Latin America identify primarily as an ethnic group. The strength of Zionism in Argentina, and more specifically their common claim that the Jewish people were a nation even if dispersed, undermines his assertions (Daniel J. Elazar, "Jewish Religious, Ethnic, and National Identities: Convergence and Conflicts," in *National Variations in Jewish Identity: Implications for Jewish Education*, ed. Steven Martin Cohen and Gabriel Horenczyk (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 35–52.

³⁵ For a comparative perspective of the impact of the Six-Day War across the diaspora, see Eli Lederhendler, ed., *The Six-Day War and World Jewry* (University Press of Maryland, 2000).

³⁶ For a comparative perspective on the impact of the Yom Kippur War across the diaspora, Moshe Davis, ed., *The Yom Kippur War: Israel and the Jewish People* (New York: Arno Press, 1974). On increasing attention to the Palestinian struggle on the world stage in the 1970s, see Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine:*

Similarly, the Argentine Jewish community accepted or rejected models of Jewishness and Zionism emerging from other parts of the diaspora based on their subjectivities as Argentines. The emergence of interest among Argentine Jewish activists in the early 1960s in Jewish “consciousness” or “identity” had much to do with the work of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), a prominent Jewish organization in the United States, in Buenos Aires.³⁷ Similar conversations were unfolding in the United States, and the transnational connection served to popularize a new vocabulary for discussing Jewishness. Nonetheless, I contend that there were very local reasons that Jewish activists began to take interest in the question of Jewish identity at this juncture, particularly the goal of synthesizing Jewishness with the mentality of contemporary youth. In the late-1960s, meanwhile, as the Argentine Jewish community came to conflate Argentine identity with a broader Latin American and anti-imperialistic identity, it roundly rejected North American Jewishness as materialistic and bourgeois, and not adequately Zionist. Far more appealing were models of Jewishness and Zionism originating in other parts of the “third-world,” particularly that proposed by French-Tunisian and Jewish writer Albert Memmi, for its emphasis on national and personal liberation from a colonizer. Even as many Jews identified forcefully as Jewish and Zionist, their understanding of themselves as Argentine mediated their relationship with the rest of the Jewish diaspora and their understandings of Israel.

Perhaps more surprising, and less recognized in the literature on diaspora, is that even notions about inclusion in the Argentine nation were created within the diasporic field. Most particularly, Argentine Jewish activists looked to the model of inclusion in the United States, and compared and contrasted Argentina. As highlighted above, during the heyday of the liberal myth, Jewish activists imagined Argentina to be part of the “New World” with a model of inclusion similar to that of the United States. By the mid-1960s, however, some of these same activists were emphasizing that the notion of “cultural pluralism” that Jews articulated in the United States did not apply in the Argentine context. Then in the mid-1970s, and especially under the military dictatorship, there were efforts to advocate for “cultural pluralism” in Argentina even while recognizing that it was not as natural an

Their Influence on U.S. Middle East Policy, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Paul Chamberlin, “Preparing for Dawn: The United States and the Global Politics of Palestinian Resistance, 1967-1975” (PhD, Ohio State University, 2009).

³⁷ While the variations of Jewish identity over time and place have been much studied, the question of how and when Jewish activists began to discuss “identity,” or when they became concerned with the subjective experience of Jewishness, has been largely overlooked. A key exception is the work of David Kaufman who asks this question for the United States (David Kaufman, “Toward a History of ‘Jewish Identity’: American Jewishness in the Early 1960s,” in *Association for Jewish Studies* (presented at the 43rd Annual Conference, Washington, DC, 2011)). In addition, Philip Gleason tracked the emergence of the term identity in scholarship on ethnic identity, (though not Jewish identity specifically) pointing to antecedents in the technical vocabulary of psychology and sociology (Philip Gleason, “Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,” *The Journal of American History* 69, no. 4 (March 1, 1983): 910–931). For recent work on discussions of variations in Jewish identities, see *Boundaries of Jewish Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010); Howard Wettstein, ed., *Diasporas and Exiles: Varieties of Jewish Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Some suggest that thinking about Jewish identity is relevant only in the modern world where being Jewish became a matter of choice and the religious, ethnic, and national qualities of Jewishness became disaggregated (Daniel J. Elazar, “Jewish Religious, Ethnic, and National Identities: Convergence and Conflicts,” in *National Variations in Jewish Identity: Implications for Jewish Education*, ed. Steven Martin Cohen and Gabriel Horenczyk (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 40; Michael A. Meyer, *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* (Univ of Washington Pr, 1990)). Others, such as Wettstein, extend considerations of Jewish identity into the pre-modern world.

ideology within the Argentine context. As such, this project continually looks to the intersection of national and the diasporic to fully understand the making of Argentine Jewish identities and the articulations of inclusion throughout this period.

Beyond highlighting the balance between the national and transnational for Argentine Jews, this project is in dialogue with other scholars of Jewish history during these years. Scholars of Jewish communities in other parts of the diaspora have considered many of the themes addressed here, particularly the ripple effects of the Six-Day War and the efforts of youth to remake their local Jewish community in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁸ Nonetheless, transnational elements enter these stories only with respect to each Jewish community's relationship to Israel. By integrating comparisons and connection between various parts of the diaspora, as this study does, we begin to see that not only were Jewish youth in various places inspired by the transnational youth rebellion, but theirs was often a project of making Jewishness compatible with the national version of the global New Left. These commonalities were refracted in different local contexts: in the United States, this meant framing Jewishness as compatible with community organizing, Vietnam protests, and counter-culture, whereas in Argentina it meant emphasizing the national and territorial element so as to paint it as compatible with nationalist, third-world liberation causes.³⁹ Nonetheless, by highlighting comparisons with the United States, and at times France, or North Africa, either based on the scholarship or those comparisons made by Argentine Jewish activists themselves, this dissertation contends that the remaking of Jewish ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s should be understood as a transnational trend that took on particular shape in different national contexts.

Origins, Demographics, and Challenges

The most significant waves of Jewish immigration came to Argentina between 1880 and 1930. At the peak between 1905 and 1945, approximately 8000 Jewish immigrants entered a year. The vast majority hailed from Eastern Europe, particularly Russia and Poland, while approximately 10% were Sephardic immigrants from Turkey, Morocco, and Syria. In the years after 1930, Argentina also saw some German Jewish immigration, though there were efforts to limit an influx.⁴⁰ By the 1960s, Jewish activists claimed a population of

³⁸ On the impact of the Six-Day War and youth Zionist effervescence in Australia, see Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, 2 Revised. (Holmes & Meier Pub, 2002), 368–361. Paula Hyman highlights the interplay between Jewish migration into France from North Africa, the Six-Day War in 1967, and the youth rebellion of 1968 in her consideration of French Jewry: as changing “the face of public Jewish expression in France” (Paula Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, Jewish Communities in the Modern World 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 202).

³⁹ On rebellion among Jewish youth in the United States specifically, see for example Michael E Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America*, Religion and American Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Riv-Ellen Prell, *Prayer & Community: The Havurah in American Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989); Rachel Kranson, “Grappling with the Good Life: Jewish Anxieties over Affluence in Postwar America” (PhD, New York University, 2012), Chapter 5; Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left*, Contemporary Religious Movements (New York: Wiley, 1979), Chapter 9.

⁴⁰ Robert Weisbrot, *The Jews of Argentina: From the Inquisition to Perón*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), Chapter 2; Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: a History of Jewish Immigration*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), Chapters 3-4.

500,000 Jews. These numbers were corrected in the mid-1970s by more rigorous statistical analysis based on the 1960 census. The new estimates placed the number in 1960 at 310,000, likely the numerical highpoint. The following years saw some out-migration, particularly in 1962 and 1963 and in the mid-1970s, some to Israel and some elsewhere, but the decline is more attributable to declines in birth rate and decreasing identification as Jews.⁴¹ As such, estimates by the mid-1970s were closer to 265,000.⁴² By the 1960s, Argentina's Jews were in their great majority urban, with approximately 80% in the Buenos Aires metropolitan region, even though there had been an initial migration to farming colonies in the interior. It was also a largely native population by 1960, with 70% being native Argentines. Of those between the ages of 15 and 29, 93.9% were native born.⁴³

Despite important advances in demography, the social history of Argentine Jews is unfortunately quite sparse. The limited social history that we do have suggests that the Jewish community could generally be described as part of the "middle class." One study claimed that between 1943 and 1954, the number of Jews in "tertiary activities" (business, banks, state bureaucracy, the service industry) hovered around 67%. Another indication of this move into the middle class was the move away from the neighborhoods of Once and Villa Crespo, once very densely populated by working class Jews, to more expensive parts of the city, such as Palermo and Belgrano, after the 1930s.⁴⁴ The years under Perón, 1946-1955, were also a moment for economic advancement. As will be discussed, there was a significant ambivalence within the Jewish community, and Jews more broadly, regarding Juan Perón's first regime. Part of this complexity is that many Jews benefited from his economic and social policies.⁴⁵ Evaluations based on the 1960 census, meanwhile, suggest that 71% of Jews were employed in non-manual work, as professionals, managers, and office employees.⁴⁶ In comparing different age groups based on the 1960 census, the number of Jews in sales decreased significantly from the older age cohort to the younger, while there was a significant generational increase in professional, managerial, and clerical positions.⁴⁷

As part of an explosion of sociological studies of Argentine society in the 1960s, the Argentine Jewish community embarked on an effort to gain better demographic, sociological, and cultural information about the Jewish population. Several small studies did come to fruition, but for the most part, the community continued to rely on its own non-statistical perceptions of the Jewish population, which it generally assumed to be middle-class, native-born, with a youth that was increasingly university educated. These became key assumptions underlying both the endeavor to make Jewishness compatible with the other sensibilities of Argentine Jews and the task of articulating Jewish membership in the nation.

⁴¹ On rates of Aliyah, see Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 38, 191-192.

⁴² For the definitive demographic analysis for this moment, and an explanation of why the 450,000-500,000 estimate was inflated, see U. O. Schmelz and Sergio DellaPergola, "The Demography of Latin American Jewry," in *American Jewish Year Book, 1985*, ed. Himmelfarb, Milton and Singer, David, vol. 85 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984).

⁴³ Schmelz and DellaPergola, "The Demography of Latin American Jewry," 71.

⁴⁴ Eugene F Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), Chapter 4.

⁴⁵ Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews: Perón, the Eichmann Capture, and After* (Bethesda, Md: University Press of Maryland, 2003), 70-71.

⁴⁶ Ricardo Feierstein, *Historia de los judíos argentinos*, Espejo De La Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Planeta, 1993), 132-133.

⁴⁷ Schmelz and DellaPergola, "The Demography of Latin American Jewry," 89.

A basic overview of the Argentine Jewish population would not be complete without a consideration of antisemitism.⁴⁸ As part of a broader call for renovation in the field, Raanan Rein has astutely critiqued this over-emphasis on antisemitism in the scholarship and contends that it incorrectly suggests that Jews could not possibly feel truly Argentine.⁴⁹ At the same time, there were moments of particularly acute antisemitic incidents and people in power who were plainly hostile to the Jewish community. The *Semana Trágica*, a moment of violent worker repression in 1919, included a veritable pogrom in Buenos Aires' Once neighborhood. After 1930, Catholic nationalists played an increasingly prominent role in national politics and anti-Jewish hostility was often embedded in their core-beliefs.⁵⁰ Even the liberals who had been dominant until that point had an ambivalent relationship with Jewish particularity, allowing for their membership in the nation so long as they integrated as they deemed appropriate but often disliking the persistence of a defined Jewish community.⁵¹ In the period studied here, there were recurrent waves of antisemitism, especially in the early 1960s and the mid-1970s, most often at the hands of Catholic nationalist groups, but there were also liberals and leftists who saw Jewish particularity as undermining national cohesion. These realities did not, for the most part, lead Jews to question whether national belonging was possible, but they did consistently shape the way they thought about and framed their membership in the nation and the meaning of Jewishness itself.

⁴⁸ The definition of antisemitism and its origins have long been contested. In working towards definitions, scholars have assessed whether hostility towards Jews at different historical moments can be grouped together as one phenomenon and whether hostility towards Jews can be considered qualitatively different than hostility towards other groups (Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Benz, Wolfgang, "Anti-Semitism Research," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Goodman, Martin, Cohen, Jeremy, and Sorkin, David (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, n.d.), 943–956; *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, (Oxford, England: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, by Pergamon Press, 1988). This dissertation does not take a position on these scholarly debates but rather focuses on how the Argentine Jewish activists understood hostility towards Jews (which they referred to as antisemitism) at different historical moments.

⁴⁹ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, Chapter 1.

⁵⁰ Federico Finchelstein, "The Anti-Freudian Politics of Argentine Fascism: Anti-Semitism, Catholicism, and the Internal Enemy, 1932–1945," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (February 1, 2007): 77–110; Sandra Deutsch, *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939*, 1st ed. (Stanford University Press, 1999); David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and Its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900-1932: The Argentine Patriotic League* (University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

⁵¹ Deutsch, *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation*, 6. Ariel Svarch has highlighted a tolerance for only certain kinds of Jewish particularity in the liberal press (Ariel Svarch, "'Don Jacobo En La Argentina,' Battles the Nacionalistas: Crítica, the Funny Pages, and Jews as Liberal Discourse, (1929-1932)," in *The New Jewish Argentina*, ed. Rein, Raanan and Brodsky, Adriana (Leiden: Brill, 2013). Liberal immigration policy, more generally, involved a desire to attract only certain groups of immigrants initially (particularly Northern European) and a disdain for those immigrants that arrived from Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. See, for example, Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003). So too were liberals often intolerant of the persistence of other ethnic identities. See, for example, Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas: la construcción de la nacionalidad argentina a fines del siglo XIX*, Sección De Obras De Historia (Buenos Aires: Fondo de cultura económica, 2001).

Methodology and Sources

In his recent manifestos on the state of Latin American Jewish Studies, Raanan Rein has cautioned against focusing exclusively on community leaders and institutions and thereby overlooking “unaffiliated ethnics.”⁵² This is a valid critique: though good numbers do not exist, most Argentine Jews did not affiliate with Jewish institutions. A small study conducted by the DAIA in the mid-1960s estimated that 38% of the 90,000 youths between the ages of ten and twenty-five were affiliated with a Jewish institution, but most of these attended Jewish social clubs primarily to play sports. The numbers were even smaller for Jewish university students, of which only 8% were active in communal affairs.⁵³ While recognizing that there are stories to tell about the “assimilated Jews,” in the parlance of the community itself, and also about identified Jews who were not involved in Jewish institutions, the various voices within a diverse array of Jewish institutions offers us an essential vantage point. Khachig Tölölyan has noted that while “committed, activist and militant diasporists rarely form more than a small percentage of old ethnic or new immigrant dispersions now emerging as diasporas,” they still “have a considerable and mutually reinforcing impact on the community’s perception of itself as well as the hostland state’s perception of the community, and indeed managing this game of mirrors.” I would argue further that this “game of mirrors” itself—how these activists frame themselves both to their fellow ethnic and towards broader society—is quite illuminating. As this study shows, Jewish activists, young and old, were committed to perpetuating Jewish particularity and inclusion in the nation. This made them particularly attuned to exclusive elements of various national ideologies, various diasporic trends, and the potential conflicts between being Jewish and being Argentine. In addition, while the dissertation considers the dominant Ashkenazi and Zionist segments of the community, within each of these there was significant room for division. There was the central generational divide, but within each generation, there were associations and institutions that represented different positions on Argentine politics, Israeli politics, and the fundamental elements of Jewish ethnicity. These divisions made the debates about the terms of inclusion in the nation and the contours of Jewishness particularly rich and complex.

To capture that complexity, this dissertation considers the trajectories of various institutions. There were those institutions recognized as the community’s “central” institutions, or at certain junctures more pejoratively as “the establishment”: the *Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas* (DAIA); the *Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina* (AMIA); and the *Organización Sionista Argentina* (OSA). The DAIA was founded in 1936 as a confederation of Jewish institutions that joined together to fight antisemitic hostility in Argentina and abroad.⁵⁴ Jewish communist institutions, at first excluded (along with Jewish Anarchist groups), did later join, though they were expelled in 1952, as will be discussed further in Chapter One. Due to this expulsion, by the period studied here the leaders of

⁵² Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 14. Rein’s critique is particularly salient for studies of the cultural aspects of Jewishness and how Jews’ quotidian lives were made particular by their ethnicity. Nonetheless, this project is concerned more with the public and political discussions of ethnicity and how those were informed by and sought to shape definitions of the nation.

⁵³ Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb, eds., *American Jewish Year Book, 1967*, vol. 68 (Philadelphia and New York: The American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 276.

⁵⁴ Weisbrot, *The Jews of Argentina*, 67.

various Zionist parties dominated the DAIA. In general, the Zionist parties in Argentina were local branches of Israeli political parties, such as *Mapai*, the socialist Zionist party that governed Israel for its first decades, *Mapam*, a harder left socialist Zionist party, and *Jerut*, associated with the Israeli right. In addition to the Zionist parties, representatives from the large social, cultural, and sports clubs like *Hebraica* sent representatives to the DAIA, as did the major synagogues. The DAIA's main responsibilities lay on the "external front," defending the Jewish community against attacks from the outside by lobbying the authorities or by building connections in civil society. Due to this agenda, it became one of the key organizations to grapple with the nature of the Argentine nation and the ways to articulate inclusion. As the question of the "internal front," particularly youth assimilation, became central in the community's mind in the 1960s, the DAIA leaders and the delegates at their conventions increasingly addressed these and engaged in many conversations about what Jewishness should mean in Argentina.

The AMIA had its origins in the late 19th century as a *chevra kadisha* (burial society) but began expanding its endeavors in the 1920s, taking on educational, cultural, and social welfare responsibilities. In 1949 it officially became known as the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina-Comunidad de Buenos Aires, modeled loosely after the *Kehilla*, or community organization, common to self-governing Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Its membership numbered approximately 40,000 in 1945 and 46,000 in 1975, though only a fraction of that number voted in elections.⁵⁵ The 1950s also saw the ostracism of communist factions from the AMIA, and by the late 1950s, the Zionist parties were controlling its leadership.⁵⁶ For most of these years, the local branch of *Mapai*, the ruling branch in Israel, governed the AMIA. This dissertation looks to the AMIA's cultural and educational programming, particularly that targeted at youth, pointing to the relationship between crafting a message for Argentine Jewish youth and remaking the constructs Jewishness and Zionism.

Finally, the OSA was the only specifically and officially Zionist organization of the three central institutions, though Zionists dominated the others. The OSA emerged as the result of a reorganization of the *Consejo Sionista* (Zionist Council) in 1957, and as it did so, it opened its ranks to individual Zionists, not just Zionist parties. The primary goal of this institution, for our purposes, was diffusing Zionist ideology. Much of the terrain of remaking Jewishness and articulating membership in the nation occurred specifically in terms of recasting Zionism, and the OSA played a key role in this in its diffusion of material and publications. For all these institutions, a generational shift was underway by the mid-1950s. The "second generation" of native-born, Spanish-Speaking Jews was slowly taking over some of the community's most prominent institutions. A Spanish-speaking intelligentsia had long controlled *Hebraica*, but in the late 1950s, middle-aged, native-born men began taking the helm of the Zionist parties and organizations, which had previously been controlled by the immigrant generation. In turn, they were taking leadership positions at the umbrella organizations such as the OSA and the DAIA, and taking on leadership roles at the AMIA as

⁵⁵ Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955, 172; "Resultado de la elección de representantes de asociados de la AMIA," Boletín Informativo Comunitario, May 6, 1975, Año 2, #14, 1. Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 20c. For an analysis of voter turn out during the Perón years as reflective of variations in interest in communal politics, see Lawrence Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955" (PhD, Ohio State University, 2002), Chapter 5.

⁵⁶ Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955."

their parties won more seats.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Jewish leaders were already concerned about whether Jewish youth would eventually be capable of and interested in taking the reins next.

While the establishment, life span, and political maneuverings of the community's central institutions have received considerable scholarly attention, the community's youth institutions have received almost none.⁵⁸ Constructing the membership, ideological lines, and lifeline of various youth institutions is, in itself, challenging. The majority of the youth activists considered here were members of Zionist youth movements. These were often an outgrowth of movements founded in Europe in the 1910s and 1920s to encourage settlement in Israel, but they took on a particular organizational form in Argentina. They recruited children into their youth programs and camps, led by teenage *madrijim* (leaders), where they learned about Israeli culture, particular versions of Jewish history, and read the works of the founders or ideologues of their own youth movements. Particular university divisions, often know as *jativot*, also emerged in these years, which focused their recruitment work among university students. The leaders of the Argentine versions of these movements were generally in their late teens and early 20s, though some remained "youth" activists in to their late 20s and early 30s. For the movements in general, encouraging *Aliyah* was always a key component of their work, though the single-mindedness surrounding this goal varied over time.

The largest youth movement was Hashomer Hatzair, with approximately 1,800 members in 1962.⁵⁹ Several other groups thought of themselves as part of the "Hashomer Hatzair family," including the university organization Jativa Anlievich, named for Mordejai Anilevich, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Together with the local branch of Mapam, Hashomer Hatzair shared the publication *Nueva Sión*, which was the main voice of leftwing Zionism and youth activism. There were various other youth movements, generally associated with socialist Zionism, though there was a small contingent from Betar, which was associated with the Jerut party on the Israeli right. These Zionist youth groups, along with youth leaders from *Hebraica* and a handful of synagogues, formed a lasting confederation, the *Confederación Juvenil Judeo-Argentina* (Argentine Jewish Youth Confederation, CJA) in 1965. The foundation of this confederation suggested a base level of support for Israel among almost all Jewish youth groups and also a unified desire to show that Jewish youth activists were aligned with the leftist political sensibilities and a Latin American consciousness popular among Argentine youth.

While the Zionists dominated the community's central institutions, there was a growing interest in a religious Judaism in these years. The scholarship on Argentine Jews has often emphasized that it was a largely secular bunch from its earliest day, but in the early 1960s, and especially in the 1970s, the Conservative Movement, a liberal religious

⁵⁷ On this trend, see "Año de inquietud," *Nueva Sión*, September 27, 1955, 12; "Hablan los delegados argentinos a la reunión de Jerusalem, Israel y el sionismo quieren mantener cordiales relaciones con los pueblos," *Amanecer*, August 6, 1957.

⁵⁸ Silvia Schenkolewski-Kroll points to the absence of scholarship on youth movements in "Los movimientos juveniles: una faceta carente en la historiografía sionista de la Argentina," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* V (2005): 209–220. Adriana Brodsky is currently carrying out a study on Sephardi Zionist youth movements in these same years (Adriana Brodsky, "To Migrate or Not to Migrate: Sephardic Zionist Groups in Argentina, 1960s and 1970s" (presented at the 126th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, 2012, 2012).

⁵⁹ World Zionist Organization and World Jewish Youth Convention, *Jewish Youth Movements of the World* (Jerusalem, 1963.), 22.

movement, began to grow. This was largely under the leadership of American Rabbi Marshall Meyer, who began working in Argentina in 1959.⁶⁰ Marshall Meyer, and those affiliated with the Conservative movement and with its youth group *Ramah*, will enter into this story occasionally. They do not, however, become key figures in the debates addressed here until the mid-1970s. This came with the waning power of Zionist sectors within the community's institutions and a de-emphasis on Zionism the central component of Jewish ethnicity.

In considering these institutions, this dissertation is interested in daily activities, conflicts, interactions with authorities, political maneuverings, discursive patterns, and the self-conscious crafting of a message as reflective of various popular understandings of the Argentine nation, Jewishness, and the interplay between the two. To reconstruct this history, it relies on institutional communications, personal papers, observations of diplomats and visitors from other countries, the established Jewish press and short-lived publications, educational pamphlets and advertisements for communal activities. It also draws on over forty oral histories I conducted with many Jewish activists who, given demographic constraints, were generally youth during the period in question. These interviews have been invaluable in reconstructing the lived experience of these years, as youth, as Jews, and as Argentines.

Chapter Overview

On September 16, 1955, the military overthrew Juan Perón after his near decade-long rule. While the relationship between the Jewish community and Juan Perón had been quite complex, Chapter One argues that the community overwhelmingly celebrated the new moment as the triumph of the liberal tradition. This enthusiasm echoed that of others in the broad anti-Peronist coalition, but also reflected a particularly Jewish reading of the liberal nation that stressed cultural and religious openness and tolerance. The first chapter also turns to the dominant constructs of Jewishness that prevailed at this juncture, ones that were more tied to the recent establishment of the State of Israel than Argentine politics. It discusses not only the triumph of the Zionist sectors over communal institutions, but also the ideas of Zionism they brought with them.

The next two chapters turn to the first years of the 1960s, when Jewish activists began to call into question both their ideas of the nation and of Jewish ethnicity. Chapter Two considers the response to various challenges on the “external front,” specifically waves of antisemitism that were exacerbated by Adolf Eichmann’s capture (1960), and execution (1962), but then persisted through 1965. It argues that the interplay between waves of antisemitism, mounting labor unrest and political instability led to a broad-based questioning

⁶⁰ On secular leanings of most immigrants see Víctor A. Mirelman, *En búsqueda de una identidad: Los inmigrantes judíos En Buenos Aires, 1890-1930*, (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Milá, 1988), 123–172; Nouwen, Mollie Lewis, “Oy, My Buenos Aires”: *Jewish Immigrants and the Creation of Argentine National Identity, 1905-1930*, 19. On the increasing prominence of Conservative Judaism see Adolfo Weil, *Orígenes del judaísmo conservador en la Argentina: testimonio* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano, 1988); Laura Schenquer, “(Re)ligión, política y ‘comunidad’ judía: representaciones e imaginarios sociales en el contexto de la dictadura argentina,” in *Marginados y consagrados: nuevos estudios sobre la vida judía en argentina*, ed. Kahan, Emmanuel et al. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Lumiere, 2011), 329–350.

of Argentina's liberal myths, a re-imagining of the Argentine nation that placed the working class at the center, and a claim that Jews were sympathetic to the working class as well as Peronism. It considers these changes as both a reflection of trends in broader society, but also as a reflection of particularly Jewish subjectivities.

Chapter Three, meanwhile, considers the same years but with a focus on the "internal front," what Jewish activists saw as an alarming tendency towards assimilation among Argentine-born youth who felt ever more Argentine and less Jewish. While this had long been a concern, the chapter argues that it was only in these years that Jewish activists began to self-consciously reshape the meanings of Jewishness to resonate with the political, cultural and intellectual sensibilities of Argentine youth. Jewish youth activists were at the forefront of this process, while members of the older generation accepted and rejected certain innovations. By mid-decade, most Jewish activists, of both generations had come to reject essentialist concepts of Jewishness coming from Israel and become more open to the idea of Jewish "identity" popularized in the United States.

At the height of revolutionary foment in the 1960s and 1970s, the external and internal front folded into one with the rise of the New Left. With loyalties to other third-world movements, including the Palestinian liberation struggle, the local New Left was anti-Zionist, and at times antisemitic. At the same time, many Jewish youth flocked to the New Left and disavowed their Jewishness and Zionism. Chapter Four documents the concerns surrounding these dual challenges between 1967 and 1973, and points to a growing concern about the place of Jews in a revolutionary, third-world, nation. Nonetheless, Chapter Five argues that despite these concerns, the Jewish community itself was quite drawn in by the effervescence of the moment and charts the efforts to re-craft Jewishness and Zionism in terms compatible with leftist fervor in Argentina. Jewish youth activists were particularly militant at this juncture, fashioning themselves a revolutionary vanguard and drawing inspiration from the worldwide youth rebellion and the Six-Day War. They framed the Jewish tradition as fundamentally revolutionary, Zionism as a third-world liberation struggle, and the Jewish community as on the side of "national liberation" in Argentina and across the third world. This existed in an unresolved tension with calls for Aliyah as the true revolutionary choice. I refer to this constellation of constructs of ethnicity and articulations of national belonging as "ethno-radicalism," the most surprising outcome of which was the ultimate radicalization of the "establishment" as it too responded to similar national and transnational trends.

The radicalized terms for thinking about ethnicity and national belonging were powerful but short-lived. Chapter Six turns to the years 1973-1977, as violence escalated between leftwing guerillas and rightwing, state-sponsored para-military groups, giving way ultimately to a brutal military dictatorship. In this context, many began to react against the radicalized Jewish youth activists, regarding their positions on Argentine politics, their insistence on national rights for Palestinians, and their claim that radical Zionism was the only legitimate form of Jewish identity. Those who denounced the radicalization of youth began to call for moderation: a return to a more pluralistic approach to Jewish ethnicity and a normalization of the diaspora. With respect to national inclusion, they articulated for the first time the value of "cultural pluralism" in Argentina even while recognizing the country was not pluralistic. As for the radicalized youth, some began to accept these new formulations even before the military dictatorship as they too began to critique extreme ideologies, but it was not until the community faced the military regimes brutal repression that the last

remnants of ethno-radicalism became silenced. The articulations of national membership and framings of Jewish ethnicity in the first years of the dictatorship were an outgrowth of the military's particular form of repression but also of the community's own process of radicalization and then de-radicalization that had unfolded in the previous years.

Finally, the epilogue considers a communal debate that erupted at the end of the dictatorship regarding whether the Jewish community should involve itself in the growing human rights movement. While this debate echoed many similar ones about Jewishness and membership in the nation that had unfolded over the previous thirty years, I argue that it buried much of this history even as it built upon it.

CHAPTER ONE: THE RETURN OF LIBERAL ARGENTINA AND A NEW WORLD COMMUNITY, 1955-1960

In 2009, Moshe Korin, director of culture for the AMIA, shared his memories of Juan Perón's first presidency (1946-1955). He was a school-aged child when Perón came to power. By the time Eva Perón died in 1952, he was a high school student, and in 1955, when the military toppled Perón's regime, he had just received his certification as a teacher for the state schools as well as for the "complementary" Jewish schools. In recounting his memories of the Perón regime, some clearly informed by his knowledge of the historical scholarship, he emphasized several times "there was a little bit of everything." His earliest memory was a fond one. Perón had declared children the only privileged members of the nation, and offered them free admission to soccer games, whereas admission normally cost the impossible seventy-five cents. On the other hand, Korin was disdainful of the high school teachers who required students to recite excerpts of Eva Perón's book *La razón de mi vida* and wear black ties or armbands as a sign of mourning when she died. Turning to less personal and more specifically Jewish concerns, he explained that Juan Perón once had fascist sympathies, but after World War II tried to woo the Argentine Jewish community with citizenship papers for Jewish immigrants and trade deals with Israel that were more symbolic than beneficial to Argentina. Even still, there were instances of antisemitism, particularly from the *Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista* (National Liberating Alliance, ALN), a nationalist and antisemitic organization that supported Perón. This was yet another example of "a little bit of everything."¹

Korin's refusal to offer a black and white appraisal of Perón's relationship with the Jewish community is consistent with trends in recent historiography. While Perón's opposition during his rise to power in 1946, and later the historical scholarship, often portrayed him as an antisemitic fascist in the European mold, the scholarship of the last twenty years has worked to correct this image.² The general consensus has been that Perón had a mixed record with respect to Jewish concerns—whether curbing antisemitism in Argentina or supporting Israel—but that there was a significant improvement over time as Perón became increasingly interested in courting the Argentine Jews. A more difficult task has been gauging the Jewish response to

¹ Moshe Korin, Interview with author. Digital audio recording. Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 26, 2009; "había de todas las cosas"

² The United States press was a prime propagator of this image during Perón's rule, whereas the Israeli press took a more balanced approach (Ignacio Klich, "A Background to Peron's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* I (1988): 192–223; Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden [The Netherlands]: Brill, 2010), Chapter 6. Other works that have aimed to nuance Perón's approach to Jewish concerns include Leonardo Senkman, "El Peronismo visto desde la legación israelí de Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954)," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* II (1993): 115–136; Leonardo Senkman, "Las relaciones EE.UU. - Argentina y la cuestión de los refugiados de a post-guerra: 1945-1948," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* I (1988): 90–114; Ignacio Klich, "Failure in Argentina: The Jewish Agency' Search for Congressional Backing for Zionist Aims in Palestine," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* II (1993): 245–264; Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews: Perón, the Eichmann Capture, and After* (Bethesda, Md: University Press of Maryland, 2003); Lawrence Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955" (PhD, Ohio State University, 2002).

Perón, which was undoubtedly mixed. As Korin's account suggests, trying to establish any generalities requires an assessment not only of Perón's handling of particularly Jewish concerns, but also of how Jews responded to Perón's broader project. On the one hand, many Jews, along with many members of the middle class, disdained Perón's style of governance and the cult of personality surrounding him and Evita. On the other hand, while the Perón regime famously offered concrete economic benefits to the working class, many of these benefits extended to the middle class as well, allowing for significant improvements in standard of living.³ As part of this trend, many Jews enjoyed economic advancement through the protection of certain industries or professional training in adult schools, and this ultimately allowed several Jewish institutions to buy land or build new properties.⁴ Unsurprisingly, this all led to varying responses to the Perón regime, with current scholarship generally concluding that while most individual Jews never voted for Perón, a significant minority did. When it came to Jewish institutions, the response was similarly diverse, with some key institutions reaching a friendly or accommodationist relationship with the regime, as will be discussed further below.⁵

For all the effort spent reappraising the relationship between Perón and the Argentine Jewish community, relatively little has been spent on how these Jews responded to the aftermath of Perón's rule, from his military overthrow on September 16, 1955, through the military regime which held power for three years and called itself the *Revolución Libertadora*, to the return to electoral governance in 1958.⁶ Turning attention to the community's politics after the fall of Perón not only sheds more light on Jewish activists' particular reservations about Perón's regime, but also on how they understood the Argentine nation and their membership in it. Like many others in the broad anti-Peronist coalition, most Jewish activists read the fall of Perón as the triumph of Argentina's true liberal values over the "tyranny" and "demagoguery" of the Peronist regime. The Jewish community, however, ascribed particular values to this liberal tradition, particularly openness to immigration, religious tolerance, and the independence of the Jewish community vis-à-vis the state. This Jewish framework for understanding the liberal tradition had been pioneered by some of the earliest Argentine Jewish activists, ones intent on whitewashing less liberal aspects of the Argentine nation. Those who reiterated these claims in the post-1955 years similarly dismissed Peronism and less liberal policies of subsequent governments as anomalous to the true and triumphant Argentina.

Even as the celebrations at the fall of Perón reflected a clear rejection of key aspects of the Perón regime and its relationship with the Jewish community, this chapter also argues, perhaps paradoxically, that the fall of Perón was not a turning point in the process of constructing of ethnicity that was underway within the community. This was largely because the internal communal struggles over the meanings of Jewishness and Zionism that had begun unfolding under Perón were more shaped by events that rippled across the Jewish diaspora, particularly the establishment of the State of Israel, than any event in Argentina. Still, despite the community's efforts to frame the liberal tradition as the guarantor of cultural and religious tolerance after 1955, the constructions of identity that began to take form under Perón were

³ Juan Carlos Torre and Pastoriza, Elisa, "La democratización del bienestar," in *Los años peronistas, 1943-1955*, ed. Torre, Juan Carlos, vol. 8, Nueva Historia Argentina (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2002), 257–312.

⁴ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 101–102; Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, 98–99.

⁵ Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946–1955"; Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, Chapters 5, 6, 7.

⁶ A key exception in Raanan Rein's work on the efforts of the Jewish community to erase the memory of a friendly relationship with Perón after 1955, Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, Chapter 7.

premised on the notion that there was room for a Jewish and Zionist particularity in the Argentine nation. It was not until the early 1960s that the community would begin on its next process of reformulating ethnic identity, a process that became intimately tied to new readings of the nation.

Given the fundamental importance of the Peronist experience to subsequent developments, the first section of this chapter offers an overview and analysis of the relationship between the Jewish community and Perón with particular emphasis on his corporatist politics of inclusion and the conflicts they sparked within the community. The chapter then turns to the community's celebrations of the liberal order—and the particular values they ascribed to it—after the fall of Perón. This enthusiasm extended beyond public discourse to the community's own internal reordering and its loftier musing about the nation. Neither the Peronist experience nor the illiberal aspects of subsequent government seriously complicated their particular assumptions about the liberal nation. The third part of the chapter, finally, considers the dominant constructs of ethnicity both under Perón and the governments that followed. It argues that the frameworks of Jewish, Zionist and Argentine identity, and the relatively simple synthesis between these identities that took hold under Perón, remained relatively unchallenged through the end of the 1950s.

As the introduction suggested, the rethinking of ethnicity and the nation that would begin in the 1960s was intricately connected to the community's generational politics. The community's Zionist youth activists acted as innovators of new formulations of identity, with the older generations often adopting their innovations. At the same time, the many “assimilating” youth, the source of significant anxiety, often served as the impetus for that innovation as Jewish activists, of both generations, tried to synthesize Jewishness with the youth “mentality” of the 1960s. This anxiety about youth assimilation was certainly present in the 1950s, and will be alluded to in this chapter as it emerged within various other conversations. Nonetheless, the generational dynamic that would lead to a remaking of the community and facilitate a rethinking of the nation would only emerge forcefully in the following years.

State, Nation and Ethnicity under Perón

When a military coup overthrew Juan Perón on September 16, 1955, crowds flooded the street to celebrate. The anti-Peronist media described the massive demonstrations supporting the *Revolución Libertadora* as representing the “authentic people” or “all the sectors of the people.” Implicit in this commentary was a rejection of Perón's definition of “the people” as those who supported him and the “oligarchy” as his opposition.⁷ Nevertheless, astute observers in 1955, including Ernesto Sabato, transcended this political rhetoric and more accurately noted that it was actually the “middle class” at these demonstrations and that the working class, which had been so present at pro-Perón demonstrations, was missing.⁸ While Perón's coalition was more diverse than this suggests, the rough framework of a Peronist working class and an anti-Peronist middle class undoubtedly contains much truth.

⁷ Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón: A Cultural History of Perón's Argentina* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 29.

⁸ Ezequiel Adamovsky, *Historia de a clase media argentina: Apogeo y decadencia de una ilusión, 1919-2003*, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2009), 328–329.

The reasons underlying the dichotomy, however, were not purely economic, as various sectors of the middle class enjoyed the economic benefits of the Perón regime. Instead, the opposition to Perón among the middle class, and conversely the support he received from the working class, was, as Daniel James has noted, derived from Perón's challenge to Argentina's liberal tradition, one that had prized political rights over social and economic ones. While the "democratic" parties that joined forces under the banner of the *Unión Democrática* (Democratic Union) in 1946 to oppose Perón framed their campaign "in terms of a rhetoric of 'liberty,' 'democracy,' 'the constitution,' 'free elections,' 'freedom of speech,'" Perón contended that this kind of formal liberalism had often been associated with fraud, economic dependency, and exploitation of the workers. This indictment of liberal democracy came with a move away from a citizenship based on individual participation in electoral democracy, to one based on corporatist representation that offered rights and negotiated power via interest groups.⁹

Many of the critiques of Perón within the Jewish community, especially as he rose to power and after his fall, reflected the liberal preferences of the middle class. Nonetheless, these reactions were consistently intertwined with more specifically ethnic concerns. During Perón's rise to power and particularly during his election campaign in 1946, the majority of the Argentine Jewish community read him as the reincarnation of the fascist, antisemitic, European dictators. Distrust at this juncture was reasonable. Perón rose within the ranks of a military government that took power in 1943, and that military regime was at first quite explicitly hostile to the Jewish community, banning the Yiddish press and kosher slaughter, and implementing restrictions on immigration. It further instituted mandatory Catholic education in the schools, overruling a key aspect of the 1884 Law 1420 that had mandated free, compulsory, and secular public education. The regime remained neutral during World War II until 1945. While this was largely rooted in resistance to the hegemony of the United States in the Western Hemisphere, there were various government officials who maintained an intimate relationship with the Nazi government.¹⁰

This image was magnified by the political rhetoric from both Perón's supporters and his opposition during the 1946 presidential campaign. The *Unión Democrática*, along with United States Under Secretary of State, Spruille Braden, and the Jewish press pointed to the legacy of the military regime, but also the anti-Jewish attacks at pro-Perón rallies carried out by supporters.¹¹ Some of these turned violent: in December 1945 Isaac Frydenberg killed a Perón

⁹ Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 16–17.

¹⁰ Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines? Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), Chapter 4. The controversy about the Perón regime's relationship with the Nazi regime rages on. For two opposing views see Uki Goñi, *The Real Odessa: Smuggling the Nazis to Peron's Argentina*, 1st US. (Granta Books, 2002) and Ronald C. Newton, *The "Nazi Menace" in Argentina, 1931-1947* (Stanford University Press, 1992). Ignacio Klich argues that while the Nazi government was initially optimistic about Perón as he rose in the ranks of the military regime, it ultimately concluded that he was not an ally to the German cause ("A Background to Peron's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," 194).

¹¹ On perceptions among American press, the American Jewish Committee, and American Diplomats, see, Klich, "A Background to Peron's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations"; Raanan Rein shows that this was in large contrast to the Israeli press, which offered a more nuanced appraisal of the Perón regime, one that reflected the ideological differences of the various Israeli papers (Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, Chapter 6). On Braden pressuring American reporters to portray Perón as antisemitic see Klich, "A Background to Peron's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations," 208–216. On the *Unión Democrática* encouraging the image of Perón as antisemitic, see Leonardo Senkman, "The Response of the First Peronist Government to Antisemitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* III (1997): 184.

supporter in self-defense, and Argentine Jews feared a violent retaliation from nationalist groups.¹² During the 1946 presidential campaign, *Mundo Israelita*, one of the oldest Spanish-language periodicals, refused to officially endorse a candidate, as it generally did, but wrote that at “meetings of a determined tendency and in street marches, the exaltation of a certain candidate is associated with the shout of ‘Death to the Jews!’”¹³ *Di Presse*, a socialist-Yiddish newspaper, without mentioning Perón’s *Partido Laborista* or Perón by name, equated the Peronist movement with Nazism and the restoration of Rosas’ violent para-police band, the “Mazorca.” It associated the *Unión Democrática*, meanwhile, with Argentina’s liberal political tradition and democratization.¹⁴ In the end, Jews voted against Perón more than others in their neighborhoods in 1946, suggesting that ethnic considerations, rather than class-based ones, weighted their decisions.¹⁵

Nonetheless, the relationship between the Jewish community and Perón undoubtedly changed over the course of his presidency as Perón sought to win over the Jewish community. While, for example, Perón did not readily sideline his nationalist, antisemitic supporters from the movement, he did demote noted antisemitic ministers and bureaucrats and disavowed the support of the ALN after 1948.¹⁶ While the Perón government did abstain from the vote on Jewish Statehood in the United Nations in 1947, Perón later cultivated a very warm diplomatic relationship with Israel and endorsed the Zionist cause frequently.¹⁷ While Perón did see that the mandate for Catholic education in schools was turned into a law in 1947, he also overturned this law in 1954 and affirmed the right to religious freedom as his relationship with the church deteriorated.¹⁸ Many historians have portrayed policies favorable to the Jewish community as the

¹² Senkman, “The Response of the First Peronist Government to Antisemitic Discourse, 189.

¹³ Lawrence Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955” (PhD, Ohio State University, 2002), 87–88.

¹⁴ Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” 92–3.

¹⁵ Lawrence Bell has offered the most thorough analysis of Jewish election returns by juxtaposing district election returns with Eugene Sofer’s spatial analysis of the Jewish community (Eugene F Sofer, *From Pale to Pampa: A Social History of the Jews of Buenos Aires* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982). This runs counter to a previous argument, forwarded by Juan José Sebreli, that the Jewish opposition to Perón was just rooted in class interests (Juan José Sebreli, *La cuestión judía en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1968), 253). Raanan Rein, however, has rightfully emphasized that many Jews—labor leaders, lawyers, business leaders—did support Perón even in 1946. Rein also points to 1951 election returns in the Jewish agricultural communities of Entre Ríos and Santa Fe which show majority votes for Perón, (Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 134–135.

¹⁶ On the antisemitic head of the Department of Migrations, Santiago Peralta, and Perón’s decision to dismiss him, see Leonardo Senkman, “Etnicidad e inmigración durante el primer peronismo,” *Estudios Interdisciplinarios De América Latina y El Caribe* III, no. 2 (1992): 13–16; Leonardo Senkman, “Las relaciones EE.UU. - Argentina y la cuestión de los refugiados de la Post-Guerra: 1945-1948,” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* I (1988): 90-114. For a thorough consideration of the politics of the ALN and Peron’s inability or unwillingness to suppress them in 1945 and 1946, see Senkman, “The Response of the First Peronist Government to Antisemitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment.”

¹⁷ Ignacio Klich contends that the Unión Democrática would likely not have voted any differently (Ignacio Klich, “Failure in Argentina: The Jewish Agency’s search for Congressional Backing for Zionist Aims in Palestine,” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* II (1993): 245-264.). For a thorough analysis of the relationship between the Perón regime and Israel, see Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*.

¹⁸ On Peron’s relationship with the church see Lila M. Caimari, *Perón y la iglesia católica: Religión, estado y sociedad en la Argentina, 1943-1955*, (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planetas: Emecé, 2010).

result of Peron's belief that good treatment of Jews in Argentina and friendly diplomatic relations with Israel would improve his image in the United States.¹⁹

That being said, Perón's efforts to court the Jewish community, and particularly the way he went about doing so, were also consonant with his broader efforts to construct a new nation based on the inclusion of many and exclusion of a well-publicized few.²⁰ As Leonardo Senkman has noted, at times Perón emphasized a Catholic and Latin version of the true Argentina, but at others, he defined the nation as being made up of all those who worked for the good of the nation, in contrast to the oligarchy and imperialist forces. These different ideas of the nation played out in the exclusion of Jewish immigrants, on the one hand, but on the other, granting Jews the "civil right to define their Jewish communal identity as part of the populist process of national integration."²¹ In addition to adding a clause to the constitution that disallowed any "racial distinctions," Perón announced that the "Jewish collectivity" had the same rights as "all other Argentine citizens."²²

Perón also sought to integrate the community into his national project along corporatist lines as he did with other sectors.²³ When early attempts to win over the community stalled, he formed a specifically Peronist Jewish organization, the Organización Israelita Argentina (Jewish Argentine Organization, OIA), and favored it over the DAIA. With time, though, this strategy of

¹⁹ Ignacio Klich, "A Background to Perón's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations." *Judaica Latinoamericana I* (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1988), 192; Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews: Perón, the Eichmann Capture, and After* (Bethesda, Maryland: University Press of Maryland, 2003); Ignacio Klich, "Equidistance and Gradualism in Argentine Foreign Policy Towards Israel and the Arab World, 1949-1955," in *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America: New Studies on History and Literature* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 219-239; Leonardo Senkman, "El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí de Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954)," *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales II* (1993): 130.

²⁰ Raanan Rein, who has written about these complex negotiations in international politics still notes that "During the Peronist decade, the Argentine government—trying to improve its image at home and abroad—gradually made the struggle against antisemitism an integral part of its policy. To some extent, this is not surprising. Peronist populism showed a greater readiness to promote the social and political integration of groups that had previously remained on the margins of the system," (Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 101).

²¹ Senkman, "The Response of the First Peronist Government to Antisemitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment," 176.

²² Lawrence Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955" (PhD, Ohio State University, 2002), 166 as taken from *La Luz*, September 3, 1948. Regarding changes in the constitution, see Senkman, "The Response of the First Peronist Government to Antisemitic Discourse, 1946-1954: A Necessary Reassessment," 197.

²³ Perón's relationship with organized labor is best studied. See, for example, Louise M. Doyon and Juan Carlos Torre, eds., *La formación del sindicalismo peronista*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1988); Juan Carlos Torre, *La vieja guardia sindical y Perón: Sobre los orígenes del Peronismo*, 2a ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, 2006); Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). On Perón's relationship with business associations, see James P. Brennan, *The Politics of National Capitalism: Peronism and the Argentine Bourgeoisie, 1946-1976* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009). On his relationship with the church, see Lila M. Caimari, *Perón y la Iglesia Católica*. On the integration of ethnic groups into the Peronist project, Bell alludes to efforts to court other ethnic groups as well but does not elaborate (Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," 11), while Senkman contrasts Perón's willingness to integrate the Argentine Jews, as a group, into his national project with Getúlio Vargas' use of Jews as an "other" and the marginalization of Jewish civil society (Leonardo Senkman, "Communities under the Populist Regimes of Vargas and Peron," in *Constructing Collective Identities and Shaping Public Spheres: Latin American Paths* (Brighton, England: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), 123-146).

division failed, and he developed more cordial relationships with the DAIA.²⁴ These efforts to cultivate a relationship with an Argentine Jewish institution that might speak on his behalf within the community, suggest an interest in bringing the Jewish community into the ranks of Peronists rather than just improving relations with the United States.²⁵ In these dealings, moreover, Perón not only legitimated the existence of a Jewish community in Argentina, but also proposed that Jews participate in the Peronist state as a unit, organized under their ethnic banner. These practices ran counter to more traditional paths of Jewish integration into politics and the nation. Leonardo Senkman has pointed to a liberal construction of membership in the nation, dating back to the first decades of the twentieth century. This emerged in response to the prevalence of two common yet competing national imaginaries: one that emphasized a primordial Catholic or Latin idea of the nation and the other that emphasized contractual formulations based on “constitutional republicanism.” In the face of these contradictory frameworks, Jewish intellectuals refrained from claiming ethnic loyalties in the public sphere, emphasizing that they were citizens and thereby members in the liberal nation, like any other. At the same time, they found their particular identities tolerated in the private sphere or civil society.²⁶ To illustrate this framework, Senkman offers a close reading of the memoir of Salvador Kibrick, who immigrated to Argentina from Russia as a young child, settled with his family in a farming colony, and then moved to Buenos Aires as a high school student in 1907. He continued on to the university and became a lawyer. The liberal construct of membership in the nation emerged in his strong confidence in the secular, public education system to form citizens and in his response to instances of antisemitism. When in 1940 the sermons of the archbishop of Buenos Aires, Monsignor Copello, included attacks on Jews, Kibrick described these hateful teachings that divided the “Argentine family” as making him, “as a citizen,” feel “shame in front of my sons.”²⁷ When the DAIA was founded in the 1930s, it incorporated these assumptions into policy, reiterating at every election that there was no Jewish vote, and that Jews participated in Argentine politics as individual citizens.

Perón’s framework of ethnic inclusion, meanwhile, brought ethnicity into the public and political sphere, engendering diverse responses. The openly Peronist OIA worked to be Perón’s

²⁴ While Perón had initially met with the DAIA as the *de facto* representative of the Jewish community, once the OIA was established, he shunned the DAIA. Still, these extreme efforts to strengthen the OIA at the expense of the DAIA were fairly short-lived. By 1952 Perón realized that the OIA would not be a successful conduit to the hearts and minds of the Jewish community, and he re-worked his relationship with the DAIA (Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” Chapters 3,4, 6; Marder Jeffrey, “The Organización Israelita Argentina: Between Perón and the Jews,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 29, no. 39–40 (1995): 125–152. For analyses of the OIA, particularly how much support it gained within the community and regarding the integrity of its members, see Leonardo Senkman, “El peronismo visto desde la legación israelí de Buenos Aires: Sus relaciones con la OIA (1949-1954),” *Judaica Latinoamericana* II. (Jerusalem: AMILAT, 1992) and Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 146–7.

²⁵ Senkman’s conclusion based on Israeli diplomatic documents is that the creation of the OIA was not “to involve the Jewish community in a totalitarian process of Gleichschaltung, but rather to create a loyal Jewish space from which to pronounce his anti-racist and pro-Israel discourse with the goal of changing his image, especially in the eyes of the United States” (Senkman, “Peronismo visto desde legación israelí,” 132). In light of Bell’s analysis, it seems this was the intention only after it became clear that the OIA would not succeed in Peronizing the community.

²⁶ Leonardo Senkman, “Ser judío en Argentina: Las transformaciones de la identidad nacional,” in *Identidades Judías, modernidad y globalización*, ed. Paul R Mendes-Flohr, Yom Tov Assis, and Leonardo Senkman, Biblioteca Universitaria De La Cultura Judía 2 (Buenos Aires: Centro Internacional para la Enseñanza, Universitaria de la Cultura Judía; Ediciones Lilmod, 2007), 406.

²⁷ Senkman, “Ser judío en Argentina, 411.

partner in this endeavor, but never garnered significant support in the Jewish community. The DAIA, meanwhile, confronted the new parameters with ambivalence. While initially shunning Perón's requests for outward support, in 1948, under new leadership, the DAIA shifted its tactics, at the very least for the sake of institutional survival. In 1953, the DAIA participated fully in the OIA-organized event to honor President Perón, where Perón lauded Israel and the Jewish community. In 1954, the DAIA published a book that collected all of Perón's proclamations of support for the community and Israel, presenting one copy to Perón and sending another to the American embassy. After the failed attempted coup in June 1955, the DAIA quickly expressed "profound satisfaction" with the new regime.²⁸ All along, however, the institution continued to claim that Jews voted as individuals and the DAIA was not endorsing any particular political position.

Nonetheless, others accused the DAIA of allowing the Jewish community to be co-opted. One of the central critiques came from the Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información (Argentine Jewish Institute of Culture and Information, IJA). Founded with the help of the American Jewish Committee in 1948, the leaders of IJA were the social and cultural elite associated with *Hebraica* and the synagogue, *Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina* (CIRA), and some described them as aristocrats.²⁹ They reaffirmed the liberal model of citizenship and the claim that Jews should only participate in politics as individuals.³⁰ From the other end of the Argentine Jewish political spectrum, the communists critiqued the DAIA for becoming Peronized and thus failing to defend Jewish-communist institutions when they, like other communist institutions, came under pressure from the government.³¹ Both the communists and the Jews associated with IJA were ultimately raising the question of how the Jewish community ought to interact with the state. They insisted that the Jewish community, *qua* community, was apolitical and that Jews participated exclusively as individual citizens.

This question was quickly closed with the advent of the *Libertadora*, when those who had been more or less complicit with the Perón regime scrambled to reaffirm that the community was apolitical and prized individual political participation. While Perón had explicitly offered Jewish inclusion in the nation, he had done so in a way that many found compromising, especially in retrospect. The rejection of these aspects of the Perón experience, meanwhile, would be only one element in the celebrations surrounding the return to the liberal order. As the Jewish activists celebrated this return, they ascribed particular characteristics to the liberal nation, some that echoed the broader discourse of the moment, and some which reflected their own subjectivities and concerns.

The Return of the Liberal Nation

²⁸ Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," Chapters 3-6.

²⁹ Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," 176.

³⁰ Even as the IJA reaffirmed that there was no ethnic political identity or affiliation, its thinly veiled critiques of Perón, such as calls for freedom and democracy, earned some of its leaders harassment by the police. One leader of the IJA, Simón Mirelman, was arrested for supposed participation in a bank scheme and imprisoned for a week, which suggested political persecution (Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," 199).

³¹ Lawrence D. Bell, "Bitter Conquest: Zionists Against Progressive Jews and the Making of Post-War Jewish Politics in Argentina," *Jewish History* 17, no. 3 (January 1, 2003): 285-308.

Many of the Jewish institutions that had been friendliest to Perón rapidly disavowed their positions after his fall. The change in political positioning was perhaps clearest in *Mundo Israelita*, a weekly newspaper with strong connections to the community's central institutions. Months before Perón's overthrow, the paper struck a Peronist tone in calling for prioritizing nationalism over a "just order." This editorial was printed next to an article entitled "The people of the Republic today offer homage to General Perón."³² Three weeks after Perón's fall, meanwhile, *Mundo Israelita* published an editorial entitled "What we could not say during the dark years of the dictatorship." The article did not celebrate the triumph of "democratic" forces because Jews had faced antisemitism under Perón. They had not. Instead, the ground for complaint was that Perón had used the newspaper as an "instrument of his propaganda machine." The editorial went on to attack the "unscrupulous" OIA and it followed with an affirmation that "this newspaper never engaged in proselytizing campaigns for the party that stripped the Argentine people of their liberties and undermined the dignity of its citizens."³³ This was a very forceful denunciation for a newspaper that had offered subtle elegies to the regime, but it was also a fairly honest assessment of the offenses of the Perón regime; it made clear that the regime had quelled antisemitic attacks and indicted it instead for its heavy intervention into independent civil society and freedom of press. While this echoed the stance of various other press organs, *Mundo Israelita* based its claims largely on the experience of the Jewish community.

Voices within the Jewish community would not always be so measured in their appraisal of the Perón experience, but what they would consistently share was a celebration of the return to a liberal nation. This was in keeping with the general framework embraced by the diverse coalition of anti-Peronists under the *Libertadora*. The first leader of the military regime was General Eduardo Lonardi, a Catholic nationalist, who was toppled after a short seven-week reign by an internal military coup. General Pedro Aramburu assumed the presidency for the next three years. Under the banner of the "restoration" of liberty and republican democracy, Aramburu worked to rid society of any vestiges of the Peronist movement before returning to democracy.³⁴ He banned Peronist symbols, outlawed mentions of Perón's name, persecuted and imprisoned Peronist supporters, and purged Peronist leadership from the *Confederación General del Trabajo* (CGT).³⁵ In addition, he ensured that Peronists would be prohibited from competing in elections for the constituent assembly in 1957 and in the general elections of 1958. Even in the midst of these repressive policies, many intellectuals also affirmed the broader project of the regime and validated it as a return to liberal Argentina. The literary and cultural magazine *Sur* was a constellation of anti-Peronist voices under Perón, and immediately after his fall, published a series of articles that contended that Peronism had been a hoax that had tricked the working class with a mix of fascism and *Rosismo*.³⁶ By dismissing Perón as a fascist demagogue, these

³² "Prioridad de lo nacional sobre lo social," *Mundo Israelita*, June 4, 1955, 2.

³³ "Lo que no pudimos decir en los oscuros años de dictadura," *Mundo Israelita*, October 8, 1955, 2.

³⁴ Aramburu described the repression of strikes as "luchando para que marchemos sin tropiezos hacia el reencuentro de nuestra historia que está marcada en Mayo y Caseros," (María Estela Spinelli, *Los vencedores vencidos: El antiperonismo y la "Revolución Libertadora"*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2005), 83).

³⁵ Cesar Teach, "Golpes, proscripciones y partidos políticos," in *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo (1955-1976*, ed. James, Daniel, Nueva Historia Argentina 9 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003), 24–25.

³⁶ Beatriz Sarlo, *La batalla de las ideas: (1943-1973)*, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Emece, 2007), 25; Oscar Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas: La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual en la Argentina, 1956-1966* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Puntosur Editores, 1991), 46–48.

intellectuals could endorse the position that the Peronist experience could be erased rather than integrated into subsequent Argentine history.³⁷

While invocations of the liberal tradition were discursively powerful, concrete understandings of what exactly this liberal tradition entailed were subject to intense debate within the broad anti-Peronist coalition. Most agreed, at least theoretically, in freedom of the press, a state that intervened less in civil society, and “democracy as a matter of votes.”³⁸ More contentious was the question of economic liberalism. Aramburu’s government implemented an economic program inspired by Raúl Prebisch that was a combination of a new style of structural reforms and a “more orthodox stabilization and liberalization program.”³⁹ While there was a schism in the traditionally middle-class party the *Unión Cívica Radical*, both factions championed state intervention in the economy and particular versions of economic nationalism.⁴⁰ Even more contentious was the question of Catholic education. While secular education had been one of the hallmarks of the 19th century liberal state, the *Libertadora* and then President Arturo Frondizi (1958-1962), the first civilian president afterwards, both appointed Catholic nationalists as ministers of education and legalized private Catholic universities whereas previously only secular, state universities had existed. These policies polarized society and politics, sparking the intense “*laica o libre*,” (secular or free) debate.⁴¹ Finally, and most obviously, there was an underlying contradiction in the proposition that democracy could be restored without effectively enfranchising the many Peronists. For some, this inherent contradiction was grounds to discredit the liberal tradition as a whole.⁴²

Nonetheless, for most voices in the Jewish community, this was indeed a triumph of the liberal order. This was a discourse used to advocate for themselves with the authorities, and at times seemed more instrumental than genuine. Nonetheless, the community’s own internal politics and its own discussions of Jewish membership in the nation reflected the same celebrations. Through it all, Jewish activists echoed aspects of the liberal tradition common within the broader anti-Peronist coalition, but also ascribed their own meanings to the liberal tradition as it pertained to Jewish membership in the nation. In doing so, they echoed some frameworks of inclusion that Jewish activists had pioneered before the rise of Perón. The fall of

³⁷ Mariano Ben Plotkin describes this tendency of many writers to invoke the “pathological interpretation” of Peronism whereby the regime was framed as a deviation from the nation’s proper trajectory (Plotkin, Mariano Ben, “The Changing Perceptions of Peronism: A Review Essay,” in *Peronism and Argentina*, ed. James P Brennan, Latin American silhouettes (Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 1998), 29–32).

³⁸ María Estela Spinelli, *Los vencedores vencidos*, 135.

³⁹ Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century* (Pennsylvania State Univ, 2002), 136.

⁴⁰ Celia Szusterman, *Frondizi and the Politics of Developmentalism in Argentina, 1955-62*, Pitt Latin American Series (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), Chapter 2.

⁴¹ For a discussion of the inroads made by the Catholic church under the *Libertadora* and under Frondizi and the “*laica o libre*” debate more broadly, see Mónica Esti Rein, *Politics and Education in Argentina, 1946-1962* (M.E. Sharpe, 1998), Chapters 6, 7, 8. See also V. W. Leonard, *Politicians, Pupils, and Priests: Argentine Education Since 1943* (Peter Lang Pub Inc, 1990), Chapter 6; José Salvador Campobassi, *Ataque y defensa del laicismo escolar en la Argentina (1884-1963)* (Ediciones Gure, 1964), Chapter 4.

⁴² In light of Aramburu’s repressive policies, a budding group of young leftists associated with the magazine *Contorno* began seeing liberalism as “ideology of the ruling class” or the values associated with the “bourgeoisie,” (Oscar Terán, *En busca de la ideología argentina*, (Buenos Aires, República Argentina: Catálogos Editora, 1986), 216). Plotkin calls this the “literature of self-mortification” (Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas: The Emergence and Development of a Psychoanalytic Culture in Argentina* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2001), 168–170; See also Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, 53–6. This discourse would become increasingly pervasive over the course of the 1960s.

Perón and the so-called restoration of the liberal tradition offered the opportunity to rearticulate them triumphantly.

Jewish Advocacy in the Liberal Nation

Affirming the project of the *Libertadora* was politically prudent for any group. Still the Jewish community felt the need acutely because it faced accusations that it had been too cozy with the Peronist regime and was at least partly responsible for its (post-1953) anti-clerical policies.⁴³ This was particularly pressing given the Catholic and Nationalist allegiances of members of Lonardi's regime and a wave of antisemitic threats and literature released surrounding Perón's overthrow.⁴⁴ In response to these perceived threats, and perhaps due also to a certain shame at having reached accommodation with the Perón regime, the central institutions ostracized those who had been the most vocal Peronist supporters, and certainly the leaders of the OIA, from the community's institutions.⁴⁵ The first month after the coup also saw editorials from *Mundo Israelita*, *Nueva Sión*, *Di Yidishe Tzeitung* and declarations from the DAIA praising the new regime.⁴⁶ They generally dismissed any previous praise for Perón as a requirement for institutional survival.

Various voices within the community also appropriated the revived liberal discourse to advocate for Jewish interests. In a letter to President Aramburu the DAIA called for removing restrictions on Jewish immigration, the lifting of a ban on the use of Yiddish in public gatherings in place since the early 1940s, and the end to discrimination against Jewish medical students in Buenos Aires hospitals. All of these, the DAIA argued, "are repugnant to the democratic spirit," which should motivate the authorities, to embark on a "radical remedy."⁴⁷ A year later, *Mundo Israelita* wrote an angry piece denouncing two illiberal restrictions that were still standing: a decree implemented by President Castillo's conservative regime in 1943, which mandated that foreign language newspapers print their editorials in Spanish and another from Perón that prohibited the use of foreign languages in public gatherings. These policies were proof of the "Nazi-fascist affiliation" of those regimes and thereby shameful to "our liberal system." There was, *Mundo Israelita*, went on "no valid reason that the government that rose out of the

⁴³ As Perón's relationship with the Church became increasingly estranged towards the end of his presidency,, the IJA expressed concern that Catholics would associate the attack on friendliness towards the Jewish community, and rightfully so given that some Catholic Nationalists adopted the slogan "Down with Perón and his Jewish friends!" (Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 154-5).

⁴⁴ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 158-162. At a meeting of a Hashomer Hatzair chapter, a socialist Zionist youth group, days after the September 16 coup, conversation was, on the one hand, more frank than it had been in recent memory, likely reflective of the fall of Perón. Nonetheless, the speakers noted "the organized diffusion of verbal and written agitation" as a result of the political changes and noted that community was currently "living with a sense of insecurity and uncertainty" (Realizó mifleguet H. Hatsair un importante acto de esclarecimiento," *Nueva Sión*, September 27, 1955, 8; On a later date, *Nueva Sión* critiqued the DAIA for not being adequately prepared to respond to the antisemitism that accompanied the transition, ("Año de inquietud," *Nueva Sión*, September 27, 1955, 12). Within *Nueva Sión*, the publication associated with Hashomer Hatzair, there was variability in the spelling of "Hatzair," but Hatzair was more standard.

⁴⁵ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 163-7; Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," 284-286.

⁴⁶ Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," 282.

⁴⁷ "La DAIA elevó un memorial al Presidente de la República, General Pedro Aramburu," *Mundo Israelita*, December 17, 1955, 3.

Revolución Libertadora should maintain these totalitarian burdens that tarnish and obscure the democratic itinerary that it has championed resolutely and without weakness.”⁴⁸ In this instance, *Mundo Israelita* was not interested in noting that the Perón regime had actually muted antisemitism to a large extent. Instead, the goal was to contrast his nationalistic and intolerant dictatorship with the supposedly liberal and culturally tolerant *Libertadora*.

This framing of the Perón regime as particularly hostile to the Jewish community was invoked fairly frequently in the community’s attempts to turn the liberal/anti-liberal framework to its advantage. When the military government convoked a constituent assembly in 1957 to write a new constitution, various voices within the community advocated adding a clause to protect against racial discrimination.⁴⁹ Editor of *Amanecer*, Lázaro Schallman, tied the proposed reforms to an explicit rejection of Peronism, writing in April 1957:

There has always been an explicable correlation between dictatorial ideologies and racist and chauvinist hate; and, as a result, when our nation is ready to root from its soil the nefarious seed of dictatorship, it is only fair that it will simultaneously put in place an insurmountable constitutional barrier against those who propagate doctrines that do not correspond with the liberal tradition and the Argentine spirit.⁵⁰

Advocacy during the *Libertadora*, then, involved not only efforts to frame cultural and religious tolerance as part of the liberal tradition, along with civil liberties in democracy, but also a tendency to over-associate the Perón regime with anti-Jewish persecution so as to emphasize that undoing persecution fit within the broader liberal goals of undoing Peronism.

Similar tropes permeated the Jewish community’s efforts to advocate for secular education. As noted above, both Aramburu and Frondizi had Catholic nationalists as ministers of education, and both governments supported the Church’s efforts to legalize private universities, breaking the state monopoly on higher education. The “*laica o libre*” debate became most explosive in September 1958 when Frondizi proposed legislation that would ultimately allow for the establishment of Catholic universities. The debate raged in newspapers, magazines, and on the streets, with a protest against the law numbering 200,000, mostly university students.⁵¹ From the fall of Perón onward, many voices within the Jewish community maintained that secular education at all levels was a guarantor of the liberal tradition. In the 1955 letter to Aramburu mentioned above, the DAIA made clear its opposition to reinstating the Catholic education in the schools that had existed for much of Perón’s time in office. Secular public schools, it argued, were instrumental in forging “the spiritual unity of the Argentine nation” and that compulsory secular education had been the “the instrument of perfect *convivencia* [coexistence].”⁵²

The realities of enduring antisemitism and especially the debate surrounding Catholic education call into question whether the Jewish community was as inwardly confident in the

⁴⁸ “Resabio de la dictadura y lastre de la reacción,” *Mundo Israelita*, June 22, 1957, 2. For a similar approach taken by IJA see “Una delegación del Instituto Judío Argentino recibió el General Aramburu,” *Mundo Israelita*, January 28, 1956, 5.

⁴⁹ “Frente a la reforma constitucional,” *La Luz*, October 4, 1956, 70, 72; “Que la reforma constitucional contemple medidas contra discriminaciones raciales y religiosas, Pide en un memorial la DAIA,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 13, 1957, 4.

⁵⁰ “Represión de toda discriminación racial y religiosa,” *Amanecer*, April 12, 1957, 4.

⁵¹ Rein, *Politics and Education in Argentina, 1946-1962*, 182–191.

⁵² “La DAIA elevó un memorial al Presidente de la República, General Pedro Aramburu,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 17, 1955, 3.

return of the liberal nation as its outward rhetoric suggested. This question seems especially salient given that the values they so frequently ascribed to the liberal nation were racial and religious equality and “*convivencia*.” Invoking the liberal tradition to secure their position was undoubtedly shrewd. But they were not being solely instrumental: this understanding of the liberal nation extended far beyond public discourse. It is in the community’s own internal politics, particularly its reform of various institutions and disavowal of Perón’s politics of ethnic inclusion, that we see the clearest celebration of the new moment and the liberal nation.

Liberalism on the Internal Front

In October 1955, an author listed only as “RME” offered an appraisal of the previous years in *Nueva Sión*, a paper associated with socialist Zionism and the youth movement Hashomer Hatzair.⁵³ The community, he claimed, had “experienced a period that challenged its autonomous existence under the regime that has just fallen.” The regime’s interference had created ugly politics within the community where unnamed organizations (such as the OIA) tried to “conquer the representative voice of the community.” In addition, some of the members of the DAIA had created ties with the government. *Nueva Sión* used this moment to remind its readers that it had always maintained, “every Jew can take the political position that suits him. The central institutions of the community should not attach the community to any particular party.”⁵⁴ In the following issue, a frequent contributor writing under the name “Emet” issued a strong critique of the *Convención Extraordinaria* the DAIA had just held for failing to offer a “profound and honest assessment” of its actions under the Perón regime. While Emet made clear that *Nueva Sión* as a publication was not among those who “believe that the work of the DAIA had been all bad,” the compromises made under the previous regime merited a thorough examination, so as to avoid repeating the errors committed. To move forward, the community needed to affirm the “independence and autonomy of the *ishuv* (community) and its absolute impartiality in the nation.”⁵⁵

This call for maintaining independence from the political process as a community was to a large extent a response to the specific experience under Perón, when the question of how to negotiate the regime had been divisive. Nonetheless, *Nueva Sión*’s claim that the Jewish community, as such, had no political alignment, was also a loftier vindication of the autonomy of civil society and individual citizenship. In fact, it was in discussions on the internal workings and political culture of the Jewish community that it becomes clear that the optimism about the new political moment was deeply rooted. The community’s own politics reflected an enthusiasm for the so-called restoration of the liberal tradition rather than disillusionment with the anti-democratic tendencies of the *Libertadora*, concessions to the church under that regime and Frondizi, or antisemitic policies that remained in place.

