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The New Jewish Pioneer:

Capital, Land, and Continuity on the US-Mexico Border

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Chicana/o and Central American Studies

by

Maxwell Ezra Greenberg

2021

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The New Jewish Pioneer:

Capital, Land, and Continuity on the US-Mexico Border

by

Maxwell Ezra Greenberg

Doctor of Philosophy in Chicana/o and Central American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Robert Chao Romero, Chair

Ethnic Studies epistemologies have been central to the historicization and theorization of the US-Mexico border as an ordering regime that carries out structures of settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and white supremacy. While scholars of Jewish history have explored the connections between colonial borders, transnational economic structures, and Jewish merchants, little is known about the role of Jewish entrepreneurs in the process of modern US-Mexico border formation. This dissertation explores how state, corporate, and military imperatives of US imperialism between the American Southwest and Northern Mexico created the conditions for Jewish inclusion into a white settler class and a model of Jewish continuity beyond Europe since the mid-nineteenth century.

To explore the imprint of US settler colonialism on Jewish settlement, inclusion, and continuity, Chapter one reviews how Jews have been historicized as exceptional subjects in the contexts of colonial Mexico and the modern American West. Subsequently, Chapter two utilizes archival sources to reinscribe the Jewish border entrepreneur into the history of capitalist and

military expansion across the new US imperial frontier. Working across the economies of extraction, policing, and revolution, Jewish border entrepreneurs reflect how commercial middlemen were neither separate nor above the racial and colonial contexts in which they existed, but were rather active and benefiting participants.

Next, Chapter three investigates a regional movement for Jewish agricultural colonization and immigrant re-settlement that originated in late-nineteenth-century California and imagined a semi-sovereign Jewish nation-state in Baja California, Mexico. The plan to establish a "Palestine on the Pacific" persisted through 1939 and suggests that ideologies of Jewish nation-building were informed by structures of US settler colonialism, including liberal articulations of peoplehood, citizenship, and territorial belonging. Finally, Chapter four employs place-based, autoethnography in a Jewish cemetery in the Sonoran Desert to understand Jewish interpolation into US settler society as an ongoing process that can be explored through the Jewish American non-profit industrial complex. To conclude, I discuss how writing Jews into a modern, critical history of the US-Mexico border region contributes to Jewish and Chicana/o Studies by expanding methodological approaches to the analysis of settler colonial and neoliberal economies, and racial ordering in North America.

The dissertation of Maxwell Ezra Greenberg is approved.

Aomar Boum

Rubén Hernández-León

Sarah Abrevaya Stein

Robert Chao Romero, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

DEDICATED TO

Michelle Rein and Justin Shlomo Sims

For teaching me about difference. May your memories be for a blessing.

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Program at UC Davis, the Gold Shield Alumni Network at UCLA, the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University, the Jewish History Museum and Holocaust History Center in Tucson, the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA, the American Academy for Jewish Research, the Maurice Amado Research Grant, the Jack H. Skirball Fellowship in Modern Jewish Culture, the Knapp Family Foundation, the Bluma Appel Research Grant, the Mellon Foundation and the Urban Humanities Initiative Research Grant, and the Chaskel and Sara Roter Summer Research Travel Grant.

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VITA

MAXWELL EZRA GREENBERG

EDUCATION

2018	C.Phil	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Chicana/o and Central American Studies
2018	Certificate	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Urban Humanities Initiative
2016	M.A.	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Chicana/o and Central American Studies
2011	BA	Kenyon College, Highest Honors Spanish Language and Literature

PUBLICATIONS

Greenberg, Maxwell. "Jewish Merchants between Landscapes of Extraction and Policing," *Jews as Whites. Jews as Others."* Ed. Ellen Eisenberg. (Brandeis University Press, 2022) *forthcoming*

Greenberg, Maxwell and Laura Leibman (co-editors) "Introduction: Race and Antisemitism." *Journal of Jewish Identities* (Special Issue). Summer 2022, *forthcoming*

Greenberg, Maxwell E. "Jewish Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Border Crossing Cards." *Jews Across the Americas: 1492-Present* (Sourcebook). Ed. Laura Leibman and Adriana Brodsky. (Press TBD) *forthcoming*

Greenberg, Maxwell E. "The Mexican Mahjar of the Borderlands." *1000 Years of Sephardic Los Angeles: A Project of the UCLA Alan D Leve Center for Jewish Studies.* February 2020. Online.

Greenberg, Maxwell E and Max M Daniel. "Ocasio-Cortez's Jewish Heritage Isn't About You," *Jewish Currents.* January 2019. Online.

Greenberg, Maxwell. "Anxiety in the Archive." *PROTOCOLS,* Vol. 3, Summer 2018.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Gold Shield Fellowship, UCLA

Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCLA (declined)

New Directions in Jewish Studies Lecturer. Jewish Studies Program, University of California, Davis.

Inaugural Scholar-in-Residence, Jewish History Museum of Tucson.

Travel Grant. American Academy for Jewish Research

Jack H. Skirball Fellowship in Modern Jewish Culture (AY 2018-2019). Alan D. Level Center for Jewish Studies. University of California, Los Angeles

Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program. University of California, Los Angeles.

Graduate Research Mentorship Program (2016-2017 AY). University of California, Los Angeles.

CONFERENCES

Greenberg, Maxwell. "Jewish Immigrant Entrepreneurs at the Border(s) of Revolution." Roundtable participant for "Jews in the Multicultural West." American Jewish Historical Society Biennial Conference 2020

Greenberg, Maxwell. "American Jewish Identity Beyond Liberalism" Roundtable Participant. Association of Jewish Studies 2019. San Diego, CA

Greenberg, Maxwell. Co-Organizer. Latin American Jewish Studies Regional Conference, June 2019. Los Angeles, CA

Greenberg, Maxwell "Constructing Racial Identity in the Latin American Jewish Context." Roundtable Organizer & Participant. Latin American Jewish Studies Association Regional Conference. Columbia University, New York, New York

Greenberg, Maxwell. "Transnational Networks, Transborder Ties: Entrepreneurship, Race and Place in Contemporary Jewish Mexican U.S. Migration." Latin American Jewish Studies Association 2017. Universidad Iberoamericana, México City, D.F.

Greenberg, Maxwell. "Marking the Case for the Lethal Lesbian: A Queer Legal and Media Analysis of the State of Texas v. Yolanda Saldívar." National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies. Irvine, California

Greenberg, Maxwell. "The Archive and Repertoire of Queer Selenidad." National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies. Denver, CO

Greenberg, Maxwell. "Queer Echoes of Selenidad: Utopian Fandom from the Club to Cyberspace." Queer Graduate Student Conference. University of California, Los Angeles

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UCLA Department of Chicana/o and Central American Studies

Primary Instructor: Politics of Crisis: Migration, Identity and Religion

Primary Instructor: Jewish Latinidad: Race, Religion and the US-Mexico Border

Teaching Fellow: History, Culture and Identity

Teaching Fellow: Social Structure and Contemporary Conditions

Teaching Associate: Chicana/o and Latina/o Music in the US

Teaching Associate: Latina/os in Public Education

Teaching Associate: History, Culture and Identity

Teaching Assistant: Barrio Service Learning

Teaching Assistant: CCS Theoretical Concepts

UCLA Department of History

Teaching Fellow: World History

UCLA, cityLAB Institute

Teaching Fellow: Bunche Center & cityLAB Big Data for Justice Institute

Teaching Fellow: cityLAB Summer Institute

Introduction

There was a wall. It did not look important. It was built of uncut rocks roughly mortared;
An adult could look right over it, and even a child could climb it.
Where it crossed the roadway, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry,
A line, an idea of a boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall.

–Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

In 1925, the Jewish American women of the San Diego-based, Federated Jewish Charities (FJC) began driving across the border to Tijuana, Mexico to bring kosher food and wine to European Jewish immigrants and refugees. FJC was one of several Jewish charitable institutions in San Diego providing social services to mostly poor and immigrant Jews. While Jewish charitable associations at this time typically catered to Jewish Americans or first-generation Jewish immigrants in the US, Jewish American communal organizations, leaders, and communities in US border cities were often interpolated into issues of co-ethnic immigrant resettlement in the 1920s. European Jews were among the many immigrant groups facing increased barriers to documented entry to the United States under the new National Immigration Quota System. A series of restrictive immigration policies passed by the US Congress in 1921 and 1924, the law represented an unprecedented effort by the US government to control the nation's borders, both geographically and demographically. Many scholars who study twentieth-century US immigration history agree that the national quotas were legal mechanisms to limit the perceived political, racial, and cultural threats that Asian, as well as Eastern and Southern

European immigrant groups posed to US settler society.[1] It was in this context that European Jewish immigrants were among those navigating entry, documented and undocumented, into the US, from outside the nation's borders.

In response to the needs of European Jewish immigrants who, in transit to the US, settled temporarily in Tijuana, Mexico, the FJC created the Jewish Foreign Relief Society of San Diego and for a two-year period, raised emergency funds for immigrant families. Through the fund, the charitable organization provided employment assistance, and food services that were specific to Jewish ritual and tradition. Significantly, the women of the FJC provided support to the Jewish refugees living Tijuana in ways that would have implications well beyond weekly Jewish ritual preparations. The late Gert Thaler joined her mother, a member of the FJC, on their weekly drives from San Diego to Tijuana and remembers the ritual of cross-border co-ethnic solidarity fondly. In a 2002 article in the *San Diego Jewish Press-Heritage*, Thaler wrote: "The early [Jewish] immigrants had given birth to children who, because of an 'arrangement' by my mother and the immigration officers, were born as Americans in a San Diego hospital. The passing of time saw all these families given US entry, establishing homes and prosperous business, and raising children to become productive citizens."[2] In Thaler's near one-hundred-year-old memory, she speaks openly and proudly about the role that a Jewish American charitable organization played, in defiance of legal immigration restrictions, to resettle Jewish immigrant in the United States. Moreover, Thaler includes the important detail that state agents

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[1] Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Robert Chao Romero, *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882–1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008); Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[2] Gert Thaler, "Our Jewish Family across the Border," *San Diego Jewish Press-Heritage*, May 3, 2002, Gert Thaler Collection, Jewish Historical Society of San Diego, San Diego State University.

of the US Border Patrol, meant to enforce immigration laws, assisted this Jewish American organization in defiance of US immigration laws to secure European Jewish settlement in the US. Thaler's story evokes a kaleidoscope of well-studied issues about cross-border migration and US state power in the twentieth century, including the unequal, racialized and inconsistent enforcement of the national quotas, gendered modes of surveillance, and notably, the exclusion of undocumented European Jewish immigrants from categories of illegality, or the trope of the anchor baby.[3]

Thaler's narrative is also a window into an unexplored topic: how modern structures of capitalism and policing at the US-Mexico border shaped European Jewish American ideologies about, and strategies of, continuity and survival. More specifically, this story captures how a US Border Patrol agent, a representative of the US federal government sent to the border to enforce racist immigration controls, chose not to enforce these laws and instead invested in the possibility that these European Jewish immigrants were worthy of becoming homeowners, prosperous businesspeople, and "productive members of society." One ordinary day in the 1920s, "3-year-old 'Gertie' got fit into the back seat . . . among the challahs, salami, halvah and rye bread" to be delivered to soon to be Jewish Americans, just across the border, where she bore witness to a single moment that captures an over one-hundred-fifty-year history of European Jewish American settlement in the US-Mexico border region.

In the following pages, I examine the story of modern European Jewish migration and settlement in the US-Mexico border region, and analyze how the structure of US settler colonialism created the conditions for a new model of Jewish continuity and survival outside of

[3] Garland, *After They Closed the Gates*; Leo Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

Europe.[4] More specifically, I explore how the racial and spatial aspirations of US imperialism and settler colonialism in the US-Mexico border region between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, aided in the transformation of European Jewish immigrants from a territorially, economically and politically dispossessed ethno-religious minority into a landowning, socioeconomically mobile and civically enfranchised white settler class. To explore the imprint of US settler colonialism on economic strategies and political ideologies of Jewish continuity, I historicize dynamics of Jewish American entrepreneurship and colonization efforts between the 1850s and the 1930s, and offer a contemporary, autoethnographic inquiry and spatial analysis of an over one-hundred-year-old Jewish cemetery along the US-Mexico border wall in the Sonoran Desert. In sum, this dissertation utilizes the US-Mexico border as an analytic space and regional and relational framework to trace how US settler colonial structures shaped commercial, territorial, and institutionalized strategies of European Jewish American continuity and survival.

Significance of the Study

This dissertation engages three distinct scholarly canons that have not heretofore been put in conversation: the historiography on modern Jewish settlement in the Americas, the historiography of the US-Mexico border region, and critical scholarship on the non-profit and prison industrial complexes in the US. At the intersection of these three scholarly discussions is the narrative of the inextricably linked relationships between US settler colonialism, the

[4] Many of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Jewish settlers in the border region were from Central and Eastern Europe, or the second or third generations with similar European ancestries. In the context of this analysis, all forthcoming uses of the ethno-religious category "Jew" refer to Central and Eastern European Jewish immigrants and/or US-border Jews of European-origin and does not mean to obscure the racial, geographic, and ethnic diversity of Jewish peoples globally. Nearly all of the Jewish subjects in this dissertation could be ethnically and culturally categorized as Ashkenazi Jews, or Jews who can trace their lineage back to Christian-majority, German lands, or Eastern Europe. See Aaron J. Hahn Tapper, *Judaisms: A Twenty-First-Century Introduction to Jews and Jewish Identities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 5, 19.

expansion of Western capitalism into Northern Mexico, the entrepreneurial cross-border networks among European immigrant men, the evolution of border surveillance, the rise of territorial-based, Jewish political nationalism, and the interpolation of Jewish American organized life into America's neoliberal political economy. To further elaborate the connections between these interlocking themes, this dissertation offers three distinct and related arguments.

First, I argue that Jews must be written into the history of capitalism in the context of settler colonial societies, including the United States. Scholars in Jewish Studies have looked toward more peripheral spaces, including port cities and imperial and colonial frontiers across the globe. Specifically, Jewish historians demonstrated how frontier geographies help capture the roles of Jews "as entrepreneurs and commercial liaisons," in transnational capitalist markets, often helping connecting frontier encampments with metropolitan centers, across different colonial projects.[5] With few exceptions, most scholars have explored Jewish involvement in the expansion of capitalist markets in colonial settings outside of the geographic context of the Americas, and absent a distinct settler colonial framework.[6]

By locating Jewish participation in the development, and expansion of capitalism in a settler colonial context, this study complicates the commonplace use of middleman minority theory to frame small-scale entrepreneurship amongst ethnic minorities, including Jews.[7] Often,

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[5] Sarah Abrevaya Stein contextualizes her study of Jew's preeminence in the trans-Atlantic ostrich feather trade was as a necessary step for the field of Jewish Studies to write Jews into the history of colonial economies as entrepreneurs and commercial liaisons." Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "Falling into Feathers: Jews and the Trans-Atlantic Ostrich Feather Trade," *Journal of Modern History* 79, no. 4 (December 2009): 775.

[6] In David Koffman's consequential study *The Jews' Indian* (2019), is an exception to this pattern and is one of the few scholarly works that positions Jewish entrepreneurship in the context of colonial economies in the American West. By centering the economic encounter between Jewish immigrants and native peoples in the nineteenth century American West, Koffman highlights how Jews socio-economic mobility and ambitions, were bound up with "the nation-building process in the West." David S. Koffman, *The Jews' Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 16.

[7] Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 138; Marni Davis, "Toward an 'Immigrant Turn' in Jewish

theoretical approaches to studying immigrant networks and entrepreneurship hinges on the assumption that middlemen work above, or outside a given geopolitical context.[8] In reality, those categorized as middlemen, including Jewish border merchants, are ensconced by the racial and colonial contexts in which they are located. By identifying how European Jewish Americans have been interpolated into capitalist structures within settler society at the border, I challenge the historicization of ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the Americas and socioeconomic mobility as narrative of exceptional individual success that exists independent from the state.

By studying Jewish entrepreneurs within the industrial capitalist transformation of the American West, and the US-Mexico border region in particular, we better understand the politicized and racialized roles played by small-scale, ethnic minority merchants within a given imperial project. Likewise, locating Jewish participation in the development, and expansion of capitalism in a settler colonial context, expands the critical history of capitalism in the US-Mexico border region. Recent scholarship has clarified the compounding state, corporate and military structures that shaped the capital and territorial transformation of the US-Mexico border region between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[9] Such narratives have not

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Entrepreneurial History: A View from the New South," *American Jewish History* 103, no. 4 (October 2019): 440, https://doi.org/10.1353/AJH.2019.0046.

[8] Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Middleman Minorities," *American Sociological Review* 38, no. 5 (October 1973): 583; Davis, "Jewish Entrepreneurial History"; Radba Chaganti and Patricia G. Greene, "Who Are Ethnic Entrepreneurs? A Study of Entrepreneurs' Ethnic Involvement and Business Characteristics," *Journal of Small Business Management* 40, no. 2 (April 2002): 128, https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-627X.00045; Ivan Light and Edna Bonacich, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles, 1965–1982* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[9] In the late nineteenth century, the US-Mexico borderlands underwent a transformation which Kelly Lytle Hernández describes as "non settler forms of conquest and colonialism," where the Mexican dictatorial regime of Porfirio Díaz invited US investors to send their dollars, employees and skilled laborers to build railroads, extract natural materials and buy up land. Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 93. Relatedly, Jessica Kim refers to this corporate conquest of Northern Mexican land and labor at the turn of the twentieth century as America's informal empire. Jessica M. Kim, *Imperial Metropolis: Los Angeles, Mexico, and the Borderlands of American Empire, 1865–1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 9. Finally, while US army troops and state-sanctioned vigilantism worked to assert US settler dominance in the region since the 1830s, US

considered the unique, intermediary roles of smaller-scale entrepreneurs, working across corporate and military sectors, as agents and beneficiaries of capitalist and settler colonial expansion in the US-Mexico border region. In sum, writing Jews into the history of capitalism in the context of settler colonial societies contributes to the historiography of Jews in the Americas and the history of capitalism in the US-Mexico border region.

Second, I argue that Jews must be written into the history of the US-Mexico border region and doing so, makes valuable contributions to racial formation theories across Jewish, Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies. The historiography of Jews in the Americas vastly overlooks the border region between the American Southwest and Northern Mexico as a site of academic inquiry, despite the region being one of the earliest sites of Jewish settlement in the hemisphere.[10] The exceptions to this gap in the literature include the accounts of *converso* and crypto-Jewish settlement in northern New Spain in the sixteenth and seventieth centuries during the Spanish colonial period. Additionally, the narratives that explore modern histories of European Jewish immigrants and Jewish Americans in the American Southwest, are featured in non-academic local histories, and center the US context to the exclusion of Mexican histories and the transnational realities of border experiences.

Likewise, scholars working within and between Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies have yet to integrate Jewish immigration and settlement into historical accounts of the modern US-Mexico border region. Foundational Chicana/o and Latina/o discourse frames modern and contemporary Chicana/o and Latina/o identities as rooted in the racial hierarchies and *mestizaje*

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military presence became a permanent fixture along the US-Mexico border during the decade of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920); the protection of national boundaries and US capital investments were dual objectives for an increasingly militarized presence in the region. C. J. Alvarez, *Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction on the US-Mexico Divide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021); Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[10] See discussion of crypto-Jewish historiography in chapter one.

(racial mixture) between Spanish, Indigenous, and African ancestries of sixteenth-century colonial Mexico. However, the use of *mestizaje* as a frame for Chicana/o and Latina/o racial histories often homogenizes the ethnic and religious heterogeneity of colonial Mexico's European population, and in turn, obscures *converso* and *morisco* ancestries and subjectivities within a dominant Spanish, Christian and white identity.

Writing Jews into the history of the US-Mexico border region contributes to Jewish Studies in several important ways. It expands the periodization and timeline by which Jewish presence in the region has been measured, clarifying that the sixteenth century was simply a starting point for a multi-century history of Jewish arrival and settlement across disparate diasporas. Furthermore, this cross-border, regional context pushes our understanding of Jewish American identity as not necessarily confined to the national boundaries of the US, but shaped by the intersecting local, national, and global structures that collide in a border zone. Rather than treating the US southern border as the limit of Jewish history in the American West, writing Jews into the history of the US-Mexico border considers the colliding, competing and collaborating regional, national and transnational power structures that define border zones.[11] Finally, it opens up new avenues for Jewish Studies to consider the influence of Jewish American institutions within the body of scholarship that traces historic and contemporary collaborations between the US and Israeli state, and the shared experiences of dispossession and genocide among Mexican, Indigenous, and Palestinian peoples.[12]

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[11] Harsha Walia's theory of "border imperialism" defines borders as "spatial and material power structures," and ordering regimes "both assembling and assembled through racial capitalist accumulation and colonial relations." Harsha Walia, *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), 2. For an explanation of how Mexico is part of a settler colonial project, see Shannon Speed, "Structures of Settler Capitalism in Abya Yala," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (December 2017): 783–90.

[12] Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, "Rethinking Settler Colonialism," *American Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (December 2014): 1039–1055.; David Lloyd and Laura Pulido, "In the Long Shadow of the Settler: On Israeli and US Colonialisms," *American Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (December 2010): 795–809.

Likewise, writing Jews into the history of the modern US-Mexico border region makes meaningful contributions to racial histories and frameworks in Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies. Since the 1970s, foundational scholarship in Chicana/o Studies has relied on a racial model based upon the framework of *mestizaje,* or racial mixture. While the term has carried various meanings depending on the context, the use of the term within Chicana/o Studies was directly connected to the early-twentieth-century Mexican revolutionary government project that consolidated national, racial, and cultural identity between two identities: Spanish and Indigenous. In recent decades, scholars working across Ethnic Studies disciplines have made essential critiques of the model of *mestizaje* for the way it has redeployed the racial and ethnic exclusions at the center of modern Mexican nationalism, including anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-Chinese ideologies.[13] However, critiques of *mestizaje* have overlooked the persistence of colonial-era racisms, and more specifically the anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim discourse, that was also was central to the colorism that structured the social and economic order of New Spain.

The absence of Jewish and Muslim subjectivities within discussions of Chicana/o and Latina/o racial histories lays bare how *mestizaje* reaffirms the racializing project of Mexican nationalism, and additionally, the ethno-religious imperatives of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. While this dissertation locates Jews within modern US-Mexico border history, it nonetheless establishes a foundation for future considerations of how the legacy of European Christian supremacy (the dogma line) is exported from Europe to inform a white supremacist

[13] Since the 2000s, scholars working in Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies have critiqued traditional notions of mestizaje for its propensity to erase, or homogenize racial and ethnic differences, and redeploy anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-Chinese racial discourse. For a critique of mestizaje and Sinophobia, see Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*, 8. For critiques of mestizaje and anti-Blackness, see Christina A. Sue, *Land of the Cosmic Race: Race Mixture, Racism, and Blackness in Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). For a critique of mestizaje and anti-Indigeneity, see Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, "Who's the Indian in Aztlán? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from the Lacandón," in *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*, ed. Ileana Rodríguez (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 402–23.

racial colonial order in the Americas, which continues to be rearticulated through the *mestizaje* racial discourse. By locating modern structures of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in the Americas within a longer genealogy of racialized difference rooted in medieval and colonial-era intra-European religious otherness, Jewish and Chicana/o Studies are better positioned to be in meaningful conversation regarding the relational differences and similarities between anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Black, and anti-Native racisms.[14]

Third, I argue that the history and on-going impacts of Jewish American philanthropy must be positioned within the existing body of scholarship that links the evolution of settler colonialism and the rise of neoliberalism to the non-profit and surveillance industries. Currently, researchers and investigative journalists have demonstrated how collaborations between US government institutions and Israeli technology corporations have influenced the increasing privatization of policing and surveillance across the Americas, especially along border zones.[15] However, little attention has been paid to Jewish American philanthropic capital and non-profits as private entities that invest in political and economic cooperation between the US and Israel, including the surveillance industry.

Likewise, Jewish American philanthropy has only recently been troubled by scholars in Jewish Studies as an organizing and economic model of Jewish American life that is inseparable

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[14] For a comprehensive study on how racial thinking, racial law, racial practices and racial phenomena existed in medieval Europe before the modern vocabulary of race emerged in the West, see Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Gerald Horne, *The Dawning of the Apocalypse: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and Capitalism in the Long Sixteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).

[15] Todd Miller, *Empire of Borders: The Expansion of the US Border Around the World* (London: Verso, 2019), 57, 137; Geoff Boyce et al., *Facing Down Settler Colonialism: O'odham-Palestinian Struggles* (Tucson: Arizona Palestine Solidarity Alliance, 2020), https://www.arizonapalestine.org/uploads/2/2/5/2/22521248/apsareportjuly2020.pdf; Walia, *Border and Rule*, 37, 78.

from the American state-making, specifically liberal democracy's investment in capitalism.[16] However, this scholarship overlooks the roles that policing, and surveillance have always played within America's political democracy, particularly under twenty-first-century neoliberalism. Furthermore, this discussion leaves unattended the potential linkages between Jewish American philanthropic capital, and the privatization of surveillance as a critical outgrowth of neoliberalism. By using the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery, a Jewish cemetery that is adjacent to the US-Mexico border wall (see chapter four), as a material and speculative space of analysis, this dissertation offers a radically new methodology for the study of Jewish cemeteries in the Americas. Not simply and autonomous site of Jewish memory, a Jewish cemetery in the Americas is land marked by the racial and colonial projects that created the conditions for Jewish settlement in the first place.

In order to explore the dynamics between modern Jewish settlement in the Americas, the US-Mexico border region, and the non-profit and prison industrial complexes in the US, I employ a settler colonial framework. Beyond serving as the theoretical core of this dissertation, settler colonialism is the overarching structure of power that created the conditions for modern Jewish presence in, and engagement with, liberal and neoliberal capitalism in the US-Mexico border region.

Theoretical Underpinnings

I conceive of settler colonialism as the central, conceptual methodology of this dissertation, and crucial investigative tool to capture modern histories of Jewish settlement along the US-Mexico border region within the histories of state-making, corporate investment, and

[16] Lila Corwin Berman, *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020); Raphael Magarik, "Who Owns American Judaism?" *Jewish Currents*, June 1, 2021, https://jewishcurrents.org/who-owns-american-judaism/.

policing. I trace European Jewish arrival and entrepreneurial activities in Baja California, Arizona, and New Mexico between the mid-nineteenth century through 1920 to reflect the ways in which US settler colonial expansion offered European Jewish immigrants' territorial and commercial incentives to settle the American frontier. In addition, a settler colonial framework offers new perspectives within on-going conversations about Jewish American philanthropy and the direct and indirect consequences of the institutionalization of Jewish American organized life.

As I will demonstrate in chapters one, two and three, the application of a settler colonial framework to Jewish borderlands history clarifies how Jewish immigrants, while economically dispossessed and religiously persecuted in what could be called internal colonialism between Europe, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire, they arrived in, and were invited to become white settlers in the modern US imperial project. More specifically, this framework highlights how European Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs and merchants were cast as commercial intermediaries between state, corporate and military actors that served the expansion of US imperialism in the region. In chapter three, I use a settler colonial framework to locate non-Palestine-based Jewish nationalisms beyond a European context, and rather, within the regional and hemispheric contexts of the border and the Americas. This approach underscores the relationships between late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century political ideologies for Jewish continuity, survival, and nation-building and modern European imperialism and US settler colonial structures that have weaponized theology to justify territorial and capital theft, or accumulation.

In my fourth and final chapter, I draw on the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) and the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) as corollary frameworks to think through the institutionalization of contemporary Jewish American life, and related collaborations with

neoliberal and settler colonial projects along the US-Mexico border.[17] In sum, a settler colonial framework pushes beyond the historical accounts of Jewish history in the American West that are framed as exceptional, and inevitable manifestations of capitalist and liberal democratic progress. Rather, I locate European Jewish American's relationship to liberal and neoliberal capitalism and territorial accumulation as necessarily entangled with imperial structures of racialized exclusion, including land theft, genocide, labor as enslavement and exploitation, and war in the US-Mexico border region. More specifically, this framework exposes how Jewish experiences of social mobility, economic security, land ownership, and political participation were reliant upon a broader structure of racial colonial violence that created "free" land through Indigenous removal, and genocide and an economic system rooted in enslaved and exploited labor.

Methodology and Sources

My dissertation is based on a four-year, interdisciplinary study of Jewish history in the US-Mexico border region conducted between 2017 and 2020. I employed traditional, historical research approaches to gather transnational primary sources in English and Spanish from national, state, and university archives, in addition to Jewish American institutional and private or informal collections, between the United States and Mexico. My sources were gathered from California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico, including Baja California and Mexico City. By drawing from different archival spaces, some which represented federal histories, and others more regional Jewish American institutional histories, I aimed to capture the distinct ways that governments incorporated European Jewish Americans in each geopolitical context, the ways

[17] Dylan Rodríguez describes the NPIC as the "institutionalization of a relation of dominance." Dylan Rodríguez, "The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex," in *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*, ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007), 39.

that European Jewish Americans understood their own roles in society (as Jews and Americans), and importantly, how non-Jews understood themselves vis-à-vis a Jewish presence.

Between 2017 and 2020, I conducted archival research at US academic institutions, including the University of California, Los Angeles, San Diego State University, and University of Arizona. The genre of documents collected included US and Jewish American periodicals; correspondence between Jewish American philanthropists to the Baron de Hirsch Foundation in England, and between rabbis and researchers tracing nineteenth-century Jewish presence in New Mexico and Arizona (notes included family trees, and census records for several Jewish settler families to the Arizona Territory); an Indian depredation claim report filed between 1867 and 1887; 1860s–1880s US census records; US congressional committee meeting notes (1913); the proceedings from the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1923); Jewish American organizational meeting notes; and, proceedings from an academic research lecture on New Mexico's nineteenth-century commercial revolution; and archived oral histories with descendants of early-twentieth-century Jewish border entrepreneurs. I augmented these archival document sources with documentary film, museum exhibitions, visits to public monuments, and local historical societies. These auxiliary sources often reflected how scholars, journalists and artists have portrayed modern Jewish settlement in the US-Mexico border region as a celebrated narrative of building the American frontier. Overall, these sources provided the materials for analyzed in chapters two and three, and clarified details of how Jews fit into the capitalist infrastructure along the border at the turn of the twentieth century.

Between 2017 and 2019, I conducted various trips to national, state, university, and Jewish archival institutions in Mexico, but utilized a limited number of sources collected from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California and the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN,

México). It was at these institutions that I identified the most valuable materials concerning the proposal to establish a Jewish colony in Baja California. Specifically, in the Presidential Files of Lázaro Cárdenas del Rio (AGN), provided extensive documentation on the subject, including Mexican periodicals and pamphlets, correspondence from Jewish and non-Jewish Americans and US businesses to the Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940); and reports and correspondence about the viability of Jewish colonization in Mexico from state-sponsored Mexican anthropologists. These sources complicated my initial understanding of how Jewish Americans organized on behalf of a Jewish resettlement and colonization plan in Mexico. While my initial source from UCLA's Special Collections indicated that the Baja California Jewish colonization plan was limited to the 1890s, the sources retrieved from Mexican state and federal archives clarified that the plan extended through the 1920s and 1930s.