Nueva Sión was only one of many voices that denounced the system of corporate ethnic political involvement and endorsed involvement in politics based on individual citizenship. In December 1955, the DAIA issued a proclamation affirming its “unwavering political

⁵³ Publishing under pseudonyms was common in *Nueva Sión*, more as a reflection of the insular culture of the staff than a reflection of the danger associated with publishing under one’s own name.

⁵⁴ RME, “La colectividad judía en la hora presente,” *Nueva Sión*, October 27, 1955, 6.

⁵⁵ “La convención de la DAIA—cumplió su cometido?” *Nueva Sión*, November 25, 1955, 8, emphasis in original.

impartiality, which allowed the members of the community to involve themselves in the democratic system in accordance with their convictions, as is the right of every citizen.”⁵⁶ This question reemerged again in 1958 during the election campaign, as it did in almost every election year. During this election, a “*Movimiento Israelita ‘Balbín Presidente’*” (Jewish Movement for Balbín for President) formed, encouraging Jews to vote for Ricardo Balbín instead of Frondizi. The organization issued a flyer that argued that Frondizi had connections with “*criollo* fascists” as well as communists, which implied he was less supportive of Israel. Efforts like these led the DAIA to encourage everyone to vote and support the “progress toward the normalization of democratic institutions,” but to make clear “the Jewish community as such was impartial in party politics.” Every Jew, it went on, “acts as an individual in the civic life of the nation, like all other citizens.”⁵⁷

These affirmations of political independence referenced one element of the liberal tradition, and the simultaneous efforts towards renewal and reform in Jewish institutional life invoked other elements. In 1957, Isaac Goldenberg, president of the newly founded *Organización Sionista Argentina* (Argentine Zionist Organization, OSA) linked the restructuring and democratization of the Zionist movement with the political project of the *Libertadora*. While discussions about reforming the umbrella Zionist institution, the *Consejo Sionista* (Zionist Council), had begun before Perón’s fall, they were only put into action afterwards. In 1956 the *Consejo* became the OSA, which individuals could join without being members of any Zionist party.⁵⁸ At the new institution’s first convention in 1957, Goldenberg announced, “We meet in the city of Córdoba, the bastion of Argentine democracy. We are certain we will find in its moral climate the right environment to enable the channeling of the liberating ideals of the Zionist movement into this centralized organization.”⁵⁹ This was not a vague reference to Argentina’s democratic credentials, but a rather explicit one to the military insurrection in Córdoba that toppled Perón and led to the establishment of the *Libertadora*.

Similar calls were echoed in various institutions and periodicals, all premised on the assumption that the members of the community were taken with the new moment and the rebirth of independent civil society. Bell has pointed to calls for democratization of the AMIA via electoral reform from both the Zionist and communist block in late 1955.⁶⁰ While calls for proportional elections had been issued before within the community, now the campaigners made reference to national renewal to build support for their cause.⁶¹ An advertisement for the *Bloque Democrático Judío* (Jewish Democratic Block), a coalition of Zionist parties, announced that the elections should be “the starting point for a broad campaign of rationalization and democratization in all aspects of Jewish life, given the climate created by the recent events in the nation.” The advertisement continued, “Local Jewry is part of the Argentine nation, which is beginning a new era that should be based on freedom, democracy, liberty and the rights of all

⁵⁶ “En una declaración de la DAIA reitera la vocación democrática de la colectividad judía del país,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 3, 1955, 3.

⁵⁷ “La colectividad es prescindente en materia de política partidaria,” *Mundo Israelita*, February 15, 1958, 2.

⁵⁸ “La preconvencción del sionismo argentino,” *Nueva Sión*, August 10, 1955, 6.

⁵⁹ “Refirmó la fe en la causa del pueblo kinus sionista realizado en Córdoba,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 6, 1957, 6.

⁶⁰ Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” 239.

⁶¹ On Zionist takeover of the community and calls for proportional election, see Silvia Schenkolewski-Kroll, “La conquista de las comunidades: El movimiento sionista y la comunidad ashkenazí de Buenos Aires (1935-1949),” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* II (1993): 191–202.

citizens without racial or religious distinction.”⁶² Reforms in other institutions meanwhile focused on rationalizing operations with the consolidation of two major networks of non-communist schools into the *Vaad Hajinuj* (Education Organization) in 1957, and movements towards restructuring the *Confederación Juvenil Sionista Argentina* (Confederation of Jewish Zionist Youth).⁶³ *La Luz* spoke directly to this trend on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah in October 1957. “Within Jewish life in Argentina,” it wrote, “the efforts to consolidate institutional life have been renewed, in line with the recuperation of democracy in the nation, a project the government of the Revolución Libertadora is committed to.”⁶⁴

The one notable exception in this broad trend of democratization and restructuring was the DAIA.⁶⁵ Various press outlets advocated for major reform in the DAIA’s system of representation, particularly moving away from a confederation of delegates from other institutions towards direct elections like those at the AMIA. These critiques had existed even before the rise of Perón, but during his rule came mostly from the organizations that opposed the institution’s relationship with Perón.⁶⁶ After his fall, meanwhile, these critiques emerged from multiple and diverse corners. Unsurprisingly, *Mundo Israelita* couched its appeal for reform as necessary in “these moments when the nation, having been subdued for more than a decade under a regime of force, has just recuperated its liberties and restored democratic life.”⁶⁷ While the DAIA gestured towards reforming its statutes in 1956 and 1957, there were no major changes.⁶⁸ Still, there was undoubtedly an impulse towards democratization within the Jewish institutions and an effort towards rationalization and reorganization in others, both in line with a broader rebuilding of civil society after the fall of Perón.

When Jewish leaders advocated for the community to the authorities, they emphasized that democracy and liberty were the order of the day, but so too was cultural and religious

⁶² “Bloque judío-democrático para las elecciones en la comunidad, *Mundo Israelita*, October 15, 1955, 4. In 1956 the government approved a change in the AMIA statutes, which created a representative assembly in the place of an assembly open to all the members of the AMIA. *Mundo Israelita* lauded this change as opening “the path towards greater democratization of our institutional life,” (“Aprobó el gobierno la reforma de estatutos de la kehila,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 5, 1956, 5). In 1957 the AMIA held its first proportional elections, with each Zionist party competing separately along with the communists, the bund, and the Comité Centro Europeo (“Gran interés por el comicio de la kehila,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 6, 1957, 9; “Por Israel y contra los ‘progresistas’ se definió la elección de la kehila,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 20, 1957, 2).

⁶³ “Objetivos y realizaciones de la Federación de Comunidades,” *Mundo Israelita*, March 16, 1957, 2; “Informes de los Consejos de Enseñanza,” *Mundo Israelita*, March 23 1957, 8. 1957 also saw the emergence of *Amanecer*, the first Spanish-language Jewish daily since the expulsion of Jews from Spain. Editor Lázaro Schallman, editorialized frequently on the value of the freedom of the press, calling, “The restoration of freedom of expression is perhaps one of the most prized accomplishments of the *Revolución Libertadora*” (“El mensaje presidencial,” *Amanecer*, April 1, 1957, 4). While never saying so explicitly, Schallman likely saw this political moment as making possible such a significant undertaking, both for the lack of censorship and the enthusiasm for rebuilding within the Jewish community.

⁶⁴ “Comentarios: Retrospectiva del año que fenece ante el umbral del año nuevo hebreo,” *La Luz*, October 4, 1957, 7-8.

⁶⁵ The DAIA did employ the same vocabulary, but to consolidate its own authority, claiming that “In the climate of liberty and democratic traditions, which make up the essence of our republican life, the DAIA, as the legitimate representation of the Jewish community in Argentina, finds the potential to fully realize its goals of defending and supporting human rights,” (“El memorial de la DAIA al presidente de la nación,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 24 1955, 2).

⁶⁶ For earlier critiques of the DAIA’s system of representation, see Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” 133–136.

⁶⁷ “La DAIA en su vigésimo aniversario,” *Mundo Israelita*, November 12, 1955, 2.

⁶⁸ “Nueva postergación de un viejo problema,” *Mundo Israelita*, February 16, 1957, 2.

tolerance. In so doing, they tried to ensure that the liberal values they most associated with the nation be incorporated into the government's agenda. The community's internal politics during these years, meanwhile, pointed to an enthusiasm for still other elements of the project of the *Libertadora*—the independence of civil society, freedom of the press, and citizenship based on individual political participation. These assertions built on formulations of Jewish membership in the nation that dated back claims earlier century that had emphasized that membership in the nation, was based on a civic ideal, and that Jewish particularity was confined to the private sphere or civil society. The fall of Perón and the supposed restoration of liberalism under the *Libertadora* seemed to validate this model, and the community took the new opportunity to affirm it forcefully.

The New World, the Americas, and Argentina

In 1942, the Zionist Youth Confederation of Argentina issued an article entitled “Loyalty to America Stimulates Our Zionism.” It claimed, “Every Jew has the color of the land he inhabits. The Chinese Jew is yellow, the Yemeni Jew is black...It should not surprise us that Jews of the Americas have a color different from the Old Continent.” It went on to explain that a Jewish youth born or raised in the New World, whether he spoke English or Spanish, was “above all, a free man, a democratic creature, a son of the emancipating revolution.” This freedom made him uniquely capable of redeeming Zion when compared to his persecuted brethren in the Old World.⁶⁹ While this article responded to the particular context of World War II, it was emblematic of yet another component of the Jewish community's understanding of Argentina as a liberal nation. Within this framework, Argentina was considered in the same camp as the United States, particularly when it came to space for ethnic particularity. Even as Argentine Jews faced moments of acute antisemitism and exclusionary nationalism, as they did during the years proceeding and during World War II, they generally maintained this conception of the nation and the region.

This framework, in which the Americas and New World were used interchangeably, enjoyed a particular prominence in the late 1950s in more lofty discussions of the relationship of Jews to the Argentine nation. In years to come, discussions about the challenges facing the community would contextualize Argentina as a Latin American nation, finding underdevelopment, structural inequality and revolutionary movements to be relevant factors in shaping the lives of Argentine and Latin American Jews. In the 1950s, however, the concept of Latin America held little weight in how the community understood itself or the challenges it faced. Instead, Jewish voices defined the challenges facing the community by the very openness associated with the Americas.

The most explicit endorser of this framework was *Mundo Israelita*, then edited by León Kibrick, who had since the 1920s actively propagated the liberal construction of the nation. Numerous times during the *Libertadora*, he wrote editorials that framed Argentina as a “New World” country, which, like all the others in the Americas, was fundamentally open to immigrants and their descendants. This was in contrast to the “Old World,” where Jews were, de jure or de facto, “national minorities, with different rights and legal powers.” As national

⁶⁹ *Primeras etapas del movimiento sionista en la argentina, en fotografías, documentos y Periódicos de la Época*, Publicación Especial del 41 Iom Haatzmaut, Buenos Aires-Argentina, 1989, OSA, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 21.

minorities, they faced persecution but assimilation was never an option. In the new world, meanwhile, the situation was opposite in that “legislation along with the habits and traditions are entirely free and therefore no ethnic group is blocked by their origin or their lineage from climbing to the most varied realms of society.” For Kibrick, this was praiseworthy, but also had the negative effects of a decreasing “attachment to Jewishness.” This had to be remedied by a strong Jewish education, to tie Argentine Jews to the “destiny of the [Jewish] people.”⁷⁰

Mundo Israelita was the most explicit and repetitive endorser of this understanding of Argentina as indistinguishable from the other, open societies in the new world, but *La Luz* also invoked this framework on occasion. In response to anti-Jewish attacks in an Argentine Syrian publication, *La Luz* affirmed that one could be fully Argentine without disavowing their Jewish tradition, “especially in the young nations” because affirming both identities “offers more force and vigor to true patriotism.”⁷¹ In this construction, Argentina, and the other “young” countries, or those in the New World, were enriched by citizens of different backgrounds.

Latin America, meanwhile, rarely emerged as a relevant category of analysis in these years. Even as various Latin America-wide or South America-wide Jewish conventions were established, the proceedings at these conventions reflected little sense of particularity associated with the region. An 80-person convention of the *Juventud Mordejai Anilevich* (Mordejai Anilevich Youth) in 1956 included participants from the major cities in Argentina and Uruguay. The Argentines saw the participation of Uruguayans as positive not because these two Latin American nations faced similar realities and challenges, but because it gave the gathering “an international character” and allowed the Argentines to learn more about the needs of the Uruguayans.⁷² The *Congreso Judío Latinoamericano* (Latin American Jewish Congress), a branch of the World Jewish Congress, held its first conference in Montevideo that same year. Again, its central goal was not considering Latin American Jewry as a unit with regional commonalities, but amassing significant funds for Israel, then in the midst of the Suez Crisis.⁷³ When the same group met in 1958, some agenda items did suggest that the coordinators were beginning to see Latin America as a relevant framework. One topic to be discussed was the relationships between the Jewish community, other sectors of the population, and the respective national governments. Another was the influence Arab communities exercised in Latin America and their efforts in certain cases to “incite anti-Jewish hate, in accordance with the institutions of the Arab League.”⁷⁴ While detailed reporting on the convention is not available, these agenda items might well have led to analysis of commonalities in the region more broadly. Still, the primary concern at these conferences was assimilation and building a unified force for Israel.

Perhaps most indicative of the solidity of the New World framework considering ethnic particularity, is that Latin America was already becoming a relevant category in other respects. The distinction is perhaps most clear in *Amanecer*, the daily, Spanish-language, Jewish newspaper that published from 1957-1958. On national rather than Jewish questions, Schallman discussed Argentina as part of Latin America, a continent in which liberal impulses dueled with more reactionary and fascist tendencies. One May 1957 editorial discussed political violence in

⁷⁰ “Comenzó la inscripción en las escuelas israelitas: Un deber irrenunciable impartir a los niños educación judía genuina,” *Mundo Israelita*, February 25, 1956, 2.

⁷¹ “Los sirios locales creen poder extender el conflicto del Medio Oriente a la Argentina,” *La Luz*, February 10, 1956, 2.

⁷² “El V seminario de invierno de la Juventud Mordejai Anilevich,” *Nueva Sión*, September 13, 1956, 8.

⁷³ “Intensos preparativos para el Congreso Judío Latinoamericano,” *Mundo Israelita*, January 28, 1956, 4.

⁷⁴ “Problemas de suma importancia abordará la Conferencia Judía Latinoamericana, en B Aires,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 31, 1958, 5.

Chile, Cuba, Columbia, and Nicaragua, where citizens fought against dictatorships. These conflicts, common to Latin America, were essentially between the forces of democracy, which had as their ancestors José de San Martín, Simón Bolívar, and José Martí, and the forces of fascism with ancestors such as Rosas. The paper ended on an optimistic note because these countries were increasingly “eliminating the tyrannies and imposing regimes based on respect for the laws and individual liberty.”⁷⁵ This was a triumph that had already occurred in Argentina with the *Libertadora*. At the same time, when *Amanecer* discussed Argentina in terms of its reception of Jews, there were no dueling traditions, but rather just a liberal nation. One editorial described Passover, the holiday of liberation, as having particular resonance in Argentina, where formerly persecuted Jews could now “mix their unleavened bread without fear of the infamous calumnies or accusations of ritual crime.” Jews found in Argentina, moreover, that the “hymn of their new nation” inspires the same passion for liberty as Passover traditionally did.⁷⁶ With respect to Jewish questions, or ethnic particularity more broadly, then, there was only a liberal Argentina that was more broadly part of the “New World,” even as Latin America was a region where liberalism and fascism dueled in other contexts.

There is no doubt that the Jewish community discussed 1955 as a key turning point. For the various voices within the community and the broader anti-Peronist coalition, the Peronist experience was definitively over and Argentina’s true liberal tradition had been restored. Despite debates over the meanings of the liberal tradition in broader society, the Jewish community celebrated its version of the ideal in various capacities: in its public discourse and advocacy, in the restructuring of the community’s institutions, and in the broader discussions of the nature of the nation and Jewish membership in it. Many of the formulations of membership in the liberal nation had been pioneered earlier in the century, but the supposed rebirth of the liberal nation after 1955 was a moment to reiterate and reclaim these models forcefully. At the same time, there were processes afoot within the Jewish community, particularly in the construction of Jewishness and Zionism, that belied the discussion of 1955 as a turning point, and especially the framings of the liberal ideal as the only guarantor of ethnic inclusion.

Jewish Ethnicity and Gradual Change

While Peronist politics created certain divisions within the Jewish community, the most divisive internal debates during his time in office were more due to momentous international events. These included, as Lawrence Bell has noted, the end of World War II, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the radical change of position of the USSR towards the State of Israel.⁷⁷ Within the Argentine Jewish community, the most notable and drastic effect of these international events was the growing hegemony of the Zionists as they unified and ostracized the

⁷⁵ “Las luchas fratricidas en nuestro continente,” *Amanecer*, May 27, 1957, 4.

⁷⁶ “La fiesta de la libertad,” *Amanecer*, April 15, 1957, 4. Similarly, at the meeting of Zionist party Poale Sion Hitajdut, a socialist party affiliated with the governing party of Israel (Mapai), one topic was the challenges facing socialism in the world, Israel, South America, and Argentina (Se iniciara mañana un seminario ideológico de Poale Sion Hitajdut, *Mundo Israelita*, July 14, 1956, 7). A publication of Ijud Hanoar Hajalutzi, a pioneering Zionist youth group, included a piece by Professor Américo Ghioldi on “Las dictaduras latinoamericanas” (“La cuarta veida del IJUD” *Unidad Jalutziana*, March 1956, year 3, #19, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 8

⁷⁷ Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” 203.

Soviet-line communists, or “progressives” (*progresistas*) from the community’s central institutions. While the Zionists and communists had feuded in the 1930s, there had been a short-lived détente after the Soviet Union entered World War II.⁷⁸ Tension began to grow anew when the Soviet Union changed its position on Israel in September 1948, with Argentine Jewish progressives (and many of their counterparts in other parts of the diaspora) following the Soviet line.⁷⁹ In the next years, when the progressives turned a blind eye to antisemitic persecution in the Soviet Union and its satellite nations, the majority of the Zionist contingent tried to exclude them from communal leadership, calling them traitors to the Jewish people.⁸⁰

The most dramatic and bitter manifestation of the Zionist/Progressive conflict took place at the DAIA. There each institution within the community garnered two representatives regardless of its size, which strongly benefited the Zionist camp with its proliferation of institutions. The breaking point at the DAIA, and within the community more broadly, came when the Czechoslovakian government accused fourteen party members, including Rudolf Slansky, general secretary of the Czech Communist party, of espionage linked to a Zionist conspiracy. Eleven of the fourteen accused were Jews and most were hanged. The incident was widely considered a purge of Jewish communists.⁸¹ In response, the DAIA issued a declaration demanding unity in denouncing this antisemitic persecution, but the progressives refused to sign the declaration. The progressive newspaper *Tribuna* wrote, “it is not possible to conceive that an entity which is supposed to be the expression of the sane, patriotic, and unified sentiments of the Jewish community, is converted into a tribunal of defenders of espionage, of defenders of those who betray their *patria*...” In response to this stance, the DAIA expelled all progressives, blocked them from receiving communal funds, and refused to support them when they became the victim of antisemitic attacks. In this instance, the politics of the Peronist government and its relationship to the DAIA aided the ostracizing of the communists. Perón too denounced the actions of the Czech government and voiced active support for the Zionists, gaining the praise of the Jewish Zionist press and the United States diplomatic community.⁸² A year later, Perón

⁷⁸ As Bell shows, during the years leading up to the war, the Argentine Jewish community divided into factions over how to spend the money raised for European Jewry. Militant Zionists (who controlled the DAIA) wanted to fund development in Palestine and efforts to bring Jews there, where as less-militant Zionists and non-Zionists wanted direct aid to European Jews by means of the American Joint Distribution Committee. It is unclear from Bell’s distinction what exactly the ideological differences were between the less-militant (or liberal as he refers to them) Zionists and the militant Zionists (Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” 30).

⁷⁹ In Argentina, the first specific conflict revolved around how to disperse the funds collected for Israel within the Jewish community. The Zionists were happy to hand the money to the World Jewish Congress and the Joint Distribution Committee, but Progressives wanted to ensure that the money did not go to the Israeli government but rather to popular forces on the ground in Israel (Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” 216–217).

⁸⁰ An exception was the left-wing Zionists affiliated with the Israeli party Mapam and its youth movement, Hashomer Hatzair. While opposed to the stance of the progressives, they were also opposed to their marginalization from the community, which brought them under fire from the other Zionists (Organización Juvenil Sionista Hashomer Hatzair, 1952, Archivo IWO, Box: no name).

⁸¹ For more on the repercussions of the Slansky trial across the Jewish diaspora, see Helaine Blumenthal, “Fourteen Convicted, Three Million Condemned: The Slansky Affair and the Reconstitution of Jewish Identities After the Holocaust” (PhD, UC Berkeley, 2012).

⁸² Bell, “The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955,” 229–232.

cracked down on various communist individuals and institutions, many Jewish ones among them. Neither the DAIA nor the Israeli ambassador spoke out against these actions.⁸³

Meanwhile, triumph in popular elections at the community's largest institutions suggested that the Zionists were winning the Jewish street. These years saw many contentious elections at the AMIA with 40,000 members, and the social and cultural institution, *Hebraica* with 15,000.⁸⁴ The ultimate move to proportional elections at the AMIA in 1957, while linked to the moment of reform after Peron's fall, was also made possible by the Zionists' confidence that the communists would no longer be able to win even when the Zionist parties participated individually rather than as a block. The communists ultimately came in third place with 13% of the vote, but the Zionist parties formed a governing coalition to exclude them from leadership in the *Consejo Directivo* (Board of Directors).⁸⁵ Complaining about their exclusion, one communist member of the Assembly of Delegates argued that they too wanted peace in the Middle East, but most Zionist participants scoffed, pointing to elegies the communists had issued to the Egyptian president and Soviet ally, Gamal Abdel Nasser.⁸⁶ Support for the Soviet Union was defined as antithetical to support for Israel, and being a Jew required support for Israel. As such, the new Zionist leadership ostracized the progressive Jews for failing to show a true dedication to the Jewish people.

Other scholars have analyzed the growing power of the Zionists within the central Jewish institutions, but the goal here is to explore the understandings of Jewish ethnicity that they brought with them as they triumphed within these institutions. Just as 1955 was not a clear turning point for the dominant sectors of the Argentine Jewish community, neither was it a turning point for the constructs of ethnicity these dominant Zionist voices endorsed. Nonetheless, the syntheses of various identities that were formulated under Perón and then after his fall were both predicated on similar assumptions about ethnic belonging in the Argentine nation. It was not until the early 1960s, in yet another context, that these would begin to be challenged.

What Kind of Zionism? What Kind of Jewishness?

The ostracizing of the communist sectors of the community made clear that a loyalty to Israel and an unwillingness to accept the Soviet line on antisemitism were becoming central criteria for what it meant to be Jewish. Another important element of Jewish consciousness in the post-Perón era was that theirs was a tradition that was fundamentally humanistic or universalistic and thereby compatible with Argentine values, though this was actually a long-standing belief in the community. As Salvador Kibrick explained in his memoirs, "both cultures, the Jewish and

⁸³ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 192; Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," 232-3.

⁸⁴ For the insertion of Zionists into AMIA politics in the early 1940s, see Schenkolewski-Kroll, "La conquista de las comunidades: El movimiento sionista y la comunidad ashkenazí de Buenos Aires (1935-1949)." With AMIA leadership determined by a winner-take-all electoral system, the Zionists began creating a unified list in 1949 to most effectively combat the Progressives. The Zionists won in every subsequent election through the Perón years, though at first the progressive still garnered percentages as high as 40%. At Hebraica the Zionist block was represented by the leaders of IJA, and they too definitively triumphed over the Zionists in the same years (Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955," Chapters 5).

⁸⁵ "En jornada de gran significado la lista de Mapai triunfó rotundamente en el comicio de la Kehila," *Mundo Israelita*, April 20, 1957, 6; "Emilio Gutkin preside el nuevo consejo directivo," *Mundo Israelita*, April 27, 1957, 2.

⁸⁶ "Una positiva demostración de civismo fue la primera reunión de la Asamblea de Delegados," *Mundo Israelita*, April 27, 1957, 6.

Argentine, are harmonious, they complement each other to the point where they could be confused when it comes to their high goals of serving humanity.”⁸⁷ As the Zionist sectors came to dominate the community, they often included Zionism as part of this broader humanistic project. Lázaro Schallman explained in the first issue of *Amanecer* that while being a Jew and an Argentine might seem contradictory at first, this “double belonging,” was possible because “both souls desire the survival of humanity.” As such, one’s affection for the “spiritual homeland” of Israel only strengthened his “affection for Argentina.”⁸⁸ Others employed similar tropes to describe the Zionist movement and the state of Israel, as was the case at the 1958 convention of General Zionists. This group associated with the centrist, middle-class party in Israel, proclaimed its hope that Israel’s “liberal and humanistic program, that has characterized, from its first moment, the Zionist movement created by Theodor Herzl” would continued to thrive.⁸⁹ Either explicitly or implicitly, the humanistic, universalizing construct of Jewishness and then Zionism was to be compatible with a certain version of the Argentine nation that prized similar values. This was a framing that had been invoked since the early twentieth century, including under both Perón and under the *Libertadora*.

After the founding of the State of Israel, defining the essence of Jewishness and Zionism was not nearly as common as efforts to balance an allegiance to Zionism with a continued life in the diaspora. While noted historian Haim Avni has pointed to the lack of attention paid to Zionist ideology in the historiography of the Argentine Jewish community, one notable exception is a short piece by Yosi Goldstein, which considers how Jewish-Argentines constructed Zionism between 1946 and 1956.⁹⁰ Goldstein frames his discussion in a broader debate within world Jewry, fleshed out, most prominently, in discussions between David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, and Nahum Goldman, leader of the World Jewish Congress and then also the World Zionist Organization. Ben-Gurion argued that the establishment of the state of Israel meant the time had come for the gathering of all Jews in Israel and the “negation” of the diaspora, while Goldman saw the possibility of the perpetuation of the diaspora even after the founding of the State.

In studying the Perón period, Goldstein finds that among communal elites and the Spanish-Jewish press, Israel was most commonly seen as “a nation for stateless and persecuted Jews,” and a “center of spiritual inspiration” for Jews who lived securely in Argentina.⁹¹ Goldstein suggests in passing that this balancing act was an imperative during the Perón regime, but the radical shift in politics in 1955 did not change the framing of Zionism. In 1956, León Kibrick, editor of *Mundo Israelita* argued that to avoid assimilation, young Jews would need to understand the “agglutinating role of Israel and its insurmountable importance as a principle force of cohesion of the people.”⁹² This was a framing of Zionism that did not require Aliyah but

⁸⁷ Senkman, “Ser judío en Argentina: las transformaciones de la identidad nacional,” 412.

⁸⁸ “Como y porque” *Amanecer*, March 18, 1957, 4.

⁸⁹ Confederación Sudamericana de Sionistas Generales, 1958, July 9-14, Archivo IWO, Box: Betar-Likud.

⁹⁰ Haim Avni, “El sionismo en la Argentina: El aspecto ideológico,” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* V (2005): 145–168.

⁹¹ Iosi (Jorge) Goldstein, “El periodismo judío en castellano en la Argentina, 1948-1956. Sus posturas con respecto al sionismo e Israel,” 308.

⁹² “Comenzó la inscripción en las escuelas israelitas: Un deber irrenunciable: Impartir a los niños educación judía genuina,” *Mundo Israelita*, February 25, 1956, 2. The notion that immigration to Israel at this juncture was the purview of those who most needed it was bolstered by the actual needs of the state at this moment. While David Ben-Gurion called for the negation of the Diaspora even at this juncture, the Argentine delegates to the *Comité de Acción* of the World Zionist Organization returned from the meeting in Jerusalem, emphasizing that Israel had more immigrants than they could support, and therefore it was the duty of the Zionist movement to contribute money to

rather treated the State of Israel as a triumphant and inspiring example that would help to reinvigorate the Jewish people, and more specifically to prevent assimilation of Argentine Jewish youth.⁹³ In 1959 the new editor of *La Luz*, Nissim Elneché, the son of the previous editor, David Elneché, was unwilling to privilege Israel as the center, and instead contended that Israel was as served by the diaspora as the diaspora was by Israel.⁹⁴ Still even the voices that normalized life in the diaspora, before and after the fall of Perón, also romanticized a certain kind of Aliyah. *Mundo Israelita* highlighted that immigration to Israel was an option not just for persecuted Jews, but also for idealistic youth who could cultivate the land and defend Israel against its Arab neighbors.⁹⁵ Others, like the intellectuals associated with *Hebraica* and its publication *Davar*, saw no imperative for Argentines to make Aliyah but did praise *jalutzim*—the pioneers who moved to Israel and created Kibbutzes—for their “biblical humanism,” again emphasizing the link between humanism, Judaism, and Zionism.⁹⁶

Those who most seriously entertained the question of Aliyah were the Zionist parties, organized along similar lines to those in Israel, and the youth movements associated with them. The South American Convention of General Zionists in 1958 discussed Aliyah as the “highest expression” of Zionism, both for youth and middle class families. Nonetheless, the participants highlighted various other ways of expressing support for Israel, including “the diffusion of Hebrew culture, education, and language, the promotion of all forms of economic collaboration with Israel...and the consolidation of ties between the Jewish communities throughout the world.”⁹⁷ *Nueva Sión*, meanwhile, with its affiliation to the youth movement Hashomer Hatzair, which worked towards encouraging youth to make Aliyah and join a Kibbutz, similarly identified other ways of identifying with the State of Israel. In making recommendations for the Jewish year beginning in 1955, it contended:

It is necessary that all leaders understand that Jewish-Argentine professionals and intellectuals need to be drawn into the collaboration with the State of Israel in a practical way, using their prestige and capabilities. Artists, writers, poets who speak Spanish, can come together surrounding the cultural ideal of the nascent State and its young literary and artistic life. The vitality that the reborn Jewish nation displays...should be the face put forth to the immense majority of Jewish-Argentine intellectuals who have until now been on the margins of the Jewish national project.⁹⁸

the immigration effort (“Hablan los delegados argentinos a la reunión de Jerusalem, Israel y el sionismo, quieren mantener cordiales relaciones con los pueblos,” *Amanecer*, August 6, 1957, 5).

⁹³ Goldstein highlights a similar logic in his article on those who championed Hebraicist education in Jewish schools (as opposed to Yiddish) (Goldstein, Iosi (Jorge), “El movimiento hebraísta en la Argentina (1948-1959),” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* II (1993): 179. For a similar reliance on the triumph of Zionism as a mans of inspiring youth, see also “La juventud judía y el sionismo jalutziano,” *Mundo Israelita*, November 16, 1957, 2.

⁹⁴ “Sentido judío universal de Yom “Haatsmaut,” *La Luz*, May 15, 1959, 3.

⁹⁵ Iosi (Jorge) Goldstein, “El periodismo judío en castellano en la Argentina, 1948-1956. Sus posturas con respecto al sionismo e Israel,” *Judaica Latinoamericana, Estudios Histórico-Sociales* III (1997): 308.

⁹⁶ Goldstein, “El periodismo judío en castellano en la Argentina,” 312.

⁹⁷ Confederación Sudamericana de Sionistas Generales, 1958, July 9-14, Archivo IWO, Box: Betar-Likud.

⁹⁸ “Año de inquietud,” *Nueva Sión*, September 7, 1955, 12.

In this construction, Israel could be a source of inspiration or a spiritual center for Jews in the diaspora even as *Nueva Sión* advocated for recruiting young people in pioneering movements.⁹⁹

The fall of Perón was not a moment for significant reevaluation when it came to the values ascribed to Zionism and Jewishness, nor the ways they were discussed as compatible with being Argentine. Some of the earliest Argentine framings of Jewishness and Zionism—as universalistic and humanistic traditions and therefore compatible with Argentine values—appeared both under Perón and after his fall. If there was a significant turning point, it was the establishment of the State of Israel, which forced consideration of what it meant to be a Zionist Jew in the diaspora now that the option of living in Israel existed. For the most part, the newly dominant Zionist sectors saw Israel as an emotional and spiritual center, a construct that could co-exist easily with a strong attachment to the Argentine nation. For some, Aliyah was a goal, though few were willing to endorse it as the only way to be Zionist. That so little changed across the 1955 divide suggests an underlying assumption that dual identities of this sort could exist in Argentina during both moments. Even though the community affirmed that *convivencia* and openness were particularly liberal and democratic values after Perón’s fall, the constructs of identity that were dominant under Perón also point to fundamental belief among Jews that they could be Jewish and Zionist and still part of the Argentine nation.

Conclusion: “New Nations” and the Road Forward

In 1957, *Mundo Israelita* published an essay by Isaac Goldenberg, the leader of the OSA, and a member of the “second generation” of Jews born in Argentina. This one essay not only called into relief what was absent from most other discourse at the time, but also foreshadowed many interconnected trends that would become dominant in conversations about Jewish ethnicity, youth, and the Argentine nation in the coming years. He argued that Argentina was among the “*pueblos nuevos*,” but for him, this did not mean the “new world,” or the “Americas,” but rather what would soon be known as the third world. According to Goldenberg, these nations were “extreme” but also capable of generous gestures. They suffered from underdevelopment, and moved forward but also backwards. In this context, the tendencies in Jewish advocacy that assumed the ubiquity of liberalism were flawed. “In Latin America,” he wrote, “we can not focus our politics and *esclarecimiento* [enlightenment campaigns] only on friendships with some local personalities, because these countries are always in flux. We should work on conquering the dominant trends in popular opinion, and we can only do this on our own.”¹⁰⁰ These sentiments not only questioned the utility of liberal allies, but also recognized the importance of the popular classes, whose distinct opinions and whose challenge to the liberal paradigm had been largely dismissed after the overthrow of Perón. In addition, the invocation of “Latin America,” with its nationalism and structural and political challenges, as a relevant category of analysis, is a striking contrast to the invocations of the “Americas” found elsewhere. In a sea of voices affirming that Argentina was a liberal society that had been welcoming to Jews and that the fall of Perón meant

⁹⁹ The OSA’s resolutions from its 1957 convention also reflected a consensus among the Zionist parties that valued Aliyah as well as other ways of supporting Israel from the diaspora (“Refirmó la fe en la Causa del Pueblo Kinus Sionista Realizado en Córdoba,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 6, 1957, 6, 10).

¹⁰⁰ Isaac Goldenberg, “Reditanse las grandes de nuestra historia: Dios no quiera que se repiten las miserias,” *Mundo Israelita*, July 27, 1957, 6,7,8.

the triumph of the liberal consensus, Goldenberg set himself apart and foreshadowed the paradigm shift that would emerge in the following decade.

This analysis of the nation also had implications for the way the community defined itself. Youth born in these “new nations,” he argued, were very much shaped by their surroundings. While the European-born Jews who currently lead Jewish institutions were “full of Judaism” they had a different mentality than the “Argentine *sabras* [native-born Israelis]” and lacked the “language of Jewish-Argentine youth.”¹⁰¹ In the mid-1950s, many others were concerned with youth assimilation and how to prevent it, but the conversation about a youth mentality was only beginning to emerge more broadly. Jewish youth activists were at the forefront of this. *Nueva Si3n* pointed at a “youth problematic” and suggested that within the community, socialist Zionist youth groups were uniquely capable of offering “a clear response to the difficult questions and concerned common among youth today.”¹⁰² In 1956 the *Departamento de Jóvenes* (Department of Youth) at *Hebraica* hosted a round-table entitled “What is it that characterizes our generation?”¹⁰³ Nonetheless, the youth problematic was not yet clearly defined. The 1960s would see much greater attention to the youth mentality among Jewish activists of different generations, in efforts to explain and respond to assimilation. With this would emerge a new “language” to communicate with these youth, and with it, new meanings for Jewish and Zionist identities.

¹⁰¹ Goldenberg, “Reditanse las grandes de nuestra historia.”

¹⁰² “Frente al congreso de la CJSA,” *Nueva Si3n*, June 22, 1956, 6; “El V seminario de invierno de la Juventud Mordejai Anilevich,” *Nueva Si3n*, September 13, 1956, 8.

¹⁰³ “Debate sobre la juventud judía,” May 5, 1956, Year 33, #1709, page 5.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DEMISE OF THE LIBERAL NATION, 1961-1966

On May 11, 1960, Israeli Mossad agents kidnapped Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann from a street in the province of Buenos Aires. Over the next nine days, the agents shuffled him between seven different locales, and then finally transported him to Israel.¹ On May 23, David Ben Gurion, the Israeli Prime Minister, announced that the infamous war criminal had been captured but did not reveal where from. Over the next weeks, the Argentine press speculated that he had been captured from Argentine soil, and at the beginning of June, the Israeli government confirmed this to be the case.² This announcement set off a diplomatic crisis and exacerbated a wave of attacks against the local Jewish community. The Eichmann kidnapping provided Argentine Nationalist groups with a pretext to accuse the Jewish community of “double loyalty” and to assault Jewish institutions and people.

In the next years, the Argentine news covered Eichmann trial assiduously.³ The news of his hanging in mid-1962 again increased the frequency and severity of anti-Jewish attacks. With the antisemitic hostility and economic downturns, rates of Aliyah, or immigration to Israel, had a sharp peak in 1964 at approximately 4000, though even this was still a small percentage of the 310,000 Argentine Jewish population.⁴ Overall, these years were quite challenging for the Argentine Jewish community as it sought to balance attachments to Argentina and Israel and to confront quite serious antisemitic assaults. Given this, it is unsurprising then that this period has captured the attention of the most prominent scholars of the Argentine Jewish community.⁵ Various studies have analyzed the diplomatic repercussions of the capture, the relationship between the Eichmann affair and anti-Jewish sentiment, the responses within the Argentine Jewish community, and, to a lesser extent, the repercussions for Argentine Jewish identity.

This chapter parts ways with much of this scholarship that focuses specifically on the moment of the Eichmann affair. It argues that the communal reaction to the Eichmann affair is best understood as the first moment of a dynamic process that unfolded over the next years as the community confronted ongoing challenges on the “external front.” A longer lens reveals that the interplay between antisemitism, labor unrest, and political instability from 1960 to 1966 ultimately set the stage for the community’s reevaluation of the Argentine nation and Jewish membership in the nation.⁶ While Jewish youth and adults alike first understood antisemitic

¹ The basic details of the plan and its execution have been the subject of various studies and are summarized in Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 85.

² Milton Himelfarb and Morris Fine, eds., *American Jewish Year Book, 1961*, vol. 62 (American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), 199.

³ Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews: Perón, the Eichmann Capture, and After* (Bethesda, Md: University Press of Maryland, 2003), Chapter 6.

⁴ There is some debate on the exact figure, see Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, 227-228.

⁵ Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*. Leonardo Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986); Emmanuel Kahan, “La identidad judía en la Argentina en los tiempos del ‘Affaire Eichmann’ (1961–1962),” in *Cultura y política en etnografías sobre la Argentina*, ed. Frederic, Sabina and Soprano, Germán (Buenos Aires: Bernal, 2005), 141–159.

⁶ This is in keeping with Leonardo Senkman’s approach. His in-depth study on antisemitism spans 1958-1966, the years under democratic rule between two dictatorships, and he refuses to privilege the first years of the 1960s. By documenting various waves of anti-Jewish hostility that began before Eichmann’s capture and extended long

incidents as the work of fringe groups who existed outside the dominant, liberal culture of the nation, they slowly discarded this model. The ongoing efforts of nationalist bands and especially their seeming ability to make inroads with the working class played a key role in this development. So too did the failure of the “liberal sectors”—mainstream politicians, intellectuals, artists, and journalists—to serve as consistent allies lead to questions about their friendliness to Jewish particularity. Increasingly, Jewish activists began to understand Argentina as a Latin American nation, characterized by structural problems and often-exclusive ideas of the nation, and antisemitism as a byproduct of these phenomena.

These reassessments were intricately tied to the broader trend of questioning the “liberal nation” among the sectors that had celebrated its triumph after the fall of Perón. Many in the broad anti-Peronist coalition believed that the Peronist working class, which had been tricked by Perón, would be easily incorporated into the liberal democratic political system and the memory of Perón and Peronism erased.⁷ To this end, the military banned Peronist parties in electoral politics. Rather than erasing Peronism, the exclusion from the political system fomented strong discontentment and labor unrest. It also undermined the stability and legitimacy of the elected governments of Arturo Frondizi (1958-1962) and Arturo Illia (1963-1966).⁸ The unraveling political order and the workers’ continued allegiance to Peronism led many to question previously held assumptions and the experience of Peronism into a re-imagining of the nation. Those on the left rejected many of the nation’s founding liberal values and those who had perpetuated them, arguing that the ideas of political and legal equality and a cosmopolitan culture had been promoted by those Argentines tied to foreign (and imperial) interests.⁹ They increasingly conceived of the working class as the true protagonists of the nation, rather than the previously touted middle class, and accused the latter of betraying the nation by rejecting Peronism.¹⁰ Following the model of the Cuban Revolution, they contended that a strongly nationalist movement would lead revolutions in Latin America, and that in Argentina, the authentic, popular, nationalist movement was Peronism.¹¹ Many more moderate voices, those that called for economic development rather than revolution, also tended to embrace the notion

after, he shows that antisemitism was more linked to various economic downturns, political crises, and social unrest than to the Eichmann affair. Leonardo Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986).

⁷ Cesar Tcach, “Golpes, proscripciones y partidos políticos,” in *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo (1955-1976)*, ed. James, Daniel, Nueva historia argentina 9 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003), 24.

⁸ For an overview of the political dynamics of the moment, see Guillermo A. O’Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Univ of California Intl &, 1973); Tcach, Cesar, “Golpes, proscripciones y partidos políticos”; James W McGuire, *Peronism Without Perón: Unions, Parties, and Democracy in Argentina* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997), Chapter 3-5; Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Chapter 3 and 4.

⁹ Oscar Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas: La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual en la Argentina, 1956-1966* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Puntosur Editores, 1991), 64–66. Historical figures like Rivadavia and Mitre were discarded as national heroes and framed as traitors to the nation (Silvia Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder en Argentina: la década del sesenta*, 2a ed. (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno de Argentina, 2002), 212.

¹⁰ Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, 66, 99–121; Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder en Argentina*, 214; On the centrality of the Middle Class in constructions of Argentine history, see Ezequiel Adamovsky, *Historia de la clase media Argentina: Apogeo y decadencia de una ilusión, 1919-2003*, (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2009), 364.

¹¹ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder en Argentina*, 201.

of Argentina as a Latin American nation and the Peronist movement as a legitimate expression of the workers' interests.¹²

These formulations found echoes within the Jewish community, but the Jewish rethinking of the nation also reflected particularly Jewish subjectivities. This chapter first offers a close reading of the work of two Jewish institutions—the DAIA and the socialist Zionist youth newspaper, *Nueva Si3n*—between 1960 and 1965 as they tried to make sense of ongoing antisemitism, the Argentine nation, and their membership in the nation. Both observed trends in the kinds of accusations leveled at the Jewish community, the nature of the attacks (verbal, written or physical), and the connection between moments of acute hostility and the broader unrest in Argentine society. While at first they tried to reconcile recurring antisemitism with the idea of a liberal nation, they ultimately rejected this idea and began to think of Argentina in new terms. The process varied between the two institutions, as the members of the DAIA and the writers and editors of *Nueva Si3n* had different agendas, occupied different places in Argentine society, and had differing perspectives on Jewish communities in the diaspora. Nonetheless, both increasingly grappled with the place of the working class in the nation, Argentina's Latin American context, and the question of Jewish membership in a newly conceived nation. The chapter finishes with an in-depth analysis of the DAIA's Territorial Convention of 1966, where the delegates included youth affiliated with *Nueva Si3n* and, of course, the leaders of the DAIA. Despite the differences in perspectives, this convention revealed that new frameworks for understanding the relationship between the Jews and the Argentine nation had become quite dominant, even as it also offered glimpses of the competing frameworks and schisms that would emerge in later years.

The DAIA: A New Nation, New Continent, and New Allies

In June 1962, Graciela Sirota, a 19-year old Jewish university student, was kidnapped and tortured by members of the Catholic, nationalist *Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara* (Nationalist Movement of "Tacuara," hereafter Tacuara). The abductors burned her with cigarettes and tattooed her with a Swastika, and told her that the attack was "revenge for Eichmann." Days later the DAIA called a strike to protest these events. Most Jewish businesses, and many non-Jewish ones, closed their doors and posted in the window "*Cerrado como protesta contra las agresiones nazis en Argentina*" ("Closed as a protest against Nazi aggressions in Argentina"). Many high school and university students joined the strike, and various political, union, and civil organizations expressed support. The boldness of this protest was unprecedented; indeed, it was the only public action of such magnitude the DAIA organized during this period.¹³ Much more common was lobbying governmental leaders, entertaining prominent figures in civil and political

¹² If the revolutionary approach was one way to imagine change for the continent, the other was developmentalism (Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, 139–140). The developmentalist approach suggested that an interventionist state could bring about economic modernization and incorporate the working class, much like Peronism had done (Kathryn Sikkink, *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Brazil and Argentina*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 60-61; Carlos Altamirano, *Bajo el signo de las masas: (1943-1973)*, (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2001), 73-90).

¹³ Avni has offered the most thorough analysis of the successes and failures of Jewish leadership during the years of the Eichmann affair, including the Sirota kidnapping (Haim Avni, "Jewish Leadership in Times of Crisis: Argentina During the Eichmann Affair (1960-1962)," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 11 (1995): 117–135).

society, and issuing press releases, all in its attempt to improve the image of the Jewish community and halt the incidents of antisemitism. These tactics had been the mainstay of the DAIA throughout its thirty-year life. Nonetheless, in the early 1960s, the DAIA leaders did engage in a dynamic process of reevaluation that led to subtle yet important changes in how they interacted with Argentine society and remarkable changes in the way they understood the Argentine nation.

Setting the stage for this transition was the rise of a generation of Argentine-born Jews to the highest leadership positions at the DAIA. Isaac Goldenberg, mentioned in the previous chapter for his 1957 discussion of the Argentine nation that foreshadowed later changes, was emblematic of the ascendancy of this new generation when he took the helm of the DAIA. In this capacity, he ultimately led the institution's efforts to better understand antisemitism and its connection to the nation's problems. In 1964 *Mundo Israelita* described him as a "judío criollo." It went on, "he is an Argentine who knows this country; he understands and lives its problems."¹⁴ Still, in the first years under Goldenberg's leadership, the DAIA maintained that Argentina was a fundamentally liberal nation that prized religious and cultural tolerance, democracy, and the co-existence of various groups, and that antisemitism was the work of fringe groups of outsiders.¹⁵ These assumptions about the nation extended beyond the DAIA's public proclamations and underpinned its own internal politics and reforms.

By 1962, however, this framework slowly changed in a process that reflected both particular Jewish concerns and broader trends in society. As the inaction of supposed liberal allies led to disillusionment, the DAIA leaders began to claim that the nation was not, and had never been, as friendly to Jewish particularity as they had once imagined. This dented the image of the liberal nation, as did the ongoing labor unrest, military interventions, and failure of the liberal democratic system to provide stability. In this context, the leaders of the DAIA began to grapple more seriously with the working class as key national actors and to normalize Peronism and national populism in Latin America more broadly. It was this new framework that ultimately led to mounting efforts to build alliances with labor leaders and to claim that the Jewish community was not the enemy of the working class nor, importantly, of Peronism.

Eichmann and the Liberal Nation

When the Israelis captured Eichmann, a wave of anti-Jewish attacks had already been underway for over a year, as a result of both the 1959 "worldwide swastika epidemic," that started in West Germany and the socio-economic unrest in Argentina.¹⁶ The incidents in that year included Swastikas painted in various locales, anti-Jewish propaganda in a nationalist newspaper, antisemitic slogans shouted at rallies, threats via phone and mail, and smashed windows at the Jewish community center *Hebraica*.¹⁷ The main perpetrators were a handful of nationalist groups, most prominently Tacuara, which was founded in 1957 by young, extremist Catholic nationalists to fight for the reinstatement of Catholic education in the public schools.

¹⁴ "El antisemitismo es un problema serio" sostiene el presidente de la DAIA Dr. Isaac Goldenberg," *Mundo Israelita*, September 12, 1964, 10.

¹⁵ See for example, "Convención de la DAIA orientará a la colectividad acerca problemas actuales," *Mundo Israelita*, April 7, 1962.

¹⁶ On the worldwide swastika epidemic, see *American Jewish Year Book 1961*, 209-213.

¹⁷ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 14; *American Jewish Committee 1961*, 184.

They were hostile to liberal democracy, communists, and Jews, and inspired by the doctrine of Catholic priest Julio Meinvielle.¹⁸

In the midst of this wave of antisemitism, Israel revealed that Eichmann had been captured in Argentina. The capture, which was in violation of an extradition pact that the Argentine and Israeli governments had signed two days earlier, set off a diplomatic crisis.¹⁹ The diplomatic crisis was resolved fairly quickly, but Tacuara and other nationalist organizations accused Jews of “dual loyalty,” implying insufficient loyalty to Argentina. They continued to vandalize Jewish buildings with swastikas, and launched a series of assaults on Jewish high school students. At the *Colegio Nacional Sarmiento* Tacuara members shot and severely wounded high school student Edgardo Manuel Trilnik. The perpetrators yelled “long-live Eichmann, death to the Jews.” This incident garnered firm denunciations from President Frondizi and the mainstream press, as the Graciela Sirota kidnapping would two years later, but the perpetrators were not prosecuted.²⁰

The Eichmann execution also came during another wave of antisemitism, from mid-1961 through mid-1962, as nationalist groups tried to capitalize on an economic recession and the political frustrations regarding the outlawing of Peronism.²¹ In the run-up to the March 1962 election, the *Unión Cívica Nacionalista*, a political party formed by Tacuara militants, tried to capture workers’ votes and openly attacked the Jewish community.²² Still, the pace and severity of antisemitic attacks worsened when the Israeli government hanged Eichmann, two months into Guido’s administration. Raanan Rein counts over 30 attacks in the next month, which included demonstrations and Molotov cocktails thrown at Jewish buildings. The most shocking event was undoubtedly the Graciela Sirota kidnapping. Despite broad outrage within the Jewish community and the many sectors that joined the boycott, the federal police chief, Horacio Enrique Green, portrayed the attack as a fabricated by leftist Jews to create social unrest. Rein notes that this was the beginning of a lengthy trend of associating the Jewish community, and particularly the DAIA, with communism.²³

While signs that the leaders of the DAIA were questioning Argentina’s liberal values would emerge by mid-1962, until then the waves of antisemitism did not seriously undermine their assumptions. In November 1960, following the drama of Eichmann’s kidnapping, the DAIA published a report on its activities over the previous two years. It recounted the celebrations surrounding Argentina’s 150th anniversary of independence, which the DAIA saw as an opportunity to celebrate its foundational values of “liberty, democratic co-existence, respect for the rights of each person.”²⁴ It also detailed the celebrations surrounding the Jewish community’s 100th anniversary in Argentina, which had given the Jewish community the

¹⁸ Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, 201-203; Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: The Nationalist Movement, Its History, and its Impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 205–209.

¹⁹ On the diplomatic crisis, see Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, Chapter 6.

²⁰ Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, 207–208.

²¹ For details on the antisemitic incidents at this moment and the connection between waves of antisemitism and economic, political and social turmoil, see Senkman, *El antisemitismo En La Argentina*, 16-17.

²² *El antisemitismo En La Argentina*, 17. Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, “Informe de la actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo de la DAIA, Ejercicio Agosto 1962-Septiembre 1963,” 7.

²³ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 185. Rein also notes in a footnote “To my surprise, several people approached me after I published my book *Argentina, Israel y los judíos* in Buenos Aires in 2001, claiming that as far as the Sirota case was concerned, Green’s accusations were not entirely baseless, even though he was a nationalist and anti-Semite. This issue certainly deserves further research.”

²⁴ Informe de la labor cumplida por el consejo directivo de la Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA) durante el ejercicio comprendido desde el 17 de Noviembre de 1958 hasta el 28 de Noviembre de 1960, 1.

opportunity to celebrate the “generosity” of the Argentine nation that had allowed Jews, “along with other groups of various nationalities and creeds” to enter Argentina, live freely, and practice their religion.”²⁵ This portrayal of the nation, and Jewish belonging in the nation, existed in a certain tension with the DAIA’s reporting on antisemitic incidents during the previous year, particularly those associated with the Eichmann kidnapping, which had created “great concern within the community.”²⁶ Nonetheless, the DAIA reconciled the celebrations of a liberal Argentina with the more threatening events by marginalizing the perpetrators, calling them “Nazi-fascist” in nature and “incorrectly named ‘nationalists.’” The antisemitic attacks were also described as a “step back towards barbarism,” playing on the notion popularized by the 19th century liberal leader, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who described Argentine civilization as needing to triumph over barbarism.²⁷

In advocating for the Jewish community, the DAIA played on these tropes, framing attacks on the Jews as assaults on the democratic order and the liberal nation, where various groups had historically coexisted peacefully. In 1960, the DAIA expressed its concern to Cardinal Antonio Caggiano regarding the work of Meinvielle, which combined, according to the DAIA, elements of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *Mein Kampf*. In appealing to the Cardinal, the leaders of the DAIA suggested that the whole Catholic community would share this concern, because they were not interested “in introducing elements that disturb the co-existence of different sectors of the population.”²⁸ The same extended to lobbying the government. In December 1961, the DAIA responded to anti-Jewish graffiti and a small bomb placed at the headquarters of a Zionist youth group by requesting “more energetic” police efforts to end attacks that were “incompatible with the public tranquility and the harmony of all the sectors of the Argentine population.” Rather than highlighting the particular danger the attacks posed to the Jews, the DAIA stressed their threat “for the peaceful coexistence of the Argentine nation and for our democratic institutions.”²⁹ In the Graciela Sirota case, the DAIA maintained this trope of universal threat against democracy, adopting a more urgent language but still arguing that “the inconceivable kidnapping and assault against a young Jewish student is the last straw and signals the end of all guarantees, which will affect the whole Argentine nation without distinction.”³⁰ As Senkman argues, the slogan “*Cerrado como protesta contra las agresiones nazis en Argentina*” was a means of making the protest a defense of the nation’s core values rather than of just the Jewish community.³¹

At first glance, isolating the perpetrators from mainstream Argentine national values seems a tactic designed to win the Jewish community support from outsiders. Nonetheless, a series of institutional reforms put into place in the early 1960s suggests a similar reading on the Argentine nation. The impetus for these reforms was, in the words of Goldenberg, the need to

²⁵ Informe de la labor cumplida por el consejo directivo, 1.

²⁶ Informe de la labor cumplida por el consejo directivo, 2.

²⁷ Informe de la labor cumplida por el consejo directivo, 35.

²⁸ Informe de la labor cumplida por el consejo directivo, 14.

²⁹ “Nuevos actos de violencia contra judíos: la DAIA reclama medidas,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 30 1961, 4. See similar language in a message to President Frondizi in “Denunciase los desbordes antisemitas en el país, memorial de la DAIA,” *Mundo Israelita*, March 16, 1962, 5.

³⁰ “El digno documento de la DAIA,” *Mundo Israelita*, June 30, 1962, 4. It also tied the Sirota kidnapping to the murder of a Catholic student a week earlier, thereby universalizing the threat. In a declaration intended for the Argentine public, the DAIA president and Secretary General wrote “both Argentine, one dead, the other tortured, their destiny symbolizes that of the whole nation that they are trying to divide and tear apart” (Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la argentina*, 40).

³¹ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la argentina*, 40.

“study at length the necessary means to put an end to these criminal acts.”³² Under this spirit of institutional improvement, the DAIA restructured the *Consejo Directivo* (Board of Directors), creating new commissions with specified roles, to respond more effectively to threats.³³ The Press Commission made contacts with press organizations, requesting fair treatment of the Eichmann affair and retractions of antisemitic commentary, and kept a tally of relevant leaders in political and civil society to make connections when necessary.³⁴ The *Esclarecimiento* (Clarification or Enlightenment) Commission published material on antisemitic attacks and human rights and held public conferences.³⁵ The Public Opinion Research Commission, meanwhile, was tasked with using modern sociological methods to evaluate what motivated antisemitism.³⁶ The DAIA also instituted a yearly Territorial Convention, beginning in 1962, where representatives from the central DAIA and those from the provincial chapters discussed Jewish life in Argentina and worldwide. *Mundo Israelita* framed the DAIA’s restructuring as the initiative of a new generation of leadership which, “without dislocating or trying to dislocate the previous generation, can collaborate with the [older generation] and replace it honorably when it is found lacking.”³⁷

Yet the new efforts still reflected the assumption of a fringe antisemitism in an otherwise liberal nation. A major initiative of the Press Commission was monthly luncheons for handpicked civic leaders to discuss carefully considered topics.³⁸ Goldenberg described the monthly lunches as “a valuable contribution to the work of *esclarecimiento* against prejudice among the *most representative sectors* that conform the public opinion of the nation.”³⁹ At another point he described them as demonstrating to the “*healthy public opinion* of the nation and the danger that the antisemitic campaign poses for democratic institutions.”⁴⁰ The emphasis on an attack on democracy was a consistent DAIA tactic, but what is telling about the lunches is whom the DAIA considered the “most representative sectors” and the makers of “healthy public opinion.” Between 1961 and 1963 the invited guests were generally intellectuals, artists, journalists, and politicians from one of the two UCR factions or the democratic left, reflecting a traditional liberal notion of the important opinion makers in society.⁴¹ That these actors were

³² “Amenazan la convivencia del país los actos antisemitas, analizó la situación la DAIA,” *Mundo Israelita*, September 9, 1961, 2.

³³ Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, “Informe de actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo, Ejercicio: Junio 1961-Julio 1962,” 2.

³⁴ DAIA, Informe de actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo, Ejercicio: Junio 1961-Julio 1962,” 18, 21.

³⁵ DAIA, Informe de actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo, Ejercicio: Junio 1961-Julio 1962,” 23-25.

³⁶ DAIA, Informe de actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo, Ejercicio: Junio 1961-Julio 1962,” 33. There were other new initiatives to improve the work of the DAIA at this moment as well, particularly setting up regional meetings in all parts of the country to foment the activity of DAIA chapters in all parts of the country (see “La DAIA analizó en reunión plenaria los problemas de la colectividad,” December 8, 1962, 5; Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, “Informe de actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo, Ejercicio: Junio 1961-Julio 1962,” 26-32.).

³⁷ “Una nueva generación al frente de la vida institucional,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 26, 1962.

³⁸ Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, “Informe de actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo, Ejercicio: Junio 1961-Julio 1962.” 12.

³⁹ “DAIA: La asamblea general elogió la labor desarrollada por la entidad,” *Mundo Israelita*, July 28, 1962, 4.

⁴⁰ “Con brillo y ponderable nivel sesionó el congreso local de MAPAI,” *Mundo Israelita*, November 17, 1962, 4-5. On another occasion, a DAIA leader described the participants similarly as the “representative sectors of the various Argentine spheres” (“En la sesión de la DAIA: fue considerada la actual situación de la colectividad,” November 11, 1961, 5.)

⁴¹ See for example “Reanudadse los almuerzos mensuales de la DAIA,” *La Luz*, May 18, 1962, 32; Roberto Bensignor, “DAIA—último almuerzo mensual de 1962,” *La Luz*, December 28, 1962, 25; “Hablaron en el almuerzo

considered the “most representative” sectors of public opinion reflects a particular view of the nation that continued to ignore the importance of Peronism and the working class more broadly.

The topics discussed, moreover, reflected a similar construction of the national values. The first lunch, in July 1961, included journalists, which offered Goldenberg the opportunity to extol the importance of the press to sustaining a healthy democracy.⁴² At a subsequent lunch on parliamentarianism and totalitarianism, Goldenberg and the invited politicians, all Radicals, stressed parliamentary governments’ ability to enhance “*convivencia*,” or the coexistence of various groups.⁴³ Besides democracy, co-existence was the liberal value that the DAIA emphasized most frequently, which is unsurprising for an institution responsible for framing the existence of a Jewish community as legitimate and in accordance with national values. The one exception was the occasional outreach to the military. A May 1962 lunch commemorated both Israeli and Argentine independence, and the DAIA invited jurists, professors, and intellectuals along with military officers.⁴⁴ This was, of course, only months after the military had toppled Frondizi’s government and placed José María Guido in office as an interim president; fomenting alliances in the military likely seemed urgent. Nonetheless, the military was only included in the most limited of ways—to discuss independence struggles, a subject undoubtedly within their purview even in a democratic and liberal nation.

The monthly luncheon initiative and the broader reforms were the DAIA’s effort to improve its effectiveness without seriously questioning its assumptions about antisemitism. The presumption was that the opinion makers in society believed in democracy and co-existence of various groups and the DAIA needed only to more effectively show them that an attack on the Jewish community was an attack on these values. Nonetheless, many of the reforms, such as creating the Public Opinion Research Commission and the establishment of yearly national meetings, would ultimately facilitate broader changes in the way the Jews thought about the nation.

Disillusionment with Liberal Myth

As antisemitism persisted, the greatest challenge to the contention of a fundamentally open nation became the failure of the supposed liberal allies to join in the cause. The ongoing impunity of violent nationalist groups called this into relief. While no one doubted that President Frondizi was not personally antisemitic, and he was quick to condemn the antisemitic attacks, his administration did little to stop them.⁴⁵ Several authors have suggested that Tacuara enjoyed impunity under Frondizi because the military appreciated the service the nationalist group did in attacking communists.⁴⁶ Frondizi did prohibit the antisemitic accusations launched in the UCN’s

mensual de la DAIA Houssay, Dujovne, Goldenberk y Luzky,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 28, 1961, 4; “‘El odio racial y religioso en la reforma penal’ --tratose en el almuerzo mensual de la DAIA,” *La Luz*, September 8, 1961, 82; “El ultimo almuerzo mensual de la DAIA fue dedicado a Arturo Capdevila,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 22, 1962.

⁴² “Se analizó la función del periodismo en la democracia,” *Mundo Israelita*, July 29, 1961, 3.

⁴³ “Almuerzo mensual de la DAIA,” *La Luz*, October 6, 1961, 31

⁴⁴ Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, “Informe de actividades realizadas por el consejo directivo, Ejercicio: Junio 1961-Julio 1962,” 13-4.

⁴⁵ Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, 159.

⁴⁶ Ranaan Rein points to the observations of Irving Salert, first secretary at the United States embassy, who explained: “This is simply one of the unavoidable concessions that the feeble Frondizi administration has to make in order to assure the support of the military.” Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?* 179; Avni notes that the

1962 campaign, but the rhetoric did not abate.⁴⁷ Guido's administration included Catholic, nationalist ministers and was perceived as far more hospitable to violent, nationalist groups. The first Minister of Interior, General Rauch, and Minister of Education, José Mariano Astigueta, were considered plainly antisemitic.⁴⁸ Tacuara leader Alberto Ezcurra boasted to the *Buenos Aires Herald* that "Under the present government we have been treated much better than under the Frondizi regime."⁴⁹ Seemingly to garner good will from the United States, Guido did issue a decree in March 1963 that outlawed Tacuara and the break-off *Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista* (GRN, Nationalist Restoration Guard).⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the police force's nationalist sympathies meant that it had little weight, and while some meeting places were closed, very few people were detained.⁵¹

Under Frondizi and Guido, the DAIA had registered complaints about the continuing impunity, and as Rein notes, Jewish leaders had been concerned about Guido's administration in particular.⁵² Nonetheless, the DAIA had not lost faith in the *potential* of a democratically elected government to stem the tide, and it greeted the election of Arturo Illia optimistically. Not only did his election mark the return to institutional normalcy (albeit with Peronism still banned), but also his platform had called for legislation to curb the activities of racist groups.⁵³ Nonetheless, the threats to the Jewish community continued after he took office. Tacuara and the GRN turned their attention to foment antisemitism among the working class, as will be discussed further below. More anti-Jewish vitriol came from the Arab League representative in Buenos Aires, Hussein Trikki, who used the monthly magazine *Revista Árabe* to attack the Jewish community. He was responsible for the addition of attacks on "Zionists," whom he framed as imperialists working to infiltrate Argentina, to the repertoire of other antisemitic groups such as *Tacuara* and the GRN. To Senkman and many Jewish observers at the time, attacking Zionists rather than Jews explicitly was an antisemitic decoy, a means of "legitimizing antisemitic and xenophobic ideology." Indeed these attacks were not about a political attack on Zionist support for the state of Israel, but rather about a conspiratorial infiltration on the part of Zionist Jews. Accusations of

police force, tied ideologically to the navy, was unwilling to persecute *Tacuara* because they saw Jews as communist sympathizers while *Tacuara* was fighting communism. The police chief during the Sirota affair was openly antisemitic and accused the DAIA of fabricating the attack (Avni, "Jewish Leadership in Times of Crisis: Argentina During the Eichmann Affair (1960-1962)," 127-8).

⁴⁷ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 17.

⁴⁸ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 26. The minister of interior launched a slander campaign against Rogelio Frigerio, Frondizi's main economic advisor, for economic misdeeds and pointed fingers also at many with Jewish last names. Still, Avni points to some actual misdeeds at the *Banco de la Nación*, which had been run by Jose Mazar Barnet and corrupt acts by some Jewish officials (Avni, "Jewish Leadership in Times of Crisis: Argentina During the Eichmann Affair (1960-1962)," 126).

⁴⁹ Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 195.

⁵⁰ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 190. This decree was issued just before foreign minister Álvaro Alsogaray went to the United States to negotiate a deal with United States banks. American Jewish organizations had been pressuring the State Department to put pressure on Argentina to stop the antisemitic waves and Rein suggests this was an effort to create a positive disposition towards the regime in the US.

⁵¹ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 45. Senkman contrasts the lackluster effort on this front with efficacy with which the regime repressed workers, students, and forces of the left (25).

⁵² "El odio racial y religioso en la reforma penal"--tratose en el almuerzo mensual de la DAIA," *La Luz*, September 8, 1961, 82; "La DAIA entrevista al jefe de policía para requerir su enérgica intervención," *Mundo Israelita*, June 23, 1962, 1.

⁵³ "DAIA: se analizó su actuación en los dos últimos periodos y se eligió el consejo consultivo," *Mundo Israelita*, September 14, 1963, 3.

a Zionist conspiracy reached the *Cámara de Diputados* (House of Deputies) in July 1964 when the Salta aristocrat, Juan Carlos Cornejo Linares, a member of a neo-Peronist party, called for an investigation of the Zionist conspiracy by creating a *Comisión Especial Interparlamentaria de Actividades Antiargentinas* (Inter-Parliamentary Special Commission on Anti-Argentine Activities).⁵⁴

Despite optimism at the election of Illia in 1963, by the DAIA's plenary in April 1964, Goldenberg explicitly questioned the DAIA's earlier assumptions about liberal allies. While the community had been pleased that so many non-Jews had joined in the protest after the Sirota kidnapping, "we lived in a state of self-deception. We thought we had strength, energy." In the face of a new wave of antisemitism, the DAIA found itself confronting "the silence of the democratic sectors."⁵⁵ Reiterating the point at the Territorial Convention a month later, Herzl Gesang, the general secretary of the DAIA, called into question the whole concept of alliance building because the Jewish community could not rely on "the good predisposition of a governor or a general friend" and should not be satisfied with mere denunciations of antisemitism, "words that can only soothe our uneasiness."⁵⁶ This made government officials who combated antisemitism more the exception than the rule. The DAIA lauded the governor of Santa Fe for implementing a repressive law against Tacuara in 1964, calling his action natural for a democrat of his caliber but not common in the era of political timidity.⁵⁷ Small gestures of support were increasingly unacceptable—while the Illia government did ban a left-wing segment of Tacuara in 1964, the DAIA expressed frustration that it had not banned all the factions.⁵⁸

This was not, however, merely a political disillusionment, but rather a broader questioning of the commitment within these sectors to Jewish particularity. In 1964 and 1965, a Zionist youth publication, *Horizonte*, conducted interviews with politicians of various stripes regarding their opinions on the current waves of antisemitism in Argentina. Senkman has offered a close reading of these interviews and highlights that even those politicians who denounced outward attacks on Jews endorsed positions that were disquieting for Jewish leadership. Those from the *Federación de Partidos de Centro* (Federation of Parties of the Center) repeated liberal tropes claiming that in Argentina there was no antisemitism because everyone was equal before the law. This relegated the work of Tacuara and the GRN to anomalies, the reflection of mental health problems, rather than a problem that deserved significant attention. Others were less dismissive of hostility towards the Jewish community, but legitimated it by suggesting that their particularity, and especially their loyalty to Zionism, undermined unity of the nation. Peronist leader Arturo Jauretche accused Jews of voting as a block for candidates who supported Israel, which suggested that Jews were "motivated by reasons that were very national from the point of view of Zionism, but not from the point of view of the Argentine nation." He built this critique into a broader one on the perpetuation of ethnic identity: while immigrants and their descendants had once lived in "islands" or "ghettos," they ultimately became a nation and "not a group of national minorities." Zionist Jews were working counter to this model and thus undermining

⁵⁴ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 53.

⁵⁵ "El plenario de la DAIA analizó problemas políticos actuales," *Mundo Israelita*, April 11, 1964, 5.

⁵⁶ "En un tenso ambiente de honda preocupación por el porvenir del judaísmo argentino celebró la DAIA su VII convención," *La Luz*, May 29, 1964, 1

⁵⁷ "En un tenso ambiente de onda preocupación por el porvenir del judaísmo argentino celebró la DAIA su VII convención" *La Luz*, May 29, 1964, 18.

⁵⁸ On the ineffectiveness of the law, see Senkman, "El antisemitismo en la Argentina," 49. "Reuniose el plenario de DAIA: trató la situación de los judíos en el país y escucho un informe sobre estrasburgo," *Mundo Israelita*, July 31, 1965, 5, 8.

national unity. A representative from the Christian democrats claimed that various Zionist activities—celebrations of “this or that” anniversary in Israel, lobbying the authorities, sports competitions between different youth groups—threatened the “social and spiritual integration of the people,” led to self-segregation, and therefore fomented antisemitism.⁵⁹ The only exception, Senkman highlights, was the Partido Demócrata Progresista, which organized its own protest against antisemitism, claiming, much as the Jewish community had, that “history shows that when they start with the Jews they end with democracy.”⁶⁰

These sentiments, along with overt attacks, led many to claim that Argentina never had been as open to Jewish particularity as some claimed. This involved a recasting of Argentine history to stress the moments when nationalist, and often antisemitic, currents gained dominance. As early as 1962, a representative from Córdoba reminded fellow DAIA leaders of the *Semana Trágica* in 1919, the antisemitic nationalism of the “Legión Cívica” in the 1930s, and the ascendance of Nazi-aligned nationalists in 1943. The hope that the nation had returned to “normalcy” during the *Revolution Libertadora* now “seems to have been dispelled at its core by the new events that have moved the Republic.”⁶¹ These comments not only rethought Jewish membership in the nation as more contested than it was normally framed, but associated the disillusionment with the promise of the *Libertadora*. Coming to define the Argentine nation in new terms, meanwhile, went beyond a rejection of these liberal myths and involved a serious reckoning with the working class as key members of the nation and of the Latin American context as fundamental for understanding the nation.