Intentionally, I did not seek out many primary sources from Jewish American archival institutions. This methodological choice was influenced in part, by the limited holdings in Jewish American archival institutions relevant to Jews in the American West and Northern Mexico. De-centering Jewish American archival institutions is also an important methodological approach to theorize and write Jewish American histories from a relational framework. For example, it was necessary that I sought out Mexican documents pertaining to themes of Jewish immigration and colonization in Mexico, to better elaborate how non-Jews experienced these historical trends. Between 2019 and early 2020 however, I visited the offices of Jewish Family Services of San Diego (an entity of the Jewish Federation), and the extensive collections at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City. Both locations offered useful primary sources concerning how Jewish American immigrant aid organization understood Mexico as a space for hosting Jewish refugees in the 1920s. The genre of documents included an in-depth study by the Hebrew

Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) on the viability of Jewish immigration and colonization in Mexico by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (1921), and correspondence between the Jewish Benevolent Society in San Diego and local Jewish entrepreneurs in Tijuana on the subject of employment for Russian Jewish refugees.

Notably, the final case study chapter shifts from a historical informed approach toward a more anthropological one, using a Jewish cemetery as an analytic space to explore Jews as agents of contemporary settler colonial and capitalist structures along the border. The incorporation of autoethnography to my research methodology was a necessary response to a data set that existed outside the institutional archive, and within the built landscape of the Sonoran Desert and the US-Mexico border zone. The use of the autoethnography is also reflection of my training in Ethnic Studies, (rather History, Sociology, or Anthropology), which emphasizes the importance of addressing and incorporating one's positionality into the research design process. More specifically, my identities as white, Jewish, transgender, and documented, was (and is) an essential part of my methods as a researcher of modern Jewish histories in the US-Mexico border region.

Autoethnography, as an academic method of inquiry often used in Ethnic Studies, is a framework fundamentally rooted in the experiences of women of color, to evaluate and reconstruct how researchers of color experience power relations across different facets of identity (i.e., race, gender, sexuality, citizenship, ability), and how such power relations play out within the research realm and amongst faculty.[18] As a white and Jewish researcher, my status in the

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[18] Natasha Behl, "Diasporic Researcher: An Autoethnographic Analysis of Gender and Race in Political Science," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5, no. 4 (2017): 580–98, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21565503.2016.1141104; Alice Smith-Tran, "Exploring the Benefits and Drawbacks of Age Disclosure among Woman Faculty of Color," *Teaching Sociology* 48, no. 1 (January 2020): 3–12, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0092055X19869983.

academy has been supported by the very power structures that continue to marginalize women of color, and other peoples with non-dominant identities. Nevertheless, my engagement with autoethnography helped augment and expand my methodologic toolkit beyond traditional archival methodologies, which do not account for the experiences of researchers who are not white, cisgender, documented, and able-bodied.

My identities as white, Jewish, and California-born, catalyzed and informed all facets of my research design on the Jewish American experience at the US-Mexico border. In 2014, during my first quarter of my first year in graduate school, a colleague took the time to ask me why I was continually self-identifying as "Anglo" in our seminar discussions around racialization and privilege. Despite my nine years of schooling at a private Jewish day school (K–8th grade), during which I was emersed in (a version of) Jewish history and surrounded by Jewish classmates and teachers, it wasn't until age twenty-five, while in a Chicana/o Studies graduate seminar, that I was confronted with my own limited vocabulary through which to unpack the boundaries between being white, Jewish, and Anglo. Throughout the course of my research, I have come to understand that the elusive boundary between European whiteness (Spanish or Anglo), and European-origin Jewish identity, is woven into the history of racialization for European Jewish immigrants in the American West. As I argue in chapter one, Jewish immigrants have existed within a sociopolitical structure that claimed them as European since their arrival to northern New Spain in the sixteenth century.

Furthermore, my methodological approach to studying Jewish American experiences at the US-Mexico border through historical archival methods, is inextricable from my identities as being white, Jewish, transgender, and a US citizen. In 2016, in the early months of my doctoral preparation, I had planned to research the experiences of being both Mexican and Jewish while

living in the Tijuana-San Diego metropolitan area. I had learned of the numerous Jewish synagogues that had existed in Tijuana since the 1940s, including the more recent Ken Latin Jewish Community Center in San Diego, a Jewish community institution that centers the experiences of Spanish speaking, Latin American-origin Jews. This expanded version of Jewish California geographies productively challenged the version of Jewish history I had learned through my California Jewish day school, which had reinforced a narrow timeline and scope of the Jewish diaspora, that leaned heavily toward European, US, and Israeli Ashkenazi histories.[19] In the fall of 2016, I began collecting preliminary oral histories with first-generation Mexican Jewish residents in the San Diego region. However, the pilot interview process also coincided with the beginning of my own gender transition (which included a medical and physical transition) and my personal transition began to interfere with my capacity to move forward with the research. My transness, and particularly the illusion of anonymity and safety of institutional archives, pushed me toward a historical project that required traditional historical methods and primary source research from both US and Mexican archival institutions.[20]

Throughout my research process, there were moments where I was concerned that my transness would negatively impact my capacity to do traditional archival research. In 2017, for

[19] Tijuana's twentieth-century Jewish community and the community and religious institutions they organized was captured through Isaac Artenstein's documentary *Tijuana Jews*. Isaac Artenstein, dir., *Tijuana Jews* (San Diego: Cinewest Productions, 2005). Furthermore, the Elena Saad Collection at San Diego State University provides extensive Spanish-language interviews with Mexican Jewish residents of Tijuana, portions of which are captured in her MA thesis entitled "La Comunidad Israelita de Tijuana / The Jewish Community of Tijuana." Elena Saad Collection 1997–2001, Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University.

[20] Scholars of color have long theorized about the tremendous violence enacted upon users and subject of the archive. For a rich analysis of the entanglements between of archival spaces, imperialism and settler colonialism, and why antiracist and decolonial histories must necessarily challenge archival institutions I recommend the theory of the "rebel archive" in Hernández's introduction to *City of Inmates* and Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). I wrote about the intersections of my own whiteness, transness and doing archival research across international borders in Maxwell Greenberg, "Anxiety at the Archive," *Protocols*, no. 3 (Fall 2018), https://prtcls.com/article/anxiety-at-the-archive/.

example, while visiting the Archivo del Amigos de la Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalén and Area de Acervos Históricos de la Biblioteca Francisco Xavier Clavigero in the Universidad Ibéroamericana in Mexico City, where I gathered oral histories on early-twentieth-century Jewish immigrants to Mexico and nineteenth-century correspondence between Porfirio Díaz and US corporations, I had to present a state ID that did not match my name nor gender. Likewise, in 2018, while visiting the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California in Tijuana, to investigate regional periodicals and shipping manifests, I crossed through the port-of-entry that divides Tijuana from San Diego with a similarly outdated passport. In each instance however, my fair complexion—which often legitimized my Jewishness (I perceived)—coupled with my US passport, and institutional affiliation with the University of California system, ultimately secured my mobility across international borders, and facilitated my access to institutional archival spaces. I name my racial, legal, gendered, ethno-religious and class markers to clarify the intersecting parts of my identity that shaped my lens as a subjective, not objective, interdisciplinary historical researcher and witness to primary sources. Furthermore, these identity markers were activated, made visible or invisible, depending on the archival space I occupied, which also impacted my research process and analytic lens.

Using autoethnography to analyze the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery makes more transparent the embedded hierarchies of knowledge production, power dynamics and accessibility issues, which play out during the academic research process. In 2018, during my initial visit to the cemetery, the location was nearly untraceable on the internet. However, my knowledge of the space and subsequent visits was dependent upon my close professional and personal relationship with the Jewish History Museum (JHM), which owned the cemetery space from 2016–2020. Furthermore, autoethnography is a crucial method that productively leveraged

my positionality as white, Jewish, and documented, to shed light on the racial and classed imperatives of surveillance and security along the US-Mexico border wall. Between November 2018 and March 2021, I made three separate visits to the cemetery, a timeline that has coincided with the arrival of migrant caravans of asylum seekers from Central America, and increasingly violent tactics of border enforcement, and barrier fortification.[21] As a white, US citizen, my racial and citizenship designations granted me potentially lifesaving layers of security as I walked along the US-Mexico border wall. My transgender identity also helped me consider the delicate interactions between race and gender as intersecting identities that shape my experience of place and claims made on me by state actors in a space of hyper-surveillance like the US-Mexico border wall.

Dissertation Chapter Summary

This dissertation argues that a post-liberal framework must be applied when studying the relationships between European Jewish Americans, capitalism, and colonization in the US-Mexico border region. Drawing from a settler colonial framework, I explore the way imperial state formation in the region transformed European Jewish immigrants from a dispossessed European immigrant group into a white settler class who participated and benefited from systems of settler colonialism and racial capitalism. Furthermore, and as I will discuss in chapter one, a settler colonial framework exposes intersections between European anti-Semitism and anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and other forms of racism deployed in the Americas, laying groundwork for meaningful connections between Jewish and Ethnic Studies. This framework informed the orientation and content of chapter one, which offers a comprehensive review of existing scholarship on Jewish settlement in the space we presently refer to as the American West

[21] Walia, *Border and Rule*, 20.

through the analytic frame of settler colonialism. I trace Jewish Studies literature published between the 1950s through the present, which explores Sephardic Jewish presence in northern New Spain during the sixteenth-century Spanish colonial period, and modern Jewish settlement in the American West, as the region was renamed after 1848. I argue that Jewish Studies' commitment to a European liberal framework has shaped the historicization of the US-Mexico border region as a site of Jewish religious refuge, socioeconomic mobility, and social and cultural belonging, while rarely exploring the imperial and settler colonial contexts in which Jewish settlement unfolded. The theoretical methods I employ to review the literature is also a pedagogical tool and a challenge to Jewish Studies to employ Ethnic Studies methods for studying Jewish histories in the Americas.

In chapter two, I draw from archived periodicals from San Diego and Ensenada, community histories and reflections about nineteenth-century Jewish histories in Arizona and Baja California by Abe Chanin and Norman Stern, researcher notes, as well as oral history transcripts from the descendant of a Jewish immigrant entrepreneur in Nogales, Arizona. I explore the roles of Jewish border merchants as settlers of a regional racial capitalist economy between Baja California, Sonora and Arizona and commercial intermediaries between the US-backed mining industry and the expansion of the US military across the American West following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo through the Mexican Revolution.[22] I conceive of these simultaneous processes as economies of extraction, policing and revolution, and offer them as contexts for measuring legal and social inclusion of European Jewish immigrants to US settler society along the border between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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[22] I use the term *frontier* intentionally, to evoke the vision of the American West canonized by Fredrick Jackson Turner in the 1890s. Turner's frontier thesis offered a historicization of Western expansion has the inevitable conquest of Western white settlement over Native peoples for land, and in the name of liberal democratic ideals.

Chapter three historicizes the multi-decade Jewish American agricultural colonization and immigrant resettlement plan to establish a semi-sovereign Jewish nation-state in Baja California, Mexico between 1891 and 1939. An unexplored regional example of Jewish nation-building through agricultural colonization, the dream of "A Palestine on the Pacific" was originally conceived by California-based Jewish American organizational leaders and entrepreneurs and launched in a moment where the geographic requisites for Jewish nation-building were in flux. I explore how late-nineteenth-century German Jewish Americans in San Francisco sought to transform Eastern European Jewish emigration into a productive and profitable model of immigrant aid and resettlement on leased government lands in Baja California; this project endured in varied formulations through the late 1930s. This chapter draws from a wide range of US and Mexican archival materials, including government correspondence and telegrams, organizational meeting notes, regional Jewish American and Mexican newspapers, a Mexican and Jewish American speculative report concerning the viability of large-scale Jewish migration to Mexico.

Chapter four, the final analytic case study in this dissertation, offers an autoethnographic account of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery, a more than one-hundred-year-old burial ground outside Douglas, Arizona and approximately three hundred yards from the US-Mexico border wall and Agua Prieta, Sonora. Using the cemetery as a spatial and analytic site of analysis, I explore how Jewish American identity and notions of continuity have been institutionalized by the Non-Profit Industrial Complex, and in turn, can reflect the shared requirements and imperatives of settler colonialism and neoliberalism that coalesce through the Prison Industrial Complex. As an entity of Jewish American non-profit organizations that is located directly alongside the US-Mexico border wall, the cemetery offers a site through which

to trace the active and passive entanglements between ideas of Jewish continuity, US settler colonialism, and neoliberal capitalism, while envisioning alternative, relational possibilities for Jewish futurity in the region.

By way of conclusion, I recount the primary findings of my four-year, interdisciplinary historical and ethnographic study of European Jewish American entrepreneurship, colonization, and Jewish American institutions in the US-Mexico border region. Furthermore, I reflect on the on-going ways private Jewish capital determines the scope and identity of organized Jewish American life, specifically in the academic and social justice realms. I position my research alongside the various academic endeavors, cultural productions, and social movements, that have emerged over the last five years and reflect new directions, and relational models for what Jewish safety and continuity can become.

Chapter 1

A Settler Colonial Critique of Jewish Historiography in the US-Mexico Border Region; or, How Jews Might Fit in Ethnic Studies

> Liberal forms of political economy, culture, government and history propose a narrative of freedom overcoming enslavement that at once denies colonial slavery, erases the seizure of lands from native peoples, displaces migrations and connections across continents and internalizes these processes in a national struggle of history and consciousness. The social inequalities of our time are a legacy of these processes through which the human is freed by liberal forms, while other subjects, practices and geographies are places at a distance from "the human."
>
> –Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*

I write this chapter in a moment where the tensions between Jewish Studies and Ethnic Studies are playing out on the national stage.[1] Though initially absent from public conversations on the issue, Jewish Studies departments across institutions of higher education entered the debate in early 2021 with a series of panels that aimed to "discuss the historical and contemporary relationship between Ethnic Studies and Jewish Studies."[2] Echoed across each

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[1] In 2016, a California statute mandated the creation of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC), with the explicit statement that integrating Ethnic Studies, a discipline traditionally consisting of histories and theories from African American, Native American, Chicana/o and Latina/o, and Asian American studies, will bring greater academic engagement and graduation rates for all California students. In 2019 when the curriculum was presented publicly, there was vocal resistance, particularly from American pro-Zionist groups concerning the inclusion of Palestinian topics within the Arab American studies portion within the Asian American module. The concern over Palestinian inclusion quickly transformed into issues of Jewish representation, particularly Jews of Middle Eastern descent, known as Mizrahi and sometimes Sephardic. An article published in the *Jewish Journal* by Siamak Kordestani, assistant director of the American Jewish Committee (Los Angeles) brought the regional debate to the Jewish American mainstream with his argument that if passed, the ethnic studies curriculum renders California's Jewish population non-existent. The debate eventually made its way to mainstream media titan, th*e New York Times,* where op-ed columnist Brett Stephens argued that California's Department of Education "published a draft of an ethnic studies 'model curriculum' for high school students, in 2019, [and] managed the neat trick of omitting anti-Semitism while committing it. See Siamak Kordestani, "Politicized Curriculum Threatens California Jewish and Non-Jewish Communities," *Jewish Journal*, August 12, 2019, https://jewishjournal.com/online/302880/politicized-curriculum-threatens-california-jewish-and-non-jewish-communities/; Brett Stephens, "California's Ethnic Studies Follies: A Proposed Curriculum Magnifies Differences, Encourages Tribal Loyalties and Advances Ideological Group Think," *New York Times*, March 9, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/opinion/californias-ethnic-studies.html. For comprehensive reporting on Jewish American institutional responses to California's ESMC see publications by Gabi Kirk in *Jewish Currents* magazine between 2020 and 2021, including Gabi Kirk, "Attacks From Pro-Israel Groups Threaten California's Ethnic Studies Curriculum," *Jewish Currents*, May 7, 2020, https://jewishcurrents.org/attacks-from-pro-israel-groups-threaten-californias-ethnic-studies-curriculum/.

[2] The first of two panels discussing Jewish and Ethnic Studies was hosted by USC's Casden Institute on March 9, 2021, and the second event, a webinar titled "Jewish Studies / Ethnic Studies: Reflections on the California Ethnic

event, were arguments about identity and representation, highlighting the growing population of Jews of Color, as the basis for inclusion of Jewish Studies within Ethnic Studies. A series of essays by scholars of Jewish Studies was published, asking the question "how Jews fit within the scope of Ethnic Studies" while claiming that "the nature of political perspective on Israel-Palestine" is driving the schism between the disciplines, with no further analysis of the professional and personal risks assumed by scholars who include political perspectives on Palestine in their research and classroom curriculum.[3]

The denial of Palestinian histories has been a central organizing strategy amongst pro-Zionist political interest groups who seek to legitimate the inclusion Jewish histories into the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum in California. This zero-sum model of history, where Jewish and Palestinian histories cannot coexist, was also central to my private elementary schooling in California, over 20 years ago. I was taught a version of history that centered the oppression of my European Jewish ancestors, our right to self-determination, and obfuscated the violence on which Jewish sovereignty in Palestine relies. The graduate training I have received in Ethnic Studies has provided me the tools to envision a different model of Jewish history that is laid out in the forthcoming pages. *The New Jewish Pioneer* contributes to a new version of Jewish history that clarifies the complex roles Jews have played in Spanish, British and Anglo colonial projects across the Americas and the US-Mexico border region, specifically.

And yet, the series of panels and publications from Jewish Studies scholars on the topic of Jewish inclusion into Ethnic Studies makes clear that the discipline seeks inclusion to the

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Studies Curriculum Fights," was hosted on June 3, 2021, jointly by Stanford's Jewish Studies program and the Casden Institute.

[3] Ari Y. Kelman and Jessica Marglin, "Jewish Studies / Ethnic Studies: Reflections on the California Ethnic Studies Curriculum Fights" (webinar, Jewish Studies program, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; Casden Institute, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, June 3, 2021).

ESMC without taking time to integrate and practice the methodological tools that Ethnic Studies offers. More specifically, Jewish Studies has been slow to adopt a structural analysis of power, rooted in settler colonial epistemologies, that is increasingly central to numerous disciplines within Ethnic Studies, including Black, Asian, Chicana/o, Arab American, and Chicana/o Studies. Arguing for Jewish Studies inclusion through the paradigm of identity elides the opportunity to use concepts like US imperialism and settler colonialism that capture the racial, class and gendered experiences and identities of many Jews in the US. To better elaborate how Ethnic Studies methodologies help generate new directions in Jewish Studies, including my current exploration of modern Jewish settlement in the US-Mexico border region, the following chapter employs a settler colonial critique of the historiography of Jewish immigration and settlement in the American West.

While scholars in Jewish Studies have historicized Jewish presence in the American West through the sixteenth-century Spanish colonial context, and the nineteenth-century project of US Western expansion, *The New Jewish Pioneer* comprises the first comprehensive academic history of modern Jewish settlement in the US-Mexico border region, a space not bound to a single empire, or nation-state. Rather, the US-Mexico border has been produced through transhistorical and transnational processes of race and space-making in the Americas, and functions as Harsha Walia argue, "a key method of imperial state formation, hierarchical social ordering, labor control and xenophobic nationalism."[4] Necessarily, this dissertation analyzes modern Jewish history in the region as a narrative marked by and in relationship (active and passive) with the logic of the US-Mexico border. Historicizing Jewish experience through the

[4] Harsha Walia, *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), 2.

prism of the US-Mexico border locates this research between, and in conversation with, Jewish Studies, US-Mexico Border Studies and the study of Race and Religion in the Americas.

The body of work I will review has been published between the 1950s through the 2000s, under the broad umbrella of Jewish Studies, and within the subdisciplines of Crypto-Jewish Studies and Jewish Western history. Scholars explore Jewish presence in sixteenth-century northern New Spain under the Spanish colonial context, as well as modern Jewish settlement in the American West, in a post-1848 context. I will highlight how the discipline's commitment to reflecting Jewish American histories through a framework of European liberalism framework has shaped the historicization of the US-Mexico border region as a site of Jewish religious refuge, socioeconomic mobility, and social and cultural belonging, while rarely exploring the imperial and settler colonial contexts in which Jewish settlement unfolded. By tracing the ways that Jewish Studies has captured histories of colonial-era Sephardic settlement, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish American entrepreneurship, and Jewish American approaches to immigrant aid, I will clarify how a settler colonial framework not only captures the structures that shaped modern Jewish experiences of land and capitalism in the US-Mexico border region, but also pushes the field in new, meaningful directions to engage with Ethnic Studies.

Beyond Liberalism, Toward Settler Colonialism

Since its interpolation into the academy in the 1950s, Jewish Studies has disproportionately approached the history of Jews in the Americas through a European liberal framework, historicizing Jewish experiences in the Americas and the United States specifically, as the fulfillment of liberalism's promises of "human freed, rational progress and social equality," with little attention to global and structural conditions on which these promises were

fulfilled.[5] The integration of Jewish Studies into the academy reinforced a Jewish American belief in the promises of liberalism, as it reflected America's institutional inclusion of the emancipated, yet unassimilated Jewish subject.[6] In the post-WWII decades, the discipline was exploring its place in the US academy and in a post-Holocaust world, overtly preoccupied with questions of Jewish continuity and survival. According to the published meeting proceedings from the first gathering of the American Jewish Association (AJS) in 1969, the condition and continuation of the Jewish student, particularly the affirmation, enhancement, and cultivation of their identities as Jews, should be of central concern of Jewish Studies as a discipline. Ultimately, Jewish Studies was conceived as a discipline to serve Jewish survival and "offer Jews an alternative to assimilation and the radical politics of the time."[7]

Critiques of Jewish Studies from within Jewish Studies have emerged in recent years, including a genealogy of patriarchal and sexist ideologies within academic discourse and between faculty that originated with the concept of "Jewish continuity" and the discipline itself.[8]

[5] Traditionally, European liberalism has been historized as a product of the French Revolution of 1789, and a celebrated shift from feudal aristocracies to democratic nation-states, the replacement of religion by secular science, mercantile capitalism to industrial capitalism and the creation of citizenship rights under the modern nation-state. However, I follow Lisa Lowe, and the many scholars of Black and Native epistemologies, in my conception of liberalism as a hierarchical model of social and economic organization that upon export from Europe and into a transatlantic context, granted freedoms to Europeans and European-origin peoples in North America, while "relegating others to geographical and temporal spaces that are constituted as backwards." In other words, liberalism celebrates the economic, political, and cultural freedoms granted to Europeans and European Americans, while denying the systems of enslavement, genocide, land theft and displacement, on which those freedom rely. Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 2–3.

[6] The discourse of Jewish emancipation developed in an 18th century, central European context and was tantamount to a process of secularization of Jews into European liberal modernity, including citizenship and capitalist productivity. For a foundational text on Jewish emancipation in Europe, see Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," *Menorah Journal* 14 (June 1928): 515–26.

[7] Shaul Magid, "As Transition Looms, Jewish Studies Is Mired in Controversy," *Religion Dispatches*, May 11, 2021, https://religiondispatches.org/as-transition-approaches-jewish-studies-is-mired-in-controversy/.

[8] Tony Michaels, "Is America Different? A Critique of American Jewish Exceptionalism," *American Jewish History* 96, no. 3 (September 2010): 201–24; Gilah Kletenik and Rafael Rachel Neis, "What's the Matter with Jewish Studies," *Religion Dispatches*, April 19, 2021, https://religiondispatches.org/whats-the-matter-with-jewish-studies-sexism-harassment-and-neoliberalism-for-starters/.

However, Jewish Studies' commitment to continuity is not simply an issue of inclusion and heteropatriarchy, but part of the discipline's ideological and structural commitment to European liberalism, including a version of Jewish history in the Americas that obscures the complicated ways Jews have been entangled in histories of colonization, displacement and enslavement in the hemisphere.[9] In other words, the discipline's foundational focus on Jewish survival and continuity, has positioned the histories of Jewish settlement in the region within a framework of liberalism, that celebrates Jewish inclusion in the promises of individualism, civility, mobility, and free trade under liberal democracy. Simultaneously, Jews are written out of histories of colonization, enslavement, genocide, and war that shaped the Americas and Jewish experiences within the hemisphere. Histories of Jewish presence in the US-Mexico border region is no exception to the liberal framework. Historians began to write about Jewish presence in the US-Mexico border region simultaneous to the discipline's inclusion into the American academy.

As the following literature review will show, scholars focusing on the colonial period when the space was under Spanish colonial rule, and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, after the US-Mexico border was drawn, reflect Jews as formerly disposed subjects-turned liberated productive humans, with no account toward those relational subjects simultaneously dispossessed under the processes of colonialism and capitalism. Applying a settler colonial framework to the historicization of Jewish presence in northern New Spain (sixteenth century–1821) and the US-Mexico border region (1848–present) will clarify the linkages between the

[9] Although the historiography on Jews in the American West has been slow to critique the liberal framework, it is important to note the robust literature of post-liberal critique from scholars in Jewish Studies who focus on Jewish histories in relational colonial contexts, including the Middle East and North Africa. For example, Sarah Stein's work on the Baghdadi Jewish diaspora has interrogated how Middle Eastern Jews outside Palestine-Israel have functioned as beneficiaries and oppressed subjects of a colonial order. Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "Protected Persons? The Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora, the British State, and the Persistence of Empire," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 1 (February 2011): 84. Furthermore, Orit Bashkin's history on Jews in Modern Iraq complicates the liberal framework by clarifying how Iraqi Jews were caught between Arab and Zionist national projects. Orit Bashkin, *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

political and economic rights granted to Jewish settlers in North America, and the violence of European and US colonialisms, capitalism, and empire building. I offer a brief summary of the foundational settler colonial framework and several examples of how it's been applied to the North American context through Ethnic Studies scholarship, before applying the framework as an analytic lens through which I will review the historiography of Jews in northern New Spain or the US-Mexico Border region.

In the foundational essay, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native" (2006), Patrick Wolfe begins with the often-quoted line that "genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism. Land is life—or at least land is necessary for life. Thus, contests for land can be—indeed, often are—contests for life."[10] At its core, settler colonialism is an ongoing system of power wherein the settler seeks to occupy land through genocidal practices that seek to eliminate Indigenous peoples. Genocide, broadly defined, might include Indigenous elimination, banishment, or removal, but can also mean displacement, the erasure of cultural practices of coercive absorption into the hegemonic society.[11] As such, the contests for territorial accumulation under settler colonial contexts, is indeed, a contest for life. For Indigenous peoples, the contest for land is a contest against which they resist elimination. Other forms of colonization are organized around resource extraction (mining and industrial agriculture) and exploitation (enslavement) in the "colony," and colonists sometimes elect to return to the metropole.[12] The contest for resources and an exploitable labor force are often integrated elements of settler colonial societies but are not the principal objectives. Rather, settler colonialism is a contest for

[10] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387–409, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240.

[11] Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 2011): 6, https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648799.

[12] Veracini, "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," 3.

land with the intention of establishing permanent, independent nations that will manage a racially exclusive and hierarchical population. In other words, the settler has no intention to return home, nor integration with the already existing Native populations on the desired land base, and ultimately, eliminate the Native to replace the Native.[13]

Alongside Native elimination, settler societies manage their populations by attracting "Europe's landless" settlers with "free" land, while simultaneously excluding or removing those deemed to be racialized outsiders of the occupied territory.[14] This often results in a contradictory balancing act between requiring racialized workforces, while simultaneously excluding the same racialized workers from full inclusion into liberal forms of government and economies. The pace and scope of partial inclusion of racialized others is often determined by the labor needs under capitalism; a fall in labor demands often results in the settler society criminalizing, deporting or otherwise revoking the limited rights of racialized others to exist within the occupied territory.[15] As Kelly Lytle Hernández has pointed out, the experience of disappearing differs between Indigenous peoples and racialized outsiders. For Indigenous populations, disappearing is a question of land and sovereignty, while racialized outsiders experience the same settler imperative through hierarchical labor structures and social ordering. One of the disappearing tricks of settler colonialism is the capacity to operate as aggressor and victim simultaneously, or as Veracini argues, the capacity of settler society to justify its "operation on the basis of the expectation of its future demise."[16] Perennially on the defensive, settler societies

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[13] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230299191.

[14] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native."

[15] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

[16] Veracini, "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," 3.

always need more land, which is acquired through militarized conquest and fortification. Necessarily, territorial expansion requires managing, refining and perfecting strategies of "disappearing" racialized others. Recent contributions to settler colonial studies, particularly inquiries into US empire building in North American, have emphasized settler society's dependence not just on the state, but also corporations and the military to carry out colonial expansion that occupies land and dominates people; the Transcontinental Railroad is one such example of the confluence of the state, corporations and the military through a settler colonial project.[17]

Countering the "post" in postcolonialism, scholarship based in Indigenous Studies has applied a settler colonial framework across a variety of geopolitical contexts to understanding systems of domination and oppression in places like the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Israel, and to a lesser degree Latin America.[18] While the application of the settler colonial frame is not without contestation, I write in concordance with scholars who argue that "Latin American states are settler colonial states," and that "the history of the United States is a history of settler colonialism."[19] While Latin America is often written out of settler colonialist frameworks, Latin Americanists are increasingly pointing out that British, French, Spanish and Portuguese settlements embroiled the entire hemisphere into a history of the global expansion of European white settler populations. Relatedly, the weaponization of Christian theology to justify a white supremacist social order was pervasive across competing European

[17] Manu Karuka, *Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

[18] Haunani-Kay Trask, "Settlers of Color and 'Immigrant Hegemony': 'Locals' in Hawai'i," *Amerasia Journal* 26, no. 2 (2000): 1–24, https://opencuny.org/earthseededucation/files/2014/01/Trask_SettlersOfColor.pdf; Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native."

[19] Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014).

settler colonial projects across the hemisphere. According to a series of papal bulls in the late fifteenth century, European nations acquired the land they "discovered" and Indigenous inhabitants lost their natural rights to land following European arrival. While the use of theology as justification for conquest originated within the Iberian monarchies' exclusive rights under Christian law to colonize foreign peoples, from Africa to the Americas, the "Doctrine of Discovery" was adopted by other European colonizing projects, and was deemed applicable to the British colonies in North America and the US by 1792.[20] Under the US settler context, Christian theology as a tool of white supremacy produced a discourse of Manifest Destiny that fueled Anglo American settlement, US annexation, occupation and formal colonization of Northern Mexico. A product of Spanish, Mexican, and US conquests between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the history of the US-Mexico border region, is also a history of settler colonialism and space that produces ongoing experiences of domination typical of settler colonial societies.[21]

While foundational scholarship of settler colonial studies has focused on the roles of European white settlers as agents of expanding settler colonial society, scholars from Black, Asian, and increasingly Chicana/o Studies have contributed to the discussion. Specifically, Ethnic Studies scholars are interrogating the roles that non-Native people of color might play in argued that Chicana/o Studies has been slow to engage with settler colonialism, in part, for its potential to disrupt the foundation of Chicana/o political subjectivity. Similarly, I posit that the avoidance amongst Jewish Studies scholars to apply settler colonialism as a framework for understanding European Jewish migration to, and settlement in the Americas, shaped in part by

[20] Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*.

[21] Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

the discipline's foundational ideology of "Jewish continuity," and the related assumptions about Jewish powerlessness. Settler colonialism also has the potential, I argue, to disrupt core elements of Jewish American political subjectivity, particularly as it relates to Zionism and Jewish claims to land in Israel-Palestine.[22] But just as our understanding of Jews in the American West has been enriched by a more critical analysis of race and capitalism, so too will a settler colonial framework offer new directions in Jewish Studies that will better position the field to engage in Ethnic Studies.

In the following pages, I argue that existing historiographies of Jews in North America, particularly in geographically linked, but temporally disparate spaces like northern New Spain, US-Mexico border region, and the American West, benefit from a settler colonial framework in several ways. Not only does this offer an initial step toward unlearning the liberal paradigms embedded in Jewish Studies, but also offers a methodology for how Ethnic Studies frameworks help make meaningful connections between anti-Semitism and other forms of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous racism.

Figure 1: Viceroyalty of New Spain, 1810. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Jewish Studies: From Conquistador to Pioneer (1950s–2000)

Since the 1950s, scholars working within the newly established field of Jewish Studies attended to Jewish settlement as far back as the late-sixteenth-century Spanish colonial period, when the land was known as the northernmost region of New Spain, and converted Sephardic

[22] David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986).

Jews, also known as New Christians or Conversos joined the offshore European colonial projects which included the Spanish Americas. The northern territory of New Spain included US and Mexican states that we might readily consider as part of the US-Mexico border region today, including Texas, New Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas (see fig. 1).

Simultaneously, scholars who have focused on the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century modern immigration of Central European, Eastern European, and Middle Eastern Jews to the American West and Northern Mexico have similarly framed the story of Jewish settlement in the region as one of refuge, both religious and socioeconomic. The following paragraphs trace the historiography of Jews in northern New Spain and the American West between the sixteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. Jews from Iberia, Central and Eastern European Jews, and to a lesser extent Middle Eastern Jews arrived in conquered lands between Spanish, British, Mexican, and US imperial projects. In the colonial context through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Jewish settlers arrived to pursue the liberal promises of socioeconomic mobility, homeownership, and freedom from religious discrimination. Between the 1950s and the early 2000s, historians of Jewish experiences in the space presently named the US-Mexico border region located the Jewish experience within a liberal framework, celebrating the social and economic freedoms that Jewish immigrants experienced as individual triumphs and proof of Jewish utility to the US settler project.

Notably, this foundational period of Jewish border histories produced one of the earliest texts that captured a first-person account of a Sephardic Jew living in New Spain in the late sixteenth century during the Spanish colonial period. Seymore B. Liebman's *The Enlightened: The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, El Mozo* (1967) offered the first English language translation of the memoirs of Castilian-born Luis de Carvajal, el Mozo (born 1567, died 1596), famous for

living openly and proselytizing as a Jew in colonial New Spain (and under the Mexican Inquisition), from a jail cell in Mexico City around 1595.[23] Carvajal, el Mozo's arrival to New Spain was motivated by his relationship to Luis de Carvajal, a conquistador and governor of Nuevo León, a governorship to which Carvajal, el Mozo was the heir. Liebman's introduction takes care to emphasize how the Spanish and Mexican Inquisitions impacted Sephardic and New Christians, promoting a foundational moment of Jewish diasporic exodus and new, subversive ways that Sephardim preserved Jewish ritual in diaspora. Liebman begins with a reminder to the reader that Jews were in the company of Hernán Cortés when he "completed the conquest of Mexico on August 13, 1521, and that Carvajal, el Mozo leaves the legacy of a Jewish martyr, confronting his execution by the Inquisitors with "sublime faith."[24]

Without question, Liebman's translation of an Inquisition-era primary source offers a unique window into Jewish ritual under the Inquisition, and demonstrates how anti-Jewishness, or *Judaizing,* became the foil by which Spanish institutions criminalized the acquisition of wealth through a discourse of antisemitism. Furthermore, *The Enlightened* set the foundation for a more robust literary canon on the history of and contemporary expressions of crypto-Jewish identity by the end of the twentieth century, that located the US-Mexico border region and New Mexico in particular, as the locus of colonial-era Sephardic refuge and the evolution of crypto-Jewish identity in the Americas. Liebman's focus on the experiences of Sephardic Jews vis-à-vi the Spanish and Mexican Inquisitions, however, does not consider how the shifting geographic contexts for Sephardic emigrants, also shifted their positions, structurally, under Spanish imperialism. Nor does it question how Sephardim's economic participation in Europe's colonial

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[23] Seymour Liebman, ed., *The Enlightened: The Writings of Luis de Carvajal, El Mozo* (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1967), 31.

[24] Ibid., 20, 52.

projects in New Spain as strategies for religious refuge, cast them as agents of empire, who carried out the process of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their lands and the murder, enslavement, and sale of Native peoples. It begs the question, what does it mean that Hernán Cortés was "in the company" of Jews in 1521, and how does that broaden our understanding of how settler colonialism in the Americas recast the dispossessed European Jew into the role of conquistador?

Published a little over a decade after Liebman's text, Norton Stern's *Baja California: Jewish Refuge and Homeland* (1973) similarly casts Northern Mexico as a space well suited for Jewish religious refuge, albeit several centuries following the Inquisition.[25] Stern offers a community history of an unrealized plan to establish a Jewish colony on the Baja California peninsula on which to house Jewish refugees fleeing religious persecution from Russia, also known as the Pale of Settlement. The regional project of Jewish nation-building is also the central case study explored in chapter three of this dissertation. Stern traces the plan's existence between the 1890s and 1920s, while this dissertation follows the plan's evolution through the 1930s. Stern echoes the words of the original architects of the agricultural and immigrant resettlement plan from the 1890s in so far as he presents a vision of Baja California as a natural and uncomplicated site of Jewish continuity and survival that would be realized through colonization. Like Liebman, Stern narrowly historicizes this regional process of Jewish agricultural colonization and resettlement alongside other movements for Jewish nationalism without considering the broader context of European and US imperialism, nor Mexican nationalism. Both texts historicize sixteenth- and nineteenth-century narratives of Jewish refuge in the border region as an urgent matter of Jewish survival, without considering how Jewish

[25] Norton B. Stern, *Baja California: Jewish Refuge and Homeland* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1973).

continuity in the border region was interdependent with projects of settler colonialism and the transatlantic African slave trade that created the "free land" and "free labor" on which capitalism relied.

Between the 1980s and early 2000s, Latin American and Sephardic Studies created a disciplinary space for further studies in colonial-era Jewish histories in the Americas. Social science scholars began to explore the historical conditions of northern New Mexico that produced crypto-Judaism and the contemporary structures in place that sustain crypto-Jewish identity. A Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies was established (1991), academic conferences were hosted, and museums and documentary films were created to capture the crypto-Jewish experience.[26] Importantly, a series of ethnographic studies by Fay Forman Blake (1997), Tomás Atencio (1996), Seth D. Kunin (2009), Janet Liebman Jacobs (2002), David Gitlitz (2019) and Stanley Hordes (2005), which stood on the shoulders of Liebman's work, pushing the subfield in new directions, excluding an exploration of how *conversos* participated in the development of colonial-era New Mexican society, along with cultural and spiritual continuities between fifteenth-century Sephardim and contemporary New Mexican Hispanos.[27] Ultimately, the academic literature and cultural productions that emerged during these decades overwhelmingly reinforce the trope that sixteenth-century Sephardic settlers to northern New Spain is a story of

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[26] The Society for Cypto-Jewish Studies was founded in 1991 in Marina del Rey, California to create an association for research in the historical and contemporary development of Sephardic crypto-Jews. Isaac Artenstein, dir., *A Long Journey: The Hidden Jews of the Southwest* (San Diego: Cinewest Productions, 2020); Isaac Artenstein, dir., *Challah Rising in the Desert: The Jews of New Mexico* (San Diego: Cinewest Productions, 2018).

[27] Fay Forman Blake, "The Hidden Jews of New Mexico," *Journal of Progressive Judaism* 8 (1997): 5–26; Tomás Atencio, "The *Converso* Legacy in New Mexico Hispano Protestantism," *El Caminante* 2 (2003): 10–15; Tomás Atencio, "Crypto-Jewish Remnants in Manito Society and Culture," *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* 18 (1996): 59–68; Janet Liebman Jacobs, *Hidden Heritage: The Legacy of the Crypto-Jews* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); David M. Gitlitz, *Living in Silverado: Secret Jews in the Silver Mining Towns of Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2019); Stanley M. Hordes, *To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Seth Kunin, *Juggling Identities: Identity and Authenticity Among the Crypto-Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Jewish survival, without taking into account how these histories connect with those dispossessed under with European settler colonial projects in the Americas.

The literary canon, documentary films, and museum exhibitions of crypto-Jewish history conceived of the US-Mexico border region as a foundational site of Jewish religious refuge in the Americas, incubator for the survival and continuity of Jewish ritual across multiple centuries and site through which Jews became useful arbiters of capital expansion. By overlooking the nuances of Jewish exclusion and inclusion within Spanish imperialism in the America's, Jewish Studies scholarship has yet to consider how European Jewish inclusion into Western liberalism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century North America has a much longer history, with origins in the sixteenth-century Spanish colonial period in New Spain. I argue that locating Sephardic histories in New Spain within a settler colonial framework would clarify that persecuted Jews who departed Europe in the sixteenth century arrived in the Americas as part of a colonizing class who became European and White under the new colonial order.

The oversight to locating New Mexico's crypto-Jewish history and contemporary communities within a settler colonial framework holds broader implications for discussions of Jews and race in the Americas, and in the US specifically. While the periodization of this dissertation does not extend analysis to Jewish settlement during the colonial period, the historicization of Sephardic settlers in northern New Spain holds resonance for the study of Jewish racial formation in North America broadly. Overwhelmingly, Jewish Studies has approached the timeline of Jewish racialization in North America as a post-nineteenth-century project, where the unstable, or "provisional" relationships between Jewish immigrants and legal and cultural whiteness in the US begins in the 1880s and is solidified in the post-World War II

era.[28] The continued categorization of Sephardim in northern New Spain by crypto-Jewish Studies as refugees of the Inquisition, without simultaneously considering their roles as economic agents and racial beneficiaries of Spanish imperialism, has not challenged Jewish Studies to reevaluate Jewish inclusion into a white settler class in the Americas as a process that begins with sixteenth-century European colonization.

The missed opportunity among Jewish Studies scholars to clearly position sixteenth-century conversos living in northern New Spain with a European white settler class has fueled on-going ambiguities in Jewish Studies on the topic of Jews and racialization in the Americas, including the common trope in US-focused studies that Jews "became white folks" in the post-World War II era.[29] Specifically, the narrow framework for tracing Sephardic Jewish experiences in northern New Spain overlooks the significant continuity between modes of religious differentiation in Medieval Europe and the racialized capitalist system that enshrines anti-Black enslavement and Native genocide and enslavement under New Spanish society.[30] This approach not only elides a painful historical reality that imperial structures pushed Jews out of European society, only to push them into roles as agents of a violent colonial project in the Americas, it

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[28] Eric 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: Harvard University Press, 1999); Devin Naar, "Our White Supremacy Problem," *Jewish Currents*, April 29, 2019, https://jewishcurrents.org/our-white-supremacy-problem/; Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

[29] Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks*.

[30] Sylvia Wynter, Tiffany Lethabo King, Cedric Robinson, and Gerald Horne are among the scholars who have turned to intra-European structures of religious differentiation, particularly anti-Jewishness and Islamophobia in the "long sixteenth century" (1492–1607) to identify the seeds of slavery, white supremacy and settler colonialism, all of which are deployed through capitalism between Africa and the Americas. Sylvia Wynter, "1492: A New World View," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, eds. Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 5–57; Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019); Gerald Horne, *The Dawning of the Apocalypse: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and Capitalism in the Long Sixteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).

also misses the important opportunity to make meaningful connections between discourses of European anti-Jewish, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in the Americas.[31] As Ella Shohat has argued, a fifteenth-century "discourse about Muslims and Jews crossed the Atlantic with the Spaniards, arming the conquistadores with a ready-made racist ideology."[32] In sum, when we position Jewish histories in the Americas within a settler colonial framework, histories of European antisemitism and islamophobia are placed in meaningful dialogue with Black and Indigenous histories in the Americas.

Through the turn of the twentieth century, historians who wrote about nineteenth-century European Jewish immigrants in the American West largely overwhelmingly emphasized individual agency of European Jewish success and utility to the American project, particularly in the realms of commerce. This canon of Western Jewish secondary sources effectively replicated the tone of the nineteenth-century primary sources themselves. Through memoir, journalism and popular histories, Jewish immigrants wrote about themselves and their experiences migrating from Europe to the United States as a trajectory of celebration, not displacement, nor forced exile.[33] One of the earliest academic studies on German Jewish immigrants in the American Southwest, presented by William Parish, dean of the University of New Mexico School of Business Administration in 1959, argued that German Jews were the "moving force" for a

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[31] The failure of crypto-Jewish studies to clearly locate conversos living in New Spain with a European settler class had fueled ongoing ambiguities in Jewish Studies on the topic of Jews and racialization in the Americas, including the common trope in US-focused studies that Jews "became white folks" in the post-World War II era. Locating sixteenth-century Sephardic history in New Spain within the framework of imperialism would clarify that persecuted Jews who departed Europe in the sixteenth century arrived in the Americas as part of a colonizing class who became European and White under the new colonial order.

[32] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[33] David S. Koffman, *The Jews' Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 9.

"commercial revolution."[34] It would be decades before historians of Jews in the American West considered the broader imperial and colonial structures that positioned German Jews as catalysts for capital expansion in the region, many did consider the diminished role that anti-Jewish racism played in facilitating European Jewish integration in social, political and economic spheres of American life, as well as building Jewish communal associations. Juxtaposing Jewish exclusion with other forms of racism, Gerald Sorin wrote that in "San Francisco and the West generally, with its Indian, Mexican, and Oriental populations, the drive to maintain white supremacy also helped dilute anti-Semitism."[35] As the case studies in chapter's two and three will illustrate, Jewish men who arrived in towns and small cities across the American West in the decades following the US conquest of Northern Mexico, played active roles in mining and real estate speculation, political life, and the retail and hospitality merchants who helped drive demographic and industrial expansion. The racial landscape and demographic density of settlers in the nineteenth century American West was such that the Jewishness of European Jewish immigrants did not prove to be a barrier to their socioeconomic inclusion to US settler society.

Between the 1980s and 2000s, academic literature on Jewish Western history was published in abundance, exploring turn of the century Jewish arrival across Texas, the Southwest, California, and Oregon, and celebrating immigrant achievement in the realms of industrial capitalism, including mining, banking, mercantile sectors.[36] Many of these historical

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[34] William J. Parish, "The German Jew and the Commercial Revolution in Territorial New Mexico, 1850–1900," *New Mexico Historical Review* 35, no. 1 (January 1960).

[35] Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 165.

[36] Harriet Rochlin and Fred Rochlin, *Pioneer Jews: A New Life in the Far West* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2000); Ava Fran Kahn, ed., *Jewish Life in the American West: Perspectives on Migration, Settlement, and Community* (Seattle: University of Washington Press and Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 2002); Kenneth Libo and Irving Howe, *We Lived There Too: In Their Own Words and Pictures—Pioneer Jews and the Westward Movement of America,*

accounts reinforced the archetype of the Jewish pioneer subject, which positioned the American West as an exceptional geography that invited European Jewish Americans to become useful settlers and active participants in the project of Western expansion. The Rochlins, Irving Howe and Kenneth Libo, and Ava Khan were among the scholars who historicized nineteenth-century Jewish arrival in mining towns and small cities who went on to become prominent civic and business leaders. Just as nineteenth-century Jewish settlers to the West fashioned themselves into pioneers through their interactions with Native peoples and white settler's vis-à-vis Indians, the 1980s cohort of Jewish Western historians enshrined the Jewish pioneer category into the academic archive.[37]

The canon of Jewish pioneer scholarship did not push beyond a liberalist framework, nor locate the boundaries of European Jewish American inclusion in the American West in relation to the dynamic forms of political, economic, and social exclusions experienced by Indigenous, Mexican, African American, and Chinese groups simultaneously living in the region. However, this cohort of historians did shed light on the regionally distinct experiences of racialization that European Jewish Americans experienced within the United States.[38] Drawing distinctions between the industrial cities in the East Coast of the US, where Jewish demographic density provoked Anglo American racial and class anxieties, the American West provided Jews with "high levels of inclusion and civic prominence." Ultimately however, the interpretation to intra-Jewish relational racialization served to reinforce a narrative of Western exceptionalism to which

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1630–1930 (New York: St. Martin's, 1984); Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans: Their Impact on Texas and American History for Four Hundred Years, 1590–1990* (Dallas: Heritage Press, 1989).

[37] Koffman, *The Jews' Indian,* 25.

[38] Ellen Eisenberg, Ava Fran Kahn, and William Toll, *Jews on the Pacific Coast: Reinventing Community on America's Edge* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Karen Wilson, "Becoming Angelinos," in *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic*, ed. Karen Wilson (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 11–24.

Jewish pioneers could seamlessly belong as a bootstrapping immigrant success story of capital achievement.

Reading the foundational canon of Jewish Western history through a settler colonial framework exposes how the field has perpetuated hegemonic mythologies of European settlement in the American West between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Western Jewish historians did not challenge nor complicate the vision of liberal modernity that Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis canonized in the late nineteenth century. Rather, these scholars wove Jewish immigrants into Turner's narrative that presented the American West as the inevitable result of European settlers taming a backward wilderness, to make room for the triumph of democratic ideals and a new version of an American citizen devoid of ethnic otherness.[39] Writing Jewish histories into Turner's thesis obscures the racialized colonial violence experienced by Indigenous, Black and other racialized populations in the American West and reinforces a mythology of white settlement to make it more palatable.[40] Such historical methodologies have been referred to as "transition narratives," or discourses that serve a whitewashed, hegemonic version of history that, like ideologies of Manifest Destiny, justifies violent histories of imperial conquest and white supremacy.[41]

The application of a settler colonial framework locates Jewish Western history, and specifically the prolific use of the term "Jewish pioneer," within the transition narrative

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[39] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894), 199–227.

[40] Richard White, "Race Relations in the American West," *American Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (1986): 396–415, https://doi.org/10.2307/2712674; Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping US and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

[41] The term "transition narrative" was written by political philosopher Laura Brace and cited in Laura R. Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley: Rural Landscapes, Urban Development, and White Privilege* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 11.

paradigm. The term Jewish pioneer fills academic and popular historical texts, local historical societies, and Jewish monuments across the Southwest, and makes claims that these nineteenth and early twentieth century Jewish migrants are newcomers, while erasing the populations native to the region. The foregrounding of European Jewish settlement in the American West through language like "pioneer Jew" illustrates how historians of Western Jewish history perpetuated a settler colonial version of historicization that Jean O'Brien refers to as "firsting and lasting." Such an approach to history casts European settlement as first, or foundational to the history of the land itself, while Natives of Indigenous histories are removed or relegated to the past.[42] In turn, histories of "Jewish pioneers" carry forward a discursive methodology of settler colonialism, that erases Indigenous histories to replace the fantasy of Indigeneity in the American West as the condition of the European (Jewish) settler.

Finally, the application of the settler colonial framework to Jewish Western history exposes how liberal accounts of the frontier and the American individualism it engendered are deeply implicated in practices of genocide, enslavement, and war. While narrative of the Jewish pioneer revises the Jew from a landless, diasporic, and disempowered European subject into a landed, permanent, and productive modern citizen who helped build the frontier, it erases the overarching processes of Indigenous land theft and the reliance on African chattel slavery for capital expansion that created the conditions for Jews as a landowning class in the American West. As in other contexts, US settler colonialism created "free" land across the continent to attract European settlers, many of whom were dispossessed in their countries of origin.[43] Following the Louisiana purchase of 1803, when the "gateway to the West," was the Mississippi,

[42] Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*.
[43] Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*, 3.

President Andrew Jackson created “free land,” through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. What became the American Southwest and California was also a byproduct of state manufactured “free land,” the consequences of the US annexation of the Republic of Texas as a slave state in 1845, leading to the US-invasion, and colonization of over half of Mexican territory between 1846 and 1848.[44] In sum, a settler colonial framework reveals how the foundational secondary source accounts of Western Jewish history, mirror hegemonic versions of US Western history, and celebrate the process of Western expansion “from sea to shining sea.”[45]

Jewish Studies' "Racial Turn": (2000s–Present)

To locate European Jewish entrepreneurship and colonization as immigrant-resettlement in the US-Mexico border region within the broader project of US imperialism and settler colonialism, I am in conversation with emerging directions in Jewish Studies (2000s–present) which more closely examine evolving understandings of race and citizenship in the US, particularly as such categories intersect with capitalism. This “racial turn” in Jewish Studies has shaped this discipline's approach to histories of immigration, capitalism, and inter-racial relations, beyond the historic narrow focus on Jewish-Black relations, and in conversation with Latina/o and Asian American Studies. The racial turn has also augmented Western Jewish histories, pushing scholars to locate Jewish histories alongside Indigenous, Asian, and Mexican experiences with land, capitalism, and citizenship in the American West. While no comprehensive study of Jews in the American West uses a settler colonial framework explicitly, scholars have increasingly located the Jewish experience within a framework that is critical of

[44] Walia, *Border and Rule*.

[45] This lyric from “America the Beautiful” (1895) was repurposed in Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States,* to visible the violence and death that was involved in US westward expansion, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in the nineteenth century. Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*, 118.

capitalism, colonialism and the racial inequities produced through US immigration policies. Rather than reviewing the following scholarship through a settler colonial framework, I will discuss how my exploration of Jewish entrepreneurship, colonization and memory in the US-Mexico border region compliments and expands more recent scholarship on Jewish histories between the American West and Northern Mexico.

First, my historicization and analysis of Jewish border merchants between 1848–1920 places my work in conversation with scholars from Jewish Studies, and Latin American Jewish Studies have turned to histories of immigrant entrepreneurship between the American Southwest and Northern Mexico to explore how immigrant entrepreneurs were both agents of expanding regional and continental capitalist structures, and transnational political networks.[46] As scholars began to locate Jewish migration and settlement histories within more critical frameworks of colonization and capitalism, European Jewish American engagement in small-scale commerce, land ownership and agricultural projects, complicated earlier Jewish Western histories by locating European Jewish American's hyper-socioeconomic mobility as a product of Western capitalism, rather than exceptional individual determination.[47]

Works by David Koffman and Sarah Imhoff, expand studies of Jewish-Native relations by locating Jewish migration and settlement to the American West within the broader process of

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[46] Though outside the geographies of the Americas, I have been influenced by other studies of Jewish participation in the expansion of capitalist markets in colonial settings, most notably the work of Sarah Abrevaya Stein and the transatlantic ostrich feather trade. Building off Stein's assertion that "we must write Jews into the history of colonial economic as entrepreneurs and commercial liaisons of a consumption hungry Europe," my own research locates the Jewish commercial intermediary on a more regional scope, between US imperial interests and a modernizing Mexican nation-state. In particular, Stein's assertion that "thinking of capitalism we learn about Jews, it is also true that by thinking about Jews we learn about capitalism," unpins my argument that we cannot understand Jewish participation in capitalism in the US-Mexico border region without thinking about the histories of mining, agriculture, railroads, and the numerous extractive industries that restructures the landscape. Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "Falling into Feathers: Jews and the Trans-Atlantic Ostrich Feather Trade," *Journal of Modern History* 79, no. 4 (December 2009): 772–812.

[47] Shari Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

Western expansion and policies of Indian removal. As amateur Jewish historians in the 1990s reinforced the celebrated "Jewish pioneer" identity that nineteenth century Jewish settlers fashioned for themselves, Koffman and Imhoff take care to show how European Jewish American fascination with the figure of "the Indian," was linked to their fellow white settlers' strategies of claiming Indigenous belonging to the American West. In other words, both authors clarify how Jewish immigrants, like their fellow white settlers, were commercially and socially rewarded for "playing Indian," without experiencing the structural modes of exclusion and dispossession to which Native peoples in the region were subject during this time.[48]

My dissertation builds on Koffman, Rabin, and Imhoff's work, while also expanding this history of Jewish commerce in the American West by accounting for the substantial role that the Mexican government, corporate elites, and laborers played in the capitalist transformation of the region during this time. This intervention bridges scholarship in US-Mexico border history, while also incorporating scholarship at the intersection of Middle Eastern and Latin American Jewish history that includes Northern Mexico as an important commercial region for Middle Eastern migrants (Jewish and non-Jewish) to Mexico.[49] Works by Devi Mays and Camila Pastor

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[48] Philip Deloria's foundational text coins the term "playing Indian" to capture the ways white Americans have used their fantasies about Indians to shape national identity and claim an aboriginal sense of belonging to the land since the eighteenth century. Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

[49] The inclusion of Jewish commercial participation in capitalism between the US and Mexico between the 1850s-1920 expands Mexican histories by Teresa Alfaro-Velcamp, Robert Chao Romero, and Veronica Castill-Muñoz who have focused on the roles played by Middle Eastern and Chinese immigrants to carve out economic niches as merchants between Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California during the early twentieth century. Robert Chao Romero, *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882–1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008); Veronica Castillo-Muñoz, *The Other California: Land, Identity, and Politics on the Mexican Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016); Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007). Furthermore, this account provides historical foregrounding to sociological studies that focus on cross-border ethnic immigrant networks between Northern Mexico and the American Southwest in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, including Rubén Hernández-León, *Metropolitan Migrants: The Migration of Urban Mexicans to the United States.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Geraldo Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

trace post-WWI Jewish migration to Mexico from post-Ottoman states, including Turkey, Greece, and French Syria-Lebanon, and argue that imperial reorganization in the Middle East / Mediterranean produced a highly mobile, and racially favorable white migrant class of Jewish immigrants in Mexico.[50] While both studies focus primarily on Mexico City as the nucleus of a growing elite Middle Eastern immigrant entrepreneurial class, Chihuahua and other Mexican states at the border with the US are folded into the histories of migration. As both authors suggest, this "hypermobile" entrepreneurial class of Middle Eastern immigrants, including Jews, thrived in spaces defined by swift moving flows of peoples, goods, and knowledge—like border regions, due in large part to their language skills, legal documents, and transnational familial and commercial networks. Even as immigrant mobility along the US-Mexico border became increasingly restricted to all non-Western/Northern European immigrants in the decade following WWI, Pastor argues that Middle Eastern immigrant entrepreneurs were well equipped to navigate commercial networks in the region, due to (for some) their French imperial status, which afforded them the tools for cross-border mobility.

Second, my exploration of the Baja California Jewish colony (1891–1939) expands a small body of work in Jewish Studies regarding Jewish American immigrant aid and participation in social justice movements in the American West. Part of the legacy of "Jewish continuity" in Jewish Studies has been a pervasive collective consciousness that Jews have always been deserving and legal immigrants to the US, and how such inclusion informs a deeply seated Jewish American commitment to social justice, and refuge relief. As part of the "racial turn," Jewish Studies scholarship has begun to depart from such mythologies, and increasingly

[50] Devi Mays, *Forging Ties, Forging Passports: Migration and the Modern Sephardi Diaspora* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020).

understands US immigration and citizenship laws in the US as inseparable from broader racialized projects of colonization and state-making.

While my analysis of Jewish Baja California contributes to the existing body of work on Jewish colonization and refugee resettlement projects in the Americas, I was most influenced by scholarship by Libby Garland and Ellen Eisenberg, who have explored the complicit roles that Jewish American organizations have played at different moments throughout the 20th century to support state-sanctioned modes of immigrant exclusion along the US-Mexico border.[51] While Garland provides an in-depth analysis of Jewish American institutional organizing against the national immigration quotas (1921–1965), Eisenberg's "State of the Field" explores Jewish American organizational responses to Japanese American incarceration (1942–1946). Both texts capture how Jewish American organizations have responded to and acted in complicity with the racialized exclusion of immigrants through territorial accumulation and border governance strategies, themes that traverse chapters three and four.[52] Furthermore, the authors expose how Jewish American political organizing around immigrant and minority rights in the American West extended itself only in so far as it did not compromise Jewish Americans reputation as law-abiding ethnic minorities.

By complicating popular liberal notions of Jewish American's commitment to anti-racism, Garland and Eisenberg reveal how in moments of heightened white supremacist nativism, Jewish American leaders and organizations secured Jewish American legal and social

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[51] Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Ellen Eisenberg, "State of the Field: Jews & Others," *American Jewish History* 102, no. 2 (April 2018): 283–301.

[52] This is distinct from the rich histories of multiracial immigrant organizing that Jewish Americans (and Jewish American organizations operating outside formal Jewish American institutions) have participated in during the twentieth century, from the 1930s through the Cold War era and the Sanctuary and new Sanctuary Movements. Rachel Ida Buff, *Against the Deportation Terror: Organizing for Immigrant Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017).

inclusion by supporting state modes of racialized exclusion, particularly as they were enforced in the border region.[53] Ultimately, this body of work provides a window into how US settler colonialism, particularly strategies of immigration control and border governance in the American West, included Jewish Americans, while marking other immigrant groups and racial minorities, particularly of Latin American and Asian-origin, as excludable, or illegal others.

To review, chapter one traced the scholarly approaches to historicizing Jewish presence in the US-Mexico border region, beginning in northern New Spain during the sixteenth century Spanish colonial period, through the twentieth century under US settler society. Between the 1950s and the 2000s, the literature overwhelmingly historicized Jewish presence through a liberal framework and as a narrative of religious refuge and a capitalist triumph of merit and ingenuity. Not until the last two decades, and after the "racial turn" in Jewish Studies, did scholars critically frame projects of empire, nation-building, and capitalism in North America as inseparable from settler colonialism in the Americas and the transatlantic African slave trade. By employing a settler colonial critique of the historiography of modern European Jewish Americans in the US-Mexico border region, I join the cohort of scholars writing in the post-racial turn of Jewish Studies. As a Jewish American historian trained in Chicana/o and Central American Studies, *The New Jewish Pioneer* also reflects how Jewish histories can be written through Ethnic Studies methodologies.

[53] A collective mythology that Jewish Americans are a reliably liberal leaning group who has always been overrepresented in progressive movements, from struggles against anti-Black racism to immigrant rights, is pervasive amongst Jewish American institutions and is echoed often through mainstream media. One recent example is Michelle Goldberg, "Mazel Tov, Trump. You've Revived the Jewish Left," *New York Times*, August 24, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/24/opinion/sunday/trump-jews.html.

Chapter 2

Jewish Border Merchants between Economies of Extraction, Policing, and Revolution, 1848–1920

In the late nineteenth century, Jewish immigrants, and US-born Jews of European origin, were among the commercial and territorial beneficiaries of US settler colonial expansion, Indigenous genocide, and land theft in the US-Mexico border region. The economic successes of Jewish border entrepreneurs were seen across agribusiness, mining, and real estate, from the Texas-Chihuahua region to the California-Baja California coast. Border entrepreneurship among Jewish immigrants was a commercial relationship born of US imperialism, linked to the growth of US settler colonialism beyond the nation's southern border and Mexican economic and land reforms, which welcomed the expansion of US investments and racialized labor hierarchies, while continuing the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands.[1]

The following case studies illustrate how Jews acted as commercial intermediaries, working as real estate speculators, mining prospectors and owners, and retailers between the Mexican administration of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1910), US investment capital, Mexican revolutionary factions and the US Army.[2] The economic profiles of Jewish merchants to industrial reorganization along the border reveals not only how they were racialized alongside

[1] Veronica Castillo-Muñoz, *The Other California: Land, Identity, and Politics on the Mexican Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 11.

[2] Mining towns were primarily comprised of displaced Indigenous laborers, annexed Mexicans living under US occupation, and European and Chinese immigrants. For a more in-depth study of labor practices across US-owned mining sites in Mexico see: Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California;* Jessica Kim, *Imperial Metropolis: Los Angeles, Mexico, and the Borderlands of American Empire, 1865–1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

other immigrant groups, but significantly, the ways Jewish immigrants were positioned as productive and protected actors to carry out colonial and racial imperatives of US imperialism.

The decades following the Mexican War (1910–1920) reflected significant shifts in how federal, state, and local actors regulated and policed the movement of people and goods along the new geopolitical border between the US and Mexico.[3] The rights to land, citizenship and socioeconomic mobility were determined by inclusion in the project of US settler colonization. This chapter explores the legal, racial, and socioeconomic inclusion of Jewish merchants in Anglo settler society in the border region from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. I focus on three overarching historical structures between 1848 and 1920 which I name "the economies of extraction, policing, and revolution," as contexts for measuring Jewish American inclusion to US settler society along the border.[4]

With a focus on the decades following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and prior to the Mexican Revolution (1848–1910), the economies of extraction and policing provide a framework for tracing how US settler colonialism deployed and protected white settlers to carry out the process of industrial capitalism across the new US-Mexico border region. Relatedly, the economies of revolution cast light on the expansion of US border governance between 1910 and 1920 and the ways the US military interpolated white (and non-white) settlers to the colonial project by merging commercial and military imperatives. Ultimately, the economies of

[3] Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz, eds., *Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019), 6.