The Working Class, the Argentine Nation, and New Terms of Inclusion

The years after 1955 were marked by consistent waves of labor protest, but 1964 and 1965 were perhaps the most dramatic. In January 1964, Augusto Vandor, the leader of the metallurgical workers union and a power broker for national labor militancy, launched a *Plan de Lucha*, with both bread and butter demands and a call for the end of proscription.⁶² The *Plan* reached its peak in May and June of 1964 with a series of factory takeovers. Illia did not call on the police to repress the workers’ actions, which irked business interests and the military. The whole endeavor proved the weakness of the elected government vis-à-vis labor.⁶³ The pressure exerted by labor continued and included a campaign for the return of Perón at the end of 1964 and a large protest during the state visit of Charles De Gaulle in 1965.⁶⁴ This labor activism made increasingly clear that the working class was and would remain a key protagonist in national politics.

⁵⁹ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 64-67.

⁶⁰ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 74-75.

⁶¹ “Sesiones de la convención de la DAIA en Córdoba,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 21, 1962, 10. Marcelo Dimenstein offers a thoughtful analysis of the collective memory surrounding the *Semana Trágica* and contends that it was largely forgotten in the communal realm (as well as among organized labor) until the 1960s (Marcelo Dimenstein, “En busca de un pogrom perdido: Memoria en torno de la semana trágica de 1919 (1919-1999),” in *Marginados y consagrados: nuevos estudios sobre la vida judía en Argentina*, ed. Kahan, Emmanuel et al. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Lumiere, 2011), 121-142).

⁶² James W McGuire, *Peronism Without Perón: Unions, Parties, and Democracy in Argentina* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1997), 114.

⁶³ McGuire, *Peronism Without Perón*, 119; James, *Resistance and Integration*, 183.

⁶⁴ James, *Resistance and Integration*, 182.

This observation, common to many, had particular resonance for the Jewish community as it seemed increasingly that the working class was a potential locus of anti-Jewish hostility. Increasingly, antisemitic nationalist sectors spread their vitriol to the working class, in the hope of gaining mass support. *Tacuara* worked particularly to infiltrate unions and Peronist youth groups.⁶⁵ A 1962 publication entitled *El caso Sirota y el problema judío en la Argentina*, made several attempts to portray the Jewish community as the enemy of the working class and specifically of Peronism. The publication argued that the whole Jewish community was anti-Peronist, from 1945 to the present.⁶⁶ While Jose Alonso denounced *Tacuara* in 1964 as “*jovencitos de dos apellidos*,” an allusion to their upper-class origins, who encouraged violence and chaos so as to incite a coup, other Peronist leaders and groups were more amenable to the message.⁶⁷ In February 1964, the *Juventud Peronista* published a letter of support for Hussein Trikki in a Buenos Aires newspaper, framing the DAIA as representing international Zionism in Argentina and violating Argentine sovereignty through its Zionist training camps.⁶⁸ Also in 1962, Gino Germani, the famed sociologist, carried out a study, sponsored by the University of Buenos Aires Sociology Department and the local office of the American Jewish Committee, to evaluate antisemitic attitudes within the working class.⁶⁹ While antisemitism had previously been considered the purview of the elite, Germani’s study revealed that the working class also had quite pronounced hostilities towards the Jewish community. Germani argued that when political groups tried to capitalize on these sentiments at moments of socio-economic crisis, there could be explosive results.⁷⁰

Other studies pointed to antisemitism in various other sectors of society, especially the military, but the leaders of the DAIA turned their attention specifically to the working class.⁷¹ For Goldenberg, the penetration of the unions was particularly concerning because that “gives [the nationalist groups] revolutionary possibilities.”⁷² In analyzing antisemitism among the working class, Julio Kesselman, a former Minister of Economy of the province of Chaco and the leader of the DAIA of the Northeastern provinces, suggested that it was “a consequence of the social problems the nation suffers.”⁷³ The legitimating of workers’ problems, and the nation’s deep-rooted problems, became a mainstay in the new discourse surrounding antisemitism. In a letter to Foreign Minister Zavala Ortiz about signs that claimed a Zionist conspiracy was infiltrating the nation, the DAIA contended that not only was this kind of scapegoating

⁶⁵ David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, 207.

⁶⁶ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 29.

⁶⁷ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 51.

⁶⁸ “Hasta donde llegó Tacuara,” *Nueva Si3n*, February 28, 1964, 2.

⁶⁹ Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb, eds., *American Jewish Year Book, 1963*, vol. 64 (Philadelphia and New York: The American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publication Society of America), 183.

⁷⁰ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 30.

⁷¹ In the days after Eichmann was condemned to death, a private institution carried out a broad-based study on antisemitic attitudes, including workers, high school students, university students, housewives and professionals. It revealed that only 40% of those surveyed had positive feelings towards Jews (“Encuesta sobre los judíos: la capital federal opina,” *Nueva Si3n*, September 28, 1962, 2, 11). Two years later, Dr. Enrique J. Pichon Rivière surveyed 440 civilians and 60 members of the military, which revealed hostility towards Jews in both sectors, but at a higher rate within the military (“Los prejuicios raciales en la Argentina,” *Nueva Si3n*, January 31, 1964, 2, 6).

⁷² “El plenario de la DAIA analizo problemas políticos actuales,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 11, 1964, 5.

⁷³ “DAIA: realiz3se con 3xito en Resistencia la reuni3n de su regional para el Nordeste,” *Mundo Israelita*, September 8, 1962, 5, 11.

commonplace in Nazi Germany, but it was being used at a moment when “the Nation searches for solutions for its authentic problems and needs.”⁷⁴

In light of this analysis, the DAIA retooled its notion of key allies, a transition that signaled shifting ideas of the nation. Goldenberg announced that instead of the previous tactic of seeking support among the liberal and democratic sectors, it was time to “look for allies in the popular sectors who possess the sensibilities of the people.”⁷⁵ This is striking not only because Goldenberg was looking towards alliances within the working class, but also because he was crediting that class with the “sensibilities of the *people*,” thereby equating it to an extent with the essence of the nation. To form these alliances, one of the DAIA’s monthly lunches that year had the theme “homage to cooperativism,” in which the secretary general of the CGT participated.⁷⁶ This was an opportunity to highlight the Jewish community’s tradition of rural and urban cooperatives and draw a link to union activity in Argentina. While this process of alliance building mirrored the tactics employed when courting the “liberal” sectors of society, it reflected a broadening in the understanding of the relevant members of society to the working class.

Most revealing of the shift towards recognizing the working class as key members of the nation, and the efforts to build bridges with it, were efforts to de-pathologize the Peronist movement. Doing so was challenging on two fronts: first, elements of the Jewish community still maintained that Peronism had traditionally been anti-democratic and antisemitic and second, some associated with the Peronist movement, such as Cornejo Linares, were presently and plainly antisemitic. Nonetheless, the leadership of the DAIA dedicated itself to proving that Peronism was not the enemy of the Jews. After Cornejo Linares initiated his campaign to investigate anti-Argentine activities, the DAIA responded by writing a letter to the leader of the Justicialist block in the House of Deputies, Juan Alejandro Luco, to protest. Besides characterizing Zionism as a national liberation movement, the DAIA emphasized that the Peronist movement had never been anti-Israel, pointing particularly to figures such as Joaquín Díaz de Vivar and Raúl Bustos Fierro.⁷⁷ The DAIA also interviewed various Peronist leaders to confirm that they did not share Cornejo Linares’ position.⁷⁸ While at the most basic level this was a response to Cornejo Linares’ accusations, it should also be read as a broader effort to emphasize to both Peronists and doubters within the Jewish community that the movement was, at its essence, not antisemitic. If many members of Argentine society were coming to terms with the persistence and legitimacy of the Peronist movement, this was a particularly Jewish way of doing so: by emphasizing the friendliness that Perón and his close associates had shown towards the Jewish community and attacking the likes of Cornejo Linares as deviating from the true Peronist line, they were accepting Peronism as non-threatening to their community and as a legitimate political movement.

With the growing acceptance of Peronism came efforts to accept popular nationalism more broadly. At the Territorial Convention in 1963, in a well-received speech, Goldenberg

⁷⁴ “Presentación de la DAIA al canciller Zavala Ortiz,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 8, 1964, 3.

⁷⁵ “Realizóse en Santa Fe la IIIa convención territorial de la DAIA,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 30, 1964, 4. The call for alliances with workers emerged as early as 1962, but the emphasis in alliance building was still on the “liberal” sectors (“Convención de la DAIA en Córdoba,” *Mundo Israelita*, 14 April, 1962, 4; “Sesiones de la convención de la DAIA en Córdoba,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 21, 1962, 10).

⁷⁶ “DAIA: una importante declaración política fue aprobada por su consejo plenario,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 12, 1964, 3, 9.

⁷⁷ “Carta de la DAIA al presidente del bloque justicialista,” *Mundo Israelita*, July 11, 1964, 3.

⁷⁸ “DAIA: una importante declaración política fue aprobada por su consejo plenario,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 12, 1964, 3, 9.

called for the Jewish community to understand and adapt to “the social changes that are happening in our country and those that surround us,” especially the development of new kinds of nationalism. Even as he and other delegates expressed concern about antisemitic propaganda in union settings, he argued that the nationalism that arose naturally in the union or popular sector was not threatening and had the goal of reforming society. Several delegates at that convention expressed support for his argument.⁷⁹ León Pérez, a professor of sociology and committed socialist Zionist, similarly engaged in an effort to de-pathologize nationalist movements, responded to a tendency of some DAIA delegates to refer to nationalist movements in Latin America as “Nasserism.” He differentiated the Egyptian movement, which he deemed clearly fascist, from the movements unfolding in Latin America. Though these were occasionally led by the military, they were responding to specifically Latin American problems and trying to produce social and economic change.⁸⁰ This commentary suggested that even though virulent forms of nationalism might occasionally corrupt the working class, Jews in Latin America should not fear authentically popular nationalism and its reformist agenda.

Finally, along with this analysis came the tendency to consider Argentina’s problems and the problems of the Jewish community in continental terms. Goldenberg’s 1957 musings at the helm of the national Zionist organization placed Argentina among the “new nations,” but as the previous chapter showed, this was not a common framing in the late 1950s. In fact, framing the Latin American context as meaningful did not become common among DAIA leaders until 1963. This year for the first time the discussion of popular nationalism at the territorial convention treated it as a continental phenomenon rather than just focusing on the Argentine particularities. In 1964 Goldenberg narrated the increasing awareness of continental trends within the Jewish community, highlighting the different attitudes of the two previous territorial conventions and the current one:

In Córdoba [1962]...the country lived its abnormality normally. We warned about a few symptoms that inspired us to be prepared. There was a mild Jewish alert. We did not believe that a short while later we would close the Jewish stores in a protest strike. At the Rosario convention [1963], other symptoms had already arisen. We perceived the concreteness of social changes that had begun to be expressed in Latin America. We signaled the problem but did not feel it within the community. Today, on the other hand, we are in the middle of the process. This process affects the immediate future of the Jewish communities in Latin America.⁸¹

The Jewish community felt this directly because rising social tensions seemed to lead many to blame Jews. Goldenberg framed the problem as belonging to all of the continent’s Jewish community, emphasizing that it was the result of the structural inequality and tensions endemic to the region. In doing so he discarded the framework of a “New World” Jewish community, discussed in Chapter One, and replaced it with the framework of a “Latin American” Jewish

⁷⁹ “Estudió los problemas que afectan al judaísmo argentino, con seriedad y señalado éxito, la convención de la DAIA realizada en Rosario,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 25, 1963, 4-5. Julio Mazo and Julio Kesselman of the Chaco delegation and Gregorio Faigon, Jose Kestelman, and Noé Davidovich of the central DAIA, expressed support for Goldenberg’s sentiments. While Goldenberg seemed only to be calling for being aware of the reality, Kesselman, the ex-minister of economy for the province Chaco affirmed that Jews should “accompany the processes of social transformation.”

⁸⁰ “Estudió los problemas que afectan al judaísmo argentino,” 4-5.

⁸¹ “Realizose en Santa Fe la IIIa convención territorial de la DAIA,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 30, 1964, 4.

community. This centrality of Latin America as a concept at that convention was clear in *Mundo Israelita's* reporting. It noted that various topics were discussed, “although all related to one another: the situation of the nation and of the Jewish community; the evolution of Latin America; antisemitism as an element of the Argentine process; the new antisemitic arguments and tactics.”⁸²

In a relatively short period, then, the leaders of the DAIA adopted a dramatically new way of thinking about the dominant values of the nation and its “important” sectors. At the beginning of the decade, they saw themselves as confronting small but extreme nationalist groups that by attacking the Jewish community were attacking Argentina’s dominant liberal culture and democracy. If they could make this clear to those they saw as opinion makers—politicians from the liberal parties, intellectuals, artists, and mainstream press—these natural allies would cooperate and antisemitism would be eradicated. As waves of antisemitism continued, their supposed allies failed them, and nationalists shifted their focus to gaining mass support, the DAIA turned its attention to the importance of the working class. This led to discussions on the nature of the Peronist movement, the forms of nationalism growing among the working class, and the connection to Latin America and even commissioned an extensive survey in 1965 to study the working class, discussed below.

That being said, it would be a mistake to attribute the DAIA’s attention to the working class solely to the latter’s antisemitism. The leaders of the DAIA recognized and other published studies confirmed that antisemitism existed in other sectors as well and particularly in the military.⁸³ Nonetheless, the working class increasingly seemed the national protagonist. That the DAIA made efforts to accept new forms of nationalism and Peronism as legitimate, even though both could be seen as challenging towards the Jewish community, can best be explained as part of the broader efforts in Argentine society to legitimate the working class as a key member of the nation. While many members of the middle class had imagined Peronism as an anomaly and the working class adhesion to Peronism as the reflection of manipulation, these assumptions were called into question as the adherence to Perón remained in the 1960s and subsequent governments seemed increasingly illegitimate. For the DAIA, this also meant efforts to think about inclusion in new terms, emphasizing to labor leaders that the Jewish community was concerned with the nation’s real and structural problems, and not the enemies of the interests of the working class or Peronism. This trajectory in the DAIA and its warming to the Peronist movement is particularly remarkable when compared with the more ambivalent posture of *Nueva Sión*, a voice of Jewish youth with socialist leanings.

Nueva Sión: Socialist Zionist Ideology and the Nation

Founded in 1948, *Nueva Sión* was a weekly, youth-run newspaper and the voice of the socialist Zionist youth group *Hashomer Hatzair*. There were some key connections between this youth group and the DAIA. León Pérez, one of the most active contributors to the DAIA’s political analysis in the early 1960s, had been a member of Hashomer Hatzair and had edited *Nueva Sión* in the 1950s. By the mid-1960s, representatives from Hashomer Hatzair participated

⁸² “Realizose en Santa Fe la IIIa convención territorial de la DAIA,” 4.

⁸³ See, for example, “La DAIA analizó en reunión plenaria los problemas de la colectividad,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 8, 1962, 5.

in DAIA conventions. There was also an important similarity between the two institutions: both were particularly interested in tracking and understanding antisemitism and saw themselves as responsible for making the Jewish community aware of the threats at hand. As a result, *Nueva Sión* was often quite approving of the work of the DAIA, and particularly Goldenberg's leadership, especially when compared to others less concerned with the threat posed by antisemitism.⁸⁴

Nonetheless, these were two very different institutions. At the most basic level, the DAIA was concerned with maintaining a working relationship with the authorities and a sense of Jewish dignity within the Jewish community. *Nueva Sión*, meanwhile, had a contrarian and youthful voice and felt comfortable forcefully criticizing other Jewish institutions and the government. Most importantly, however, *Nueva Sión* and the youth group associated with it had strong ideological positions on both Jewish life and global politics that shaped reporting and editorials throughout this period.⁸⁵ A week after the Sirota kidnapping, the newspaper explained that in the past year and a half, it had worked to "inform and caution, to wake the Jewish consciousness." It considered itself "practically alone in this work within our community" while many had called them "alarmist." In explaining this commitment, it deferred to its socialist Zionist ideology, which offered "the key to understanding the Argentine social events and their repercussions on the Jewish national minority." As far as these youth were concerned, assimilation in Argentina or any part of the Diaspora was an impossible goal because Jews would never fully be accepted. They expressed disdain for those who tried to assimilate and disavow their Jewishness, especially those who tried to do so by joining the Argentine left. To *Nueva Sión*, being a true Jewish revolutionary meant being aware of the specific reality of the Jewish people (which precluded assimilation), fighting against antisemitism, working towards a strong "national Jewish consciousness," and supporting those Jews who moved to Israel to live on a kibbutz.⁸⁶ In later years, the newspaper would encourage Aliyah much more forcefully, but at this juncture it was more focused on pointing to the rash of antisemitism to prove that assimilation was futile and Jewish cohesion was imperative. An article on the occasion of the Jewish New Year a few months later stressed how the antisemitism of the past year marked "the bankruptcy of the ideology of integration."⁸⁷

That being said, *Nueva Sión*'s socialist ideology was also influential in how it analyzed antisemitism and the Argentine nation. While hostile to young Jews who chose allegiance to Argentine or international struggles over Zionism, *Nueva Sión* was clearly committed to social reform worldwide and to various national liberation struggles in the third-world. Often university students or former students, the minds behind the newspaper were certainly quite attuned to the trends within general leftist thought. While the newspaper and the youth movement refused to

⁸⁴ For support for the DAIA see "Una vez mas: sin pánico sin ilusiones," *Nueva Sión*, July 13, 1962, 1-2; "Un balance provisorio," *Nueva Sión*, July 13, 1962, 1-2. For lauding Goldenberg particularly see "Persiste el problema nazi en Argentina? Un balance Provisorio," *Nueva Sión*, April 11, 1.

⁸⁵ This chapter will read the various editorials and articles in *Nueva Sión* as a unified voice. This of course masks differences of opinion and debates between the various authors and editors. While the analysis of *Nueva Sión* would likely be richer if it could account for this diversity, on a practical level, articles often ran without an author and so tracking subtle differences between various contributors becomes quite difficult. More importantly, while there was significant change over time, the consistency in editorializing and reporting at any given moment makes it possible to discuss the evolution of *Nueva Sión* as a cohesive text.

⁸⁶ "Hoy, acá: toma de conciencia," *Nueva Sión*, June 29, 1962, 3.

⁸⁷ "5722: El pueblo judío en la Argentina, en Israel y en el resto del mundo," *Nueva Sión*, September 28, 1962, 1, 10.

affiliate with any particular political party in Argentina, like the DAIA and most Jewish institutions, the paper was concerned with the future of the working-class, in favor of significant reform in the Argentine economy, and highly critical of United States imperialism.⁸⁸ While maintaining a policy of reporting only on Jewish concerns when it came to Argentina—as was common throughout the Jewish community—various articles justified lengthy analyses of Argentine politics by considering the implications for Argentine Jews.

This strong commitment to Jewish solidarity, an embedded distrust of the possibility of integration in the diaspora, and the allegiance to a socialist and anti-imperialist framework remained fairly constant throughout these years. Nonetheless, the writers behind *Nueva Sión* did rework their understandings of the Argentine nation and grapple with how Jews could articulate inclusion yet maintain particularity. Their efforts to do so paralleled the DAIA's in the active rejection of Argentina's liberal myths and in their growing attention to Peronism and to the Latin American context. Nonetheless, the process for *Nueva Sión* was also particular as the youth behind the paper worked to be loyal to their key ideological tenets, which at times co-existed easily and at others came into stark tension.

A Quick Disillusionment

In August 1961, *Nueva Sión* reported on a meeting between the DAIA and the Minister of Interior at which the minister expressed his hope that the Jewish community was not under the impression that the authorities were indifferent to antisemitic attacks. *Nueva Sión*'s response to the meeting was flippant: "That is precisely the impression of the community. But there is an easy way to remedy it and that is for the national authorities to actually not be indifferent."⁸⁹ The paper was also unimpressed when President Frondizi banned the antisemitic campaigning of the *Unión Cívica Nacionalista* during the March 1962 election campaign, dismissing it as a mere campaign tactic on the President's part. For the paper, Frondizi had all the resources to "repress and eliminate at their root neo-Nazi groups, prohibiting once and for all their activities and their existence," but he chose not to act.⁹⁰ While the tone here was more hostile than that of the DAIA at this juncture, *Nueva Sión*'s commentary did reflect an important commonality: the assumption that antisemitism could easily be curbed because it was a straightforward, limited, phenomenon.

This soon changed as *Nueva Sión* came to see antisemitism as more deeply rooted and became disdainful of members of the community that thought otherwise. In August 1962, two months after Sirota's kidnapping, *Nueva Sión* criticized *Mundo Israelita* for repeatedly insisting that "America should confront the Nazi conspiracy," "...the unfortunate work of the Nazi elements that try to sow hate in America, continent of liberty," and "We as Americans feel ashamed." As far as *Nueva Sión* was concerned,

The generalization 'America' as 'continent of liberty,' does not correspond with the reality of our hemisphere, which is convulsing due to the grave social conflicts and in

⁸⁸ On support for the Cuban revolution and anti-Americanism, see "Es Fidel Castro comunista?," *Nueva Sión*, May 5, 1961, 3; "Psicosis anti-castrista," *Nueva Sión*, May 19, 1961, 1; "De Eichman a Castro," *Nueva Sión*, June 2, 2. For opposition to the Alliance for Progress because it is putting reactionaries in power, see "Resumen de un año," *Nueva Sión*, January 17, 1964, 6, 8.

⁸⁹ "El eco crítico," *Nueva Sión*, August 26, 1961, 3.

⁹⁰ "El poder ejecutivo, la DAIA y los comicios," *Nueva Sión*, March 21, 1962, 1, 7.

which liberty is now a luxury item in a majority of nations. To call on America, again in general terms, to confront the Nazi conspiracy, is an admirable wish, but in the light of reality, it is a phrase without meaning. It creates a false illusion that there is a broad common front in America ready to put an end to the Nazi offenses and to the real and severe dangers of Nazism.⁹¹

By critiquing the framework of “American” values versus Nazi infiltration, *Nueva Sión* was discarding the idea that Argentina as a nation was defined by its openness to various groups. It also called for a new understanding of the relevant regional frame, emphasizing the southern hemisphere, or Latin America, as defined by its process of social upheaval, rather than the concept of the unified, liberal “Americas.” It seems that mid-1962 was the turning point for *Nueva Sión* in its thinking about both the Argentine nation and antisemitism, which befit both their attunement to the persecution of Jews and the marginalization of the working class. In a few months, Argentina had seen the annulment of Peronist victories in the 1962 elections, the overthrow of Frondizi, the installation of Guido, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of antisemitic attacks, particularly after Eichmann’s execution.

From that point on, the dominant framework in *Nueva Sión* was that the government was not truly willing to address antisemitism, and even if it were, it would have to resolve the deep-rooted tensions in society that allowed it to thrive. During Guido’s presidency, the paper greeted “multiple declarations condemning antisemitism” skeptically.⁹² Infighting in the military, a profound economic crisis and social conflict created an environment in which “antisemites find a propitious field to resume their activity.”⁹³ Given these ongoing problems, as well as apparent hostility towards the Jewish within the military, *Nueva Sión* refused to rejoice, as other members of the community did, when Guido issued Decree 3134/63 in May 1963, outlawing Tacuara and the GRN.⁹⁴ A few weeks later, *Nueva Sión* lauded itself for being the most prescient sector of the Jewish community when it came to Guido’s decree, noting, “the facts have now confirmed our doubts about the enforcement of the decree.”⁹⁵ Similarly, it did not share the DAIA’s optimism at the return of institutional normalcy and the election of Illia. Two days before that election, *Nueva Sión* made clear that while it believed that “political normalcy” was best able to solve the country’s problems and provide security for the Jewish community, the elections alone would not solve the deep rooted problems.⁹⁶ Adding to the pessimism about the future government was that the elections were “only a partial step towards constitutional normalcy,” because “important sectors” could not vote for their candidates.⁹⁷ In this one statement *Nueva Sión* explained further its skepticism regarding the new “democratic” system, denounced proscription, and affirmed the legitimate attachment between the working class and the Peronist movement.

The focus on the underlying need for major reform continued through Illia’s time in office with ongoing laments that the new president failed to decrease unemployment, agrarian reform, and redistribute wealth. The specific analysis of the Illia regime tied in to the particular problems of the community—that the government was unable to turn the economy around or alleviate social tensions, led to “the search for a scapegoat that, to be loyal to tradition, is once

⁹¹ “El eco crítico,” *Nueva Sión*, August 16, 1962, 3.

⁹² “Una nueva etapa?,” *Nueva Sión*, October 13, 1962, 1.

⁹³ “Vuelta al pasado,” *Nueva Sión*, November 3, 1962, 1.

⁹⁴ “El decreto 3134 y su aplicación,” *Nueva Sión*, May 10, 1963, 1.

⁹⁵ “Algo nuevo,” *Nueva Sión*, June 7, 1963, 1.

⁹⁶ “Ante esta hora,” *Nueva Sión*, July 5, 1963, 1.

⁹⁷ “Después de los comicios,” *Nueva Sión*, July 19, 1963, 1.

again the Jews.”⁹⁸ Discarding the liberal model of the Argentine nation and the contention that antisemitism was endemic given the political and social upheaval that characterized Latin America seemed to come easier to the writers behind *Nueva Si3n* than the DAIA. This new framework allowed for a fairly easy synthesis between the socialist Zionism that saw an inevitable tendency towards antisemitism in the diaspora and the tendency of Argentine leftism more broadly of discarding Argentina’s liberal myths at this juncture. It was the newspaper’s relationship to the workers movement, and Peronism specifically, however, that presented special challenges for the writers of *Nueva Si3n* as they tried to balance their leftist allegiances with their particular positioning on Jewish questions.

Peronism, the Nation, and Jews

In late-1963, *Nueva Si3n* expressed outrage at a convention of some 400 people, including retired military officers, priests, civic leaders and some representatives from unions, who met to honor known anti-Semite Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, ex-director of the nationalist magazine *Azul y Blanco*. The paper was particularly displeased that Shmuel Rozansky, who wrote in the Yiddish *Diario Israelita* praising the military officers who had been there as “the champions of the noble idea of the *Revoluci3n Libertadora*, who struggled heroically to ensure that Per3n and Peronism never returned to power” had attended. *Nueva Si3n* wrote “As a journalist, democrat, and a Jew,” he should not have overlooked that many of the attendees were antisemitic nationalists. It expressed dismay that the commentator could value these generals for their role in the *Libertadora* so much that he would display “such political myopia to celebrate more than one thousand military men, among whom you could find bitter enemies of democracy and protectors of the Nazis in the country.”⁹⁹ Underlying this complaint was a critique of Argentine Jews who were so blinded by their distaste for Per3n that they accepted the often antisemitic military officers who unseated him. *Nueva Si3n* itself had celebrated the fall of Per3n in 1955, but its perspective on Peronism had changed by 1963 to be more accepting of Peronism and more disdainful of the leaders of the *Libertadora* as anti-popular and even antisemitic. Similarly, a 1965 article lauded Peronism for giving the masses “a singular opportunity to politicize, to become aware of their ability to become, in sum, a new factor of power.” The broad and positive consequence was that now “the politicians need to appeal to them, they can no longer ignore them. They are an indisputable part of the nation.”¹⁰⁰ As was the case for many leftists, the cohort behind *Nueva Si3n* had come to value Peronism for proving the working class’ centrality to the Argentine nation and proving workers with basic rights.

Nonetheless, these fairly positive assessments of the Peronist movement were accompanied by a pessimistic appraisal of what the return of Peronism might mean for Argentine Jews. For the DAIA, the acceptance of the working class as key actors came with a call for building alliances with that sector, but *Nueva Si3n* offered a mixed review in 1964 when the DAIA met with Vandor, the power broker in national union politics. On the positive side, the meeting could lead to the recognition among workers that blaming Jews for their problems would distract them from their true interests. That being said, the paper urged a critical eye because with the antisemitic propaganda that had been presented to the working class in the last

⁹⁸ “La realidad nacional, un mes de gobierno,” *Nueva Si3n*, November 15, 1963, 1.

⁹⁹ “El eco critico,” *Nueva Si3n*, December 13, 1963, 3.

¹⁰⁰ “Peronismo: media vuelta a la derecha,” *Nueva Si3n*, March 6, 1965, 2.

year, “we have not heard nor read” of the Peronist leadership denouncing antisemitism.¹⁰¹ Perhaps to further justify their hesitance to embrace what many now saw as a popular movement, *Nueva Si3n* emphasized on multiple occasions that the movement had been co-opted by right-wing leaders who had no base in the unions. This was not only worrisome to the Jewish community, because the rightwing enjoyed support from known antisemites but was also a betrayal of Per3n, the “the indisputable leader of the working class.” *Nueva Si3n* also pointed to the left-wing credentials of Per3n, particularly his allegiance to the “third world,” whereas the rightwing who had co-opted the movement never made mention of the liberation struggles in Algeria or Cuba. It concluded that these right-wing leaders had forestalled all of the revolutionary possibility of Peronism.¹⁰²

While the DAIA conventions also showed an increasing acceptance of Peronism and working class nationalism, *Nueva Si3n* emphasized was more ambivalent about Peronism. By claiming that the movement was being distorted and as a result was becoming less popular and more antisemitic, it could reject it both as leftists and as Jews without denying its authentically popular roots. The unwillingness of *Nueva Si3n* to endorse building bridges with the Peronist movement as the DAIA did seems rooted in its understanding of the dynamics of youth assimilation: it feared that young Jews would integrate into Argentine political movements and thereby distance themselves from the Jewish community and a Jewish identity. This concern will be discussed in detail in the next chapters, but it is worth noting here that while *Nueva Si3n* had an interest in emphasizing that neither Peronism nor any other political movement should be seen as the path for full Jewish integration or assimilation. The lengthy analyses of the political system in 1964 and 1965 that painted a dark picture of the situation for Jews in any likely eventuality, almost invariably ended by saying that the current events required the Jewish community to be unified as they had no other allies. One article that rejected alliance building with the working class, for example, argued that, “Now more than ever the community needs to come together and strengthen itself. It should not accept the charges that antisemitic Machiavellis level against it.”

What is striking is that even with the dismal prognoses, the paper did not focus its attention on encouraging Aliyah. Instead it called mainly for Jewish cohesion in Argentina and a strong Jewish and Zionist identity. Indeed, it encouraged fellow Jews to feel comfortable asserting a strong Zionist identity, not only because Zionism was a legitimate national liberation movement but also because doing so was an affirmation of “inspiring ideal of [Argentina’s] independence, whose most noble protagonists did not deny the right of Jews to live as such.”¹⁰³ What is striking and perplexing here is that even as *Nueva Si3n* denounced readings of Argentina as a fundamentally liberal country, it was still willing to invoke those liberal values as a means of justifying to other Jews that they had a right to maintain a commitment to Zionism and Jewish particularity. It seems that at this juncture the writers behind *Nueva Si3n* had not yet found new terms to justify their inclusion, though they would by the late 1960s.

¹⁰¹ “Vandor en la DAIA: el futuro bajo signo de interrogaci3n,” *Nueva Si3n*, October 10, 1964, 3.

¹⁰² Peronismo: mediavuelta a la derecha,” *Nueva Si3n*, March 6, 1965, 2. On the occasion of the 1965 elections, *Nueva Si3n* noted that much of the funding for the movement comes from Jorge Antonio, who, along with Cornejo Linares had antisemitic and fascist aspirations for the movement (“Las pr3ximas elecciones,” *Nueva Si3n*, March 6, 1965, 2). In the archival collection at IWO, two issues of *Nueva Si3n* ran with the same date; it seems that “Las pr3ximas elecciones” ran before “Peronismo: media vuelta a la derecha” even though both articles are dated March 6, 1965.

¹⁰³ “Vandor en la DAIA: el futuro bajo signo de interrogaci3n,” *Nueva Si3n*, October 19, 1964, 3.

The 1966 Territorial Convention

In late May 1966, 213 delegates gathered together for the DAIA's Territorial Convention. The group represented not only different regions but also different generations. If the changes in the DAIA in the early 1960s were marked by the rise of Argentine-born, middle-aged men, by 1966 an even younger generation of Argentine Jews had also become vocal contributors at some of the community's central institutions. The origins of youth participation will be further developed in the following chapter, but what is important here is that the 1966 convention brought the leaders of the DAIA into direct discussion with the members of the youth movement Hashomer Hatzair, publishers of *Nueva Sión*. The conversations at that convention reveal the extent to which these two groups, as well as many others, had come to quite similar conclusions about the Argentine nation and its relationship to Jewish belonging.

While the convention was held at a moment of relative peace for the Jewish community, many shared the concern of Herzl Gesang, secretary general of the DAIA, who noted: "when the surface is exceedingly calm it is necessary to worry about what is below the surface."¹⁰⁴ Submerged hostility towards the Jews was perhaps more threatening given the sense that a military coup was imminent—and a month later General Juan Carlos Onganía indeed seized power. Nonetheless, the discussions on antisemitism centered more on the working class rather than the military.

In his opening remarks, Goldenberg reminded everyone that the policy of the DAIA should not be based on the "emotion of the leaders" but rather on empirical studies of the situation in the nation.¹⁰⁵ This had been the sentiment behind the 1961 founding of the Public Opinion Research Commission, and that commission finally bore significant fruit with the 1965 study on antisemitic attitudes among workers by sociologist Joaquín Fischerman. This survey revealed not only significant hostility towards the Jewish community in general, but greater hostility among the members of the working class identified as Peronists. These Peronists were also more likely than other workers to express hostility towards the military and large landholders. To explain this discrepancy Fischerman speculated that Peronists had an "authoritarian personality," borrowing from a term used originally to explain a susceptibility to Nazism.¹⁰⁶ Those with this personality profile tended to be ethno-centric, xenophobic, and accepting of a single party. To find out if this attitude was an explanatory factor in their survey, the sociologists asked workers if they were in favor of a single party in Argentina, and defined the participants as "authoritarian" if they both supported a single party and were hostile to Jews. Those who fit both categories were likely to be Peronists.¹⁰⁷

Despite these results and discourse surrounding authoritarianism, the speakers at the convention were unwilling to blame the Peronist movement for cultivating antisemitism. Fischerman himself noted "there is no evidence in the Peronist literature, at least in the official Peronist literature, in the official declarations, in the speeches of Perón, that make one think that Peronism as an ideology determines the appearance or the accentuation of antisemitic attitudes within the population."¹⁰⁸ Indeed, rather than blaming Peronism, many participants, both young

¹⁰⁴ Herzl Gesang, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 7, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 25

¹⁰⁵ Issac Goldenberg, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 13-14

¹⁰⁶ Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (W.W. Norton Company, 1993).

¹⁰⁷ Joaquín Fischerman, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 28-35.

¹⁰⁸ León Pérez, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 32. León Pérez explicitly noted that Peronist ideology was not antisemitic but rather anti-clerical. He also normalized the "authoritarian" tendency by noting that within the

and old, pointed to underlying structural problems to explain working class antisemitism, almost choosing to overlook the higher percentage of hostility among working-class Peronists.¹⁰⁹ A member of *Juventud Anilevich*, the university group associated with Hashomer Hatzair, was not satisfied with the “psychological” aspects of Fischerman’s study, pointing instead to the social tensions in this “convulsing continent...where we live in misery, in ignorance and in illiteracy of the better part of its inhabitants.”¹¹⁰ By rejecting a knee jerk association between the values of Peronism and antisemitism, and instead pointing to the continent’s deep-rooted inequality, these speakers forcefully rejected hostility towards the Peronist movement in favor of a more nuanced and accepting appraisal.

Various speakers also took the opportunity to critique the idea of Argentina as an open and tolerant nation. León Pérez explicitly contrasted the political culture in Argentina with the pluralism of the United States:

Here we do not have a nation divided between Catholics and Protestants and dozens of sects, here we have one important, large, Catholic Church and all of the other small drums. It is not like in the United States where it is possible to create a symphonic orchestra where all the communities contribute their particular sound. If our sound is going to ring, it will always be out of tune. Here there is a large drum and all the others are small instruments. There is no real pluralism, one can invent pluralism but there is no real pluralism.¹¹¹

The analogy to an orchestra was a specific reference to conversations, often among American Jews but other ethnic groups as well, about inclusion in the United States.¹¹² If the “New World” framework discussed in Chapter One suggested that Argentina and the United States were one and the same with respect to openness and tolerance, now León Pérez rejected this framework as inappropriate to the Argentine context. In a more subtle refutation of the liberal construction of the nation, several participants emphasized that while everyone had been discussing the hostility towards the Jews in the working class, there was also evidence of similar attitudes in the military, church, upper class, and even the middle class.¹¹³ This stood in stark contrast to the dominant

context of continental radicalization and economic instability, “it is not only Peronists that want a single party, there are also many Jewish and non-Jewish youth that want one party of the right or left...All of the youth including the Jewish youth is radicalized and wants strong regimes, they want organized regimes, they want stable regimes” (37-38).

¹⁰⁹ Jaime Finkelstein, an older man who struggled to speak in Spanish as opposed to Yiddish, presented an almost identical analysis by pointing out Latin America Jews were an easy scapegoat when “here in these countries, we confront many social, political and economic problems” (Jaime Finkelstein, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 45).

¹¹⁰ [unnamed] Solominsky, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 47. Bernardo Kliksberg, another leader of Hashomer Hatzair, struck a similar note reminding everyone that antisemitism was the result of social problems that the Jewish community was little capable of resolving (41). One of the resolutions issued at the end struck the balance between the focus on working class antisemitism and the same problem in other sectors.

¹¹¹ León Pérez, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 86.

¹¹² The play 1905 “The Melting Pot” by Israel Zangwill centered on creating an “American Symphony” (Israel Zangwill, *The Melting-Pot Drama in Four Acts* (Ayer Co Pub, 1994)). When Horace Kallen played on this metaphor when he critiqued Zangwill’s approach and articulated his theory of “cultural pluralism” (Horace M. Kallen, “Democracy versus the Melting Pot: A Study of American Nationality,” *The Nation*, February 25, 1915).

¹¹³ Bernardo Kliksberg, for example, argued that with the antisemitism of the military, latent antisemitism in various corners and the infiltration of the working class, the community could itself in “explosive conditions whose

discourse of a few years earlier that framed antisemitism as just the work of fringe groups in an otherwise tolerant nation. The subcommittee at the convention that further discussed antisemitism in the working class and explained this emphasis by noting: “this commission understands that antisemitism can be found in all parts of the population: nonetheless, the problem within the working class has more serious characteristics due to the tensions and the pressures that this group is subjected to.”¹¹⁴ This made clear that in the minds of those present, the working class had become significant actor in the nation and that the notion that the liberal, intellectual, middle class sectors were the most relevant opinion makers in society had been discarded.

When it came to the practical efforts to persuade the working class that Jews were not the enemy, there were still some significant differences among the delegates. Some of the DAIA’s long-term members continued to endorse working towards alliances with the working class. Samuel Goransky, a representative from San Juan, boasted that his chapter of the DAIA had encouraged Jewish business people to help their workers’ children attend universities, which “enormously counteracted what the worker thinks of the Jew and the Jewish businessman.” In addition, while the San Juan DAIA had long been inviting various civil, military and ecclesiastical officials to their yearly commemoration of the State of Israel, this past year it included the local delegate to the CGT, and Goransky was pleased with the results.¹¹⁵ León Pérez offered a less enthusiastic appraisal of the DAIA’s efforts. While it had been reaching out to the working class since the 1962 convention, Pérez found that the institution’s efforts to build alliances had not been as fruitful as direct contact between Argentine and Israeli union leaders on visits or at international meetings.¹¹⁶ Still, Pérez was optimistic that in some way, union leaders in Argentina could be won over.

The DAIA’s stated goals had long been protecting and defending the community on the “external front,” but the discussions at the 1966 convention bled into conversations about the “internal front,” or the effort to maintain Jewish cohesion. In fact, these were thought about in tandem in many respects as both the youth representatives and the leaders of the DAIA affirmed the importance of Jewish unity and a strong Jewish identity in the face of these antisemitic hostility. In Goldenberg’s closing remarks he reiterated that the DAIA should be aware of the stimuli that triggered antisemitism but should also “continue carrying out the absolutely difficult work of preparing the Jewish consciousness to confront these so that they respond adequately to these realities.”¹¹⁷ For Jaime Finkelstein, an older man who struggled to speak in Spanish, it was only through maintaining unity and Zionist life that the community would be able to combat antisemitism and maintain its “dignity as Jews and Argentines.”¹¹⁸ This attention to Jewish unity and strong Jewish identity and away from alliance building among the leaders of the DAIA was similar to the line that *Nueva Sión* had been encouraging for years. At the same time, it was reflective of a broader discussion of Jewish identity that had exploded in recent years and that is the central concern of Chapter Three.

The May 1966 Convention, held just a month before Onganía’s military coup and the beginning of the *Revolución Argentina*, can thus be read as the crowning moment for a trajectory

trajectory no one can anticipate and could be extremely dangerous” (Bernardo Kliksberg, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 14).

¹¹⁴ Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 112.

¹¹⁵ Samuel Goransky, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 52.

¹¹⁶ León Pérez, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 37.

¹¹⁷ Isaac Goldenberg, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 128.

¹¹⁸ Jaime Finkelstein, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 45.

that had been unfolding since the beginning of the decade. The combination of ongoing labor unrest, increasing military intervention, and illegitimate and ineffective elected presidents had led to rethinking of the nation's liberal myths for many. Within the context of the Jewish community, the relationship between antisemitism and broader political instability also meant rethinking the Argentine's membership with the Jews. These new frameworks were well ensconced by the time of the 1966 convention. Both the members of the DAIA and the members of Hashomer Hatzair now accepted the working class as key actors in the nation and authentic Peronism as a popular movement. The important opinion makers were no longer just intellectuals, journalists, and politicians who represented mostly the middle class. They collectively rejected the notion that Argentina was fundamentally an open and tolerant nation, and recognized antisemitism and exclusive ideas of the nation as deeply embedded in various sectors of society rather than the purview of a few fringe groups outside the national mainstream. This led to calls to prove Argentine membership in new ways: new through references to abstract concepts of democracy and equality directed at the politicians, journalists, and intellectuals but rather by claiming that they were sympathetic to the needs of the newly conceived nation at which the working class lay at the center.

At the same time, it can be read as the beginning of a new moment in understandings of the nation and considerations of Jewish belonging. Even as the DAIA leaders presented unity and a strong Jewish identity as the key response to antisemitism, one young member of Hashomer Hatzair had moved beyond that trope and began to call for Aliyah more forcefully than before. He claimed that given the nature of the continent, antisemitism and reactionary nationalisms were so embedded that the Jewish community could not fix the problems. Foreshadowing a sentiment that would become increasingly common in the years to come, he argued, "the only solution historically... was not found within the framework of the Diaspora but rather in the framework of the State of Israel."¹¹⁹ Other young speakers who called for Aliyah pointed to the rise of a threatening leftist, nationalism in Latin America that tended to be quite "exclusionary". The prognosis of I. Kamenzain, of Hashomer Hatzair was prescient: this forceful leftwing nationalist movement did not yet exist in Argentina, but "the possibility exists of it happening." His conclusion was clear: while it was reasonable to work against assimilation, the community should only do so with the "clear awareness that we build [the community] with the goal of achieving normalization and Jewish concentration in Israel."¹²⁰ While he did not explicitly call for Aliyah as the only option, as would become the rote response years later, his analysis—of limited room for a Jewish people in a revolutionary Argentina and the ultimate goal of relocating to Israel—would become increasingly commonplace in the next years.

Conclusion

The antisemitic attacks surrounding the Eichmann affair greatly alarmed the Jewish community. The DAIA launched its boldest protest ever in response to the Sirota kidnapping and *Nueva Si3n* became increasingly skeptical about the likelihood that antisemitism could be easily curbed in the months after Eichmann's execution. More broadly, as Ranaan Rein has noted, in addition to the rise in rates of Aliyah, these years saw the rise of Jewish day schools and Jewish self-defense organizations, in his reading as an affirmation of Jewish identity in response to the

¹¹⁹ [first name missing] Solominsky, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 48.

¹²⁰ I. Kamenzain, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 102.

affair.¹²¹ 1960-1962 were indeed momentous years, and by mid-1962, both *Nueva Si3n* and the DAIA were tiring of the government's inaction with respect to antisemitism and beginning to consider the structural roots of antisemitism. Nonetheless, the process of rethinking the nation and Jewish membership continued from there as waves of antisemitism persisted in the context of rising labor unrest and political instability.

While the DAIA and *Nueva Si3n* were quite different institutions, they were both committed to analyzing antisemitism and came to see it as particularly tied to the broader social tensions in Argentina. As they considered these social tensions, they also engaged with the Peronist movement, popular nationalism, structural inequalities, and Argentina's similarities to other Latin American countries. Their conversations echoed the ones being carried out in national newspapers and magazines and other parts of the public sphere, but they took on their own particularities because of the specifically Jewish lens. The liberal values that the DAIA celebrated in the early 1960s were democracy, *convivencia*, and cultural and religious tolerance. When it began to question the model of a liberal nation, it grappled with the importance of the working class like many others but it also came to terms with the fact that few others prized *convivencia* in the way the DAIA had once imagined. *Nueva Si3n*, meanwhile, followed a trajectory similar to many others on the left but found itself highly ambivalent about the Peronist movement as it tried to balance a certain left-wing enthusiasm with concerns about the co-optation of the movement by the right and the potential assimilation of young Jews into the movement. While each institution had a distinct trajectory, by the mid-1960s, both reached a similar overarching analysis about the problems facing the Jewish community. At the 1966 Territorial Convention it became clear that participants from different generations and different parts of the country had absorbed the new ways of understanding antisemitism, the working class, the nation, and the continent. More broadly, the convention suggested that the self-conception of a "New World" Jewish community akin to the one in the United States disappeared. In its place was emerging the idea of a "Latin American" community, which faced problems that were very much determined by the Latin American context.

Another trend that has emerged in this chapter is the growing emphasis on the need for a strong Jewish identity and a refusal to accept the accusations antisemites leveled, particularly about Zionism. *Nueva Si3n* pointed to antisemitism to emphasize that people could not abandon their Jewish identity because in the eyes of antisemites they would always be Jewish. It also emphasized that Jewish cohesion and unity was the best way to confront the antisemitism in various corners of the population. By 1966, the leaders of the DAIA had also begun to emphasize the importance of Jewish consciousness and a sense of dignity. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that this discussion of Jewish identity was just the result of *Nueva Si3n*'s influence or even just the result of the attacks from the "external front" during these years. Instead, the calls for strong Jewish cohesion, consciousness, and dignity were likely the result of the conversations about identity that were becoming increasingly prominent in various communal settings. These conversations, which will be the topic of the next chapter, were occasionally linked to antisemitism, but more frequently arose as Jewish institutions tried to understand the "internal front," or the nature of the community itself and particularly the community's youth.

¹²¹ Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 192.

CHAPTER THREE: YOUTH, IDENTITY AND THE MAKING AN ARGENTINE JEWISH COMMUNITY

In his survey of the history of Argentine Jews, Ricardo Feierstein shares a joke known in all of the “towns of Eastern Europe.” “There are four kinds of Jews,” a Rabbi says. “First, there are those that go every day to synagogue. Second, there are those that go to synagogue only on Saturdays and holidays. Third, there are those that only go on the Day of Atonement. And forth, there are those that are buried in a Jewish cemetery.” Feierstein then claims that Argentine Jews have pioneered a fifth category: “those who never go to synagogue, do not follow any of the rules, are agnostic, do not circumcise their sons, enter into mixed marriages, love ham sandwiches and cheese, but... frequently attend *classes about Jewish identity*.”¹ The joke speaks to the tendency among Argentine Jews, for the most part uninterested in any religious traditions, to still maintain a sense of Jewish “identity” or a more subjective sense of themselves as Jewish. Feierstein marshals this joke to preface a conversation on the many different ways that Argentine Jews understand themselves to be Jewish. The goal of this chapter is different: I seek here to historicize this joke, contending that the term “Jewish identity” and various discussions surrounding it emerged in Argentina for the first time in the 1960s as part of a broader rethinking of what it meant to be Jewish.

While the previous chapter focused on a process of reevaluation intimately tied to challenges on the external front, the conversations about the meaning of Jewishness discussed in this chapter were very much tied to questions on the internal front, or the challenge of preserving cohesion within the community itself. This chapter argues that the first half of the 1960s saw the emergence of efforts to think about the nature of Jewishness as flexible rather than essentialist, shifting in accordance with how Jews themselves understand it in different times and places.² With this came efforts on the part of Jewish activists to work actively to construct Jewishness and especially Zionism in terms that might resonate with assimilating Jews.

This chapter highlights two different yet complementary trends that facilitated the emergence and popularization of these new frameworks: an explosion in social scientific studies of Argentine Jews and a growing effort of Zionist youth activists to respond to the subjectivities of their assimilating peers. In both scenarios, Argentine Jewish activists responded to national and continental trends as well as ones within the Jewish diaspora in their efforts to rethink the meaning of Jewishness and make it appropriate to the Argentine context. Tracking these processes offers important insight into the Argentine Jewish community as well as trends in the Jewish diaspora. How Jewish identity—or the subjective experience of being Jewish—has varied over time and space has become a mainstay in contemporary Jewish studies, but what has been almost ignored is how and when Jews themselves came to think about the concept of “Jewish

¹ Ricardo Feierstein, *Historia de los judíos argentinos, espejo de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Planeta, 1993), 358; emphasis in the original

² In a similar consideration of the emergence of the idea of “Jewish identity” in the United States, David Kaufman notes “Once Jewish identification is seen as an autonomous choice rather than an inherited and fixed definition of self, once the implicit claim of constructedness is made, Jewishness comes to be understood as fragmented, conditional and changeable—and the phrase “Jewish identity” captures this amorphous quality well,” David Kaufman, “Toward a History of ‘Jewish Identity’: American Jewishness in the Early 1960s,” in *Association for Jewish Studies* (presented at the 43rd Annual Conference, Washington, DC, 2011).

identity” as relevant.³ This chapter points to the early 1960s as the moment when conversations about “Jewish identity” emerged in Argentina, and one recent study suggests the same of the United States.⁴ The emergence and the popularization of the concept in Argentina, I contend, cannot be understood without considering the interplay between input from other parts of diaspora as well as national and communal life in Argentina.

The discussion on shifting trends in sociological and demographic studies of Argentine Jews focuses primarily on the leaders of the community’s central institutions. These Jewish activists drew inspiration and aid from Jewish institutions outside Argentina, specifically the Israeli Institute of Contemporary Jewry and the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and were also responsive to trends in Argentine sociology. All agreed on the need to accumulate more knowledge, but the first half of the decade saw significant contention over what it meant to study Jews, and, fundamentally, what it meant to be Jewish. While the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, with its demographic studies, held more appeal in the first years of the decade, by mid-decade, the AJC model of studying “attitudes” or “identities,” gained traction. This represented a broader shift towards understanding Jewishness as subjective rather than essential quality and lead to widespread discussions of what it meant to be Jewish in Argentina.

A similar transition was underway among the Jewish activists who focused specifically on communicating with Jewish youth via educational material, periodicals, and public events. While the community’s central institutions were at the helm of the social science initiative, when it came to efforts to forestall the assimilation of youth, Jewish youth activists were key protagonists. They were the first to embrace a notion that youth had particular subjectivities and they were the first to claim that Argentine Jewishness would have to be remade accordingly. They were particularly attuned to a burgeoning “Latin American identity” after the Cuban revolution, and the anti-imperialist politics that came with it.⁵ As the leaders of the older generation eventually shifted their emphasis in social scientific studies, so too did they begin to embrace the calls of the youth to reframe Jewishness in accordance with the “youth mentality.” The older generation, however, had a different, and far less politicized, reading of the underlying reasons for assimilation, and, as a result, worked to perpetuate a different image. While both generations were attempting to adapt the community’s message, the conflicting understandings of what it meant (or ought to mean) to be Jewish, Zionist, and Argentine fomented a generational conflict that would endure for the next several years.

The two processes highlighted here were certainly related, but not in a clearly causal relationship. They unfolded simultaneously and each followed its own internal logic. Nonetheless, the Jewish activists were involved in both endeavors and observations in one context echoed in the other. There was also some overlap in personnel—for instance, the director of youth programming at the AMIA later directed the AMIA’s social science institute. Most importantly, there were underlying commonalities that shaped the similar trajectory of processes. The activists involved in both endeavors were fundamentally concerned with maintaining Jewish cohesion and appealing to the youth. Both grappled with the reality of Argentine Jews who were largely native born, increasingly educated, and quite integrated into various realms of Argentine

³ See footnote 36 in the Introduction.

⁴ David Kaufman, “Toward a History of ‘Jewish Identity’: American Jewishness in the Early 1960s.”

⁵ Diana Sorensen has noted that while the concept of Latin America dates to the 19th century, the 1960s marked the moment when “a transnational cultural identity became rooted in the hemispheric imagination” (Diana Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade Remembered: Scenes from the Latin American Sixties*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1.

society. Both responded to the same transnational trends, including the rise of a Latin American consciousness and shifting understandings of Jewishness across the diaspora. Ultimately, it was the combination of these factors that redirected focus to Jewish identity and engendered the notion that Jewish activists must work to make various identities synthesizable.

Demography, Sociology, and the Rise of Identity Studies

The Social Science Explosion and Demography as Knowing

The first half of the 1960s saw what can best be described as an explosion of interest in the study of Argentine Jews. The AMIA and the AJC's Latin America office (located in Buenos Aires), created institutes to study the community itself, a process which various press outlets lauded as absolutely essential. The DAIA established its Commission on Public opinion, discussed in the last chapter, also pointing to a moment of confidence in social science research. Several national and transnational trends converged to fuel this enthusiasm for learning more about the community by means of social science. First, interest in sociology was experiencing a significant upswing in the university setting and in Argentine society more broadly. This likely influenced Jewish leaders, but the trend had more specific relevance for the Jewish community. Sociology had become particularly attractive field of study for university students, particularly of the lower-middle class and the middle class, because, according to historian Lucas Rubinich, the field offered "an ideological context that did not stigmatize their cultural disadvantage and in some cultural spaces evaluated it positively."⁶ Many young Jews fit this category, and many Jewish activists, both young and old, hoped that by employing young Jewish sociology students and sociologists to carry out studies, they would bring them into the communal fold.⁷ More broadly, activists commonly assumed that if Jewish institutions better understood how many Jews there were, where they were located, and how they affiliated with the Jewish community, they could better carry out their work of maintaining cohesion.

This homegrown interest in sociological inquiry gained momentum when the Israeli Institute of Contemporary Jewry turned its focus to the Argentine community in 1961. When American-born historian Moshe Davis founded the Institute of Contemporary Jewry in 1959, he aspired to produce and encourage academic studies of diaspora communities.⁸ In October 1961, the Institute organized, with the help of Argentine communal leaders, the First Conference of Jewish-Argentine Researchers and Students in the Field of Social Sciences. The goal of the

⁶ Lucas Rabinich, "La modernización cultural y la irrupción de la sociología," in *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo (1955-1976)*, ed. James, Daniel, Nueva Historia Argentina 9 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003), 249.

⁷ Natan Lerner recommended hiring Jewish university students who studied related fields to work at the communal institutes that would be created to carry out research ("La primera conferencia sobre sociología judeo-argentina tanteo la posibilidades que hay en ese terreno," *La Luz*, October 20, 1961, 32). After the conference, *Nueva Sión* printed the anonymous reflections of an Argentine researcher who noted that university youth were "the central concern of the Conference. A university group is forming now that will carry out a study of their attitude towards Judaism. This study will be directed by a special staff and carried out by students of sociology from the local university" ("Los judíos en la argentina," *Nueva Sión*, October 28, 1961, 3).

⁸ Geoffrey Wigoder, "Moshe Davis and the Study of Contemporary Jewry: An Oral History," in ed. Geoffrey Wigoder (*Humanities Pr*, 1985), 12.

conference, like others in England and Belgium, was to spur local communal organizations to research their own communities.⁹ In his work on the American-Jewish community, Davis had emphasized that Jewish history should be understood as shaping and shaped by broader United States' history.¹⁰ At the Buenos Aires conference, he posited that every Jewish community in the Western Hemisphere "has acquired its very own characteristics as a consequence of the infinite circumstances and events that have taken place in the countries they live in" and must therefore be understood in that context.¹¹

While Davis offered an abstract argument for the importance of local context at the conference itself, for most Argentine participants the goal was a pragmatic attempt to gather basic demographic information about their little-studied local community. Nissim Elnecavé, editor of *La Luz*, argued that the 1960 National Census did not accurately count Jews in Argentina because it was taken on the night of Yom Kippur when many Jews were not home.¹² The only data were American sociologist Jacob Lestchinsky's rough estimate that there were 420,000 Jews in Argentina.¹³ Only in the 1970s would Israeli scholars reach a more accurate count of 310,000 Jews in Argentina in 1960.¹⁴ Beyond statistical concerns, most conference presenters offered descriptive studies on the particularities of the Argentine community—its institutions, school system, and press, life in the colonies, agricultural practices, occupations, and the difference between the Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities.¹⁵ Only two of the sixteen presenters explained the trends within the Jewish community by looking towards broader Argentine society. Most notably, León S. Pérez insisted that "Jewish university students do not escape, nor can they escape, the all-encompassing social and political process of America, and this fact is of great importance as it is common to all students, and is a centrifugal force within Jewish community."¹⁶ Pérez' analysis, particularly of the community's youth, would become increasingly prominent in later years, as this chapter will show. Nonetheless, at the 1961

⁹ Wigoder, "Moshe Davis and the Study of Contemporary Jewry, 18; "La conferencia de estudios judaicos sistematizará las investigaciones científicas sobre la comunidad," *Mundo Israelita*, September 30, 1961, 4.

¹⁰ Jonathan Sarna, "Achavah and History: Reflections on the Historical Emphases of Moshe Davis," in *America and Zion: Essays and Papers in Memory of Moshe Davis*, ed. Eli Lederhendler and Jonathan D. Sarna (Wayne State University Press, 2002), 27).

¹¹ "La primera conferencia sobre sociología judeo-argentina taneo la posibilidades que hay en ese terreno," *La Luz*, October 20, 1961, 18. Similarly, Bezalel Sherman, a sociologist from New York, claimed in his paper at the same conference Jewish adaptation in immigrant countries meant "every group of Jews shows very different characteristics when compared to other Jews." While Israel may be a focal point for all Jews, he contended, Jews of the Diaspora must maintain two cultures: "their own and the one of the country they live in." His own scholarship emphasized Jewish particularity in the United States, in contrast to the dominant sociologists of ethnicity in the United States at the moment, Nathan Glazer and Oscar Handlin, who argued that Jews were quite similar to any other ethnic group. (Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals, and the Creation of an American Public Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 111, 115).

¹² "La primera conferencia sobre sociología judeo-argentina taneo la posibilidades que hay en ese terreno," *La Luz*, October 20, 1961, 20.

¹³ "La primera conferencia sobre sociología judeo-argentina taneo la posibilidades que hay en ese terreno," 20. "La primera conferencia sobre sociología judeo-argentina taneo la posibilidades que hay en ese terreno," *La Luz*, October 20, 1961, 20.

¹⁴ Ricardo Feierstein, *Historia de los judíos argentinos*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Galerna, 2006), 117.

¹⁵ Based on all the speakers mentioned in *La Luz*, which did a thorough recounting, not including speeches of foreign visitors or introductory speeches from Argentines ("La primera conferencia sobre sociología judeo-argentina taneo la posibilidades que hay en ese terreno," *La Luz*, October 20, 1961, 18-21, 32).

¹⁶ León Pérez, "La juventud universitaria judía en la Argentina," *La Luz*, November 3, 1961, 8-11.

conference, studies that grappled seriously with the local context as an explanatory variable were in the vast minority, despite Davis' efforts.

The 1961 conference was only a starting point in what became an explosion of interest in social scientific studies within the Jewish community. Later that year the AMIA established the *Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales* (Institute of Social Investigations). In its first years of operation, the AMIA's new Institute continued to reflect the overwhelming desire for basic, demographic data.¹⁷ The first study published was "Marriage in the Kehilla of Buenos Aires," which analyzed the 1,058 marriages registered with the AMIA from mid-1960 to mid-1962. Those registering their marriage also answered questions about where they were born, where their parents were born, what they did for work and what their parents did for work.¹⁸ *Nueva Sión*, which had carried out its own small investigations in provincial cities in the 1950s, welcomed the study with an article entitled, "Research, at Last!" and enthused that even though the study was limited in scope, "it has been done with seriousness, focusing on a series of problems, and in the dearth of sociological work in Jewish life in Argentina, it represents a very valiant effort deserving of general applause."¹⁹

Next, the Institute expanded its reach by researching Jewish communities as a whole in the smaller cities of Tucumán, a province in northwest Argentina, and Quilmes, a municipality on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, arguing that these modest studies were "the indispensable point of departure for more complete and ambitious research."²⁰ The enthusiasm for a broader census continued, and in 1963, the AMIA again turned to the help of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry but this time particularly to demographer Roberto Bachi.²¹ He suggested the creation of a Department of Statistics within the Institute.²² The Statistic Department, according to his recommendations, would be charged with carrying out a complete census of the community and also basic research on educational, religious and social services that communal organizations provided to Jews.²³ For the next three years, this remained the stated goal of the AMIA Institute, though the accomplishments in that direction would remain fairly limited.

¹⁷ "La primera conferencia sobre sociología judeo-Argentina tanteo la posibilidades que hay en ese terreno," *La Luz*, October 20, 1961, 32; Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina Comunidad de Buenos Aires, "Memoria y Balance General. #67," 1962, 5, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 20a1.

¹⁸ "Por fin, una investigación!," *Nueva Sión*, November 30, 1962, 3.

¹⁹ "Por fin, una Investigación!," *Nueva Sión*, November 30, 1962, 3.

²⁰ Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina., *La comunidad judía de Tucumán* : (Buenos Aires, 1963), 1.

²¹ Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina Comunidad de Buenos Aires, "Memoria y Balance General, #69," 1964, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 20a1. In Bachi's reflections "Personal Recollections on the History of Research in Jewish Demography" he marks the mid-1960s as a moment of major change in the power of Jewish demography and includes, in addition to technical advances, "the change in the attitude of leaders and officials of Jewish institutions in many Diaspora countries, who became increasingly appreciative of the need to base action on knowledge," "the activity at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of a Division for the comparative study of world Jewish demography," and "the active support for collection of information given by the Council of Jewish Federations and other institutes in the Diaspora" (Roberto Bachi, "Personal Reflections on the History of Research in Jewish Demography," *Jewish Population Studies* 21, (1991): 36-37.

²² The result was that "Department of Statistics" and the "Institute of Social Investigation" were referred to interchangeably for the next few years. Bachi's other suggestions included making the department "an independent body" though it would ask the AMIA for its budget and present all of its plans to the AMIA to gain "approval" before proceeding. (Clara Badler, "Anteproyecto para la reestructuración del departamento de estadística," July 1965, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 13a.)

²³ Clara Badler, "Anteproyecto para la reestructuración del departamento de estadística."

A Competing Transnational Model and the Rise of “Attitude” Studies

While the 1961 convention and the early work of the AMIA’s Institute suggested general consensus on the need for basic, demographic studies of the community, not everyone at the Institute, or within the community more broadly, was on board with the emphasis on demography. In fact, Eduardo Rogovsky, who had led the institute since 1962, left in 1964 as Bachi’s plan was being put into effect. While Rogovsky had long had a tense relationship with the AMIA leadership, his departure was also likely motivated by a difference of opinion regarding the kind of studies the Jewish community most needed.²⁴ Rather than being consumed with quantifying and gathering basic demographic data, Rogovsky was interested in studies that evaluated the Jews’ “attitudes” towards values, rituals, and social phenomena. Even as he introduced the Quilmes study in 1962 as a “first step” in a census of the broader Buenos Aires metropolitan area, he also called for studying “not only the socio-demographic composition of the community, but also their attitudes; for example, their attitude towards Judaism, towards Israel, and on the education of children.”²⁵ When Rogovsky left the AMIA, he found a welcome home as the director of the *Departamento de Estudios Sociales* (Department of Social Studies) at the *Oficina Latinoamericana del Comité Judío Americano* (American Jewish Committee (AJC), Latin America office).²⁶

The work of the AJC Latin America office reflected the trends underway at the AJC in the United States, and among Jewish in the United States more broadly, but also more homegrown ones. The central office in the United States was becoming increasingly concerned with questions of identity, or what it meant to Jews to be Jewish.²⁷ John Slawson, Executive Vice President at the AJC, encouraged workshops and round-table discussions on identity in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1966, Slawson called for the creation of an Institute for Jewish Identity to carry out social scientific studies akin to those the AJC had long carried out on antisemitism.²⁸ Even before this, however, the AJC was publishing studies addressing identity such as: “Integration and identity: the Jew on the American scene today” (1959); “Am I a Jew by birth alone?” (1962); “Jewish identity in America: intermarriage and conversion” (1963); “Jewish identity in America: Jewish intolerance among Jews” (1963); “Jewish identity in America: how does Israel make American Jews feel?” (1963).²⁹ The AJC Latin America office did not use the

²⁴ For an illusion to the tense relationship, see Daniel Hopen, “Informe integral del Depto. de Estadística,” 1966, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 13a.

²⁵ “El I. de investigaciones sociológicas de la comunidad, encuesta, proyectos,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 15, 1962, 4.

²⁶ It is worth noting that the AMIA often viewed the AJC Latin America office with disdain because its North American parent was seen as anti-Zionist and assimilationist; consequently, Rogovsky’s dual affiliation might have been one of the causes of tension between him and AMIA leadership.

²⁷ Kaufman explains the emerging interest in “Jewish identity” in the United States to rising fear of assimilation, the emergence of a third generation, suburbanization (and the move out of Jewish neighborhoods), and the “notable entry of Jews and Jewishness into the mass media and other forms of popular entertainment at the turn of the 60s,” Kaufman, David, “Toward a History of ‘Jewish Identity’: American Jewishness in the Early 1960s.” All of these raised the question of what it meant to be Jewish, and the first three possibilities seem to resonate in the Argentine context as well.

²⁸ Naomi Wiener Cohen, *Not Free to Desist; the American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 431-2.

²⁹ The AJC was by no means responsible for the popularization of conversations surrounding identity with in the Jewish community in the United States. David Kaufman points to the use of the term by various Jewish actors and in the Jewish press, beginning in the 1950s but truly exploding in the 1960s (David Kaufman, “Toward a

word identity in its earliest studies in the 1960s, but rather queried “attitudes” towards values, rituals, and social phenomena, which similarly reflected the subjective experience of Jewishness. While borrowing its basic formulation from the US model, the work of the AJC Buenos Aires office drew on trends in Argentine sociology. Gino Germani, the famed Argentine sociologist, participated in the AJC’s 1963 study “Study of Attitudes in the Buenos Aires Community.”³⁰ In addition, the use of “attitudes” as an important category of analysis was consistent with Germani’s work, and Argentine sociology more broadly, which had been studying “attitudes” of members of different societal strata.³¹

In some respects, this 1963 project was quite similar to the first one published by the AMIA in 1962, “Marriage in the Kehilla of Buenos Aires.” The AJC Latin America office drew on the men who had recently registered marriages with the AMIA and also collected basic data about age, occupation, place of birth, but it also surveyed Sephardic couples and couples of German decent. The size of the AJC study was more modest—the AMIA survey had based its study on over 1000 people while the AJC surveyed only 150 people (though apparently they were chosen at random from a group of 1725)—but the survey itself was far more expansive, asking about activities and opinions to acquire a profile of how these young people understood their Jewishness. Many questions related to opinions on Jewish institutions. When asked which kinds of institutions were most important, Jewish Schools was most commonly ranked first (27%), followed by organizations that fought antisemitism (24%), and then institutions that raised money for Israel (13%). Another group of questions asked which of eighteen customs and behavior were essential to being Jewish. The survey revealed that 86% thought that it was essential to “accept the fact of being Jewish and not try to hide it” and that 88% found it to be essential to “live a life bounded by ethics and morals,” whereas only 3% thought it was essential to attend religious services weekly and only 12% to live in Israel. They also asked the participants: “If you had to explain what Judaism is, would you say it was a nation, a religion, a culture, a race, or a sect?” “Nation” was the most common at 32%, likely reflecting the lack religiosity yet strength of Zionist allegiance within the community. The questions also delved into the participants relationship with Argentine society more broadly, asking questions about their perceptions on the economic situation, the problem of antisemitism, and friendships with non-Jews, and whether they would consider leaving the country.

In a similar vein, the AJC processed data that American sociologist, David Nasatir, collected at the University of Buenos Aires in 1962 on the differences in attitude towards, religion, politics and economics between Jewish and non-Jewish students. Controlling for age, sex, area of study, marital status and socio-economic standing, the AJC observed that Jewish youth were less religious, more passionate about university politics, and more concerned with inequality in society than their non-Jewish counterparts. The authors of the study made clear that this contradicted the common assumption among communal leaders, which will be discussed in the next section, that youth were uninterested because they were too individualistic and unconcerned with social problems.³²

History of ‘Jewish Identity’: American Jewishness in the Early 1960s”).

³⁰ Eduardo Rogovsky and Abraham Monk, *Estudio de actitudes en la comunidad judía de Buenos Aires.* (Buenos Aires: Comité Judío Americano, 1963), Methods, 7. The AJC deferred to him particularly for analyzing class and occupational structure.

³¹ Lucas Rabinich, “La modernización cultural y la irrupción de la sociología,” 253.

³² Departamento de estudios sociales oficina latinoamericana del AJC, “Diferencias actitudinales entre estudiantes universitarios judíos y no judíos de Buenos Aires,” in *Primera Conferencia sobre identidad e identificación judía, #1, síntesis bibliográfica de investigaciones y ensayos sobre la comunidad judía argentina,*

Beyond their own studies, the local AJC popularized conversations on Argentine Jewish identity, and particularly the use of the word “identity,” through a series of conferences in 1965 and 1966. For the first two-day conference in Buenos Aires in 1965 the institution invited writers, psychologists, journalists, sociologists, historians, psychoanalysts, educators, jurists, and social workers, among others, to pontificate on the question of “Jewish Identity and Identification” (*Identidad e identificación judía*). Some invitees were leaders of central Jewish institutions whereas others had no affiliation with Jewish institutions and were just prominent Jewish professionals. To prepare the participants for the conference, the office disseminated abridged versions of scholarly work on the Argentine Jewish community, on immigrants in Argentine society more broadly, on the state of world Jewry, on Jews in the United States, and on Jewish identity. Despite empirical information on the Argentine community, these packets showed a strong preference for knowledge produced in other diaspora communities or in Israel. Only the anthologies on Argentine Jewish sociology and immigration included work by Argentine authors (with foreign authors mixed in).³³ The work on identity, meanwhile, completely ignored any conversations on Jewish identity that had taken place in Argentina. The publication entitled “*La cuestión de la identidad*” was a translation of an essay by John Slawson reflecting on Jewish identity in the United States, comparing it to Catholic and Protestant identity and riffing on Will Herberg’s seminal 1955 essay “Protestant-Catholic-Jew.”³⁴ The other essays were by Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel. Had the AJC Latin America office been so inclined, it might have collected reflections on Jewish identity that had appeared sporadically in different publications in the Argentine Jewish sphere (some of which will be discussed below), but instead, it deferred to the work produced in the United States and internationally, presumably assuming that the question had been considered more thoroughly or properly elsewhere.