[4] The case studies offered in this chapter trace the inclusion of Jewish immigrants and US-born Jews of European origin to Anglo settler society and ultimately, the modern condition for whiteness in the American West broadly and the border region, specifically. Many of the nineteenth-century Jewish settlers in the border region were from German lands, or the second or third generations with German ancestries. In the context of this analysis, all forthcoming uses of the ethno-religious category "Jew" refer to Jewish immigrants and/or US-border Jews of European origin and does not mean to obscure the racial, geographic, and ethnic diversity of Jewish peoples globally.

extraction, policing and revolution, as chronological and interlocking processes, highlight how nineteenth century US imperialism across the border region was shaped by state, corporate and military imperatives that sought to expand US settler society in the newly annexed territories through the extraction, accumulation and protection of capital .[5] I argue that the inclusion of Jewish border merchants in US settler society in this region is evidenced through their role as entrepreneurs who carried out and were protected by the capitalist and policing infrastructures of settler society.

The first part of this chapter, "Economies of Extraction," focuses on the family history of Louis Mendelson and his role within a network of Jewish border merchants and entrepreneurs who settled between Baja California, Mexico and California, US. Their cross-border commercial network was shaped by extractive operations, steamship transportation and mercantile investors across the peninsula. Rarely seen as threatening or disloyal to US nationalism—a script cast onto Chinese border merchants—these early Jewish merchants were invited to be productive contributors to the process of making the US-Mexico border region profitable.[6] The second part of this chapter, "Economies of Policing," centers the history of the Goldbaum family of the Arizona-Sonora border region as a window into Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs as protected

[5] Border policing as we understand it today is the outgrowth of a multi-century process rooted in colonialism and nation-building securitization that took unprecedented material form in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The process of border policing discussed in this chapter is rooted in the belief of the US-Mexico border as an inherently transnational, fluid region that is presently an expansive militarized zone. The case studies presented here focus on the early decades of border policing (1850s–1920) that prove foundational to development over the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

[6] By contrast, Chinese immigrants who sought economic opportunity in the business of mineral extraction were much more constrained by anti-Chinese sentiment that rose in the 1870s, culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, barring all but a few elite classes of Chinese from the US. Nevertheless, robust, transnational Chinese business networks had been created and in response to immigration restrictions, Northern Mexican states, particularly Sonora, became a backdoor for Chinese border crossing and smuggling between Mexico and the US. Thus, Chinese mobility within a landscape increasing defined by anti-Chinese rhetoric and laws marked Chinese border entrepreneurs as subversive and fugitive. See Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 120.

white settlers under an expanding infrastructure of state and vigilante policing aimed at protecting the racial and colonial projects along the border. The third and final section, "Economies of Revolution," focuses on the narrative of the Polish Jewish immigrant Hyman Capin, whose work as a military tailor for African American US Army cavalries during the Mexican Revolution, illuminates how the Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs along the border became further enmeshed and protected by the expanding infrastructure of policing that was instituted to defend US corporate interests in Mexico.

Clarifying the economic roles Jewish immigrants played within the process of US settlement, industrialization, and militarization of the border region, complicates existing academic scholarship on Jews in the American West. Rather, this study reveals Jewish border merchants as participants and beneficiaries of US imperialism and settler colonialism across the binational border region that expanded infrastructures of Indigenous elimination, land theft and policing of non-whites. As such, this study clarifies Jewish inclusion into a class of white settlers whose presence would shift the racial, economic, and political order of the region.

Jewish and US-Mexico Border Studies

Most historical accounts of Jewish histories in the American West are framed through which I refer to as Jewish pioneer history and the uncritical championing of Jewish settler's role in civilizing the American frontier.[7] As discussed in chapter one, the Jewish pioneer framework refers to the body of scholarship in Jewish American Studies, as well as local histories and Jewish cultural institutions throughout the Southwest and California that explore nineteenth and early twentieth century Jewish settlement in California and the Southwest as an exceptional, counter narrative about European-origin Jews on a global scale, but especially alongside the

[7] See chapter 1, "From Conquistadors to Pioneers."

racialized experiences of Jews in the industrial cities of the US East Coast. The Jewish pioneer framework celebrates the American West as a unique space that provided Jewish Americans greater access to private land ownership, entrepreneurship, and civic participation. While these studies have rightly emphasized that Jewish immigrants left Central and Eastern Europe and cities across the Eastern seaboard to pursue Western settlement and business opportunities not previously available to them in either context, few consider the overarching imperial structures that positioned Jewish immigrants as settlers to the American West.

The following chapter contends that Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs participated in a transnational process of settler colonization between the US and Mexico between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The ideology of Manifest Destiny was a cultural and theological discourse that fueled the overarching structure of US imperialism and settler colonialism the justified US annexation and occupation of the new "American West." These processes also shaped the US-Mexico border region and created the conditions for white settlement, the commodification of land and exploitation of labor.[8] While middle and late nineteenth-century Jewish emigrants left a geopolitical context in which they were pushed to the social and legal margins of society, they arrived in the newly annexed American West categorically as white settlers. The border region is an essential landscape within the American West that has yet to be considered to more fully understand the scope and limits of Jewish inclusion to US settler society in the American West. A racial landscape primarily comprised of mixed-race Mexican-origin peoples, Indigenous communities and in the case of Texas, enslaved Africans, the border region pushed the boundaries of the Black-white binary that shaped Jewish

[8] Manu Karuka's term the "war-finance nexus" captures the role that the military has always served to protect and expand US State and corporate dominance across North America. Manu Karuka, *Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 168.

racial formation on the Eastern seaboard. As such, the border region of the mid-nineteenth century offered more fluid access to whiteness relative to more Eastern and urban regions of the US, including the protections of US citizenship to a greater diversity of immigrants of European origin, including Jews. As Koffman has argued, Jewish immigrants racially and economically benefited from the diversity of the West.[9] I extend the contributions of these scholars to understand how the US settler colonialism shaped Jewish American relationships to land, capital, and labor in the American West, and how Jewish Americans were among those white settlers deployed as commercial agents to expand US imperialism across the US-Mexico border region.

The following chapter also contributes to US-Mexico Border Studies and discussions of racial capital expansion between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while complicating the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship amongst ethnic minorities. Scholars who explore the industrial reorganization and the unofficial and official forms of policing that reshaped the spatial and racial landscape of the border region between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century overwhelmingly locate US imperial state formation across the US-Mexico border region as a dynamic primarily between the US and Mexican governments, elite Anglo-American investors and a semi-indentured laboring class of Mexican mestizos, Indigenous populations and Chinese immigrants.[10] Some historians who have considered the roles played by immigrant entrepreneurs within this era of industrial reorganization and

[9] David S. Koffman, *The Jews' Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 23.

[10] The following texts provide unique but interrelated analysis of the role that US private investment played in colonization and industrialization in Mexico's northern border region between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For a focus on incarceration and policing see Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); to focus on corporate and state processes, see Kim, *Imperial Metropolis*; to focus on landscape and infrastructure, see C. J. Alvarez, *Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction on the US-Mexico Divide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021); to focus on the multiracial landscape of the industrial border economies see: Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California* and Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*.

militarization between Northern Mexico and the US Southwest have used a theory of middlemen minorities to focus on the ways some immigrant groups made significant contributions to the development of Mexico's modern economy, during and following the Mexican Revolution.[11] Often, scholars analyzed the roles of these ethnic entrepreneur's through the middleman minority theory, or a lens through which to trace the intermediate (rather than low status) economic role that an ethnic minority group can play in a given context.[12] Indeed, the modern history of Jewish border entrepreneurship similarly reflects a concentrating of Jewish immigrants in the retail, wholesale and mining industry between the US and Mexico.[13] However, the middleman theory does not account for the relationship between commercial intermediaries and the overarching settler colonial process, such as US imperialism in the border region.

The case studies in this chapter will show that occupational profiles of Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs served a particular imperative linked to the growth of racial capitalism as the dominant socioeconomic structure under US settler society. Cedric Robinson's canonical text *Black Marxism* (1983) and his theorization of "racial capitalism," frame the expansion of capitalism in the border region as an expansion of a socioeconomic order that was anti-Black and

[11] For a discussion on the roles that Middle Eastern and Chinese immigrants played during the Revolutionary economies across the borderlands see Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007). For a post-Mexican Revolutionary perspective on the transnational orbit in which Mashriqi (or Arabic-speaking countries of the Eastern Mediterranean) migrants to Mexico existed (which included Jews) see Camila Pastor, *The Mexican Mahjar: Transnational Maronites, Jews, and Arabs under the French Mandate* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017); Robert Chao Romero, *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882–1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008), chaps. 3, 5.

[12] Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Middleman Minorities," *American Sociological Review* 38, no. 5 (October 1973): 583–94.

[13] Highlighting the contributions that Chinese immigrants made to Mexico's economy is an important counter narrative that challenges both US and Mexican Sinophobic discourse that dominated both law and culture at the turn of the twentieth century. Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*.

anti-Indigenous in nature.[14] Working as land prospectors, small-scale shop owners in mining town, or as military outfitters, Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs were deployed as active agents helping to expand three distinct economic structures under racial capitalism. The terms economies of extraction, policing, revolution help frame the experiences of Jewish border merchants beyond the middleman minority theory and reveal how US settler society placed value upon the labor of Jewish merchants in ways distinct and unequal to other laboring bodies across different industrial projects. Through the economies of extraction, policing and revolution, US settler society invested in and protected Jewish entrepreneurial labor, while Indigenous bodies, and Mexican, Chinese, and African American labor was treated as excludible and, or disposable. I apply a settler colonial framework to complicate previous understandings of Jewish merchants as commercial intermediaries, or middlemen, by demonstrating how Jewish entrepreneurs work within, and not above, the racial and colonial context of US settlement and capitalist expansion in the border region. Ultimately, this chapter offers a regional analysis of Jewish entrepreneurs along the border, contributing to and expanding the existing body of work between Jewish, Chicana/o and Mexican Studies that explores the relationships between immigrant entrepreneurs and the shifting dynamics of power across the US-Mexico border region between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Economies of Extraction: A Case Study between the Two Californias

The arrival of Jewish settler families to the newly created American Southwest in the

[14] Cedric Robinson's writings in Black Marxism and within the framework of Black radicalism, put forth a definition of capitalism as inextricably connected to a racist system. Robinson argues that "racial capitalism" reflects the emergence of the modern racial order in feudal Europe and its subsequent impact on the organization of labor under capitalism, between the colonizing and colonized worlds. Expanding on Marx's focus on the European proletariat as the source of structural transformation, Robinson centers the Black radical tradition as a (silenced) revolutionary force with the capacity to challenge the racialized social and ideological structures that emerged from capitalism. Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 2.

mid-nineteenth century aligned with the legal drawing of the US-Mexico international boundary in 1848 and the related expansion of railroads and extractive industries. While the border building process would take decades of binational collaborations before taking physical form, the treaty itself anticipated new economies that would create the conditions for expansive cross-border commerce and infrastructures of policing that protected resource extraction and accumulation and reshaped the border region.[15] This was a time of overall expansion of the United States' Jewish population, growing from 15,000 in 1840 to 250,000 by 1880.[16] In 1880, approximately 400 Jews, primarily of German origin, lived in Arizona and New Mexico, along with other immigrant arrivals from Western, Central, and Southern Europe and China.[17] Jewish border merchants would have primarily encountered Mexican-origin peoples in the US military towns that peppered the newly annexed territories and along the railroads that increasingly invaded Indigenous lands.[18] Mexican-origin peoples across the border region were not themselves immigrants, but rather longtime residents now living under US occupation following

[15] Several articles in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo create legal pathways for the future infrastructure needed for the industrial reorganization of the border region for integration into a global capitalist market. Specifically, Article VI pivoted toward railroads, subsequent transportation routes and hydraulic engineering. Relatedly, to protect such industrializing investments, Article XVI created the legal right to border fortification in the name of national security. Beyond the existing forts and presidios that populated the border since the time of Spanish colonial occupation, Article XVI anticipated the future building of "tactical infrastructure," the legal and military terms for the barricades and fences that came to define the border in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. See Alvarez, *Border Land, Border Water*, 20–21.

[16] Bettina O'Neil Lyons, *Zeckendorfs and Steinfelds: Merchant Princes of the American Southwest* (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 2008), xi.

[17] Tomas Jaehn, ed., *Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2003), 2; Blaine Lamb, "Desert Pioneers: The Jewish Experience in Early Arizona" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1990), 2. Estimations and summations of relational immigrant arrivals to the region are based on author's review of US federal census data from El Paso, Texas, Albuquerque, New Mexico and Tucson, Arizona—three commercially and militarily significant cities across the US-side of the border region—in the latter half of the nineteenth century. See: US Census Bureau. Population Estimates, 1860, 1870, and 1880—El Paso, TX; Albuquerque, NM; Tucson, AZ. *Ancestry.com*, accessed October 24, 2020; Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*, 120.

[18] My understanding of railroad construction and transportation infrastructure as a tool of dispossession and land theft among settler societies is shaped by Karuka, *Empire's Tracks*, 45.

the colonization of Northern Mexico and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.[19] Jewish settlers, primarily of German background, were visible and influential participants in the process of regional industrialization, and the related process of border fortification in New Mexico and Arizona.[20] For example, the Gadsden Purchase/Mesilla Treaty in 1853, in which the US paid Mexico $10 million for territories that later became part of Arizona and New Mexico, was a key binational agreement between the US and Mexico that made social mobility, economic security and access to land a reality for white settlers, including Jewish immigrants, willing to migrate to the "new American frontier." The conclusion of the Mexican War brought significant settlements of German immigrants to the region, particularly South Texas and New Mexico, where the German Jew—estimated seven percent of all German immigration between 1840 and 1880—played "so large a part," that their contributions to cross-border trade networks were distinct amongst German immigrants and their overall impact on the commercial development to the region.[21] The treaty also confirmed US access for a rail link from El Paso to the Pacific Coast, and reflected a turning point in the arrival, scope and influence of Jewish merchandising, wholesalers, financial and even political networks between the Southwest and Northern

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[19] By the late nineteenth century, however, migrants from central Mexico joined other European and Asian immigrant groups in the border region, as Porfirian economic and land reforms dispossessed many indigenous farmworkers from their land and the US corporate takeover of Mexican resources pushed central Mexicans from their towns and cities and toward the border region, which offered work in mining, oil, and railroad expansion. For more on Mexican migration to California and the Southwest at the turn of the century, see Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), chap. 5.

[20] Archival materials and secondary sources on the history of Jews of the Southwest explore the influence of German-origin Jewish settlers to the industrializing economies of New Mexico beginning with the Santa Fe Trail in 1821 through the US occupation of Northern Mexico. See Jaehn, *Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico*; O'Neil Lyons, *Zeckendorfs and Steinfelds*; and William J. Parish, "The German Jew and the Commercial Revolution in Territorial New Mexico, 1850–1900" (1959), lecture, folder 62, box 2, Rochlin Collection, Southwestern Jewish Archives, University of Arizona, Tucson.

[21] Parish, "German Jew."

Mexico.[22]

Locating how Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs were positioned within the economies of extraction along the border, reveals the legal, racial, and socioeconomic inclusion of Jewish immigrants in the US settler project in this region between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before turning to the case study of two Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs between the two California's, it is important to understand the regional context of Mexican modernization and US imperialism that created conditions for Jewish participation in the economies of extraction.

Late-nineteenth-century Mexican approaches to national modernization worked together with federal and corporate entities in the US to encourage white settlement and the expansion of industrial capitalism across the US-Mexico border region. The assumption of executive power by Porfirio Díaz in 1876 ushered in a new era of territorial restructuring and economic modernization that heavily favored foreign capital and cross-border connections. Díaz's political and economic strategy known as *Orden y Progreso* contended that foreign investment could, more quickly than domestic investment, build up Mexico's communication networks, transportation lines, and participation in the world economy. Land reforms were notable factors in the modernization Mexico's northern economies and the extension of US settler society beyond its southern border. To court foreign capital, President Díaz changed a colonial-era law and nationalized subsoil resources to make them available for purchase by foreign investors. It was through the *terrenos baldíos* or "vacant lands," policy specifically that members of Mexico's governing elite legally claimed land as vacant and partnered with US investors to develop, or

[22] Michael Dear, *Why Walls Won't Work: Repairing the US-Mexico Divide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 5; Parish, "German Jew"; David S. Koffman, "Jews, American Indian Curios, and the Westward Expansion of Capitalism," in *Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism*, ed. Rebecca Kobrin (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 171.

colonize that land.[23] In turn, US investors and corporations had a clear pathway to develop and profit off Mexican transportation, mineral extraction, agricultural industrialization, and the expansion of regional, national, and transnational communications. Alongside other white settlers, Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs benefited from an economy of extraction and were deployed as agents of expanding a regional capitalist project that justified displacement and racialized labor exploitation in the name of settling the frontier.

Porfirian land reforms also reflected a new approach to US dominance in the Americas and allowed for the extension of the US racial capitalist model of industrialization and labor beyond US borders. Mexican governing elites hoped that the influence of European and US capital and settlers would expedite mineral and agricultural industrialization while and relatedly, bringing independent Indigenous nations into Western capitalism.[24] The integration of Indigenous peoples into Mexico's modernizing industries as laborers paralleled the racial capitalist structure in the US, and the persistent anti-Indigenous racial ideology in Porfirian Mexico, namely the belief that foreign colonization would help civilize the countries unincorporated Indigenous communities, or *indios bárbaros.*[25] The state-sanctioned process of "civilizing" Indigenous peoples meant different things under different imperial occupations. In Mexico's northern frontier under *Orden y Progreso*, civilizing the *indio bárbaro* meant the incorporation of Native peoples into a racialized labor system that supported US commercial interests in Mexico and governing Mexican elites.

Between the 1880s and 1890s, Díaz opened railroad concessions, banking charters,

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[23] Kim, *Imperial Metropolis*, 45, 56.

[24] José Angel Hernández, "From Conquest to Colonization: *Indios* and Colonization Policies after Mexican Independence," *Mexican Studies* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 299.

[25] Hernández, "Conquest to Colonization," 309.

mines, oil properties, and farmland to extensive foreign investment.[26] US capital combined with liberal Mexican land and colonization laws expedited the settlement of white foreigners and the exploitation of the region's natural resources in the name of modernity, order, and progress. Beginning in the late 1870s and into the 1880s, legal rights to cross-border railroad construction were ceded to British and US firms who built the Sonora Railway, facilitating the export of cash crops from Sonora to Arizona (1879) and eventually, from Mexico City to El Paso and Laredo, Texas (1884 and 1888).[27] Alongside railway expansion, US and Mexican owned steamship operations facilitated cross-border trade between the Baja California peninsula and California.[28] Echoing the practices of Spanish colonizers and Californios, US investors relied on Indigenous and mestizo labor to build profitable enterprises across Northern Mexico.[29] By the end of the Díaz dictatorship in 1910, foreign investors owned 35 percent of Mexico's surface area; American investors alone controlled 27 percent of the nation's land.[30]

In the shadow of the California Gold Rush, Baja California became a site of commercial opportunity for European and Anglo settlers including Jews, to take advantage of the economic potential of the peninsula's emerging gold, silver, and quartz mining industries. Louis Mendelson, a Jewish immigrant of Polish origin, became a protagonist in the development of cross-border commerce in agriculture, mining, land development and transportation. The few historical accounts that mention Louis Mendelson claim he was among the first Jewish settlers in

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[26] Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes,* 59–60.

[27] Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes,* 59–60.

[28] Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 28.

[29] Kim, *Imperial Metropolis*, 50.

[30] Kim, *Imperial Metropolis*, 12.

Baja California.[31] Mendelson offers a window into a network of Jewish border merchants who commercially benefited from the industrialization of Baja California in the late nineteenth century. Working with US and British-owned land colonization and transportation companies Mendelson linked San Diego's Jewish mercantile community to mining, agriculture, cattle, and wholesale shipping across the peninsula. Additionally, his marriage into an elite, landowning Mexican family, helped positioned him as an intermediary who facilitated the exchange of US capital, Mexican land, mineral resources and labor between California and Baja California. Ultimately, Mendelson's role in fortifying cross-border entrepreneurship, within and beyond a growing network of Jewish merchants, emphasizes the inclusion of Jewish immigrants in Anglo settler society's racial capitalist system.

Louis Mendelson was born in Kalisz, Poland in 1840 before migrating to the United States in the early 1860s with his family. He spent one year in the Missouri Infantry Regiment serving in the Union Army during the Civil War, after which he moved to California where he naturalized as a US citizen and became a homeowner and an entrepreneur. In 1871, Mendelson participated in the migration of prospectors and merchants from Southern California to Baja California to pursue gold and silver "discovered" inland from the port city of Ensenada.[32] His presence in Baja California opened personal entrepreneurial opportunities in mining and facilitated cross-border commerce between San Diego-based Jewish mercantile investors and the US-funded colonization projects across the peninsula. It was reported in a San Diego newspaper in 1897 that "L. Mendelson is making creditable efforts to extend the Mexican coast trade. He

[31] Norton B. Stern, *Baja California: Jewish Refuge and Homeland* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1973), 22; Donald Chaput, "Louis Mendelson: Baja California Statesman," *Western States Jewish History* 19, no. 2 (January 1987): 99–114.

[32] Lawrence Taylor, "The Mining Boom in Baja California from 1850 to 1890 and the Emergence of Tijuana as a Border Community," *Journal of the Southwest* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 476.

should have the hearty cooperation of every capitalist in San Diego."[33] These Jewish border merchants included garment retailers Steiner & Klauber and Lowenstein & Co., boot seller Marcus Schiller, and dry goods and wholesalers firm, Levy & Wetheimer, and Dr. Daniel Cave.[34] Growing cross-border trade helped sustain the peninsula's mining communities and agricultural developments, and generated profits for Anglo and European investors and little for the predominantly mestizo Mexican and Indigenous labor class.

Mendelson's marriage to Carmen Lamadrid in 1886 bolstered the scope of his extractive operations in Baja California, just as it affirmed his position within white settler society. In the context of US settler society in the border region, marriage remained an important site from which racial and socioeconomic inclusion was determined.[35] Intermarriage between white Americans and the landholding, rancho elite of Mexican origin across the Southwest and California was both a sign of racial acceptance between the upper classes and significantly, a tool of Manifest Destiny. Marriages between Anglo men and Mexican women—also legally white and US citizens under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—gave the former access to land held by the family of the latter, and facilitated the process of land dispossession from Mexican to Anglo society.[36] In her study of commercial linkages between Southern California and Mexico at the turn of the century, Jessica Kim highlights that "Anglo settlers in Los Angeles

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[33] Cited in Stern, *Baja California*, 26.

[34] Cited in Stern, *Baja California*, 29; *Weekly Sun,* October 4, 1888, Levi Collection, Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University.

[35] María Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West, 1840–1900.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 49.

[36] Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 52. For more on the gender and systems of land ownership between Spanish/Mexican and Anglo societies, and interracial marriage between Anglo men and Mexican women as a strategy of territorial acquisition within Anglo Western Expansion, see Montoya, *Translating Property*.

prioritized business partnerships and intermarriages with a Californio elite that superseded strict definitions of racial purity to facilitate access to land, citizenship, and economic privileges."[37] Similarly, Mendelson's marriage to Carmen Lamadrid embodied an important socioeconomic union between a European American settler and a prominent Northern Mexican family with commercial ties to mining and telecommunications. The marriage helped expand his commercial reach in Baja California's gold mines and cross-border maritime transportation, underlining Jewish immigrant inclusion into Anglo settler society. Like many Anglo settlers to the American West, Mendelson's marriage into a landowning family served the settler colonial and racial capitalist projects that aimed to transfer land and resources from Indigenous communities and the Mexican nation to the US. The experiences of Jewish immigrants with interracial unions stood in stark contrast to those of more marginalized groups in the region, particularly the Chinese, for whom such unions would be considered miscegenation and thus legally and culturally criminalized.[38]

Alongside his marriage into the Lamadrid family, Mendelson's employment with the Hartford, Connecticut-based International Company of Mexico, clarified his position as a commercial beneficiary of expanding US imperial capitalism in Northern Mexico.[39] The firm was organized in 1885 in response to the 1883 law of *terrenos baldíos* effort to promote US and

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[37] Kim, *Imperial Metropolis*, 49.

[38] In accordance with the articles of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Mexican-origin peoples were considered legally white, thus casting Chinese-Mexican intermarriage as illegal. The privileging of Anglo-Mexican marriages alongside the criminalization of Chinese-Mexican unions illuminates how anti-miscegenation laws both consolidated and preserved an imagined white race and supported the acquisition of private land by those considered white within Anglo settler society. European Jews' white status allowed them to marry outside their national/ethnic categories, particularly with Mexican-origin women of elite rancho families, without fear of criminalization.

[39] The International Company of Mexico was a US and UK owned land colonization company that facilitated the industrialization and urbanization of the Baja California peninsula during the final decades of the nineteenth century, particularly in the realm of mineral extraction and agribusiness. Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California,* 2, 11, 25.

European investment and settlement in the region. By the time of Mendelson's tenure, the company owned nearly half the land in Baja California. Alongside his formal responsibilities promoting Mexican settlement opportunities to US and European investors, Mendelson's position enabled him to pursue private mining interests and assist other Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs to realize the same. The year Mendelson began his employment with the International Company, Maximiliano Bernstein, another Jewish immigrant, was employed as a land agent with the company. Originally from Prussia, Bernstein arrived in Baja California around 1884, likely in pursuit of gold and silver. Within two years, Bernstein married a Mexican national, Guadalupe Riveroll, whose family was of the landowning class and participated in cross-border mercantile trade between Ensenada and San Diego, giving Bernstein links to a wide commercial network. Together, Mendelson and Bernstein made personal investments in mineral extraction and through their work with the International Co., helped make the border region safe for racial capitalism and white settlement.[40]

During his first year of employment, Bernstein was responsible for the firm's purchase and acquisition of the city of Ensenada, paving the way for sweeping developments across the region. Under the jurisdiction of the US firm, Ensenada became a crucial port from which steamships transported raw material to manufactures based in central Mexico and the US, along with tourists and miners traveling between Ensenada, San Diego, and San Francisco. Relatedly, a telegraph line was built, connecting Ensenada to San Diego, helping the overall transformation of the port city into a key point of entry for US business expansion into Mexico.[41] Bernstein's

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[40] According to David Goldbaum, Mexican appointed prospector who visited mining sites across the peninsula, Bernstein and Mendelson co-owned copper and silver mines south of Ensenada. *Lower Californian,* May 22, 1896, 1.

[41] Cited in Stern, *Baja California*, 24; Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 2; David Piñera, *Tijuana in History: Just Crossing the Border* (Tijuana: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y Las Artes, 2013), 53.

land negotiations between the Mexican government and foreign investors helped shape the scope of cross-border industrialization and expanded opportunities for white settlement and commerce; the next generation of the Bernstein family operated flour mills in cities across Baja California.[42] Separately, but related to his work with the International Company, Mendelson helped systematize steamship travel between Ensenada, San Diego and San Francisco through the 1890s, working with the Lower California Development Company's Steamers and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce to develop cross-border trade across the two Californias. In 1896, he and his Riveroll in-laws were among the founding members of, and Mendelson was financial advisor to, the San Diego-based Club International, which negotiated trade agreements between San Diego entrepreneurs, the steamship companies operating between Southern California, Ensenada and San Quintin ports and the Mexican consul in San Diego.[43] Maritime cross-border commerce along the coast was a crucial tool in the broader project of US-backed colonization projects in Baja California, helping transport laborers, sustain inland mining operations, clear land for cultivating cash crops, and expand retail and hospitality developments in Ensenada.[44]

Jewish entrepreneurs, alongside Anglo Americans and other European immigrants, benefited from the racialized labor model on which colonization companies relied. Foreign land development firms such as the International Company enlisted white agents—among them a number of Jews—to develop the peninsula into a more efficient trade corridor between the US and Mexico. Mexican mestizos, Indigenous peoples and Chinese immigrants were among those who experienced socioeconomic marginalization under US capital expansion into Northern

[42] Aurelio de Vivanco, *Lower California Up-to-Date* (Los Angeles: Wolfer Printing, 1924), 240.

[43] "Club International," *San Diego Sun*, May 28, 1896.

[44] Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 30.

Mexico. By the turn of the century, foreign colonization companies had made extensive real estate and transportation investments up and down the peninsula, including railway construction between Baja California, San Diego, California and Yuma, Arizona.[45] Border industrialization meant economic opportunity for white settlers, while threatening to eliminate Indigenous ways of life and pushing many single men and families into economic dependence on US companies.[46] Indigenous dispossession across the economy of extraction was not only territorial but genocidal in nature; according to census data in Baja California, the Cocopah population (the most populous Native community in the region alongside the Kumeyaay) declined from 5,000 in 1890 to 1,817 in 1920.[47]

Mendelson and Bernstein are examples of Jewish entrepreneurs whose incorporation into white settler society enabled them to benefit from the expansion of extractive capitalism into Northern Mexico. These border merchants were commercial intermediaries between US colonization companies, the landholding Mexican elite, Anglo settlers and a racialized labor caste system of Mexican mestizos, Native peoples, and Chinese immigrants essential to mining and agribusiness. Their work consolidated capital gains from mineral extraction into the hands of US and European investors and the dispossession of land from Indigenous communities and Mexican nationals.[48] By the turn of the twentieth century, Mendelson had become one of Baja California's leading mercantile businessmen. The presence of such entrepreneurs between the two Californias facilitated land theft and mineral and labor exploitation on behalf of white settlers and their integration into white settler society opened pathways to regional, cross-border

[45] Taylor, "Mining Boom," 479; Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 31–39.

[46] Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 30.

[47] Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 39.

[48] Stern, *Baja California*.

trade networks through intermarriage. Such histories offer a clear representation of how Jews were invited to commercially benefit from the expansion of extractive, racial capitalism in the border region in the late nineteenth century.

Mendelson and Bernstein's trajectories illustrate how intermarriage was also a site of Jewish racial and economic inclusion into US settler society along the border region at the turn of the twentieth century. These cases show that marital and family-making patterns among Jewish men could closely resembled those of Anglo Americans in the American West at this time. Intermarriage between male European and Anglo settlers and Mexican woman from upper class, mestizo, or white families, reflected the racial and spatial imperatives of US settler colonial expansion, offering a legal avenue through which land could be accumulated and white settlement expanded. In contrast, Chinese immigrant men in the US were legally prohibited by law from marrying Mexican women, since persons of Mexican origin were legally categorized as white.[49] In Mexico, while interracial marriage between Chinese men and Native Mexican women was common, and not officially outlawed by Mexican law, it remained a site of cultural, gendered, and racial exclusion between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Echoing the Sinophobia of the US, Mexican cultural productions, including comedy, cartoons, poetry and *corridos*, would emphasize Chinese immigrants as carriers of diseases and financially immoral. In turn, Mexican women who entered into such cross-cultural relationships were portrayed as dirty, shameful, unpatriotic, and ultimately, inconsistent with Mexican national identity.[50] Locating interracial unions within a regional and relational context reflects the experiences of

[49] The legal categorization of people in California of Mexican descent as "white" persisted until 1968. Relatedly, intermarriage between Chinese those defined as white by law, were outlawed until that same year. Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*, 73.

[50] Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*, 95; Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 34.

social inclusion to US settler society experienced by Jewish men.