The AJC office hoped that these conferences would serve as a starting point for invited guests to begin reflecting on Argentine Jewish identity. While introducing the precedents and goals for the conference, President of the Buenos Aires office Abraham Monk gave credit to international initiatives such as conferences organized elsewhere by the central AJC, but asked the participants to address Jewish identity in the Argentine context. Some of the questions he hoped they would consider included whether Jews everywhere confronted “the same problems or are they specific to the society to which they belong;” whether “Argentine society has had specific effects on Argentine Judaism;” and the extent to which “Argentine, Latin American, Israeli and International events in general...affect Argentine Jews and their future.” Some of Monk’s other questions seemed particularly targeted to the general concerns that were frequently presented in Jewish institutions including, “What are the reasons that a significant number of Jewish intellectuals and youth do not get involved with Judaism and separate themselves from the community and its institutions.”³⁵

(Buenos Aires: Comité Judío Americano, Instituto de Relaciones Humanas Oficina Latinoamericana, Servicio Comunitario, 1965).

³³ This publication included the AMIA’s study on Tucumán (1962), the AJC’s study on attitudes in the Jewish community (1963), the AJC analysis of David Nasatir’s work, and the scholarly essays by Moshe Davis (Israeli) and Irving Louis Horowitz (American) (Primera conferencia sobre identidad y identificación, Comité Judío Americano, Instituto de Relaciones Humanas Oficina Latinoamericana, Servicio Comunitario, Buenos Aires, 1965, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 25).

³⁴ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew; an Essay in American Religious Sociology*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1955).

³⁵ Abraham Monk, “Introducción” (presented at the Primera conferencia sobre Identidad e Identificación Judía, Buenos Aires, October 23, 1965), 3-4.

While the papers at the 1961 conferences had not yielded to Moshe Davis's calls for considering the local contexts, by 1965 the inclination had changed. The papers at the AJC conference complied with the agenda Abraham Monk had set out to consider the question of identity, the particularities of the community, and how they related to the local context. Some actually sought to define what Jewish identity meant in Argentina or in Latin America more broadly. Tobias Kamenzain, a lawyer and president of the board of the *Escuela Superior de Estudios Judaicos* (School of Advanced Jewish Studies) defined the Latin American communities, whose identities were very tied to Zionism, in contrast to those in the United States, where Jewish identity revolved around religion.³⁶ Zionism was inspiring for Latin American Jews because it offered a vision of national emancipation, the realization of hope and also a social project that could be a model for humanity.

For most of the presenters, however, the tack was somewhat different, as they considered not what it meant currently for people to be Jewish, but rather what kind of Jewish identity or image of Jewishness should be cultivated to ensure that Jews, and young Jews in particular, would be drawn into the community. Nissim Elnecavé, editor of the periodical *La Luz*, blamed the stagnant and bureaucratic Zionist movement in Argentina for undermining a healthy Jewish consciousness and called for the younger generation to renew Judaism to make it appealing to their generation.³⁷ José Isaacson, meanwhile, the editor of the journal *Comentario*, affirmed that the Jews felt a part of the Argentine nation and only questioned their membership in the face of Neo-Nazi activity. What they needed, however, as "Argentine Jews and Latin Americans," was to "look for and find a language to express ourselves as such."³⁸ Eduardo Rogovsky, director of the Department of Social Studies at the AJC office, argued that from a psychological perspective (and he was a psychologist), different generations had different mentalities, and the youth naturally rejected antiquated institutions and thereby the community. His indictment was strong: the community's institutions "do not allow changes adapted to the new reality and favor the progressive destruction of the community."³⁹

By the time of the conference, the model propagated by the AJC had taken precedence over that propagated by the Institute of Contemporary Jewry. When Moshe Davis, from the Institute of Contemporary Jewry spoke at the 1961 convention, he did advocate for studies that grappled with the local context. The Argentine community itself was not particularly responsive to Davis' suggestions at that juncture. In subsequent years, the scholars sent by the Institute of Contemporary Jewry focused on analysis rather than the particular subjectivities of Argentine Jews. This was certainly the case for demographer Roberto Bachi when the AMIA Institute of Social Investigation brought him in as a consultant in 1963, though this is perhaps unsurprising for a demographer. It was also the case for Haim Avni, however, the historian from the Institute of Contemporary Jewry who spent much of the early 1960s in Argentina. He participated in the 1965 conference on identity but disagreed with the idea of a particularly Argentine or Latin American Jewishness. He contended instead for the idea that all Jews experienced the same gravitational pull towards Israel with sufficient Zionist education. As a belief in local particularity was gaining force, the idea of a Jewish or Zionist education that was not crafted

³⁶ He pointed to the work of American sociologist Irving Louis Horowitz to validate this assertion.

³⁷ Nissim Elnecavé, "La Identidad judía como experiencia vivida," *Primera Conferencia sobre Identidad e Identificación judía*, 18-20

³⁸ José Isaacson, "Nuevas estructuras para la comunidad judía," *Primera conferencia sobre identidad e identificación judía*, 20-21.

³⁹ Eduardo I. Rogovsky, "Las relaciones intergeneracionales en la crisis de identidad del judaísmo argentino," *Primera conferencia sobre identidad e identificación judía*, 33-36.

specifically for an Argentine audience was rapidly falling out of favor. This can be seen at the 1965 conference on identity and will be discussed at length below.

That the vast majority of the participants at the 1965 AJC conference so fully endorsed the conference agenda is all the more remarkable when we consider the tenor of the AJC Latin America office's relationship with the DAIA and AMIA. These institutions had often viewed the local office of the AJC as a tool for the American AJC to meddle in Argentine Jewish affairs and to usurp the DAIA's representative role.⁴⁰ Another point of tension was that the AJC in the United States had long been ambivalent towards Zionism, though it was quite supportive of Israel by the 1960s.⁴¹ That many members of the Jewish community, including leaders of these institutions, participated so fully in the local AJC's conference suggests that the enthusiasm for discussing identity and in efforts to make Jewishness compatible with Argentine sensibilities was strong enough to override a historically tense relationship.

Identity and the AMIA

In 1966, one of the young social scientists in the AMIA's Institute of Social Investigation wrote a lengthy report to the president and general secretary of the AMIA. He recounted years of dysfunction. While the social scientists had ostensibly been carrying out the demographic work that Bachi had recommended, by 1966 only six of the twenty-three studies that had been undertaken were completed and published. As far as Hopen was concerned, this was because the leaders of the AMIA had lost interest and confidence in the work of the Institute of Social investigation. The AMIA let it languish without a director after Rogovsky left in 1964 until 1966 and when all the other staff of the AMIA received raises in 1965, the social scientists (*técnicos*) at the Institute did not.⁴² Hopen blamed the lack of interest on the Institute's lack of an "organic plan," or a clear-cut mission for the Institute. In his appraisal, the AMIA needed studies on identity (such as studying the image of Zionism among the youth) and political sociology (patterns of participation in and perception of AMIA elections).⁴³ He was not alone in this assessment. In 1965 Moisés Kostzer, active participant in the 1961 conference and one of the original advisors to the Institute, critiqued Bachi's plan for being interested only in statistics, arguing that "given the questions of generational problems, education, social mobility and structure, and the political, economic and social processes in the country that the Jewish

⁴⁰ Under Perón, the AJC affiliated Instituto de Judaísmo Argentino (IJA) tried to present itself as the non-Peronized alternative to the DAIA (Lawrence Bell, "The Jews and Peron: Communal Politics and National Identity, 1946-1955" (PhD, Ohio State University, 2002), see also Chapter One of this dissertation. Even after Perón's fall, there were times that the IJA went to lobby the authorities, eliciting disdain from the DAIA, ("La DAIA dio a conocer una declaración, *Mundo Israelita*, January 28, 1956, 2; "Subraya la DAIA que es necesario la unidad y la disciplina en la comunidad," *Mundo Israelita*, June 2, 1956, 4.

⁴¹ This increasingly friendly relationship had much to do with an "entente" reached between President of the AJC Jacob Blaustein and David Ben-Gurion over the question of Aliyah. Ben-Gurion's framing of the diaspora as exile and calls for mass immigration to Israel alienated wealthy Americans, and Ben-Gurion ultimately conceded that the "in-gathering of the exiles" applied only to other parts of the diaspora (Naomi Wiener Cohen, *American Jews and the Zionist Idea* (Ktav Pub. House, 1975), 116-117.

⁴² Daniel Hopen, "Informe integral del Depto de Estadística," 2-4. The relationship became more tense when Haim Avni, Israeli historian and member of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, consulted for the AMIA's institute for a brief period in 1965 but left because of he felt that the AMIA leadership undermined his projects. One of the projects that Avni wanted to carry out was a comparative study of the Greek and Armenian communities in Argentina, which apparently upset the AMIA leadership (4).

⁴³ Hopen, "Informe integral del Depto de Estadística," 13.

community confronts, the institute cannot be limited to a mere department of Statistics.”⁴⁴ Though neither Kostzer nor Hopen mentioned the AJC specifically, it was clear that their model inquiry was gaining traction.

In 1966 the AMIA leadership finally had a change of heart when Hopen and the other staff threatened to resign. Rather than abandon the Institute entirely, the leadership of the AMIA chose instead to reinvest in it, naming a new director, Lázaro Schallman, and offering the staff raises.⁴⁵ This renewed attention can also be linked to the work of the AJC and the flourishing conversations about identity. Tobias Kamenszain, the incoming president of the AMIA, had himself participated in the AJC conference, and the reinvigoration of the AMIA Institute came part and parcel with a shift towards concern about identity. The choice of Schallman was telling. While according to Hopen he had no previous experience in social scientific studies, he had led the Department of Youth at the AMIA for the last four years, which had already endorsed the importance of identity, as will be discussed further below.⁴⁶

When Schallman took the helm of the AMIA Institute of Social Investigation in 1966, he tried to diplomatically balance the AMIA’s link with the Institute of Contemporary Jewry with the growing consensus regarding a new kind of study. Considering the Bachi approach in the letter to the AMIA leadership, Schallman noted, “if the first stage can be consolidated, we could think about the crafting and completion of other broader and more ambitious sociological and historical research.” Even though the first phase had certainly not been completed, he was already suggesting carrying out studies in a new mold: “In my judgment, this year we could also begin two studies of fundamental interest for communal life: one on the factors that affect the *growing assimilation of the new generations*, and the other on *mixed marriages*.”⁴⁷ These studies would include a subjective component “on the ‘attitudes’ of Jewish youth in the Capital and Gran Buenos Aires, with the goal of understanding the lack of participation in communal life.” This would aid communal institutions in the planning of successful youth activities.⁴⁸ Schallman’s proposed study echoed the sentiments expressed at the AJC’s Identity and Identification conference: youth assimilation was the fundamental problem and figuring out how to craft a message that would resonate with them, based on how they understood Jewishness, was of the utmost importance.

Ultimately, the studies the AMIA conducted after 1966 did reflect the AJC style of inquiry, asking people about their personal relationship with their Jewishness, particularly in an effort to evaluate the AMIA’s programs. It took a few years before any of these studies came to fruition. The “Statistical Data on Mortality in the Community of Buenos Aires, January-December, 1965” was released in 1967 and included only demographic data, much like the earlier studies, but the introduction claimed a future goal of transcending the merely “statistical focus to cover analysis of broader social problems, significant for knowing the Jewish community in and of itself and in relation to the country.” It also made explicit reference to similar studies “carried out in Jewish communities in different and important world centers, like the United States, England, and other European countries with whom we have established an interchange of information, as we have with social investigation in Israel.”⁴⁹ While it is

⁴⁴ Moises Kostzer, “Instituto de investigaciones sociales,” 3, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 13a.

⁴⁵ Hopen, “Informe integral del Depto de Estadística,” 5.

⁴⁶ Hopen, “Informe integral del Depto de Estadística,” 5.

⁴⁷ Lazaro Schallman to President of AMIA, April 21, 1966, 2-4, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 13a. Emphasis his.

⁴⁸ Lazaro Schallman to President of AMIA, April 21, 1966, 5.

⁴⁹ “Instituto de investigaciones sociales y estadística, *Datos estadísticos de la mortalidad en la comunidad de Bs.As., enero-diciembre 1965* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales y Estadística, 1967), 5.

noteworthy that the Institute did not mention the AJC specifically, perhaps because of the history of institutional tension, the weight of influence had shifted away from the Institute of Contemporary Jewry towards the United States and Europe. With it AMIA had shifted away from an essentialist understanding of Jewishness to a more subjective understanding and an interest in how Jews understood their Jewishness. By 1968, the Institute of Social Investigation had succeeded in carrying out a more subjective if modest study, which evaluated whether a program to send teachers to Israel had the desired effect on the teacher's identities.⁵⁰ Work on attitudes and relationships to Jewish identity, particularly in evaluating the AMIA's own programs, would continue until the Institute was disbanded in 1970.

While the enthusiasm for empirical studies of the community would span from 1961 to 1967, the community underwent a thorough reconsideration of what it actually meant to know itself over these years. The earliest studies were premised on essentialist understandings of what it meant to be Jewish—one was born a Jew and remained Jewish—and knowledge of the Jewish community meant knowing the population size, occupations and places of birth. Nonetheless, the interest in this model waned in favor of studies that understood the meaning of Jewishness as changing over time and tried to understand what it meant to be Jewish in Argentina at this particular moment. Studies of this sort did record some basic biographical data, but also asked people what they saw as the fundamental Jewish values, traditions, and institutions. While these new studies first arrived in Argentina by means of the American Jewish Committee, Argentine sociologists adapted them to the local context and Argentine Jewish activists added questions and interpreted the data so as to be relevant for the Argentine community. By 1966, the new model had become so ubiquitous that the AMIA reshaped and reinvigorated its own institute to carry out these new kinds of studies.

What did remain consistent during these years was that the concern for youth assimilation was a fundamental motivator in carrying out these studies. From 1961 on, the hope was that by carrying out empirical studies, the community would be able to attract young Jewish sociologists. León Pérez had sociology students carry out a survey on Jewish university students in 1962.⁵¹ In 1964, the AMIA Institute thanked university students and professors for participating in their studies.⁵² In 1965 Kostzer, an advisor to the AMIA institute, insisted that the Institute be a “a center for training future researchers and should therefore attract university students or professionals that are drawn to this vocation.”⁵³ Beyond these efforts, an underlying concern of all conversations on identity and studies was how young people understood Jewishness or how Jewishness might be framed to attract them. To understand more fully how this concern for youth helped motivate this shift we can turn to a more explicit conversation about youth assimilation and particularly the innovations of young Jews as they responded to this problem.

⁵⁰ Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina Comunidad de Buenos Aires, “Memoria y Balance General, #74,” 1969, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 20a1.

⁵¹ “Informe del departamento de estadística de la “Kehila,” *La Luz*, November 30, 1962, 23.

⁵² “Informó el instituto de investigaciones sociales y estadísticas en el plenario de la AMIA, Se reunirá en noviembre un congreso de kehillot,” *La Luz*, October 16, 1964, 20.

⁵³ Kostzer, “Instituto de investigaciones sociales,” 1.

Youth and their Own Mentality

Though there were high hopes that the social science projects would interest and include youth, there were many more direct and broad-based efforts to draw young people into Jewish institutions and deepen their Jewish consciousness. Youth groups, generally of the Zionist variety, and the community's well-established institutions dedicated significant energy to fighting assimilation, by means of educational courses, social events, and reading material. While concern for assimilation was not new, nor was programming that tried to reach Jewish youth, there was a significant shift in these endeavors over the first half of the 1960s. Specifically, the question of resonating with the particular sensibilities of Argentine youth became central to these efforts. This echoed a broader concern with youth as a cultural category that had begun to emerge in the Perón years, but garnered significant attention from sociologists and psychologists by the 1960s and in popular culture.⁵⁴

Within the Jewish community, the reckoning with youth as a distinct cultural category came with new ways of thinking about Jewishness that focused on Jewish "consciousness" and later identity. It was Jewish youth activists who first bridged this conversation in broader society with the particular concerns of the Jewish community. In the course of their discussions about reaching their assimilating peers at the beginning of the decade, youth activists were the first to express concern about waning Jewish consciousness among young Jews. They were also the first to craft a Jewishness that would resonate with the sensibilities of these young Jews. The older generation, meanwhile, struggled little with the mentalities of youth at the beginning of the decade. By the mid-1960s, however, the framework shifted even among the older generation as they began to echo conversations among the youth. By mid-decade the notion that the Jewish community would have to reinvent itself and the meanings of Jewishness and Zionism to foment a healthy Jewish identity among the youth was commonplace.

Timeless Values: The Older Generation on the Subject of Youth

In 1960, Natan Lerner, a vice president of the DAIA, offered some reflections on the mentalities of contemporary youth. He claimed that while in the past religion and a distinct language had served as the bulwarks against assimilation, neither would appeal now. Instead, he pointed to three other factors that would maintain their allegiance. The first was "the hostile environment" in the climate of antisemitism. The other two were positive: improvements in an unspecified variety of Jewish education and "the existence and accomplishments of the State of Israel." He went on to claim that it was the connection to Israel especially "where we can find the great bulwark and defense against the potential for dispersing...."⁵⁵ While this assessment reflected some effort in analyzing contemporary youth, there was little discussion of why Zionism or an unspecified kind of Jewish education might appeal to them. Other leaders of the central institutions pointed to the fairly prosaic assumption that youth were idealistic, and thereby claimed that presenting the idealism of *Jalutzim* (Settlers in Israel) and *Kibbutzim* would

⁵⁴ Valeria Manzano, "The Making of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality, 1956--1976" (Indiana University, 2009), Chapter 1.

⁵⁵ "Perspectivas de la vida judía en la Argentina," *La Luz*, September 23, 1960, 40-41s.

draw them into the community.⁵⁶ Again, however, there was little grappling with how flesh and blood youth in Argentine society at that juncture understood themselves.

This trend is reflected most fully in the AMIA's Department of Youth, founded in the late 1950s with the specific purpose of reaching young people. Led by Lázaro Schallman in the early 1960s, its work reflected the assumption that young people needed only greater exposure to the valor of the Jewish tradition and the triumphs of Zionism, as understood by the community's leaders, to encourage interest in being Jewish. Beginning in June 1961, and then again in April 1962, the Department launched a course open to all interested youth on Jewish history, from "its beginnings through the collapse of Jewish life in Europe and the founding of the State of Israel."⁵⁷ *Mundo Israelita*, the paper most closely linked to the AMIA, endorsed this endeavor, writing at the conclusion of the course in 1962 that the "considerable number of youth" who had attended "could thus internalize the prominent aspects of Jewish life and the past of our people.... It is an important contribution to the current efforts to bring the new generations into the sphere of Jewish life."⁵⁸ In this course on Jewish history, the Americas generally and Argentina particularly were not included. This is not surprising given the state of Jewish historiography internationally at the moment, but it is still striking that in efforts to appeal to largely native-born Argentines, a canonical view of Jewish history was presumed more relevant than a more local account.⁵⁹

Similarly, the publications released by the Department of Youth beginning in 1961 for use at youth centers, point strongly to the disregard for local context and the assumption that simple exposure to traditional Jewish sources and glimpses of Israeli society might inspire greater interest among the community's youth. The department distributed these pamphlets to some 50 youth centers serving over 8000 young people, and hired *madrijim* (youth leaders) to facilitate discussion with them.⁶⁰ The first several publications were dedicated to different Jewish holidays, describing the biblical bases for the holidays and framing the Jewish traditions as having universal resonance. A 1962 publication on *Shavuot* and *Lag BaOmer*, for example, claimed that the giving of the Ten Commandments, the "cornerstone of civilization," made *Shavuot* a celebratory moment for all humankind. The pamphlet also offered suggestions on how to commemorate *Shavuot* in youth centers, recommending small Bible study circles and observing that similar circles had become popular in Israel with the support of David Ben-Gurion. The only sign of an effort to keep with the times were the allusions to contemporary

⁵⁶ La educación judía en la diáspora: factor primordial de cohesión; La juventud judía y el sionismo jalutziano," *Mundo Israelita*, November 16, 1956, 2. "Sobre el centenario de la colectividad y la Juventud deliberó de la DAIA," *La Luz*, September 18, 1959, 28.

⁵⁷ Memoria y Balance, #67, January 1-December 31, 1961, no page; "Inicianse el jueves los cursos de historia judía para la juventud," *Mundo Israelita*, June 3, 1961, 3; "Diose comienzo al curso de historia para la juventud," *Mundo Israelita*, June 10, 1961, 2; "Iniciase el curso de historia para la juventud," *Mundo Israelita*, April 28, 1962, 11; "Concluye el ciclo del curso de historia para la juventud," *Mundo Israelita*, November 10, 1962, 11.

⁵⁸ "Concluye el ciclo del curso de historia para la juventud," *Mundo Israelita*, November 10, 1962, 11.

⁵⁹ Academic histories of the American Jewish community were in their incipient phases in these year and professional histories of the Argentine Jewish community were even more rare. Moshe Davis, who visited the Argentine community in 1961 as a scholar from Israel's Institute of Contemporary Jewry pioneered the field of American-Jewish history in the 1950s and 1960s and hoped that the Institute would inspire similar historical studies of other diaspora communities (Eli Lederhendler and Jonathan D. Sarna, eds. *America and Zion: essays and papers in memory of Moshe Davis* (Wayne State University Press, 2002).

⁶⁰ The department boasted contact with 8,000 young people in 1962 by means of 50 youth centers and other institutions and 9,000 in 1963 ("Informó el departamento de juventud de la kehila," *La Luz*, May 18, 1962, 24; Memoria y Balance General, #69, January 1-December 31, 1963, no page).

Israel, presuming that would be inspiration enough for young Jews.⁶¹ Another publication that year commemorated the deaths of Theodore Herzl, founder of political Zionism, and Chaim Nachman Bialik, a pioneer of Modern Hebrew poetry. Through the exalting (if abridged) biographies of the two figures, the pamphlet detailed what each had done for the Jewish state and Hebrew culture, offering further reading based on their few works translated into Spanish.

The work of the Department of Youth in the early 1960s revealed the assumption that a basic education about contemporary Israeli life, the universality of Jewish traditions, and the heroes of modern Zionism would undermine assimilatory trends. There seemed to be some thought about what might appeal to youth in the portraits of young people in Israel, but considerations of what might appeal specifically to Argentine youth were absent. The work of the Department along with the musings of the community's elite suggest that being Jewish meant an alignment with Judaism's humanistic values and an allegiance to the Zionist movement that did not vary based on location in the diaspora.

“What is the Youth?”

The extent to which the leaders of the older generation were detached from the realities of flesh and blood youth in early 1960s is called into relief by the conversations among the Jewish youth themselves in the same years. While in the late 1950s Zionist youth claimed that exposure to traditional Zionist ideology, the Hebrew language, or Jewish tradition would forestall assimilation, as their older counterparts did, this outlook changed rapidly in the early 1960s.⁶² It was in these years that they became particularly concerned with the “consciousness” of their peers. Most concerning to Zionist youth activists were young Jews, who, inspired by the Cuban revolution, anti-imperial struggles, and a politicized Latin American identity, disavowed Jewishness as an “indecent parochialism.”⁶³ As university professor León Pérez claimed in his 1961 presentation at the social science conference discussed above, most Jewish students, like their non-Jewish counterparts, were particularly inspired by the Cuban revolution. In the leftist university groups in which many Jews participated, due to the influence of communist ideology, “Zionism is considered reactionary and Israel as a pillar of Yankee imperialism in the Middle East, that is opposed to Nasser’s neutral foreign policy.”⁶⁴

This kind of assimilation became the fundamental object of concern among Zionist youth activists over the next years. This focus reflected a bias among the members of Zionist youth groups, as they were generally university educated or in the process of becoming so and

⁶¹ AMIA, Comunidad Israelita de Buenos Aires, Departamento de Juventud, “Shavuot, Lag Baomer,” Publicaciones #2, Buenos Aires, 1962, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 933.5 (Arg).

⁶² For the ideas of how to communicate with youth that do not rely on a localized understanding of youth in the 1950s, see “Frente al congreso de la CJSA,” *Nueva Sión*, June 22, 1956, 6; Dr. Noé Davidovich, “La Juventud y la encuesta SHA,” *Nueva Sión*, October 27, 1955, 6; “Una positiva demostración de civismo fue la primera reunión de la asamblea de delegados,” *Nueva Sión*, April 27, 1957, 6.

⁶³ Leonardo Senkman, *La condición judeo argentina en los años 60* (Buenos Aires: J.N. Bialik, 1984), 3. For the prevalence of a “Latin American” consciousness in leftist circles after the Cuban Revolution, see Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade Remembered*; Claudia Gilman, *Entre la pluma y el fusil: debates y dilemas del escritor revolucionario en América Latina*, Metamorfosis (Buenos Aires?: Siglo Veintiuno Editores Argentina, 2003).

⁶⁴ León S. Pérez, “Situación del universitario judío en la Argentina” presented “Primera conferencia de investigadores y estudiosos judeo-argentinos en el campo de las ciencias sociales y la historia,” October 11-15, 1961, Archivo Mark Turkow, box 22A, 7.

sympathetic to leftist causes. In fact, one small (and not broadly representative) study of young Jewish men in the early 1960s suggested that only 20% were university educated and thus part of that milieu.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, the Zionist youth's focus on politicized assimilation was an important driving force in their thinking about the importance of Jewish identity and re-imagining of Jewish and Zionist values over the course of the 1960s.

The youth behind *Nueva Sión* were among the first to take on the challenge of responding to the sensibilities of young, assimilating Jews in a series of editorials and letters to the editor in 1961. To historian Leonardo Senkman, the conversations that took place on the pages of *Nueva Sión* were symptomatic of the need of “the generation of intellectual youth in the community” to respond to the climate of antisemitism and “take a position on their Jewish condition.”⁶⁶ To an extent, this was the case: the antisemitic violence associated with the Eichmann affair led the writers of *Nueva Sión* and the leaders of Juventud Anilevich (Anilevich Youth), also associated with Hashomer Hatzair, to affirm the inescapability of Jewishness and the fundamental flaws of the diaspora life.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the actual 1961 debate on the pages of *Nueva Sión* indicates that the conversations about identity were often more a response to assimilation within the community than threats from outside.

The discussion began in May 1961 when Julio Adín, a twenty-three year-old editor of *Nueva Sión* wrote an essay critiquing young Jews who actively disavowed their Jewishness.⁶⁸ He described:

We occasionally speak with Jewish youth, mainly students, rooted in Argentine life, concerned by political events, integrated into the local reality, that since their childhood had and continue having gentile friends in whose company they feel very comfortable. These young people feel Jewish by birth only; they know their parents were [Jewish]. They themselves do not feel connected in any way to Judaism. They are not religious (their parents were not either). They do not speak Yiddish. They do not know anything about Jewish culture, traditions and history. They consider, as a result, and to an extent correctly, being Jewish to be an accident—perhaps a little bothersome—and regardless, unnecessary. They are convinced that at the moment they forget it, the problem ceases to exist. They tend to express themselves with the phrase “I am Jewish, but I do not practice.”

Adín's intent was not to merely document the trend but also to offer a counterargument by claiming that this attitude was inconsistent with Sartre's notion of an authentic identity, which

⁶⁵ Eliahu Toker noted in 1966 that one of the very few sociological studies of Argentine Jewish youth suggested that only 20% of these young people were actually university educated or on their way to becoming so and thereby part of the politicized, leftist, milieu that the youth activists focused so intently on addressing. The others were small business people, industrialists, workers, white-collar workers, or artisans (*Convención territorial de la DAIA*, Mendoza, 21 al 24 de Mayo, 1966, 59). This was a very small study, based only on young men who registered their marriages with the AMIA, and the percentage of university educated young people was likely much larger and growing. Nonetheless, as Toker suggested, the obsession with the politicized youth was based on a skewed sample.

⁶⁶ Leonardo Senkman, *La condición judeo argentina en los años 60* (Buenos Aires: J.N. Bialik, 1984), 3. For another consideration of identity at the moment of the Eichmann affair, see Emmanuel Kahan, “La identidad judía en la argentina en los tiempos del ‘Affaire Eichmann.’”

⁶⁷ See for example, “5722: El pueblo judío en la Argentina, en Israel y en el resto del mundo,” *Nueva Sión*, September 28, 1962, 1, 10. For a similar line from *Juventud Anilevich*, see “Efervescencia y su contenido,” *Nueva Sión*, August 31, 1962, 1; “Juventud Anilevich: un movimiento,” *Nueva Sión*, July 5, 1963, 2.

⁶⁸ He published under the pseudonym I. Iudain.

required a “true and clear consciousness” of one’s situation. One could say that he or she was Jewish but did not practice just as accurately as someone could say, “I am black but do not practice” given that “neither of the two situations is possible. Neither can the black person change his skin, nor the Jew his condition.”⁶⁹ Adín’s appeal to Sartre, a point of reference for contemporary intellectuals, was a clear effort to frame a strong Jewish “consciousness” as compatible with the cultural and intellectual allegiances of young people in Argentina.⁷⁰

The response to Adín’s piece by Néstor Alberto Braunstein, a self-defined assimilating Jew, brought to the pages of *Nueva Sión* the arguments of the politicized, leftist Jews who found the Jewish community removed from more important struggles. Braunstein argued that Adín and his cohort were guilty of detaching themselves from the Latin American reality. Braunstein mimicked Adín’s style:

We occasionally speak with Latin American youth and old people, in their majority petit-bourgeoisie, integrated into Jewish life, concerned with the Zionist reality, that since their childhood lived and continue living among Jews, and they never had social problems. These youth and adults feel Latin American by birth alone; they know that their parents were not. They themselves do not feel connected in any way to the Latin American world. They are religious (their parents also were). They speak Spanish only when they leave their world. They do not know anything about Latin American culture, traditions and history. They consider, as a result, and with certain validity, being Latin American to be an accident—perhaps a little bothersome—and regardless, unnecessary. They are convinced that at the moment they forget it, the problem ceases to exist. They do not tend to express themselves with the phrase “I am Latin American, but I do not practice,” although this phrase describes them entirely.

To Braunstein, this attitude was particularly detestable because it signaled a lack of identification with the plight of other Latin Americans—whether it be Chagas disease in northern Argentina or the recent American invasion of Cuba. “Zionists,” the label he used to refer to all involved Jews, were more concerned with mixed marriage than illiteracy, dependency, and standard of living. Mimicking Adín’s piece further, Braunstein also invoked Sartre, arguing that the authentic choice was not to practice Judaism but rather to “practice” their “Latin American Condition.”⁷¹ Braunstein’s choice to critique Jews’ Latin American credentials rather than the Argentine ones was symptomatic of the political moment. For the politicized young people in question, in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution and in the midst of social and political unrest in Argentina, Argentine identity was becoming increasingly tied to an anti-imperialist, Latin American identity.⁷²

Confronting Braunstein, Adín took another stab at making Jewishness and Zionism compatible with the identities of young, leftist Jews.⁷³ He argued first that Jewish values and

⁶⁹ “Soy judío, pero no ejerzo,” *Nueva Sión*, May 19, 1961, 2.

⁷⁰ On the reverence for Sartre, see Oscar Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas: La formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual en la Argentina, 1956-1966* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Puntosur Editores, 1991), 21-5.

⁷¹ “Judío que no ejerce,” *Nueva Sión*, June 2, 1961, 2.

⁷² Oscar Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas: la formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual en la Argentina, 1956-1966* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Puntosur Editores, 1991), 139–142. Silvia Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder en Argentina: la década del sesenta*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno de Argentina, 2002), 192–3.

⁷³ “Respuesta a quien ‘no ejerce,’” *Nueva Sión*, June 17, 1961, 6.

revolutionary values were quite compatible, and that “Zionism has many more similarities with the struggles of the Latin American nations than B. supposes, because it is nothing more or less than the national liberation of the Jewish people.” Arguing the case for Zionism by comparing it to other national liberation movements would become pervasive in the Jewish community by the end of the decade, but Adín was among the first few voices defining Zionism in these terms. Moreover, Adín rejected the premise that involved Jews ignored their Latin American surroundings, arguing that only a few “old Jews that, according to [Braunstein’s] definition, are ‘Latin Americans that do not practice.’” As a former Communist and now a devotee of the leftist Zionism of Hashomer Hatzair-Mapam, this was an endeavor not only to prove that his own leftist and Zionist identities were compatible, but also a conscious effort to encourage young leftist Jews to join in the struggle to make Israel a “politically and socially free state for the Jews.”⁷⁴ What is perhaps most striking is that while Adín had first sought to appeal to the cultural and intellectual sensibilities of young Jews, he then shifted modes, in direct response to Braunstein, and sought to appeal to leftist political sensibilities. As Adín’s initial efforts suggests, political assimilation was not the only form of assimilation, but over the next years it would become the main focus of Zionist youth activists.

The efforts of the Zionist youth publication *Opinión* exemplified this trajectory. This newspaper, associated with the Zionist youth group Ijud Habonim, *Opinión*, began publishing in 1963, and in its first issue grappled explicitly with reconciling Jewish, Argentine, and youth identities.⁷⁵ One of its first articles, entitled “The Youth, Are they Youthful?” began by recognizing that the community incessantly discussed the youth, but then redirected to a less common question of “What is the youth?” A member of the youth (*joven*), the publication claimed, is not just a person between adolescence and adulthood. One could be much older, it argued, and still be a member of the youth, while one could be only twenty and already be an “adult” (*Viejo*). What defined a member of the youth was that he aspired for a better world, fought against injustice, and loved freedom. Conversely, one could be young without being a *joven*: “When we do not have goals, nor ideals, nor a joy for life, nor do we love, nor smile genuinely, nor demonstrate concerns, we are ADULTS, although we are 15, 20, 25, or 30 years old...”⁷⁶

In the same issue, *Opinión* questioned directly what it meant to be Jewish. Jewishness, the paper argued, is inescapable: “We cannot deny the fact that we are Jewish. This does not depend on us. We have not chosen to be it.” This was quite similar to Adín’s claim that one could no more escape being Jewish than one could escape being black. Nonetheless, *Opinión* diverged from Adín’s concrete definition of what it meant to be Jewish, which emphasized a revolutionary Zionism. Instead, the new paper argued that the Jewish tradition was flexible enough that “we can keep being [Jewish] with confidence and choose how to continue being it.” Choosing how to be Jewish was an individual choice, and “our consciousness will not be pacified until one by one we decide what we are and why. This is our privilege.”⁷⁷ While Jewishness was inescapable, *Opinión* argued that the definition of being Jewish lay in the

⁷⁴ Senkman, *La condición judeo Argentina en los años 60*, 5.

⁷⁵ *Nueva Sión*’s response to its first number was that *Opinión* seemed more intent on critiquing the MAPAM, the Israeli party *Nueva Sión*, identified with than being a voice of youth rebellion. While there were critiques in the first edition, *Opinión* did ultimately critique the older generation more than Mapam (El Eco Critico, *Nueva Sión*, October 4, 1964, 3. For approximate membership see World Zionist Organization and World Jewish Youth Convention, *Jewish Youth Movements of the World*, 23.

⁷⁶ “Los jóvenes, son juveniles? Introducción,” *Opinión*, September 23, 1963, 2. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁷ “Juventud y judaísmo,” September 23, 1963, 2.

explicit recognition that the particular values extracted from the tradition depended on people's preference in a particular time and place.

Despite the emphasis on personal choice, there was a cognizance that they, as Jewish youth leaders, would need to encourage and create a Jewish life that would appeal to their youthful peers. Jewish institutions, the paper contended, would only draw people in if they could prove a political allegiance that resonated with Jewish youth. It first took this line in 1963 in arguing that the largest Jewish campus organization, the *Centro Universitario Sionista* (University Zionist Center, CUS) should give a political voice to the Jewish university students. Without this, the Jewish youth “disperse every time more into the general university population.”⁷⁸ This call for political alignment was a bold and contentious one within the Jewish community. The community's central institutions had a long-standing line that the Jewish community, *qua* community, did not involve itself in politics. *Nueva Sión*, the powerful voice of the youth, took a similar line: Even as Adín claimed that one could be Jewish and Zionist and still deeply concerned with Latin American national liberation, *Nueva Sión* would not encourage young Jews to get involved in broader political struggles in Argentina under a Jewish or Zionist banner, arguing that such involvement would facilitate assimilation. Nonetheless, *Opinión* began to challenge this line arguing that Jewish institutions, in this case the CUS, would never appeal to young people without a clear political message.

In the next years, *Opinión* became increasingly convinced that the Jewish youth would have to align themselves politically to appeal to young people. In 1965, at the National Congress of Ijud Habonim in Argentina, the movement called for an “opening towards political activity.”⁷⁹ In the coming months, *Opinión* grappled with what involving themselves in Argentine politics might mean for a Zionist youth group. A September 1965 article, entitled “Latin America, Zionism, and Liberation Movements,” explained that while the concentration of the Jewish people in Israel was still the only way to normalize the Jewish condition, it was also necessary to recognize that not all Jews, not even all members of the movement, would make Aliyah in the near future. In the meantime, Latin America was “in a process of anti-imperialist liberation” and the relationship between the Zionist movement and the Latin American liberation movements needed to be clarified. Ultimately, *Opinión* called for becoming involved in “some groups or parties of the socialist left, that—although they do not currently constitute a mass movement—could in the future integrate themselves with the masses and become a real national liberation movement.” The paper did not make a particular choice (though it excluded the parties that were socialist but also anti-Israel) and instead called on “all Jewish youth to come to their own conclusions and rethink their location within the fight of all the nations towards socialism.”⁸⁰ This new position was premised on the notion that young people would gravitate to their Zionist movement only if the movement was clearly committed to socialist, liberationist parties in Argentina.

Another new youth periodical, *Horizonte*, took a similar line in calling for political involvement as a means of resonating with the sensibilities of young Jews. From its earliest issues, it explicitly denounced the policy of “*No meterse*” (not becoming politically involved) of many other Jewish bodies, and actively called for an agenda of “*meterse*” (involvement). *Horizonte* most frequently forwarded this position as a response to antisemitism, but it also advocated for political involvement as a means of forestalling assimilation. It reasoned that as

⁷⁸ “La tecla rota,” *Opinión*, December 1963, 8.

⁷⁹ “Ijud Habonim, 13° convención territorial,” *Opinión*, April 1966, 14.

⁸⁰ “Latinoamérica, sionismo, y movimientos de liberación,” *Opinión*, September, 1965, 11.

the generation of Jewish immigrants died, there emerged “a native Jewish community, with idiosyncrasies, a modus-vivendi, and a distinct intellectual formation, whose primary concern is national politics and Argentine and Latin American cultural values.... The path to understanding the Jewish problem should not be dry, but rather in line with their way of thinking.” Only by taking a firm stand on Argentine politics would the Zionist movement “attract the new generations to Zionist militancy.”⁸¹ Here *Horizonte* called for a Zionism that might appeal to the Latin American and Argentine identities, explicitly integrated, by appealing to the political and culture sensibilities of a native-born community.

While activists of various generations may have been in basic agreement on the need to combat youth assimilation and encourage Zionism, the conversations in *Nueva Sión*, *Opinión* and *Horizonte* in the first half of the 1960s reveal a significant distance between the youth and the older generation in their understanding of the concepts of youth, Jewishness, and the root causes of assimilation. For *Horizonte* and *Opinión* the answer was a clear opening towards politics within the Jewish community, a proposition *Nueva Sión* rejected. Nonetheless, the journalists associated with all three youth publications sought to reconcile what it meant to be Jewish and Zionist with the mentalities of young Jews. More particularly, they agreed that Argentine and Latin American politics of anti-imperialism and national liberation were a central concern of many young Jews and began thinking about ethnic values and the policies of the organized community as needing to be compatible with that politicized youth culture.

While *Nueva Sión* would not condone *Opinión*'s and *Horizonte*'s call for engagement in Argentine politics *qua* Jews and Zionists, the common anti-imperialist, Latin American identity among the youth activists did allow for the unification of almost all Jewish youth groups—Zionist youth movements, Zionist university groups (usually tied to the youth movements), youth centers, youth groups affiliated with the sports clubs, and youth groups associated with synagogues—into the *Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina* (CJJA) in 1965. The stated goals of the CJJA were “indissoluble unity of the Jewish nation, identification with the Zionist ideology and the diffusion of the everlasting values of the Jewish spirit and the creative work of the State of Israel.” Nonetheless, the impetus for the actual fusion was the desire to offer a unified repudiation of the United States invasion of Santo Domingo.⁸² This is a testament to the fact that the efforts to make Latin American allegiances compatible with Jewishness, while generally discussed in conversations regarding assimilation, were also reflective of the increasing potency of a particular Latin American identity among youth activists themselves.⁸³

The Older Generation and the Limits of the Local Identity

1965 was the year of the AJC's “Identity and Identification” conference, which popularized conversations about identity, and it was also the year that the older generation showed an increased awareness of the conversations percolating among the youth regarding the

⁸¹ “El meterse,” *Horizonte*, September 24, 1965, 6. The argument for politicizing in response to antisemitic attacks was to prove that they were true members of the nation, concerned with its future, and thereby ensuring that they did not become scapegoats in the midst of political unrest. See for example “Horizonte y renovación,” *Horizonte*, July 27, 1965, 6.

⁸² “Se unirá la juventud judeo argentina,” *La Luz*, November 12, 1965, 23.

⁸³ In fact, their own location in the university setting likely led to a skewed understanding of how many young Jews assimilated for political reasons.

youth mentality and Jewish consciousness. Some picked up on the undertones of a generational conflict that came with the conversations about a distinct youth mentality and sought to address and ameliorate this conflict. In his introduction to the AMIA *Memoria y Balance* of 1965, President Gregorio Fainguersch described Jewish life in Argentina as in a transitional phase, from one generation to the next, in which the principle goal of the AMIA was “to prevent the transition from giving rise to drastic, generational confrontations that could weaken the positions we have achieved and paralyze our achievements for a long time.”⁸⁴ In 1966 Fainguersch struck a similar note, arguing, “It would be more than insensible to take on an intransigent attitude towards [the new generations] because such an attitude would only accentuate the abyss between the adults and the new generations.” The goal, instead, should be to “enter into a frank and brave dialogue between both parties, that will make it possible to achieve mutual trust and to show, through daily activities, that our words about the new generations are more than simple rhetoric and we are animated by a truthful spirit and good will.”⁸⁵ One of the concrete initiatives in this direction was to include the youth voice in the community’s central institutions. The DAIA was on the forefront of this trend, and when the CJA was established in 1965, the DAIA offered it a seat on the *Consejo Directivo* (Board of Directors) of the DAIA.⁸⁶ Delegates from various youth groups also participated in DAIA conventions, and by 1966 the DAIA had begun to tackle the questions of youth assimilation, whereas it had previously been concerned just with antisemitism.⁸⁷

Efforts to make Jewishness compatible with the mentalities of Argentine youth manifested itself in a new approach for the AMIA’s Department of Youth. By 1965, the Department’s publications no longer focused on Jewish traditions and the triumph of Zionism but rather on questions of identity and self-reflection. The imprint of the youth community on these changes is quite clear, and at times, there were explicit linkages between the youth institutions discussed above and the Department of Youth. The corps of *madrijim* participated in the crafting of the message of the Department, with Eliahu Toker, the editor of *Opinión*, supposedly authoring some of the Department’s publications.⁸⁸ Despite the participation of youth, the department’s interest in a new message can only be explained through a broader shift in how the older generation understood what might appeal to youth. Even given these changes, the AMIA’s message remained far less politicized than that of the Zionist youth groups at this juncture.

A 1965 publication entitled “...On the Meaning of Life” offered philosophical source material with the specific intention of resonating with the interests of the young audience.⁸⁹ The introduction began:

⁸⁴ Memoria y Balance General, #71, January 1-December 31, 1965, no page.

⁸⁵ Memoria y Balance General, #72, January 1-December 31, 1966, no page.

⁸⁶ The CJA representatives, among others, played a significant role in DAIA conventions in the subsequent years. The 1966 convention is discussed below. In 1967 Goldenberg reminded the youth that they had many representatives in the DAIA and were therefore quite powerful (“La convención de la Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina fijó la futura acción de la entidad,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 29, 1967, 12).

⁸⁷ On the presence of youth delegates at the DAIA, see “La convención de la confederación juvenil judeo argentina fijó la futura acción de la entidad,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 29, 1967, 12; See also León Pérez’ observations at the 1966 Territorial Convention of the DAIA (León Pérez, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 122).

⁸⁸ Interview with Abraham Lichtenbaum by author. Audio Recording. Buenos Aires, March 3, 2009; Interview with Eliahu Toker by author. Audio Recording. Buenos Aires, April 3, 2009.

⁸⁹ AMIA, Comunidad Israelita de Buenos Aires, Departamento de Juventud, “...Sobre el sentido de la vida,” Publicaciones, #11, 1965, Archivo Mark Turkow, 933.5 (Arg).

When Adan Schaff (a Polish philosopher) ended one of his speeches for university students, one asked him what the meaning of life was. At first he thought that this was a joke, but upon noticing the expectation of the six hundred students that filled the room, he observed that if the question had been asked by one of the students, the question was on the mind of all of them. From that moment, he began his efforts to give a response.

While Adan Schaff may have been surprised, the author of this introduction was not, noting that this was already an old question in “our environment” (*nuestro medio*). The publication included a series of essays by intellectuals and scholars pontificating on the meaning of life. The authors in the collection included Franz Kafka and I. L. Peretz (both Jewish) but also Latin American authors, José Enrique Rodó and Pablo Neruda, reflecting for the first time a cognizance of the young people’s strong relationship with the Latin American milieu. In a way, this was the least Jewish publication the department had produced, not addressing Jewish values, ritual and identity directly and not making a point of including only Jewish authors. Presumably, however, the hope was that by reflecting on the meaning of life in a Jewish youth center, considering questions of Jewish identity would be inescapable.

A 1966 publication reintegrated the question of Jewish identity more explicitly with a booklet entitled “The Jewish Condition.” This publication set out to show that while some might think that antisemitism is *the* Jewish problem, “the Jewish condition is much more complex than is commonly thought, and antisemitism is no more than one of its outgrowths.”⁹⁰ The editors of the publications had noticed that many young Jews lacked a “historical, socio-economic or cultural framework” to understand the Jewish condition and “without knowledge there is no commitment.” The goal of the booklet was thus to show through Jewish literature, from the time of the Talmud to the contemporary era, that the same themes had reemerged consistently: “fear, assimilation, courage, the removal from nature, inauthenticity and other forms of oppression.” Only with this knowledge could each person “interpret his own reality.”

By mid-decade, then, both the youth and the older generation shared a concern for the subjective experience of being Jewish. They were also convinced of the need to grapple with the sensibilities of youth and the need to make Jewishness and Zionism resonate. Both even worked to adapt to the increasing prevalence of a Latin American consciousness. Nonetheless, there was a key difference. The older generation tried to avoid the efforts to explicitly synthesize Jewishness with leftist political identities. As noted above, the limited statistical information we have does suggest that the Zionist youth activists’ emphasis on politicized assimilation was overblown and reflective of their own biases as leftist, university students. What is certain, however, is that the older generation’s disinterest in or unwillingness to synthesize constructs of Jewishness and Zionism with leftist political values would create grounds for strong critique on the part of the Zionist youth and a deepening generational conflict.

The Widening Gulf

While the older generation absorbed the notion of a youth mentality and a targeted message, the Zionist youth activists became increasingly convinced that their older counterparts

⁹⁰ AMIA, Comunidad Israelita de Buenos Aires, Departamento de Juventud, “La condición judía,” Publicaciones, #14, 1967, second edition, 3, Centro Mark Turkow, Box 933.5.

were failing to adapt to Argentine or Latin American realities, particularly when it came to politics. With their particular focus on the politicization of Jewish youth, this was a profound problem as far as these youth were concerned: only by engaging in this world in the proper way, and by showing that the Jewish community and the ethnic values it perpetuated conformed to the values of young Jews, would the community be able to forestall assimilation. Given this perception, the youth began to see themselves as the only ones engaged enough in the national and continental context to dictate what the community needed.

Opinión explicitly contended that the older generation's failure to engage properly was responsible for youth assimilation. A June 1965 article, "The Youth: a Problem for the Youth" ironically launched many of the same critiques that Braunstein had in his 1961 letter to *Nueva Sión*, but did so from the standpoint of young Jewish activists who were hoping to see change within the community. To *Opinión*, young Jews were driven away by the "culture of the Ghetto," whereby "the ideology of the majority of the current community institutions is one of "enclosure." The older generation rejected "everything that comes from the outside, and in this way rejected the possibility of development and adaptation to the new political, economic and social circumstances." The anti-Zionist left was appealing to Jewish young people because they could not find "an answer in the current, supposedly Zionist, community structure." For young Jewish Argentines, there was a pressing need for a Jewishness that is "creative, vital, drenched in Zionist ideals, with which they feel connected intellectually, but also emotionally."⁹¹ What was novel in this piece was not the description of a new kind of Jewishness, but rather the strong attack on the Jewish community's central institutions as ruining the relationship with youth and causing assimilation because they were out of touch with the Argentine reality. It is not, then, just "Youth" that are a problem for the "Youth," as the title of the article would suggest. Instead, *Opinión* made a bolder claim: given that the community's values drive young people away, Jewish youth activists should assume responsibility for restructuring the community's ideology and practices.⁹²

These broad-based critiques garnered the attention of the President of the AMIA, Tobias Kamenszain. In his letter to *Opinión* responding to the critiques in the aforementioned article, Kamenszain contended that the community institutions did not have an ideology of "enclosure," but in doing so, relied on old tropes, seemingly missing *Opinión's* point. To prove the AMIA's commitment to "social justice," Kamenszain cited the AMIA's social work and aid to schools, ignoring that to the Zionist youth activists, social justice meant the struggle for socialist reform or national liberation. In addition, Kamenszain claimed that the DAIA's "effort to defend the honor and dignity of the community" did not "coincide with an ideology of 'enclosure.'" The DAIA, however, interacted with high-level officials, in a supposedly apolitical fashion, and this was not the kind of engagement with the outside world that *Opinión* was arguing for when it called for political involvement *qua* Jews or Zionists. Finally, Kamenszain rejected calls for greater involvement in national liberation struggles categorically. While socialist Zionism was opposed to "all kinds of oppression," he argued against participation in the Latin American struggle given that history had taught that "we should distinguish the processes of liberation that

⁹¹ "La juventud: Un problema para la Juventud," *Opinión*, June 1965, 4.

⁹² This is called into relief when we consider that just a year earlier when *Opinión* critiqued the AMIA department it did so on the grounds that it was not properly educating young people and only youth "with adequate Jewish training will be able to direct communal action of the large groups of the young Jewish generations" ("Tercer año de existencia de la escuela de liderazgo," *Opinión*, June 1964, 7.)

are real from those that are feigned or false.”⁹³ Apparently, the Latin American struggle was the latter. Overall, Kamenzain’s comments not only rejected calls for politicization, but also underscored a failure to grasp the nature of the Zionist youth’s critiques and the political context that engendered them.

These themes emerged again at the DAIA convention of 1966. Chapter Two discussed this convention as an important indicator that both youth and members of the older generation had fully rejected the myths of a liberal Argentina and begun to think of Argentina as part of Latin America, as defined by structural inequalities, exclusive nationalisms, and a strong working class. The question of youth assimilation, however, revealed a gulf between the youth participants and those of the older generation on questions of engagement with the Latin American context. The youth representatives in attendance critiqued both the central Jewish-Argentine institutions and the Israeli embassy for not having the appropriate Latin American allegiances and therefore alienating the youth. Jorge Pustilnik, of the *Centro Universitario Sionista* (Zionist University Center), claimed that even as Zionist university students argued that the allegiances to socialism and Zionism were compatible, the Israeli foreign ministry and the DAIA undermined these efforts. He pointed specifically to a picture on the front page of the Israeli embassy’s magazine, *Crónicas de Israel*, of Israeli foreign minister Aba Eben with United States-Supported Dominican dictator Donald Reid Cabral. Pustilnik noted that while “we are not going to judge this as good or bad here, I want to suggest as a point of reference how this appears to Jewish youth who are alienated from the Jewish community.” Similarly problematic was the earlier comments of José Kestelman, a key figure in the DAIA, that celebrated the participation of Israel in the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (*Consejo Interamericano Económico y Social*, CIES), which was “quite connected to the [Organization of American States (OAS)].” Pustilnik noted, “This is difficult to explain, but in the university, without exception, the OAS and the CIES are synonymous with imperialism.”⁹⁴ The conclusion Pustilnik drew was the need for an alignment with progressive causes: “if we want to support progressive movements, it is possible that we will get certain sectors of Jewish youth to join us; but if we do not support these causes, it is certain that they never will.” While both the Israeli embassy and the leaders of the DAIA were engaging with the Latin American world in certain ways, they failed to understand the particularities of the anti-imperialist politics that many youth embraced.

Weeks after the DAIA’s 1966 convention, the military overthrew the elected government of Arturo Illia and installed a military government that would rule until 1973. The rise of the military regime ameliorated some of the divisions over political participation among the Jewish youth activists: the closed political system limited possibilities for political activism as progressives, and no youth movements, as of yet, called for participation in the emerging violent opposition to the regime. In this new context, the youth groups claimed forcefully that no engagement with the new government was appropriate. In this light, even the DAIA’s efforts to create a cordial relationship with the government, a tactic that had previously been considered apolitical, rankled the Zionist activists and magnified their claims that the youth should be the arbiters of what the community needed. On the occasion of the 1967 commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the DAIA invited a “representative personality” from Argentine society to speak. Though this person was unnamed, the youth activists claimed that he gained the invite because of his links to power. Various youth groups independently, and the CJJA as a whole, found the DAIA’s entanglement with the regime objectionable. According to *Nueva Sión*, this

⁹³ “Nos escribe Tobias Kamenzain, aclarando conceptos,” *Opinión*, July 1965, 7.

⁹⁴ Convención territorial de la DAIA 1966, 118.

choice showed that “the old Jewish politics of lobbying power has acquired a new shine.”⁹⁵ This was a pejorative reference to the Jewish political tradition in medieval Europe of *shtadlanut*, or of lobbying powerful (and unsavory) individuals to intercede on behalf of the Jewish community.

While the political situation in Argentina had changed, the question of allegiances in Latin American politics remained the same. The youth thus took issue with the DAIA’s participation in a lunch to honor president of the Organization of American States, José A. Mora, on his visit to Argentina. The CJAA protested the DAIA’s participation, and *Nueva Sión* concluded, “An important distance separates the position of the most enlightened Zionist sectors and the youth from the recent attitudes of the DAIA.”⁹⁶ Though the “most enlightened Zionist sectors” was not a purely generational designation—it included the older generation that was associated with the local branch of the Israeli party Mapam, which had also denounced the DAIA’s actions—almost all Zionist youth groups were included among the “enlightened sectors.” The critique regarding the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was revulsion at any involvement with the military regime, but the youth rehearsed an already common trope in criticizing involvement with the OAS.

The CJAA held its yearly convention in April 1967 just as these conflicts with the DAIA were unfolding, giving the confederation an opportunity to elaborate on its positions. 150 youth delegates gathered, and while the leaders of the AMIA and DAIA were present as well, the tensions between the two generations colored the proceedings. The mission of the annual convention, according to its president Eliahu Toker’s remarks, was to bring together the youth organizations so that they could be an “actor in the intergenerational dialogue and an actor in making the central bodies fit the new reality.”⁹⁷ Toker’s tone, however, was more cooperative than the proceedings themselves. There were rumblings in the corridors that the speeches of Isaac Goldenberg and Tobias Kamenzain had not responded to the concerns of the youth.⁹⁸ A delegate from Juventud Anilevich, meanwhile, argued that the DAIA’s political tendencies were problematic “in the current circumstances.” He called for elucidation of this issue within the Jewish community, to make clear that “we should only trust in the strength of our own nation to solve our problems, and not on the hand-outs given to us by the grace of patrons.” In denouncing the alliances the DAIA sought to build, his comments echoed *Nueva Sión*’s reference to *shtadlanut* a week earlier and the general ideological line of Juventud Anilevich. That youth group was, after all, named for Mordejai Anilevich, hero and organizer of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and symbol of Jewish empowerment. While the delegates from the other youth groups did not necessarily share this particular emphasis on self-empowerment, they did resolve that the DAIA should maintain “absolute impartiality with respect to the alternatives in the nation” in light of the “general situation of the nation,” which was to say, the military dictatorship.⁹⁹

The youth claimed further that its role extended beyond defining proper political alignments. In *Nueva Sión*’s commentary on the 1967 CJAA convention, it maintained that the youth “can be the initiators of change for certain calcified institutions.”¹⁰⁰ For Eliahu Toker, youth needed to be the key actors in remaking Jewish consciousness. He spoke poetically:

⁹⁵ “Por quien doblan las campañas? La colectividad por adentro,” *Nueva Sión*, April 7, 1967, 3.

⁹⁶ “Por quien doblan las campañas?, 3.

⁹⁷ “La convención de la Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina fijó la futura acción de la entidad,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 29, 1967, 12.

⁹⁸ “Por quien doblan las campanas? La colectividad por adentro,” *Nueva Sión*, April 7, 1967, 3.

⁹⁹ “Por quien doblan las campanas? El congreso de la juventud,” *Nueva Sión*, April 22, 1967, 2.

¹⁰⁰ “Por quien doblan las campañas?, 2.

Around us, we see eroding and crumbling walls, which seemed so solid in the eyes of our grandparents, but to the grandsons seem only temporary partitions, worn-out and old. All that remains standing are the foundational columns of our Jewish condition. In us lie the characteristics of these new walls that will offer fundamental support.¹⁰¹

Facing a community for who antiquated forms of Jewishness no longer resonated, Toker claimed that it was incumbent upon the youth activists to create meanings that would bolster the Jewish identity and Jewish cohesiveness. The general consensus among the youth at the 1967 convention surrounded the missteps of the older generation, but also the belief that only the youth were capable of remaking the Argentine Jewish community in a way appropriate to the contemporary context.

Conclusion

By the mid-1960s, the idea of a locally defined, subjective Jewishness had become prominent within the Jewish community, largely by means of two, somewhat distinct, processes. One process revolved around acquiring a more scientific understanding of the community, first by means of demographic studies and later by means of identity studies. The other, was fundamentally concerned with how to entice youth to be interested in Jewishness and Zionism, first by means of straightforward education, later by means of a message targeted at their particular sensibilities. This chapter has contended that there is not a specifically causal relationship between the two processes describe here, but rather that the activists involved in both were aware of one another and, more importantly, shared the fundamental concern of maintaining Jewish cohesion. While this concern itself was not new, the intersection of various national and diasporic trends played a key role in rethinking the problem of assimilation and ultimately the nature of Jewishness. Foremost among these were the growing analysis of the youth mentality in Argentine society, increasing attention to native-born Jewish youth who found their Argentine and Latin American identities incompatible with their Jewish ones, and the rise of identity in another corner of the diaspora, specifically the United States.

With the new emphasis on Jewish identity or consciousness came efforts to remake the Jewish community and the image of Jewishness and Zionism in a way that would resonate with young Jews. This project seemed to have the seed of generational tension embedded within it as debates began to hinge on how successful Jewish leaders and institutions were at adapting to the new reality. For the Jewish youth activists, increasingly unified in their allegiance to anti-imperialist struggles across the continent (if at times divided on the appropriate level of engagement in Argentine politics), the older generation was still hopelessly misguided when it came to its relationship with the outside world. While the older generation was looking for ways to include the voices of these youth activists within the community's central bodies in the mid-1960s and extolling the virtue of inter-generational dialogue, the younger generation found many ways that their older counterparts were not striking the right key when it engaged with the Argentine government or Latin American politics more broadly. This was especially true in the

¹⁰¹ "Por quien doblan las campañas?, 2.

aftermath of the 1966 coup. These failings convinced the youth that they should be the arbiters of the community's actions and message.

In the next years, conversations about how to communicate with youth, and the generational tensions embedded in those conversations, would remain prevalent. Conversely, the interest in studying the community would wane significantly. The AJC, AMIA, and later the DAIA all created social science institutions in the 1960s, and the DAIA revamped its social science institute in 1967 creating the Centro de Estudios Sociales (CES). By 1969, however, *Mundo Israelita* began attacking the redundancy between the AMIA's Institute of Social Investigation and the DAIA's CES and Gregorio Fainguersch, the president of the AMIA at the time, suggested combining the two institutes.¹⁰² Instead of combining forces, in 1970, after years of declining productivity, the AMIA Institute closed mid study.¹⁰³ The CES lasted not much longer—while it is difficult to pinpoint the year it closed, it did stop publishing its journal *Índice* in 1971. These closures were at least in part due to a financial crisis that hit the community in 1970, but several indicators—accusations of redundancy, lower productivity—suggest that interest had waned by that point. Pressed with hard choices social science fell by the wayside, and efforts to understand the Argentine Jewish community relied on other forms of knowledge acquisition.

Nonetheless, at this particular juncture in the 1960s these two interests and projects elided to formulate and popularize the notion that the Argentine Jewish community would have to construct ethnicity in a way that resonated with Argentine Jews if it were to succeed in encouraging a strong Jewish identity. While the projects were fundamentally concerned with the internal front, and the conversations about the nation discussed in Chapter Two were primarily prompted by the external front, the simultaneous processes of reevaluation complemented and reinforced each other. At times the intersections were explicit. For *Nueva Sión* and *Juventud Anilevich*, for example, the rash of antisemitism reinforced the idea that Jews could only thrive in Israel, and they focused on communicating this to other young people so as to encourage a strong Jewish identity. In addition, the recurring question of how to reconcile Jewishness with political identities, particularly in light of attacks on Zionism from the left, involved an intersection of the internal and external threats. Beyond these instances of intersection, the consideration of a particularly Argentine Jewish ethnicity and the reevaluation of the Argentine nation and Jewish membership therein both entailed a fundamental reconsideration of the particularities of Argentine context for understanding the challenges facing the Jewish community.

¹⁰² "Acotaciones," *Mundo Israelita*, October 18, 1969, 4.

¹⁰³ La educación judía en la Argentina en 1970: Características básicas del personal docente de los jardines de infantes y escuelas primarias de Capital Federal y Gran Buenos Aires (1971), Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 22a.

CHAPTER FOUR: JEWISH PARTICULARISM AND THE RISE OF THE NEW LEFT, 1967-1973

For Jorge Kirszenbaum, a university student in 1967, the Six-Day War was a clear turning point, the moment when every Jew “had to define where he stood.” Before the war, he had involved himself in various political groups on the “non-Jewish” left while being casually involved in a Zionist social group named Doctor Herzl. Raised in a strongly Zionist home and educated in Jewish, Zionist schools, he described his Zionism in these pre-1967 years as a “sentimental attachment.” This all shifted with the Six-Day War, after which Kirszenbaum’s Zionism became “more ideological,” leading him to join an explicitly socialist-Zionist groups. At the same time, he severed his connection with the “non-Jewish” left as it became increasingly anti-Zionist. While recalling how leftist “dogma” framed Israel as an outpost of imperialism in the Middle East now makes him smile nostalgically, in those years he found it very painful.¹

It was Kirszenbaum’s understanding of himself as both a leftist and a Zionist that made the rebuke of Argentine leftists, many Jewish youth among them, particularly potent. Elements of this problem were apparent earlier in the 1960s, as Jewish youth activists tried to bridge an increasingly apparent gulf between the political sensibilities of their peers and Jewishness and Zionism. Even so, the Six-Day War ushered in a new moment. This chapter and the next consider the years between 1967 and 1973, a periodization defined by both national and global politics. The Six-Day War, on the one hand, inspired increased Zionist fervency across the diaspora, and in Argentina this manifested itself in a politicized and ideological form of Zionism among Jewish activists young and old.² On the other hand, the war was the key turning point in the souring relationship between Israel and the global New Left and between Israel and the third world. In the 1950s and 1960s Israel had devoted significant attention and resources to aiding development in and building diplomatic relations with Africa, Asia, and Latin America.³ After

¹ Jorge Kirszenbaum, interview by author, digital audio recording, February 11, 2009, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

² A collection of essays edited by Eli Lederhendler tries to nuance the common assumption that the Six-Day War was a crucial moment across the Jewish diaspora in reconfiguring relationships with Israel and understandings of Jewishness. With essays considering the experience of Jews in the United States, France, Canada, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, the USSR, Poland and some Muslim countries, the collection highlights significant variation from country to country in accordance with the political context, national culture, and the nature of the Jewish community. Still there is agreement that in the Six-Day War was a key moment in some regard everywhere (Lederhendler, *The Six-Day War and World Jewry*). The cases most comparable to Argentina are others in which a powerful New Left turned against Israel after the war even as many Jews became increasingly committed to the Israeli cause (Edy Kaufman, Yoram Shapira, and Joel Barromi, *Israel-Latin American Relations* (Transaction Publishers, 1979). This was largely the case in France (Zachariah Shuster, “Western Europe,” in *World Politics and the Jewish Condition* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972), 181–206). The comparable trend in the US was the relationship between African Americans and Jews in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, where black radicals leveled many of the accusations against Israel that the Argentine New Left did (see, for example, Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times Between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York: Scribner, 1988); Liebman, *Jews and the Left*).

³ Several of the chapters in *Israel in the Third World* are written by Israeli economists, diplomats and agronomists involved in these efforts, and, as such, reflect a particular bias. The bias in itself is telling of Israel’s understanding of its role in the third world in these decades: the authors uniformly endorse the notion that Israel was a prime model of development given its own success building an agricultural and industrial economy and integrating various ethnic groups in a post-colonial nation (*Israel in the Third World* (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Books, 1976), Parts I, II, III). This was a narrative that Argentine Zionists would endorse and try to propagate. For essays in the collection that offer a more academic approach on Israel’s relations with Asia and Africa, see Susan Aurelia

1967 African and Asian countries became increasingly hostile towards Israel, seeing it as aligned with Western imperialism and as an occupying force on Palestinian lands.⁴ The relationship between Latin American government and Israel did not yet sour at a diplomatic level, but the Latin American New Left did grow quite hostile to Israel.⁵

This trend became particularly concerning to Argentine Jewish activists as the Argentine New Left, characterized by its mixture of socialism and nationalism, became increasingly powerful in the late 1960s and early 1970s in opposition to the reigning military government. Like its global counterparts, the New Left sympathized with the Palestinian struggle. Most concerning, however, was its anti-Zionism, which Jewish activists defined as rejecting the right of Israel to exist or suggesting that Zionism was a conspiratorial force exercising power throughout the world. The latter was plainly antisemitic and drew on tropes similar to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The former, meanwhile, did at times transform into hostility towards Jews in Argentina: as members of the New Left constructed a revolutionary nation, membership came to hinge on support for national liberation in Argentina and throughout the third world (including Palestine), and being a Zionist was considered antithetical to the cause. The challenges posed by the New Left were compounded by the choice of many Jewish youth to distance themselves from the Jewish community and Zionism in favor of allegiance to the national movement. These were years, then, when the seemingly ascendant Argentine New Left, with its particular transnational allegiances, posed interlocking challenges both to Jewish cohesion and to Jewish membership in the nation. In the first half of the 1960s, the challenges of the internal and external front had been largely distinct. Between 1967 and 1973, however, the fronts converged into one, thus drawing increasing Jewish communal attention to the nature of the New Left and a remaking of ethnicity that clearly responded to its power.

While Kirszenbaum points to the Six-Day War, which spanned June 5 to June 10, 1967, as a turning point itself, the reality is more complex. It is clear that the actual moment of the War

Gitelson, "Israel's African Setback in Perspective," in *Israel in the Third World*, ed. Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), 182–199; Meron Medzini, "Reflections on Israel's Asian Policy," in *Israel in the Third World*, ed. Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), 200–211.

⁴ Various variables led to this shift at this juncture including (but not limited to): the strengthening of relations between Israel and the United States (Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (Oxford University Press, 2004)); the take-over of the West Bank and Gaza after the Six-Day War and increasing attention to the Palestinian plight in international bodies (Chamberlin, Paul, "Preparing for Dawn: The United States and the Global Politics of Palestinian Resistance, 1967-1975" (PhD, Ohio State University, 2009); Gitelson, "Israel's African Setback in Perspective"); Israel's diplomatic relationship with apartheid South Africa (Gitelson, "Israel's African Setback in Perspective;") and the diplomatic maneuverings and propaganda of Arab countries in Asia and Africa, and Latin America, to a lesser extent, after the war (Edy Kaufman, "Israel's Foreign Policy Implementation in Latin America," in *Israel in the Third World*, ed. Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), 120–146; Yoram D. Shapira, "External and Internal Influences in Latin American-Israeli Relations," in *Israel in the Third World*, ed. Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), 147–181; Gitelson, "Israel's African Setback in Perspective"). Argentine Jewish activists tended to point fingers at Arab propaganda or an anti-Israel bias as the sole reason for the distancing of the third-world or the global New Left. The general assumption that Israeli policy had no blame in this reflected their pro-Israel bias. At the same time, some of the accusations pointed to a worldwide Zionist conspiracy that certainly cannot be blamed on Israeli conduct.

⁵ Kaufman, "Israel's Foreign Policy Implementation in Latin America"; Shapira, "External and Internal Influences in Latin American-Israeli Relations." On still friendly diplomatic relations with Israel in most of Latin America through 1973, see Joel Barromi, "Latin American States' Conduct at the UN Assembly on Issues Affecting Israel," in *Israel in the Third World*, ed. Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), 270–288.

inspired raw emotion and fear for the survival of the State of Israel in Argentina and across the diaspora. In the days surrounding the Six-Day War, many Argentine Jews donated blood, food, and clothing to support the Israeli cause. Approximately 70,000 of the 350,000 Jews in Argentina came together for public gatherings, while an estimated 600 young people even boarded ships to travel to Israel and fight in the war, only to arrive long after the war had ended.⁶ Even Jews formerly been hostile to Israel reversed their position—when the Soviet-line Jewish institution, ICUF, blamed the war on “Zionist-imperialist aggression,” several young members broke away from the organization, founding a new, progressive, pro-Israel organization called *Fraie Schtime*.⁷

The emotion surrounding the war would continue to shape communal dynamics in subsequent years, but the new set of challenges facing the community emerged more gradually in response to Argentine politics and the country’s shifting relationship to Israel and the third world. During the Six-Day War, Jewish leadership was impressed by the demonstration of support for Israel by Argentine Jews, as well as the support from the government and key figures and press outlets in the broader society.⁸ It was only as the New Left continued to grow and define its international allegiances that Jewish activists came to focus on the threat it posed. This chapter asks how Jewish activists, young and old, understood the challenges posed by the New Left to Jewish particularity and membership in the nation. Jewish youth were often the first to raise concerns over the New Left as it first gained traction in their milieu. As the movement gained force in society at large, particularly in 1969 and after, the older generation came to observe many of the same problems. The following chapter, meanwhile, turns fundamentally to the response to these challenges, specifically the re-imaginings of Jewishness, Zionism, and national belonging and the generational tensions that surrounded them.