Ultimately, Mendelson and Bernstein's participation in the economies of extraction, including entrepreneurial and marital practices between the two Californias, clarifies how US settler society deployed Jews, alongside other European and Anglo Americans, as agents of an expanding a racial and capitalist project in the US-Mexico border region. As the following section demonstrates, the histories of Jewish entrepreneurs between Arizona and Sonora illuminate how Jews were included into US settler society not only through capitalism, but also through the corollary process of policing. The cross-border economy of extraction in the American Southwest necessitated new approaches to surveillance and policing to protect the capitalist investments and the racialized labor caste systems on which they relied. Resistance from the Apache and Yaqui, alongside multiracial, labor uprisings against US-owned mining communities in Northern Mexico represented threats to the expansion of Anglo settler society in the region. The history of the Goldbaums, a Jewish settler family in the copper borderlands between Arizona and Sonora, clarifies the direct and indirect ways Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs benefited from the expansion of policing on both sides of the border in the second half of the nineteenth century. The emergent economy of policing sought to ensure that the new frontier remained safe for white investment and settlement. While securing the border signified socioeconomic stability for white settlers, groups excluded from the project of US nation-building encountered a growing, binational infrastructure of criminalization and the continuation of land theft and Native genocide.

Landscapes of Policing: A Case Study from the Copper Borderlands

The settlement and commercial successes of Jews in the context of the industrial reorganization of the border region in the late nineteenth century was part of a broader colonial

strategy of American nation-building reliant on land theft and racial capitalism. If Porfirian land reforms and privatization of Mexican industries made the borderlands safe for investment, the rise in vigilante and state policing efforts protected the longevity and organization of investments. Building a landscape of border surveillance gave way to official and unofficial strategies to control property and Indigenous mobility in service of extractive, racial capitalist projects.[51] As Jewish border merchants achieved socioeconomic mobility as financiers of mining operations and relatedly, as small-scale businessmen catering to the growth of such operations, Indigenous lands were stolen, their original inhabitants displaced and replaced. The process of industrial reorganization across the border signified material betterment to some settlers, including Jews, while simultaneously producing a new infrastructure of surveillance that was explicitly anti-Indigenous. I refer to the interlocking processes between capital and state and vigilante violence as *economies of policing*, as a framework to trace the ways in which Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs were positioned as useful actors in capital expansion and thus, protected and included subjects within US settler society.

The Goldbaums of Arizona-Sonora arrived in the American Southwest during the early phase of border building, wherein the US and Mexico worked collectively to displace and replace Indigenous groups while expanding and protecting a capitalist project centered around extraction and a racialized labor caste system. Following the Mexican War, the US replaced

[51] While the case study presented focuses on the protection of Jews as white settlers under an anti-Indigenous policing infrastructure, the surveillance of Black mobility has always, and simultaneously been at the center of border policing. Before the US annexed Mexico's northern territory in 1848, the Texas Rangers were the mercenary police force that shaped and protected Anglo settlement in (Mexican) Texas, battling indigenous groups for territorial dominance, and capturing runaway slaves seeking freedom in Mexico. See, Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 19–20. For more on the Black experience and border policing prior and during the Mexican Revolution, see Gerald Horne, *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910–1920* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 16–17; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Alice L. Baumgartner, *South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2020).

Mexico as the imperial power in the border region and continued the state-sanctioned project of Indigenous suppression. Specifically, Article XI of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo enshrined into US law Mexico's anti-Native approaches to modern nation-building. Article XI, which would inform subsequent local bounty laws against tribes indigenous to Northern Mexico, officially tasked the US military with policing and punishing "savage tribes for raids against Mexicans," still living in the newly occupied US territories.[52] On a more regional level, Northern Mexican elites turned to US mercenaries in the Southwest to assist them in their country's racial and colonial project of eliminating the *indio bárbaro,* the (imagined) savage Indian, who remained unincorporated and unassimilable to the modern Mexican nation-state. Between 1845 and 1885, a bounty program remained in effect, wherein Northern Mexican states authorized the funding and hiring of US nationals to fight and scalp Apache, Comanche, or Kiowa warriors. Scholar of Native Studies, Josefina Maria Saldaña-Portillo, has likened bounty laws to a form of racial capitalism, influencing the transformation of the border region into "a transnational economy of death."[53]

While not the actual perpetrators of these violent encounters with Indigenous peoples over land, nor state agents of labor suppression, the Goldbaums provide a window into Jewish border merchants as direct and indirect beneficiaries of border policing in their roles as agents of expanding racial capitalism across the region.[54] As early European and US-born settlers to the

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[52] Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 129–30.

[53] Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given*, 114.

[54] In his study of Jewish participation in the curio industry in the mid-nineteenth-century American West, David Koffman emphasizes that white settler violence was enacted upon Indigenous communities through land theft but also through commerce. Commercial exchange between settler merchants and Indigenous peoples can be understood as intertwined with the broader structure of settler colonial violence, as such micro commercial exchanges exists within and serve the expansion of racial, industrial capitalism. Koffman, *Jews' Indian*, 84–85.

Arizona Territory, the Goldbaum family's experiences demonstrate the *direct* ways that Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs benefited from the rise in border policing, particularly the US government's commitment to casting "Indian country" as enemy territory, spiritually destined to be colonized and civilized by white settlers. Relatedly, the experiences of the first and second generations of the Goldbaum family reflect how Jewish entrepreneurs were the *indirect* beneficiaries of binational policing against anti-imperial labor organizing in the copper-rich state of Sonora.[55] As racially and financially protected settler-citizens, the histories of Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands cannot be unlinked from settler colonial violence on which Western expansion relied.

The impact and influence of the Goldbaum family on the development of the Arizona-Sonora copper borderlands begins in the mid-1850s and traverses nearly half a century of binational projects of border industrialization and fortification. Rough estimates gathered from between 1877 and 1880 indicate that the Goldbaums were among the approximately 200 Jewish settlers living in the Arizona Territory.[56] As early as the 1860s, German and Polish Jewish merchants had arrived in Tucson, and through the subsequent decades, established regional mercantile businesses, served on school boards, the Tucson chamber of commerce, and local and state political office; notably Tucson's first Jewish mayor, Charles M. Strauss, helped secure the land grant on which the University of Arizona was built.[57] The first generation of Goldbaums

[55] Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*, 3.

[56] Lamb, "Desert Pioneers," 2.

[57] Though beyond the scope of this chapter, Strauss's role in securing the land for the University of Arizona is a powerful example of Jewish inclusion into Anglo settler society in the border region. See Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 140. To read more on late-nineteenth-century Jewish merchant participation in the expansion of Western capitalism into Arizona Territory (with focus on Tucson), Abraham S. Chanin, *Cholent & Chorizo: Great Adventures of Pioneer Jews on the Arizona Frontier, Sometimes Kosher, Sometimes Not, but Always Fascinating!* (Tucson: Midbar Press, 1995), 131–43;

immigrated to Tucson from Prussia in 1856 and would be in the company of dozens of other Jewish settlers who arrived to help "pioneer" the expansion of racial capitalism into the newly occupied territories. [58]

Sarah and Marcus Goldbaum traveled throughout the Southwest and California before permanently settling in Arizona in the 1860s; their children's birth records indicate the family lived temporarily in Kansas, California, New Mexico, and Arizona. It was in Benson, Arizona that the Goldbaums established deeper commercial ties, owning and operating the Pioneer Butcher Shop, and a wholesale liquor shop and grocery store. The six Goldbaum sons built on Marcus's commercial legacy, working as tobacco clerks, liquor dealers, grocers, bookkeepers and, in the case of Abraham Goldbaum, for the mining companies themselves.[59] The family's commercial livelihood between Southern Arizona and Northern Sonora was tied to the copper industry and the cross-border railways. The Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 provided private companies nearly 200 million acres of Indigenous land that was essential to the cross-border economy and the business of mineral extraction and processing.[60] In 1880, the Southern Pacific and El Paso Southwestern railroads expanded to make possible the cross-border transport of copper deposits from Cananea, Sonora to the smelters in Bisbee and Benson, Arizona in preparation for the global market. The Goldbaums' cross-border commercial ties clarify the links

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Elizabeth Ramenofsky, *From Charcoal to Banking: The I. E. Solomons of Arizona* (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1984).

[58] For archival information on the Goldbaums, see folders 18–19, box 12, Rochlin Collection, Southwestern Jewish Archives, University of Arizona, Tucson.

[59] Rochlin's research notes, 1870s–1880s, folder 21, box 12, Rochlin Collection; Abraham Chanin's anecdotal account of "pioneer Jews" mentions Julius Goldbaum, Marcus and Sarah's son, as a well-established liquor dealer in downtown Tucson, known for importing bourbon from Kentucky. He also served as a city councilman and owned a resort called "Jule's Club." Chanin, *Cholent & Chorizo*, 222.

[60] Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*, 140.

between Jewish border entrepreneurs, mineral extraction, and the legal dispossession of Indigenous lands in service of railroad expansion.

Relatedly, the Goldbaums' wholesale businesses clarify the interdependence between border entrepreneurs, industrialization, and increased militarization across the region. In the aftermath of the Mexican War, the US military was the primary governing institution in the lands west of the Mississippi, tasked with replacing Indigenous populations with a majority Anglo one; ethnic cleansing of Indigenous residents and the theft of Indigenous lands were the primary strategies employed to whiten the West.[61] The arrival and settlement of the Goldbaums in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands in the 1850s intersected with an active period of US and Mexican military counterinsurgency against Apache and Yaqui Indians, who posed a powerful challenge to the continued theft and desecration of their ancestral lands.[62] The Pioneer Butcher Shop reflects Marcus Goldbaum's role as the commercial intermediary between Indigenous populations and the US military presence across Southern Arizona; the US Army was the primary buyer of Goldbaum's Comanche-produced beef.[63]

Goldbaum's years of operation in Arizona Territory between the 1860s and 1880s coincided with increased presence of US military troops as part of a state-sanctioned project to eliminate Apache power and secure white settlement in the region.[64] The trope of the *indio bárbaro*, dating back to Spanish colonial period and revived under Anglo occupation, cast the Apaches as an existential and material threat to Manifest Destiny, particularly the Apaches'

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[61] Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*, 137.

[62] Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*, 131–32; Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping US and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), chap. 4.

[63] Details on Goldbaum's Butcher Shop is from local newspapers found in Goldbaum family, MS401 research files, folder 21, box 12, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson.

[64] Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*, 84.

potential to limit or refute the consolidation of territorial and capital accumulation among white settlers. Such anxieties were expressed in the Sixth Legislative Assembly of the Arizona Territory which met in January of 1871. It advocated for a policy of extermination against the Apaches, the "placing on reservation of the Pinals and Tonotos [Western Apache tribal groups]" and recommended "that volunteers raised in the country, inured to the climate, acquainted with all the habits of the Indians of the country and fighting for their homes," be employed as a more effective and economical force for Apache suppression than official US military troops.[65] This proposed anti-Apache policy echoed the logic of state-sanctioned vigilantism that had been active in Texas since the 1830s, and foreshadowed the organization of the Arizona Rangers as an early strategy of border policing. Modeled on the Texas Rangers, the Arizona Rangers were formally organized in 1901, functioning as a civilian police force in the absence of statehood. The Rangers were activated by a frontier mentality and a belief that it was the Anglo-American right and imperative to protect US investments, regardless of national boundaries.[66]

Relatedly, the 1871 territorial assembly also emphasized the federal government's commitment to fortifying white settlement and rootedness in the resource rich region. The federal government had a long tradition of creating legal pathways of policing the mobility and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples to consolidate territory and capital. Such policies, notably the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and then the Homestead Act of 1862, served to ensure white migrants might securely settle in the lands west of the Mississippi to aid in the transformation of "Indian Country" into a white, American frontier. The conditions of Marcus Goldbaum's death in 1886 illuminate how Jewish merchants were positioned within the economies of policing.

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[65] Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*, 93.

[66] Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*, 138.

Specifically, Goldbaum's death reflects how European settlers in Arizona Territory, including Jews, were integrated into the process of civilizing the region through the systemic suppression of Indigenous sovereignty, with the Apaches as particular targets, and the protection of capital and territorial accumulation for the whites doing the civilizing.

Until the 1880s, Goldbaum's proximity to the business of mineral extraction was through his grocery and liquor wholesale businesses in mining towns in and around Benson, Tombstone and Tucson. In 1886 however, Goldbaum became a part-time prospector in the Whetstone Mountains, forty-five miles southeast of Tucson, where he built a small property from which he could pursue gold mining. Goldbaum's death in June 1886 was reported by several periodicals, including the *Arizona Weekly Citizen* and *Outing Magazine,* which reproduced details collected by Lt. John Bigelow Jr. and Pvt. E. L. Vail of the US Army. The US troops had come across Goldbaum's body and reported that he "had been murdered by the Indians, [and his] cabin nearby had been ransacked."[67] It was Goldbaum's personal economic aspirations within the broader contexts of Manifest Destiny and extractive capitalism that supported his impetus to settle in the ancestral territory of the Chiricahua Apaches, a nation long cast as the *indio bárbaro.* During the decades of Goldbaum's life in the Arizona Territory, the US military, white settlers and an interracial coalition of Mexicans, Papago and Tohono O'odam worked toward the elimination of the Apache, in part by settling centuries-old, intra-Indigenous conflicts, but primarily by serving the expansion and preservation of economic order and productivity of white settler society.[68] The narrations of Goldbaum's death by US troops reinforce the trope of the Apache as the *indio bárbaro*, emphasizing the excessive cruelty of the attack, noting that "as a

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[67] The narrations and notes from Bigelow's journals while serving in the US Army were reproduced in 1958 through Westernlore Press in *The Blood Trail of Geronimo* and again in Chanin, *Cholent & Chorizo*, 12.

[68] Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*, 82–89.

grim joke they had killed his little black dog [and] a large white burro still tied to its stake." In their attempt to identify the body, they noticed he had been scalped. The US troops paused long enough to inter Goldbaum and study "the tracks of his murderers," an indication that the US Army troops felt a shared commitment to white settler rootedness and a common enemy in the Apaches.[69]

A year following Marcus Goldbaum's death, his wife, Sarah Goldbaum, filed Indian depredation claims for losses amounting to $22,985 from depredations by Apaches in Arizona and New Mexico.[70] An Indian depredation claim was a legal claim for compensation from the US government created by the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1796. Section 14 of this act provided that "if any Indian or Indians, belonging to any tribe in amity with the United States" cross a boundary line to enter "into any state or territory inhabited by citizens of the United States and there take, steal or destroy any horse, horses or other property" or "commit any murder, violence or outrange" upon a citizen or inhabitant of the US and its territories, it was the duty of the aggrieved persons to make an application for compensation, rather than seek private satisfaction or revenge." If the Indian nation in question didn't reimburse the claim, the US promised to do so by deducting amounts from tribal annuities. This policy was reflective of the federal government's commitment to protecting and supporting white settlers in the West for doing heroic work "as pioneers of our civilization."[71] The family's ability to seek reparations from the government for loss or damage to their property by Apache tribal members clarifies the position

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[69] From the Bigelow Journals, reproduced in Chanin, *Cholent & Chorizo*, 12.

[70] Earlier depredation claims had been filed prior to Marcus's death. The dollar amount listed reflects a total of all Goldbaum's claims filed between 1867 and 1887. Rochlin's research notes, folder 19, box 12, Rochlin Collection.

[71] K-Sue Park, "Insuring Conquest: US Expansion and the Indian Depredation Claims System, 1796–1920," *History of the Present* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 57–87, https://doi.org/10.5406/historypresent.8.1.0057.

of late nineteenth-century Jewish merchant families along the border as celebrated settlers and necessary actors in the broader process of Anglo settlement.

The terms of Goldbaum's death, and the family's subsequent access to government compensation as victims of Indian "violence or outrage," emphasize Jewish border merchants as among the direct beneficiaries of state policing aimed at protecting economic productivity through Indigenous elimination. The Indian depredation claims system was one of the many federal laws that facilitated the expansion of empire and genocidal conquest by outsourcing the public work of nation-building to individual citizens stealing, settling on and commercializing Native lands. Critical race and legal scholar, K-Sue Park has argued that this system "offered settlers a form of social insurance that supplemented a broader system of incentives the government designed to encourage settlement as a means of conquest, and to thereby creatively finance its expansion project . . . [and] also played a role in bringing an emergent system of property."[72] As such, the experiences of the Goldbaums indicates how Jewish merchant families along the border were considered worthy recipients of a legal and financial system that perpetuated US settler colonization, protecting the rights of white settlers to occupy land and extract resources over Indigenous peoples sovereignty over their ancestral lands. Likewise, the entrepreneurial histories among the second generation of the Goldbaum family reveal that the US and Mexico held shared investments in economies of policing and sought to protect the rights of white settlers as agents of extractive capitalism through state-sanctioned vigilantism and military intervention across the border region.

The military presence in the border region served to protect the expansion of US capital imperialism on both sides of the border and represented one way that Anglo settler expansion

[72] Park, "Insuring Conquest," 59.

and Porfirian modernization worked together. As was the case in Baja California, the US-backed industrial projects in Sonora reflected the racial caste system found in rural, industrial America. The most dangerous mining positions with the lowest wages consisted of a mostly Indigenous and mestizo Mexican workforce, while the better paid, more administrative positions connected to mining operations were reserved for mostly white settlers in the region, including Jewish entrepreneurs.[73] The son of Marcus and Sarah Goldbaum, Abraham, occupied one such desirable administrative position in the heart of the Sonora-Arizona copper industry. At the turn of the twentieth century, Abraham Goldbaum worked as a private real estate agent in Hermosillo, Sonora and directly with the Greene Consolidated Copper Company (GCCC), a Cananea-based mining firm headed by US entrepreneur, William C. Greene.[74] In both capacities, Goldbaum worked as a commercial intermediary, negotiating the transfer of Mexican land to US investors, and played an active role in building a regional and transnational corporate network capable of responding to global demands for copper.

At the turn of the century, the Cananea mines were a $50 million operation, Mexico's third largest company and the perfect synthesis of Porfirian modernity and US private investment in extractive industries south of the border. During Abraham Goldbaum's years working as a land agent in the copper borderlands, Cananea, Sonora transformed into the most significant, popular site of rejection of US imperial capitalism in Northern Mexico; historians now argue that the Cananea copper mines were the staging ground for "the opening battle of the Mexican Revolution," a civil war that in large part represented nationwide and regional resistance against

[73] Kim, *Imperial Metropolis*; Hernández, *City of Inmates*, 104.

[74] Rochlin's research notes, folder 62, box 2, Rochlin Collection.

foreign corporate interests.[75] The 1906 labor strike at Cananea became a coordinated, binational military attack to suppress anti-imperial organizing. Abraham's commercial ties to the copper borderlands sheds light on how Jewish border entrepreneurs were also *indirect* beneficiaries of border policing that sought to uphold the labor caste system on which the economy of extraction relied.

The few accounts of Jewish settlers on the Arizona-Sonora border that include the figure of Abraham Goldbaum, do so to emphasize him as victim to "one of the region's earliest cases of anti-Semitism." The event was publicized through the *American Jewish Archives* in 1957, in an article titled "Abe Goldbaum and the General: An Incident of the Old West," written by an alleged witness-turned-reporter who transcribed the event for a local Arizona newspaper. The account describes the following scene: Goldbaum was at a dinner with friends in Hermosillo at the Hotel Cambuston when General Charles P. Eagan of the US Army, dining at an adjacent table, made loud remarks critical of the "Jews of Tucson" for their roles in stalling negotiations over a Mexican coal property Eagan was interested in purchasing. At the time, Goldbaum worked not only as an associate of William C. Greene but was also the co-owner of the real estate firm, Monteverde and Goldbaum, based in Hermosillo. The firm brokered land negotiations between private US investors and the Mexican government around leasing and operating industrial operations, including copper and coal mining.

While there were several Jewish men present, Goldbaum was the assumed target of the accusations. The loud verbal critiques nearly turned into a gun brawl before Goldbaum disarmed the general and the incident concluded with "the sympathy of the community" on Goldbaum's

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[75] Hernández, *City of Inmates*, 104–106.

side for the “ungentlemanly [behavior] on the part of the American officer.”[76] While this incident reveals the presence and recycling of anti-Jewish tropes by Anglo Americans, it also emphasizes the socioeconomic inclusion of Jewish border entrepreneurs in Anglo settler society. The dinner interaction clarifies Goldbaum’s elite position in the racialized labor system on which many US-owned mining operations in Mexico, including the GCCC, relied. Those who benefited from the systems of racial segregation that supported mining operations would also be those who indirectly benefited from the binational violent suppression of the 1906 Cananea copper strike.

Goldbaums’ real estate business was tied to and dependent upon the unofficial racial caste system at the heart of many US-backed, industrial, mining projects in Northern Mexico. The uprising among Mexican miners in Cananea sought to directly destabilize the socioeconomic status quo of the mineral extraction business in Sonora and by extension, Goldbaum’s commercial relationship with the GCCC. When the strike broke out in Cananea in June 1906, William Greene was a client of the Monteverde and Goldbaum firm, which assisted in negotiating lease agreements between the Mexican government and the GCCC’s copper mining operations. The strike had ideological origins in 1905, when the miners unionized to demand safe working conditions and promotional opportunities akin to those available to their US-counterparts who occupied the better paying positions in management.[77] This laid the foundation for the large-scale strike in June 1906, leading to the shutdown of multiple mines, the burning of the lumber yard and the temporary occupation of exclusive, Anglo-American residential space, including Greene’s mansion, by miners to more directly voice the terms of their demands. Greene’s pleas to Sonora’s governor for auxiliary protection catalyzed a binational response

[76] Fred Rochlin’s correspondence, Folder 18, box 12, Rochlin Collection; “Abe Goldbaum and the General: An Incident of the Old West,” *American Jewish Archives* (1957).

[77] For more on the origins of the strike, see Hernández, *City of Inmates*, 106.

involving the arrival of armed, state and vigilante forces. First to arrive were the *Rurales,* a rural Mexican vigilante police force developed by the Porfirian state to maintain economic investment in the borderlands. Next were the Gendarmería Fiscal (*gendarmes*), a department of treasury customs guards who patrolled points of entry into the US. Finally, and most controversially, the Arizona Rangers were called to assist in suppressing striking miners, ensuring the protection of Greene's management, and resisting further property damage. The uprising concluded with forty dead, mostly Mexican miners.[78]

The miners' strike in Cananea proved that the coordination of Porfirian modernity and US imperial capitalism in the borderlands required not only US investment and settlement, but also an infrastructure of surveillance and policing. The military imperatives inherent to border industrialization were exemplified through the convergence of the *Rurales, Gendarmes,* and the Arizona Rangers. The armed suppression of the miners' strike, particularly the invitation of US citizen vigilantes, catalyzed nationwide protests against pervasive US investment over Mexican land and resources. Goldbaum's economic livelihood would no doubt have been threatened by the public rejection of labor and residential segregation that extractive capitalist projects, and his own real estate firm, perpetuated. Goldbaum had much to gain from the binational suppression of proto-revolutionary organizing, for his role as a border entrepreneur was dependent upon the spread and protection of US imperial capitalism across the resource rich Northern Mexico.

The binational military efforts that coalesced in Cananea in 1906 violently and lethally suppressed a growing movement to undo the inequalities imported by the Porfiriato, including the racialized labor system on which mining firms like the GCCC relied. Indirectly, the same infrastructure of border policing protected entrepreneurial intermediaries like Goldbaum, whose

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[78] Hernández, *City of Inmates*, 105.

commercial investments in the copper borderlands were inextricably linked with the expansion and protection of the economy of extraction. The entrepreneurial experiences of the Goldbaum family, particularly the case of Abraham Goldbaum, indicate that the Jewish border merchant was an economically mobile and protected subject within the intersecting and parallel economies of extraction and surveillance, while Indigenous peoples and Mexicans were criminalized.

Economies of Revolution

Unlike prior decades, when the productive and protected location of Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs within economies of extraction and policing occurred alongside and in the shadow of growing methods of border governance, the Mexican Revolution ushered in an era such that the commercial aspirations of Jewish merchants were directly linked with groups and institutions dedicated to policing and the underlying nationalist imperatives of policing. Like the histories of those who settled in the region during the *Porfiriato*, Jewish border merchants active during the Revolutionary-era signal the emergence of a new regional market, *an economy of revolution*, where the commercial livelihoods for entrepreneurs along the border became directly enmeshed with official and unofficial militarized groups between the US and Mexico. From El Paso, Texas to Nogales, Arizona, Jewish border merchants owned and operated dry goods general stores, hotels, clothing stores, received government contracts for military tailoring services, conducted official and unofficial business with the US military, US-based vigilante groups sometimes known as "home guards," and dodged US neutrality laws by selling arms and ammunition to Mexican rebel factors.[79]

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[79] Miguel A. Lavario, "Home Guard: State-Sponsored Vigilantism and Violence in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands," in *Border Policing*, 129. Extensive materials on Revolutionary-era Jewish merchants along the US-Mexico border, primarily in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona can be found in the Southwest Jewish Archives at the University of Arizona Special Collections. For Jewish merchants with military contracts see the Capin Collection, which contains primary sources concerning the family patriarchy, Hyman Capin, who worked between 1911 and 1919 as a military tailor between El Paso, TX; Columbus, NM; and Nogales, AZ, primarily for all Black, segregated cavalries in the US army. For primary source data on Jewish merchants who worked dealing in arms and ammunition to the

The following case study will trace the family history of Polish Jewish immigrant and military tailor, Hyman Capin, whose location within the economy of revolution reflected how Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs profited from an overall expanded militarized presence along the border region. Evolving from its roots as an Indigenous removal and slave catching enterprise, the arrival of US military troops along the border during the decade of revolution, including segregated African American cavalries, reflected new federal tactics of policing Black mobility. Furthermore, the militarization of the border during this decade set a foundation for enduring infrastructure of exclusion into the 1920s that increasingly centered Mexicans and Mexican Americans as targeted and excluded subjects under US border governance. Ultimately, the economies of revolution became a direct site of socioeconomic mobility for Jewish border merchants and reinforced existing pathways for Jewish participation and integration to the project of American frontier expansion, while simultaneous expanding infrastructure of policing and surveillance for African Americans and Mexican-origin peoples.

The duration of the Mexican Revolution remains a contested timeline, but most historical accounts mark the start and end dates as the decade between 1910 and 1920. The geographically fragmented civil war was unified by a fight for economic equity, land, and labor rights and, increasingly, a rejection of foreign corporate imperialism profiting off Mexico's foundational industries. Another widely agreed upon point is that the revolution was motivated in large part by the land reforms and economic and immigration policies under the thirty-four-year dictatorial regime of Porfirio Díaz that opened the door to European and US imperial interests in Mexico. The aforementioned miner's strike in Cananea signaled growing labor tensions and political

Mexican Revolutionary factions, see the Rochlin Collection and information on the Ravel family. For a primary source account on the Ravels as arms dealers in Columbus, New Mexico during the Mexican Revolution, see Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, "Pancho Villa and My Grandfather," *Tablet*, August 26, 2019, https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/community/articles/pancho-villa-and-my-grandfather.

unrest across Porfirian development projects between 1906 and 1908, and a global financial panic in 1907 forced banks to tighten Mexico's credit, revealing the country's dependency to the foreign export market. The silver market collapsed, and copper prices fell, which caused particular economic devastation to Northern Mexico's mining industry and left many miners in Chihuahua and Sonora without employment.[80]

By 1910, the Díaz regime faced political adversaries from numerous regions, claiming to represent distinct industries, sectors, and demographics of Mexican society. Northern Mexico produced numerous movements and political and military leaders who competed for national control, beginning with Francisco Madero, who began the anti-reelection campaign against Porfirio Díaz and went on to claim the presidency by 1911, as Díaz fled to France. General Victoriano Huera ousted and killed Madero in 1913, but whose usurpation of power was met with descent from numerous revolutionary factions from across the country. With the backing of the US government, Venustiano Carranza, an elite landowner from Coahuila, took control of the Constitutionalist Army and vied for power from 1913 through 1917 against the Conventionalists. Co-lead by Emiliano Zapata in the south and Francisco "Pancho" Villa in Northern Mexico, the Conventionalists represented those living on the peripheries of Mexican society and remained unrecognized by the US government. Among the few published historical accounts that mention Jewish mercantile presence along the border between 1910 and 1920, Villa consistently emerges as a supporting character, and point of commercial exchange between Jewish shop owners and armed factions of the revolution.[81] While the merchants along the US border who engaged in

[80] Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah*, 71–72.

[81] Through the present day, local historical accounts of the Villista's raid on Columbus, New Mexico in March of 1916, maintain that the Villista's were seeking revenge on the Polish Jewish immigrant and dry goods store owner, Sam Ravel, who owed Villa ammunition that had been paid for but never delivered. See Roy Stivison to Rabbi Floyd S. Fierman, June 11, 1951, folder 52, box 3, Rochlin Collection; Abarbanel, "Pancho Villa and my Grandfather." In an interview with Southwestern Jewish historian Abe Chanin, a descendant of the Levy family who

alternative economies risked legal persecution from the US government,[82] Hyman Capin reflects the segment of Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs who worked in neat alignment with the needs of the US military and border enforcement.

Born in Lithuania in 1874, Hyman Capin was part of the mass migration from Eastern Europe to the US between 1880 and 1920. Seeking opportunity beyond the deteriorating political and economic conditions within which Jews were stuck, the Capin family settled in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1892 when Hyman was eighteen. It was here he opened his first tailor shop and met and married his wife Dora Loon, also a recent Jewish immigrant from Lithuania. According to archived oral histories with Hyman and Dora's youngest son, Zellie Capin, Hyman was educated in the Hebrew language and the couple spoke both Hebrew and Yiddish in the home. The couple began having children while residing in Harrisburg when an asthma-related illness in the family prompted their departure from the industrial pollution across the East coast.[83] In 1906, the Capin's moved to the more arid climate of the Southwest, settled in Tucson, and opened a dry-cleaning establishment. Hyman Capin's entrepreneurial affiliation with the US military aligned with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, a decade through which he would work closely as a military tailor and outfitter for the US Army.

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had stores along the border between New Mexico and Arizona, explained that Pancho Villa was a customer of the Red Star General Store in Douglas, AZ. Chanin, *Cholent & Chorizo*, 182–83.

[82] In 1918, the US's sixty second congress held a subcommittee hearing to investigate "whether any interests in the United States have been or are now engaged in inciting rebellion in Cuba and Mexico." The sale of arms and ammunition or any other resources that were considered to support the endurance of rebel factions in Mexico by US citizens could be considered part of inciting a rebellion, and a threat to US domestic sovereignty and overseas/cross-border investments. *Revolutions in Mexico: Hearing before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate*, 62nd Cong. (1913).

[83] In her study of 1930s Boyle Heights, Caroline Luce captures how early western Jewish historians focused on tuberculosis and asthma from US eastern industrialized cities as a major driver of Jewish American immigration to California and the Southwest in the early twentieth century. Caroline Luce, "Visions of a Jewish Future: The Jewish Bakers Union and Yiddish Culture in East Los Angeles, 1908–1942" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2013), 13.

While scholars in Jewish Studies have explored the outsized presence of Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs in garment industries across colonial and imperial contexts, including their roles as military outfitters, none has focused on the US-Mexico border region, nor the participation of Jewish tailors in the Mexican Revolution.[84] Capin's trajectory as a military outfitter for the US Army's segregated African American troops between Columbus, New Mexico and Nogales, Arizona during the Mexican Revolution complicates existing narratives on Jews in the garment industry that cast Jewish socioeconomic success as an exceptional tale of Jewish ethnic networks and mobility; indeed, the subsequent generations of Capins went on to become a prominent mercantile family with over thirty department stores throughout Texas, New Mexico and Arizona by the late twentieth century.[85] Rather than exceptional, Hyman Capin's story reflects the continuity of Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs as useful commercial foot soldiers in expanding racial capitalism. Specifically, Capin's role as a military tailor clarifies how the economies of revolution expanded and reinforced existing pathways for European Jewish participation in US settler projects along the border.