The protagonists in the communal conversations considered here and in the following chapter were often the same as those in earlier periods: the DAIA and the AMIA, representing the voice of the older generations, and the CJJA and various individual youth groups positioning themselves in contrast to their elders. In this period, the most combative youth were the proponents of *Sionismo Realizador* (actualizing Zionism), a brand of Zionism that saw making *Aliyah* (emigrating to Israel) and joining a kibbutz as the only true way to be a Zionist. These groups were known as *realizadora* (actualizing) or *jalutziano* (pioneering) groups, and though they were only one genre of youth groups, in many ways they set a tone of harsh critique of the establishment within the CJJA and for youth activists in general. Paradoxically, another important and prominent critique of the mainstream institutions was born from within one such institution. In 1968, a new glossy magazine, *Raíces*, sponsored by the OSA, began appearing in *kioskos*, and despite the OSA’s sponsorship, the magazine had a young editorial board and placed itself on the side of the youth in their conflict with the older generation.⁹ The OSA’s

⁶ Haim Avni, “The Impact of the Six-Day War on a Zionist Community: The Case of Argentina,” in *The Six-Day War and World Jewry*, ed. Eli Lederhendler (University Press of Maryland and the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000), 146, 149.

⁷ Leonardo Senkman, “Repercussions of the Six-Day War in the Leftist Jewish Argentine Camp, 1967-1969,” in *The Six-Day War and World Jewry*, ed. Eli Lederhendler (University Press of Maryland and the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000), 167–187.

⁸ Avni, “The Impact of the Six-Day War on a Zionist Community: The Case of Argentina,” 147–9.

⁹ The two men the OSA placed at the helm were Simja Sneh, who was in his late 50s, and Bernardo Kliksberg, who was 28. While only Kliksberg conceivably fell into the category of *joven*, young people who were sympathetic to the plight and critiques of the youth staffed the magazine. At times, youth institutions, such as the CJJA’s *Tiempo de Jerusalem* and *Nueva Sión* did critique *Raíces* for being a voice of the establishment (“El eco crítico,” *Nueva*

sponsorship, and the *carte blanche* it supposedly gave the editors of the paper, even given their critical take, was an effort to create a new Jewish voice that would appeal to young people.¹⁰

The Rise of the New Left

What came to be defined as the Argentine New Left, with its combination of nationalism and socialism common to other similar movements across Latin America, had its beginnings in the early 1960s. It started as a small group of intellectuals, students, and labor leaders who critiqued the “Old Left,” made up of the communist and socialist parties, for their betrayal of Peronism and failure to grasp the importance of nationalism. Mentioned in Chapters Two and Three, these activists took great interest in the Cuban revolution as a model of socialist, nationalist, and anti-imperialist revolution applicable for all of Latin America. In the first half of the 1960s, phenomena associated with the incipient New Left had a ripple effect within the Jewish community. Chapter Two pointed to the earliest concerns, emerging at mid-decade, about what left-wing nationalism meant for Jewish membership in the Argentine nation. Chapter Three, meanwhile, noted a few observations as early as 1961 about the tendency among Jewish youth to choose the national left over the Jewish community and the efforts to re-craft Jewishness in light of this reality. It was Jewish youth activists who were most aware of these challenges, as it was in their university milieu that the New Left first gained force, and as Chapter Three showed, Jewish youth activists had sympathy for many of its nationalist, anti-imperialist, and socialist programs. A key change of the 1960s and early 1970s was that the older generations also become consumed with the threats posed by the New Left, and at times also drawn in by its magnetism, as it became a key protagonist in national politics.

It was under the military dictatorship that held power from 1966-1973, that the New Left gained force, particularly after 1969.¹¹ The turning point most frequently invoked was the military government’s violent repression of a worker and student protest that year in Córdoba in May that year, which left twenty dead and many more injured or jailed. This event, which became known as the *Cordobazo*, fomented greater support for the Argentine “New Left.” Who exactly made up this often referred to but poorly defined “New Left” and what its ideological tenets were have been much debated. Some historians have used the moniker “New Left” to describe only the violent guerilla groups that opposed the Onganía regime. More recent scholarship, meanwhile, has correctly pointed to a coalition that encompassed a far more diverse group. This coalition, which included both violent and non-violent groups, also included significant generational, socio-economic, professional and religious diversity, though workers

Sión, March 20, 1970, 5; Eliahu Toker, “Un movimiento que se estanca es un movimiento que se pudre,” *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, January/March, 1969, e3). Nonetheless, there was significant overlap between those who worked on *Raíces* and those who worked on *Nueva Sión* and *Tiempo de Jerusalem*: Ricardo Feierstein worked on *Raíces* in the early 1970s and was also one of the main organizers behind the CJA’s *Tiempo de Jerusalem* while Bernardo Kliksberg, the first assistant director of *Raíces*, contributed frequently to *Nueva Sión*.

¹⁰ Bernardo Kliksberg. Interview with author. Digital Audio Recording. New York City, July 17, 2009.

¹¹ Maria Cristina Tortti, “Protesta social y “Nueva Izquierda” en la Argentina del Gran Acuerdo Nacional,” in *La primacía de La política: Lanusse, Perón y la nueva izquierda en tiempos del GAN*, ed. Alfredo R Pucciarelli, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Eudeba, 1999), 206; Monica B. Gordillo, “Protesta, rebelión y movilización: de la Resistencia a la lucha armada, 1955-1973,” in *Nueva Historia Argentina*, ed. Daniel James (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Sudamericana, 2003), 357.

and youth were often the most prominent members of the movement.¹² The common thread that joined these various sub-groups together, according to Cristina Tortti, was a “vocabulary of ‘national liberation,’ ‘socialism,’ and ‘revolution.’”¹³

Despite the movement’s diverse constituency, middle-class youth played a decisive role in defining the New Left ideologically. Valeria Manzano has claimed that while there was youth activism before 1969, the events in Córdoba, and before that similar events in the cities of Corrientes and Rosario earlier in May 1969, was a moment when “‘youth’ and ‘rebellion’ would become linked references.”¹⁴ The repression university students faced under Onganía’s military dictatorship helped forge a new kinship between students and the working class.¹⁵ For middle-class youth, this often came with the adoption of Peronism as Argentina’s true nationalist movement, the very movement that their middle class parents had rejected in the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁶ The political culture of youth rebellion will be discussed at length in the following chapter as we consider the generational rebellion within the Jewish community, but it is worth noting here that the common denominators for these youth, key members of but not co-terminus with the New Left, were, “anti-US imperialism, popular nationalism, and third worldism.”¹⁷

The climax of New Left activism came after the *Cordobazo* in 1969 and in 1970, with the ferment calming somewhat after General Lanusse, the new military president, presented political leaders with the *Gran Acuerdo Nacional* (GAN) in 1971 to negotiate an end to the dictatorship and the return of democratic elections. This agreement supposedly separated the hard-line, violent members of the New Left, who were unwilling to work within the political system, from those who were willing to support political parties and await elections.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the climate of protest against the military persisted, particularly but not exclusively from the violent hard-liners, until Peronism was ultimately allowed to resume power in 1973. In accordance with this historical trajectory, it was in the late 1960s that the New Left came to dominate the community’s conversations both about Jewish cohesion and Jewish membership in the nation. Nonetheless, while the literature on Argentine politics suggests that the New Left lost some of its force and popularity in the years of the GAN, for Jewish activists, the New Left remained the focus of analysis through the early years of the decade and until the return of Juan Perón to Argentine politics in 1973.

¹² For a similarly expansive definition, see Alfredo Raúl Pucciarelli, “Introducción,” in *La Primacía De La Política: Lanusse, Perón y la nueva izquierda en tiempos del GAN*, ed. Alfredo R Pucciarelli, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Eudeba, 1999), 15.

¹³ María Cristina Tortti, “Protesta social y “nueva izquierda” en la Argentina del Gran Acuerdo Nacional,” 207. Tortti separates herself from scholars, such as Hilb and Lutzky who in *La nueva izquierda Argentina* defined the New Left as just the violent opposition to the military (Claudia Hilb and Daniel Lutzky, *La nueva izquierda argentina: 1960-1980* (Centro Editor de América Latina, 1984). For a similar effort to move definitions of the New Left in Latin America beyond just the violent left, see Zolov, Eric, “Expanding Our Conceptual Horizons: The Shift from an Old to a New Left in Latin America,” *A Contracorriente* 5, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 47–73.

¹⁴ Manzano, “The Making of Youth in Argentina,” 274.

¹⁵ On the impact of student repression under Onganía, see Gordillo, “Protesta, rebelión y movilización: de la resistencia a la lucha armada, 1955-1973,” 344.

¹⁶ Gordillo, “Protesta, rebelión y movilización, 374; Tortti, “Protesta Social y “nueva izquierda” en la Argentina del Gran Acuerdo Nacional,” 226.

¹⁷ Tortti, “Protesta Social y “nueva izquierda,” 227. On the impact of student repression under Onganía, see Gordillo, “Protesta, rebelión y movilización: de la resistencia a la lucha armada, 1955-1973,” 344.

¹⁸ Manzano, “The Making of Youth in Argentina,” 266.

¹⁸ Manzano, “The Making of Youth in Argentina, 374; Tortti, “Protesta social y “nueva izquierda” en la Argentina del Gran Acuerdo Nacional,” 226.

Jewish Cohesion and the “Progressive Concerns” of Youth

For Zionist youth activists, their peers’ tendency to embrace the New Left and simultaneously reject their Jewish identity was a first-hand experience. A member of the Sephardic socialist Zionist youth group *Baderej* recalled in 1970, “I had just gotten to the *Facultad de Filosofía* when I began to live the climate of progressive concerns that thrive there; but I was greeted with the forceful rejection of many with respect to the Zionist path towards revolution. They are extreme in this rejection, with some Jewish youth shamefully rejecting their identity, thereby ending any possibility of dialogue.”¹⁹ The emergence of anti-Zionism as a fundamental element of New Left discourse will be discussed more fully in the following section. What is worth noting here is that this young member of *Baderej*, like Jorge Kirszenbaum, understood himself to be a champion of “progressive reforms” as a member of a socialist Zionist group though many others, including Jews, disagreed. While there is very little information on the breakdown of ethnicity in the New Left, the assumption that many young Jews were turning towards various factions in the Argentine left and consequently rejecting any Jewish identification became commonplace in these years. In the early 1960s, as we saw in Chapter Three, the politicization of young Jews and the abandonment of Jewish identity had already been a concern for youth groups. In the late 1960s, as the revolutionary movements of the New Left were gaining momentum, it became an even more pressing concern for the Jewish youth activists and emerged as a key concern for the older generation as well.

At the 1969 DAIA convention, León Pérez, still an astute and articulate observer of assimilatory trends among youth, noted that the Jewish community could only avoid losing people if it discussed Marxism, Biafra, Vietnam and psychoanalysis “all of this within the context of Jewish life.”²⁰ As a university professor, Pérez had long been attuned to the tendency among Jewish youth to see a conflict between their political and Jewish identities, as signaled in Chapter three. As such, it was the growing ubiquity of similar reflections from others in his generation that truly indicate change. Late in 1969, AMIA president Gregorio Fainguersch expressed concern over the “foreign ideologies that try to attract our youth with their calls for change.”²¹ By 1970, when *Mundo Israelita*, the newspaper most linked to the central institutions, reported on a speech at *Hebraica* in 1970 entitled “The youth and contemporary revolutions,” it noted that the youth’s attraction to revolutionary movements had become an explosive topic discussed frequently in Argentine Jewish community.²²

The concern among Jewish activists only grew in the next years as even young Jews who had previously been active members of Jewish institutions were now abandoning the cause. At the 1972 DAIA convention, Jaime Pompas, the president of the Córdoba branch of the DAIA, recounted a trend in his home city, whereby “wonderful youth” (*jóvenes magníficos*) who had a Jewish education, were youth leaders, and had traveled to Israel, returned and entered “the struggle for national revindication in an active way, and unfortunately we have to recognize that they have been absorbed. And today instead of participating in an event to commemorate the State of Israel, we see them at an event handing out pamphlets for a planned strike for some

¹⁹ “Baderej, nuestra manera de hacer la revolución,” *Raíces*, April, 1970, 72-73.

²⁰ “La convención territorial de Mar Del Plata,” *DAIA Boletín de Informaciones*, #17, October 1969, 13-14.

²¹ “Sesionó el consejo directivo de la comunidad, aprobaronse los lineamientos de la acción en el campo de la juventud,” *Mundo Israelita*, November 8, 1969, 7.

²² “‘Juventud y revolución’,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 23, 1970, 11.

union.”²³ Pompas’ speech not only offered anecdotal evidence of a path from involved Jewish activist to left-wing activists, but also called into question the previously held assumption that education could stave off assimilation. Jacobo Keter of Tucumán struck a similar note, when he lamented that on his way to the proceedings of the convention he had run into a twenty-two year old who had once intended to make Aliyah. The young man explained to Keter: “I am no longer a member of the organized Zionist movement, I am not anti-Zionist but I think that Zionism has not given a clear answer to my ideological concerns, like it does offer many young Jewish Argentines.” Keter explained that this “left a bitter taste” because the young man had once attended all of the community’s conventions as “one of the main spokesmen of Aliyah as the only solution.”²⁴ While this young person did not denounce Zionism as imperialistic or oppressive, as youth who were drawn towards the New Left often did, the anecdote did suggest again that the community was incapable of responding to the political concerns of its younger members.

By 1972, the assumption that the community was losing key members to the national left had become such a common refrain that a few delegates to the DAIA convention questioned how significant the phenomenon really was. Iosef Prync argued that the assumption of leftward movement was overblown and it was really just a “significant minority” that followed this pattern whereas most youth were apolitical.²⁵ The few stabs at more academic and less anecdotal analyses that had appeared in Jewish publications did suggest that the numbers of youth fleeing towards the left was overestimated. In 1969, Bernardo Kliksberg, the young assistant director of *Raíces*, conducted a modest study of 34 Jewish university students and asked them eighty questions about their Jewish identities. The largest number of respondents frequented the Jewish institutions where they could play sports and socialize, but knew little about cultural values or Jewish history. The second most numerous, meanwhile, was drawn to leftist causes and saw Jewishness as counter-revolutionary. Finally, the smallest group was defined by a strong commitment to Jewishness and Zionism.²⁶ These observations based on a small sample were similar to those of Leonardo Senkman, then a young intellectual, who noted that while mixed marriage and efforts to blend socially and intellectually were pervasive throughout the diaspora, in underdeveloped countries, the appeal of Latin American nationalism drew many people in.” At the same time, however, Senkman highlighted the existence of many young Jews who were “bourgeois, who prosper and do not want to see the reality that surrounds them,” and were as a result indifferent to both local and world Jewish problems.²⁷ Senkman’s analysis underscores that even as Jewish youth activists resented their peers who assimilated for political reasons, they too embraced many of the frameworks of the New Left, such as a critique of materialism.

Even if the actual incidence of politicized assimilation was overblown, that it garnered so much more attention from Jewish activists, young and old, than other forms of assimilation is undoubtedly significant. This was in part because the renunciations of the Jewish cause were more dramatic and vocal from the political young people than from those who just wanted to assimilate into a comfortable lifestyle. Another contributing factor was that those who had been active in Jewish organizations, those with whom the communal activists were most familiar,

²³ Jaime Pompas, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 25.

²⁴ Jacobo Keter, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 38.

²⁵ Iosef Prync, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 58.

²⁶ “Informe especial: crisis de la identidad judía en la Argentina,” *Raíces*, December, 1969, 80-85.

²⁷ Leonardo Senkman, “Problemática de Las nuevas generaciones del Ischuy,” *Anales De La Comunidad Israelita De Buenos Aires* II (1963-8): 97-98.

were more likely to move left because of a certain elective affinity between training in Zionist groups and activism in the New Left. There was a certain commonality in the training and values of the Zionist left wing youth groups and that national left. In the Zionist groups, young Jews learned to be militants and read and discuss theory.²⁸ Shlomo Sluzky, a documentary film maker and journalist who has chronicled the lives of various Argentine Jews recounted, as an example of this affinity, a story about a young woman joining a political group of the left when she entered the university in the early 1970s. As she and her fellow activists sat together on a retreat, around a campfire, singing “protest songs,” one person started singing and strumming the song of the partisan fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto. Sluzky underscored to me that no one knew each other’s last names, yet all of a sudden they realized that not only were many Jewish, but that their common knowledge of the song reflected a shared past Zionist youth groups.²⁹ Finally, for many Jewish activists, especially those from leftist Zionist youth groups, it was a particular affront to their personal sensibility that they were being rejected for not being committed enough to the left and that Zionism was being rejected as imperialistic and revolutionary. Given these realities, the willingness of young Jews to disavow Jewishness and Zionism for the sake of membership in the New Left became the prototypical threat that haunted Jewish activists, of all ages, and served as the fundamental basis for remaking Jewish meanings of ethnicity in these years.

New Challenges to Jewish Belonging

That many young Jews believed their commitment to revolutionary politics in Argentina seemed to necessitate an abandonment of Jewishness and Zionism was inextricably linked to the New Left’s hostility to Zionism and Jewish particularity. It was not until the late 1960s, however, that the New Left came to be seen as the Jewish community’s key challenge on the external front as well as the internal. At the moment of the Six-Day War, attacks on Jews came from familiar actors on the nationalist right and Arab League. These included two small bombs placed in Jewish institutions in Córdoba, Molotov cocktails placed at a Jewish school in Lanús, and a protest outside the Syrian embassy where participants handed out *Tacuara* flyers and yelled “death to Jews.”³⁰ At the end of the year, Isaac Goldenberg, president of the DAIA, noted that while the year had been relatively calm, both the Arab League “with its not just anti-Zionist but also clearly antisemitic preaching” and *Tacuara*, with its anti-Jewish slogans, had been active, demonstrating “that neo-Nazi and antisemitic action remains latent and could reemerge at any moment.”³¹ The other main source of anti-Israel sentiment came from the soviet-aligned *Partido Comunista* (Communist Party, PC), which used its news organs *Propósitos* and *Política Internacional* to condemn Zionism and Israel, often pointing to international Zionist conspiracies

²⁸ Some of the former militants in the national left who were interviewed as part of *Memoria Abierta*’s oral history project had roots in socialist Zionist groups and spoke of how the values of social justice that they had learned in these Zionist movements ultimately inspired their participation in leftist, guerilla group (David Blaustein. Interview with Federico Lorenz. Digital video recording. October 18, November 1, and November 9, 2009. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Memoria Abierta*, Buenos Aires; Enrique Mario Fukman. Interview with Vera Carnovale. Digital video recording. August 16, 2001. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Memoria Abierta*; Ariel Blaustein. Interview by Pablo Palomino. Digital video recording. May 8, 2006, San Isidro. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Memoria Abierta*.

²⁹ Shlomo Sluzky.. Interview with author. Digital audio recording, Tel Aviv, July 27, 2009.

³⁰ Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb, eds., *American Jewish Year Book, 1968*, vol. 69 (Philadelphia and New York: The American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 404.

³¹ “Informe sobre la labor de la DAIA,” *La Luz*, December 15, 1967, 30.

that made their attacks similar to those coming from the nationalist right.³²

At the end of 1968 the DAIA characterized antisemitism as emanating from three corners: the Nazi right, the Arab league, and the anti-Israel left (generally affiliated with the Soviet-line communists).³³ This tri-partite framework was shared by the more anti-establishment and youth voices in the community as well, such as *Raíces* and *Nueva Sión*. *Raíces* first issue in 1968 ran with a story about the October detonation of two bombs that destroyed all the merchandise at an Israel Exposition in Buenos Aires. The new magazine claimed that the wave of antisemitic incidents that year made it the worst since 1962, and blamed the diffusion of Arab League propaganda that attacked Zionism with a clear antisemitic subtext that had infiltrated right-wing circles in Argentina.³⁴ In the same year, *Raíces* called attention to the antisemitism emanating from the Soviet-line left, reporting that the publication *Propósitos* in 1968 had claimed that the Six-Day War was “‘experimental war’ launched by Israel’s desire to trial its new military methods...”³⁵ These tropes of the Soviet-left would weave their way into the accusations of the New Left, but in the first years after the Six-Day War, the primary concern in Argentina was the Old Left and the same right wing and Arab League that had menaced the community in the early 1960s.

It was Jewish youth activists who were the first to call attention to anti-Zionism and antisemitism of nationalist left-wing movements. The 1966 Tri-continental Conference in Havana brought together left-wing delegates from Africa, Asia, and Latin America but purposefully excluded Israel, and many Zionist activists read this as a defining moment in fostering anti-Israel sentiments among the third-world left.³⁶ Zionists were also more attuned to incidents of hostility from the nationalist left surrounding the Six-Day War.³⁷ Activists like Jorge Kirszenbaum saw it as a moment of rude awakening when many of their peers supported the Arab cause and denounced Zionism as imperialistic.³⁸ By 1969 *Nueva Sión* noted that

³² Senkman notes that the arguments in these two publications were quite similar to those in right wing periodicals such as *Azul y Blanco* and *Ulises*. (Senkman, “Repercussions of the Six-Day War in the Leftist Jewish Argentine Camp, 1967-1969,” 174).

³³ Goldenberg and Pérez mentioned the left at the Reunion Territorial in 1967 (“Reunion Territorial de la DAIA en Cordoba,” *La Luz*, October 4, 1967, 56) and the delineation of the three types of antisemitism emerges at a 1968 Asamblea Extraordinaria of the DAIA (“Asamblea Extraordinario de la DAIA, Swásticas en Tablada,” *La Luz*, October 11, 1968, 36).

³⁴ “Quien incendio la exposición Israel?” *Raíces*, October, 1968, 9-10.

³⁵ “La “guerra” de las letras,” *Raíces*, December 1968, 13.

³⁶ Jorge Pustilnik, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 118-119, Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 25; León Pérez, Convención territorial de la DAIA, 1966, 88. For further analysis on the positioning on Israel, specifically the lack of unanimity on the hostile stance both among the delegates and within the Cuban government, see Yoram D. Shapira, *Israel and the Third World*, 151-152.

³⁷ Senkman has noted that despite tensions between the PC and the New Left (which he refers to as the “Argentine national leftist currents”), there were segments of the nationalist leftist camp that joined the PC in denunciations of Israel. He writes: “The public expression of this combined anti-Israel sentiment of the leftist camp, as well as Argentine Communism, was the widespread distribution of an anti-Israel poster on the streets of Buenos Aires in August 1967, entitled “Together with the Arab people,” that condemned Israeli racism. It was signed by intellectuals and members of a varied spectrum of the Argentine Left, including Communists and leftist Peronists. The names of John William Cooke (Leftist Peronist), together with Juan Carlos Coral (socialist), Alcira de la Peña and Hector Agosti (PC) stood out, as did those of student leaders of the Argentine University Federation (Federación Universitaria Argentina), and various unionists, together with the directors of the ICUF, Ruben Sinay and Jose Goldberg, and the Argentine Jewish Peronist writer German Rozenmacher” (Senkman, “Repercussions of the Six-Day War in the Leftist Jewish Argentine Camp, 1967-1969,” 174).

³⁸ Jorge Kirszenbaum, interview by author, digital audio recording, February 11, 2009, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

“radicalization towards the fascism of the right means the growth of the political use of antisemitism” whereas the “triumph of the popular sectors ever more tied to anti-imperialist nationalism also carries with it antisemitic frameworks.”³⁹

The youth also cast an eye on rising anti-Zionism and antisemitism in the international New Left, particularly in France. The CJA printed an article in its publication *Tiempo de Jerusalem* in 1968 by the French intellectual Robert Mizrahi entitled “ambiguities of the French left,” in which Mizrahi outlined the strong anti-Israel bias on the part of the non-communist French left. While Arab countries were seen as working towards socialism, the kibbutz movement in Israel and the country’s freedom of press and association garnered very little attention.⁴⁰ Israel, he reported, generally was seen through the Arab gaze, which led to adopting “a very dismissive attitude to the Nazi holocaust.”⁴¹ This international trend actually garnered the attention of the older generation even before it became attuned to similar tropes within the Argentine New Left. In November 1969 a group of professors, including Rodolfo Mondolfo, José Luis Romero, Gregorio Klimovsky, Gino Germani, Carlos Fayt, José Itzigsohn, Enrique Butelman, José Babini, and José Bleger, organized a conference entitled “Conference on Discrimination and Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary World” with the participation of several DAIA members. At the conference, French intellectual Claude Lanzmann spoke on the rise of antisemitism in the wake of the Six-Day War, when “without analysis, with a surprising ignorance of the particular history of the Middle East, the left condemned Israel out of hand and denied the right of the Jewish people, and only them, to have a nation. From then on the whole classic antisemitic arsenal emerged.”⁴²

By 1971, however, both generations were keenly attuned to the Argentine New Left’s hostility towards Zionism and, by extension, to the membership of a highly Zionist Jewish community in the nation. The DAIA claimed that the Arab League’s propaganda worked to target workers and students, particularly its efforts to present “Zionism as responsible for all evils, not only those that happen in the Middle East, but also those that occur in countries where Jewish communities live and carry on.” It pointed particularly to propagandistic posters meant for students that juxtaposed images of Che, Ho Chi Minh and other revolutionary leaders of underdeveloped countries on one side with an image of an imperialist Jew on the other.⁴³ The conspiratorial theories used to target the left, and the absorption of these theories into leftist discourse, led many communal leaders to note that right-wing antisemitism and the left-wing version were becoming indistinguishable.⁴⁴ Raíces noted that “all the components of the left,

³⁹ “5729-5730, Al fuego de la liberación,” *Nueva Sión*, October 7, 1969, 2; for more on right-wing antisemitism from *Nueva Sión*, see “Otra Primavera de los Nazis Criollos,” *Nueva Sión*, October 25, 1969, 3.

⁴⁰ Robert, Mizrahi, “Las ambigüedades de la izquierda francesa,” *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, May/June 1968, b2. In the case of Syria, he noted that “the coups carried out by pressure groups are not even mentioned and they do not condemn the military regime. The existence of some cooperatives and nationalizations constitute the whole of their argument.”

⁴¹ Mizrahi, “Las ambigüedades de la izquierda francesa,” b2.

⁴² “Discriminación y antisemitismo en el mundo contemporáneo,” *DAIA Boletín de Informaciones*, #18, December 1969, 20

⁴³ “Ofensiva árabe,” *Informativo DAIA*, #26, August 1971, 1. Also according to the DAIA, Arab League propaganda targeted at workers portrayed the *Histadrut* as an international finance company and the Argentine Jew as obeying the orders of the DAIA blindly and bringing in money that exploits the Argentine people and has expansionist goals.

⁴⁴ In 1972, then president of the DAIA Nehemías Resnizky noted in an interview with *Nueva Sión* that both left and right blame the economic problems in the country on Zionist leaders, so that the right, Liga Árabe and “False Left” (*Falsa Izquierda*) all have the same arguments (“Responde el presidente de DAIA, antisemitismo,

save the social-democrats” considered “the Arab terrorists to be freedom fighters and Israel— allied with the United States—as the materialization of evil.”⁴⁵ While it was legitimate to critique Israel and Zionism, the publication argued that when detractors also deferred to traditional stereotypes, attacked people just because they were Jewish, or accused Jews of a “world conspiracy,” they were guilty of antisemitism and racism.

The way these global frameworks intersected with the particularly Argentine question of Peronism was especially distressing to the Jewish community. By the late 1960s the idea of Juan Perón’s return was capturing the imagination of more and more Argentines, and by 1971, it seemed inevitable that Peronism would return to power in some capacity.⁴⁶ This in and of itself was not necessarily concerning but the tendency among both left and rightwing segments of Peronism to frame the interests of Jews or Zionists as antithetical to the goals of Peronist movement, and thereby the nation, was. From the Peronist left, the newly founded *Comité Justicialista de Solidaridad con Palestina Libre* (Justicialist Committee for Solidarity with a Free Palestine), led by union leader Andres Framini, published letters in *Clarín* and *La Razón* in October 1971. Importantly, the letter in *La Razón* was dated October 17 (the anniversary of the day in 1945 that the “masses” took to the streets to demand that Juan Perón return to power), presumably as a means of linking the committee’s support for the Palestinian cause with the essence of the Peronist movement.

The letter began by bringing together the struggle of leftist Argentines and the Palestinians: “The Argentine men and women who identify with a common national endeavor and who have made political sovereignty, economic independence and social justice the permanent goal of their militant activity, can not remain indifferent to the heroic struggle of the Palestinian nation for their social and national liberation.” Rather than being merely pro-Palestinian, the letter struck a conspiratorial tone, calling for a defense against “all forms of Zionist and imperialist penetration into Argentine.”⁴⁷ The letter in *Clarín* carried with it many signatures, representing a broad array of political affiliations, some of which the DAIA speculated correctly had been added unbeknownst to the signers.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the DAIA

antisionismo y algo mas...” *Informativo DAIA*, #41/42, June 1972, 18-19). Similarly, the AJC yearbook report on Argentina from that year claimed that at university symposia, it was difficult to distinguish between the anti-Israel positions of the left and the right (Nissim Elneché, “Argentina,” *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 73 (1972), 438. Also on the convergence, Sion Cohen Imach noted in 1972 that “The nationalists of the extreme, reactionary right, speak of the Jews that drain companies and cooperatives and in newspapers like *Tiempo* and *Nuestra Vida* they also speak about the “Zionist delinquents” that drain the cooperatives”(Sion Cohen Imach, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 12).

⁴⁵ “Antisemitismo, de derecha a izquierda,” *Raíces*, February 1971, 51-3.

⁴⁶ In 1970, various party leaders, including those representing the two largest parties, the Peronists and Radicals, signed an accord entitled *La Hora del Pueblo*, which called for elections and established their unity in opposition to the military. This was a defining moment for the end of the Peronist/Anti-Peronist impasse and a signal that when electoral politics returned, all major parties were in favor of Peronist participation. In the following year, meanwhile, General Lanusse tried to woo Perón to take part in the GAN, thereby legitimating Peronism as a political force.

⁴⁷ “Ofensiva abierta de la Liga Árabe, La provocación no desbordará a DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA*, #30, October 1971, 3-4.

⁴⁸ When the *Informativo DAIA* reported on these letters, it speculated that some of the signers were surprised to see their names in this context; the next issue of *Informativo DAIA* was in fact able to report that several of the signers of Framini’s *solicitada* had made known to the DAIA that they either regretted signing the letter or that they had never authorized their signature. Raúl Bustos Fierro, a Peronist politician and former nacional deputy, wrote to the DAIA to say that not only had he never signed the letter, but that he would never encourage antisemitism, and expressed his “firmest and deepest conviction...that that was also the position of the Argentine political party to which he belonged” (“Desautorizan,” *Informativo DAIA*, #31, November 15, 1).

printed a letter in *La Nación* refuting Framini's claims, and both *La Luz* and *Mundo Israelita*, newspapers tied to the older generation, and *Nueva Sión*, a youth publication, took note of the attack and issued lengthy responses.⁴⁹ In the approximation of the DAIA and the leftist periodical *La Opinión*, whose editor, Jacobo Timerman was openly sympathetic to Israel, Framini's letter was the result of Arab League infiltration of the working class and left wing groups. Framini's counter attack, made his distrust of Jews and Zionists as legitimate members of a revolutionary nation even clearer by linking the Zionist cause to "yanqui (US) petroleum imperialism." He also pointed fingers at "reactionary Jews, who are always Jews before Argentines, in the service of other flags." The emphasis on "reactionary Jews" seems an effort to distinguish Zionist activists to those Jews who were part of the broader national struggle and disavowed Zionism.

Attacks from the Peronist right, meanwhile, that similarly sought to frame the Jewish community and Zionism as the enemy of the nation, also garnered attention from various corners of the community. In 1972, the DAIA, *Raíces*, and *Mundo Israelita* all commented on an article that Jose Lopez Rega published in the Peronist newspaper *Bases*, that contended that the Jews who killed Jesus were the "same imperialists as they are now" and that Nazism "was not as bad as they made it seem." Lopez Rega also claimed that "national socialism" was a governing principle for Peronism, which these Jewish publications read as another sign of sympathy for Nazism.⁵⁰ At the end of 1972, DAIA president Sión Cohen Imach called attention to antisemitism from the fascist right, the communist left and the Arab League, which disguised antisemitism as anti-Zionism, but he argued that the most problematic trend was antisemitism from those associated with the Peronist movement.⁵¹

With antisemitism emanating from various corners of the large Peronist movement, the question of whether Perón himself was antisemitic or anti-Zionist became quite pressing. Several Jewish publications waffled on the issue because, as was often the case, Perón was seemingly courting two opposing constituencies: the Jewish community and his antisemitic supporters. Between 1972 and 1973, the *Informativo DAIA* published various conflicting pieces of information about Perón's sentiments on Jews and Zionism, that included support for Israel and the Jewish community on the one hand and accusations against the conspiratorial aspects of Zionism on the other. Statements that suggested hostility towards Jews included a report in *La*

⁴⁹ *Nueva Sión*, October 27, 1971, *La Luz*, November 5, 1971, *Mundo Israelita*, October 23, 1971, (as reprinted in *Informativo DAIA*, #31, November 15, 1971). Jewish institutions were concerned with other events from the Peronist left, such as an event organized by the Juventud Peronista in Santa Fe that gave an ovation to "el Fataj" ("En la asamblea general de delegados se presentaron informes de las actividades del periodo noviembre 1970-octubre 1972," *Informativo DAIA*, #54, December 31, 1972, 3); the relationship between El Fataj and the Peronist left was friendly in general, with El Fataj branch in Argentina expressing support for Peronism as the national movement of the masses and Perón as the rightful leader of a third-world nation ("Cuestiones que preocupan a la colectividad judía de nuestro país, fueron tratadas en la sesión plenaria de DAIA," *Informativo DAIA*, #63-4, July 1973, 4).

⁵⁰ "El pueblo judío según José López Rega," *Informativo DAIA*, #44, August 15, 2. On DAIA concern about support for nacionalsocialismo, see "En la asamblea general de delegados se presentaron informes de las actividades del periodo noviembre 1970-Octubre 1972," *Informativo DAIA*, #54, December 31, 1972, 2. For *Mundo Israelita* on López Rega, see "De semana en semana," *Mundo Israelita*, July 29, 1972, 2. For *Raíces* see "Anatomía de un chanta," *Raíces*, August 1972, 3.

⁵¹ "En la asamblea general de delegados se presentaron informes de las actividades del periodo noviembre 1970-Octubre 1972," *Informativo DAIA*, #54, December 31, 1972, 3; Among the Peronist antisemites he mentioned names from the right and left including Norma Kennedy, Marta Curone, Galimberti, Cornejo Linares, Marcelo Sánchez Surondo, Abal Medina (who had belonged to Tacuara).

Opinión that Perón had included the Jews (along with the communism, capitalism, masonry, and the Catholic church) in a list of those who managed an international “synarchic” conspiracy.⁵² Another was a meeting Perón held in Spain in 1973 with rightwing Peronists Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, who argued that Jewish particularity in Argentina “conspired” against the Argentine nation.”⁵³ At the same time, *La Opinión* published an interview Noé Davidovich had conducted with Perón, in which Perón had said that any division between Jews and Arabs in Argentina was artificial and had denounced those people who signed Framini’s letter as not representing Peronism.”⁵⁴ In addition, in a correspondence with former ambassador from Israel, Yaacov Tsur, Perón reaffirmed his wish to maintain good relations with Israel.⁵⁵ In 1972 Sión Cohen Imach expressed the urgent need to have Perón offer a straight answer as to whether he accepted racism and antisemitism.⁵⁶

A similar confusion emerged on the pages of *Raíces*. In July 1972, a reader of *Raíces* wrote in asking the magazine to publish an article on Perón that clarified what the Peronist position was towards Jews both historically and currently.⁵⁷ The publication never complied completely, though it did contend with the issue. A month later, *Raíces* expressed incredulity that Perón could possibly share the antisemitic sentiments of López Rega as judging from Perón’s conduct during his first presidency.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, four months later, the publication openly admitted that it had been wrong in light of new statements from Perón, including one in which Perón had said that Zionism contributed to his overthrow. *Raíces* was unwilling to suggest that these were Perón’s true sentiments, but instead noted that Perón was presenting conflicting messages.⁵⁹ Interestingly, both the DAIA and *Raíces* were unwilling to assume the worst, suggesting an unwillingness to dismiss him, or the movement that saw him as a leader, as truly antisemitic. These efforts echoed similar ones in the first half of the 1960s even in the face of evidence that suggested that Peronist workers were more likely to harbor antisemitic sentiments than non-Peronist workers. The unwillingness to blame Peronism as a movement, or Perón as a leader, speaks to a gradual re-positioning of the Jewish community with respect to Argentine politics that will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.

Between 1967 and 1973, the nature of antisemitism, and the community’s perception of it, had changed dramatically. In the years after the *Cordobazo* the penetration of anti-Zionism and antisemitism into various corners of the left and into the increasingly powerful Peronist movement made the new brands of antisemitism as concerning as more traditional, nationalist right-wing antisemitism. In fact, the anti-Zionism, and at times antisemitism, coming from the New Left was particularly concerning because so many young Jews were drawn to it. As was the case with politicized assimilation, the new brands of antisemitism did not subside as the political system began to reopen with the GAN. If anything, the resurgence of the Peronist party made

⁵² “Expresiones de Perón durante una entrevista,” *Informativo DAIA*, #43, July 1972, 18;

⁵³ “Un temario que registra las preocupaciones de la colectividad judía del país fue abordado en la ultima session plenaria de DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA*, #63-4, July 1973, 1. For the Sánchez Sorondo quote, see Gregorio Selser, “Argentina, vísperas de una elección,” *Raíces*, February, 1973, 8-10).

⁵⁴ “Dialogo con Perón sobre movimientos de liberación, la realidad Argentina, el sionismo y los judíos, y Latinoamérica,” *Informativo DAIA*, #37, March 31, 1972, 7.

⁵⁵ “Un temario que registra las preocupaciones de la colectividad judía del país fue abordado en la ultima session plenaria de DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA*, #63-4, July 1973, 1.

⁵⁶ “En la asamblea general de delegados se presentaron informes de las actividades del periodo noviembre 1970-octubre 1972,” *Informativo DAIA*, #54, December 31, 1972, 3.

⁵⁷ “Cartas de lectores,” *Raíces*, July 1972, 4.

⁵⁸ “Anatomía de un chanta,” *Raíces*, August 1972, 3.

⁵⁹ “Sinarquía, una palabra peligrosa,” *Raíces* December 1972, 10-11.

accusations that Jews and Zionists were not true members of the movement and therefore the nation more threatening.

Jews in the Revolutionary Nation?

Beginning in 1970 the conferences and roundtables at the *Casa Moshe Sharet*, a boarding house in Buenos Aires for Jewish university students from other parts of Argentina and Latin America, covered topics such as “The Problem of Jewish Youth with respect to the Latin American Socio-Economic Situation” (1970), “The Social Situation in Argentina and the Insertion of our Community” (1970), “The Socio-Political Future of Argentina and its Consequences for our Community” (1970), and “The Social, Economic and Cultural Events in the Republic of Argentina” (1971).⁶⁰ Ijud Habonim, a socialist Zionist youth group, explained that its members “stay aware of and observe the social processes that are happening in the new Latin America, as well as the location of the Jewish masses in this process, always trying to offer a revolutionary alternative for the Jewish youth.”⁶¹

As far as some youth were concerned, their elders were more inclined to discuss the problems that Jews faced in other countries than the situation of Jews in Argentina.⁶² While this may have been the case in the late 1960s, by the early 1970s Jewish institutions populated by older generations were concerned with how the political, social, and economic processes unfolding in Latin America affected Jews. More specifically, there was a growing assumption that there was a revolutionary imminence in Argentina and Latin America. The challenges posed to the Jewish community by a seemingly ascendant New Left led Jewish youth activists and the older generation alike to question whether political instability and revolutionary ferment had radically altered the place of Jews in the nation.

This was a central question at the DAIA’s 1972 yearly convention. Si3n Cohen Imach, president of the DAIA, explicitly discarded the old notion that Argentina was divided between a dominant liberal culture (of 19th century statesmen Domingo Faustino Sarmiento) and a fascist sub-culture (of 19th century dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas). The reality was much more complex, and Jews could not expect support from either the left or the right. As Cohen Imach pointed out, with the majority of parties in the nation associating Zionism with imperialism, the Jews had no clear allies. Also pointing to a sea change in political culture and its implications for Argentine Jews, Hugo Golber, a delegate from Rosario, argued:

Our *ischuv* (community), by its nature, has been tied to the so-called liberal and democratic sectors of the nation through elements of sympathy and interest. But the nation has been changing and we have not been left with such simple frameworks. Now the definition and distinction between right and left has lost its clear meaning from other eras...Before we could expect a verbal or physical attack from the right, but now, and especially after the Six-Day War, the political spectrum has taken on new and changing

⁶⁰ Actividades culturales realizadas en la Casa Moshe Sharet, Centro de Documentaci3n Mark Turkow, Box 13b.

⁶¹ Informativo Avod3, July 7, 1973, Archivo IWO, Box: Poalei Tzion-Tzeinei Tzion, 1950-1969-72-74.

⁶² One youth activist wrote in the CJA publication *Tiempo de Jerusalem* that “They speak a lot—and this is not bad—about the situation of Jews in other countries, but they analyze very little the situation in our nation” (Ernesto Grimblat, “No idolatrar las instituciones,” *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, September/October, 1968, c3).

forms...⁶³

The changing climate was particularly threatening because many participants (though certainly not all) questioned whether the revolutionary movements held any promise for the Jews. Even though most agreed that the Jewish community was a part of the middle class, there was also recognition that Jews were scapegoated for being oligarchic exploiters, as they were in Framini's letter. To Secretary General Resnizky, it was "especially serious, founded or unfounded, that our children and outsiders see us as tied to the status quo because we live in an underdeveloped country with the dramas, complexes, and anxieties particular to underdevelopment."⁶⁴ He then informed everyone that there was an analysis of the socio-economic processes in Latin America in the packets that had been distributed to everyone.

With the perceived threats to the Jewish community amidst revolutionary ferment, more and more Jewish activists openly questioned whether there was a future for a strongly identified Zionist community in Argentina. While this doubt had been the purview of just the most radical Zionist youth associated with Hashomer Hatzair in the early 1960s, the idea had become much more mainstream by the early 1970s. This fundamental questioning about Jewish continuity in a revolutionary Argentina would underlie all other considerations regarding Jewish ethnicity and Argentine Zionism that took place in these years. The continental framework was also central to these discussions. Discussions of Latin America as the relevant regional context had first emerged in response to the chronic social unrest in the early 1960s. At that moment, some observed that Latin America was a region ripe with structural inequality and therefore at risk for severe antisemitism. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the understanding of Latin America had changed somewhat. Now the continent was defined by its revolutionary climate. Jewish activists questioned the prospects for Jewish communities in a context in which leftist nationalism seemed to leave little room for ethnic particularity and especially little room for Zionist particularity.

But the reaction towards the New Left and revolutionary foment was not, by any means, exclusively negative, and there was an underlying complexity to the community's observations regarding the New Left. Even as Jewish activists of different generations recognized that it posed challenges to Jewish cohesion and Jewish (and especially Zionist) membership in the nation, many still shared a clear sympathy for many aspects of the New Left's project. It was this sympathy and even sense of kinship that made the common rejection of the Zionist project particularly harsh. It was also this sympathy that explains the unwillingness to dismiss Perón, increasingly seen as the legitimate, popular, leader, as antisemitic.

The tensions revolving around the New Left—at once magnetic and threatening—underpinned the efforts to remake the meanings of Jewishness and Zionism, taken up in the next chapter. Even given the pessimism expressed regarding the future of Jewish communities in Argentina, the Jewish community continued to work within the realities in Argentina to create a Jewish and Zionist culture that would in some ways resonate with the current reality. The goal was to bring those who were alienated and maybe even have some impact on those who attacked Israel or the community from the outside. By the early 1970s there was a general agreement on the challenges the community faced, even as the youth had been the first to cast attention on the New Left. When it came to offering a remedy, however, to remaking Argentine Jewish identity and communal life, the conflicts between the generations that had emerged in earlier years deepened significantly. Influenced by a global youth rebellion and its particular manifestations in

⁶³ Hugo Golber, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 16.

⁶⁴ Nehemías Resnizky, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 23.

Argentina, Jewish youth activists would level various accusations at their elders for incorrectly responding to the new challenges faced in the revolutionary, Latin American context. Nonetheless, I will argue, that the generational tensions were ultimately quite productive, catalyzing a radical remaking of Argentine Jewish ethnicity.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNITY, 1967-1973

In 1968, Paúl Warszawski wrote admiringly in a publication of the *Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina* (CJJA) about the Jewish youth in Paris who had taken over communal institutions as part of the general youth rebellion of May 1968. While some observers saw this as another example of “the proverbial distancing and hostility of the Jewish-French university student with respect to their community,” Warszawski saw it as promising because people “only occupy that which they live as their own, and in that sense, the university students’ action shows a degree of connection with their community and an interest in the reform of the institutions.”¹ As revolutionary ferment gained force in Argentina in the following years with youth at the forefront, the association with the 1968 French rebellion would wane and the Jewish youth groups would associate themselves more with revolutionary activity in their own country and other places in the third world.² Nonetheless, as early as 1968 the youth confederation, which had a seat at the table of many of the community’s central institutions, saw itself as responsible for communal revolution.

May 1969 was the moment of the *Cordobazo* and also the moment of the “1969 DAIA rebellion” discussed in the introduction of this dissertation. Though only 10% of the delegates at this particular convention were from youth organizations, they set the tone of the conference and introduced the word “establishment” to critique the DAIA and the other central institutions. The fundamental goal of this rebellion, and Jewish youth activism in these years, was to revolutionize understandings of Jewishness and Zionism. The Jewish youth activists, however, were not the only protagonists, and this chapter contends that it was actually the interactions between these youth and the “establishment” that enabled the thorough and dramatic reworking of ethnicity. More specifically, this moment saw the fairly uniform adoption of “ethno-radicalism,” a term I use to describe the re-definition of Jewishness, Zionism, and Jewish membership in the nation in radical, third world terms.

Other scholars have noticed certain trappings of this new discourse, particularly the tendency among Jewish activist youth and intellectuals to define Zionism as the national liberation movement of the Jewish people akin to all others in the third world.³ The goal here, however, is to associate the emphasis on national liberation with a broader reworking of what it meant to be Jewish and Zionist that emerged at the intersection of national, diasporic, and communal processes. The previous chapter set much of the backdrop for these changes: the Zionist fervency among Jewish activists after the Six-Day War, which made ideological Zionism

¹ Paul Warszawski, “Universidad judía en Buenos Aires: alguien se pregunto para que?” *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, September/October, 1968, e1.

² Valeria Manzano highlights ambivalence about the youth rebellion in France in 1968 among Argentine youth. While they took inspiration from some aspects, there was also a belief that the revolution in Argentina and the third world would be different (Valeria Manzano, “The Making of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality, 1956-1976” (PhD, Indiana University, 2009), 272–273).

³ Leonardo Senkman, “Repercussions of the Six-Day War in the Leftist Jewish Argentine Camp, 1967-1969,” in *The Six-Day War and World Jewry*, ed. Eli Lederhendler (University Press of Maryland and the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000), 167–187. Emmanuel Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento: actitudes sociales, posicionamientos y memoria de la experiencia judía durante la última dictadura militar (1973-2007)” (PhD, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2010), Chapter 1; Adrián Krupnik, “Cuando camino al kibbutz viene pasar al Che. Radicalización política, y juventud judía: Argentina 1966-1976,” in *Marginados y consagrados: Nuevos estudios sobre la vida judía en Argentina*, ed. Kahan, Emmanuel et al. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Lumiere, 2011), 311–328.

an unmovable component in their ethnic identity; the challenges the New Left posed to Jewish cohesion and Jewish inclusion in the revolutionary nation; a certain sympathy many Jewish activists felt towards the New Left despite the challenges it posed. This chapter, meanwhile, redirects attention to the key role the community's own generational politics played in the struggle to redefine itself.

While trappings of the youth rebellion were already apparent by the mid-1960s, the generational tensions and confrontations only deepened in the late 1960s. As noted in the previous chapter, Valeria Manzano has highlighted 1969 as the moment when youth and rebellion became synonymous. Jewish youth activists were clearly a part of the broader youth rebellion in Argentina, which opposed US-imperialism and embraced third-worldism, vanguardism, and the goals of personal and national "liberation."⁴ By treating the Jewish community as a site of generational interaction, meanwhile, we see that much of this discourse ultimately transcended just youth politics and became a mainstay in "establishment" circles as well. The members of the older generation, after all, shared the fundamental concerns about Jewish cohesion and membership in the Argentine nation and often the same fervent Zionism. As such, generational divisions were often less stark than perceived and the generational groups less monolithic than portrayed.

The chapter first turns to the most straightforward and self-conscious efforts to discuss Jewishness and Zionism in new, radical terms, for the sake of synthesizing their own identities, appealing to assimilating Jewish youth, and responding to attacks from the New Left. While youth activists were undoubtedly innovators, by the early 1970s even the "establishment" had absorbed the new discourse and applied it to the same ends. These new formulations were the agreed upon backbone of ethno-radicalism, but the following sections turn to two debates that emerged within this consensus. The first was whether a commitment to Aliyah (or immigration to Israel) was essential to being a radical Zionist, an argument that was often more about Argentine politics than Zionist ideology. The second was whether Jewish institutions, with their commitment to national liberation globally, should actively take a stand on Argentine national politics. Taken together these debates add more complexity to our understanding of the community's generational politics and reveal the challenges Jewish activists, of all ages, faced in trying to balance their deep commitment to Zionism with their understanding of themselves as Argentines.

The Emergence of Ethno-Radicalism

Immediately after the Six-Day War, León Rozitchner, a leftwing Jewish intellectual with no clear ties to the Jewish community, published an essay entitled *Ser Judío* (Being a Jew). He began his essay by spelling out the leftist critique of Jewish particularity and of Israel. Jews who maintained a commitment to Jewishness, the critique went, alienated themselves from the

⁴ Manzano, "The Making of Youth in Argentina," 266, 287; Maria Cristina Tortti, "Protesta Social y "Nueva Izquierda" en la Argentina del Gran Acuerdo Nacional," in *La Primacia De La Política: Lanusse, Perón Y La Nueva Izquierda En Tiempos Del GAN*, ed. Alfredo R Pucciarelli, (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Eudeba, 1999), 213. Another locus of "liberationist" thought was, of course, liberation theology. While liberation theologians also called for a social revolution and national liberation, their argumentation was far more religiously based than that emanating from the largely secular Jewish community. For an articulation of liberation theology, including these themes, from one of its foremost proponents, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1973).

revolutionary struggle, whereas Israel was the imperialist enemy to budding socialism in the Arab world. The essay set out to ask “whether being Jewish, and recognizing oneself as such, is incompatible with being coherently of the left.”⁵ Ultimately, Rozitchner took the position that one could certainly be Jewish and leftist, either by living in Israel and fighting what he saw as a rightwing government there, or staying in Argentina, affirming one’s Jewish identity, and taking part in the national struggle there.⁶ Leonardo Senkman has analyzed the polemical efforts of Rozitchner and other Jewish, leftist intellectuals in the few years after the Six-Day War, who shared a “common critique of the anti-Zionist Left on the subject of Israel’s right to exist, and at the same time intended to legitimize the possibility of being a pro-Israeli Argentine Jew without simultaneously alienating themselves entirely from the Leftist camp.” To Senkman, these intellectuals “represented the first serious Latin American attempt to tackle the existential questions of Jewishness, and to substantiate from a secular and politically liberal perspective the right for Jewish cultural distinctiveness, both individual and collective, in Argentina.”⁷

Though Rozitchner and others lent nationally prominent voices to this effort, I would argue that the most sustained conversation about Jewish and Zionist identity post-1967 and the efforts to frame Jewish values as compatible with the left did not come from independent intellectuals, but rather from within the Jewish community. In the ongoing struggle to maintain Jewish cohesions and articulate membership in the nation, Jewish activists were the primary instigators of the new vocabulary associated with “ethno-radicalism.” This makes the remaking of the meanings of Jewishness and Zionism more properly understood as a popular phenomenon, rather than one confined to the work of intellectuals.⁸ Jewish activist youth were at the forefront of this effort as they responded to the dual challenges posed by the New Left and tried to synthesize their own identities as Jews, Zionists and leftists. While their calls to reframe ethnicity were an explicit critique of the establishment, the older generation was not far behind in absorbing these new formulations, making the transition as revolutionary foment became more powerful and the challenges posed by the New Left more widespread.

Making Ideology Mobile: The Youth and Ethno-Radicalism

In 1969, youth activist Eliahu Toker wrote in the CJA publication *Tiempo de Jerusalem* that while Zionism was originally a revolutionary movement, with Zionists at the helm of the Argentine community, Zionist ideology had come to a standstill; the “worst enemy of the image of Zionism” had become “the immobility of the ideological bureaucrats.”⁹ He went on to write that the common refrain from community leaders that they “kept alive the forms of [communal]

⁵ León Rozitchner, *Ser judío* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 1968), 10-11.

⁶ Rozitchner, *Ser judío*, 104

⁷ Senkman, “Repercussions of the Six-Day War in the Leftist Jewish Argentine Camp: the Rise of Fraie Schtime, 1967-1969,” 184. Others that Senkman includes in this category are León S. Pérez, “La identidad reprimida”; José Itzigsohn, “Una experiencia judía contemporánea”; and Bernardo Verbitzky “Etiquetas para los Hombres.” Pérez and Itzigsohn, were also tied Jewish leftist newspapers like *Nueva Sión* and *Voz Libre*.

⁸ This draws on the framework offered by Russel Kazal in his discussion of “vernacular pluralisms” as opposed to the rhetoric of pluralism employed by intellectuals (Russel Kazal, “The Lost World of Pennsylvania Pluralism: Immigrants, Regions, and the Early Origins of Pluralist Ideologies in America,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 7–42).

⁹ Eliahu Toker, “Un movimiento que se estanca es un movimiento que se pudre,” *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, January/March, 1969, e2.

life from Eastern Europe at the beginning of the century” meant that they championed an outdated Zionism, leading to rejection by those who were “truly young and creative.”¹⁰ One young activists struck a similar tone, explaining to the magazine *Raíces* that the communal institutions could avoid assimilation “if they explain a thousand and one times that Zionism has progressive value in the struggles of the nations of the world, as the [Movement of National Liberation] of the Jewish people.”¹¹

The calls for renovation in and of themselves were not new and had emerged earlier in the 1960s, as discussed in Chapter Two. What marked the new moment as distinct was the nearly uniform claims that only by making Jewishness and Zionism compatible with the particular brand of revolutionary fervor in Argentina and the third world more broadly would the Jewish community survive. *Raíces* was at the forefront of championing revolutionary definitions of Jewishness and Zionism. In 1970 the magazine reprinted a two-part article on “Jews and Revolution,” by Israeli historian Yaakov Talmon emphasizing the role that Jews, whether identified as such or not, had played in various world revolutions. For these Jewish revolutionaries, he argued, “Social Justice is the unwavering North, the prophetic concern, the common preoccupation, the vision they had for a world always better for a new man.”¹² To *Raíces*, however, a reinvigoration of Zionism was the crucial component of any rejuvenation of the Argentine Jewish community and this new Zionism would have to resonate with young Argentines who increasingly embraced a Third-World identity. Countering the Soviet line that Israel was a bastion of imperialism while the Arab countries were “progressive,” an assertion that had also become increasingly common among the New Left, *Raíces* consistently framed Zionism as the national liberation movement of the Jews and tried to emphasize the power of the Israeli left, the Israeli labor movement, and the Israeli communist party.¹³ While Rozitchner took a critical stance towards Israel by defining it as a right-wing state (albeit with a legitimate left), *Raíces* and other voices from the organized Jewish community preferred to emphasize the leftist qualities of the nation. Responding explicitly to the attraction of the New Left for young Jews, *Raíces* published an article on Jewish Identity and the New Left in late 1969. It argued that Jews who partook in the anti-Zionism of the New Left were misguided in their assumption that only the Arabs were engaged in a struggle for national liberation.¹⁴

As much as youth activists were attuned to trends in Argentina, this was not an exclusively local process, and youth activists grappled with definitions of Jewishness and Zionism coming from other parts of the diaspora in their process of redefinition. The youth

¹⁰ Eliahu Toker, “Un movimiento que se estanca es un movimiento que se pudre,” *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, January/March, 1969, e4.

¹¹ “Informe especial: Crisis de la identidad judía en la Argentina,” *Raíces*, December, 1969, 80-85.

¹² “Los judíos y la revolución,” *Raíces*, Testimonio 14, January, 1970,

¹³ In the “letter to the reader” in the first issue of *Raíces*, the editorial team discussed Zionism as a national liberation movement and said that one of the goals of the magazine was to show similarities and differences with other national liberation movements (“Carta al lector,” *Raíces*, October 1968, 5); For reporting on Israeli communism see “Conferencia del Comunismo Israelí,” *Raíces*, November 1968, 71; On participation of the workers confederation, see “Histadrut, La participación obrera,” *Raíces*, April 1969, 66-8; “Delegación de la Histadrut,” *Raíces*, October, 1970, 82.

¹⁴ The same article also argued that what the Jew of the New Left did not understand was that only through Zionism could Jewishness cease to be a negative mark on ones identity. It was the normalization offered by Zionism that allowed the Jew of the left to “integrate himself into modern society and also be a radical if he wanted to.” This, Lam contended, was more important than the details of who started the Six-Day War, or how Israel treated Arab citizens. (Tzvi Lam, “Identidad judía y nueva izquierda (conclusion),” *Raíces*,” November 1969, 76-8). See also, Tzvi Lam, “La nueva izquierda y la identidad judía,” *Raíces*, October 1969, 88-90.

particularly admired the Tunisian writer, Albert Memmi, and his theorizing on Jewish identity and Zionism, given how connected his understanding of both were to post-colonial struggles. *Nueva Sión*'s adoration of him began in 1962 when he visited Israel, and then continued as he published his most famous work in the later 1960s.¹⁵ In May 1969 *Raíces* published a piece by Simja Sneh, the magazine's director, in which he recounted highlights from an interview he had conducted with Memmi. To Memmi, the Jewish problem was quite similar to the problem of the colonized man, and the Jewish nation was similar to other colonized peoples. Simja Sneh quoted Memmi's assertion that "To be a Jew...means understanding most of all the need to liberate oneself from oppression. This aspect is common to other oppressed peoples."¹⁶ In these regards, Memmi served as a Frantz Fanon for the specifically Jewish question and was highly prized by various Jewish youth periodicals.

Jewish radicalism in the United States, meanwhile, failed in the eyes of the writers of *Raíces* in that Zionism was not a central element. Art Green's *Response* magazine might compare psychedelic drugs and Kabala, or the Talmud and Buddhism, but it failed to make the case for Israel. The Rabbi at Temple Emanu-el on Fifth Avenue in New York City might have organized a protest against the Vietnam War, but this only showed *Raíces* that "the Jewish radicals look for God, but not in Jerusalem."¹⁷ This critique of American radical Jewish organizations reveals a certain anti-American bias common among leftist Latin Americans, but it also points to how the different national contexts shaped the responses to Jewish youth choosing radicalism over Judaism. In both instances, the goal was to emphasize that Jewish identity could be compatible with the leftist cause, but in the United States this meant framing it as compatible with community organizing, Vietnam protests, and counter-culture, whereas in Argentina it meant emphasizing the national and territorial element so as to paint it as compatible with nationalist, third-world liberation causes.

That Zionism was a legitimate member of the third world revolutionary movements was a frequent refrain among the Zionist movements themselves. In September 1969, *Raíces* transcribed many of the comments from a roundtable discussion with members of various Zionist pioneering groups. In response to the magazine's question of whether the values of *jalutziano* groups (those intent on making *Aliyah* and settling on the Kibbutz), could be an attractive alternative to youth who were attracted to "new ideological currents," Mario from the socialist-Zionist group *Dror* noted that these ideological currents were present among the pioneering movements, while Pedro of *Jazit Hanoar* noted that "we do not see ourselves competing with the new ideological trends, but rather as one more, a national and Jewish one, within them."¹⁸ Similarly, when *Raíces* held a roundtable with members of Baderej, a Sephardic socialist-Zionist youth movement, it asked about how the movement was connected to the rebellion of the youth in the "New Left" and the hippie movement. One participant, Enrique, explained, "not only are we included in the general rebellion, but the revolution influences us directly also, through particular people and revolutionary actions."¹⁹

¹⁵ "En busca de una identidad perdida," *Nueva Sión*, November 17, 1962, 8; "Albert Memmi, luego de visitar Israel: "Israel normalizara la condición judía," *Nueva Sión*, November 30, 1962, 2; "Polémica, dos escritores judíos acusan a la izquierda-II," *Nueva Sión*, April 7, 1967, 8; Albert Memmi, "El judío y la Revolución," *Nueva Sión*, August 25, 1967, 6-8; Albert Memmi, "El 'mayo francés' y los judíos," *Nueva Sión*, August 22, 1969, 8-9.

¹⁶ Simja Sneh, "Albert Memmi, el retrato de un judío," *Raíces*, May 1969, 40-42.

¹⁷ Rafael Rotschtein, "La nueva izquierda y la juventud judía en estados unidos," *Raíces*, August-September, 1970, 67-70.

¹⁸ "Movimientos jalutzianos: Los problemas de una vanguardia," *Raíces*, September 1969, 72-74.

¹⁹ "Baderej, nuestra manera de hacer la revolución," *Raíces*, April, 1970, 72-73.

These discussions highlight the efforts among youth to reconcile their own attachment to the New Left in Argentina, but also work towards Jewish cohesion by convincing other young Jews who found the allegiances incompatible. The efforts to respond to attacks from the New Left on Israel, the Jewish community, or Zionism offered another opportunity to cultivate the new tropes. As early as February 1968, *Nueva Sión* put out a publication entitled, “*Israel, Un tema para la izquierda*” (“Israel, a theme for the left”), in which it recognized the hostility towards Israel from some corners of the left, but highlighted all the progressive intellectuals who *had* supported Israel during the Six-Day War in Argentina and internationally, dedicating significant time to Sartre’s position that Israel had a right to exist, was a legitimate national liberation movement, and was an anti-Imperialist advance in the region.²⁰ *Nueva Sión* was also at the forefront of the efforts to respond to Andrés Framini’s 1971 letter that claimed that Argentines committed to national liberation needed to combat Zionism and framed Zionist Jews as the enemy not only of the Palestinians, but also of the Argentine nation. *Nueva Sión* argued that the birth of the Palestinian and Israeli nation came about at the same time, that both nations were legitimate members of the third world, and that it was unjust to think of one as imperialistic given that both were the result of decolonization.²¹

Finally, they capitalized on this trope to rework public opinion on the Israeli Palestinian conflict in Argentine society. The *Frente Sionista de Vanguardia* issued a flyer in 1972 extracting quotes from Arab news outlets that supported terrorism against Israel and against Jews. One example was Radio Aatzifa of Cairo, which responded to a May 1972 terrorist attack at Tel Aviv’s Lod airport by lauding the “greatness of those *Muchachos*” who carried out the attack and compared their “greatness” to that of the “Palestinian cause.” The flyer then went on to ask rhetorically: “Is this an example of the humanism of a national liberation movement??? Is it possible that the essence of the existence of the so-called movement of Palestine liberation, lies in the extermination of another nation?”²² This rhetoric, fundamentally used to validate Israel, did to an extent validate the Palestinian cause as legitimate. Nonetheless, it was not until somewhat later that actual denunciations of Israeli policy, or a more serious engagement with the Palestinian cause, would emerge.

Growing Uniformity of Discourse

While the young voices saw themselves as counteracting the unimaginative discourse of the establishment, the establishment was actually not far behind in adopting this new discourse. In the months surrounding the Six-Day War, the DAIA, along with the AMIA and OSA, still framed Israel as a free and democratic state whose well being was important for the whole free world. In a statement issued by the three institutions, they denounced the Soviet Union for instigating the war and noted “the healthy conscience of the civilized world knows that the future of the free world is in jeopardy with the conflict in Israel. Either the survival of ethical values, or amoral and calculating totalitarianism.”²³ When advocating for the Jewish community, the DAIA

²⁰ “El dilema de la izquierda Ante el conflicto árabe-israelí,” *Raíces*, November 1968, 93-4.

²¹ “Solicitada,” *Informativo DAIA*, #30, October 1971, 9.

²² “Frente Sionista de Vanguardia, los asesinos se regocijan por la sangre derramada,” 1972, Archivo IWO, Box Betar/Likud.

²³ “La Unión Soviética--principal culpable de la sangre derramada en el Medio Oriente,” *La Luz*, June 30, 1967, 27.

did so in essentially liberal terms, by emphasizing that all people deserved basic human rights and that all forms of discrimination reflected some sort of pathology in society. On the occasion of the *Día de los Derechos Humanos* (Human Rights Commemoration Day), the DAIA published an “*adhesión*” (adherence) stating that “Peace can only be based on justice and it fundamentally consists in the recognition of the essential rights of the person: life, liberty, and security, without any distinction based on race, color, religion or national origin.”²⁴

By 1970, however, with the growing recognition of the challenges posed by the increasingly powerful New Left, the leaders of the central institutions came to frame Israel, Zionism, and Jewishness much in the same way as the youth. The national liberation framework emerged often to counter arguments that Israel was imperialistic and too closely aligned with the United States. In 1970, Nehemías Resnizky, then vice president of the DAIA, highlighted the illegitimacy and tragedy of a recent terrorist attack on a plane from Zurich to Israel, by explaining that “The Zionist movement, authentic movement of national liberation, liberated the land of Israel from the colonial yoke.”²⁵ In response to Framini’s 1971 letter, the DAIA published its own letter in *La Nación* that debunked the accusations that Israel was aggressive and imperialistic, and ended by saying that “It seems to us, that after centuries of indescribable persecution the moment arrived for the Jewish nation’s struggle for national liberation to be recognized.”²⁶

As Chapter Three noted, by 1966 the DAIA had transcended its traditional focus on the “external front” and begun to turn its attention to the problem of youth assimilation. This became a mainstay in the DAIA’s proceeding in the next years, as the leaders worked to develop a vocabulary that would resonate with youth. León Pérez called for conversations on Marxism and Biafra within the context of the Jewish community at the 1969 DAIA convention, as mentioned in the previous chapter, and he also critiqued the community for offering little more than “repetition and rehashing of propagandistic speeches.”²⁷ By the DAIA convention in 1972 the manner of self-presentation had indeed begun to look similar to the youths, playing on the revolutionary tropes of the moment. Lázaro Schallman, who had directed the AMIA’s Department of Youth in the early 1960s, called for advertising that biblical prophets advocated social justice and that biblical agrarian law were quite just.²⁸ Nehemías Resnizky, meanwhile, discussed the Jewish community had always been non-conformist and that the prophets were a rebellion against the status quo.²⁹

²⁴ “Adhesión de la DAIA al Día de los Derechos Humanos,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 9, 1967, 3. The discussion of human rights and discrimination, moreover, extended beyond the recognized day of commemoration. In 1967, the DAIA’s *Centro de Estudios Sociales* (Center of Social Studies) began publishing its scholarly journal, which focused on various forms of discrimination across the world. The first issue included articles on antisemitism in the Black community in the United States, “Ethnocentrism and Anti-Semitism,” Apartheid in South Africa, as well as ones on Middle East politics and the reaction of Argentines to the Six-Day War (*Indice, Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, Year 1, #1, December, 1967).

²⁵ “La DAIA organizó una protesta contra el terrorismo árabe,” *DAIA Boletín de Informaciones*, #19, April 1970, 12.

²⁶ “Solicitada,” *Informativo DAIA*, #30, October 1971, 9. Similarly, the 62 Organizations of Bahía Blanca (a confederation of unions) issued a statement blaming Argentina’s problems “on those who have systematically handed over the sovereignty of our nation to imperialism, to colonialism and to international Zionism.” Abraham Shienes of the DAIA responded that national liberation of all the nations had always been a goal of Zionism (Bahía Blanca: DAIA rechazó conceptos de las 62 organizaciones,” *Informativo DAIA*, # 27, September 15, 1971, 10).

²⁷ “La convención territorial de Mar Del Plata,” *DAIA Boletín de Informaciones*, #17, October 1969, 13-14.

²⁸ Lázaro Schallman, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 46.

²⁹ Nehemías Resnizky, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 23.

In keeping with another trend initiated by youth publications, the DAIA published an essay by Albert Memmi in its *Informativo* in 1973 (*Nueva Sión* and *Raíces* had run articles on him in 1960s).³⁰ It noted that Memmi's book 'Portrait of a Jew' should be "in the head of every Jew who lived Judaism in a proud or conflictive state," and that it was specifically "the Jewish Argentines, those who have grown up in the nation, that have a concrete connection with the Jew in Albert Memmi's 'Portrait.'" In an effort to associate the piece even further with national liberation struggles, and offer Memmi authenticity, the DAIA noted that Memmi "has not been influenced by 'fashionable' trends," as his "Portrait of Colonizer," had been written even before the works of Franz Fanon appeared. While the *DAIA Informativo* recognized that its readership was just the members of the institution and therefore it did not have mass diffusion among the youth, the publication hoped that "the children of the leaders that receive our pages, will find the necessary arguments to clarify their Jewish identity with respect to the concrete problematic that the Jewish people live currently."³¹

The newspaper *Mundo Israelita*, meanwhile, is perhaps the clearest example of an embrace of ethno-radicalism within the establishment.³² Responding particularly to the increasingly strained relationship between Israel and the third world, *Mundo Israelita* instituted a recurring section beginning in 1969 entitled "*Israel y el Tercer Mundo*." These short blurbs recounted different instances of aid Israel offered to various countries of the third world, including Latin America, and portrayed Israel as a model for radical reform.³³ Moreover, in late 1969 *Mundo Israelita* also employed the description of Zionism as the national liberation movement of the Jews in an article discussing the problem of politicized assimilation.³⁴ Much as the youth groups framed themselves as part of the revolution, *Mundo Israelita* also tried to make clear that there were revolutionary opportunities within the Jewish community, particularly

³⁰ Simja Sneh, "Albert Memmi, El retrato de un judío," *Raíces*, May 1969, 40-42; *Nueva Sión* actually ran his reflections on Israel in 1962 ("Albert Memmi, luego de visitar Israel: 'Israel normalizara la condición judía,'" *Nueva Sión*, November 30, 1962, 2) and then several others in the late 1960s including "El judío y la revolución" on April 25, 1967 and "El 'mayo francés' y los judíos," on August 22, 1969, 8-9.

³¹ "Lucido ensayo de Albert Memmi sobre Israel y el tercer mundo." *Informativo DAIA*, #59, May 15, 1973, 17.

³² From 1961 on, the local branch of the Mapai party, the most powerful party in Israel and in Argentine communal politics, owned *Mundo Israelita*. When Mapai in Israel fused with other labor parties to form the Labor party in 1968, the Argentine branches of the parties followed suit and the local branch of the Labor party became the owner of *Mundo Israelita*. Moreover, the leadership of both the newspaper and the AMIA was one in the same during this period. Gregorio Fainguerh, for example, served as the president of the AMIA and the editor of *Mundo Israelita* over the course of the 1960s and early 1970s (though not simultaneously) (" 'Mundo Israelita' ha sido adquirido por MAPAI," *Mundo Israelita*, August 25, 1961, 21; "Se acoge a al jubilación el doctor León Dujovne," *Mundo Israelita*, February 3, 1968, 2).