In 1910, Capin moved his family to El Paso, Texas where he secured a position as a military tailor servicing the influx of US military troops along the border. The move to El Paso was one of several that Capin would make in which his commercial pursuits aligned with the needs of the US military along the across US border towns. The second move came in 1916, when Capin opened up a new branch of his military tailoring business in Columbus, New Mexico, a small border town across from Palomas, Chihuahua, which had exploded

[84] Adam D. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Phyllis Dillon and Andrew Godley, "The Evolution of the Jewish Garment Industry," in *Chosen Capital*, 35–62; Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[85] Finding aid for the Capin Family Business Records, 1895–1995, Southwestern Jewish Archives, University of Arizona, Tucson.

demographically following Villista's raid in March of that year. The corresponding US military response added an estimated 10,000–20,000 troops to the border region, signaling a new era of border governance that would only expand in the following years. By 1917, President Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson had sent 160,000 US troops to the border—the largest military mobilization since the Civil War—to enforce US neutrality and surveille and prevent undesirable cross-border activities, including incursions, raids, and some commercial exchange. The revolutionary decade, it's been argued, was the foundational moment when the border region was converted into "a modern militarized police zone," prior to the establishment of the US Border Patrol.[86] Capin's role as a military outfitter to the US Army located him as a productive and protected subject under an expanding infrastructure of policing that was put in place to fortify US sovereignty and extinguish threats to US corporate dominance across the region; labor disputes across US-controlled industries in Northern Mexico were expanded in strength and scope during the decade of civil war and threatened America's informal empire. Capin's work as a military outfitter served this ultimate goal to contain revolutionary violence in Mexico as a strategy to fortify the border and US private investment in Mexican industries.[87]

Alongside his position as a useful white settler to the US imperial project along the border, Capin's position as a military tailor offers a window into how military recruitment under US settler society functioned as a method of racialized control that obfuscated pathways of solidarity. Beginning from his deployment to Columbus, New Mexico in 1916, followed by his relocation to Camp Stephen D. Little in Nogales, Arizona, Capin worked as the exclusive tailor for the 10th and 25th infantries which were comprised entirely of segregated African American

[86] Alvarez, *Border Land, Border Water*, 55.

[87] Alravez, *Border Land, Border Water.*

cavalries. Cavalries made up of segregated African Americans were commonly referred to as Buffalo Soldiers, made up of freed slaves, young workers, farmers and simply those looking for work. When stationed in Columbus, Capin worked outfitting what has been described as the "single largest sustained black military community that ever existed in the West up to that time."[88] During an interview with the Southwestern Jewish Archives in 1997, Capin's son Zellie explicitly recalls his father's convivial relationship with African American members of the US Army as his favorite childhood memory. Describing the racial nature of his father's professional and social life at the camp, Zellie recalls that:

> Most of the enlisted men were black. Of course, all the officers were white except one officer—the chaplain. Chaplain Carter was his name. He was the highest-ranking Black officer in the United States Army at that time. Each troop—they were very fond of my father because he did a lot of favors for the soldiers—each troop every year would fight for him to come to their Thanksgiving dinner or Christmas dinner or different dinners they had. My father would take me and some of my brothers that were available to these dinners. And I have very fond memories of those days with him and my brothers and the very nice soldiers that were stationed there. I can still remember Chaplain Carter. He used to come up to the house and sit around with my father. And they would gossip for hours at a time.[89]

Zellie's nostalgia for his father's social and professional intimacies with African Americans enshrines into the official university archive, a long standing, unproblematized trope in white Jewish American memory of Black-Jewish relations and solidarity, known as the "Black-Jewish alliance."[90] As a Jewish American ideology and organizing principle, the trope obscures the

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[88] Horne, *Black and Brown*, 141.

[89] Zellie Capin, interview by Melissa Amado, July 23, 1997, Southwest Jewish Archives, https://swja.library.arizona.edu/content/interview-zellie-capin.

[90] In his analysis of Black-Jewish relations in the Progressive Era, historian Eric Goldstein contends that while both Black and immigrant subjects were coded as biologically and culturally outside of dominant racial scripts of Americanness, the historic links between white Americans and Europe complicated any finite social or legal *othering* of European immigrants. Until the Black Power movement of the 1960s shattered such illusions, Jewish American cultural and political movements actively organized around an imagined common historical experience and similar sociological marginalization to their African American counterparts, see Marc Dollinger, *Black Power, Jewish Politics: Reinventing the Alliance in the 1960s* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2018), 92–93;

profound structural inequities that a European Jewish immigrant entrepreneur and an African American soldier experienced while both working on behalf of US imperial interests along the border.

The economies of revolution clarify the distinct and unequal valuations placed on European Jewish immigrants versus African Americans' sources of labor under racial capitalism. This regional context shows how the US state actively invested in the sustainability of the European Jewish immigrant body and their socioeconomic livelihood, while African American bodies were treated as a disposable and replaceable labor source. Describing the labor structure of his father's business working for the US government during the decade of revolution, Zellie explains that "in those days the government gave them the building, gave them lights, gave them heat. So, they didn't have any overhead except their employees. At one time my father employed around forty tailors in Nogales."[91] Immediately following the war, Capin was able to start buying a lot of property, take tremendous business risks. In essence, the support that the government gave Capin for his military service facilitated the acquisition of profit during the war and expedited his socioeconomic mobility as a prominent and expansive mercantile actor in the border region—a business that would expand generationally.

In contrast, African Americans who enlisted in the army, seeking to transcend the structural barriers of the Jim Crow South, were lucky to survive the war. Buffalo soldiers were often sent to the most desolate posts, issued faulty equipment, worn out horses and spoiled or rationed food supplies.[92] The trope of the buffalo soldier's passivity, subordination and

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Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness : Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 4.

[91] Capin, interview.

[92] Horne, *Black and Brown*.

reliability, was pervasive and justified the anti-Black racist strategies of the US Army to send African American troops into battle at an outstanding rate than any other racial group.[93] While the economies of revolutions positioned both European Jewish immigrants and African Americans as agents of US imperialism along the border, federal benefits and compensation created radically distinct avenues for socioeconomic mobility that would follow each group postwar.

Conclusion

The commercial linkages between Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs and border militarization during the Mexican Revolution is rooted in a longer history of European Jewish immigrant inclusion in white settler society and a regional, racial capitalist economy between the American Southwest and Northern Mexico. Following the Mexican War and despite the establishment of an international boundary, the region underwent an unprecedented process of transnational commercial integration. The Porfirian project of *Orden y Progreso* collaborated with the aspirations of US settler colonialism, enmeshing US capital with Mexican land and resources, and producing a cross-border economy of policing to eliminate impediments to economic efficiency. In the decades leading up to and through the years of the Mexican Revolution, European Jewish immigrants and American-born Jewish entrepreneurs joined other European and Chinese immigrants on both sides of the border[94] to take advantage of commercial opportunities directly and indirectly linked up with industrial reorganization of the border region.

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[93] Horne, *Black and Brown*.

[94] Asian American histories that incorporate both Mexican and US histories have identified the central role played by Chinese migrants and their descendants in shaping and profiting from the industrial reorganization of the border region between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Sonora-Arizona specifically, the heart of the copper mining region, Chinese were a visible presence in mining town stores and raised produce on truck farms. See Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*, 97.

Exemplified through the economies of extraction, policing and revolution and several family histories between Baja California-California, New Mexico-Chihuahua, and Sonora-Arizona, the experiences of Jewish border merchants of the late nineteenth century help us understand the deep economic linkages between the industrial economies across the US-Mexico border region and the nascent tactics of vigilante and state policing that expanded in scope and capacity during the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). This chapter argues that the process of US settler colonialism positioned European Jewish immigrant settlers and entrepreneurs as agents of expanding a regional racial capitalist project that perpetuated Indigenous genocide, land theft and the exploitation of the Mexican laboring classes and African Americans. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates how the commercial livelihoods of the Jewish border merchants were both directly and indirectly protected by a binational investment in anti-Indigenous and anti-Black dispossession and elimination. At the crossroads of economic extraction, policing, and revolution, late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs were cast as useful and protected actors under US settler society in exchange for their labor facilitating US imperial dominance between the US and Mexico.

Ultimately, this chapter explores Jewish immigrant entrepreneurship as it intersected with racial capitalism, surveillance, and militarization and border fortification along the US-Mexico border region. In turn, it demonstrates how Jewish immigrant entrepreneurship in this time and place provided a pathway of socioeconomic mobility in ways not afforded to other non-Anglo-American groups occupying similar commercial opportunities. These microhistories expand the geographic and temporal scope of how we understand Jewish race formation in the US in several important ways. Foremost, these narratives include, rather than overlook, the border region as a significant geography relevant to our understanding of modern Jewish experiences in the

Americas.[95] This chapter calls into question the assertion that Jews' racial position in Progressive Era America was "unstable," by demonstrating that in the US-Mexico border region (and in much of the American West), the Jewish relationship to the dominant Euro-Anglo racial hierarchy was one of belonging. [96] In the context of the economic and racial organization of US settler society along the border at the turn of the nineteenth century, this chapter demonstrates that Jews were reliably positioned as white European settlers, and commercially and militarily protected for their service in expanding capitalism not only from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but also between the US and Mexico.

[95] Beyond Libby Garland's *After the Closed the Gates* (2014), no academic literature presently considers the US-Mexico border as a notable site of Jewish geography that influenced the modern Jewish experience in the Americas.

[96] Eric Goldstein, "The Unstable Other: Locating the Jew in Progressive-Era American Racial Discourse," *American Jewish History* 89, no. 4 (December 2001): 383–409.

Chapter 3

Baja California Dreaming:
How US Settler Colonialism Shapes Jewish Nationalism, 1891–1939

The mythology around WeWork, the American commercial real estate company known for its spectacular success and failure in the business of mainstreaming the co-workspace concept, was conceived and popularized by co-founder Adam Neumann. Raised in Israel, Neumann built a company that merged the agricultural commune of his youth with the Western doctrine of productivization.[1] This "capitalist kibbutz" as he called it, leveraged the expanding gig economy and the aspirations of millennials (with economic safety nets) to create the first and biggest physical social networking experiment, where doing what you love made you money and made the world a better place. The era of individualism was over. This was the "We Generation," where corporate interests had the power to fuel a collectivist revolution.[2]

As a growing number of investigative journalism pieces have clarified, WeWork was little more than a real estate scam for late-stage capitalism, taking advantage of distressed building rents in New York and other cities after the 2008 financial crash, acquiring long-term leases, subdividing spaces, and renting them to short-term tenants at a markup. It's not a stretch to say that Neumann's "capitalist kibbutz" was a twenty-first-century refashioning of the settler colonial model, where private property has the power to revolutionize, land deemed

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[1] Gershon Shafir has described kibbutzim (one of the central institutions of the Israeli state) as employing an approach to labor organization as fundamentally different from the European doctrine of productivization that encouraged a particularly urban and industrial ideology of self-sufficiency among Eastern European Jews who had been relegated to stigmatized "parasitic" occupations alongside the gentile population. Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 81.

[2] When speaking publicly about the mission of WeWork, Neumann frequently referred to the members of the corporation as part of the "We Generation." Cited by Derek Thompson, "WeWork's Adam Neumann Is the Most Talented Grifter of Our Time," *The Atlantic*, October 25, 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/10/how-weworks-adam-neumann-became-billionaire/600607/.

"unproductive" should be appropriated, and workers and places are both essential and expendable. The "capitalist kibbutz," as an Israeli business strategy, inspired by the communal farms central to Zionist settler ideology, then exported to the US, is a ripe entry point for broader comparisons between US and Israeli settler colonialisms. As the progressive mainstay for American Jewish Zionist critique, *Jewish Currents* magazine argued, WeWork was the perfect synthesis of settler states: "The United States had 'the frontier,' and the hardy homesteaders who settled it, building small subsistence farms in an untamed wilderness. Israel had the kibbutz."[3]

In this analogy, the kibbutz model as foundational to Jewish nation-building was conceptualized in early-twentieth-century Palestine, prior to Israeli statehood, and nearly a century later, was exported to the US as the new frontier for capitalizing off land, and labor. Never mind that WeWork was and is a deeply urban project based in New York City, and thousands of miles away from Fredrick Jackson Turner's untamed frontier wilderness, the analogy falters in its assumption that the "capitalist kibbutz" brings together two geographically and temporally disparate projects of imperial state formation.[4] Nevertheless, it offers a useful starting point for a conversation about Jewish nationalism and settler colonialism in the American West. The history that fills the following pages argues that the "capitalist kibbutz" is not an import at all, but in fact a domestic product, designed and attempted numerous times, across the actual "American frontier." This is the story of the many projects for Jewish nationalism conceived through agricultural colonies and immigrant resettlement projects that

[3] Sam Adler-Bell, "The Capitalist's Kibbutz," *Jewish Currents*, May 11, 2020, https://jewishcurrents.org/the-capitalists-kibbutz/.

[4] The "frontier thesis," written by historian Frederick Jackson Turner in 1894, was a history-making text that popularized the mythology of the American Frontier as a space that was necessarily settled and tamed by white Anglo European settlers. The history of the US West was taught through the prism of Turner's thesis for much of the twentieth century. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 179.

were organized across the US and Latin America between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An unexplored regional example of Jewish nation-building through agricultural colonization was the group of California-based Jewish American leaders, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, working at the intersection of Western boosterism and within the broad umbrella of Jewish nationalism to leverage the crisis of Russian Jews and transform what was perceived as chaotic emigration into a productive and profitable model of immigrant aid and resettlement.

On January 4, 1891, it was standing room only at the B'nai B'rith building on 121 Eddy Street in San Francisco, California, where Jewish American entrepreneurs and organization leaders from across the state met to discuss the crisis of persecuted Russian Jews and immigrant aid. Anti-Jewish persecution in late-nineteenth-century Russia was systemic, 1891–1892 were particularly violent years and in turn, catalyzed a wave of Russian Jewish emigration out of Eastern Europe and toward the West. For those in attendance, the majority of them retailers, wholesalers, and hospitality merchants, "The great danger of the impending immigration lies in concertation in the cities," and it was decided that immigrant redistribution might be solved through colonization. "Our Russian coreligionists," they cheered, "will readily become pioneers." The meeting ended and the International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews was formally established through the city of San Francisco and "incorporated under the laws of the state of California," with fourteen official broad members, unified around a mission to create a spiritually Jewish and commercially profitable plan for the resettlement of their co-ethnics.

The members of the International Society were products of the San Francisco boomtown of the mid-nineteenth century. In the shadow of US annexation of over half of Mexico's northern territory and the Gold Rush of 1848, German Jewish Americans arrived in a racial geography in flux, where those considered marginalized whites in Europe and the cities of the US East Coast,

were categorized as useful white settlers who enjoyed a wide range of landowning, civic, and economic privileges alongside Anglo Americans. The central role that German Jewish immigrants played in the banking and mercantile sectors during San Francisco's industrial transformation is well known and widely celebrated today through academic and popular literature and cultural exhibitions. In contrast, elite Mexican families known as Californios were being dispossessed of their land deeds under new, legally ambiguous reforms and Chinese migrant laborers, who built the transcontinental railroad that connected San Francisco to a global capital network, were being driven out by federal immigration exclusions and white supremacist militias that patrolled the city streets. The best-known group, Committees of Vigilance, was known to have provided special security to Temple Emanu-El, where Dr. Jacob Voorsanger was the lead rabbi.[5] The socioeconomic benefits enjoyed by San Francisco-based Jewish American merchants and entrepreneurs, including protections from white mercenaries known to target Chinese and other immigrant groups, was emblematic of the experiences of many Jewish Americans living in the nineteenth-century American West. As earlier chapters have emphasized, the US settler colonial structure interpolated Jewish immigrants and Jewish Americans as useful white settlers and conduits of territorial and capitalist expansion, a racialized space-making project of the American frontier.

Voorsanger was also the co-founder of the International Society, along with David Lubin, a prominent merchant, trader, and agricultural researcher. The two men co-authored a report, *The Occupation of Agriculture as a Means for the Betterment of the Condition of the Russian Jews*, which outlined the association's ideological strategy toward the work of immigrant resettlement and as the title suggests, the steadfast belief that agriculture was central to resettling

[5] Fred Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans: A Social and Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 27.

Russian Jewish refugees. Like other Jewish nationalist movements of the time, the International Society believed in the process of "emigrant colonialism" as a method of labor management and process by which Jewish migration to North America could be monitored and made productive and purposeful under capitalism.[6] Relatedly, the report established the material approaches to the agrarian future for Russian Jews that would be secured through "colonization on the corporation plan," where the corporation might colonize or lease a large tract of land in the "semi-tropics" with ample water supply. The land, once secured, will be broken up into smaller tracts, upon which each Russian "colonist is to be the nominal owner until his lands and improvements are all paid up." European Jews were eager to leave the "icy heart" of Russia and become farmers, but simply lacked the means to do so.[7]

In the days following the inauguration of the International Society, the *Lower Californian*, the newspaper for English speaking American and European entrepreneurs who lived and worked in Baja California, announced that the northwestern Mexican state had been selected as the site of Jewish colonization, reporting that "A grand move is on foot on the part of . . . the wealthy Jews in San Francisco to purchase . . . land in [Lower California] on which to place the Russian Jews." It was added that "these persecuted Russian Jews are great workers and make the best of farmers and fruit growers."[8] A fund was established by Sacramento-based

[6] Tara Zhara's exploration of Zionism in the context of Eastern European colonization project at the turn of the twentieth century borrows historian Mark Chaote's term "emigrant colonialism" to frame the strategies of resettlement among colonial advocates between Jewish and Eastern European nationalist projects. Tara Zahra, "Zionism, Emigration, and East European Colonialism," in *Colonialism and the Jews*, eds. Ethan B. Katz, Lisa Moses Leff, and Maud S. Mandel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 167.

[7] International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews, *The Occupation of Agriculture as a Means for the Betterment of the Condition of Russian Jews* (San Francisco, 1891), 6–7.

[8] Cited in Norton B. Stern, *Baja California: Jewish Refuge and Homeland* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1973), 17.

retailer Harris Weinstock to purchase "1,000,000 acres in Mexico on the Pacific Coast," a private investment toward an "autonomous Jewish State under the joint protectorate of the US and Mexico." Just as Los Angeles boosters were selling the dream of California real estate to white settlers in the East Coast and Midwest, the International Society was selling the Baja California dream to Jewish American communities from Arizona, Missouri to Pennsylvania, and US investment firms with land holdings in Northern Mexico. Though the organization itself was short lived, the International Society laid the ideological foundation for the evolution of a succession of coordinated efforts to establish an autonomous Jewish state in Baja California for over four decades. The proposal for what was nicknamed, a "Palestine on the Pacific," entered national and international conversations about Jewish nationalism, elicited the participation of Mexican diplomats and heads of state, the US Department of Treasury and significantly, sparked responses from Mexican residents of Baja California. After 1939, the Baja California resettlement proposal disappeared from the official archival record and might appear to be another Jewish nationalist "road not taken," or a territorial project "in the shadow of Zion."[9] I propose, however, that this regional history of Jewish agricultural colonization is an opportunity to take seriously the influences of US settler colonialism on movements for Jewish nationalism.

Drawing from a rich archival database of regional Jewish presses, Jewish association meeting notes, personal and government correspondence, along with Mexican periodicals, the following chapter offers a regional, relational strategy for thinking about how Jewish nationalism was influenced by ideological and material strategies of imperialism and US settler colonialism across state, corporate and military processes. The International Society and their corporate

[9] Several texts have explored the intellectual and political movements that parallel and intersected the project of Jewish nation-building in Palestine between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands Before Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

approach to agricultural colonization offers a starting point for exploring regional entanglements between Jewish nationalisms and colonial projects between the US and Mexico. Specifically, I locate Jewish American interest in Baja California, and ideas of land, religion, agricultural and immigrant resettlement expressed through colonization efforts, within the broader structures of US imperial expansion into Northern Mexico, the institutionalization of the theology of Manifest Destiny, the racialization of property relations through agriculture, and the fortification of the frontier through enhanced securitization between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In sum, the dream of Jewish nation-building in Baja California clarifies how ideologies of nation-building among Jewish American immigrant aid organizations, were not just influenced by European Zionism, and European colonial projects in Africa, but also by the settler colonial context of the United States, and across the American West specifically. In turn, these regional entanglements open new avenues for tracing similar linkages between Jewish nation-building and US imperialism on international scales, including the Zionist project in Palestine.

The Baja California Dream between Jewish and US-Mexico Border Studies

Existing academic literature on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish agricultural colonization initiatives in the Americans, have overwhelmingly tied these small-scale projects to European emancipation and European Zionism and other European-based movements for Jewish nationalism.[10] This Eurocentric framework overlooks important regional contexts that suggest Jewish nationalism was shaped by different geopolitical realities. Palestine-focused Zionism was one of the numerous solutions to the Jewish refugees discussed through the prism of Jewish

[10] Tobias Brinkmann, "Between Vision and Reality: Reassessing Jewish Agricultural Colony Projects in Nineteenth Century America," *Jewish History* 21, no. 3/4 (2007): 305–24; Rovner, *Shadow of Zion*, 7; Laura Almagor, "Forgotten Alternatives: Jewish Territorialism as a Movement of Political Action and Ideology (1905–1965)" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2015); Ellen Eisenberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey, 1882–1920* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

nationalism, alongside territorialism and diasporic nationalism. Scholarship on territorialism and related movements have emphasized, prior to the Seventh Zionist Congress (1905) when Zionism and Palestinian land became inextricably linked, the strategy of agricultural colonization as a method of Jewish nation-building was applied across different realms of Jewish political discourse on a transnational scale, but always rooted in European political and colonial projects.

From the Ararat, the City of Refuge, in Upstate New York, to Woodbine, New Jersey, and into the rainforests of Suriname, and Moises-Villa, Argentina, academic literature frames the small-scale agricultural projects as part of piecemeal movements for Jewish nationalism that responded to the failure of European emancipation, the inherited crisis of European Jewry and Europe's colonial entanglements with the Global South, primarily across the African continent. The architects of a Jewish agricultural colony in Baja California, from the International Society in the 1890s, through its evolution into the 1930s, were always in conversation with the sociopolitical and economic conditions in Europe and the major movements that defined Jewish nationalist ideologies, like Zionism and territorialism, which for the most part emerged from Western Europe. However, the regional specificity of this case study makes visible the dimensions of US imperialism and North American settler projects that profoundly influenced the history of Jewish nationalism in the American frontier.

Likewise, scholars working in Border Studies with a focus on the US-Mexico boundary, and themes of land, capital, and labor at the turn of the twentieth century, overwhelmingly locate US-backed colonization initiatives along the American frontier, including Northern Mexico, as a dynamic primarily between the Mexican government, elite Anglo-American investors and a semi-indentured laboring class of Mexican mestizos, Indigenous populations, and Chinese

immigrants.[11] If and when histories of the US-Mexico border have considered the theoretical or material influence of Jewish nationalism, such analysis focuses on a post-1948 context. Comparisons are drawn between the dispossession of Mexicans following US annexation of the Southwest and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, and the 1948 Nakba, or year of catastrophe for Palestinians in the face of Israeli occupation.[12] Furthermore, scholars have thought critically about the economic and military relationships between Israeli-US state and corporate entities as a window into the expansion of surveillance and border building technologies across global borders.[13] Integrating Jewish histories to the story of the American frontier expands both Jewish and Border Studies, by attending to regionally specific ways Jews of European-origin were integrated into Anglo settler society and the relationships between small-scale entrepreneurship and Jewish political movement in the process of US imperial expansion across borders.

A Baja California Dream on the American Frontier

The Jewish Baja California dream is defined by the American frontier, as both the coastal periphery of Anglo-Euro settler colonial annexation, and a significant space from which US

[11] The following texts provide unique but interrelated analysis of the role that US private investment played in colonization and industrialization in Mexico's northern border region between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For a focus on incarceration and policing see, Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), chap. 4; to focus on corporate and state processes, Jessica Kim, *Imperial Metropolis: Los Angeles, Mexico, and the Borderlands of American Empire, 1865–1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019); to focus on landscape and infrastructure: C. J. Alvarez, *Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction on the US-Mexico Divide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021); to focus on the multiracial landscape of the industrial border economies see Veronica Castillo-Muñoz, *The Other California: Land, Identity, and Politics on the Mexican Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016); Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[12] David Lloyd and Laura Pulido, "In the Long Shadow of the Settler: On Israeli and US Colonialisms," *American Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (December 2010): 795–809; Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, "Rethinking Settler Colonialism," *American Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (December 2014): 1039–1055.

[13] Todd Miller, *Empire of Borders: The Expansion of the US Border Around the World* (London: Verso Books, 2019), 57–90.

imperial state formation grew beyond the domestic sphere and toward continental and global realms. My theorization of the American frontier, as the lynchpin between US settler and imperial state formations is nothing new, but an amalgamation of theorizations by scholars working in Native and Border Studies who think and write about how imperial and settler projects rely on (1) native removal to seize and commodify land and natural resources, (2) enslavement and/or exploitation of Black and other racialized bodies to accumulate capital and (3) official and unofficial forms of policing to uphold the racial capitalist processes on which white settlement relies. In other words, US settler colonial society, as a historic and on-going project, is rooted in a white supremacist ideology, and reliant on anti-Black enslavement and policies of anti-Indigenous genocide and land theft.[14] As a method of imperialism, settler colonialism was the structure through which US annexed more than half of Mexico's territory between 1846–1848 to make the American West, and transform hundreds of thousands of miles between the New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming and the Pacific Coast of California, into a laboratory for evolving technologies of racialized economic accumulation.

The arrival of Anglo-European settlement to the edge of the continent represented both a triumph of US settler colonialism and an existential crisis to the American project. Author of the frontier thesis, Fredrick Jackson Turner argued that "movement has been its dominant fact" of American life, he wrote, "and unless this training has no effect upon a people, the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise."[15] The racial and colonial logic of the American frontier cast the region as a spatial hinge between savage and civilized humans and

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[14] Dunbar-Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History*; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387–409, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240.

[15] Turner's "Frontier Thesis," cited in Manu Karuka, *Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 169.

a region from which US settler colonialism took on more aggressive imperial aspirations to deploy the American project across international borders, land and water. While US imperialism took on distinct formations, Baja California and Northern Mexico became a site of "non-settler forms of conquest and colonialism," where America's 'informal' empire proceeded through an interrelationship between state and corporations across through agriculture, mining, transportation sectors. As Manu Karuka's theorization of the "war-finance nexus" reminds us, the military is always at the center of the state-corporate relationship that has fueled imperialism and settler colonialism across the Americas.[16] Such theorizations of imperialism, US settler colonialism, and border formation help define American frontier as a colonial and racial project that entangled Jewish agricultural colonization with state-making policies, enforced by the military, police and state-sanctioned mercenaries, to commodify and privatize land.

Jewish Colonization in America's Informal Empire

In the days following the inaugural meeting of the International Society, Jewish American newspapers across the country and California newspapers reported on the nascent resettlement initiative, announcing that Mexico was being considered alongside California and Palestine, as a "fit camping ground for the Russian unfortunates who, after years of torture and cruel persecution, might at last find rest in countries that would hound them no longer."[17] David Lubin, co-founder of the International Society and agriculturalist, argued publicly that California and Mexico were the only places on the face of the earth where the Jew might go back to his occupation of farmer and rancher," traveling to Oregon and Washington on a fundraising tour.[18]

[16] Karuka, *Empire's Tracks*, 168.

[17] Cited in Stern, *Baja California*, 14.

[18] Cited in Stern, *Baja California*, 14.

Voorsanger, who had the credit of being the rabbi of the largest reform congregation in the American West, wrote an open letter to the New York City-based, weekly publication the *American Hebrew* calling for comprehensive support among American Jews for the International Society's colonization scheme in Baja California. Emphasizing the commercial viability of immigrant resettlement, Voorsanger explains the Mexican government would require land surveys, taxes, and bonds for a long-term lease of "2,000,000 acres of the choicest land in Lower California." If all conditions are met by the International Society, the land would pass on to the Russian Jewish settlers.[19]

Mexican land reforms closely paralleled the method of land privatization and redistribution in the US, wherein government policies favored the capital accumulation and hegemony of corporate entities and forced laboring classes into a semi-indentured status. "The advantages for settlers are numerous," Voorsanger argues, noting that Jewish sovereignty over the width of the Baja California peninsula, between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean, would connect settler-pioneers and the investors in the International Society, to ports of entry and trade routes across the Pacific Rim of the Americas and ultimately into the transatlantic realm. While not the focus of this chapter, it is worthwhile to mention that Jewish agricultural colonization projects were motivated by an earnest desire amongst Jewish Americans to respond to and ameliorate Jewish persecution. Within the realm of Jewish political movements, agricultural colonization, like territorialism, sought an immediate and land-based solution to the needs of European Jewish emigrants. However, the regional specificity of this resettlement proposal requires that we also locate the International Society's strategies of immigrant aid within the process of American frontier building. The association's steadfast belief that farming

[19] Jacob Voorsanger, "Colonization on the Pacific," *American Hebrew*, June 5, 1891, 107.

was the means through which Russian Jews sought to better themselves, and that Baja California was ideal the space to realize the dream of agricultural colonization entangled Jewish nationalism with US imperial expansion into Baja California at the turn of the twentieth century.

Simultaneous to the announcement of the colonization plan, there was broader speculation across California regarding a potential occupation of Baja California by the United States. Quoted in the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, San Diego-based military leader General Cadwaller explained, “Sooner or later, and it may come very soon, there is going to be trouble between the United States and Lower California. . . . Geographically it is a piece of country that fits into our area much more naturally than as a possession of Mexico. . . . I don’t know what the Mexican would want for it, or even if they would be willing to see at all, but they are shrew people and doubtless have long ago found out that the strip is of far more value to the United States than to them.”[20] Since the redrawing of the US-Mexico boundary in 1848, Northern Mexico and Baja California in particular, was an imagined territorial extension of the American frontier and actualized space of US commercial occupation. Between the 1950s through the turn of the century, the peninsula was subject to numerous plots of US occupation, known as filibuster invasions, which were openly and economically supported by US real estate and mining tycoons, the highest levels of US government. While the US never formally colonized Baja California, collaborations between the Mexican state and US corporations created the conditions for American commercial conquest across Northern Mexico. The model of Mexican modernization under the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, known as *Orden y Progreso*, passed a series of executive reforms that opened the door to widespread US commodification of Northern Mexico’s entire economic landscape, including transportation, mineral extraction, agricultural

[20] Cited in Stern, *Baja California*, 18.

industrialization, and the expansion of regional, national, and transnational communications. At the onset of the Mexican Revolution, which marked Díaz's expulsion from power, US corporations controlled over 200 million acres of Mexican land, primarily in the Mexican-US borderlands.[21]

In contrast with some Jewish land-based movements like the Bilu'im (BILU) in Palestine and Am Olam in the United States, that were oriented around agrarian communalism and appealed to those attracted by populism and socialism, the International Society openly modeled their Jewish agricultural colonization plan and their empire-building strategies off an overtly capitalist model of productization.[22] The board members looked to the corporate and state-backed colonization schemes they had observed through US settlement in the American West and imperial expansion into Mexico. In the organization's report on the advantages of colonization as a method of Jewish immigrant aid, the International Society highlights that territorial colonization as a corporate project "is not at all original with the members of the association, for it has been and is, the very plan that had aided to settle up the State of California."[23] Numerous members of the International Society, including its co-founder David Lubin, were established entrepreneurs across California's private industrial sector and cognizant of the state-protections afforded to white settlers dedicated to transforming the wild frontier into a productive and civilized society, through agriculture, mining or retail. Writing to Jewish Americans living in Eastern cities in hopes of earning their financial backing, Voorsanger explains the profitability of agricultural colonization along the Pacific coast, where

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[21] Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 10.

[22] On socialism and populism of Am Olam and BILU, see Eisenberg, *Jewish Agricultural Colonies,* 23.

[23] International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews, *Occupation of Agriculture*.

> You take $1.00 worth of land, soak it with $5.00 worth of water, and convert it into a paradise, in other words, the deserts of the West, as you may learn from the extensive reports of Major Powell to the army office in Washington, need but irrigation to convert them into the granary of the world . . . of such land the West has millions upon millions of acres, and more yet is to be found in Mexico, and it was but perfectly natural that in the fullness of our sympathy we should think of the possibility of winning from the desert a sufficient area of, and to convert it into, a habitat for a large number of our unfortunate co-religionists.[24]

The reports of Major Powell that Voorsanger mentions are in all likelihood a reference to the Powell Geographic Expedition of 1869, which offered cartographic and scientific investigation of the Green and Colorado rivers, including the first official US government sponsored passage through the Grand Canyon. On the heels of the US Army, geologists like Powell acted as agents of the Department of the Interior (DIO) that helped "transform lands expropriated from Indigenous peoples and Mexico into properly American ones."[25] The expedition offered the first cartographic renderings of rivers that would, in the coming decades, become essential to white settlement and private interests including irrigation and industrial agriculture. Locating US geological expeditions and the DIO within a settler framework makes clear the connections between Voorsanger's strategy of agricultural colonization and the American frontier project that had expanded into Mexico. The process of "winning the desert," through infrastructure like irrigation, offered Jewish American investors the preconditions for managing settlement of their "unfortunate co-religionists."

The Jewish agricultural colonization in Baja California was also enmeshed in "railroad colonialism" as an imperial and corporate collaborative project that facilitated America's

[24] Voorsanger, "Colonization on the Pacific."

[25] Megan Black, *The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 17.

informal empire building in the US-Mexico borderlands.[26] More specifically, the regional entanglements between Jewish American resettlement advocates and the transportation economies between the American Southwest and Northern Mexico, underline the corporate incentives of Jewish immigrant aid and agricultural colonization. Specifically, railroad colonialism offers a frame for tracing links between the funders of Jewish resettlement projects, like Jewish American banker Jacob Schiff, and an ever-widening constellation of colonial commodities and global capitalist markets that were linked through railroads. Schiff was one of numerous Jewish Americans working through corporate and state mechanisms in the US and globally, to respond to Eastern European Jewish emigration through immigrant resettlement outside industrial centers, and agricultural colonization in 1891. That year, Schiff became a vocal proponent of the International Society and wrote to Ernest Cassel**,** a British financier, investor in Mexican Railroads and partner to the Baron de Hirsch Fund, about the possibility of directing emigration of Russian Jews to Mexico.[27] Following the publication of Rabbi Voorsanger's letter in the *American Hebrew,* Schiff reported:

> Large and fertile areas in healthful districts in Mexico which can be bought at nominal prices. We are told that the Mexican government would in every way facilitate and support immigration on the part of Jews, and we are told that there are no more tolerant people than Mexican which is completely unprejudiced toward all religion. Since you know Mexico so much better than I, your opinion ought to carry more weight with Baron Hirsch. . . . That great areas of land are available in Mexico there can be no doubt and if you are of the opinion that steps ought to be taken to direct Russian immigration to that country, perhaps you would discuss the question with Baron Hirsch. Mexico is in any case nearer than the La Plata states, and the expenses of transportation would be much

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[26] Manu Karuka's theorization of railroad colonialism counters the traditional understanding of transportation as an apolitical engineering achievement. Rather, the transcontinental railroad was a major instrument in US empire-building and colonial expansion, particularly in the American West. Karuka, *Empire's Tracks*, 40.

[27] The Baron de Hirsch Fund was created in 1891 and brought funds from Europe to financially underwrite agricultural colonization efforts across the Americas to remove Eastern European Jewish immigrants from industrial centers and relocate them to national hinterlands and more rural/suburban peripheries. Gary Best, "Jacob Schiff's Galveston Movement," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 30 (April 1978): 43–79.

> less, and what is not to be minimized, the colonies to be founded there could be much more easily supervised and guided than in South America.[28]

Schiff expresses several important details in the letter that help locate the Jewish Baja California plan within the colonial and commercial web of America's informal empire in Northern Mexico. First, he mentions the proximity to the United States as useful for the question of supervision. In contrast to "La Plata," a reference to speculation that Jewish colonization should happen in the Southern Cone, somewhere between Argentina and Uruguay, redirecting Jewish emigration to Mexico will be an efficient strategy of labor management that will serve the investors of the corporate colonization. Relatedly, Schiff mentions the reduced expenses of transportation that Jewish colonization in Mexico versus South America ensures. Both Cassel and Schiff were private investors in the expansion of railroad infrastructure across the US and into Mexico, helping situate their financial investments in Jewish resettlement and agricultural colonization to the broader process of railroad colonialism that "constricted people and goods within a specific imperial network." Specifically, US corporate investments in rail across the hemisphere helped create the conditions of trade dependency between the US and Mexico while foreclosing the economic possibilities for more regional trade relationships across Latin America.[29]

Alongside Schiff's likely earnest desires to support immigrant aid initiatives, the regional context of railroad colonialism helps clarify how Jewish colonization in Northern Mexico was entangled in a cross-border imperial process of railway expansion that served corporate investors, white settlement and often reinforced large-scale mechanisms of unfree or exploited labor. Rooting this history in the space of the American frontier clarifies how architects of the

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[28] Jacob Schiff to Ernest Cassel, June 9, 1891, microfilm 714, Jacob Schiff Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

[29] Karuka, *Empire's Tracks*, 40–41.

Jewish agricultural colonization project in Baja California were not only shaped by European-based movements for Jewish nationalism, but explicitly informed by US state and corporate-backed territorial and commercial dominance in Northern Mexico at the turn of the century.

The Theology of Manifest Destiny and the Religious Imperative of Private Land

The proposal for Jewish agricultural colonization in Baja California also took inspiration from state and corporate sponsored emigrant colonization schemes that aimed to resettle dispossessed religious and racial minorities. These colonies for religious refugees, which included the resettlement of Mennonites, Mormons, and Russian Molokans across different states in Northern Mexico, synthesized various components of Manifest Destiny, and brought together the racial and spatial imperatives of Christian conquest that had marked the Americas since the fifteenth century. Between the 1880s through the 1920s, US state and corporate sponsors negotiated with the Mexican government to allow for the colonization of large tracts of land in the northern states of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California for European and US origin Christian minority groups.[30]

Jacob Schiff saw the Mormon agricultural community in Mexico as "a strong argument for the possibilities which that country must offer this settler."[31] Schiff, who had extensive investments in US and Mexican railroad construction, became an important ally of the International Society and wrote to the Baron de Hirsch Foundation (a major presence in Jewish

[30] The failed plans to establish a "Negro state in Lower California," where wealthy African Americans sought to resettle poor and working-class members of their community, provides valuable relational context for understanding autonomous emigrant colonies as both space and race-making projects. For more on African American colonization efforts in Baja California see, Gerald Horne, *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910–1920* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 82–83; Therese Adams Muranaka, "The Russian Molokan Colony at Guadalupe, Baja California: Continuity and Change in a Sectarian Community" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1992); J. Winfield Fretz, *Mennonite Colonization in Mexico: An Introduction* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1945); Thomas Cottam Romney, *The Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).

[31] Cyrus Adler, *Jacob H. Schiff: His Life and Letters, Vol. II* (New York: Doubleday, 1928), 91.

agricultural colonization projects) advocating for his investment in Jewish colonization in Baja California. Another example of how Jewish Baja California was modeling itself alongside other projects of state-corporate colonization in Northern Mexico, Schiff's comments also highlight a theological dimension of settler colonialism that influenced the International Society and their foundational proposal for Jewish colonization in Baja California.

The theology of Manifest Destiny, as a justification for private land ownership, frames the *Occupation of Agriculture* report from beginning to end. In fact, the architects of this regional Jewish nation-building project highlight that a society based on "land proprietors and farmers" is both the reason why Jews were the "founders of the principal religions of the civilized world" and the means through which Russian Jews-turn-settlers will fulfill their sacred mission "to carry out the eternal truth of 'Monotheism, of love and concord among mankind, the religion of amity."[32] Jewish reunification with land and the occupation of agriculture, the authors argue, is a sacred mission and spiritual imperative not only for Russian Jewish settlers, but for what such a project will bring to "the religion of the world, teaching mankind that they have all the same Heavenly Father."[33] Alongside financial and legal details required to realize colonization on the corporate plan, the International Society envisioned new directions for modern civilization and religious unification, between the "true Jew and the true Christian," through the establishment of a society of independent Jewish landowning farmers.[34]

[32] International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews, *Occupation of Agriculture*, 6.

[33] International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews, *Occupation of Agriculture*, 11.

[34] While a religious analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter, the preoccupation with fostering conviviality between Jews and Anglo Christians, as part of a Jewish nation-building project, has roots in European emancipation, nineteenth-century Germany, as the foundational context of the Reform Movement. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Jewish population across the American West, including San Francisco, was predominantly comprised of Jewish immigrants from German-speaking lands, many of whom found the space to strategically negotiate their relationship between Judaism and American whiteness in ways that did not compromise their mobility. The language of the International Society mirrors certain anxieties at the center of the Reform Movement

Rooted in the fifteenth-century Doctrine of Discovery, US Manifest Destiny was a tool of settler colonialism to solidify the natural superiority of the American Anglo-Saxon peoples who were destined to bring "good government, commercial prosperity and Christianity to the American continents and to the world."[35] Always with a focus on the American frontier, Manifest Destiny shaped the contours of US literature, politics, and military projects and has been historicized by scholars working across Ethnic Studies as a spatial and racial project that naturalized a social order of slavery, Indian extermination and territorial conquest.[36] Recent analysis by Robert Chao Romero has helped define the ways Manifest Destiny functioned as the "theological backbone of American civil religion," and ultimately, a tool of conquest with spatial and racial implications.[37] Particularly across the lands annexed by the US following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the US-Mexico border region, Romero argues that Christian theology was weaponized to justify American Westward expansion, including the belief that "Anglo-Saxons had been given a 'manifest destiny' by God to conquer and control North America," spread democracy and their particular version of Christianity.[38]

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and broadly, the Jewish condition in the nineteenth-century American West: a longing for gentile approval and to align Jewishness with late-nineteenth-century Western scientific understandings of evolution. See Shari Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 3–4. Rabbi Voorsanger himself wrote that the new goal of Judaism would be that the non-Jew "look on the Jew as a create after his own image and likeness." Cited in Marc Lee Raphael, "Rabbi Voorsanger of San Francisco on Jews and Judaism: The Implications of the Pittsburgh Platform," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (December 1973): 191.

[35] Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 4.

[36] Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 143.

[37] Robert Chao Romero, *Brown Church: Five Centuries of Latina/o Social Justice, Theology, and Identity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 101.

[38] Romero, *Brown Church*, 103.

Understanding Manifest Destiny as a theological tool of colonization that took both material and spiritual form underscores how Jewish American charitable, fraternal, and immigrant aid associations, including the International Society, were operating within the context of US imperial expansion. After the US militarily occupied the continent "from sea to shining sea," the settler colonial project shaped new laws to seize land of those deemed racially and spiritually inferior; members of American civil religious society would be supported in their efforts to enlighten the religiously and racially backward through conquest. The subtle infusion of Manifest Destiny into incorporation and taxation laws in the late nineteenth century facilitated the acquisition of land for religious associations, including Jewish American associations.

The legal organizational tactics of the International Society clarify how the regional movement for Jewish nation-building was bound up with the state's management of private property that linked the theology of Manifest Destiny to policies of incorporation and taxation. The *Occupation of Agriculture* report establishes that the International Society was formalized through the city of San Francisco and "incorporated under the laws of the state of California." As Lila Corwin Berman has argued, the incorporation of free associations by the US state in the nineteenth century, particularly religious associations like the International Society, reflected a blurred space between public and private interests, wherein state policies legally managed the property and interests of free associations."[39] Incorporation and taxation laws, which functioned at both state and federal levels, gave tremendous power and autonomy to private interest groups, while also managing the organizational strategies of religious associations to ensure their alignment with the needs of the state. Taxation law both granted religious associations an exception on property tax and could also deny property tax exemptions if the state deemed the

[39] Lila Corwin Berman, *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 16.

religious institution as not adequately serving the "public mission [of the] American State." In locating Jewish American institutions to a public infrastructure that managed religious associations, Berman points directly to the national ecosystem of Jewish American organizations like the International Society that were committed to immigrant settlement, education, and occupational uplift, as windows into the coordinated effort between free (religious) associations and "American statecraft."[40]

As an incorporated association under the State of California, the International Society could benefit from laws that defended tax exemptions for religious properties on the basis that such properties provided social benefits for the public good, broadly defined. In other words, the incorporation of the International Society invited them into a system of property relations that allowed them to purchase land and accumulate funds undiminished by taxation. Given that territorial accumulation was central to the strategy of the International Society, incorporation was an important step in making immigrant aid a commercially lucrative endeavor. In settler terms however, US incorporation and taxation laws that defend capital and territorial accumulation of religious associations is not simply a new technology of "American statecraft" as Berman argues, but the byproduct of the state's incorporation of the theology of Manifest Destiny. While the International Society never formally purchased territory on which to resettle refugees (in Mexico or otherwise), the society was poised to benefit from state policies that categorized religious associations as agents of Anglo settler colonial expansion, removing barriers to capital accumulation on the basis that such organizations served a public good.[41]

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[40] Berman, *American Jewish Philanthropic Complex*, 21.

[41] The system of charitable giving that arose in the post-Civil War era of the US, that would go on to shape the tax-exempt status of religious organizations and their property across most states in the twentieth century, was originally a response to the poverty and the breakdown of community relations that nineteenth-century industrialization had accelerated. However, as charitable giving was co-opted by the state and a small population of the wealthiest individuals by the turn of the twentieth century, the system transformed into a shield to protect the accumulation of

The regional context reminds us that the application of incorporation and taxation laws across religious associations would have adhered to the racial and gendered boundaries of property rights in California in the 1890s. While the International Society, made up of German Jewish American men, experienced unfettered access to the benefits afforded to religious associations, Indigenous, African Americans, and most Mexican-origin peoples and women, were not considered invited participants in the process of spiritual conquest. In sum, the incorporation of the International Society into California law in 1891 reflects a direct alignment between the strategies of Jewish American immigrant aid and continental imperialism in North America, particularly how such legal ties facilitated the acquisition of tax-exempt private property.

Private Property, Incorporation, Elimination

Nearly every periodical, correspondence, and report related to the International Society's corporate colony in Baja California emphasizes that Jews' place in the modern world relies on their reunification with independent land ownership and the occupation of agriculture. In his appeal to Jewish Americans of the Eastern cities, Rabbi Voorsanger explains that the solution to Russian Jewish overcrowding in cities is to "make a square effort to distribute them over the face of the land, by means of introducing them to the farming countries of the West." Scholars who have critically examined Jewish agricultural resettlement proposals have rightly noted that the emphasis on "overcrowding" reflected anxieties at the time about the spread of anti-Semitism

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private capital while remaining under the original premise that such organizations or institutions served a public good, and specifically, remedied societal ills produced by capitalism. This transformation of a state-coordinated system of public good that serves the accumulation and protection of private capital is the basis for critiques of the 501(c)(3) designations that began in the mid-twentieth century and the non-profit industrial complex. If the International Society had been incorporated by the state of California in the mid-twentieth century, they would more than likely have been considered a 501(c)(3) organization See more on the history of the non-profit system in Andrea Smith, "Introduction: The Revolution Will Not Be Funded," in *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*, ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007), 6.

and the fascination with agricultural labor as viable and legible strategy of Jewish Americanization was shaped in part, through the state's strategy of Indian acculturation through resettlement through the Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act of 1887.[42]

What this analysis overlooks however, is that resettlement of Indigenous peoples onto individual parcels of land as a pathway to engage in agriculture was never about Indigenous inclusion, but rather a revision of property relations that privileged white settlement and capital accumulation through the removal of Native peoples. The entrepreneurial successes through industrial agricultural that David Lubin and other members of the International Society enjoyed is inextricable from US policies like the Homestead Act in 1862, which granted three hundred million acres taken from the Indigenous collective estates to large operators, land speculators and single family homesteaders, and state-sanctioned allotments under Dawes Act in 1887, which resulted in expanded state and corporate control of land and the loss of three-fourths of Indigenous territories by 1934. Alongside the US context, which had transformed the previously landless European Jewish immigrants in the American West into upwardly mobile white settlers, members of the International Society were also poised to benefit from Mexican land reforms like *terrenos baldíos*, or vacant public lands. Similar to other liberal state-building initiatives under the Porfiriato, the *terrenos baldíos* reform facilitated US investment in industrial agriculture and urban development in Mexico, particularly in the northern states, as a project to manage

[42] Sarah Imhoff locates Jewish American resettlement and agricultural colonization schemes, and the orientation toward immigrant assimilation through ideas of "uplift" alongside policies expressed through the Department of Indian Affairs and the Dawes Act and the belief that Native American engagement with agriculture was a path to Americanization, particularly in gendered, individualistic ways. Sarah Imhoff, "Wild Tribes and Ancient Semites: Israelite-Indian Identification and the American West," *Culture and Religion* 14, no. 2 (2014): 237, https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2014.911196.

Indigenous sovereignties and strategy of integration into the Mexican national project, itself a form of genocide.[43]

State policies that facilitated Native land left and corporate industrialization, like Mexico's vacant public lands law, helped institutionalize and perpetuate a mythology of Indigenous lands as empty, unproductive, and ultimately in need of capitalist cultivation. As the Baja California dream evolved past the International Society and was kept alive through different leaders and organizations into the twentieth century, echoed the tropes of Native land as uninhabited to justify their colonization project. Between 1906 and 1907, Victor Harris, the editor of the Los Angeles-based Jewish newspaper, the *B'nai B'rith Messenger,* ran a series of stories regarding his trip through Mexico that included details of Jewish life in Mexico. The series of articles became part of a sixty-four-page book titled *The Jews in Modern Mexico*, and was distributed across Jewish American newspapers nationwide and sent a copy to Israel Zangwell, the leader of the Territorialist Movement.[44] Among the various details about Jewish life in Mexico, Harris dedicates a significant portion of his book, including the concluding pages, on the question of Jewish immigrant resettlement and Baja California as an advantageous site of colonization, explaining that:

> According to information I gained while sojourning in Mexico, that immense territory situated just south of our country, Baja California would, with proper measures taken, support a population of twenty million, whereas at present it only contains an insignificant number of people. The firm of Speyer & Co., Bankers, London, Frankfort and New York, is the financial agent of the present Mexican government. It would at least be worth the attempt, on the part of those who possess the influence, to induce the Speyers to enter into negotiation with the proper Mexican authorities for either an autonomous possession in Lower California or colonization on a large scale.[45]

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[43] Alan Knight, "Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910–1940," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 10.

[44] Stern, *Baja California*, 58.

[45] Victor Harris, *The Jews in Modern Mexico* (Los Angeles, 1907), 64.

The idea that Baja California was a land that was currently home to an "insignificant number of people," was central to Harris's justification of Jewish colonial investment and immigrant resettlement. Likewise, Irvin S Metzler, an active member of the Congregation B'nai B'rith and the Los Angeles Jewish community alongside Harris, reacted to the reports of Jewish settlement in Mexico with an expanded plan of Jewish agricultural colonization. As head of an investment firm, Metzler's Baja California dream included Sonora, the Mexican state just east of the peninsula, writing in the *B'nai B'rith Messenger* that the Yaqui River Valley was a "fertile district . . . which now lie[s] untouched, awaiting enterprise and which will return ten-fold in new opportunity."[46] For both Harris and Metzler, the idea of Northern Mexico as unpopulated and untouched land was a useful strategy to offer a solution to Jewish homelessness, but also cast Jewish settlement as a valuable step toward cultivating land in service of expanding industrial capitalism.

Scholarship on territorialism has rightly addressed the presence of the empty land rhetoric to address entanglements between Jewish nationalism and European imperialism.[47] A regional framework, however, more directly clarifies the interlockings between Jewish nationalism and US imperialism and settler collaborations between Mexico and the US. More specifically, the regional specifics helps link Jewish agricultural colonization and their reliance on a rhetoric of land as untouched, to what Josefina Saldaña-Portillo has named "a racialized mode of envisioning the North American landscape as empty of emptying of its Indigenous inhabitants," that date back to the early period of British colonial settlement, but were central to nineteenth

[46] Cited in Stern, *Baja California*, 62.

[47] Almagor, "Forgotten Alternatives," 62.

century policies of Western expansion and American frontier building.[48] As such, we might locate the language of empty land as a rhetorical strategy to prompt up the Jewish Baja California dream that both dovetailed the needs of European Jewish emigrants, the demands of investors and the industrial capitalist market, while reinforcing the racial imperatives of the settler colonial that sought to eliminate the Native.

Alongside the empty land rhetoric, the Baja California proposal from its inception in the 1890s through the 1930s, consistently emphasized agriculture as the justification for colonization. Like other movements of Jewish nationalism within and beyond Palestine, the Baja California dream also understood productive agriculture as core to Jewish modernization and nation-building.[49] Settler colonialism always needs more land, and as Patrick Wolfe reminds us, agriculture is one of the primary animators of this insatiable need. The emphasis on farming as a legitimizing factor for Jewish agriculture and resettlement projects was shaped by a preceding, transatlantic racial capitalist context, with metropolitan centers in Europe and the US that "required colonial land and labor to produce raw materials just as centrally as it required metropolitan factories and an industrial proletariat."[50] Baja California was the new colonial frontier and the Jewish Russian refugee-turned pioneer, the labor to produce raw materials for growing urban centers along the California coast. Like settler colonial projects, the International Society understood agriculture as a sedentary and therefore permanent project and remedy to the material and moral challenges that arise from Jewish landlessness. For nearly eighteen centuries,

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[48] Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 54.

[49] Joseph Getzoff, "Zionist Frontiers: David Ben-Gurion, Labor Zionism, and Transnational Circulations of Settler Development," *Settler Colonial Studies* 10, no. 1 (2020): 74–93, https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2019.1646849.

[50] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 394.

the founders argued, Jews have been "denied the ownership of land," pushed into the professions of trade and bartering, and became "clog[s] to progress and calamity to themselves." There is but one remedy," the association's members argued, "and that is that the Jews should by degrees leave Russia and become farmers."[51]

The project of Jewish agricultural colonization in Baja California was enmeshed in American frontier building as the latest expression of colliding settler colonial projects that since the fifteenth century had seized on the dispossession of European immigrants and promised them private property at the expense of Native lands and livelihoods in the Americas. Such entanglements give new context to the International Society's method of emigrant colonialism, and their productive management of Jewish emigrants to the Americas. A corporate colonization approach to Jewish immigrant resettlement in Baja California ultimately sustained pre-existing racial and colonial processes that utilized new generations of landless Europeans, casting them as proxy-settlers, and perpetuated racialized property relations.

The Baja California Dream into the Twentieth Century

The proposal to build a Jewish agricultural colony in Baja California endured through the 1930s, in no small part due to ongoing political unrest in Europe and the sustained emigration of European Jews. While the archival traces of the International Society disappear after 1891, Jewish American writers, community leaders and entrepreneurs, as well as non-Jewish businesses and residents of the US, lent their voices to the debates surrounding the question of European Jewish persecution and the possibility of their resettlement on Mexican land through the 1930s. Letters and telegrams flooded the offices of Mexican presidents, from a wholesale fish supplier in Philadelphia claimed that Mexico would "benefit by receiving the best cultured Jews

[51] International Society for the Colonization of Russian Jews, *Occupation of Agriculture*.

recognized in the world," and while a Minneapolis Real Estate and Insurance company cried that "Jews of the whole world could raise a considerable number of millions of dollars" to secure Baja California as a Jewish home.[52] A Los Angeles journalist even speculated that the arrival of Jewish middlemen was the solution to the "deplorable state" of Mexico's lower classes, "as it is known that wherever [Jews] have settled in large numbers they have created new industries, such as the manufacture of medium and cheap grades of wearing apparel, furniture, etc."[53]

While the voices of those advocating for Jewish colonization in Mexico offer a fascinating window into the scope and rhetoric of Jewish immigrant advocacy in the US, or the racialized ways that US residents saw Mexico, Mexicans and Jews, the regional and temporal context of the American frontier in the early decades of the twentieth century draws our attention to another part of this story: the relationship between frontier fortification and strategies of Jewish immigrant aid. The approaches to Jewish agricultural colonization and the related, non-territorial strategies of Jewish immigrant resettlement in Mexico, echo the evolving mechanisms of racial exclusion and migrant expulsion that reached new levels of institutionalization between the 1920s and 1930s. Alongside the transnational factors, a regional framework illuminates how the tools used fortify settler society, spatially and racially, infused Jewish American ways of thinking about Jewish futurity and nation-building.

In in the 1920s, the proposal for Jewish agricultural colonization in Baja California was reanimated and investigated by established Jewish American institutions, including the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in 1921, the American Jewish Congress in 1923 and the

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[52] Baruth Urbach, 1933, folder 5.28, Colección Abelardo L. Rodríguez, Archivo Estatal de Baja California, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexico City.

[53] Harris, *Jews in Modern Mexico*.

American Emergency Committee for Jewish Refugees, all of whom rendered Mexico unsuitable for large-scale Jewish settlement. [54] After the passage of the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Johnson Reed Act of 1924, which expanded anti-Asian immigration laws of the late nineteenth century to include Eastern and Southern European immigrants, Jewish American organizations and leaders were forced to rethink the work of Jewish immigrant aid in the context of new federal restrictions. Alongside the approach to Jewish immigrant aid through agricultural colonization in Mexico, other resettlement strategies emerged that emphasized the role that Jewish Americans might play in incentivizing Jewish immigrants to remain in Mexico, rather than attempting to cross the US-Mexico border without the required legal documents.

Rabbi Martin Zielonka of Temple Mount Sinai of El Paso, Texas became an influential voice on the topic of Jewish immigration to the US and the dilemma facing many Jewish Americans invested in immigrant aid work: the desire toward co-ethnic solidarity, and like the International Society, a desire to align Jewish sociopolitical interests with US laws, specifically newly instated immigration policies that adversely affected (a least in theory) the authorized mobility of European Jewish immigrants across US borders. Zielonka's proximity to the US border with Mexico gave him a window into the structural ambiguities of quota laws, inconsistencies in enforcement and significantly, the sustained arrival of immigrants to the US, including Jews, without the required documents. [55] In one of his many statements on the topic of Jewish resettlement in Mexico in the early 1920s, Zielonka wrote that time and money spent pursuing a farm colony in Lower California would be better spent in a coordinated effort to

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[54] HIAS report on possibility of Jewish migration to Mexico, roll 47, microfilm reel 15.47, HIAS Collection, YIVO Archives, Center for Jewish History, New York, NY; Stern, *Baja California*, 65.

[55] Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 11.

widely distribute immigrants across commercial centers. Such a strategy of integration would reorient Jewish immigrants away from US cities and toward Mexican ones and "the more centers we can create the greater will be the number of those who will eventually find peace and a livelihood in Mexico."[56] In the early 1920s, Zielonka's plan to establish a lodging house in Mexico City connecting Jewish immigrant arrivals at the Mexican port of Vera Cruz to a range of resources including housing, food, employment, health care and communication assistance was funded by the International Order of B'nai B'rith (IOBB). By 1926, the Emergency Committee for Jewish Refugees (an entity of HIAS) began subsidizing the project as well, an indicator that American Jewish immigrant aid for Jews in Mexico was a sustained concern through the decade.

As historian Libby Garland has rightly argued, Zielonka's strategies of immigrant aid reflected how American Jewish organizations confronted the quota laws through a policy of "cautious but law-abiding resistance," that would advocate for Jewish migrants while also keeping unauthorized Jewish immigration from becoming a "large-scale phenomenon."[57] Through the regional settler framework however, Zielonka's Mexico City lodging house also reflects the ways in which Jewish American immigrant aid operated within, and in compliance with, US state strategies of racial exclusion and migrant expulsion that contributed to a rising discourse of "illegal alienness," as the central focus of US immigration law. The mobilization among Jewish American leaders and organization to enact strategies of co-ethnic support that also uncoupled Jewish immigration with the rhetoric of illegality, suggests that Jewish American approaches to immigrant aid were enmeshed in the logic of racial exclusion and migrant

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[56] Martin Zielonka, "Dr. Zielonka Writes Seriously Concerning Mexican Jewish Situation," *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 10, 1922.

[57] Garland, *After They Closed the Gates*, 59–60, 87.

expulsion that were central to fortifying the American frontier and the US border with Mexico since the nineteenth century. Institutional modes of racial exclusion and migrant expulsion in the 1920s were deeply rooted in a late nineteenth century culture of anti-Chinese and anti-Asian nativism that dominated politics across the American frontier, particularly in California, and shaped immigration policies like the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and the Asiatic Barred Zone Act (1917). By the 1920s, the US Congress adopted an immigration system that banned all Asian immigration and significantly diminished the number of immigrants allowed to enter the US from countries outside northern and Western Europe.[58]

The immigration quotas of the 1920s and the establishment of the US Border Patrol in 1924 were bound up with vigilante groups who enforced white settler dominance in the region, as well as late nineteenth century immigration policies that informed twentieth century ideas of citizenship, race and the US nation-state.[59] Since the inception of the US-Mexico border itself, the US had deployed military and/or state-sanction mercenaries to oversee the quotidian work of US settler colonialism, and particularly making annexed lands ready for capitalist development. Beginning the late 1820s through the turn of the century, white supremacist militias like the Texas and Arizona Rangers and the New Mexican Home Guard patrolled the country's porous Southwestern peripheries, killing Indigenous peoples who threated Euro Anglo claims to private

[58] Kelly Lytle Hernández, "How Crossing the US-Mexico Border Became a Crime," *The Conversation*, April 30, 2017, https://theconversation.com/how-crossing-the-us-mexico-border-became-a-crime-74604.

[59] Even before the US annexed Mexico's northern territory in 1848, the Texas Rangers were the mercenary police force that shaped and protected Anglo settlement in (Mexican) Texas, battling Indigenous groups for territorial dominance, and capturing runaway slaves seeking freedom in Mexico. Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 19–20. The expulsion of certain immigrants deemed undesirable in the 1920s era of numerical restriction was an extension of the nineteenth-century immigration laws that sought to expel Chinese and other marginalized persons (criminals, the insane, prostitutes, etc.) The establishment of the Border Patrol was an outgrowth of administrative issues that the numerical strategies of restriction engendered, specifically how restriction should be enforced. See Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 56–57.

property, reinforced Black Codes, or re-enslavement laws in the Reconstruction era and violently suppressed to labor strikes at US-owned colonization projects in Northern Mexico.[60]

The state balancing act of preserving a white settler society across the US Southwest, while satisfying the needs of corporations for an exploitative migrant labor class, fueled the increased militarization of the border through the early decades of the twentieth century, with the establishment of US Border Patrol in 1924, and new policies that made crossing the border without proper documentation a felony and catalyzed the construction of new jails and prisons along the border to cage unauthorized migrants, primarily of Mexican origin.[61] Unique to this moment however was the discourse of immigrant illegality, codified in the 1920s through immigration law, to help justify expanded infrastructures of policing and incarceration along the border, and the method through which many Latin American-origin and other racialized groups became formally and informally categorized as subjects of "political disenfranchisement, economic inequity and social suspicion within the United States."[62] Jewish American mobilization around casting Jewish immigrants as lawful and deserving in the face of immigration restrictions, from the International Society's colonization proposal to Rabbi Zielonka's lodging house, reveal how architects of Jewish immigrant resettlement in Mexico, worked with (not against) the logic of racialized exclusions at the center of the quota laws.[63]

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[60] Miguel A. Lavario, "Home Guard: State-Sponsored Vigilantism and Violence in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands," in *Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America*, eds. Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019),129–43; Harsha Walia, *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), 30; Hernández, *Migra!* 105.