³³ The paper quoted former Guatemalan reformist president, Juan José Arévalo, who had just visited Israel: "the authentically revolutionary forces of the world have not accepted the distortion that Israel is pro-imperialist" ("De semana en semana," *Mundo Israelita*, December 20, 1969, 2). In March 1970 in the same section of the paper, *Mundo Israelita* recognized that there was a controversy surrounding the governments of Peru and Bolivia because revolutionary change was coming from above, but lauded the radical changes in both nations including the nationalization of Gulf Oil, agrarian reform, and an independent foreign policy. The paper then pointed out that two Israelis had helped in this process, particularly with founding agrarian cooperatives ("De semana en semana," *Mundo Israelita*, March 7, 1970, 2).

³⁴ "De semana en semana," *Mundo Israelita*, December 6, 1969, 2. The use of the phrase National Liberation Movement was also employed frequently at the Labor Party's World Ideological Conference in 1970, pointing to the international use of the discourse within the party the owned *Mundo Israelita*. Louis Pincus, an Israeli delegate, noted that "Actually it is only in recent years that we have resuscitated this term in order to give the youth some understanding of what we really are," (Bet Berl and World Labour Zionist Movement., *World Ideological Conference, Beit Berl, 5-10 August 1970*. (Tel-Aviv, World Labour Zionist Movement, 1971), 393.

within the paper's own party (the local branch of the Israeli Labor Party). As part of its reporting on the Argentine Labor party convention in 1969, it printed the reflection of Avraham Mittelberg, secretary general of the party, who argued that socialist Zionist ideology could be offered as an option "to counteract the harmful influences of separatist ideological currents that seduce some sectors of our youth."³⁵ Whereas *Mundo Israelita* had never before emphasized the socialist component of its socialist Zionist ideology when discussing anything related to Argentine politics, the picture had changed.

That the editors endorsed the message of activist Jewish youth was clearest in a new weekly section entitled "*Aquí, La Juventud*" that appeared in the paper beginning in 1970. The new section profiled various Jewish youth, asking many of them to make the case for Judaism and Zionism's leftist credentials. Some of these youth were active in Jewish youth groups, and promoted the line of those groups. Others were students at the university or professionals who had more casual relationships with Jewish institutions. In interviewing one young cantor in 1971, *Mundo Israelita* asked him why he was referred to as the "Cantor of the third world" (*Jazán del tercer mundo*), giving him the opportunity to explain that he was involved with the struggle against underdevelopment and that he thought that Jewish liturgy was quite compatible with that struggle.³⁶ Rather than resisting the constructs of Jewishness and Zionism the youth proposed, the newspaper made efforts to disseminate them and even used youth themselves as the spokespeople to make the discourse more credible.

While the older generation adopted much of the discourse the youth had pioneered, there were some key differences. As early as 1969, some youth voices began referring to Zionism as the movement of "national and social liberation of the Jewish people," making clear that to them the movement they supported was not just about self-determination but also socialist revolution.³⁷ This formulation was far less common among the older generation. By 1973, another important schism was emerging. That year the CJJA expressed concern about Israel's foreign policy and introduced a new platform, "For Jewish national and social liberation; for the self-determination of the Palestinian nation," thereby adding the Palestinian cause to its platform for the first time.³⁸ According to CJJA president Marcelo Schottlender, the constituent groups were on board with this position, minus the right-wing youth group Betar (affiliated with the conservative and expansionist revisionist movement in Israel), which had been alienated from the increasingly left-wing mainstream of the CJJA for the past two years.³⁹ Similarly, a CJJA flyer hung at the community-wide event in 1973 to commemorate the ghetto uprising, called for national and social liberation as well as direct dialogue between the Arabs and Israelis.⁴⁰

³⁵ "3 opiniones sobre el zionismo en la hora actual," *Mundo Israelita*, December 6, 1969, 9

³⁶ "Aquí, la juventud," *Mundo Israelita*, January 6, 1971, 12.

³⁷ "Juventud judía: conciencia de su propio destino," *Nueva Sión*, October 7, 1969, 3. "Un invierno caliente?" *Hapeil (El militante)*, Year 1, #3, July 1971, 3 (Archivo IWO, Box: Tnuot, Folder Hashomer Hazair 1951-52-84-55-71); "El judaísmo argentino conmemoró solemnemente el 30o aniversario del heroico levantamiento del gueto de Varsovia," *Informativo DAIA* #59, May 15, 1973, 7-8; "Un volante de la CJJA, por nuestra y vuestra libertad," *Informativo DAIA* #59, May 15, 1973, 7-8;

³⁸ "Entrevista con el secretario de la CJJA, Marcelo Schottlender," 1973, Centro de Documentación Mark Turkow, Box 8.

³⁹ "Entrevista con el secretario de la CJJA."

⁴⁰ "Un volante de la CJJA, Por nuestra y vuestra libertad," *Informativo DAIA*, #59, May 15, 1973, 8.

As the youth refashioned the meanings of Jewishness and Zionism in the first years after the Six-Day War, they thought of their efforts as a rebellion against the establishment. Their role as innovators has to be understood as rooted in their understanding of themselves as rebels as well as their earlier attunement to the challenges posed by the New Left. For the older generation, meanwhile, it was only when political protest erupted and the New Left gained force in society more broadly that the new challenges became so clear and pressing. Ultimately, for both generations, the commitment to Zionism, sympathy for the left in Argentina, and the particular challenges posed by the New Left motivated the self-conscious efforts to stress the compatibility of leftist and Jewish values, to re-cast Zionism as a national liberation movement, and to highlight the options for involving oneself in the revolution within the context of the Jewish community. These tropes formed the core of ethno-radicalism in these years and by the early 1970s. Even within this framework, there was significant room for division and debate. As suggested above, by 1972, the youth had again found a way to take a bolder stance with their emphasis on the Palestinian rights. The following section turns to other key points of generational division, some real and some imagined, that unfolded surrounding the finer points of ethno-radicalism.

Aliyah and the Revolutionary Vanguard

In July 1969 a representative from the Zionist, Aliyah-oriented movement *Hajalutz-Lamerjav* wrote a letter to the editor of *Raíces* complaining that the movement received too little support from the community's central institutions. This forced the young Zionists to work in ramshackle buildings, without psychologists and educators, and without funds for a library. In a note following the letter, the editors of *Raíces* claimed the struggle of these pioneering movements against the establishment as its own.⁴¹ A month later at the "1969 DAIA Rebellion," the question of Aliyah became central: youth activists harangued the establishment for not adequately promoting immigration to Israel. In reporting on the DAIA convention *Raíces* editorialized,

Judging by the applause that exploded loudly after every exposition of the youth delegates, one could presume that the day after the convention, held at the beginning of last August in Mar del Plata, all of the delegates would get on a flight directly for Israel, to carry out in practice what the youth called for and, most of all, personal Aliyah. We have thought it appropriate to begin this article with this perhaps ironic observation to stress the contradiction between the high-sounding verbiage that predominated in our community and our reality.⁴²

The tension highlighted in *Raíces*, of young people supporting immigration to Israel and the failure of the "establishment" to support them adequately, became the most contentious and symbolic conflict between the two generations in the years after 1969.

The centrality of questions about Aliyah were at least in part due to increased fervency for ideological Zionism after the Six-Day War and Israel's push to encourage Aliyah at that juncture. Nonetheless, the issue only became explosive in 1969, signaling the importance of the

⁴¹ "Cartas de lectores," *Raíces* July 1969, 4-5.

⁴² "Convención DAIA 1969, tema central: la juventud," *Raíces*, September 1969, 82.

processes unfolding in Argentina and within the local Jewish community. For the members of Zionist youth groups described as “*jalutziano*” (pioneering) or “*realizador*” (actualizing), being a true Zionist revolutionary meant having a date set to make Aliyah, the true act of self-realization. Nonetheless, as the discourse of Aliyah became increasingly ubiquitous in the next years and was embraced by many young people who had little intention to leave, it came to stand for much more than actual immigration to Israel. A close reading of the debates surrounding Aliyah suggests that the youth’s position was often more about creating a radical version of Zionism compatible with revolutionary politics in Argentina than actual immigration.

The Vanguard and the Bourgeoisie

If Zionism was becoming increasingly framed and understood as a revolutionary movement, young Jews were to be the first-line combatants and make Aliyah. The older generation, as far as these youth activists were concerned, was more concerned with their bourgeois interests and preserving life in the diaspora than in promoting mass immigration to Israel. In an interview with *Raíces* in March 1970, a 19-year-old about to spend a year in Israel, claimed that the difficulty in promoting Aliyah was that “Jewish-Argentine community belongs in general to the middle class and up and to make Aliyah is to decide to change one’s status and location.”⁴³ For the members of Juventud Anilevich, a leftist Zionist group associated with Hashomer Hatzair, the members of the establishment chose their class interests in Argentina over the national interests of the Jewish people, a critique premised on the idea that their socio-economic standing would decline if they were to relocate.⁴⁴ Yet another activist described found various hypocrisies in the behavior of the establishment, “failing to make Aliyah personally despite Zionist declarations, to engaging in projects to build more and more buildings to perpetuate the diaspora in the country.”⁴⁵ *Nueva Sión* went so far as to place the Zionists “in name” of the establishment, as among the “anti-Zionist” groups that the Aliyah-oriented groups had to confront.⁴⁶

Given this opposition, the youth groups defined themselves repeatedly as the vanguard of the national liberation movement, responsible for undoing the unhealthy tendencies of the establishment. One youth activist, a member of the group *Dror*, explicitly linked their work to all other vanguards in that they all faced “the lack of economic and moral support from the community.”⁴⁷ In Córdoba, a group of *realizadora* youth actually succeeded in taking over the local OSA, and placing a 21-year-old at the helm. The new president, Eduardo Danilovich, claimed their control to be necessary if the institution was to truly encourage actualizing Zionism and to “redefine the basic premises not to change them but to adapt them to the current era, understanding that Zionism is a movement of liberation and its content should be progressive.”⁴⁸ Similarly, in 1973, one member of Hanoar Hazoni described *jalutziano* movement as “a revolutionary challenge to the ‘establishment’ and a ‘head-on’ change in the life of the youth.”

⁴³ “Una experiencia en Israel,” *Raíces*, March 1970, 65-66.

⁴⁴ *Hapeil (El militante)*, Year 1, #3, July 1971, 11, Archivo IWO, Box: Tnuot, Folder Hashomer Hazair 1951-52-84-55-71).

⁴⁵ “Comunidad Judía, El ‘establishment’ y los rebeldes,” *Raíces*, July 1970, page 62-3. A member from *Dror* also accused the establishment of preferring to build buildings to supporting *jalutziano* groups.

⁴⁶ “5729-5730, al fuego de la liberación,” *Nueva Sión*, October 7, 1969, 2.

⁴⁷ “Movimientos *jalutzianos*: los problemas de una vanguardia,” *Raíces*, September 1969, 72-74.

⁴⁸ “Córdoba,” *La Luz*, December 24, 1971, 24-5.

He focused his attention on the AMIA, whose educational events had no ability to attract youth and were “more like balloons launched into the air to cover, with a paltry effort, the lack of content in these supposed ‘activities.’”⁴⁹

This self-defined vanguard also assumed the responsibility of educating other youth about Aliyah, recruiting them into their struggle, and thereby offering a revolutionary option within the Jewish community to those attracted to the Argentine left. In 1971, a coalition of Zionist youth groups, “identified with the Zionism of the Vanguard,” opened the *Escuela Ideológica Ber Borojov* (Ber Borojov Ideological School).⁵⁰ The name stressed the common reverence for Ber Borojov, the socialist-Zionist thinker of the early 20th century, who offered a class-based analysis for the fundamental abnormality of the diaspora.⁵¹ This was a project, which attracted approximately 200 students, meant particularly to reach the “progressive Jewish youth who are today estranged from the Jewish national struggle and interested in discussing their doubts.” When *Raíces* asked the leadership of the school why another educational institution was needed, one organizer responded that “a large number of the communal educational institutions do not educate on the concrete reality, and do not show that the only liberating option is Aliyah.” So as to avoid being compromised by “non-Zionists and Zionists in word only, who have tried to sabotage this initiative,” the school founders decided to maintain absolute financial independence even though the costs were high.”⁵²

The Older Generation and the “Cult of the Diaspora”

The ubiquity of these critiques and a push from Israel for Aliyah after the Six-Day War combined to bring the question to the forefront of communal discussions within the establishment institutions as well. Promoting massive Aliyah entered prominently into the conversation at the 1968 DAIA. While *Raíces* and some youth observers found the support for Aliyah hollow at the 1969 convention, the commitment to Aliyah on the part of some key players seemed quite genuine. León Pérez, a member of Mapam who had been the most prescient voice on the politicization of youth at the 1961 Conference, argued that the members of *jalutziano* youth groups were themselves as hypocritical as the older generation in calling for Aliyah but not actually leaving and that much of the weakness in the Zionist movement was the responsibility of these young people. He admonished,

Do not say that it is because you do not have funds. Do not say that it is because the institutions do not support you. This is not true. Never have you been supported this much. You cannot hide the internal weakness of the youth movement by blaming the leaders. Perhaps one of the mistakes of the leaders is not confronting the youth with their own faults.⁵³

⁴⁹ “Aquí, la juventud,” *Mundo Israelita*, July 7, 1973, 16.

⁵⁰ In English, the name of the Zionist thinker is spelled Ber Borochov, but for consistency with Jewish activists in Argentina, I will refer to him as Borojov.

⁵¹ David Joshua Engel, *Zionism*, (Harlow, England; New York: Pearson/Longman, 2009), 64–65. For a collection of his work, see Ber Borochov, *Nationalism and the Class Struggle: a Marxian Approach to the Jewish Problem; Selected Writings* (Poale Zion-Zeire Zion of America and Young Poale Zion Alliance of America, 1972).

⁵² “Ber Borojov, la escuela del conocimiento clandestino,” *Raíces*, May, 1971, Page 70.

⁵³ “La convención territorial de Mar del Plata,” *DAIA Boletín de Informaciones*, #17, October, 1969, 14.

Former leader of the DAIA Isaac Goldenberg, who himself would make Aliyah only a few years later, was less critical of the youth, and credited them with forcing the central institution to face their contradictions.⁵⁴ While he noted that the *jalutziano* youth were only a minority, he contended that they should be the leading path for the rest; as it stood the community mistakenly built opulent buildings, or “golden tombs” rather than creating a true movement towards Aliyah. At the behest of DAIA president Gregorio Faigón the institution approved a resolution encouraging all central institutions to support the Aliyah-oriented youth, the “vanguard of the Jewish people,” both financially and morally.⁵⁵

By the 1972 DAIA convention, calls for Aliyah reflected the interplay between the aftermath of the Six-Day War across the diaspora and the deepening revolutionary foment in Argentina. Goldenberg, now the president of the *Congreso Judío Latinoamericano* (CJL) encouraged the approval of the “Jerusalem Program,” which had been approved at the 27th World Zionist Conference in 1969. This program represented a significant shift in policy for that entity in its call for Aliyah from all countries.⁵⁶ In arguing on behalf of this program, Goldenberg called for fighting against the “cult of the diaspora” (*culto de la diáspora*). He went on to credit the Six-Day War with awakening a consciousness of common destiny for Jews across the diaspora, “Because every Jew in the diaspora felt that he, personally, would be irredeemably conquered...if the war had been lost thousands of kilometers from Buenos Aires.”⁵⁷ Hugo Golber, of Rosario, linked these international events with the particular political climate in Argentina, given that antisemitism from the right and left had become more acute after that juncture. This left Jews in a precarious position whereby “not even our ideological consciousness, nor our understanding of the process of change can ensure a tranquil future for the community.”⁵⁸ These sentiments did not suggest an ideological commitment to Aliyah, but rather a sense of helplessness in the face of the challenges posed by the New Left. DAIA Secretary General Nehemías Resnizky, meanwhile, embraced a goal of effecting change, but claimed that it was only in Israel where Jews could truly “decide their destiny.”⁵⁹

The dominance of the Aliyah rhetoric is perhaps best gauged by the tendency of dissenting voices to first contend with the default Aliyah position before staking another claim. In Marcos Korenhendler’s appeal for improvements in Jewish education, this meant explicitly countering those who believed such improvements were a “way of moving against Zionism and against Aliyah.” Massive Aliyah, or the “evacuation or liquidation of *ishuvim* (communities),” he argued further, “has not been decreed by our enemies or our friends, or by us.”⁶⁰ Others questioned whether massive Aliyah was actually realistic. Gregorio Markowski positioned himself in favor of Aliyah, but went on to acknowledge that 99.8% of world Jewry was not going to relocate. For the Jews who were bound to stay in the Diaspora, “I believe that it is the

⁵⁴ “La convención territorial de Mar del Plata,” 25.

⁵⁵ “La convención territorial de Mar del Plata,” 26-7; “Convención DAIA 1969, tema central: la juventud,” *Raíces*, September 1969, 82.

⁵⁶ Earlier conventions of the World Zionist Organization in 1951 and 1960, had framed Aliyah as an individual choice, for fear of alienating diaspora Jews, especially in the United States. In 1969, meanwhile, Israeli Zionists were emboldened by the Six-Day War and included a call for the “ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland...through *Aliyah* from all countries, the strengthening of the State of Israel” (Engel, *Zionism*, 160–161). See also Moshe Davis, *Zionism in Transition* (Ayer Publishing, 1980), 275–6.

⁵⁷ Isaac Goldenberg, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 10.

⁵⁸ Hugo Golber, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 15-16.

⁵⁹ Nehemías Resnizky, *Informativo DAIA* #50/51, 24.

⁶⁰ Marcos Korenhendler, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 48,

responsibility of the leaders to not abandon them.”⁶¹ In the end, at Goldenberg’s behest the DAIA did approve the Jerusalem Program. Despite the attacks lodged at the establishment on the issue of Aliyah, the many arguments in favor of it at the DAIA did not seem to be merely defensive or even a direct response to the critiques of the young people. Instead, and not dissimilarly from the youth, they reflected a post-1967 fervency for supporting Israel via immigration, a reckoning with the challenges posed to Jews in the revolutionary climate, and even an undercurrent of the notion that Aliyah was the fundamental way for Jews to engage in the revolutionary moment.

Aliyah, a Rallying Call

To the youth, these increasingly common discussions from within the establishment institutions fell for the most part into the category of empty rhetoric. This was at least in part because the question of Aliyah was becoming reified among the youth as the stark dividing line between generations. This was exemplified by the fact that even youth involved in the Conservative synagogue Bet El, which was undoubtedly pro-Israel but did not have a pro-Aliyah stance, began to articulate the same disdain for older generation who preached Aliyah but did not carry it out themselves.⁶² The mainstreaming of the discourse can also be seen in the shifting position of the CJJA. In 1968, the organizations’ publication, *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, contended that Aliyah made sense ideologically but was essentially a personal choice.⁶³ Over the next years, the question of Aliyah became more charged and prominent. In 1969 Alberto Senderey, a leader of the CJJA, reported to *Mundo Israelita* that the institution did not like the “Dualism” of declaring oneself Zionist without making Aliyah that was common among the establishment and boasted that their was changeover in their leadership each year as youth activists left for Israel.⁶⁴ At the community-wide commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1972, Rafi Milberg spoke on behalf of the CJJA and denounced antisemitism and anti-Zionism from various corners, he announced: “We should stop playing the game of the society that surrounds us, stop taking on the character of the dispersed and oppressed minority, and instead take on the character of the vanguard of the hope to normalize a nation that wants to live in all its intensity, with the valiant agreement of all Jews to commit to: ALIYAH.”⁶⁵ Given that the CJJA was a confederation of various institutions, this transition towards a more combative pro-Aliyah stance suggests a significant shift on the topic within the youth organizations in general.

⁶¹ Isaac Chomer, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 36. Few were bold enough to come out as not valuing Aliyah oriented Zionism. Kovadloff, who was the director of the local office of the AJC, an organization that, like its American counterpart, had never taken issue with diasporic Judaism as a concept, invited everyone “to walk firmly and securely in South America but with a heart that never leaves Jerusalem,” (Jacobo Kovadloff, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 52).

⁶² “Aquí, la juventud,” *Mundo Israelita*, November 21, 1970, 17.

⁶³ Ernesto Grimblat, “No idolatrar las instituciones,” *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, September/October, 1968, c3.

⁶⁴ “Nuestras instituciones por dentro, Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 30, 1969, 6.

⁶⁵ “Sentido Homenaje a los héroes del ghetto de Varsovia,” *Informativo DAIA*, #38, April 15, 1972, 7. Beyond discourse, in 1973, the CJJA created a *Frente Sionista Realizador* with *Horim* and *Tnuat Aliyah*, contending that everyone must see Aliyah as a concrete goal and the only true militancy. *Horim* was an organization that brought together people who had children in Jewish schools; *Tnuat Aliyah* was an organization oriented towards encouraging Aliyah sponsored by the Jewish Agency (“Entrevista con el secretario de la CJJA, Marcelo Schottlender,” 1973, Centro de Documentación Mark Turkow, Box 8).

The calls for Aliyah, however, went beyond just an ideological position championed by more and more youth groups, and became institutionalized as a protest mantra of the youth in this period. While chanting “Aliyah, Aliyah,” became commonplace at various communal events,⁶⁶ the most controversial invocation of that mantra was at an event commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1971. When a Holocaust survivor who lived in Israel began speaking in Yiddish, the response of some youth in the crowd was to interrupt him with the chant, as had become traditional at communal events when speakers used Yiddish.⁶⁷ Many of the press outlets issued scathing critiques of this behavior.⁶⁸ Even to *Raíces*, one of the organs most supportive of the *jalutziano* cause, these young people were acting out of ignorance and generational conflict. Their actions were particularly incomprehensible “if we take into account that the *jalutziano* youth truly heading towards Aliyah rarely take part in these incidents, but rather precisely those that yell “Aliyah” stay in the coziness of their parents homes.”⁶⁹ Not only do *Raíces’* comments point to the absorption of the chant by youth who were not actually committed to immigration, but also to the inappropriateness of the slogan for the occasion (the speaker they were protesting with calls for Aliyah was a resident of Israel himself), suggests that the chant was not a reasoned response to an affront on Aliyah-oriented Zionism. Instead, it seemed a discontentment with anything representing the older Jewish generation, this time represented by Yiddish, and a deferral to the standby revolutionary discourse in response.

Indeed, the mantra became so ubiquitous even among youth not necessarily committed to Aliyah that it came to seem empty to some youth. In an interview in *Mundo Israelita’s* “Aquí, la juventud,” one young person critiqued his Zionist peers:

It now seems that if someone is not a Zionist it is like being a *converso* Jew. I will be a Zionist when I am fully convinced that this idea is the just one. For now, what I see in my Zionist friends, many of them my age, is that all they do is talk poorly of the Zionist leaders in our country. Furthermore I was at various events with them and at the end the only ‘theory’ that I heard were the calls of “*Aliá, aliá, la única verdad*” (Aliyah, Aliyah, the only truth), and it seemed like a call of war sung by young people who repeat words and slogans with an element of schizophrenia. I do not want to be a schizophrenic Zionist youth. I want to confront my Jewish condition with serenity.⁷⁰

This detractor pointed not only to the reliance on the chant as a form of protest, rather than

⁶⁶ One youth group wrote in to *Raíces* complaining that Isaac Goldenberg, former president of the DAIA and leader in the *Congreso Judío Latinoamericano* (Latin American Jewish Congress), had called the people who yelled Aliyah at a demonstration for Soviet Jewry “provocateurs of the left.” The youth group wrote that they were in no way provocateurs and asked rhetorically if Goldenberg would refer to members of a kibbutz as such (“Cartas de lectores,” *Raíces*, June 1970, 4). It is worth noting that even though Goldenberg was generally quite supportive of the innovations of the youth, the interruptions of “Aliyah, Aliyah” angered him as plainly provocative.

⁶⁷ Adrian Krupnik has highlighted the hostility of the youth towards Yiddish that continued even though the community was Spanish-speaking for the most part by then. He highlights the Yiddish press’ (*Di Idische Tzeitung*) denunciations when young people interrupted Mark Turkow at an event in 1969. Krupnik analyzes these protests as a manifestation of generational tensions within the community (Adrian Krupnik, “Que les pasa con el ídish a estos ídishes que escuchan a los Beatles y hablan de revolución?” in *Buenos Aires ídish*, ed. Perla Sneh, (Buenos Aires: Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2006), 35-39).

⁶⁸ *Mundo Israelita* referred to these youth as a “guerrilla lingüística,” (De semana en semana,” April 30, 1971, 2; See also Krupnik, “Que les pasa con el ídish a estos ídishes.”

⁶⁹ “La juventud y el ídish,” *Raíces*, May 1971, 74.

⁷⁰ “Aquí, la juventud,” *Mundo Israelita*, January 1, 1972, 14.

something more substantial, but also to the critiques of the establishment that had become common enough to seem clichéd and unsatisfying.

Launching a similar critique were Jews who had been active in Zionist movements in the 1960s who saw the sub-generation that was active in the early 1970s as relying too heavily on the absolutist stance of Aliyah. Another interview in *Mundo Israelita* featured a young man, “pushing thirty,” who had been a writer for “*Horizonte*” between 1964 and 1966, when the Zionist youth newspaper engaged in debates about the place of Zionists in national politics. When asked if Aliyah was the “only authentic possibility,” he responded,

The word only is intolerable and almost racist. I would say that Aliyah is a possibility for those that think that their natural place for the fight of the classes and social revolution is in the Jewish state. For me, it is not, as it is not, in reality, for those—who are eternally rootless—who are half Argentine and half Jewish. These are evidently the “stratospheric Jews” that live on the moon filling their mouth at every moment with the vocabulary of Aliyah. They are a species of Zionist ‘sui generis’ whose rhetorical Aliyah gives them an excuse to close themselves again in the ghetto and not commit to the country they live in.⁷¹

That these critiques came from outside observers rather than the establishment (which was under attack) lends credence to the notion that many activist youth had actually come to rely on calling for Aliyah and critiquing the establishment as the default means of defining themselves as revolutionary.

Within the conversations about Aliyah, serious debates unfolded about whether there was a future for Jews in the diaspora and in Argentina specifically, whether orienting oneself towards Aliyah was the only legitimate way to be a Zionist, and whether the only place Jews could effect change was Israel. Positions on these questions did not fall squarely on generational lines. Nonetheless, obscuring the nuanced diversity among members of different generations were rhetorical tactics on the part of youth, both those deeply committed to Aliyah and those who were not. They framed the divide as starkly between a pro-Aliyah revolutionary youth and a pro-diaspora, bourgeois establishment. Even though the pro-Aliyah discussion was undoubtedly tied to the post-1967 push for Aliyah from Israel and sense of urgency to support Israel, the contention over the issue erupted in Argentina in 1969 and only intensified from there, tying it to the moment of greatest political foment and youth agitation in Argentina. It was in this political context that the question of Aliyah became the single most symbolic issue for various youth groups, even those who were not necessarily intent on emigrating. This apparent contradiction seems rooted in the attraction of youth to a truly revolutionary Zionism but also a deep-rooted attachment to Argentina and the process unfolding there. In fact, it seems that the protests surrounding Aliyah afforded these young people the opportunity to act as rebels within the Argentine Jewish community, but also to prove that the “Zionist path towards revolution” was legitimately revolutionary.⁷² Still, the cumulative effect of this conversation was that by 1973, the general discourse embraced by most Jewish activists, young and old, was that Aliyah was the ideal, and that those who thought otherwise were not only less Zionist but also less revolutionary.

⁷¹ “Aquí, la juventud,” *Mundo Israelita*, September 11, 1971, 12.

⁷² Quote taken from “Baderej, nuestra manera de hacer la revolución,” *Raíces*, April, 1970, 72-73.

A Politicized Community?

At the 1972 DAIA convention, José Itzigsohn, a leader of *Fraie Schtime*, the pro-Israel organization that broke away from the communist party after the Six-Day War, took a forceful stand on the question of whether the Jewish community should, as a community, take a stand in Argentine politics. He warned:

And if we isolate ourselves from solidarity with the forces that make possible the national liberation of the Argentine nation, we will find ourselves isolated from the process, we will find ourselves isolated from our own youth, we will be solidly seen as a foreign element, an odd element, that is at odds with the life of the nation and we will also do a favor for those that maintain the stereotype of Jews not as a nation with its own problems, but rather as a element foreign to the collective life of the nations among which they find themselves.⁷³

Not only would joining the liberation struggle mean that Jews would be seen as part of the nation, but it would also aid in the struggle against assimilation by creating “a framework so that the Jewish youth interested in what is happening here do not as a result feel excluded or condemned.”⁷⁴ In Itzigsohn’s mind, the clear and simple solution to the community’s key challenges was to take an active stand in favor of the leftwing movements and national liberation in Argentina. For most other attendees at the conference, the solution was not nearly this simple, and most delegates respectfully disagreed with Itzigsohn’s proposals.

At the 1972 convention, and more generally in the early 1970s, the community embarked again on the question of whether the Jewish community, as such, should take a stand on politics. While 1969 was a crucial turning point in the emergence of the discourse of ethno-radicalism and the debates about Aliyah, it was not until 1971 and 1972 that the community began to question whether it ought to redefine its relationship with Argentine politics. On this subject there were certain divisions on generational lines and certainly an overlay of youth hostility, but there was no major innovation on the part of the youth then echoed by the older generation. Instead, both youth and the older generation seemed on a similar trajectory of trying to balance their fear that integrating fully would ultimately undermine their cohesion against their ever-increasing desire to take a stand. The result was that most institutions maintained an official policy of non-alignment in Argentine politics, even as they tried to make clear that they were on the side of change, broadly defined, and thereby part of the revolutionary nation.

The Policy of Non-Alignment

Though most delegates at the DAIA’s 1972 convention disagreed with Itzigsohn, he was given several opportunities to speak and he garnered many direct responses.⁷⁵ One common counter-argument was that Jews would inevitably be inconsequential to change in Argentina. In the words of Julio Mazo, Jewish activists could debate political change in “Latin America or in

⁷³ José Itzigsohn, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 21-22.

⁷⁴ José Itzigsohn, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 31.

⁷⁵ Both Mardoquo Szwimer and Julio Mazo said specifically that they were happy to hear his point of view even if they did not agree (Mardoquo Szwimer, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 37; Julio Mazo, *Informativo DAIA*, 33).

the third world” as much as they desired, but the bottom line was that “it happens with us, without us, or against us.”⁷⁶ In the same speech in which he argued that Jews could only determine their destiny in Israel, Resnizky pointed to the threats to cohesion, arguing that participation in Argentine struggles, “will lead, unavoidably, to our dissolution, which for me, is as upsetting as our destruction by others.”⁷⁷ Similarly, Lázaro Rubinson, director of the OSA, argued that making common cause with national liberation movements that are not Jewish, even if it did not require rejecting Zionism, would lead Jews to be submerged and abandon their ethnic identity, and that the promise of the revolution would prove illusory for the Jews, as had happened in the Russian Revolution of October 1917.⁷⁸ The DAIA had traditionally refused to tie the institution to any political party or groups for fear of alienating national power players or alienating members of the community. Instead, Jews were to participate in the political system as individual citizens who made their own choices. While most activists maintained a position of non-involvement, the terms had changed and now the concern was that by integrating into the national liberation movement Jews would either be inconsequential or would merely be absorbed. These arguments were often tied to calls for Aliyah where Jews could be active in society and politics without either of those risks.

The arguments that emerged against political involvement at the DAIA convention were similar to the ones emanating from Zionist youth groups, which for the most part disavowed dual involvement. For many youth groups, the common argument was that the Jewish community was essentially inconsequential, and could not be a powerful actor in change in Argentina. In 1973, a group of *realizadora* groups under the banner Juventud Sionista Socialista, which included Hashomer Hatzair, Baderej and Ateneo Martin Buber, put out a flyer that offered quick analyses of the implications of the social, economic, and political situation in Argentina for the Jewish community. The flyer wrote that with respect to the process of polarization between Left and Right in Latin America, “history shows us that in these conditions no Jewish community can stay intact because of the appearance of two phenomena that destroy the community: antisemitism and assimilation.” The threats to Jewish cohesion and membership in the nation, along with the inability of Jews to determine their own future economically and politically, meant that the only solution was Aliyah, and it was the job of these youth groups to make this clear because the communal leadership failed to do so.⁷⁹

The youth committed to this posture of non-alignment often accused the community’s central institutions (controlled by the older generation) of not fulfilling its commitment to the same policy. We saw this in Chapter Three, when the youth forcefully denounced the DAIA’s connections with “factors of power” once the military took power in 1966. The trend continued in the next years, and at the 1968 DAIA convention, a CJJA representative said that the youth demanded from the community “an abstention from public commitments to factors of power (this does not impede limited contacts).”⁸⁰ In 1971, *El Militante*, a homemade publication put out by the socialist Zionist *Juventud Anilevich* strongly denounced the “participation-ism” of the

⁷⁶ Julio Mazo, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 33-4.

⁷⁷ Nehemías Resnizky, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 24.

⁷⁸ Lázaro Rubinson, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 56.

⁷⁹ “A todos nuestros hermanos judíos en el nuevo año respondemos, por que estamos oprimidos,” Archivo IWO, Box: Tnuot, Folder- Hashomer Hatzair, 1953-1985.

⁸⁰ “4 diálogos sobre la reunión Marplatense,” *Mundo Israelita*, July 13, 1968, 7. In 1972, Marcelo Schottlender of the CJJA spoke at the conference of the Latin American Jewish communities in Lima, Peru and also called for a communal leadership that was “independent and not compromised by any factory of power” (“VI Conferencia de Lima,” *Informativo DAIA*, #53, December 15, 1972, 3).

magazine *Raíces*, calling it the voice of the OSA and refusing to recognize the ways in which it represented youth voices. The particular offense was an article in *Raíces* that supported the public works projects of Buenos Aires Mayor Saturnino Montero Ruiz.⁸¹ While the publication couched this critique in the fact that the magazine, and by extension the OSA, was linking the community to a particular political personality, the real offense seemed to be that it was a politician that the left-wing community, and particularly the magazine *La Opinión*, had denounced. Similarly, in 1973, *Nueva Sión* accused the DAIA of being an agent of the GAN, which many saw as an agreement designed by the military to extend its power even as it promised elections. While *Nueva Sión* denounced this supposed affiliation as an affront to the institution's policy of non-alignment, it seems that the concern was at least in part that the DAIA was supporting an alliance with the military rather than the popular movement against it.⁸² These accusations highlight a central tension in the position of the youth: while they proclaimed a policy of non-alignment, and forcefully critiqued the older generation's deviations, they were clearly not neutral. This tension emerged even more forcefully as these youth activists worked to establish their own position on politics in Argentina and abroad.

Youth and the ambiguities of the apolitical

In an interview with *Mundo Israelita* in 1969, one of the CJJA's leaders argued that being a good Jew meant being concerned with the world, even as the institution had a policy of non-alignment.⁸³ The CJJA tried to maintain this balance by avoiding alignment in Argentina politics (and critiquing the older generation if it seemed to be aligning) while proving its concern for the "world." In a 1968 editorial in *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, the publication explained its intended audience as:

...those for whom opening the newspaper daily not only meant becoming informed but also being a protagonist in the present in which the noise and lights cover the silent work of the arms traffickers and the destroyers of nourishment—all for their market value—work that undoubtedly is related to Vietnam and Czechoslovakia, genocide in Biafra, and the hunger of the majority on a daily basis.⁸⁴

This engagement with the global left, a trend that was present in earlier years as well, was a key way to balance their political sensibilities with a policy of non-alignment.

The youth activists maintained this balance of engagement with politics worldwide but

⁸¹ "Editorial," *Hapeil (El Militante)*, Year 1, #3, July 1971, (Archivo IWO, Box: Tnuot, Folder: Hashomer Hazair 1951-52-84-55-71). For the *Raíces* article, see "Montero Ruiz y la frustración porteña," *Raíces*, June 1971, 15-16.

⁸² The DAIA leadership discussed *Nueva Sión's* critique in this regard, and that, conversely, *La Luz*, the most conservative paper in the Jewish realm, had said that the DAIA was handing the community over to Peronism ("En una reunión de DAIA se evaluó el proceso eleccionario del país," *Informativo DAIA*, #58, April 15, 1973, 5-6).

⁸³ "Nuestras instituciones por dentro, Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina," *Mundo Israelita*, August 30, 1969, 6.

⁸⁴ "Editorial," *Tiempo de Jerusalem*, September/October 1968. Similarly, the working group preparing for the CJJA conference in 1968 expressed disapproval of Apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia and support for the civil rights struggle in the United States ("Denuncio una asamblea juvenil la falta de dialogo con la estructura comunitaria," *La Luz*, April 12, 1968, 37).

not in Argentina through the 1960s, but by the early 1971, even the groups most committed to Aliyah, most skeptical about the political power of Jews in the diaspora, and most critical of the compromised positions of the “establishment,” could not avoid commenting on Argentine politics. The 1971 publication of *Juventud Anlievich, El Militante*, that so harshly criticized *Raíces* (and the OSA by extension) for its “participation-ism,” also made its sympathies in Argentine politics quite clear. While it did not endorse any particular group, party, or politician, it did explain the fundamental conflict plaguing Argentina as between the guerillas and the capitalists and critiqued the GAN based on the fact that the bourgeois parties could never overcome “historical expiration.” It was also skeptical about the potential return of Perón, which would only lead to a repressive dictatorship that was “highly nationalistic in politics, demagogic in society, but pro-imperialist and pandering in economics.”⁸⁵ This odd balance between engagement and disengagement, politicization and critique of politicization that can be found in just one issue of *El Militante*, also emerged in the 1972 speech of the CJJA leader, Marcelo Schotlender, at a convention of Latin American Jewish communities. In the same speech in which he called for Aliyah as the only solution for the Jewish community, he also called for “a communal leadership that is independent and not committed to any factor of power, but that at the same time interprets and does not stand at the margins of the social changes that are underway in the whole world and especially in Latin America.”⁸⁶ The juxtaposition of a call for communal independence with a call for not being on the margins of change points to an odd balance that these youth groups were trying to strike. While they offered reasoned endorsement of the notion that the Jewish community as such could not have a major impact and recognized that Jews were often excluded by the revolutionary left, these young people could not help but engage in the revolutionary process unfolding, leading to a somewhat contradictory position that is difficult to unravel but suggests the weight of dueling commitments.

There were a few, fringe, youth organizations, as well as a few individual voices that were not trapped in this contradiction and advocated a clear dual involvement in both the Argentine and Zionist struggle. In January 1972, *Mundo Israelita* wrote on the wave of new groups of this sort, including the Movimiento Amos de Izquierda Sionista (Amos Movement of the Zionist Left), also known as AMOS, describing these groups as radical in both Argentine and Jewish politics.⁸⁷ The members of AMOS often came from left-wing Zionist organizations but broke from them over the question of militancy in Argentine politics. The organization tried to balance the imperatives of both Zionist and Argentine national liberation with the notion that until one chose to make Aliyah (and making Aliyah was an option), he or she could be active in the Argentine left. The group committed itself to studying both Israeli and Argentine politics and history, turning a more critical eye to Israeli politics than the Zionist youth movements did, and protested not only Menachem Begin but also General Onganía and the “Bonaparte-ism” of the Peronist movement. The members of AMOS and other similar groups saw the *jalutziano* groups as no different the “bourgeois” Jewish social clubs. They were also much more critical of Israel and its treatment of the Palestinians and questioned the kibbutz system that was so sacred to other youth groups.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ “Un invierno caliente?” *Hapeil (El Militante)*, Year 1, #3, July 1971, 2 (Archivo IWO, Box: Tnuot, Folder: Hashomer Hatzair 1951-52-84-55-71).

⁸⁶ “VI conferencia de Lima,” *Informativo DAIA*, #53, December 15, 1972, 3.

⁸⁷ “Aquí, la juventud,” *Mundo Israelita*, January 22, 1972, 7.

⁸⁸ Adrián Krupnik, “Cuando camino al kibbutz viene pasar al Che: Radicalización política, y juventud judía: Argentina 1966-1976.”

In addition to these marginal groups that openly championed dual militancy, many of the individual youth that *Mundo Israelita* interviewed in its “*Aquí, la juventud*” section argued for a dual militancy in both Argentine politics and Zionism on a personal level, having distanced themselves from the Zionist youth groups that denied this possibility. A former member of Ijud Habonim said that he left the Zionist youth groups because of their obsession with “‘contaminating’ ourselves with those who fight in the nation to change things, under the pretext that we should think only of ‘our own liberation.’”⁸⁹ The former editor of *Horizonte*, mentioned above, who disliked the absolutist stand taken by the pro-Aliyah youth, also argued that it was perfectly possible to have a dual identity and that for him, his current struggle was in Argentina.⁹⁰ Alejandro Topolansky, who defined himself as a “*joven*, a university student, and profoundly Jewish and Zionist” wrote a letter to *Raíces* in response to the 1972 DAIA Convention noting, paradoxically, that while he did not endorse the institution taking a political stand, in the polarized political climate, the middle was no longer an option and he feared that taking no stand actually implied a definition (presumably on the right). If he had to choose, he preferred the youth who “assimilated” into the national movement, to those who ignored their surroundings and just practiced religious rites or just prepared for their *Aliyah*.⁹¹ What these dissenting voices shared in common was a disdain for the ambivalence and contradictory positions of Zionist youth groups when it came to Argentine politics. Even as Zionist youth groups were clear in their affinity for the Argentine left, their line of non-involvement, for the sake of Jewish cohesion or encouraging Aliyah as the ultimate solution, led many to critique their inaction.

The Older Generation and the Ambiguity of the Apolitical

The case was remarkably similar among the establishment institutions. While the youth were quick to suggest that the members of the older generation were somehow compromised by their alliances with the wrong side of the political spectrum, leftist allegiances crept into the older generation’s thinking as well despite the policy of impartiality. *Mundo Israelita* maintained a policy of not commenting on Argentine politics. At first, it fulfilled this commitment, but much like the CJA, wrote in favor of Allende in Chile and other revolutionary movements in Latin America.⁹² Nonetheless, as the political process was reopened between 1971 and 1973, the tension between efforts to maintain a distance from politics and the gravitational pull of politics led to particularly ambiguous positions on the part of the newspaper. It was, for example, the change in leadership within the military government from Levingston to Lanusse in March 1971,

⁸⁹ “*Aquí, la juventud*,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 21, 1971, 12. He also argued that this isolation was not consistent with the practices of Ber Borjov.

⁹⁰ “*Aquí, la juventud*,” *Mundo Israelita*, September 11, 1971, 12. He argued: “for me, here and now, it is Argentina. Everyone chooses his own geographical location, although the truth is that the objective will be the same: to fight against the “status” that the owners of the means of production impose on us through the unequal system, whatever the location, whether it be Central Park in New York, Red Square in Moscow, or Disengoff Avenue in Tel Aviv.”

⁹¹ “*Sionismo y política en América Latina*,” *Raíces*, September, 1972, 47-48.

⁹² In August 1970, the paper endorsed Chile’s Popular Unity’s coalition of socialists, communists, and the Catholic left and its proposed program of ending dozens of commercial and industrial monopolies, nationalizing industries, especially copper, and serious agrarian reform (“*De semana en semana*,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 29, 1970, 2). While ambivalent about the leftwing military dictatorship in Peru, it did laud its agrarian reform (“*De semana en semana*,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 1, 1970, 2).

that led *Mundo Israelita* to note that “every time there is small, medium, or large socio-political convulsion in our nation,” there reemerges in “the specifically Jewish world an old discussion: should the community’s organs of expression (particularly the press), offer an analytical analysis of such events or, on the other hand, is it better to remain indifferent to them like someone who is uninterested?”⁹³ The piece then went on to say that while it had traditionally been the young members of the community who wanted to take a stand, recently some “*viejos*” (old-timers) had advocated for more involvement in the political arena. While *Mundo Israelita* stopped short of taking a position on this particular event, by invoking the example of levelheaded “*viejos*,” the paper seemed to condone a more overt political discussion. Later in that same section of the paper, the author wrote on polarization between what it called the radical left and the fascist right in Israel, but at the end brought the attention back to Argentina, noting that “every day it is harder to walk down the middle...”⁹⁴ After recognizing this climate of polarization and the difficulty in staying removed, it was not long before *Mundo Israelita* began analyzing Argentine politics, whether it be the *Hora del Pueblo* (a union of political parties in opposition to the military dictatorship), the Peronist/Anti-Peronist divide, or an increasing number of assassinations by leftwing guerillas (which the paper explicitly denounced).⁹⁵ Nonetheless, the paper was careful not to endorse any political group or any candidates during the 1973 election cycle, and expressed significant displeasure when the newspaper *Crónica* suggested that the Jewish community was for FREJULI.⁹⁶

Perhaps the closest the paper came to revealing a certain sympathy was in a May 1973 article on the Peronist left, in which it argued that Perón’s first regime had been “the most important experience of popular participation in power registered until now in Argentina.” It noted further that there was very little antisemitism under Perón and that many key Peronist figures were pro-Israel. Moreover, while antisemitism had infiltrated the right wing of the movement in the 1960s, particularly the youth sectors, the leftwing *Juventud Peronista* (Peronist Youth) in the 1970s were much more sympathetic to figures like Allende and Castro than they were to Hitler. While it justified this conversation about Peronism by saying it was “linked to the purview of this weekly paper,” by involving specifically Jewish concerns (antisemitism), the author also made clear that it saw Peronism as a popular movement and particularly that its left wing had proper leftist credentials.⁹⁷ The article need not be read as an endorsement of left-wing Peronism, per se, but rather as an effort to undo the assumption that Jews were opposed to the Peronist movement, propagated by antisemitic Peronists, or to show young Peronist Jews that the community was not hostile to Perón as it had once been. Nonetheless, these efforts seem to reveal an underlying allegiance or admiration on the part of the writer for left-wing Peronism when we consider the choice to overlook anti-Israel sentiment within the *Juventud Peronista* and the Peronist left more generally.

In August 1973, *Mundo Israelita* went so far as to encourage Jews to be active in the Argentine left, but still avoided the endorsement of any particular party or organization. The article started by recounting the events surrounding a large protest against the terrorist attack at the Munich Olympics that Jewish youth groups had organized. Many observers had critiqued the

⁹³ The piece then went on to recall a debate on this front between two Zionist papers, *Horizonte* and *Nueva Sión*, in the early 1960s, on whether Zionists should involve themselves in Argentine politics, discussed in Chapter 3.

⁹⁴ “De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 19, 1970, 2.

⁹⁵ “De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, April 17, 1971, 2; “De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 29, 1970, 2.

⁹⁶ “De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, February 17, 1973, 2.

⁹⁷ “De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, May 5, 1973, 2.

Jewish youth on this occasion, contending that they protested because “it touches them, but when the regime beats or kills workers, they are quiet because they do not think of it as their problem.” An anarchist paper ran a headline stating “Those who cried for Munich were quiet for Trelew.”⁹⁸ In response to these critiques, *Mundo Israelita* contended that both events were “perpetuated by the violent ferocity of fascism,” and that Jews should protest both. The article went further to say that many people think that they are alone in being both revolutionary and Jewish, “in reality they are, if not the majority (although there are no scientific statistics available), at the least a rather extensive mass.” Beyond arguing that leftism, Zionism, and Judaism were all compatible, this article struck a new prescriptive note in suggesting that Jews *should* be actively involved not only in issues that affect Jews but Argentine society in general—a more prescriptive claim than saying that the two allegiances could be compatible. The articles on Peronism and Trelew crept in under the guise of concerning specifically Jewish issues, rather than Argentine politics more broadly, but the articles did reveal how taken in the paper was with the political moment and how difficult it was not to comment and not to align itself.

The ambivalence regarding politics from the establishment corner is clearest in *Mundo Israelita* because of the sheer quantity of editorializing in a weekly newspaper. Nonetheless, an affinity for leftist causes also emerged in discussions at the DAIA even among those who supported the institution’s apolitical stance. At the 1972 convention, Jaime Pompas, the president of the DAIA chapter in Córdoba, argued that while it was risky to be involved as a group, that they should support in all ways the Zionist movement and at the same “keep fighting, on an individual level, for the revindication of the Latin American nations.”⁹⁹ While the institution had long affirmed its impartiality and encouraged people to be involved as individuals, Pompas modified this stance in a significant way by suggesting that their individual involvement should be specifically for the national liberation cause. Also revealing a certain bias, Resnizky’s analysis of the problems in Latin America was that the minority landowners and a bourgeoisie tied to monopolistic capital got rich at the detriment of the majority popular masses.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the DAIA leaders often referred to the antisemitic left as the “false left” (*falsa izquierda*) or “so-called left” (*llamada izquierda*) suggesting a sympathy for a more true left.¹⁰¹

As was customary, the DAIA affirmed its impartiality and that Jews participated only as individuals before the 1973 election.¹⁰² Nonetheless, after the election of Hector José Cámpora, the DAIA sent him a letter establishing again that Jews did not vote as a block, but that “Argentine Judaism has not been nor will it be absent from building a better and more just nation for the generations to come, free from all dependence, and from the dramas that submerge the oppressed nations in frustration.”¹⁰³ While this could be seen as merely absorbing the discourse of the day in the same way that messages to power players in the 1950s emphasized their allegiance to liberalism, the message to Cámpora in conjunction with the other comments mentioned above do point to a certain sympathy for the left despite the establishment’s efforts to

⁹⁸ “De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, August 25, 1973, 2.

⁹⁹ Jaime Pompas, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Nehemías Resnizky, *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 23.

¹⁰¹ “Responde el presidente de DAIA, antisemitismo, antisionismo, y algo mas...” *Informativo DAIA*, #41/2, June 1972, 19; “Sión Cohen Imach,” *Informativo DAIA*, #50/51, 11.

¹⁰² See the reaffirmation of this policy in July 1973 (“El Temario que registra las preocupaciones de la colectividad judía del país fue abordado en la ultima sesión plenaria de DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA* #63/4, July 1973, 2).

¹⁰³ “Mensaje del presidente electo a la institución representativa de la comunidad judía,” *Informativo DAIA*, #58, April 15, 1973, 1.

remain removed from politics.

Ultimately, the hard line that various institutions took on non-alignment in Argentine politics was quite porous. While explicit discussions about Argentine politics were very limited in the late 1960s even as some institutions were willing to support movements in other countries, by 1971 Jewish activists from both generations could not entirely separate their institutions or press organs from the processes afoot in Argentina. Why did the years 1971-1973 lead the institutions of both youth and older generation to backtrack, at least in part, on the distance from politics they tried to maintain for so long? Perhaps it was the reopening of the political system that made dissent against the military a safer position to take or that the enthusiasm for radical change was contagious. I would argue that these external factors combined with the fact that the community's self-conception had changed as a result of the particular challenges it faced. If Jewishness meant struggling for social justice and Zionism was a national liberation movement, staying indifferent to the struggles for social justice and national liberation in Argentina seemed increasingly inconsistent with the new self-understanding. Moreover, even though very few would admit it explicitly, they likely believed that expressing leftist allegiances would counteract the claim that the Jewish community, with its particularist concerns and Zionist allegiances, was outside the national struggle. Ultimately, for these activists the goals of Jewish cohesion and commitment to the Zionist cause existed in an unresolved tension with a desire to be part of and prove their membership in an Argentine national struggle.

It is worth noting, however, that even as these institutions moved slowly towards discussions of politics, almost all were still unwilling to express support for particular groups, parties, or figures. The sympathies expressed were rarely more specific than an opposition to the military and for a national liberation movement, popular participation and decreased dependency in Argentina even as they did comment on Argentine politics much more than they had in the past. Avoiding the specific was a means of maintaining an explicit policy of non-alignment, but also of responding to the lack of cohesion within the broad coalition that opposed the military dictatorship. Given this diversity, there was likely little agreement among Jewish activists (within a broader framework of general agreement), and, furthermore, taking a more specific position could alienate segments of the diverse coalition opposed to the military and further alienate members of the Jewish community. Still, if the cumulative effect of the Aliyah debate was to center Aliyah as a key component of authentic Zionism, the cumulative effect of the politicization debates was to suggest, fairly uniformly, that the Jewish community was on the side of national liberation in Argentina.

Conclusion

Youth activists in the early 1960s began the process of renovating the Jewish community to respond to the sensibilities of their politicizing peers. The late 1960s and early 1970s, however, saw the widespread adoption of highly political and even radical terms to discuss Jewishness, Zionism, and membership in the nation. This ethno-radicalism emerged, and with such force, due to the intersection of a dramatic moment in Argentine politics, the Jewish diaspora, and the community itself. Turning first to the diaspora, the previous chapter and this one have pointed to the Six-Day War as a key moment in Jewish consciousness, and, more specifically, the emergence of a more politicized, ideological Zionism. In addition, Israel's push

for Aliyah after the war resonated with Zionist youth activists and ultimately the older generation as well. This Zionist fervency was a constant for the Jewish activists discussed here. Even as the New Left became increasingly hostile to Israel and Zionism, and even as Jewish activists hoped to prove themselves to the new left, they would not abandon Zionism but rather tried to make it compatible with the terms set out.

Even still, the moment in Argentine politics did force new questions of what it meant to be Jewish and Argentine. The New Left suggested that being a true Argentine meant engaging in the struggle for national liberation in Argentina and supporting other such struggles across the third world. This often came with hostility to Zionism, which posed threats to Jewish membership in the nation and to Jewish cohesion as many young Jews preferred membership in the Argentine national movement. By reframing the meanings of Jewishness and Zionism, Jewish activists could claim that they were rightful members of the Argentine nation subject to these terms. The centrality of national politics to the reworking of Jewish ethnicity is perhaps best revealed by the specific moments at which certain conversations and debates emerged. 1969, a turning point in Argentine politics not in the Jewish diaspora, was the moment when the vocabulary of ethno-radicalism and the debates about Aliyah took center stage. The early 1970s, meanwhile, when the military committed to reopening democratic politics with the GAN, was when the questions of whether and how the community should define itself in favor of national liberation in Argentina. The national moment also created conflicts as Jewish activists sought to balance their desire for Jewish cohesions and a dedication to the Zionist cause with the gravitational pull of the Argentine political effervescence.

Finally, it was the youth rebellion within the community, with its reference points in Argentine and global politics that pushed these questions to the fore and catalyzed change. Identified leftists themselves, Jewish youth activists were the first to draw attention to the challenges posed by the Argentine New Left. As they worked to respond to their assimilating peers and to justify their inclusion in the revolutionary nation, they proposed new frameworks and fought, or screamed, for change within the community. The leaders of the central institutions, meanwhile, were often quite willing to accept the innovations of the youth, if on a somewhat different timeline. Not only were they often grateful for the participation and energy of the younger generation, but Argentine and Jewish diasporic politics drew them in as well. This responsiveness did not assuage the younger generation, which found various means to set themselves apart, some symbolic and some real. The use of Aliyah as a rallying cry even among youth who had no intention to make Aliyah points to the underlying desire among Jewish youth activists to prove that they too were part of the worldwide rebellion and in constant confrontation with their own institutional establishment. Other differences were emerging to be more substantive. By 1973, youth were the first to broach the subject of Palestinian rights and to offer critiques of Israeli foreign policy, themes the youth, but not the older generation, would embrace more forcefully after the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. In fact, the differences between youth activists and the older generation would only deepen in the next years, both in light of shifting national politics with the return of Perón in October 1973 and the shifting geo-politics of Israel after the Yom Kippur War. Nonetheless, for the moment between 1967 and 1973, the Jewish community should be seen as a site of generational interaction, not just generational conflict, where the two generations ultimately cooperated in the popularization of ethno-radicalism.

CHAPTER SIX: THE ECLIPSE OF RADICALISM AND THE RISE OF PLURALISM, 1973-1977

October 1973 would usher in a new moment for the Argentine Jewish community. In the late afternoon of October 6, as the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur was coming to a close, news reached Argentina that Syria and Egypt had attacked Israel in what would become known as the Yom Kippur War.¹ *La Opinión* described the scene in the synagogue on *Libertad* where a newspaper with the headline “Guerra” passed “from hand to hand.”² The next day, concerned Jews mobilized into a mass rally that covered six city blocks.³ During the nineteen-day War, the community relied on the newspaper *La Opinión*, not a specifically Jewish newspaper but edited by Jacobo Timerman, who had sent a war correspondent to Israel.⁴ In addition, the community’s central institution began publishing its reports on the war in *Días de Combate*, eventually printing 15,000 copies a day.⁵ In the midst of this, on October 12, Juan Perón assumed the presidency after eighteen years in exile. The diverse 62% of the population that voted for him and the many others that could be described as loyal opposition invested diverse hopes in his return, ranging from a socialist revolution to a nationalist co-optation of the working class. As noted in the previous chapter, when Héctor Cámpora, Perón’s chosen representative, became the first democratically elected president after the military dictatorship in July 1973, most voices within the Jewish community celebrated the return of the “popular will” and the path towards “national liberation.” They echoed many of these sentiments when Perón took office later that year.⁶

It was the aftermath of these two events, this chapter will contend, that led the Argentine Jewish community to rework the constructs of Jewish ethnicity that had dominated in the previous years. As the previous chapter argued, in the moment of leftwing political effervescence, Jewish activists had embraced ethno-radicalism for various purposes: to reconcile the activists’ own national, Zionist, and Jewish identities; to communicate with assimilating

¹ This is also referred to as the October War in scholarship, but uniformly as the Yom Kippur War within the Argentine Jewish community.

² “Simplemente que haya paz,” *La Opinión*, October 10, 1973, as cited in *Informativo DAIA*, October, 1973, 8-9.

³ “La existencia del pueblo judío podrá ser triturada si no adoptamos actitudes claras y firmes” dijo el presidente del CJL en una sesión plenaria de DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA*, December 1973, #66/68, 6.

⁴ Making reference to the high readership of *La Opinión* during the war, *Mundo Israelita* recounted a joke told during the War: “Every good Jew has four obligations: to pray Shacharit in the morning, to pray Mincha in the afternoon, to pray Ma’ariv in the evening, and at one in the morning to wait for *La Opinión* on the corner of Corrientes and Callao,” (“La Guerra en Buenos Aires,” November 3, 1973, 8); Clarín also sent a correspondent (“La Guerra en Buenos Aires,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 27, 1973, 7-8).

⁵ On *Días de Combate* see “La existencia del pueblo judío pondría ser triturada si no adoptamos actitudes claras y firmes” “dijo el presidente del CJL en una sesión plenaria de DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA*, December 1973, #66-68, 6.

⁶ “Perón, por voluntad popular,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 13, 1973, 1; “Significativas declaraciones de Sión Cohen Imach,” *Informativo DAIA*, December 1973, #66/8, 3. See also Laura Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura: Estudio sobre las organizaciones judías durante el último régimen militar (1976-1983)” (PhD, University of Buenos Aires, 2012). 70-71; Emmanuel Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento: Actitudes sociales, posicionamientos y memoria de la experiencia judía durante la última dictadura militar (1973-2007)” (PhD, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2010), 36-44.

youth and those hostile to Zionism; and to avoid being marginalized in the revolutionary nation. After 1973, however, as this chapter will detail, in the midst of an unraveling political order in Argentina and Israel's shifting position in the world, the consensus surrounding ethno-radicalism would rupture. While no one framework for discussing Jewish ethnicity emerged in its place, Jewish activists increasingly emphasized the need for a more a more flexible and pluralistic approach to Jewish identity and a willingness to de-emphasize Zionism for the first time in years.

Despite the hope surrounding the 1973 return to democracy, Perón's presidency offered the nation little solace. He confronted the almost impossible task of unifying the many segments of his movements which included union leaders; rank and file workers; key business leaders; right-wing nationalists; and the radicalized *Juventud Peronista* (Peronist Youth) with its violent offshoot, the Montoneros.⁷ This conflict between these segments of the movement grew violent even before Perón assumed the presidency: as Perón's supporters gathered to greet him at Ezeiza airport on June 20, 1973, as he returned for the final time from exile, right-wing snipers opened fire on members of the *Juventud Peronista* and *Montoneros*, killing at least twenty-five.⁸ Over the next year, Perón's moderate economic policies and the increasing power José Lopez Rega, the ultra-right minister of social welfare (*bienestar social*), ultimately led to a schism between Perón and the *Juventud Peronista*. This led the Montoneros to rejoin the non-Peronist ERP in guerilla attacks against union bureaucracy and military personnel. In response, José López Rega, with the tacit approval of Juan Perón, organized a covert para-police organization, the *Alianza Anticomunista Argentina* (Argentine-Anti-Communist Alliance, *Triple A*) to repress the leftist guerrillas.⁹ After Perón's death in July 1974, his wife Maria Estela (Isabel) Martínez de Perón took over and proved even less capable of synthesizing the different interests and even more beholden to López Rega. The violence escalated, leading many contemporary observers to describe the nation as having descended into a "civil war." Taken as a whole, between 1973 and 1976 there were 1,543 political assassinations and 900 people disappeared.¹⁰ This violence eventually led to a fairly broad "consensus" in favor of military intervention by the time of the March 24, 1976 coup.¹¹

While the national process gives this story its fundamental context, it was in debates on specifically "Jewish" questions that the community reworked its understanding of ethnicity and its place in the Argentine nation. The three years of Peronist rule saw a significant upswing in antisemitic discourse, attacks on Jewish institutions, hostility towards Israel, Zionism and occasionally towards the Jewish community from left-wing activists, and even calls to violence against Jews from the Peronist and non-Peronist right. The notion of "*sinarquía*," a conspiracy

⁷ Making this proposition more difficult, Liliana de Riz, has noted, that the tactics of these different actors "had developed in the context of a protest against an institutional system that excluded the majorities," which made their tactics in demanding what they wanted from the Peronist government more destabilizing than cooperative (Liliana de Riz, *Política en suspenso*, (Ediciones Paidós Iberica, 2000), 130).

⁸ Richard Gillespie, *Soldiers of Peron: Argentina's Montoneros* (Oxford University Press, 1983), 152–3.

⁹ On López Rega's attacks on leftist under Juan Perón's presidency, see Richard Gillespie, *Soldiers of Peron: Argentina's Montoneros* (Oxford University Press, 1983), 153–159; de Riz, *Política en suspenso*, 153.

¹⁰ Emilio A Crenzel, *La historia política del Nunca Más: La memoria de las desapariciones en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Siglo Veintiuno Editores Argentina, 2008), 31.

¹¹ In the AJC's yearbook introduction to the events of 1974, Naomi Meyer wrote, "Most serious analysts agree that Argentina was on brink of civil war in 1974," (*American Jewish Year Book, 1974-5*, Fine, Morris and Himmelfarb, Milton, eds. Volume 75, 263). On analysis of this discourse in broader society, see Sebastián Carassai, "Antes de que anochezca: Derechos humanos y clases medias en Argentina antes y en los inicios del golpe de estado de 1976," *América Latina Hoy* 54 (2010): 69–96, 73-74. For discussion on the consensus, see Marcos Novaro and Vicente Palermo, *La dictadura militar (1976-1983)* (Paidós, 2003), 19–32.

involving various international powers, including Zionists, became a mainstay in rightwing politics, as did the *Plan Andinia*, which claimed that Zionists were looking to takeover Patagonia.¹² By tracking the nature and timing of antisemitic attacks, Leonardo Senkman has shown that attacks on Jews were used as a political tool in the “cross fire” between different Peronist factions.¹³ Particularly menacing was the endorsement of anti-Jewish hostility from people in power, most notably López Rega. Beyond this rise in antisemitism, the geo-political reordering surrounding the Middle East after the Yom Kippur War and its aftermath saw a further deterioration in the relationship between Israel and the third world.¹⁴ This held true for the Argentine government and a wide range of political voices that seemed increasingly hostile to Israel and supportive of the Arabs or the Palestinians.¹⁵ The reactions to all of these processes created opportunities for schisms and realignments within the Jewish community, many of which echoed positions on Argentine politics, and ultimately amounted to the remaking of Argentine Jewish ethnicity.

In tracking this process, the chapter highlights a shifting dynamic in generational relations. Beginning in the early 1960s, the Zionist youth acted as innovators within the Argentine Jewish community, politicizing and radicalizing constructs of ethnicity, while the older generation often adopted their message (with some key adaptations). Beginning in 1973, this pattern was largely reversed as members of the older generation, and some youth activists, decidedly rejected the ethno-radicalism of what I will refer to as “leftwing Zionist youth.” In discussions of previous years, I grouped all Zionist youth activists together because they fairly uniformly supported the leftwing line. In considering these years, as more young Jewish activists, along with members of the older generation, began to dissent from the majority line, it is necessary to draw a distinction between the leftwing Zionist youth and a variety of other Zionist youth activists.

This chapter, then, begins with a consideration of the sustained ethno-radicalism in 1973 and 1974. It then turns to the critiques that members of the older generation and a minority of Jewish youth activists began to levy against the positions of the leftwing Zionist youth. These critiques offered new ways of articulating Jewish membership in the nation and more diverse understandings of Jewishness and Zionism. While the growing schism between the leftwing Zionist youth and the other members of the community was in many ways bitter, the following

¹² On origins of the term “sinarquia” and of the “Plan Andinia,” see Leonardo Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986), 107–113. See also Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

¹³ Leonardo Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 112–3.

¹⁴ Curtis and Gitelson, ed., *Israel in the Third World*. In the months surrounding the war, almost every African country broke diplomatic relations with Israel.

¹⁵ As Leonardo Senkman has signaled, “Basically, the non-aligned nations’ political condemnation of Israel after the Six-Day War in 1967, Peronism’s vague adhesion to a third-world ideology, and its indiscriminate sympathy for national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, also inclined it to adhere to the Palestinian cause and move away from the initial support offered to Israel,” (Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 187). While Perón himself issued statements during the Yom Kippur war that struck a balance between Israel and the Arab powers, many attached to power were either more supportive of the Palestinian cause or blatantly hostile to Israel. In 1974, Argentina’s representative to the UN voted to allow Yasser Arafat to speak before the general assembly and abstained from the vote when UNESCO excluded Israel. Still some prominent liberal intellectuals and the press dissented (*American Jewish Year Book, 1976*, Fine, Morris and Himmelfarb, Milton, eds., *Volume 76* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America and American Jewish Committee, 1975), 274; *American Jewish Year Book, 1977*, Fine, Morris and Himmelfarb, Milton, eds., *Volume 77* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America and American Jewish Committee, 1976), 344–5; “Ante la actitud antiisraeli de la UNESCO,” *Informativo DAIA* #76, April 7, 1975, 15.

section of the chapter turns to a surprising and important rapprochement beginning in late 1974. This hinged most explicitly on the youth's support for the DAIA's bold stand against antisemitism, but was underpinned by leftwing Zionist youth's slow rejection of certain elements of ethno-radicalism. Finally, the chapter will turn to the first years of the dictatorship, when even leftwing youth discarded the final trappings of ethno-radicalism and the community as a whole abandoned all politicized constructs of ethnicity. This final section argues, however, that the new articulations of ethnicity that came to dominate during the dictatorship must not be understood simply as a reflection of the state's repression, but rather also as the outgrowth of the communal process of de-radicalization that had been unfolding before the military seized power.

Even as this chapter builds on the particular intersection of national, transnational, and communal dynamics to understand shifts in ethnic identity, it also aspires to complicate the larger story so often told about the de-politicization of Argentine society between the return of Perón and the beginning of the military dictatorship. Extant studies focus on the positioning of the violent extremes: the guerilla left, on the one hand, and the para-police bands and increasingly the military that combated them, on the other. As Sebastián Carassai has noted, the subjectivities of the “middle,” the middle class members of civil society, have been largely ignored.¹⁶ This absence is striking when we consider that a significant political mobilization brought down the military dictatorship in 1973, but by 1976 the vast majority of society welcomed a far more brutal regime. The somewhat facile assumption is that the failure of Perón, and especially Isabel Perón, to consolidate the movement and control escalating inflation and violence made it clear that the only option was a military coup. As such, the assumption goes, all others “demobilized” or “de-politicized” and formed a “consensus” around the military government.¹⁷ While not inaccurate, this story fails to account for the variegated and gradual shifts within the very diverse “middle.” In analyzing the ways that Jewish activists of different generations reconfigured their discussions about ethnicity and their articulations of belonging in the nation we come to see that the moment of increasing violence in the mid-1970s was not a uniform process of de-politicization but rather a moment of gradual de-radicalization. As late as 1975, Jewish activists—perhaps due to their particularly Jewish concerns or their perspectives of members of the “middle”—were still very much engaged in the political processes unfolding in Argentina and working towards change. It was not until after the coup that we see widespread efforts to de-politicize the community and discussions of ethnicity.

Radicalism and its Discontents

¹⁶ Carassai, “Antes De Que Anochezca,” 84. He has worked to correct this absence in Sebastian Carassai, “The Argentine Silent Majority Middle Classes, Violence, Political Culture, and Memory (1969--1982)” (Ph.D., History, Indiana University, 2011). There is far more literature on the political consciousness, and especially the culture of fear, once the military actually took power. See, for example, Daniel Lvovich, “Sistema político y actitudes sociales en la legitimación de la dictadura militar argentina (1976-1983),” *Ayer. Revista de historia contemporánea*, vol. 75, Madrid, 2009; Antonius C. G. M. Robben, *Political Violence And Trauma In Argentina* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). On evaluations of political consciousness and socialization in the Jewish community, see Laura Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura” and Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento.”

¹⁷ Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar (1976-1983)*. De Riz writes, for example, that by 1975, “the moderate sectors of Peronism who were critical of the administration were becoming, along with the rest of the political spectrum, mere spectators of the violence,” (de Riz, *Política en suspenso*, 168).

By October 1973, ethno-radicalism had penetrated Jewish institutions and had lodged there. In August 1973, for example, Albert Memmi, a Jewish Tunisian post-colonial theorist, received an exalted reception not only from Zionist youth but also from the community's central institutions when he spoke about the Jewish condition in the diaspora as similar to that of the colonized man, and of the need for national liberation.¹⁸ As noted above, these months also saw general enthusiasm surrounding the return of democracy and then of Perón, and an insistence that the Jewish community was on the side of "national liberation." Nonetheless, the leftwing Zionist youth's deepening engagement with the national left was beginning to produce schisms. Most notably, the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the State of Israel was postponed from May to August because the Zionist youth wanted to include a representative of the Juventud Peronista and the community's leaders objected and ultimately disallowed it.¹⁹

This disagreement itself signaled a burgeoning division between leftwing youth and the leaders of the central institutions on the subject of Argentine politics. Nonetheless, some press outlets of the older generation were more forcefully disdainful of the youth. According to Naomi Meyer's report in the AJC yearbook, when the anniversary celebration finally did occur, there were several thousand empty seats at Luna Park and Israel's representative, Yitzhak Navon was "heckled by left-wing Zionist youth, demanding sovereignty rights for the Arabs in the occupied territories." Meyer reported further: "Organized Zionist Jews were very much disheartened by the entire episode. Many leading figures openly declared that the community had reached its nadir."²⁰ Naomi Meyer was likely alluding to the right-wing segments of the community, who were the first to forcefully denounce the youth for their perverse politicization of Zionism and to criticize the community's leaders as complicit. *Mundo Israelita*, meanwhile, more representative of that leadership, argued that the "difference between the youth and adults is more in style than substance." Rather than reading this event as a nadir, *Mundo Israelita* thought a synthesis could be reached because both youth and adults were ultimately committed to the "national liberation of the Jewish people."²¹

The schism between rightwing voices, the more centrist leaders of the central institutions, and the leftwing youth would all deepen over the course of Peronist rule. Particularly divisive was the question of how to engage with the Argentine left. Perón's relationship with the primarily youthful left of the Peronist movement, the Juventud Peronista and the Montoneros, a guerilla group, became increasingly fraught during his time in office, culminating in the May Day celebration at the Plaza de Mayo in 1974. When youth interrupted Perón's speech accusing him of having "guerillas" in his government, Perón responded angrily, criticizing the "beardless" youth and calling them "infiltrators" of the movement. The members of the Juventud Peronista, some 60,000 people of the 100,000 person crowd, left during Perón's speech, and the

¹⁸ "La mayor parte de los pueblos que deseen liberarse deben pasar por su condición nacional. He aquí por que he dado mi adhesión política al estado de Israel," dice Albert Memmi," *Informativo DAIA*, #66/8, 32-35; " 'Lo más urgente es la solución nacional judía,' dijo Memmi en un diálogo mantuvo con intelectuales," *Informativo DAIA*, #66/8, 35-39. In August 1973, in one Jewish high school, students organized a "homage" to the political prisoners killed in Trelew a year earlier, only to meet with scandalized communal leaders, who punished the involved students (Schiller, Herman, interview by author, audio recording, Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 24, 2009). Nonetheless, *Mundo Israelita* did support these protests, so the broader position of the institutional leadership is unclear.

¹⁹ "Por qué la comunidad no festejo todavía los 25 años de Israel," *Nueva Sión*, June 2, 1973, as cited in Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento, 57.

²⁰ *American Jewish Year Book, 1974-5*, 366.

²¹ "Colectividad: Un año de transiciones e intentos para neutralizar la crisis," *Mundo Israelita*, September 29, 1973, 23-4.

Montoneros officially resumed the armed struggle.²² It was the different reactions to the shifting politics of Peronism, the seemingly ascendant right and the increasingly marginalized left, that laid the groundwork for a deepening commitment to ethno-radicalism among the leftwing youth yet a rejection of it by other segments of the Jewish community.

These divisions manifested themselves in the Jewish community's responses to the more particular "ethnic" concerns of the moment. The Yom Kippur War created the opportunity for varied attacks on Israel and accusations against the local Jewish community. As discussed in Chapter Four, the New Left's hostility towards Israel occasionally bled into antisemitism. The publication *Avanzada socialista*, for example, announced its support for "the Arab people against imperialism" and exhorted "our Jewish comrades not to fall into the racist and reactionary demagoguery of the State of Israel and of imperialism."²³ Magazines on the right such as *El Caudillo* and *Consigna Nacional* equated the nationalist struggles in Latin America with the Palestinian struggle, and argued that *sinarquía* and Zionism undermined both.²⁴ In 1974, meanwhile, in the midst of 40% inflation, the consensus surrounding the "Social Pact," the economic policy crafted by Minister of Finance José Ber Gelbard in mid-1973, began to unravel.²⁵ As opposition mounted, both from workers and capital, many claimed that Gelbard's Jewishness made him suspect and linked him to the mystical *sinarquía*.²⁶ Flyers on the street read "*Fuera Gelbard Judío Vende Patria*" (Out with Gelbard, Jewish Betrayer of the Nation), "*Fuera Judío Bolche*" (Out Bolshevik Jew); "*Gelbard Sionista*" (Gelbard the Zionist).²⁷ Powerful figures were complicit in these attacks. After brokering a trade agreement with Libya in February 1974, López Rega blamed Argentina's poor negotiating position on Libya's distrust of "Argentine figures of Jewish origin," a clear reference to Gelbard.²⁸ On the heels of this event, a Peronist television channel broadcast a program entitled *Mesa de Corresponsales* (Correspondents' Roundtable), which claimed to be "anti-Zionist but not antisemitic."²⁹ The host described one of the participants in the roundtable as "a great student on the problems of

²² On the fraught relationship between the Montoneros and the Juventud Peronista with Perón see de Riz, *Política en suspenso*, 148–152; Gillespie, *Soldiers of Perón*, 144–153; Carlos Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda* (Siglo Veintiuno Editores Argentina, 2011), 138–140. On the generational language that Perón and the youth themselves used, see Manzano, "The Making of Youth in Argentina," 295–323.

²³ "La Guerra en Buenos Aires," *Mundo Israelita*, October 20, 1973, 8.

²⁴ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 123.

²⁵ The Social Pact set wages and prices on public goods, suspended collective bargaining for the next two years, and had "a moderate reformist, nationalist, and redistribunist tone." This made it tolerable to the economic establishment as well as labor, at least temporarily. Nonetheless, it was certainly not a radical reordering of the economic system (De Riz, *Política en suspenso*, 132–3; Gillespie, *Soldiers of Peron*, 142).

²⁶ Enabling (or adding to) this conspiratorial framing was that Gelbard and Bronner, the head of the CGE (General Economic Council), were both Jewish, as was Jacobo Timerman, a supporter of the Pact (Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 130–131). There were also accusations of Gelbard's misconduct that were not of a conspiratorial or antisemitic nature, or not obviously so, regarding government contracts, under Lanusse, with an aluminum company in which Gelbard was a large shareholder (María Seoane, *El burgués maldito*, 2. ed., Espejo De La Argentina (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1998), Chapter 5–8.

²⁷ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 132–3.

²⁸ Fine, Morris and Himmelfarb, Milton, *American Jewish Year Book, 1976, Volume 76*, 274. For more on the trade negotiations with Libya and López Rega's affinity for that country and Muammar Gaddafi, see Martin Edwin Andersen, *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the "Dirty War"* (Westview Press, 1993), 144–145.

²⁹ Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 126.

Zionism, the Jewish-*sinarquía* conspiracy in the Middle East and in Argentina.”³⁰ In responding to antisemitism, the members of the community echoed the broader divisions on the questions of radicalism and the left. Where the leftwing Zionist youth continued to engage with the national left while forcefully denouncing the “fascist right,” their older counterparts began to reject both and conflate incidents of antisemitism from either “extreme.”³¹

Divisions also emerged on the geo-politics of Israel and the Palestinian question. Palestinian rights was the most contentious issue, with the leftwing Zionist youth much more sympathetic to their cause. The event with the most repercussion was the Ma’alot Massacre in May 1974, when three members from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, took 115 hostages in an elementary school, ultimately killing 25 people, mostly children, when Israeli soldiers raided the building.³² The community joined together in a massive protest against these actions, but underlying this cohesion were different positions on the Palestinian question.³³ As a whole, events in the Middle East and turmoil at home led many to rethink the meaning of Jewish ethnicity and Jews’ place in the nation, even as the leftwing Zionist youth clung to and even deepened their commitment to ethno-radicalism.

Left Wing Zionist Youth

The institutional protagonists of the leftist youth included both old and new players. *Nueva Sión*, while facing significant financial difficulties, continued to report on the activities of the Zionist left and serve as an important voice for articulating its ideology and political commitments. A powerful new player was the *Juventud Sionista Socialista* (Socialist Zionist Youth, JSS), founded in 1972 from the various youth groups that defined themselves as “*sionistas socialistas realizadores*,” (Aliyah-oriented, socialist, Zionists). One of their fundamental goals was to form a powerful block within the *Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentina* (Argentine Jewish Youth Confederation, CJA), and they were successful and came to dictate the confederation’s agenda.³⁴ This resulted in the “right-wing” groups, those associated with religious and rightwing Zionism (unsympathetic to the socialist project and in favor of a more expansive definition of Israel’s borders) deciding to form their own confederation in

³⁰ “El pueblo judío todo y la colectividad judía de Argentina en particular, fueron alevosamente injuriados en un programa televisado por el Canal 7,” *Informativo DAIA*, March 1974, #70, 7. *La Luz* quoted Szyozorik saying that “the Talmudic-Kabalistic-Rabbinic religion is a political vehicle for international Jewish *sinarquía*” and that “Israel is a fictitious nation,” (“Vil insulto por TV a la colectividad judía,” *La Luz*, March 8, 1974, as re-printed in “*Informativo DAIA*, March 1974, #70, 10).

³¹ Carassai has pointed to a growing disdain for the two “ultras,” both left in right, in the burgeoning human rights organizations. He refers to this as the incipient form of the “two demons theory” which most scholars assume only emerged as an apology for the repression of the military dictatorship (Carassai, “Antes de que Anochezca.”

³² On the details from the perspective of the DAIA, see Suplemento, *Informativo DAIA*, #2, 1974.

³³ On the protest see “‘La acción antijudía de los países árabes en nuestro medio omite contradicciones internas para concentrarse en una guerra global contra Israel, el sionismo y el pueblo judío’ señalóse en la última reunión plenaria,” *Informativo DAIA*, May-June, 1972, #72, 4-5.

³⁴ “JSS: Por un sionismo revolucionario,” *Informativo DAIA*, November-December, 1974, #75, 46. In contrast to many of the prominent Zionist groups that formed the JSS, as a conglomerate, they refused to align with any Israeli party or faction, claiming that “these positions are not aligned with our own principles or are tactically detrimental to our work in Argentina,” (45-6).

1974.³⁵ The fundamental concerns of the leftwing Zionist youth remained the same: to prove the revolutionary credentials of Zionism so as to reconcile their own identities, prevent politicized assimilation, and gain acceptance from the Argentine left.

These leftwing youth organizations continued to define themselves in contrast to the older generation. Adapting the ideology of Ber Borojov, pioneer of class-based analysis of diaspora Jews, the JSS argued that the middle class position of most Jews in Argentina meant an ongoing desire to abandon Jewish values to succeed professionally. It also made Jews “particularly vulnerable” to being scapegoated for the nation’s problems by those truly responsible—“imperialism and the rural and industrial upper class.”³⁶ The disdain for life in the diaspora, at least on a theoretical level, engendered many familiar critiques of the older generation’s lack of Zionist conviction. Aligned with the socialist-Zionist framework, Leonardo Senkman, then a communal activist, argued to a Jewish youth group in 1974 that the community’s own institutions, including Jewish schools, the political parties aligned with the Israeli parties, and the AMIA as a whole were often anachronistic, disconnected from the masses, and, worse, were reproducing the diaspora.³⁷

This critique extended to the older generation’s approach to antisemitism. In March of 1974, Iosef Ben Ami, writing in *Nueva Sión*, claimed that only the Zionist youth and other “progressive youth sectors” were responding boldly to all acts of antisemitism, “without false illusion or expectations.” This was in contrast to those who ignored antisemitism, those who panicked, and those, presumably the DAIA, who responded by “idealistically appealing to abstract slogans and supposed humanistic values, expecting everything from public opinion.” When it came to the question of left-wing antisemitism, meanwhile, the critique shifted. Ben Ami argued against those who “use the errors of the left and the revolutionary movement for their own political interests, thereby creating the risk of opening an even bigger gulf with the Jewish youth estranged from our people.”³⁸ While the youth claimed that when it came to right-wing antisemitism the older generation did not react with enough force, when it came to the left, the older generation was overreacting to “mistakes.” This criticism also reiterated the claim that had been so common in previous years—that if the community did not align itself with the Argentine left, it would lose its own youth to politicized assimilation.

As the discussion on antisemitism suggests, the leftwing Zionist youth had lost some of their ambivalence about the national left. Over the past fifteen years, Zionist youth had debated what the proper level of engagement in Argentine politics was, so as to be engaged in the leftwing national cause but not lose sight of the Zionist struggle or their Jewish particularity. In 1973 and 1974, even as they continued to denounce diaspora life, and the Jewish institutions perpetuating it, they seemed to reach a consensus on involvement in the national left. As

³⁵ On the schism, see *American Jewish Year Book, 1976*, Volume 76, 268.

³⁶ “JSS: Por un sionismo revolucionario,” *Informativo DAIA*, November-December, 1974, #75, 46. Representatives from Ijud Habonim, one of the socialist Zionist group active in the CJJA similarly integrated these two discourses, arguing that life in the diaspora “Generates a strong trend of imitation, similar to that of the oppressed nations, pager to mimic the oppressor, to acquire its characteristics, to have some of the socio-economic benefits.” The representatives then went on to claim, as was common, that the “only solution to this problem is socialist Zionism, this is the national and social liberation of the Jewish people, in their own society, without oppressed and oppressors,” (“Reportaje a un Movimiento Juvenil: Ijud Habonim,” *Informativo DAIA*, June 23, 1975, #79, 12

³⁷ Leonardo Senkman, “Jornadas de discusiones juveniles comunitarias,” Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 22b.

³⁸ “Ecos de la sesión plenaria de la DAIA del 11 de Marzo,” *Informativo DAIA*, March 1974, #71, 3, 10. Taken from *Nueva Sión*, April 10, 1974.

mentioned above, in 1973 they wanted a representative of the Juventud Peronista to be present at the event commemorating the Israeli independence rather than the politicians that the older generation tended to invite, who were inevitably “pro-Israel liberals.”³⁹ More broadly, these groups were increasingly confident that they were making inroads with the left. In an interview with the *Informativo DAIA* in 1974, the JSS representatives boasted that the organization’s visible participation in protests against Pinochet’s coup “had a great impact on the left and counteracted the bad image of Zionism in these circles.” This along with its important work during the Yom Kippur war had made the JSS “respected as a force and as an ideology by important sectors of the community and of the national left.” All together, the JSS claimed to be “a name that opens many doors.” *Nueva Sión*, for its part, was reaching even those assimilated youth who “were militants in some segment of the Argentine left.”⁴⁰

The youth were now clear on their commitment to join the Argentine struggle, but they were much less clear on what this meant, and especially whether it included taking up arms. There are scattered references in the historical material and scholarship to self-defined Zionist groups that somehow participated in guerilla actions. The most remembered incident was a group of young people in Córdoba who broke away from the leftwing Zionist “Comité de Coordinación” to form the Línea Socialista Sionista. The new organization’s primary goal was to be more deeply involved in the armed struggle, and many of its members joined the ERP.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the JSS, the CJJA, and *Nueva Sión* did not take a clear stand on violence even as they generally condoned participation in the Argentine struggle alongside the Zionist one. Pointing to this ambivalence, Marco Blank, a former Zionist who opted instead for participation in “*la Tendencia*,” the radicalized segment of the Juventud Peronista, wrote a letter to *Nueva Sión* in September 1974 to argue that leftwing Zionist youth employed an “inflamed, abstract, discourse” but were not truly serious about revolution in Israel or in Argentina. Iosef Ben-Ami responded by claiming that “the Jewish youth, now more than ever, realize that their liberation as Jews and as men will happen by traveling the revolutionary path, in Argentina, Latin America, and Israel.” As a testament to this fact, Ben-Ami noted that *Nueva Sión* had taken a position on the Cordobazo, the massacre in Trelew, freedom of the press and the death of Juan Perón.⁴² Nonetheless, Ben Ami’s defense undermined his own claims: editorializing on these events allowed for expressions of sympathy for the broadly defined left, but did not require taking a stand on the violent left, which was increasingly the protagonist. Still, the engagement with the national left had become far less ambivalent, which would become grounds for others within the community to turn against their ideology and politics.

In addition, their self-definition as leftists continued to shape their analysis of the Middle East. The basic framework from the Yom Kippur War onward was that the imperialist powers

³⁹ “Por qué la comunidad no festejo todavía los 25 años de Israel,” *Nueva Sión*, June 2, 1973, as Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 57.

⁴⁰ JSS: Por un sionismo revolucionario,” *Informativo DAIA*, November-December, 1974, #75, 45-7.

⁴¹ Joel Barromi, “Israel frente a la Dictadura militar Argentina. El episodio de Córdoba y el Caso Timerman,” in *El legado del autoritarismo: Derechos humanos y antisemitismo en la Argentina contemporánea*, ed. Leonardo Senkman, (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalem: Nuevohacer, Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1995), 327). Several of my interviewees in Córdoba recounted the story of the youth in Córdoba who supported or even joined the ERP (Paulina (Perla) Mangupli. Interview with author. Digital Audio Recording. Córdoba, Argentina, June 25, 2009; Herberto Reisin. Interview with author. Digital Audio Recording. Córdoba, Argentina, June 23, 2009. There seems to have been a similar incident in La Plata, which will be discussed further below.

⁴² David Ben-Ami, “Respuesta de un sionista,” *Nueva Sión*, September 9, 1974, as cited in Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 51–2.

(the United States and the USSR), along with the ruling classes in Israel and the Arab States, benefited from war.⁴³ The slogan of these years thus became, “in the Middle East, only peace is revolutionary.”⁴⁴ Pointing to a fallacy of the Yom Kippur War one flyer read, “In this war there are workers who fight against workers, a sufficient ploy to stop the revolutionary process in both nations.”⁴⁵ This implied a criticism of Israel, emphasizing on several occasions how Israelis’ “chauvinism and vengeance” was perpetuating belligerent actions.⁴⁶ The JSS added to this a critique of the increasing disparity of wealth in Israel, giving these Zionist activists a clear sense that their role as Zionists was to fight for peace in Israel and a redistribution of wealth.⁴⁷

The more difficult question was how to respond to the Palestinian question. In a flyer after the Ma’alot attack, the JSS claimed that they had demanded that “Israel, the Arab countries, and the world community,” establish a Palestinian state to enable the “normalization” of the Palestinian nation. At the same time, the PLO’s efforts to destroy Israel “have nothing to do with a real revolutionary movement.”⁴⁸ This effort to balance their support for Palestinian national liberation with condemnation of the PLO was common among the leftwing Zionist youth, but there were other Zionist groups that did express sympathy for the “Palestinian guerillas.” In May of 1974, Joel Shani wrote a piece in *Nueva Sión* entitled “*Israel, Los Guerrilleros y el Problema Palestino*,” (Israel, the Guerillas, and the Palestinian Problem) in which he pointed to the tension surrounding the question of the PLO for “Jewish youth, including militants in the Jewish [national liberation movement].” When it came to the Ma’alot attack, he went on, some of these Jewish youth explained it as “the reflection of the desperation of a neglected people. And they justify. Or pardon. Or ‘understand.’” To Shani, who reflected the most common position in the leftwing Zionist community, the Palestinian “guerillas,” failed the test of legitimate guerillas because they “use their own national misfortune to justify their attempts at genocide, hiding under the romantic image of the guerilla struggle to create general sympathy.”⁴⁹

In the leftwing youth community, this conflict and others existed within a broader consensus surrounding ethno-radicalism. The various groups continued to emphasize Aliyah-oriented Zionism as the key component of Jewish ethnicity, the abnormality of the diaspora, and the need to engage with the national left. How exactly to pursue this engagement remained

⁴³ The JSS explained that the “big powers” use the conflict as “an instrument of control over the world, in this case through their insertion in a zone vital to humanity due to its strategic location and petroleum recourses, (“JSS: Por un Sionismo Revolucionario,” *Informativo DAIA*, November-December 1974, 47). See also “Reportaje a un Movimiento Juvenil: Ijud Habonim,” *Informativo DAIA*, June 23, 1975, #79, 12. For an overview of the war and the significant role played by the United States and the Soviet Union, see Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1998*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1999).

⁴⁴ “En fervorosa concentración la juventud judía vibró consubstanciada con la lucha del pueblo Israel,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 20, 1973, 10. A flyer of the Jewish technical school ORT during the Yom Kippur War elaborated on this position: “We demand: peace is the only revolutionary path in the Middle East. No to wars that stop the social liberation of the nations. Out with the imperialism that begin the wars. Yes to Zionism,” (“En fervorosa concertación la juventud judía vibró consubstanciada con la lucha del pueblo Israel,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 20, 1973, 10).

⁴⁵ “La guerra en Buenos Aires,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 27, 1973, 7-8.

⁴⁶ Joel Shani, “Israel, los guerrilleros y el problema palestino,” *Nueva Sión*, May 24, 1974, as re-printed in *Informativo DAIA*, May-June, 1974, #72, 13-14; “Volantes repartidos durante la concentración frente a la embajada de Israel,” *Informativo DAIA Suplemento*, May-June, 1974, #72, 14.

⁴⁷ “JSS: Por un sionismo revolucionario,” *Informativo DAIA*, November-December 1974, #75, 47.

⁴⁸ “Volantes repartidos durante la concentración frente a la embajada de Israel,” *Informativo DAIA*, #72, May-June, 1974, 14.

⁴⁹ Joel Shani, “Israel, los guerrilleros y el problema palestino,” *Nueva Sión*, May 24, 1974, as re-printed in *Informativo DAIA*, May-June, 1974, #72.

contested or deliberately unresolved. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, most Zionist youth activists had maintained that their primary struggle was Zionism and their goal Aliyah, and rejected, at least rhetorically, political involvement in Argentina. Nonetheless, it seems that by the mid-1970s these groups no longer deemed political involvement as in tension with their other goals. The positions, and contradictions, of the leftwing youth had extended to much of the community in the years leading up to 1973. But this would become less and less true as the older generation, and a growing number of youth, began to contest the leftwing Zionist youth's positioning on the Argentine left, Zionist ideology, and the conflicts in the Middle East.

Beyond Liberation

In 1973, Nissim Elnecavé of *La Luz* launched a series of attacks on the leftwing Zionist youth, which he would reiterate down through the first year of the dictatorship. The general thrust was that the engagement with the third-world left had distorted Zionist ideology, and, worse, the community's leadership had been complicit in this. A prime example was the *Organización Sionista Argentina's* (Argentine Zionist Organization, OSA) sponsorship of the leftwing Zionist magazine *Raíces*.⁵⁰ He was not alone in this critique. In 1973, others sympathetic to the Israeli right, the *Federación Sionista Liberal Argentina*, *Mizrachi-Hapoel Hamizrachi*, the *Movimiento Sionista Apartidario*, and the *Unión Sionista Revisionista* (Jerut), split from the OSA, opposed to its leftwing message, and formed a new right-wing federation.⁵¹ The new federation did not participate in the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Israeli independence that the DAIA, AMIA, OSA, and CJJA coordinated and instead organized its own celebration of "75 Years of Herzlian Zionism."⁵² *Mundo Israelita* explained that the invocation of Theodore Herzl, father of modern Zionism, in the group's "diatribes" was intended as a contrast to the socialist Zionism of the other side. *Mundo Israelita* astutely noted that this rejection of socialism was a "subconscious echo of the debates regarding what kind of nation the Argentines wish for."⁵³

The denunciations from the right-wing segments of the community grew more severe in the next years, in further "subconscious echo" of national politics. Not only had the youth distorted Zionist ideology with their commitment to "third-worldism and the new left," they had even betrayed the Zionist cause with their support for the Palestinians.⁵⁴ After the Ma'alot massacre, *La Luz* began its report by noting that "certain Jewish leftist groups, that bang their chest in guilt over their Zionist faith," had in the past defended Nayef Hawatmeh, the leader of

⁵⁰ The previous chapter pointed to projects like *Raíces* as efforts to reach leftwing youth and as indicative of the absorption or at least the condoning of liberationist constructs of identity. Echoing this analysis but with a hostile flair, Elnecavé read *Raíces* as a clear sign of the OSA's complicity with the youth and claimed, upon its closing in October 1973, that it had never been a true Zionist publication. Not only did it offer only "a few passing allusions to Zionism and Israel," but its biased stance meant that even these references were not "always consonant with the national interests of the Jews," ("Raíces: el fin de una aventura desquiciadora," *La Luz*, October 5, 1973 as cited in Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 86.

⁵¹ "Un reportaje al presidente de DAIA," *Informativo DAIA*, May 19, 1975, #78, 14; Kahan cites a suggestion that *La Luz* is the hard right in *Nueva Sión*: "*La Luz* is to the Jewish press what *Cabildo* is to the Argentine reality," on October 1, 1974 (Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 87).

⁵² *American Jewish Year Book, 1974-5*, Volume 75, 362.

⁵³ "Colectividad: Un año de transiciones e intentos para neutralizar la crisis," *Mundo Israelita*, September 29, 1973, 23-4.

⁵⁴ Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 54.

the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, saying that he had made gestures towards peace. *La Luz* went on: “This supposed peace, is now bloodied with the cowardly assassination at close range of 16 children and 5 adults—in addition to the fallen terrorists—and around 50 injured, the majority of whom were children between 12 and 14 years old.”⁵⁵ That same year, Saul Patrigh, of the Liberal Zionist Federation, denounced the “monstrous ideological distortions in many sectors of Zionist youth, some of whom are not sure whether Zionism is a Jewish or a Palestinian liberation movement.”⁵⁶ While most leftwing Zionist youth were themselves concerned with those who supported Palestinian “guerillas,” these right-wing voices delegitimized the whole leftwing Zionist community as Palestinian apologists.

La Luz would continue over the next few years to impugn the central institutions for their indulgence of the leftwing youth. Writing in 1975, it denounced the DAIA’s and the OSA’s “constant flirtation and complacency...towards the third-world Jewish youth.”⁵⁷ Nonetheless, this critique belied an increasingly complex and at times estranged relationship between the leftwing youth and the leaders of these central institutions. 1973 and 1974 were particularly tense years. As noted above, the celebration of Israel’s 25th Anniversary in May 1973 was postponed over the question of the Juventud Peronista. While the members of the older generation had largely embraced the discourse of ethno-radicalism, they were not comfortable with the youth’s willingness to publicly align itself with the Juventud Peronista. This tension continued into 1974: bucking a longstanding tradition, the CJJA did not participate in the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising that year.⁵⁸ There is no direct evidence that disapproval of the Zionist youth was the reason, but there were oblique references to generational tension.⁵⁹

Yet the community’s institutions had by no means expelled or disavowed their leftwing youth. These youth played a key organizing role in the demonstration against the Ma’alot Massacre in May 1974 leading Nehemías Resnizky, now president of the DAIA, to reflect: “At this moment, with the exception of the Juventud Peronista, there is no sector in the nation that can organize in less than 48 hours a mobilization of the magnitude and transcendence that marked the Jewish repudiation of the Ma’alot massacre.” This underscored that not only did the youth see themselves as linked to the youth activism in broader Argentine society, but that the older generation also embraced this parallel, particularly when it came to the youth’s mobilizing potential. Events like this, he went on, required communal leaders to better understand the youth, despite their tendency to heckle speakers and shout their critiques. While he too “had been attacked at times by these screams,” he called for dialogue and resisting “the easy path of

⁵⁵ “Estremecedora masacre de niños por terroristas árabes,” *La Luz*, May 17, 1974, as re-printed in *Informativo DAIA*, Suplemento #2, May 1974, #72, 10. *La Luz* was not the only voice to issue such denunciations and it often reported on others. At the meeting of the *Consejo Central de Educación Judía* in July 1974 the representative from La Plata, Manuel Graiver complained that youth leaders and emissaries from Israel “recruit the children who have just finished Jewish school and try to lead them towards a total distortion of the Jewish identity.” Graiver went on to note that “the youth organized in a *jalutziano* movement did not join the mourning for the massacre in Ma’alot because they said that the “understood” the “‘liberating’ motives of the ‘Palestinian gorillas,’” (Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 53).

⁵⁶ *American Jewish Year Book, 1976*, Volume 76, 266–7.

⁵⁷ “Dulzin fustigó a los dirigentes de la comunidad judeoargentina,” *La Luz*, October 24, 1975, 7.

⁵⁸ “En diversos y significativos actos se rememoró la gesta que libraron los judíos del gueto de Varsovia contra el nazismo,” *Informativo DAIA*, Suplemento April 1974, 1.

⁵⁹ “Algunos actos conmemorativos realizados en el interior del país,” *Informativo DAIA*, Suplemento April 1974, 8.

immediate rejection.”⁶⁰ Whether conscious or subconscious, it is difficult not to see Resnizky’s words as a reference to Perón’s denunciation of the members of youth at the May Day celebration earlier that month. In contrast to Perón, Resnizky recognized the great organizing capabilities of the youth and validated the legitimacy of their unique voice. Striking a similarly conciliatory tone, the *Informativo DAIA* described the Zionist youth groups being, “for a long time now, something like Socrates’ famous gadfly, biting the community and keeping it awake.”⁶¹

Even given this more respectful attitude towards the youth, the older generation was definitely moving away from ethno-radicalism in 1973 and 1974. As the Juventud Peronista conflict shows, the division between the youth and the older generation was at least in part due to an explicit resistance to the youth’s efforts to associate the community with that segment of the left. If in the years leading up to 1973 the leaders of the central institutions had embraced a similar discourse as the youth—that Jewishness involved a struggle for social justice, that Aliyah-oriented Zionism was a revolutionary endeavor and should be the community’s fundamental goal, that the Jewish community must make clear that it was on the side of national liberation in Argentina—this discourse began to lose prominence or be actively rejected in the following years. This change unfolded in conversations about ethnic identity, the geo-politics surrounding Israel, and antisemitism in Argentina, but implicitly hinged on a critique of radicalism and violent extremism. What emerged in place of the unified claims of ethno-radicalism were calls for more diverse ways of experiencing Jewish identity, a pluralistic attitude to different ideas about Zionism, and claims that the community’s interests were aligned with the “democratic” sectors that found themselves in between the two “extremes.”

Jewishness and its Multiple Meanings

While *La Luz* was extreme in its denunciation, the leaders of the central institutions and a growing number of youth also faulted the leftwing youth for being too politicized and too beholden to the Argentine left. When it came to the implications for the construction of Jewish ethnicity, leaders of the AMIA, DAIA, OSA and some youth groups called for a move away from the ideological inflexibility that emphasized Aliyah-oriented Zionism as the only valid form of Jewishness. Underlying this transition was a fundamental shift in assumptions about assimilation. Since the mid-1960s, the primary worry had been politicized assimilation, even if, as some noted, this led the community’s institutions to overlook all other forms of disinterest in Jewish identity. In these years, leftwing youth continued to be concerned above all with those who became militants in the national left and rejected a Jewish or Zionist identity. Nonetheless, other voices in the community were beginning to believe that other, less overtly political, Jewish values, might appeal to assimilating youth. As such, these voices began to call for the restoration of elements of the Jewish tradition that had fallen by the wayside in the previous years, and, most of all, for a greater acceptance of diverse forms of Jewish identification.

A few of these critiques came in straightforward polemics intended to reach the radicalized Zionist youth themselves. At the OSA’s 1974 Convention, President Lázaro Rubinson, addressed the “Youth who preach Aliyah-oriented (*realizador*) Zionism which we

⁶⁰ “La acciona antijudía de los países árabes en nuestro medio omite contradicciones internas para concentrarse en una guerra global contra Israel, el sionismo y el pueblo judío’ señalase en la ultima reunión plenaria,” *Informativo DAIA* #72, May-June, 1974, 6.

⁶¹ “Reportajes a los movimientos juveniles sionistas,” *Informativo DAIA*, November-December, 1974, #75, 43.

applaud and encourage, those who call for Aliyah and follow through, and those that call for Aliyah and are still among us.” His lesson to them was that “the Jew is not formed solely through political motivations, nor through national liberation. Zionism, and I said this two years ago when I assumed this position, does not replace a faith, a religion, or a millennial Jewish culture.”⁶² While he still embraced Aliyah as the fundamental goal, he contended that the youth focus on the politics of Aliyah and National Liberation had led them to overlook that the “new Jewish man” in Israel had to be rooted in “the past, in the land, and in the history.”

Coming from a different angle, but also critiquing the distorting power of politicization, the AMIA’s youth publication, *Lejá*, published a piece by Abraham Golek, the director of a leadership-training program at *Hebraica*. He began with an anecdote about a journalist meeting with a group of Chinese students who recognized that Mao Zedong was a man, and men can err, but claimed that Mao would never err. To Golek, this made the belief in Mao a religion rather than an ideology. To him, the youth in the Jewish community were guilty of a similar offense, of only appreciating insights that matched those of their leader Ber Borjov. When people are too ideological, even subject to a “progressive” ideology, he argued, they risk becoming reactionary. Zionism, he argued, was a movement to “realize the national existence of the Jewish people,” but beyond that there was room for debate about the content.⁶³

Many youth were also tiring of the JSS’s ethno-radicalism and began to emphasize a Jewishness predicated on different values. While there was a mass mobilization surrounding the Yom Kippur War, and the JSS credited itself with effectively communicating with the national left at this juncture, it was losing sway among some committed Jewish activists. In an interview with *La Opinión*, a member of the liberal-religious Conservative youth movement, *Ramah*, described the group as “apolitical, but due to being religious, essentially conservative.” A 21-year-old female activist explained that within Jewish dietary laws there were foods that were dairy, and those that were meat, and still others that were “neutral,” or “parve.” When it came to the question of Middle Eastern politics, she explained, “some say Israel is imperialist, other say it is not...In response to the two positions, I would take an intermediate one. Mine would be ideologically “parve.”⁶⁴ This made clear her disinterest in the activism associated with the leftwing youth, but also marked a point of divergence from the more clearly politicized views of *Ramah* only a few years earlier.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the key causes of the 1974 schism in the CJJA, in which the “right-wing” groups formed the *Federación Juvenil Sionista* (Zionist Youth Federation), was resistance to the politicization and control of the leftwing youth.⁶⁵ For *B’nei Akiba*, an orthodox, Zionist youth group, choosing which group to merge with was a difficult decision. While this group was committed to the model of Aliyah and socialism, it also believed deepened religious observance would appeal to young people. These youth organized what they saw as more spiritual and authentically observant services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for youth, in contrast to the “pseudo-religiosity” of the older generation. There were three other issues that drove them to split away from the leftwing youth: that the left “refused to brand Palestinian groups as terrorists,” that it had not been interested in fighting for religious freedom for Jews in

⁶² “Debemos asumir una lucida introspección del pasado y el porvenir,” *Informativo DAIA*, May-June, 1974, #72, 8-9.

⁶³ Abraham Golek, “Las religiones laicas,” *Lejá*, Publicación del Departamento de Juventud, #6, 1975, 12-15.

⁶⁴ “Simplemente que haya paz,” *La Opinión*, October 10, 1973, as re-printed in *Informativo DAIA*, October, 1973, 9.

⁶⁵ *American Jewish Year Book*, 1976, 268. On the split within the CJJA see also (Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 86-7.

the Soviet Union, and that its publications highlighted only “non-Jewish ideologues” rather than the ideology of social justice found in the Torah.⁶⁶

Taken as a whole, these various critiques of the leftwing approach suggests a broad-based effort to replace the hegemony of ethno-radicalism. These critics shared a clear denunciation of the youth’s politicization and alignment with the Argentine left, but they offered diverse suggestions for what more authentic Jewishness might look like, ranging from a greater emphasis on religion towards a more open and multi-faceted discussion on the meaning of Zionism. These conversations laid the groundwork for a more pluralistic approach to Jewish identity developed in the following years, an approach that would even win over many leftwing youth as their own ideological commitments began to waver.

Geo-Politics and the Decline of National Liberation

It was in the politics surrounding Israel during and after the Yom Kippur War, that many community members, including the leaders of the central institutions, most definitively moved away from the revolutionary, national-liberation formulations of Zionism. The youth continued to cast blame on the US and the USSR, as well as the ruling classes both in Israel and the Arab nations, for war in the Middle East. The DAIA, OSA, and AMIA, meanwhile, exclusively blamed the “Soviet Arab or Arab Soviet” forces, which sought only the “destruction and genocide of the State of Israel and its nation.” The emphasis was still on imperialism, but Resnizky underscored, “Here we always speak of ‘yanqui’ imperialism, but there is never a clear understanding of imperialism from the Soviet Union.”⁶⁷

This came with increasing gratitude to the United States for its role in the war, though not without ambivalence. *Mundo Israelita* explained the US support for Israel as the result of the “bourgeois Jewish lobby.” At the same time, the paper noted, that for Israel this was “the only alternative that remains—after having knocked on all doors and gotten no response—to be able to successfully confront all the reactionaries (close and far) that question its national existence.”⁶⁸ This came with mournful statements about how the third world had abandoned Israel. Journalist Herman Schiller wrote that once Israel had made historic “great efforts to ally itself with the nations of Africa and Asia,” but after the war, he wrote with sadness, the photographs of Ben Gurion dressed in Burman style with U Nu in Rangoon and Aba Eben with Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya now “seem to be from another planet.” Israel’s only remaining choice was to ally with the United States.⁶⁹

In the next year, the community’s elite softened its position towards American Jewry, and the United States more broadly, due to the support lent to Israel. At a meeting in late 1973,

⁶⁶ “B’nei Akiba: Por un sionismo religioso,” *Informativo DAIA*, November-December, 1974, 43-4; See also “Cartas a redacción, *La Luz*, September, 12, 1975, 37.

⁶⁷ “La existencia del pueblo judío podría ser triturada si no adoptamos actitudes claras y firmes” dijo el presidente del CJL en una sesión plenaria de DAIA, *Informativo DAIA*, December 1973, #66-68, 7.

⁶⁸ “De Semana en Semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 20, 1973, 2. A week later, *Mundo Israelita* contended with similar questions (“De Semana en Semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 27, 1973, 2). And again, the following week, the paper felt the need yet again to deal with the question of US support for Israel, noting that it afforded leftists worldwide more ammunition to question the legitimacy of Israel and its socialist credentials. The paper, however, was quick to legitimate this relationship by noting that the Israeli left had accepted it as necessary while the right was forcefully opposed to it, (“De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, November 3, 1973, 2).

⁶⁹ Herman Schiller, “Israel-África: El amargo desencuentro,” *Informativo DAIA*, Informe Especial, #3, May-June 1974, no page.

Resnizky expressed some hostility towards that community. He was miffed that Israeli TV had broadcast US-Jewish rallies supporting Israel during the Yom Kippur War but not those of Argentine Jews. Nonetheless, Isaac Goldenberg, who had made Aliyah and was visiting Buenos Aires as the president of the *Congreso Judío Latinoamericana* (Latin American Jewish Congress, CJL), found Resnizky's response petty and responded harshly. He credited the image on Israeli television of "our brothers of the North" as "a fresh breeze" that inspired the Israelis during the war and that was undoubtedly responsible for encouraging the government of the United States to support Israel, even in the face of counter pressure from "the large petroleum companies."⁷⁰ Despite Resnizky's hostility in that instance, respect for the American Jewish community and the United States grew progressively over the next years. A series of articles reprinted in the *Informativo DAIA* expressed confidence that the United States would not succumb to the pressure of higher oil prices and therefore would not abandon Israel.⁷¹ In late 1974, the *Informativo DAIA* lauded the US congress for refusing a trading deal with the USSR until the latter promised to ease restrictions on Jewish emigration.⁷² While the line within the Argentine Zionist community had long been that the American Jewish community was not Zionist enough—claiming that Jews in the United States did not emphasize Aliyah and instead focused on just tourism or donations to Israel—in this new geo-political analysis the leaders of the Argentine community were striking a more admiring and appreciative note.

Finally, while the youth were struggling to reconcile their calls for national liberation with support for Palestinian rights, the representatives of the older generation were either silent or uninterested in Palestinian rights, and perhaps as a result, abandoned discussions of Israel's "national liberation" almost entirely. Responding to the attack in Ma'alot, *Mundo Israelita* did not mention the plight of Palestinians, and instead focused on how, despite this event, "Israel is a nation and a people that, despite its errors and weaknesses, will not cease in its defense of humanism, in its unflinching search for Arab-Israeli dialogue."⁷³ When, in 1974, UNESCO voted to include a representative from the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the press release of the DAIA, OSA and AMIA claimed that Arafat was not trying to "liberate" the Palestinians, "who are not prisoners nor are they subjugated." Instead, he was working "to annihilate the State of Israel, one of the most extraordinary epics of civilization of our century."⁷⁴ In these appeals, Israel was a defender of humanism and civilization against the inhumanity and barbarism of the Palestinian terrorists. This echoed framings of Israel prevalent in the 1950s and early 1960s, and diverged significantly from calls for Palestinian liberation alongside Israel's.

When the AMIA began issuing a youth publication, *Lejá*, in 1974, it was similarly dismissive of Palestinian interests even while recognizing this was a pressing question for the youth. One piece by chief editor Sergio Blumenkranc did hit many of the same notes as the conversations among the leftwing youth: a discussion of Zionism as the "legitimate Jewish national liberation movement and the State of Israel as its maximum expression"; sympathy for the Palestinian nation and its right to self-determination; and an assertion that Palestinians lived

⁷⁰ "'La Existencia del pueblo judío podría ser triturada si no adoptamos actitudes claras y firmes' - Dijo el Presidente del CJL en una Sesión Plenaria de DAIA, *Informativo DAIA*, December 1973, #66-68, 9

⁷¹ *Informativo DAIA*, Oct 1973, 30-32.

⁷² "Tiene imprevisibles derivaciones para todos los judíos el acuerdo que permitirá la libre emigración de los judíos de la URSS," *Informativo DAIA*, November-December, #75, 38.

⁷³ "La sangre de niños," *Mundo Israelita*, May 18, 1974 as re-printed in *Informativo DAIA*, Suplemento, May-June 1974, #72, 8.

⁷⁴ "Una solicitada de las instancias centrales, frente a las arbitrariedades de la UN y del UNESCO," *Informativo DAIA*, November-December, 1974, #75, 14.

in a state of cultural, political and economic repression. Nonetheless, the emphasis was on the PLO's "retrograde" efforts to destroy Israel. At its close, the piece asked, "Is a peaceful solution that respects the legitimate rights of all the nations that live in the region possible?" It left the question open, but the tone of the article was fundamentally pessimistic.⁷⁵ The subsequent pieces in *Lejá* on the subject were reprints from Israeli authors, and were generally much less sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. One piece entitled the "*Guerrilla Palestina*" (Palestinian Guerilla) actively worked to de-legitimize the idea of a Palestinian nation. The only reason the Palestinians had any national identity, the piece argued, was because the economic development the Jews orchestrated made "a country traditionally abandoned by the Arabs," a desirable location.⁷⁶ This was followed by a piece by Israeli journalist Ze'ev Schiff that pointed to a long history of terrorism at the hands of Arabs, all with the goal of "the destruction of what the Jews have build in the land of Israel." The years after the Yom Kippur war, meanwhile, had "inaugurated a new wave of terror characterized by the indiscriminate assassination of women and children." This justified "direct rule" (*dominio*) of the West Bank until the issue was resolved.⁷⁷

In several regards, the move away from the ethnic politics of the leftwing youth (and presumably radical politics more broadly) overlapped with the new discussions on the Middle East. Most overtly, various actors of the older generation and groups of dissident youth either denounced or deliberately ignored the sympathy of the leftwing youth for the Palestinian cause. Calls for a move away from the inflexible Zionism of the leftwing youth towards a more diverse array of Zionist identities, meanwhile, complemented the greater acceptance and appreciation for the Zionism of American Jews. Finally, the softening of the politicized, anti-imperialist Latin American identity likely allowed for a more generous reading of US actions during the Yom Kippur War, on the question of Soviet Jewry, and in the peace process. The other key question that unfolded simultaneously—that of repeated attacks on the Jewish community—also drove community leaders away from radicalized positions and towards an emphasis on democracy and human rights.

Anti-Semitism and the Struggle Against Fascism

In the midst of the Yom Kippur war, as various press outlets denounced Israel as an aggressive, imperialist power, *Mundo Israelita* asked "What could Juan Carlos Coral and Raúl Jassen have in common?" Socialist Juan Carlos Coral had argued in his periodical *Avanzada Socialista* that the only solution to the conflict in the Middle East, itself a "product of imperialist expansion," was "the disappearance of the Zionist State and the creation of a secular Palestinian State." Meanwhile, a known "fascist" Raúl Jassen had written in *Primera Plana* that "the Zionists of the diaspora—among them those that sabotage our nation" were undermining the efforts of the "nations of the third world" by supporting "the most aberrant form of imperialism and colonialism: sinarchic socialism." Whatever differences Coral and Jassen might have, *Mundo Israelita* went on to conclude, they were both calling for the destruction of Israel.⁷⁸ In his analysis of this same article in *Mundo Israelita*, Emmanuel Kahan notes that despite this equation between right and left, a broader look at the response to antisemitism and anti-Zionism

⁷⁵ "Sobre los palestinos y el pueblo judío," *Lejá*, Publicación del Departamento de Juventud de AMIA, #4, 38-9.

⁷⁶ "La guerrilla palestina," *Lejá*, Publicación del Departamento de Juventud de AMIA, #5, 47.

⁷⁷ "1920-1974 de Tel Jai a Naharia," *Lejá*, Publicación del Departamento de Juventud de AMIA, #5, 48-9.

⁷⁸ "La Guerra en Buenos Aires," *Mundo Israelita*, October 27, 1973, 7-8.

within the community makes clear that it did not see attacks from the right and the left as the same, given that “the questions directed at the ‘left’ tried to sustain dialogue, a negotiation, where it would recognize the legitimacy of the State of Israel and Zionism...With the right, on the contrary, the arguments did not try to convince the adversaries.”⁷⁹ Kahan’s observation is astute, but only accurate for particular groups at particular moments. Before the return of Perón and to an extent shortly after, even the community’s leading institutions did proceed in this way. In 1973 and 1974, the leftwing youth continued on this path in their attempts to engage with the national left. Nonetheless, these years also saw a notable shift away from this pattern among the community’s leaders and some youth groups. To them, the nature of antisemitism after Perón’s return and its relationship to the broader political process led to a more equitable denunciation of the “extremes” on either end of the political spectrum.

During the Yom Kippur War and the months after, the leaders of the DAIA emphasized that anti-Israel sentiment, hostility towards the Jews and accusations of *sinarquía* were coming from the Arab league, Arab diplomats in Buenos Aires, and petro-dollar funded propaganda. Nehemías Resnizky specifically pointed to the Algerian embassy and its ties with the left, the Libyan embassy with ties to the left and the fascist right, and the Syrian embassy as for working to “build consciousness among the Arab masses in our nation.” The threat of antisemitism was compounded by the fact that there were actually more people of Arab descent in Argentina and in positions of power, many of whom empathized with the “Arab cause.”⁸⁰ The response to these attacks came in a few registers. One was a reiteration of the now-common response to diffuse third-worldist ideas that emphasized that the “Jewish State initiated the path of anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East several decades ago.”⁸¹ Another fundamental and particularly timely tactic was to attack the foreign propaganda as dividing the “Argentine family” and undermining Peronist goals. During the Yom Kippur War, the DAIA held meetings with various Peronist leaders and “especially the president,” to make them aware of “Arab penetration.” The DAIA leaders emphasized that Perón had adopted “an effective and forceful anti-racist policy” during his first terms and had established a cordial relationship with Israel.⁸² The emphasis on the Peronist legacy was particularly necessary, because, as the DAIA, AMIA and OSA emphasized at a press conference, there was “a desperate, insidious attempt...to identify, at any cost, the popular movements, especially Justicialism, with the Arab cause.”⁸³ While the DAIA clearly recognized that antisemitism was not just a foreign imposition but also a tool used within the Peronist movement, particularly by the right, the DAIA deemphasized this during Cámpora presidency and Perón’s few months in office, seemingly confident that the right was not ascendant.⁸⁴

But in the next months, as union leaders and prominent personalities of the Peronist right launched attacks on Gelbard and frequently invoked *sinarquía* to blame Jews for the nation’s problems, Jewish leaders shifted their focus. Internal discussions increasingly described antisemitism as one of the symptoms of a “fascist” ascendancy within the Peronist movement

⁷⁹ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 72-73.

⁸⁰ “La existencia del pueblo judío podría Ser triturada si no adoptamos actitudes claras y firmes,” *Informativo DAIA*, December 1973, #66-68, 6.

⁸¹ “De semana en semana,” *Mundo Israelita*, October 20, 1973, 2. See also “América Latina constituye el epicentro de una vasta campaña antijudía empujada por la acción de los países árabes,” señaló el presidente de DAIA durante la última reunión plenaria,” *Informativo DAIA*, March 1974, #70.

⁸² “DAIA convoca a una trascendental conferencia de prensa,” *Informativo DAIA*, October 1973, 23.

⁸³ “DAIA convoca a una trascendental conferencia de prensa,” *Informativo DAIA*, October 1973, 21.

⁸⁴ Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura,” 65-6.

and the nation more broadly. The *Informativo DAIA* connected this fascism to the “old accusations of *criollo* Nazism” a suggestive reference to the local oligarchy.⁸⁵ On the other side of the struggle, according to Nehemías Resnizky was President Perón, who had a legacy of denouncing antisemitism, as well the “vast popular sectors” that hoped for the “unity and institutionalization of the nation.”⁸⁶ Upon Perón’s death, as various groups fought to claim his legacy, Resnizky celebrated his “revolution in peace,” with its success against the “denationalization of the economy, against the proletarianization of the middle classes, and against the pauperization of all the popular sectors.” Nonetheless, he directed attention at the “tiny reactionary minorities” that sought to capture the legacy of Perón despite the shared desire of “all citizens” for republican institutions, democratic legality, and continuing on the path of “national liberation.”⁸⁷ While there was still mention of national liberation, the emphasis was on constitutionalism, democracy, and republicanism in the face of an aggressive fascism or a potential military coup. Knowing that the Peronist legacy was in play, the DAIA published a small book entitled *Perón y el Pueblo Judío* (Perón and the Jewish People) in which it reprinted all of Perón’s pro-Israel and pro-Jewish statements.⁸⁸ Laura Schenquer has contended, in analyzing the DAIA’s discourse and lobbying in these years, that there was only mention of the incidents affecting Jews directly and they “represented this violence as if it were produced by groups that were carrying out an antisemitic campaign.”⁸⁹ Nonetheless, the example invoked here, and others that will be discussed below, suggest that while the focus remained on the attacks on Jews, these were understood as part of a broader rightwing or fascist campaign.

As this framework took hold, the community’s leaders increasingly grouped antisemitic or anti-Israel tendencies from the left with those on the right as threats to the nation’s stability and democracy. This was no longer merely a discursive strategy for critically engaging the left, but rather a seemingly genuine disdain for both extremes that was becoming common even in “progressive” segments of society.⁹⁰ At a Warsaw Ghetto uprising event in May 1974, Juan Gurevich, Secretary General of the DAIA, explained, “today we have the doubtful privilege of being attacked by two extremes, by the “ultras” on both sides, with the evident goal of confusing public opinion, and predisposing it against the Jews.”⁹¹ Similarly, *Mundo Israelita*, which had been sympathetic to the Peronist left through late 1973, in December 1974 blamed the rise in

⁸⁵ “ ‘Amerita Latina constituye el epicentro de una vasta campaña antijudío empujada por la acción de los países árabes’, señaló el presidente de DAIA durante la última reunión plenaria,” *Informativo DAIA*, March 1974, #70.

⁸⁶ This was part of a public speech at the community’s commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising (“31 aniversario, el judaísmo argentino rindió homenaje a los héroes del Gueto de Varsovia,” *Informativo DAIA, Suplemento*, April 1974.

⁸⁷ On these points he made specific reference to Ricardo Balbín’s eulogy as the expression of these shared desires, (“En la última sesión plenaria de DAIA se rindió homenaje a la memoria del extinto presidente Perón,” *Informativo DAIA*, July-August, #73, 1-2). See also *Mundo Israelita* on fascist opportunists after Perón’s death, “Hechos y resonancias,” *Mundo Israelita*, July 13, 1974 as cited in Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 61.

⁸⁸ “Reitero el doctor Resnizky el oportunismo y la estrategia global unificada que signan las pautas propagandísticas de la liga árabe,” *Informativo DAIA*, September-October 1974, 9.

⁸⁹ Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura,” 85.

⁹⁰ Carassai points to *La Opinión*, where Timerman wrote in 1975, “the battles and the barbarous assassination that today bloody the territory and fill its inhabitants with fear only have three participants: the army, the delinquent subversives of the right, and the delinquent subversives of the right. If the nation is not at war yet, it is only because it has not been announced. Argentines want a war against the terrorisms and they know they can win it” (Carassai, “Antes de que anochezca,” 73-4).

⁹¹ “Algunos actos conmemorativos realizados en el interior del país,” *Informativo DAIA, Suplemento*, April 1974, 7-8.

antisemitism as coming from, “extreme sectors of the reaction and the ultra-left.”⁹² The most notable sign of change, and division between the community leaders and the leftwing youth, was the unwillingness to engage with the left on their own terms. When the publication *Cuestionario*, edited by Rodolfo Terragno, a young activist in the Radical Party, remarked that Israeli conduct in the West Bank showed that Nazi concentration camps had “merely been training camps,” Resnizky and pro-secretary of the DAIA, Moisés Camji, wrote a letter of complaint to the director of the publication, Rodolfo Terragno. In the letter they refused to address the question of Palestinian rights, just as “we do not speak about terrorists whose daily “exploits” the newspapers report on.” Even as they equated Palestinian terrorists and Argentine terrorists, Resnizky and Camji denounced “this incredible falsification of the truth in equating Jews with the Nazis.” The DAIA leaders went on claim that a generally sensible editor must recognize that “on top of what is happening” in the nation, he was further dividing Argentines on questions that were “completely foreign from our world.”⁹³ The DAIA did assume *Cuestionario* to be an otherwise respectable publication, and was therefore willing to engage with Terragno, which it did not do with more extremist actors. But the change was palpable. In earlier years, community leaders might have opened a discussion about Israel’s legitimate right to national liberation or at least addressed in passing the rights of Palestinians. But now they shut down any discussion of either matter, and equated criticism with attempts to divide the nation at such a trying moment.

The growing schism between the leftwing Zionist youth and the rest of the community made 1973 and 1974 particularly tense, with the CJA’s choosing to sit out most communal events. The leftwing Zionist youth chose to support the increasingly embattled left, even as they maintained their hard-line commitment (at least rhetorically) to negating the diaspora. As for the rest of the community, it is difficult to unravel a clear cause and effect for explaining the fairly dramatic abandonment of the discussions of Zionism and Jewishness that had dominated the previous years. Did the justifications for Zionism as a national liberation process evaporate because of the third world’s abandonment of Israel or because of the disillusionment with the left in Argentina? Did the nature of antisemitism lead to the disdain for the “ultras” or did the Jewish community read their antisemitism in a particular way because of a growing disdain for their violent political tactics? Was it the shift in geo-politics or the critique of hard-line ideology that led to fewer calls for Aliyah as a revolutionary imperative and more for varied ways of understanding Zionism and Jewishness? The analytical challenge lies in the fact that all of these processes were mutually reinforcing and unfolding rapidly, as the processes within the community, on the national stage, and in the international arena, led an increasing number of Jewish activists to reject the multiple uses of ethno-radicalism.

Generational Rapprochement and Ideological Softening

While the gulf seemed to be widening, and dramatically so, between the leftwing Zionist youth and the other segments of the community, the last months of 1974 and 1975 brought surprising signs of mutual respect and cooperation. On the most basic level, the DAIA’s response

⁹² “Injustificable actitud,” *Mundo Israelita*, December 28, 1974, 4, as cited in Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura, 76.

⁹³ “A raíz de una caricatura,” *Informativo DAIA*, September-October, 1974, 16-17.

to deepening antisemitism garnered a great deal of respect from the left-wing youth, enabling a solid working relationship. Even though this respect did not necessarily extend to the community's other central institutions (the AMIA and the OSA), the goodwill with the DAIA facilitated communal dialogue and an ideological softening on questions of Jewishness and Zionism. Underlying this communal process, however, was a progressive de-radicalization even among the leftwing youth in response to the dramatic deterioration of the national situation.

While Juan Perón had never been able to bring together all of the factions of the Peronist movement or put an end to guerilla violence, the situation only worsened under Isabel. The economic crisis, with inflation hitting a record 544.6% in 1975, hit everyone, including the Jewish community, very hard. Jewish institutions, especially the network of schools, were thrown into serious financial trouble.⁹⁴ More intricately related to the concerns here was the increasing violence. In 1974, the ERP and Montoneros worked to ramp up their attacks, with new efforts to recruit in factories while José López Rega worked tirelessly to rid the Peronist movement of leftist “infiltrators” both through covert sponsoring of the *Triple A* and other “legal” means. In June 1975, finance Minister Celestino Rodrigo announced austerity measures, which resulted in massive labor protests. The debacle, known as the Rodrigazo, ultimately led to the fall of both Rodrigo and López Rega, but this did not bring peace or stability.⁹⁵ Mounting violence continued to dominate the agenda—with leftwing militants suffering many more deaths (427 by mid-1975) than the military officers and police they targeted (76 by mid-year).⁹⁶ By March 1976, the month of the coup, *La Opinión* reported that there was a political assassination every five hours and a bomb detonated every three.⁹⁷

The severity of the antisemitism deepened in the midst of national chaos. The by now standard accusations of participation in *sinarquia*, the detonation of small bombs in Jewish institutions, and a proliferation of flyers with statements such as “Be Patriotic, kill a Jew,” were punctuated by far more threatening events.⁹⁸ In October 1974 the *Alianza Libertadora Nacional*, an organization that had been responsible for attacks on Jews during Perón's run for office in 1945-1946, organized a mass homage to Juan Manuel de Rosas. The attendees included prominent politicians, including the acting president of the senate (and second in line for presidency), José Allende. The rally ended with many in the crowd chanting, “*Mazorca, Mazorca, Judios a la Horca*” (“*Mazorca* [the name of the 19th-century dictator Juan Manuel Rosas' corps of executioners], *Mazorca, Jews to the scaffold!*”).⁹⁹ Foreshadowing what would become commonplace during the dictatorship, a group of teenagers leaving one of Córdoba's Jewish institutions were captured by the police, physically abused while in custody, and attacked with antisemitic epithets. References to the *Plan Andinia* peppered the press, particularly in the interior of the country, while the *Triple A* threatened to “execute” those it saw as part of a

⁹⁴ Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura,” 80–81. For inflation statistics, see Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar*, 17.

⁹⁵ On economic and repressive policy of Isabel Perón's government, see Andersen, *Dossier Secreto*, Chapter 10; Riz, *Política en suspenso*, 163–172. On tactics of Montoneros and ERP, Gillespie, *Soldiers of Peron*, Chapter 5; Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar (1976-1983)*, 73–76.

⁹⁶ Pilar Calveiro, *Política y/o violencia: Una aproximación a la guerrilla de los años 70* (Buenos Aire Grupo Editorial Norma, 2005), 58. On the disproportional number of leftist that were killed in comparison with those associated with the AAA and other rightwing groups, see Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar*, 73–76.

⁹⁷ Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar*, 17.

⁹⁸ For the flyer see *American Jewish Year Book, 1977*, Volume 77, 347.

⁹⁹ “Estas estrofas fueron repetidamente coreadas en un homenaje a Rosas auspiciado pro la ALN,” *Informativo DAIA*, September-October 1974, 46. Translation taken from *American Jewish Year Book, 1976*, Volume 76, 275.

“Marxist-Jewish conspiracy.”¹⁰⁰ In April 1975 Resnizky claimed not to remember any moment with “such a concentration of anti-Jewish activities as there have been in the last months.”¹⁰¹

Nonetheless, the most jarring attack came on June 17, days after Minister of Economy Rodrigo announced the austerity measures to curb inflation and speculation and workers called a massive strike. Speaking of shopkeepers in the predominantly Jewish Once district, Peronist leader Norma Kennedy announced, “the Argentine public will no longer put up with these individuals; we will no longer tolerate their vile business practices. If we see hoarding of sugar or any other product, we will put it out for sale immediately, and, if necessary, we will use sticks and whips.”¹⁰² The communal leadership read this as an “incitation of a pogrom” by a well known Peronist leader, a threat that seemed all the more acute in light of the general climate of violence.¹⁰³ In this context, even the leftwing youth began to soften their ideological positions within the Jewish community and emphasize struggle for human rights and democracy against fascism. The particulars of this process began with a warming relationship with the DAIA based on mutual respect in the struggle against antisemitism.

Towards Cooperation

In May 1975, Resnizky explained the climate of antisemitism to the fellow DAIA delegates in terms quite similar to those Senkman would employ in his historical analysis. He contended:

...in the times we live reactionary minorities with privileges confront the interests of the popular majorities. And we know that when these confrontations occur, there is a certain danger that the privileged sectors will try to create a “ritual sacrifice,” ‘barter’, of the Jewish community to preserve their interests, misdirecting the tensions and social crises onto us.¹⁰⁴

Given this dismal reality, and “despite the fact that we have no objective chance of changing the course of events,” the DAIA refused to “silently ignore the gravity of the problems that hang over us.”¹⁰⁵ Elaborating on this policy at an international conference, Resnizky obliquely referred to the Chilean Jewish community’s complicity with the Pinochet regime and argued that Jewish communities should not “seem identified with regimes that deny human rights and social progress beyond what elemental pragmatism requires.” He went on to claim that what endangered the Jews was the appearance of “unconditional allegiance” to “reactionary regimes”

¹⁰⁰ Andersen, *Dossier Secreto*, 145.

¹⁰¹ “Paulatino envenenamiento antisemita del alma colectiva argentina,” *La Luz*, April 25, 1975 as cited in Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 79.

¹⁰² *American Jewish Year Book*, 1977, Volume 77, 348. Senkman claims that the goal was to distract workers from Rodrigo’s plan (Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 157).

¹⁰³ “Avaló la última reunión plenaria todo lo actuado hasta el momento por los directivos de DAIA,” July 28, 1975, #80, 1; *American Jewish Year Book*, 1977, Volume 77, 348.

¹⁰⁴ “Un reportaje al presidente de DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA*, May 19, 1975, #78, 13.

¹⁰⁵ “Aunque no tengamos posibilidad objetiva de torcer el rumbo de los acontecimientos, tampoco podemos silenciar la magnitud de los peligros que se ciernen, señaló el titular de DAIA, doctor Nehemías Resnizky, al informar sobre el recrudecimiento de la actividad Nazi,” *Informativo DAIA*, May 19, 1975, 2.

and that “the legacy of the prophets impedes us from mixing with the forces of anti-progress.”¹⁰⁶ These statements placed the Jewish community in a national struggle against reaction and fascism, thereby defining their role in the nation in political terms yet ones that were different than those proposed by ethno-radicalism.

Throughout late 1974 and 1975, the DAIA acted on these principles. In late 1974, two leaders of the DAIA met with Isabel Perón, Jose López Rega, and Alberto Rocamora to register their complaint that antisemitic publications, like *Patria Peronista*, had “government functionaries” on their boards.¹⁰⁷ Lodging this protest with López Rega, who was personally involved in the antisemitic publications *Patria Peronista* and *El Caudillo*, was a proud moment for Resnizky. In 1976, after the coup, Resnizky recounted that during the trying moments of 1974 and 1975, the DAIA had issued a denunciation to the “very Minister of Social Welfare whose ministry financed the Nazi rags.”¹⁰⁸ Another indication of this commitment was the DAIA’s harsh rebuke of the police after the youth were detained in Córdoba. The institution issued a press release that denounced the mistreatment of these youth, “without getting into a discussion of the legitimacy” of the arrest. It particularly emphasized that one of the victims was only 14 and that all were confronted with “physical aggression” and “insults and attacks that referred to the Jewish origin of the detainees.”¹⁰⁹ The boldness here lay in the repudiation of the harassment and unwillingness to even engage with the question of whether the youth were guilty, a combative stance that would largely disappear during the dictatorship.

At this juncture, however, the DAIA’s tactics gained wide respect, even among the leftwing youth. In April 1974, Iosef Ben Ami had claimed that progressive youth were the only ones properly engaged in the struggle against antisemitism, but later that year, the representative from *Nueva Sión* lauded the DAIA’s “fundamentally positive opening towards Argentine reality,” and called only for the deepening of these efforts.¹¹⁰ Fraie Shtime, a left-wing group that had broken from the Soviet-Line ICUF over the Six-Day War but never defined itself as ardently Zionist, echoed this support. Its publication, *Voz Libre*, celebrated the DAIA’s new approach as a welcome change from the DAIA’s traditional “opportunism.” More specifically, it pointed to Resnizky’s call for engagement with the “popular majorities” and his denunciation of the Chilean Jewish community for its complicity with “reactionaries.”¹¹¹ Resnizky, for his part, rejected the claim of opportunism, but praised *Voz Libre*’s tireless denunciation of fascist activity.

¹⁰⁶ “El presidente de la DAIA con el periodismo,” *Informativo DAIA*, April 7, 1975, #76, 8. He went on: “It is especially dangerous to the Jewish image that certain communities appear unconditionally associated with reactionary regimes because, fundamentally, the legacy of the prophets prohibits us to mix with the forces of anti-progress.”

¹⁰⁷ The “Ministerio del Pueblo,” as Lopez Rega liked to refer to the Ministry of Social Welfare, financed the periodical *El Caudillo*, voice of the Peronist right and frequent distributor of the *sinárquica* conspiracy, (de Riz, *Política En Suspense*, 167–8).

¹⁰⁸ “La DAIA, en estos años difíciles, fue un medio decisivo para luchar por la dignidad judía,” *Mundo Israelita*, September 10, 1976, Archivo CES-DAIA, Box CRD14, Archivo presentado por el Dr. Resnizky (Folder 2).

¹⁰⁹ “Insultos Antisemitas y Agresión Física,” *Informativo DAIAI*, #76, April 1975, 2. For more on the particularly tense climate in Córdoba, see Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la Argentina*, 150. That year, anti-leftist violence led to the killing of two Jewish doctors by the AAA and anti-Jewish propaganda in kiosks, on the radio, and in the university.

¹¹⁰ “Reiteró el doctor Resnizky el oportunismo y la estrategia global unificada que signan las pautas propagandísticas de la liga árabe,” *Informativo DAIA*, September-October, 1974, #74, 12.

¹¹¹ “Un reportaje al presidente de DAIA,” *Informativo DAIA*, May 19, 1975, #78, 14.

In June of 1975 the CJJA joined forces with the DAIA to organize neighborhood meetings across Buenos Aires, actualizing a long discussed desire to organize at the “base.” The purpose was to discuss the rise in antisemitism with an emphasis on “awakening Jewish consciousness to defend the rights and dignity of the Jewish community in the nation.”¹¹² Most attendees were youth, but there were some parents as well, amounting to 4,500 to 5,000 participants total. Reporting on the event, the *Informativo DAIA* called this “a highly significant number for the moments in which we live, especially given that this emergency led to the uncommon occurrence of youth inviting parents to the event.”¹¹³ The success of the neighborhood meetings not only reflected inter-generational dialogue within the Jewish community, but also deepened the DAIA leadership’s respect for the mobilizing ability of the youth. Resnizky marveled that “in two or three days they were able to mobilize almost five thousand people.”¹¹⁴ The *Informativo DAIA*, meanwhile, read it as a sign that “a new phase of collaboration has been reached between the highest political body of the Jewish community and the representation of the youth.”¹¹⁵

It is worth underscoring that June 1975, the month these neighborhood meetings took place, was a moment of massive labor protests, Norma Kennedy’s inciting comments, and generalized violence coming from rightwing paramilitary groups and leftwing guerillas. The *Informativo DAIA*’s emphasis on the “highly significant number for the moments in which we live” indicates their unwillingness to withdraw from activism, as many others in civil society apparently were. Over the course of 1975, the DAIA emphasized that it was “easier to be quiet than to speak” but that the Jewish community must speak out regardless.¹¹⁶ When the DAIA delegates, including several from leftwing youth organizations, met together for their Territorial Convention in August 1975, most agreed on deepening this approach, with surprisingly few delegates highlighting its potential dangers. Perhaps even more surprising was a fairly broad-based agreement on the need for more ample definitions of Jewishness and Zionism, even among the once hard-line leftwing youth.

The 1975 Convention

During the DAIA’s 1975 Territorial Convention, held August 14-17, Juan Gurevich, the Secretary General of the DAIA, explained that in these “conflictive moments, there are no optimistic prognostics, and the alternatives are so varied that they cannot be listed or evaluated easily.”¹¹⁷ Nehemías Resnizky, for his part, took a stab at laying out two possible outcomes for the current national morass. The first was that the nationalists in the armed forces and the authoritarian elements of the union sector would impose “drastic repression” with respect to politics and a “social and economic reordering.” Those who stood to gain in this scenario were

¹¹² “DAIA participa en concurridos actos de la Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentino,” *Informativo DAIA*, June 23, 1975, #79, 9.

¹¹³ “En la ultima reunión plenaria fue destacada la respuesta juvenil ante el llamado a permanecer alertas por las provocaciones antisemitas,” June 23, 1975, #79, 1.

¹¹⁴ “En la ultima reunión plenaria fue destacada la respuesta juvenil,” 1.

¹¹⁵ “DAIA participa en concurridos actos de la Confederación Juvenil Judeo Argentino,” *Informativo DAIA*, June 23, 1975, #79, 9.

¹¹⁶ “Avaló la ultima reunión plenaria todo lo actuado hasta el momento por los directivos de DAIA,” July 28, 1975, #80, 1.

¹¹⁷ Juan Gurevich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 6.

the “privileged few” and the multinational corporations. This outcome would undoubtedly be threatening for the Jewish community. The second scenario was more optimistic, “a peaceful solution” based on an agreement “among the political, union, and business sectors, with the moderate participation—with no more permitted—of the military.” This, too, posed threats as the effort to overcome differences divisions in society might introduce anti-Jewish hostility into the political process. Regardless of the scenario, Resnizky underscored the importance of international realities, highlighting that “the ghost of petrodollars” would continue to threaten local Jews.¹¹⁸

It was in this shadow of escalating violence and impending change—whether a coup or a “concordance”—that the participants in the DAIA convention discussed the community’s needs. While the coup would not happen until the following March, the proceedings of the DAIA’s 1975 convention offer a rich snapshot of the interplay between politics and the construction of ethnicity as the community approached that date. Coming on the heels of the CJJA/DAIA neighborhood meetings, the tone of generational goodwill colored the proceedings. Resnizky claimed that the DAIA now understood “the youth as the youth are, not how one wants them to be.”¹¹⁹ For one representative of the youth, the DAIA had been “a true pioneer in the opening towards the youth, with a high amount of self-criticism, and an understanding that the youth cannot march behind, that they have to march with their leaders because we have the force of mobilization, of struggle, and of *sionismo realizador*.”¹²⁰ While this approval did not extend to the AMIA and the OSA, which the youth still disdained, it did bring the youth to the convention with a cooperative spirit that extended beyond the question of antisemitism.¹²¹ More specifically, the general agreement, between Jewish activists of both generations, was on the need to deepen “*apertura*,” (openness) both on the “external front,” towards Argentine society, and on the “internal front,” towards other Argentine Jews.

When Nehemías Resnizky articulated the goal of *apertura* on the external front, he largely reiterated the DAIA’s policy of the previous months. The goal was to make clear that the interests of the Jewish community, despite what the “reactionary sectors” might say, were aligned with the interests of the “popular majorities.” For Resnizky, a key element of this message was to encourage an element of pluralism, to convey that Jewish particularity was not a threat—that “our singularity does not damage the nation.”¹²² Others articulated *apertura* as fighting not just against antisemitism but also against all violations of human rights, which at this point seemed to be propagated by the violent extremes in society with the military’s involvement not yet clear. José Itzigsohn, of the leftwing but not specifically Zionist Fraie Shtime, was one of the few to still invoke a revolutionary vocabulary, calling on the community to enter “the Argentine nation’s struggle for their own social and national liberation,” but his concrete suggestions reflected a shift towards a human rights discourse. When, Itzigsohn argued, the Jewish community read news like it did yesterday, of a whole family that had been “assassinated and burned,” (*carbonizada*) it should speak out because “we are more threatened by the changes

¹¹⁸ Nehemías Resnizky, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 9.

¹¹⁹ Nehemías Resnizky, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 14. Juan Gurevich, secretary general, call on all institutions to reserve positions for youth activists in their leadership (Juan Gurevich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 7).

¹²⁰ D. Feld, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 45.

¹²¹ D. Feld explained that the CJJA had been struggling with the OSA for the two previous years trying to get it to long delayed elections and demanded immediate elections earlier in 1975, but with little results. It was in the OSA and AMIA that they demanded more representation (D. Feld, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 45).

¹²² Nehemías Resnizky, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 55).

in the normal order than any other group.”¹²³ Also emphasizing the struggle for human rights as fundamental, Pablo Bercovich, representative of the CJJA and a lawyer for political prisoners, argued that the Jewish community should be impelled to denounce “not only the attacks against the Jewish community but also every manifestation of fascism.”¹²⁴

The most surprising facet of the discussions on *apertura* was the almost complete avoidance of the question of danger. Only one representative, José María Pascar, from La Plata, objected to *apertura* on the grounds that it “has caused too much blood in the Jewish community of La Plata.” He went on to elaborate that a group of youth, some who had been quite involved in the community, were gunned down. He wondered if in the leaders’ attempt at *apertura* they had sent them the wrong message, “if what we showed them was ‘a tree, and what enthused them was a forest,” but in the end, “they appeared in the forest shot.”¹²⁵ While some of the pieces are missing from his account, the story suggests Zionist youth who had become radicalized, gone into the “forests,” either literally or figuratively, and as a result, been targeted by right-wing assailants. As suggested above, this was not an isolated problem. A Córdoba Zionist youth group became involved in the ERP and when Jewish youth affiliated with the Jewish center in Lomas de Zamora went on a graduation trip to Córdoba, they returned with an affiliation to the *Juventud Guevarista* (Guevarist Youth), the youth section of the ERP.¹²⁶ In both Lomas de Zamora and Córdoba, these tendencies were highly worrisome to the leaders of Jewish institution.¹²⁷

Given this reality, it is striking that only one person, José Itzigsohn, responded directly to Pascar’s harrowing story. He legitimized his fear of danger: “*apertura* is not a theoretical question, but rather something that has to do with real suffering, which is to say, with death and the physical disappearance of many youth, etc.” Nonetheless, he claimed that *apertura* “does not mean lowering our guard or disintegrating, nor sending our youth to die in the forests to employ the metaphor. It means, precisely, not enclosing ourselves in a besieged city. Instead it means looking for ourselves within the struggle, in defense of the Jewish community, in defense of Argentine democracy.”¹²⁸ This interchange suggests that while Pascar was concerned that any *apertura*, any engagement in politics, could quickly lead members of the community towards the violent left, Itzigsohn, and presumably the others who endorsed the new message, felt confident that they could draw a clear line between guerilla warfare and their activism. This was a sentiment that refused to accept that the only political options in mid-1975 Argentina were the violent extremes, and insisted that there was still room to denounce human rights violations (including, but not exclusively, antisemitic ones), without putting the community in danger, or at least any more danger.

The proposals regarding internal *apertura*, meanwhile, built on the conversations that had been unfolding in the efforts to de-center Aliyah-oriented Zionism and to incorporate various

¹²³ José Itzigsohn, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 17, 26.

¹²⁴ Pablo Bercovich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 25. Reflecting the consensus on the question of human rights was one of the resolutions approved at the convention’s close. It read: “That the Argentine Jewish community—an integral part of the Argentine people—shares in the aspirations of the large majorities, and as such assumes as its own the struggle against all anti-democratic expressions, and works to assure freedom and human rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, whatever their form” (Conclusiones, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 55).

¹²⁵ José María Pascar, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 21-22.

¹²⁶ Laura Schenquer, “(Re)ligión, política y ‘comunidad’ judía: Representaciones e imaginarios sociales en el contexto de la dictadura argentina,” in *Marginados y consagrados: Nuevos estudios sobre la vida judía en Argentina*, ed. Kahan, Emmanuel et al. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Lumiere, 2011), 342.

¹²⁷ Schenquer, “(Re)ligión, política y ‘comunidad’ judía,” 342–3. Herberto Reisin. Interview with author.

¹²⁸ José Itzigsohn, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 26-7.

models of Jewish identity. Reflective of this agenda, the DAIA leadership had invited three new personalities to speak: Marcos Aguinis, author and intellectual from Córdoba, and Daniel Muchnik and Mario Diamant, two reporters from *La Opinión*. All three were notable personalities in broader Argentine society who were committed to their Jewish identity but not subject to the familiar terms that centered Zionism. When it came time for Diamant to speak, he recounted that his father had given him a Jewish education, setting him apart from his Italian or Spanish compatriots, but at the same time he was deeply formed by Argentine culture. He went on to synthesize that “I believe that my behavior, identification, my reality have to do with this Argentine Jewish culture, like the North American writers are part of the North American Jewish culture, like there exists a Hispanic-Argentine culture. I do not see contradictions.”¹²⁹ While the model of Jewish identity in the United States had for so long been discussed pejoratively as assimilationist, Diamant invoked this model of dual identity proudly. Daniel Muchnik, the other reporter, started by explaining that he was in a mixed marriage, he was not Zionist (which was to say not interested in Aliyah though he supported Israel), only understood some Yiddish and no Hebrew, and had no connection with the “Jewish community.” When it came to Aliyah, he contended that any Jew had the right to “remain here, to set down roots, to integrate themselves, or go to Israel.”¹³⁰ Itzigsohn who had long been a discordant voice in the discussions of Aliyah oriented Zionism, also called on Jewish institutions to move away from their focus on Zionism and reorder the relationship between Israel and the diaspora: while the creation of Israel had created “a pole, an option and a possibility,” this did not mean “the mechanical or immediate annulment of the other dialectical pole that is the Jewish people.”¹³¹ The common thread running through all of these articulations of Jewish identity was a normalization of life in the diaspora and a de-centering of Israel, tendencies that were nearly unspeakable in previous years.

At this juncture, however, the DAIA leadership was ready to endorse these propositions and move the institution away from a specifically Zionist identity. While the DAIA had proudly been the first representative institution in the diaspora to approve the 1969 Jerusalem Plan with its emphasis on Aliyah, Resnizky now claimed that the DAIA was not “officially Zionist because it reflects our community.”¹³² Gurevich called for a move away from Zionism as a core structuring principle of the community’s other institutions as well, and particularly the Israel-centered political parties, which, according to Gurevich, “do not respond to the true interests of the *ishuv* [community] nor those of Israel.”¹³³ Following from these new frameworks, the DAIA leadership even reversed its long-standing policy on “double militancy.” As discussed in the previous chapter, in the highly politicized climate of the 1960s and 1970s, the Zionist youth groups and the leaders of the central institutions worried that leftwing militancy among the youth would lead them away from the community. At this juncture, however, the DAIA chose to reverse this policy and declare “valid and legitimate the participation of our people in other realms and sectors apart from Jewish life.”¹³⁴ Beyond being remarkable for its reversal of precedent, the choice to do so at this moment is noteworthy. While Gurevich was not suggesting

¹²⁹ Mario Diamant, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 30.

¹³⁰ Daniel Muchnik, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 30.

¹³¹ José Itzigsohn, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 26-7. Articulating a similar point, Polak claimed, “The organizations of the community are only going to grow, not lose people, when they understand that the Zionists have the right to lead if they are the majority but those of us who are the minority have the right to participate and may some day be the majority,” Carlos Polak, Convención DAIA, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 48.

¹³² Nehemías Resnizky, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 55.

¹³³ Juan Gurevich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 7.

¹³⁴ Juan Gurevich, Convención DAIA 1975, 7.

involvement in the violent left, political activism of all stripes was becoming increasingly dangerous. Nonetheless, the abiding goal of *apertura* was to recognize dual identities, rather than be threatened by them, so as to create a truly pluralistic community.

The response of the Zionist youth activists was perhaps the most precedent breaking in its move away from the ideological hard-line. They still clung to certain elements. Pablo Berkovich would not accept that Israel was not the “national creative center of the Jewish people, the base for the future historical development of our nation.”¹³⁵ He defined the diaspora as inherently insecure and claimed that “Jewish creativity” was only possible “in the normal framework of its own territory, language, economy and history in Israel.”¹³⁶ Carlos Chaky, the representative from the Confederación Juvenil Sionista Rosario (Zionist Youth Confederation of Rosario), reaffirmed that the “diasporic Jew” lived in an abnormal state. Borrowing from a revolutionary vocabulary, he framed Zionist youth movements as creating a “new Jew” and a “strengthening of Jewish identity.” Even the Jews in the United States, “that placidly enjoy their marginal life,” needed to be liberated from their state of abnormality.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, there was a significant openness to new voices and ideas about Jewishness. Pablo Bercovich specifically endorsed the diversity and democracy of the DAIA. He appreciated that they had heard from “Jews that have shown themselves loyal to their Jewish identity but have done so in a way different, at least in formal terms, from how the majority in this institution understand it.”¹³⁸ One subtle comment from Bercovich is perhaps most telling of the CJA’s shifting attitude on the question of the diaspora. In the moment of ideological hardening, and even a year previously, there had been abundant critiques of how Jewish institutions in Argentina simply perpetuated the diaspora. At the DAIA convention in 1975, however, Bercovich suggested that in this moment of crisis, they should celebrate the richness that was the institutional structure—including a network of schools, welfare institutions, Zionist parties, Fraie Schtime, Bundist organizations, religious institutions. He encouraged everyone to recognize that the OSA was collapsing and that the community needed a “Presidents Club” inspired by the one in the United States, to work on reforming the community’s structure.¹³⁹ While the voices of the youth did maintain their commitment to Zionism as central to Jewish ethnicity, and particularly to a Zionism that treated Israel as the center of Jewish life and encouraged Aliyah, their overall position was a far cry from the days of vehement chants of “*Alía, Alía, es la única verdad*” (Aliyah, Aliyah, it’s the only truth).

It was in an emerging debate about cultural pluralism within the Argentine nation that the conversations about the external front, with its emphasis on democracy and human rights, came together with the conversation on the internal front, with its emphasis on various forms of hybrid identities. Itzigsohn stated definitively that Latin America did not have a pluralist culture like the United States or Canada, and that Jews were offered integration into the nation only as individuals, not as an ethnic group. Nonetheless, he still maintained, somewhat defiantly, that Argentine Jews should “move forward and develop ourselves as individuals, Jews, and

¹³⁵ Pablo Bercovich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 31.

¹³⁶ Pablo Bercovich, Convención DAIA 1975, 32.

¹³⁷ Carlos Chaky, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 37. It is worth noting that Lázaro Rubinson also dissented on the question of the diaspora, arguing that Jews could never “be normal” in the diaspora. As he had a year earlier, he also expressed disdain for the way the youth and their politicized, third-world Zionism overlooked the importance of religion and culture, (Lázaro Rubinson, Convención Territorial, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 35). There were some other voices that emphasized Aliyah as the only option, but they were few and far between. See for example, Luis Jaimovich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 23.

¹³⁸ Pablo Bercovich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 31.

¹³⁹ Pablo Bercovich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 52.

Argentines.” For Daniel Muchnik, Jews had every right to be Jewish in Argentina, and despite the onslaught of fascism, it lay upon the Jews to recognize the right they had “to this land, as much a right as the son of a Spaniard, Italian, or the son of whatever kind of immigrant.”¹⁴⁰ Even Pablo Berkovich—with his dedication to Aliyah and the centrality of Israel in Jewish identity—agreed with the pluralist proposition that Jews had the right to “feel as much owners of this nation as any son of immigrants. It is true that we have to feel as much love and loyalty to the country as any of them.”¹⁴¹ These assertions of pluralism reflected a certain boldness and defiance in 1975, but they would be further elaborated under the dictatorship as part of the community’s far more careful maneuvering.

To the participants, the convention seemed quite remarkable. This was at least in part because they shared little institutional memory, particularly regarding the work of the DAIA in the early 1960s, another moment of acute antisemitism. The propositions of 1975 echoed those of the 1960s in the calls for uniting with the democratic sectors, the observations that Argentina lacked a pluralist culture, and the effort to make clear to the “majority” that the Jewish community was not its enemy. Nonetheless, the convention was remarkable in two respects. The first was that the discussions marked a significant change from those in the early 1970s. While the 1972 DAIA convention had centered on proving to assimilating Jews and Argentine society that Zionism was a national liberation movement and that the Jewish community was on the side of national liberation, the phrase “national liberation” was only rarely invoked in 1975.¹⁴² The 1972 convention had also been colored by significant generational hostility, but this, too, was almost completely absent in 1975 given the common ground on antisemitism and the willingness of the Zionist youth to accept different frameworks of identity.

The second was the forceful stand most took on engaging in politics in the midst of what many called a “civil war,” and in which the “middle” was supposedly moving away from politics. Pascar’s fear that any involvement in politics might result in bloodshed was likely representative of many Jews at this juncture, particularly those familiar with specifically Zionist or Jewish youth groups that had already been killed or disappeared. Nonetheless, the proceedings of the convention show near unanimous agreement on *apertura* towards the popular and democratic sectors and public opposition to all manifestations of “fascism” in Argentina, even if that stand might be futile. The tone was defiant not just when it came to speaking out against human rights abuses, but also when it came to asserting their right to membership in a pluralist Argentine nation. Taking the discussions on ethnicity and Argentine politics as a whole, the convention seems not to reflect a turn away from politics, as the historiography would suggest. Instead, it suggests a turn away from radicalism: even the hard-line Zionist youth were softening their approach, and all agreed that the struggle to be fought in Argentina was for democracy and human rights, not national liberation or a major reordering of society.

In the next months, the particular concerns facing the Jewish community continued to be intertwined with those facing the nation in general, with the *Triple A* being the protagonists of violence from the right and a propagator of antisemitic calumny and threats. In December, for example, three Jewish reporters from *La Opinión* received death threats from the *Triple A*, one

¹⁴⁰ Daniel Muchnik, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 30.

¹⁴¹ Pablo Berkovich, Convención DAIA 1975, *Informativo DAIA*, #81, 32.

¹⁴² That phrasing did make it into one resolution that called for the revitalization of Zionism, as a “Movement of the national, social and cultural liberation of the Jewish people.”

reading “Russian, Jew, Communist, you are dead.”¹⁴³ When it came to anxiety surrounding the impending coup, meanwhile, some fears were assuaged by December promises from Admiral Emilio Massera to the DAIA and the local branch of the American Jewish Committee that the military government would put an end to rampant antisemitism.¹⁴⁴ All of these factors might have led to or suggested a more open attitude towards the military coup, a joining of the broad-based “consensus.” When the coup did come in March 1976, most Jewish periodicals treated it as a foregone conclusion or welcomed the end of “*lopezreguismo*” (Lopez Rega-ism).¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, in the midst of spiraling inflation, increasing physical insecurity, and rampant antisemitism, it is striking that there was little interest in “de-mobilizing” or “sitting it out” in August 1975. This would be one of the fundamental changes in the early years of the dictatorship.

Repression and Ethnicity

During the dictatorship, the Argentine Jewish community confronted a paradox. On the one hand, the military’s efforts to reorder society, politics, and economic structure were highly repressive. While the military junta promised to stamp out extremism of both the leftwing and rightwing “subversives,” it was workers and the defined left that were particularly vulnerable to being kidnapped, tortured, and killed.¹⁴⁶ Of those detained or disappeared, Jewish Argentines constituted a number disproportionate to their percentage in the population.¹⁴⁷ While many of these Jews had no clear connection to the Jewish community, some did. In addition, regardless of their affiliation with the community, Jewish detainees faced questions about Zionist conspiracies, the hostile suggestion that Jewishness implied Marxism, and antisemitic threats.¹⁴⁸ When it came to the public proclamations, the junta vowed to restore “the values of Christian morality” and Argentina’s place in the “Western and Christian” world, and implemented Catholic education in public schools in 1979.¹⁴⁹

That being said, when it came to many narrowly defined ethnic concerns, the first years of the dictatorship marked an improvement from the previous years. The junta was by many

¹⁴³ For the specifics of antisemitism in the months leading up to the coup, Senkman, *El antisemitismo en la argentina*, 169–173. The UN vote equating Zionism and Racism also created the opportunity for many reiterations of claims of “sinarquía,” “doble lealtad,” and the “plan andinia,” (169-170).

¹⁴⁴ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 106-7.

¹⁴⁵ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 103-4; “La DAIA, en estos años difíciles, fue u medio decisivo para luchar por la dignidad judía,” *Mundo Israelita*, September 10, 1976, Archivo CES-DAIA, Box CRD14, Archivo presentado por el Dr. Resnizky (Folder 2).

¹⁴⁶ Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar*, 24–30; Deborah Lee Norden, *Between Coups and Consolidation: Military Rebellion in Post-Authoritarian Argentina*, 1992, 58–60; Robben, *Political Violence And Trauma In Argentina*, Chapter 9.

¹⁴⁷ The current estimate is that 1% of the Argentine population was Jewish, while 10% of the disappeared were (Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 36.

¹⁴⁸ Argentine National Commission on Disappeared, *Nunca Más: The Report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared*, 1st ed. (Farrar Straus & Giroux (T), 1986), 67–72; Edy Kaufman and Beatriz Cymberknopf, “La dimensión judía en la represión durante el gobierno militar en la Argentina (1976-1983),” in *Autoritarismo y antisemitismo: Los judíos durante la dictadura militar, 1976-1983* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986), 256–258.

¹⁴⁹ Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar (1976-1983)*, 20. On the intersection of catholic and anti-communist agendas, 34-5 .

counts friendlier to the institutional Jewish community than many of its predecessors: it closed down (at least temporarily) antisemitic publishing houses; it publicly denounced the efforts to associate the “subversive” activity of high profile Jews with their Jewishness; and it cultivated a friendly relationship with Israel.¹⁵⁰ Many felt quite safe participating in certain communal activities, and some even remarked that the Jewish community was flourishing.¹⁵¹ At a DAIA meeting in September 1976, Nehemías Resnizky described the trying moment as having passed, and that “Argentine Judaism had been able to weather the moment with success.”¹⁵²

Given this complexity, scholars, as well as the community itself, continue to debate two key questions: first, the extent to which the regime could be considered antisemitic, and second, whether the institutional community, and particularly the DAIA, was overly passive in the face of antisemitism and human rights abuses.¹⁵³ Both of these questions will be taken up more directly in the Epilogue, which considers the emergence of these debates within the community itself in the later years of the dictatorship. The pertinent questions here, however, are different but not unrelated. In light of the concerns in the previous part of the chapter, and the dissertation more broadly, this section analyzes the constructs of Jewishness and Zionism that became dominant during the dictatorship. While these did reflect state repression, they also reflected an ongoing process within the community that had begun in 1973. More specifically, the first years of the dictatorship lead the community to silence the final remnants of ethno-radicalism and more broadly to de-politicize Jewishness. At the same time, the renewed emphasis on Jewish culture, religion, and a re-conceptualized relationship between Israel and the diaspora, as well as articulations of the need for cultural pluralism in the Argentine nation, were products of the particular process of de-radicalization that had been unfolding within the community well before 1976.

The clearest response to the dictatorship was the silencing of radical elements of Zionist discourse, this time among the leftwing youth, but not until the extent of the repression began to become clear. Before this, in the first months of the dictatorship, the youth continued with their familiar tropes and voices from the right lobbied familiar denunciations. As Kahan has detailed, at the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1976, youth carried signs calling for socialism in Israel, peace in the Middle East as well as ones that read “Homage to the Heroes of

¹⁵⁰ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 146-154. On the relationship between military junta and the Israeli government, see Rein, *Argentine Jews or Jewish Argentines?*, 236–241.

¹⁵¹ The dissertations of both Laura Shenquer and Emmanuel Kahan contend with the forms of sociability within the Jewish community that were considered safe and the broader paradox more broadly (Shenquer, “Actitudes Sociales En Dictadura”; Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento.”

¹⁵² “La DAIA, en estos años difíciles, fue un medio decisivo para luchar por la dignidad judía,” *Mundo Israelita*, September 10, 1976, Archivo CES-DAIA, Box CRD14, Archivo presentado por el Dr. Resnizky (Folder 2).

¹⁵³ On these questions, see Kaufman and Cymberknopf, “La dimensión judía en la represión durante el gobierno militar”; Ignacio Klich, “Política comunitaria bajo la junta militar, 1976-1983,” in *Autoritarismo y antisemitismo: Los judíos durante la dictadura militar, 1976-1983*, ed. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986), 276–296; Paúl Warszawski, “Régimen militar, Iglesia católica y comunidad judía en la República Argentina,” in *El legado del autoritarismo: Derechos humanos y antisemitismo en la Argentina contemporánea*, (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Nuevohacer, Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1995), 217–238; Gabriela Lotersztain, *Los judíos bajo el terror: Argentina, 1976-1983* (Ejercitar La Memoria Editores, 2008); Guillermo Lipis, *Zikaron: Memoria, judíos y militares bajo el terror del Plan Condor*, (Nuevo Extremo, 2011); Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura.” For an overview of the trajectory of the debates see, Emmanuel Kahan, “Discursos y representaciones en conflicto sobre la actuación de la comunidad judía durante la última dictadura militar: Análisis de los informes sobre ‘Los detenidos-desaparecidos de origen judío’, 1984-2007,” in *Marginados y consagrados: Nuevos Estudios sobre la vida judía en Argentina*, ed. Kahan, Emmanuel et al. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Lumiere, 2011), 351–378.

the Revolution.” In his speech before the crowd, the speaker from the CJJA contended “to be Zionist today is to look for means of communication with the Palestinian people.” While some youth interrupted Nehemías Resnizky for calling himself a Zionist but not making Aliyah, the CJJA and the JSS responded by writing a letter declaring “our total support for his leadership,” showing that the rapprochement of the previous year still stood. *La Luz* reiterated its critiques of the previous years, denouncing the “seduction” of the youth by left wing, third-world causes. It also claimed that the term “revolution” should have been replaced with “rebellion.”¹⁵⁴ *La Luz*, and Isais Jasiuk, of the Argentine branch of the right-wing Jerut party, continued to accuse the DAIA and AMIA of being complicit with these radicalized youth even though the leftwing youth were only a small minority of Jewish youth.¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, as Kahan has noted, “the polemic regarding ‘youth effervescence’ would not extend beyond the first months of the military dictatorship.”¹⁵⁶ Many leftwing Zionist youth went into exile; those who remained in Argentina were complicit in this silencing. When *Nueva Sión* reported on the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1977, it did not use the rhetoric of national liberation or compare the combatants in the ghetto with contemporary rebels.¹⁵⁷ Even still, *Nueva Sión* was shut down by the regime in 1977 as a subversive publication, though more clearly for its leftist trajectory than its Zionism, as no other Jewish newspaper suffered the same fate.¹⁵⁸

This abandonment of ethno-radicalism was undoubtedly related to the steep learning curve about the state’s repressive arm as Zionist activists, communal leaders (or their relatives) became victims of state terror. Most notably Nehemías Resnizky’s son was kidnapped, and while Resnizky managed to effect his release, many saw this as turning point after which Resnizky became complicit with the regime.¹⁵⁹ In July 1976 five Israeli emissaries from the Jewish Agency, who were members of the leftwing Hashomer Hatzair, a socialist youth movement, and three Argentine Zionists were kidnapped and imprisoned in Córdoba. The Argentines were members of the “Comité de Coordinación,” the Zionist youth group in Córdoba that, as mentioned above, had a splinter group that participated in the armed struggle of the ERP. The level of involvement of the Argentine youth kidnapped in this instance is unclear. While imprisoned, the group was tortured, the women were sexually molested, and all were questioned about the work of Zionist groups in Argentina. Through it all, the Israeli embassy exerted intense pressure on the Argentine authorities, emphasizing that Zionism had no interest in revolution in Argentina, and ultimately succeeded in obtaining the release of all the detainees after thirteen days.¹⁶⁰ In the face of events like this, it is not surprising that the leftwing youth moved away from their revolutionary discourse. At the same time, and presumably with the same impetus, the communal leadership moved away from any implications that Jewishness was inherently political. Gone were statements like those Resnizky had made about the Jewish imperative to not

¹⁵⁴ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 133.”

¹⁵⁵ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento.” Kahan also notes that Elnecavé’s disdain for the central institutions revolved around the lack of independence it had shown towards the Peronist government. His call for a purging of these leaders and a re-building of the institutions mirrored he rhetoric of the dictatorship. He also claimed that *La Luz* had never kowtowed to the Perón regime, as had many others, and it had called for the same cleansing of the community’s institutions after the fall of Perón (115-116).

¹⁵⁶ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 134.

¹⁵⁷ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 135.

¹⁵⁸ On the closing of *Nueva Sión*, see Eliahu Toker, *Trayectoria De Una Idea: Nueva Sión: 50 Años De Periodismo Judeo-Argentino Con Compromiso: 1948-1998* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Fundación Mordejai Anilevich, 1999), 124.

¹⁵⁹ Kaufman and Cymberknopf, “La dimensión judía en la represión durante el gobierno militar,” 265.

¹⁶⁰ Barromi, “Israel frente a la dictadura militar Argentina,” 327–330.

be complicit with reactionary regimes. Instead, Resnizky established a new policy in September 1976: the DAIA would protest every “attack or offense to Jewish dignity” and, at the same time, “not respond to other interests that were not the concern of the Jewish community.”¹⁶¹

The forms of Jewish identification that remained within the community at large were largely apolitical. The question of Aliyah-oriented Zionism and the Kibbutz ideal seemed to occupy a grey area: while some thought these could be defined and supported in safely apolitical terms, others did not. This debate emerged as several neighborhood schools and Jewish centers expelled Zionist youth groups that met there and burned their readings on Kibbutz life. *Nueva Presencia*, a new Jewish newspaper that emerged in July 1977 as a voice of the “left,” though not a specifically Zionist one, called this an effort to “pasteurize the Zionist ideological activism.”¹⁶² Significantly, the AMIA and OSA also objected to these expulsions and tried to get the youth groups reinstated.¹⁶³ To these institutions, there was room for this ideology, but only cast in particular ways. This was apparent in an issue of *Lejá*, the AMIA’s youth publication, which began publishing again in 1977 after a yearlong hiatus. In the first issue, the AMIA published the reflections of a group of young people who had participated in “Plan Tapus,” a seemingly apolitical and non-ideological (beyond the ideology embedded in support for Israel) two-month-long tour of Israel that included courses, touring, and work on a kibbutz. Many of the interviewees mentioned their interest in kibbutz-life and that they wished the program spent more time there. While the kibbutz model was inherently socialist, the tone of the reprinted interviews was remarkably apolitical, containing no actual reference to socialism or to national liberation.¹⁶⁴

Still, the AMIA and the community more broadly seemed more comfortable with a cultural or religious, diasporic Jewishness. In the 1977 edition of *Lejá*, Hebraica’s department of youth advertised classes on “Judaism,” group dynamics, as well as a “literary workshop.” The ORT school’s youth department offered Israeli folk dance, music, and photography. *Lejá* carried a featured piece on “Tzavta,” “cultural cafés,” that had been founded in Buenos Aires and Rosario for young Jews to create and consume “specifically Jewish contemporary art and culture.”¹⁶⁵ The traces of politics were confined to considerations of other parts of the world: one roundtable on the recent election in the United States and its “implications for the Jewish world” and another on the politics of the Middle East.¹⁶⁶ Finally, it reprinted a lengthy interview with Marcos Aguinis who contended that while the normalization of the Jewish people with the State of Israel was a remarkable accomplishment, it should not lead to “forgetting the great experience (*gran experiencia*) of the diaspora.” Rather than privileging Israel as the center of cultural production, he called for a “fluid relationship between the culture that exists in Israel and the culture that unfolds in the diaspora.” Invoking a framework that had fallen out of favor during the high point for ethno-radicalism, he and the publication unified the “Americas” into one region, claiming that authors in both Argentina and the United States (Philip Roth and Marcos

¹⁶¹ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 148.

¹⁶² Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 137.

¹⁶³ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 135-6.

¹⁶⁴ “Reportaje a los participantes del Plan Tapus,” *Lejá*, Publicaciones del Departamento de Juventud de AMIA, #7, 1977, 5-8.

¹⁶⁵ “Tzavta, uno, un café cultural,” *Lejá*, Publicación del Departamento de Juventud de AMIA, #7, 1977, 16-17.

¹⁶⁶ “Informe de actividades,” *Lejá*, Publicación del Departamento de Juventud de AMIA, #7, 1977, 14-16.

Aguinis, in this case), grappled with the “same problematic.”¹⁶⁷ The normalization of the diaspora and comparisons with the American Jewish community had already found voice before the coup, with Aguinis himself and others advocating for this framework at the 1975 DAIA convention. Now, in the absence of radical Zionism and muted forms of Aliyah-centered Zionism, this framework of cultural hybridity in the diaspora became dominant.

Other recent scholars have also highlighted the appeal of non-politicized and diaspora-centered forms of Jewishness during the dictatorship, pointing to a growing Conservative movement, a liberal version of religious Judaism, and educational programs centered on Jewish history, thought, or culture. They have also emphasized that these Jewish activities offered a form of “permitted socialization” or a “protected space.”¹⁶⁸ The rapid silencing of the more radical ethnic discourse and the persecution the leftwing Zionist youth faced, however, makes clear that it was only certain constructs of Jewish ethnicity that offered this guarantee and were permitted to thrive. At the same time, it would be a mistake to see the forms of identification that flourished during the dictatorship as just the result of state terror. As the previous sections of this chapter show, the reaction against the radicalization of society and the related reaction against the hard-line Zionist youth had, well before the dictatorship, led to various calls for a more pluralistic approach to Jewish ethnic values and Zionism, pre-disposing many to the forms of Jewish identification that would be safe during the dictatorship. In the lead article in the first issue of *Nueva Presencia*, entitled “*Ser judío, ser argentino*” (Being Jewish, Being Argentine), editor Herman Schiller emphasized an inherent “pluralistic richness of the Jews,” that was undermined within the community’s institutional structure. He went on to highlight the great diversity of groups in the Jewish community, from *Fraie Shtime*, to Jerut, to *Nueva Sión*, to Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform religious synagogues, lamenting that these diverse groups rarely came together “in the same forum.” While Schiller was committed to offering a new voice and a new critique, his discussion echoed the calls for a varied approach to Jewish identity at the DAIA’s convention in 1975, as well as earlier denunciations of the ideological hard-line of the leftwing Zionist youth. So he too was reflecting, rather than initiating, the rise of different forms of Jewish sociability and identification that had become common during the dictatorship.

The efforts to fight against antisemitism and claim legitimate membership in the nation also reflected an interplay between the realities of the dictatorship and formulations that had emerged earlier. Kahan has usefully divided the DAIA’s response to antisemitism into two categories. While largely silent in response to antisemitism carried out covertly by the repressive arm of the state, the DAIA continued to speak out against all public antisemitism.¹⁶⁹ While the silence regarding covert antisemitism will be addressed more fully in the Epilogue, it is worth noting here that this silence contrasted the position taken in 1975 when the DAIA spoke out against the youth detained and persecuted in Córdoba. With respect to public acts of antisemitism—anti-Jewish attacks in newspapers, threats or attacks against Jewish institutions or the efforts to impose Catholic education in the schools—the DAIA retained its commitment to speaking out in an effort to maintain Jewish dignity.¹⁷⁰ The way it did so, however, marked a

¹⁶⁷ “El escritor judío y su tiempo, Marcos Aguinis,” *Lejá*, Publicación del Departamento de Juventud de AMIA, #7, 1977, 26-32. Specifically on the Americas question, Aguinis opined that the Jewish problematic in the 20th century was defined by the “creation of new diasporas, especially in America” and the creation of the State of Israel.

¹⁶⁸ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 205; Schenquer, “(Re)ligión, política y ‘comunidad’ judía,” 333.

¹⁶⁹ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” Chapter 3.

¹⁷⁰ As Estelle Tarica shows, the leadership of the DAIA deferred to its behavior on this count to counter the accusations that they were “silent” like the Jews during the Holocaust (Estelle Tarica, “The Holocaust Again?:

clear transition from the previous years. If the community had responded to antisemitism by claiming that Jewish interests were aligned with those of “national liberation” in the early 1970s, and those of the “popular majorities” in the mid-1970s, during the first year of the dictatorship they aligned themselves with the national project of the military. A few months after the coup, Resnizky complained to the Minister of Interior General Albano Harguindeguy that antisemitic publications should be closed just as all others that threatened “the peace and tranquility of Argentines” had been.¹⁷¹ Akin to the publication *Perón y el Pueblo Judío*—which had been used to negotiate with the Peronist authorities—under the dictatorship, the DAIA published and sent to President Videla and Harguindeguy, *El Legado de San Martín* (The legacy of San Martín). Laura Schenquer has noted that this publication “invented” San Martín as a definitively antisemitic military leader.¹⁷²

That being said, a loftier trope coexisted with these tactics that proposed new terms for understanding Jews’ membership in the nation, and this was an appeal for cultural pluralism. In mid-1976, the Latin American Jewish Congress (*Congreso Judío Latinoamericano*, CJL) with the cooperation of the DAIA, organized a colloquium in Buenos Aires entitled “Cultural Pluralism and National Integration.” Marcos Aguinis, now the director of culture for the CJL, organized the conference. In reporting on the project to the CJL leadership, he wrote,

Although reality reveals the existence of pluralism, the dominant trends in Latin America are monist. Pluralism is seen with suspicion because people believe that it poses difficulties for the consolidation of each nationality. As a result, minorities are tolerated, but always encouraged to integrate—an accelerated and intense integration that hardly allows them to maintain their distinct characteristics. The minorities have to renounce their particular qualities, diluting themselves into norms of the dominant culture. The only minority that receives a preferential treatment is the indigenous. This minority is recognized as having contributed a spiritual base to the continent.

The goal of the Latin American Jewish Congress has been to counteract this in some way by presenting the reality and benefits of cultural pluralism at a high level, trying to involve all of our actual and potential allies. This is a cause that does not only interest Jewish communities. It is known that these communities need pluralism to survive, but it is also known that cultural pluralism supports democracy and harmony between all sectors of the population.

While Aguinis recognized that the “monist nationalism” in many Latin American countries “created doubts about the viability of the project,” he was committed to publicizing the event and gaining support from the government. The inclusion of “National Integration” in the title of the colloquium was a deliberate choice to make the colloquium less threatening. The organizers also

Dispatches from the Jewish ‘Internal Front’ in Dictatorship Argentina,” *Journal of Jewish Identities* 5, no. 1 (2012): 89–110).

¹⁷¹ Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 146; The framework of the struggle against subversion was also employed to garner support from the Argentine government for the State of Israel in its struggle against PLO terrorism and to denounce efforts in the Argentine government to support the diplomatic recognition of the PLO or friendly relations with Arafat (127-128).

¹⁷² Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura,” 146. Schenquer also notes that these tactics shifted after 1977, in the wake of the Gravier affair, when the DAIA became more complicit with the regime, collaborating “in the construction of a positive image of the military government” and adopting “a discourse of support for the eradication of ‘subversion’ (151).

borrowed quotes from UNESCO that called for the “defense of cultural identity” so as to “undermine the resistance” within Argentine society.¹⁷³

The DAIA and the CJL requested municipal sponsorship from the Secretary of Culture, and though he declined, he said that he sympathized with the effort on a personal level. The Director General of Education, Professor Enrique Belloc, ultimately did agree to offer opening remarks on behalf of the municipal and national governments. In addition to the participation of academics, priests, writers and journalists, the CJL and DAIA counted on notable personalities from other Latin American countries. These included the director of the National Library of Uruguay, and an expert on Guarani language and culture from Paraguay and one on Mapuche Language and Culture from Chile, a clear effort to capitalize on the legitimacy of indigenous particularity. One key disappointment, according to Aguinis, was the failure to secure the participation of an Arab or Muslim participant, who might have proven that Jews’ concern were not alone in their concerns, because “The Islamic center disallowed its members from participating.” The organizers did, however, succeed in recruiting a reporter of Armenian descent, Narciso Binayán, to present on “Armenians and Arabs in Latin America.” The proceedings themselves counted sessions on ethnic, religious, educational, and linguistic pluralism.¹⁷⁴

Taken as a whole, the careful planning and execution of the colloquium is suggestive of the maneuverability the community felt it had in crafting its membership in the nation. While there was a great deal of caution in how they framed the conference and the concept of pluralism, there was also a confidence that if framed correctly, the cultural particularity of different groups in the nation would not be seen by the authorities or other social actors as threatening. Again, this was not just a question of negotiating the political realities of the dictatorship. The community’s emphasis on ethnic particularity and cultural pluralism had emerged even before the dictatorship in discussions both on openness to various ideas of Jewish ethnicity and with respect to the right to Jewish particularity within the Argentine nation. In addition, a decidedly less cautious voice, *Nueva Presencia*, also endorsed the framework of cultural pluralism. In the same lead article mentioned above, Schiller wrote,

We believe that there is no contradiction between being a good Argentine and actively experiencing a Jewish identity, including through concern and solidarity with the destiny of Israel...In these columns we will try specifically to be a newspaper with *double loyalty*, towards Argentina and the Jewish people, exercised without inhibitions, with significant passion and public legitimacy.¹⁷⁵

The following issue published a piece entitled “Zionism and ‘Double Loyalty,’” which not only pointed to anti-Zionism as a fantasy of “ultras” the world over, but also pointed to the loyalty that descendants of all immigrant groups felt towards their homeland, whether Spanish, Arab or Armenian. While there were many Argentines, “whether nationalists or liberals of various stripes,” that believed in a “unitary structure” of the nation, Jews should make clear to the “non-

¹⁷³ Memo de Marcos Aguinis a Congreso Judío Latinoamericano sobre coloquio de pluralismo, July 10, 1976, Archivo CES-DAIA, Box CRD14, Archivo presentado por el Dr. Resnizky (Folder 3).

¹⁷⁴ Memo de Marcos Aguinis a Congreso Judío Latinoamericano”; Kahan also offers a reading of this colloquium on Cultural Pluralism and a second iteration of it held in December of 1978. The thrust of his analysis is quite different. He uses these conferences as another example of one the several public Jewish events during the dictatorship (Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 202-203).

¹⁷⁵ “Ser judíos, ser argentinos,” *Nueva Presencia*, July 9, 1977, 1, Emphasis in the original.

Jewish street” that they were a “positive factor in the nation” and that Zionism was not threatening. The invocation of pluralism and allusions to various immigrant groups would become even more common in response to the military’s 1979 establishing *Formación Cívica y Moral* (Civic and Moral Education), essentially Catholic education, in public and private schools,¹⁷⁶

The emphasis on cultural pluralism was quite different from the iterations of membership in the nation that had come before it. Even in the days after Perón’s fall, the community emphasized its membership in the nation by appealing to liberal values of openness and tolerance. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, they had emphasized that they were aligned with the goal of national liberation. In the mid-1970s and under the dictatorship, however, there was no clear group of national values with which to associate. In the defiant moment of the mid-1970s, when the community endorsed a struggle for democracy and human rights, it also embraced this discourse on their legitimate right to be Argentines even in their particularity, like the descendants of all other immigrants. The discourse during the dictatorship was an outgrowth of this, but also one of the few options for advocating for their membership in the nation that promised to restore Christian values.

Conclusion

This dissertation has treated the Jewish community as a site where political and ethnic identities were thought about in tandem, and where they were made and remade as a result of inter-generational interactions. In doing so, it has sought to complicate the image of radical youth and a resistant or indifferent older generation by pointing to the ways that the politics of one generation bled into the politics of the other. Through 1973, the community’s youth led the path towards politicization and even radicalization, with the older generation becoming increasingly persuaded by their frameworks. When it came to the years after 1973, however, the pattern was largely reversed, as the intergenerational interactions ultimately spread de-radicalization from the older generation to the youth. In conversations on ethnicity, the politics of the Middle East, and antisemitism, the older generation and a growing number of youth activists were the first to reject ethno-radicalism. Nonetheless, through interactions with the older generation, and particularly a joint effort to combat antisemitism and generalized violence, the leftwing youth also softened their ideological positions. In doing so, they began to accept more flexible definitions of Jewish ethnicity and less radical political positions in Argentine politics.

This was a de-radicalizing process, but it was not necessarily one of de-politicization. Despite mounting violence and even clear examples of Jewish youth groups joining the guerillas or being killed for far less, both leftwing Zionist youth and the leaders of the central institutions agreed, at least as late as August 1975, to universalize their struggle against all violations of human rights. There were certainly voices that expressed caution about political involvement or that sought to actively de-politicize Jewish ethnicity so as to protect the community’s youth.

¹⁷⁶ “Sionismo y ‘doble lealtad,’” *Nueva Presencia*, July 16, 1977, 1. The invocation of pluralism and allusions to various immigrant groups would also emerge as a common trope with the military passed a resolution for *Formación Cívica y Moral* in 1979. See for example, “Hebraica mesa redonda: Formación Moral y Cívica y pluralismo en la Argentina,” *Nueva Presencia*, June 29, 1979, 5; “Voces de aliento, críticas y sugerencias,” *Nueva Presencia*, September 7, 1979, 19.

Nonetheless, it was not until the military took power that the final remnants of ethno-radicalism disappeared along with the still thriving discussions of the political imperatives of Jewishness.

The forms of ethnic identification that thrived under the dictatorship, meanwhile, were a reflection of the parameters set out by a repressive state as well as the particularities of the community's own unfolding process of de-radicalization. No one framing of ethnicity emerged in the place of ethno-radicalism; what we see instead is an increasingly shared belief that the community had allowed too many elements of the Jewish tradition—religion and culture among them—to fall by the wayside. Many worked to counteract the formulations of Zionism that had become so prevalent and to suggest instead that being a Zionist did not mean negating the value of the diaspora or privileging Israel as the cultural center. These calls for pluralism, multiplicity and a move away from the hegemony of one version of Zionism within the Jewish community were paralleled in the often-defiant struggle for pluralism in the Argentine nation.

Ethno-radicalism would not return, and, in fact, it would be largely forgotten over the course of the dictatorship. Not only did the military government leave no room for it by targeting leftwing Zionist youth and shutting down *Nueva Sión*, but the community itself had largely rejected it in the years leading up to the dictatorship. Furthering the process of forgetting were the politics of the DAIA during the military dictatorship. While it had been the community's central institution most willing to endorse ethno-radicalism in the early 1970s and a politicized reading of Jewishness even under the 1970s Peronist governments, under the dictatorship many saw it as decidedly conservative, opportunistic or passive. This erased the memory of its more activist days. Nonetheless, as the Epilogue will discuss more fully, a politicized discussion of Jewishness ultimately emerged again. In the later years of the dictatorship, as new Jewish leaders and institutions fought against the human rights violations of the military dictatorship, they explained their work as an expression of the Jewish concern for social justice. They further claimed to be the first Argentine Jews to propose this ethnic justification for politicization. In doing so, they buried the history of ethno-radicalism even as they built upon it.

EPILOGUE: OCTOBER 1983 AND THE POLITICS OF FORGETTING

Human rights activists began launching public critiques of the military's *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* (National Reorganization Process) as early as 1977, but it was not until the latter half of 1982 that their protests began to gain widespread and visible support. In 1983 these activists, including the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, organized a 150,000 person calling for the return of the disappeared and the prosecution of military officials.¹ For these demonstrators, and for society more broadly, this was a moment of coming to terms with the military regime's illegal repression of a broadly defined group of "subversives" and a magnitude of brutality that had been difficult to grasp.² Within the Jewish community, this moment also involved recognizing that many of the disappeared had been Jewish and that the regime's repressive apparatus had bombarded these victims with antisemitic hostility and, often, more severe torture. In considering the first years of the dictatorship, Chapter Six pointed to the complete disappearance of ethno-radicalism and new ways of thinking about Jewishness and Jewish membership in the nation in the years leading up to the dictatorship and in the first years after the military seized power. In all of these shifts, the growing violence in the 1970s and then the brutal repression of the Proceso served as a key context. It was not until the last years of the dictatorship, however, that the community as a whole began to explicitly contend with the experience of the regime.

This epilogue offers a close reading of a communal conflict in October 1983, in the weeks before Argentina held democratic elections, and particularly the ways this conflict opened discussions on Jewishness and Jewish membership in the nation in light of the dictatorship. The newly founded *Movimiento Judío por los Derechos Humanos* (Jewish Movement for Human Rights, MJDH) called for a march to the *Obelisco*, a monument in downtown Buenos Aires, on October 24. The central goals of the march were to protest the military's human rights abuses, the antisemitism embedded in them, a recent wave of antisemitic attacks that included Swastika graffiti and attacks on Jewish institutions. The leadership of the MJDH garnered support from various political parties and key organizations in the national human rights movement, but when it invited the DAIA to join, the latter launched a public attack on the march and worked to deplete its support. Several of the DAIA's member organizations followed suit, while others publicly dissented and joined the MJDH. In the end, a remarkable number of people (some estimated 6,000 participants), Jews and non-Jews, joined in the march. Yet the polemics against it continued.³ The debates surrounding this event, both before and after it occurred, echoed many similar ones about Jewishness and the nation that had unfolded over the previous thirty years. At the same time, I contend, the particular contours of the debate ultimately served to obscure much of this history.

Herman Schiller and Rabbi Marshall Meyer co-founded the MJDH on the corner of Libertad and Córdoba streets on August 19, 1983 in their desire to raise a Jewish banner as they

¹ Antonius C. G. M. Robben, *Pegar donde más duele: Violencia política y trauma social en Argentina*, trans. Nuria Brufau Alvira (Anthropos, 2008), 368–9.

² On this progression for various social and political actors, see Novaro and Palermo, *La dictadura militar (1976-1983)*, 484–511.

³ On the estimates, see "La intimidación interna no logró impedir que miles de judíos y no-judíos se movilizaran para repudiar el antisemitismo," *Nueva Presencia*, October 28, 1983, 3; "6,000 in Buenos Aires Demand Action on Antisemitic Incidents," Marshall Meyer collection, Folder: Copias Corridas, 1980-1981, Archive of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano.

marched with many others against the military's "Amnesty Law."⁴ Different trajectories brought Schiller and Meyer to embrace this common endeavor. Schiller had long been a Jewish activist and journalist, advocating since the 1960s, when he was in his 20s, for Jewish institutions to take a clear stand on national politics.⁵ In the early 1970s he wrote both for *Mundo Israelita* and the *Informativo DAIA*, and in 1977 he founded the newspaper *Nueva Presencia*. As noted in the previous chapter, this was a newspaper that worked towards legitimating the duality of Jewish and Argentine identities with a lead article in the first issue entitled "*Ser judío, ser argentino*" (Being Jewish, Being Argentine). It also was among the first newspapers to work against the agenda of the military regime, first through cultural politics that were anathema to the regime, and then through more overt support for the families of the disappeared and detained.⁶

Marshall Meyer had a shorter history of working to integrate Argentine and Jewish activism. He was an American rabbi who arrived in Argentina in 1959 and played a central role in the building of the Conservative movement, a liberal religious Jewish denomination that garnered a growing number of adherents during the dictatorship. In the mid-1970s he had a decidedly apolitical approach to his preaching, taking an active stance against liberation theology, and especially the violence proposed by many of its adherents. Whereas Zionist leaders worked to politicize their message, he preferred to emphasize that religious Judaism was a better and safer option for Jewish youth than political involvement.⁷ Nonetheless, during the dictatorship he offered pastoral care to Jewish prisoners, joined the *Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos* (Permanent Assembly for Human rights), and discussed championing human rights as a God-mandated Jewish imperative.⁸

Despite this longer-term activism, it was not until 1983 that Schiller and Meyer, independently, came to describe the military regime, and particularly its repressive apparatus, as definitively antisemitic. It was international Jewish organizations that first leveled this critique and it gained international traction when newspaper editor Jacobo Timerman was detained and tortured in 1977. Upon his release to house arrest in 1978, Timerman began issuing declarations about his treatment, emphasizing that the torturers had been antisemitic, and committed by Nazi

⁴ "Movimiento Judío por los Derechos Humanos: Reseña de un año de trabajo," Duke University Digital Collections, Marshall T. Meyer Papers, accessed July 17, 2012, http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/meyermarshall_meypw04022/. The "Amnesty Law" was popularly referred to as the "auto-amnesty law," this was a law the junta had issued to free the military of blame for the "crimes" committed to root out "subversion" and "terrorism," (Hugo Quiroga, *El tiempo del "Proceso": Conflictos y coincidencias entre políticos y militares, 1976-1983*, 2. ed. (Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina: Editorial Fundación Ross: Homo Sapiens Ediciones, 2004), 344).

⁵ In a letter to the editor of the newly established publication *Horizonte*, Schiller founded the *Juventud Judía Revolucionaria* (Jewish Revolutionary Youth) to build a bridge between the "most advanced sectors of Jewish youth and the militants who fight for national liberation ("Cartas de los lectores," *Horizonte*, July 29, 1965, 3).

⁶ Emmanuel Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento: Actitudes sociales, posicionamientos y memoria de la experiencia judía durante la última dictadura militar (1973-2007)" (PhD, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2010), 351–2.

⁷ Laura Schenquer, "Actitudes sociales en dictadura: Estudio sobre las organizaciones judías durante el último régimen militar (1976-1983)" (PhD, University of Buenos Aires, 2012), 236–8.

⁸ Fainstein, Daniel, "Secularización, profecía y liberación: La desprivatización de la religión en el pensamiento judío contemporáneo. Un estudio comparativo de sociología histórica e historia intelectual" (PhD, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005), 228–332. *Nueva Presencia* published a sermon of Meyer's in December of 1978 in which he explained that "as a Jew, I have to fight for human rights and human sanctity, because God demands it, independent of whether my society demands it or not" (El judíasmo no puede sobrevivir en una sociedad donde no rijan derechos humanos," *Nueva Presencia*, December 22, 1978, as cited in Fainstein, "Secularización, profecía y liberación, 332).

sympathizers, who were suspicious that he and other Jews were involved in an anti-Argentine conspiracy.⁹ For the next years, Argentine Jewish activists, including initially Schiller and Meyer, denied that the regime was specifically antisemitic.¹⁰ By 1983, however, both included antisemitism among the regime's other human rights abuses, and founded the MJDH with the goal of working to eradicate both.

As different organizations lined up in support of the DAIA or the MJDH, it became clear that contemporary allegiances did not follow the same logic they had in the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, generation no longer defined the most prominent differences. The leaders of the DAIA and the MJDH were essentially contemporaries, and more importantly, there was no discourse of youth or generational conflict in explaining their differences. Emmanuel Kahan has pointed to the *Juventud Judía de la Plata* (Jewish Youth of La Plata) as voicing early concern for human rights violations and thereby renewing youth activism.¹¹ Nonetheless, Jewish youth activists were themselves split between the two camps: *Confederación Juvenil Sionista Argentina* (Confederation of Argentine Zionist Youth) endorsed the position of the DAIA in boycotting the march, but a handful of leftwing Zionist youth dissented.¹² Nor were particular positions on Zionism the dividing line. Just a year earlier, Israeli politics had become quite contentious during Israel's war with Lebanon, and especially after a massacre in two refugee camps, Sabra and Shatila.¹³ Herman Schiller and *Nueva Presencia* denounced the conduct of the Israeli military harshly, whereas the DAIA issued a declaration of support for the Israeli government in the face of international reproach.¹⁴ Marshall Meyer and Herman Schiller found themselves on opposite side of this debate: when Schiller and various other leftwing activists endorsed the foundation of the Israeli party *Shalom Achshav* (Peace Now), Marshall Meyer did not.¹⁵ The Lebanon War was undoubtedly a divisive moment, reflecting different understandings of Zionism at this juncture, yet the conflict of October 1983 pushed these differences to the side.

The fundamental divide between those who aligned with the MJDH from those who aligned with the DAIA were different positions on Argentine politics, and, more broadly,

⁹ On early critiques of the regime from international Jewish organizations and the opposition to these assessments from the DAIA, Marshall Meyer, and even Jacobo Timerman (before his arrest), see Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 166–170. Jacobo Timerman, the editor of *La Opinión*, was arrested in April 1977, imprisoned and tortured until international pressure led to his release to home arrest in April 1978. In September 1979 he was freed under the condition that he would relinquish his Argentine citizenship and relinquish his Argentine citizenship. Once on house arrest he began publicizing the antisemitic nature of his torture, which garnered further attention from international Jewish organizations (Schenquer, "Actitudes sociales en dictadura," 160).

¹⁰ When Timerman's memoir *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number* in 1981, both Schiller and Meyer expressed support for him and sympathy for his plight, but largely sidestepped the question of the regime's antisemitism (Estelle Tarica, "The Holocaust Again?: Dispatches from the Jewish 'Internal Front' in Dictatorship Argentina," *Journal of Jewish Identities* 5, no. 1 (2012): 102).

¹¹ Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 220, 255.

¹² "El lunes 24, a las 18, al pie del Obelisco," *Nueva Presencia*, October 21, 1983, 3. Still, the generational conflicts of previous years were not irrelevant in shaping the alliances: many of the people who had been Zionist youth activists in the 1960s and early 1970s, when the discourse of ethno-radicalism reined, were now journalists for *Nueva Presencia* or key players in the MJDH. Emmanuel Kahan has indexed the journalists for *Nueva Presencia*, and among them we find names associated with Zionist youth activism in previous years, including Ricardo Feirstein, Leonardo Senkman, and Eliahu Toker (Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 342).

¹³ For details of the massacre and the passivity of various Israeli army officials as Lebanese Phalange militias carried it out, see Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 542–6.

¹⁴ Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 342.

¹⁵ Schenquer, "Actitudes Sociales En Dictadura," 191.

contrasting understandings of Jewish membership in the nation in light of the dictatorship. For the MJDH, the common thread, whether from a theological or historical perspective, was that Jewishness carried with it an imperative to fight for human rights. The MJDH claimed as a central goal “to recreate here Judaism’s millennial drive for democracy, humanism, and social justice.”¹⁶ The employees and youth leaders at Hebraica, who publicly supported the MJDH and dissented from the DAIA called for “a Judaism that is committed to the struggles of the oppressed and not the oppressors.” They claimed further, “it is our ethnic, moral, and historical duty to condemn all violations against human rights.”¹⁷ For the participants of the MJDH, this understanding of Jewishness was intertwined with the drive to join “with the other democratic sectors of the nation, to definitively eradicate, torture, kidnapping, hunger, misery, and censorship, and intolerance.”¹⁸ Their political style itself spoke further to their understanding of Jewish membership in the nation. In the August march against the Amnesty Law, the MJDH raised a Jewish banner, proposing that they could be both consciously and visibly Jewish and part of a more universal struggle. In October, they invited many others to join them in championing the intersection of Jewish and national concerns. Emphasizing this intersection, they consistently portrayed antisemitism as part and parcel with the threat to the nation more broadly. The recent wave of antisemitism, with its effort to “blame Jews for the national situation in an attempt to move it away from those who are truly responsible,” was actually a universal threat directed against “the bases of Argentine society.”¹⁹

The DAIA’s opposition to many of these propositions, meanwhile, was an outgrowth of its own trajectory during the dictatorship. The DAIA’s behavior has been a focal point for many scholars of the dictatorship, many of whom have accused the DAIA of silence in the face of antisemitism and ultimately complicity with the military regime.²⁰ Recent scholars have tried to nuance this approach, by highlighting that it was only with respect to “clandestine” antisemitism that the DAIA was silent and by offering detailed analyses of the DAIA’s statements and silences as compared to others in the community. For much of the dictatorship, figures such as Herman Schiller and Marshall Meyer joined the DAIA in claiming in front of international audiences that the military regime was engaged in a legitimate struggle against “subversion” and

¹⁶ Schenquer, “Actitudes Sociales En Dictadura,” 191. *Nueva Presencia* also explained that the MJDH was fighting for a “Just Argentina, without disappeared, without torturers, without misery, and also without antisemitism.”

¹⁷ “Solicitado: La comunidad judía, el antisemitismo, y los derechos humanos,” in “Material de AMIA producido hacia fines de 1983 en torno de la convocatoria al acto del MJDH, que se discutirá durante el Encuentro del 1 de diciembre ‘Alternativas del Pensamiento Comunitario,’” Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 26a.

¹⁸ “El lunes 24, a las 18, al pie del Obelisco,” *Nueva Presencia*, October 21, 1983, 3.

¹⁹ “El lunes 24, a las 18, al pie del Obelisco,” *Nueva Presencia*, October 21, 1983, 3.

²⁰ The most extreme version of this attack is to equate the DAIA with a Judenrat, the Jewish institutions under Nazi rule, once blamed for facilitating the Nazi agenda. Jacobo Timerman was the first to employ this critique during the dictatorship. For an analysis of his accusations, beginning while he was under house arrest, see Tarica, “The Holocaust Again?,” 94–5; Schenquer, “Actitudes sociales en dictadura,” 160–161; Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 230–231. Harsh critiques of the DAIA have been common in the scholarship. Ignacio Klich, for example, claims that failure of the DAIA to admit that there was antisemitism embedded in the regime make this “one of the darkest chapters in the history of the Jewish diaspora in the post-war period (Klich, Ignacio, “Política comunitaria bajo la junta militar, 1976-1983,” in *Autoritarismo y antisemitismo: Los judíos durante La dictadura militar, 1976-1983*, ed. Leonardo Senkman (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1986), 277). Though it is not his main focus, David Sheinin is also highly critical of the conduct of the DAIA and contrasts it strongly with that of Marshall Meyer (David Sheinin, “Deconstructing Anti-Semitism in Argentina,” in *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean: Fragments of Memory*, ed. Kristin Ruggiero, (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 72–86).

in denying that the regime itself was antisemitic.²¹ Still, there was a key difference, largely in the response to the families of the disappeared and the burgeoning human rights movement. As families approached the DAIA for help recovering their loved ones, its leadership often refused responsibility either claiming that the case did not involve specifically Jewish persecution or that it involved political questions that were outside of the institution's purview.²² As noted in the previous chapter, this was quite distinct from the DAIA's attitude in 1975 when its president, Nehemías Resnizky, boldly denounced the arrest of Jewish teens in Córdoba "without getting into a discussion of the legitimacy."²³ The DAIA also declined requests to address the question of human rights at its yearly convention by a similar logic of maintaining its apolitical stand, insisting that it attended only to Jewish concerns.²⁴

By October 1983, this narrow reading of Jewish concerns had become embedded in the work of the DAIA. This became clear at its yearly convention on October 11-13, days before the conflict over the march exploded. The DAIA leadership had invited the presidential and vice presidential candidates of almost all the competing parties (representing 90% of the electorate) to speak about their commitment to eradicating antisemitism. To Nehemías Resnizky, by then the former president of the DAIA, this was an unprecedented event, whereby "politicians who represented almost the whole Argentine political spectrum have participated in an act against antisemitism."²⁵ Nonetheless, the agenda was circumscribed to just antisemitism: the DAIA refused the requests from the Mothers of the Detainees-Disappeared of Jewish Origin to ask the politicians for a commitment to the "*aparición con vida y puesta en libertad*" (live reappearance and release) of all those who were missing.²⁶ Even as Resnizky expressed pride in having proven that antisemitism should be a universal cause, he rejected the converse proposition: that the goals of the human rights movement should be understood as Jewish cause.

Once approached by the MJDH to participate in the march, the DAIA's arguments against it were hodgepodge. At first the leadership claimed that the Peronist and Radical parties thought the march would draw attention away from the elections (scheduled for October 30), but

²¹ Schenquer, "Actitudes sociales en dictadura," Part III. Another important effort to nuance the Judenrat thesis is that of Emmanuel Kahan, who analyzes the disjuncture between the DAIA's active objection to public forms of antisemitism and its silence on clandestine forms of antisemitism (Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," Chapter 3).

²² Klich, Ignacio, "Política comunitaria bajo la junta militar, 1976-1983," 282. As Tarica notes, the suggestion that they were kidnapped for a reason "constituted an implicit political endorsement of the junta" (Tarica, "The Holocaust Again?," 100).

²³ This shift has been explained in various ways. Laura Schenquer points to the Gravier affair as a turning point, highlighting the real concerns of the DAIA that the Jewish community as a whole would be associated with "subversion" or "corruption" if the DAIA had positioned itself differently (Schenquer, "Actitudes sociales en dictadura," Part III, Chapter 1). Others have emphasized the kidnapping of Marcos Resnizky, son of Nehemías Resnizky, as essential. Marcos was tortured but released days later thanks to international pressure (See, for example, Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1999), 101). Though this was not revealed to the Jewish community until 1984, it has since raised the question of whether this was a case of extortion whereby Resnizky agreed to keep his silence on matters of antisemitism (Tarica, "The Holocaust Again?," 104).

²⁴ Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 180-181.

²⁵ "MJHD, expresa su desacuerdo un ex presidente de la DAIA," in "Material de AMIA producido hacia fines de 1983 en torno de la convocatoria al acto del MJDH, que se discutirá durante el Encuentro del 1 de diciembre 'Alternativas del Pensamiento Comunitario,'" Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 26a.

²⁶ Kahan, "Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento," 255.

the MJDH later confirmed that this was not the case and garnered support from both parties.²⁷ The DAIA then claimed that the march would undermine its leadership, and confuse public opinion, at a crucial moment in Argentine history and so soon after its successful yearly convention.²⁸ This made clear that the struggle over the march was to a large extent a power struggle with the DAIA threatened by a new and powerful voice. Still, there were also substantive divergences between the two organizations, ones that hinged on questions of Jewish integration into the nation. In articulating the position of the DAIA, ex-president Nehemías Resnizky agreed with the MJDH that Jewishness entailed a commitment to human rights: it was the teaching of Jewish prophets that set the world on the path towards human rights, a struggle that later became “universal.”²⁹ That being said, he was emphatic that Jews should join the human rights movement exclusively as individuals, not “by means of Jewish organizations.” His logic was telling: he contended that integrating into the political system as Jews would “stimulate an unnecessary segregation that runs the risk of being interpreted as arrogance or self imposed marginalization, reminiscent of the ghetto...” In this formulation, Resnizky made clear a concern about public proclamations of Jewish particularity within the context of Argentine politics, a concern that had first been articulated by Argentine Jewish intellectuals as early as the 1910s. Jews could advocate for specifically Jewish interests, but their integration into politics and the nation hinged on their individual citizenship. For the MJDH, the proposition was the opposite—that truly being members in the nation, and stepping outside of the ghetto, meant proudly announcing Jewishness and aligning the Jewish community with the national struggle and the national struggle with Jewish concerns.

The most striking aspect of this debate for the purposes of this dissertation is that even as it echoed ones we have seen before, it also worked to erase the memory of the multiple ways that Jews had defined themselves and their membership in the nation in the years before the dictatorship. As part of its polemic against the MJDH and in anticipation of national elections, the DAIA reiterated its formal policy of “absolute impartiality” of the Jewish community, as such, in national politics. Throughout the DAIA’s lifetime, it had never formally deviated from this policy. Nonetheless, the DAIA consistently articulated membership in the nation in fundamentally political terms. After the fall of Perón, this involved efforts to claim that the celebrated liberal tradition had prized openness, tolerance, and *convivencia* and thereby Jewish inclusion. As the leaders of the DAIA came to grapple with underdevelopment, structural inequality, and Argentina’s Latin American condition in the early and mid-1960s, the leaders of the DAIA worked to emphasize that Jews were on the side of change and not the enemy of popular forms of nationalism, or more specifically, Peronism. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the common refrain became that Jewishness itself and the Argentine Jewish community were concerned with national liberation in Israel, Argentina, and across the third-world. Finally, even in the midst of political violence in the mid-1970s, the DAIA leadership, including Nehemías Resnizky, joined youth activists and intellectuals in framing the Jewish community as concerned with both antisemitism and mounting human rights abuses. That the DAIA, under the same leadership, invoked apoliticism to avoid comment on the military regime and to avoid offering

²⁷ Eliahu Toker, “Guía para los perplejos,” in “Material de AMIA producido hacia fines de 1983 en torno de la convocatoria al acto del MJDH, que se discutirá durante el Encuentro del 1 de diciembre ‘Alternativas del Pensamiento Comunitario,’” Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 26a.

²⁸ “MJHD, expresa su desacuerdo un ex presidente de la DAIA.” Resnizky described the moment as “a period where everyone should put a significant emphasis on strengthening our highest representative institution.”

²⁹ “MJHD, expresa su desacuerdo un ex presidente de la DAIA.”

aid to the relatives of the regime's victims went a long way to obscure this history. The refusal to align the Jewish community, as such, with the human rights movement in 1983, solidified this new image.

But it was not just the nuances of the history of the DAIA that were obscured, but rather of the community as a whole as the MJDH became understood as the first movement to “de-ghettoize” the Jewish community and integrate it into the nation. Carlos Alberto Brocato, a journalist for *Nueva Presencia*, who defined his particular subjectivity by his being a non-Jew who worked for Jewish newspaper, defined the work of the MJDH and *Nueva Presencia* as without antecedent in “in the history of our society and very likely other societies.” Together they had “succeeded in incorporating us [non-Jews] into their fight by incorporating themselves into the broader struggles of society.” This historical feat was made possible by a “social practice that interrelates the Jewish problematic with the national problematic.”³⁰ While Brocato offered a view essentially from the outside, his essay appeared on the pages of *Nueva Presencia*, a newspaper that since its inception had fashioned itself as path breaking for the similar reasons to Brocato's.³¹

In many ways, however, the effort to relate the “Jewish problematic and the national problematic” had defined discussions on Jewishness and membership in the nation since the 1960s. Not only did articulations of Jewish inclusion geared outward wrestle with the interplay between the national and the Jewish, but so too did the many efforts to maintain Jewish particularity and forestall assimilation. In fact, Jewish youth activists in the mid-1960s had pioneered a discussion about “de-ghettoization” as they sought to remake the Jewish community so as to resonate with the Argentine and Latin American identities and anti-imperialist politics of their peers. With the rise of the New Left in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the external challenges posed to the Jewish community became enmeshed with the internal ones, setting the stage for a new conceptualization of the intersection between the national and the Jewish. First youth activists and then the older generation defined the struggle of both Jews and Argentines as one for national and personal liberation. Even as most remained concerned that fully integrating would lead to a loss of Jewish particularity and undermine the Zionist movement, “establishment” newspapers published pieces that legitimated the desire of Jewish youth to cry for the massacre of political prisoners in Trelew in 1972 and also the massacre at the Olympic games in Munich that same year. Through it all, diasporic politics and the community's own generational politics catalyzed change and offered different frameworks of Zionism and Jewishness. The foundation of the State of Israel, the Six-Day War, and the Yom Kippur War were all crucial moments in fomenting Zionist fervor and reworking the meaning of Zionism. Still, shifting understandings of the Argentine nation consistently offered the fundamental context for rethinking the meanings of Jewishness and membership in the nation. In this regard, 1983 was no different.

Another key aspect of the MJDH that appeared unprecedented to many was the effort to build alliances with non-Jewish actors. To Brocato “by mixing with us, they have obliged us to absorb a humanizing gaze, so that we feel like Jews...in a shared humanity.” *Nueva Presencia* had indeed taken these efforts towards alliance building to a new level, increasingly including

³⁰ Carlos Alberto Brocato, “El fantasma guetico,” *Nueva Presencia*, in “Material de AMIA producido hacia fines de 1983 en torno de la convocatoria al acto del MJDH, que se discutirá durante el Encuentro del 1 de diciembre ‘Alternativas del Pensamiento Comunitario,’” Archivo Mark Turkow, Box 26a.

³¹ “Ser argentinos, ser judíos,” *Nueva Presencia*, July 9, 1977, 1. This notion was also perpetuated by the letters to the editor (See “Voces de aliento, críticas y sugerencias,” July 23, 1977; August 13, 1977; September 3, 1977).

various non-Jewish journalists on its staff.³² Similarly, one student at the *Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano*, the Conservative rabbinical school that Meyer had worked to found, explained to a reporter from the Jewish Telegraph Association that this was the first time the Jewish community had chosen to “go public.”³³ But, in reality, the efforts towards building relationships and alliances with non-Jews had been a long stated goal within the Jewish community, and one that various Jewish organizations worked to actualize. In the early 1960s, the years surrounding the Eichmann affair, the DAIA worked to foment alliances with what was then considered the “most representative” sectors—intellectuals, artists, journalists, and politicians—claiming that attacks on Jews were fundamentally attacks on democracy and *convivencia*. In the face of on-going political instability and persistent antisemitism, the DAIA came to accept the working class as key national actors and they worked to build relationships with labor leaders, inviting personalities like Augusto Vandor to DAIA lunches. The youth activists, for their part, focused their attention on the burgeoning New Left, especially their peers in the university, and convincing them of the legitimacy of the Zionist movement and Jewish membership in the nation. At their most politicized, leftwing Zionist youth agitated to invite a member of the *Juventud Peronista* to a communal event. At the DAIA convention of 1975 the question focused on joining forces with the burgeoning human rights community to fight social violence and antisemitism. And in 1976, Marcos Aguinis, with the support of the DAIA and the CJL, worked to gain allies, among academics, government, and activists of different ethnic groups to legitimate cultural pluralism. As was the case in 1983, at all of these junctures, the choice of allies revealed shifting understandings of the nation and signaled shifting claims for Jewish inclusion.

The novelty of the MJDH was not in the efforts to make Jewish interests and Argentine interests compatible or in the effort to build alliances surrounding these points of convergence—Jewish activists had long engaged in efforts to do just that. The novelty, importantly, was in the degree of success. Brocato highlighted an incident where an anti-Jewish group “tried to disturb a Jewish protest,” but was “repelled by militants from a non-Jewish Argentine party.”³⁴ That the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and various political parties fully embraced the MJDH and participated in its march was also telling. The one previous moment when the Jewish community garnered visible and active support from various segments of society was the boycott the DAIA called in 1962 after the Graciela Sirota kidnapping, when they hung signs that said, “Closed as a protest against Nazi aggressions in Argentina.” Still, the MJDH and *Nueva Presencia* resonated with a large audience in a far more sustained way and are still remembered as key players in the human rights struggle.³⁵ But Brocato’s explanation of why, with attention to the tactics employed by the MJDH and *Nueva Presencia* only explains this in part. That these efforts were far more successful than similar ones in previous years is perhaps best understood as an outgrowth of the experience of the dictatorship and the moment of reckoning in 1983. It was the victimization of Jews along with many others and the tragic absence of tolerance, pluralism, and humanity that

³² Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” 342-3.

³³ “6,000 in Buenos Aires Demand Action on Antisemitic Incidents.”

³⁴ Carlos Alberto Brocato, “El fantasma guetico.”

³⁵ Kahan highlights that *Nueva Presencia* is still remembered as one of the few publications in Argentine society that spoke out against the regime, though he also shows that this memory is to an extent constructed (Kahan, “Entre la aceptación y el distanciamiento,” Chapter 7. Marshall Meyer, meanwhile, served on the *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (National Commission on the Disappeared), which was created in 1983.

made the intermingling of “the Jewish and the national problematic” resonate so powerfully at this juncture.

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