[61] Hernández, *City of Inmates*, 131.

[62] Hernández, *Migra!* 10.

[63] Mae Ngai's scholarship on the construction of immigrant illegality has shown how the system of quotas codified through the Johnson Reed Act of 1924 legalized "the principal of racial exclusion into the main body of American immigration and naturalization law." Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 37.

The following decade, the proposal to establish a Jewish colony in Baja California was reanimated across Jewish and non-Jewish American populations and revealed ways in which expanded US border militarization directly shaped strategies of Jewish agricultural colonization. The sudden shift in perspective for Jewish nation-building as a strategy that necessitated an organized security, or policing infrastructure can be understood as a response to the escalation in anti-Jewish persecution in Europe, along with an expanded investment in border securitization as part of US immigration policy.

By the late 1930s, and in the context of the violent and systemic persecution of Jews in Europe, the plan to build "a Jewish state that would be officially recognized by all powers and peoples of the world," had secured the support of US Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, and more trips to survey the available parcels of Mexican land had been financed by the American Friends Service Committee and the Jewish Committees in New York. One article in particular circulated across American Jewish presses and received the attention of Mexican newspaper in Baja California made the announcement that the project "also includes a plan to establish a peaceful army of Jews, organized within the guidelines of the (US) Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) and to send them to the border of this new country under the direction of technicians and engineers."[64] Alongside the enduring advocacy among Jewish American organizations and political actors against Jewish illegal immigration, the impulse to install state-sanctioned surveillance to maintain Jewish colonization in Baja California shows the extent to which this regional history of Jewish nationalism had become directly entangled in American frontier building, specifically the militarization and fortification of the border region.

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[64] "¡Alerta! A Toda La Nación Mexicana: Los Judíos Quieren Apoderarse de Baja California," *Revista Minerva*, 1938, folder 4.27, Colección Pablo Herrera Carrillo, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexico City.

Part and parcel to the state and vigilante tactics of migrant surveillance or discipline previously mentioned, the New Deal-era public work relief problem Civilian Conservation Corps was a method by which capital accumulation was institutionalized across the American frontier. An entity of the Department of the Interior, the CCC relocated dispossessed single men on rural lands owned by federal, state, and local governments where they worked jobs related to conservation and development of natural resources. In settler colonial terms, the CCC functioned as a space-making civilizing army, paving the way for new extractive corporate investments, while fortifying terrain deemed aesthetically and culturally significant to the American national project. The adoption of the CCC model points to another way that this regional history of Jewish nationalism was influenced by the US settler colonial model.[65] In the final year of the proposal's life, the architects of Jewish Baja California dreaming sought a triangulated colonization strategy between state, corporate and military entities to settle European immigrants on private parcels of land in service of corporate capital interests.

Where There Is Occupation, There Is Resistance

In 1938, Los Angeles-based *B'nai B'rith Messenger* reported that the news of purchasing Lower California as a possible refuge for Nazi victims, had not been well received amongst the Mexican farmers who lived on the land vulnerable to foreign colonization efforts. "No one, apparently, had bothered to ask them [the Mexican farmers]," the paper reported, and today at this very moment, "they are thronging the offices of their administrators, pleading for the right to continue their existence without losing their land."[66] Regional responses to Jewish agricultural colonization from those who lived in Baja California offer a framework for exploring the

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[65] Black, *Global Interior*, 30.

[66] Nayer Tomid, "Food for Thinkers," *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, November 18, 1938.

contributing factors to the Baja California dream as a failed Jewish nationalist project. These responses, which overwhelmingly offer narratives of resistance and as such, also provide a final node of entanglement between US imperialism in Mexico and Jewish nationalism; as Black and Indigenous historicizations of North America have shown, settler colonial histories are also histories of resistance.[67]

It was reported that the late nineteenth century Díaz administration warmly considered Jewish colonization initiatives in Northern Mexico, which contrasts the largely unsympathetic responses of the more nationalist governments of post-revolutionary Mexico in the 1930s. The Cárdenas regime did authorize an anthropological study to consider the question of mass Jewish immigration to Mexico, which called the proposal to purchase Baja California "absurd." The report made clear however, that Jews would be welcomed in Mexico on the basis of equality with Mexicans, but that Jewish self-alienation through their occupation of a Jewish colony "alarms the Mexicans and only makes for the creation of anti-Semitism."[68] Other scholarship that has accounted for Jewish colonization initiatives in Mexico have argued that the projects failed in part due to the anti-Jewishness of Mexican Catholic Church which had a powerful influence in the government's handling of land use.[69] Indeed, the project's failure is undoubtedly linked to the legacies of the Inquisition by way of the Catholic Church, and significantly, the political project

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[67] See "resistance" in index, Dunbar Ortiz, *Indigenous Peoples' History,* 292.

[68] Salamon de la Selva, "Confidential Memorandum on the Immigration of Jews into Mexico," Immigration (Mexico City, Mexico, n.d.), Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, Presidential Files, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City.

[69] Corinne A. Krause, "Mexico—Another Promised Land? A Review of Projects for Jewish Colonization in Mexico: 1881–1925," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (June 1972): 325–41; see "colonization" in Devi Mays, *Forging Ties, Forging Passports: Migration and the Modern Sephardi Diaspora* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020); Daniela Gleizer Salzman, *El Exilio Incómodo: México y Los Refugiados Judíos,1933–1945* (México DF: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2011).

of *mestizaje* and its influence on immigration laws in the 1920s–1930s*,* which paradoxically marked European Jewish immigrants as desirable based on their nation of origin, but unassimilable based on their ethnic and religious identities.[70] These factors, while helpful for understanding the experiences of Jewish immigrants in large commercial and urban centers, are limited in their capacity to clarify reasons for the project's failure in the context of Baja California, and the unique influence of US imperialism in Mexico's northern border region.

To better consider the regional realities that influenced the project's failure means we must take seriously the responses of those who would have been impacted by Jewish occupation in Baja California, starting with the project's inception in the 1890s through its conclusion in the late 1930s. Like its long history as an imagined site of settlement for foreign colonization schemes, Baja California also has a long history of anti-occupation resistance, beginning with the Cocopah, Yuma, Kumeyaay peoples and the forced missionization efforts by Spanish colonial rule in the early nineteenth century. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Indigenous peoples living in Mexico's northern territories still outnumbered people of European descent suggesting a level of success to their anti-occupation methods.

By the late nineteenth century, when the Díaz government was eager to sell off nearly all Mexican land holdings in Baja California to US investors, Indigenous communities did not challenge land sales, but records show that they did challenge their evictions.[71] Given this context, we can speculate that if the International Society's plan had been carried out, Russian Jewish colonists would have been met with resistance from those being dispossessed in the

[70] Mexico's National Revolutionary Party in the 1920s and 1930s that cast Jewish immigrants, alongside Chinese and other Middle Eastern migrant groups (which often included Jews) as undesirable immigrants for the economic threat they posed to the Mexican middle class, and culturally and linguistically unassimilable. Pablo Yankelevich, "Mexico for the Mexicans: Immigration, National Sovereignty, and the Promotion of Mestizaje," *The Americas* 68, no. 3 (January 2012): 405–36.

[71] Castillo-Muñoz, *Other California*, 16.

process of resettlement. As the Jewish Baja California dream entered its final decade in the 1930s, newspapers captured a vocal rejection to the plan from the Mexican mestizo population living in Baja California. By this time, the percentage of Indigenous peoples living in the state had dramatically declined, a consequence of Mexican nationalism that encouraged intermarriage, especially with European settlers, and US imperial processes that expanded militarization and anti-Indigenous violence across the region.

While anti-Jewish sentiment fueled some newspaper editorials, core to the resistance to Jewish occupation, however, was simply a rejection of displacement, and specifically, displacement by entities associated with the state and corporate realms of US imperialism. "Periodically," one editorial argued, "there have been movements, supported by US civic and wealthy corporate entities who have managed, unsuccessfully to acquire the peninsula, under different Mexican administrations, since the time of Don Porfirio Díaz and uniquely during the revolutionary laps, up until the current date."[72] Speculation also circulated in the region that Jewish colonization was part of a forced cession of Baja California to the US to satisfy an oil debt. While Mexican residents who opposed the plan understood the project as one moment in a broader US imperialist structure, some also understood the proposal as distinctly Jewish, grappling with their "desolate abandoned peninsula" becoming the "polarizing center of Zionism."[73] Listening to these voices help clarify that Mexican residents of Baja California understood the proposal of Jewish colonization as a type of foreign conquest with unique religious dimensions, but primarily as primarily as a threat of territorial dispossession that resembled a longer pattern of Anglo-Euro American imperialism, dating back to the late

[72] "¡Alerta!"

[73] "El Judio Errante En La Baja California," 1938, 39, Colección Pablo Herrera Carrillo.

nineteenth century Porfirian government. Insofar as Jewish nation-building and US imperialism represented nearly equivalent threats to the sovereignty of those living in Baja California, we might readily conclude that US settler colonialism shaped approaches and methods of this regional history of Jewish nationalism.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I briefly return to the chapter's opening metaphor of the capitalist kibbutz as an avenue for grounding current and on-going cooperation between Israeli and US settler colonial projects in a historic and regional entanglement between the American frontier and Jewish nation-building. Media coverage of the WeWork has categorized the staggering peak valuation and swift collapse of the co-working startup as another in a series of "high-profile American scams," that have repackaged some of the most predatory strategies of late-stage neoliberalism as revolutionary, or liberatory.[74] In the case of Adam Neuman's "capitalist kibbutz," a commercial private real estate venture was the container through which customers became "community members," where narrow hallways and stairwells were not cost-cutting design measures, but intentional spatial strategies to foster intimacy and "elevate the world's consciousness."[75] Putting aside the question of whether Neumann's own consciousness was attentive to the scam at the center of his business, we might trust his belief in the capitalist kibbutz ideology, or that public good and being driven by something greater than yourself" is compatible with the commodification of land; after all, Neuman, like the Jewish American architects of the Baja California Dream over one hundred years earlier, had been socialized to

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[74] Amber A'lee Frost, "The WeWork Con," *Jacobin*, November 25, 2019, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/11/wework-adam-neumann-con-artist-grifter-entrepreneur.

[75] Neumann speaking about WeWork's business model, cited in Adler-Bell, "The Capitalist's Kibbutz."

believe the capitalism's capacity to "made the desert bloom," for all humankind, but especially for Jews.[76]

If "capitalist kibbutz" is a contemporary hybrid of the founding "myths of both Israel and the United States," it is also a way to trace the historic intersections between US settler colonialism and movements for Jewish nationalism.[77] The following chapter explored a regional movement for Jewish nationalism that began in the 1890s with the San Francisco-based International Society who understood agricultural colonization and resettlement, on the corporate plan, to provide an effective and lucrative method of co-ethnic immigrant aid. The Baja California dream, or the vision of a Jewish nation on the northwestern Mexican peninsula, was conceived as an alternative, or adjacent to Zionist aspirations in Palestine. The short-lived International Society evolved into a Jewish agricultural colonization project through the first decades of the twentieth century until at least 1939. The proposal for a Palestine on the Pacific elicited the interest and support of Jewish American organizations and philanthropists, secular mercantile corporations with transnational trade aspirations, while gaining the ambivalent attention of Mexican diplomats and government officials, and vocal rejections from farmers and other Baja California residents who would have been adversely affected under the resettlement plan.

Throughout the forty-plus-year history, the different architects of the Baja California dream were always in conversation with the sociopolitical and economic conditions experienced by Jews in Europe, European colonial projects across the Global South, and the different

[76] The phrase "made the desert bloom," is a commonly used refrain within Zionist political ideology, often used to justify Palestinian oppression through a mythology of agricultural productivity that Zionists brought to an unpopulated, arid desert. Alan George, "'Making the Desert Bloom': A Myth Explained," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 88–100.

[77] Adler-Bell, "The Capitalist's Kibbutz."

movements for Jewish nationalism that emerged primarily out of Western Europe. While Jewish Studies has well attended to the interlockings between Jewish nationalism and European colonialism, the regional specificity of the Baja California dream points to overlooked and unexplored interactions between Jewish nationalism and US settler colonialism. The examples highlighted in this chapter clarify how regional Jewish nationalist ideas of land, religion, agriculture was shaped by numerous dimensions of US imperialism, including the weaponization of religion through Manifest Destiny, the racialization of property relations through agriculture and the formation and securitization of the nation-state through the prism of white supremacy.

While this chapter overwhelmingly frames this regional Jewish nationalist project, and the ideologies concerning land use and capital accumulation as echoing the spatial and racial imperatives of US imperialism, it's important to note that Jewish agricultural colonization in Baja California was also impacted by the racialized gender and sexual scripts that were bound up with the material and ideological realities of the American frontier. Across immigrant-led and philanthropically organized Jewish colonization projects between Palestine and the US, the reunification of Jews to the land, specifically through agriculture and the occupation of farming, was a process through which the male Jewish subject would transform and embody Western and Anglo constructions of strength and masculinity.[78]

Like Zionism, many projects for Jewish nationalism, including the International Society, gender-making was part and parcel to the racial and space-making endeavors. The vision of persecuted Russian Jews as "great workers [who] make the best of farmers and fruit growers,"

[78] Maryanne A. Rhett, *The Global History of the Balfour Declaration: Declared Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

was a vision of Jewish uplift and revival from the alienated condition of diaspora.[79] US settler colonialism also cast the trope of landlessness as a racialized and effeminized condition to be remedied through the conquest of American frontier.[80] The archival evidence of the International Society and the other architects of the Baja California dream in the twentieth century, do not explicitly speak about gender, but like the coded racial language, speak in gendered terms about the industriousness of the Russian Jewish settlers. I speculate that the project's absence of gender suggests a redeployment of a patriarchal settler ideology that treats non-male bodies as objects of surveillance, along a racialized and classed hierarchy; however, further research is needed to support this claim.

In conclusion, the dream of Jewish nation-building in Baja California demonstrates how ideas of nation-building among Jewish American settlers were not just influenced by European Zionism and European colonialism in Africa, but also by the settler colonial context of the United States. In turn, these regional entanglements between Jewish nationalisms and US settler colonial expansion highlight the utility of historicizing an unrealized project of Jewish nation-building, even in a post-Nakba (1848) geopolitical reality. Attending to the regional specificities of unrealized, Jewish national projects has the potential to expand the methodological approaches for analyzing Jewish nationalism in different temporal and geopolitical contexts. Just

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[79] Stern, *Baja California*, 14. See regeneration movement in Todd Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[80] Though conquest, the white colonist abandons the diasporic, effeminate condition by appropriating the imagined muscularity of Indian bodies and establishing permanence to the land. Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian* Given, 10. Simultaneously, the project of white settler masculinity requires that Indian and other racialized and differently gendered bodies, are policed and disciplined through various technologies of colonial violence. See Nicole Guidotti-Hernández's framing of sexuality and nation-building in postscript of *Unspeakable Violence* and the making of Anglo settler society in nineteenth-century California through racialized violence against Mexican women's bodies. Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping US and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 290.

as Tara Zahar has located Zionism within Eastern European colonization projects, the story of the Palestine on the Pacific may point us in new theoretical directions concerning Zionism and its unexplored political influences.[81] Finally, this regional history may help us locate Jewish nation-building in Palestine, not only as a project influenced by European colonialism across the Global South, but also as a project entangled with US imperial state formation and processes of land, labor and capital accumulation fortified in the American frontier for global export.[82]

[81] Zahra, "Zionism, Emigration, and East European Colonialism," 166–67.

[82] Zahra situates Zionism's use of emigrant colonialism within broader Eastern European colonization movements that were entangled in global colonial politics between Europe and African and South America. Zahra, "Zionism, Emigration, and East European Colonialism," 170.

Chapter 4

Preserving Jewish Pioneer History on the US-Mexico Border; or, Reimagining Jewish Continuity on Stolen Land

Figure 1: Image of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery. US-Mexico border wall and Agua Prieta (Sonora) water tower visible in background. Photo courtesy of author, November 2018.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the members of the Sons of Israel Congregation in Douglas, Arizona purchased a plot of land in which the town's Jewish deceased were to be buried. By some regional historical accounts, this purchase signified the creation of the first exclusively Jewish cemetery in the Arizona Territory.[1] The Jewish burial ground was built on the ancestral homeland of the Chiricahua Apache, who since the sixteenth century, had resisted invasions by military and civilian settlers under Spanish and Mexican rule. In the decades following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) and the Gadsden Purchase (1853), US imperial state formation produced permanent military occupation, the transcontinental railroad, and the expansion of extractive capitalist industries, which together worked to eliminate Apache

[1] David Del Grande, "Local Jewish Cemetery, Once Derelict, Gains National Attention," *Arizona Jewish Post*, July 7, 2016, https://azjewishpost.com/2016/local-jewish-cemetery-once-derelict-gains-national-attention/.

sovereignty over their ancestral homelands.[2] In turn, southern Arizona became an industrial economic landscape fueled by the arrival of Anglo and European settlers, including Jewish immigrants, and the pursuit of land and capital in the heart of the copper borderlands.[3] Local historians celebrate that by the early 1920s, Jewish immigrants owned and operated an estimated 65 percent of stores along the primary commercial block of the copper smelting town.[4] The cemetery would serve as the final resting place for nineteen Jewish burials between 1909 and 1947.

If US settler dominance created the context for the arrival of European Jewish immigrants to Douglas, the mining industry helped generate the socioeconomic success among Douglas's Jewish merchant class who catered to laborers of the Copper Queen Mining Company. Once enough European Jewish families had settled in Douglas to justify the creation of the Sons of Israel Congregation in the early 1900s, land for the cemetery was purchased. Following Jewish law, the plot was chosen for its isolated location on the outskirts of Douglas's commercial and residential district and incidentally, for its adjacent proximity to the international boundary between Agua Prieta, Sonora, and Douglas, Arizona. Though laws, maps, and obelisk-shaped survey markers and railroad lines made the boundary a visible and material reality, such a version of the US-Mexico barrier might be inconceivable to those familiar with the region

[2] Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the US-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008),
5.

[3] I borrow the term "copper borderlands" to refer to the nineteenth and twentieth-century copper industry between Arizona and Sonora from Truett's *Fugitive Landscapes*, 4.

[4] This figure is featured in a pamphlet publication from the Douglas Historical Society. Cindy Hayostek, "Jewish Pioneers in Douglas," *Borderland Chronicle*s (Douglas, AZ: Douglas Historical Society, n.d.).

today.[5] At its height in the 1920s, Douglas's Jewish population reached a couple hundred families, but by the mid-twentieth century, the town's organized Jewish community was non-existent. [6] Nevertheless, the land deed to the cemetery has remained in legal possession of regional Jewish institutions through present day.[7]

Since the 1990s and more substantially in the last five years, a series of coordinated preservation efforts between Jewish American educational and charitable institutions, all designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, have been at work to restore the cemetery, and with it, the "long and colorful pioneer Jewish history" of Cochise County, Arizona.[8] The restoration of the cemetery, and preservation of Jewish memory has been seemingly undisturbed by border wall construction, immigration policies, new surveillance technologies, detentions that have radically transformed the surrounding the Sonoran Desert. Immigration and economic

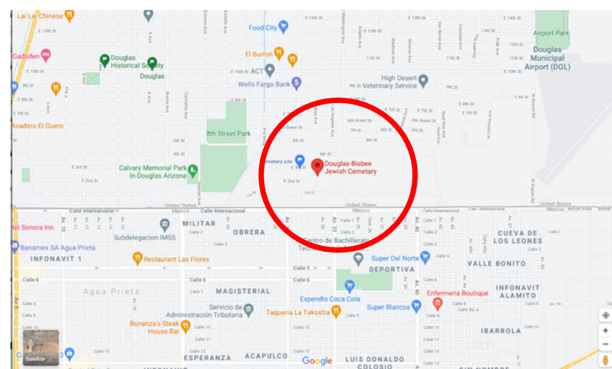

Figure 2: Google Maps screenshot of the Douglas-Bisbee Jewish Cemetery, 2021. *Red circle added by author for emphasis.*

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[5] C. J. Alvarez, *Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction on the US-Mexico Divide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021), 17; Harsha Walia, *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), 22–23.

[6] One historian has written that Douglas's Jewish community was so small that observant Jews would have to ride on horseback into neighboring town to recruit Jews to form a minyan to conform to proper Jewish ritual (Chanin, *Cholent & Chorizo*, 214). A minyan signifies a congregational quorum in the Jewish faith; for many fundamental Jewish rituals a minimum presence of ten Jewish adults is required. Abraham Millgram, "Minyan: The Congregational Quorum," *My Jewish Learning*, accessed July 23, 2021, https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/minyan-the-congregational-quorum.

[7] Jewish emigration has been identified as an important factor in determining the fate and condition of cemeteries. Despite an absence of organized Jewish community in Douglas after the mid-twentieth century, the land has remained in the legal possession of various nearby Jewish institutions in Tucson. Despite the damages incurred to the gravestones at the cemetery over the century, the possibility for restoration and preservation was linked to the ongoing presence of Jewish community in the Southern Arizona region. Minna Rozen, "A Survey of Jewish Cemeteries in Western Turkey," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 83, no. 1/2 (July–October 1992): 72, https://doi.org/10.2307/1455109.

[8] Abraham S. Chanin, "An Old Jewish Cemetery Restored," *Southwest Jewish History*, Spring 1993, Special Collections, Southwest Jewish Archives, University of Arizona, Tucson.

policies since the early 1990s have weaponized desert landscape against undocumented migrant life and mobility, and desecrated spaces of spiritual significance to communities indigenous to the land.[9] Jason de León's in-depth anthropological study refers to the Sonoran Desert currently as a "land of open graves," and a biproduct of US immigration and neoliberal policies that have increased fatalities amongst undocumented migrants.[10]

The following chapter foregrounds the regional and relational context of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery to understand the racial and spatial implications of preserving Jewish history in Southern Arizona. Part and parcel to the post-WWII project of Jewish continuity, the preservation of a Jewish site of memory in the Sonoran Desert and alongside the US-Mexico border wall, is a window into how, why, and for whom Jewish continuity is imagined. If the imperative of Jewish continuity emerged as a direct response to the genocidal events of the Nazi Holocaust, how does the preservation of the Jewish cemetery respond to the daily practices of state-sanctioned genocide in the Sonoran Desert?[11] Furthermore, how does the Jewish American non-profit model, as the financial and organizing structure of the Jewish cemetery, shape the scope and orientation of Jewish continuity in ways that reflect and reinforce the political and economic imperatives of US settler colonialism along the border?

The preservation and restoration of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery offers an avenue through which to explore how Jewish continuity takes place and makes racialized space

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[9] Jason de León, *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 8.

[10] De León's book title, *The Land of Open Graves*, refers to sites of migrant death in the Sonoran Desert.

[11] A 1970 essay by Irving (Yitz) Greenberg titled "Scholarship and Continuity: Dilemma and Dialectic" describes Jewish continuity (and the orientation of the discipline of Jewish Studies) as part of recognizing the special obligations that the post-WWII generation of Jews are charged with. Namely, the experiences of the Holocaust and the "rebirth of Israel," are the contexts in which Jewish continuity must be imagined. Cited in Shaul Magid, "As Transition Looms, Jewish Studies Is Mired in Controversy," *Religion Dispatches*, May 11, 2021, https://religiondispatches.org/as-transition-approaches-jewish-studies-is-mired-in-controversy/.

in the Sonoran Desert. I utilize a method of place-based autoethnography, specifically my embodied experiences of traveling to, arriving at, and interacting with the space, along with archival materials that include correspondence, photographs, periodicals, and government reports. Drawing together theorizations of the Jewish American Philanthropic Complex (JAPC) and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC), I offer the new concept—the Jewish American Non-Profit Industrial Complex (JANPIC)—as a framework to understand the role that Jewish philanthropic capital plays in shaping the political and ideological commitments of Jewish American non-profit organizations, particularly those dedicated toward more progressive issues.[12] Furthermore, the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC), or the framework for tracing state and corporate collaborations through the surveillance industry, is useful for exploring the direct and indirect entanglements between the JANPIC and US and Israeli collaborations along the US-Mexico border expressed through the global security industry.

Ultimately, the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery offers an analytic space that reflects how the JANPIC has confined organized Jewish American life to a neoliberal political economic agenda, such that the labor of Jewish continuity has become an institutionalized strategy to accumulate and keep private capital out of the public sector; in turn, organized Jewish American spaces necessarily reflect, and are limited to the ideological and political imperatives of the Jewish American owning class. Furthermore, the cemetery's location in the Sonoran Desert and alongside the US-Mexico border wall, clarifies how the JANPIC can and does interact with the PIC, particularly the strategies of racialized surveillance and exclusion that US settler society

[12] The Jewish American Philanthropic Complex was theorized by Lila Corwin Berman through the academic publication of the same title and published in 2020. The Non-Profit Industrial Complex has been theorized by many scholars and activists over the past decade. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*, ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007) is a foundational anthology for understanding both the NPIC and the Prison Industrial Complex.

requires along border zones. By tracing the interactions between the JANPIC and PIC that are activated through the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery, I demonstrate how settler colonial and neoliberal structures along the US-Mexico border deploy European Jewish settlers, in life and death, as space-makers of a regional, racial capitalist project. By way of conclusion, I explore how the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery also invites speculation about alternative strategies of Jewish continuity beyond the political and economic structures of the JANPIC.[13]

Cemeteries as Archives of Colonial and Racial Violence

The following analysis of the preservation and restoration of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery in Douglas, Arizona contributes to and expands literature in both Jewish and Border Studies that think about bodies, burials, and memorialization practices as windows into colonial and racial dynamics, historically and presently. Scholars of Jewish history have argued that cemeteries provide vital archival evidence, akin to written records, for historicizing a community, particularly if that community no longer exists in that geographic space. More specifically, the cemetery offers a unique window into the relational experiences between Jews and non-Jews in a given geopolitical environment.[14] Working in the temporal and geographic context of the colonial Atlantic, Aviva Ben-Ur, Rachel Frankle, and Laura Leibman have explored Jewish cemeteries as a way to locate Jewish experiences in the Americas within global capitalist trade networks with a focus on Jewish cemeteries in coastal port cities, regions often

[13] I use the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery as a material and analytic mode to speculate about the transformation of the space into one that better reflects the realities and needs of people connected to the Sonora-Arizona border region (ancestrally, presently, and/or by migratory necessity). This analytic method builds on existing scholarship that similarly uses cemeteries to reimagine urban space (that hold emotional significance and symbolic meaning), with the goal of making the space more "acceptable, relevant and meaningful" to those whose lives intersect with the cemetery grounds on a quotidian basis. Annika Porsborg Nielsen and Line Groes, "Ethnography inside the Walls: Studying the Contested Space of the Cemetery," *Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference* (November 2014): 108, https://doi.org/10.1111/1559-8918.01015.

[14] Rozen, "Jewish Cemeteries in Western Turkey," 71, 75.

considered more "peripheral" to dominant spatial imaginaries of Jewish geography.[15] Like the US-Mexico border region, Jewish cemeteries in Atlantic port cities offer windows into the ways Jewish participation in transatlantic economies dovetailed with their colonial encounters and conquests over Afro-diasporic and Indigenous populations. From the colonial era, Portuguese Suriname, where Sephardi Jewish settlers represented a slave-owning demographic, to Jewish settlers in Newport, Rhode Island living under British colonial rule, cemeteries offer ways to locate Jewish histories within imperial structures, specifically Jewish participation in the transatlantic slave trade, and how Jewish claims to land in the Americas were primarily part of a racialized colonial project, and secondarily, a marker of religious continuity and rootedness.[16]

The analysis of a Jewish cemetery in southern Arizona alongside the US-Mexico border wall requires that we consider Jewish participation in racial capitalism not only through anti-Black enslavement, but also through the Native land theft and genocide. Scholarship on Jewish cemeteries in the Americas neither account for the ways the cemeteries are settler spaces that archive the historic and on-going encounter between European Jewish Americans with Native peoples, nor how Jewish settlement in the Americas has relied on anti-Indigenous violence, dispossession, and the US nation-building project. Undoubtedly, this scholarly silence has been influenced by Jewish Studies' overwhelming focus on the Atlantic region, the related tendency to consider questions of Jewish racialization only within a Black-white binary, as well as pre-

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[15] Aviva Ben-Ur and Rachel Frankel, *Remnant Stones: The Jewish Cemeteries of Suriname, Vol. 1–2: Epitaphs, Essays* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, n.d.); Laura Leibman, *Messianism, Secrecy, and Mysticism: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2012).

[16] Leibman's study of colonial-era Jewish slaveowners and Jewish cemeteries in Newport, Rhode Island clarifies that enslaved persons of Afro-descendance who were owned by Jewish families, would be buried in separate cemeteries, regardless of if they had converted to Judaism during their lifetimes. This tells us that space-making in the colonial Americas was first a racialized project and second, a marker of religious community. Leibman, *Messianism, Secrecy, and Mysticism*, 110–13.

existing (albeit manufactured) disciplinary divisions between critiques of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness between Native and Black Studies.[17] Allan Amanik's study of Jewish cemeteries and burial practices in New York for example, meaningfully acknowledges that Jewish cemeteries signify a sign of Jewish settlement and permanence in a given geographic and temporal context.[18] Just as the investment in agriculture offered Jewish immigrant aid organizations a method of shedding the racialized conditions associated with Jewish landlessness (chapter three), Jewish cemeteries help trace the ways Jewish immigrants to the border region inherited a structure of property relations that created "free" land for white settlers to bring capitalism to the new American West. The process of restoration of Jewish cemeteries in the border zone, also complicates Amanik's underlying assumption that the preservation of Jewish space is a reaction to, and rejection of the pressures to assimilate to gentile American society. In contrast, this analysis seeks to highlight the structural entanglements between the establishment and preservation of the Jewish American cemetery and the colonial and racial status quo.

The creation and preservation of Jewish cemeteries in the US-Mexico border region are deeply enmeshed, not only with the legacies of plantation capitalism in the US, but nineteenth-century state and corporate processes that normalized and legitimized Native removal and territorial acquisition in favor of white settlement that continues to shape the racial geography of the border region through today; this plays out most explicitly through US border governance

[17] Ellen Eisenberg writes that only in recent years, the use of a relational approach to study race and Jews in the US has inspired historians of American Jewry to go beyond the binary of Blacks and Jews to consider multifaceted relationships among Jews, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and still to a lesser degree, American Indians. Ellen Eisenberg, "State of the Field: Jews & Others," *American Jewish History* 102, no. 2 (April 2018): 284–85. A critique of presumed scholarly antagonisms between Black and Native communities, including artists, scholars, and activists is at the center of the recent anthology, Tiffany Lethabo King, Jenell Navarro, and Andrea Smith, eds., *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

[18] Allan Amanik, *Dust to Dust: A History of Jewish Death and Burial in New York.* (New York: New York University Press, 2019).

and mechanisms of exclusion, including the detention, deportation and illegalization of migrants and refugees deemed undesirable.[19] Jewish cemeteries in the Americas reflect not only as evidence of religious and spiritual ritual, but also spatial remnants of Jewish participation in imperialist, racialized space-making endeavors and the on-going absorption of Jewish communal identity in the settler structure along the US-Mexico border. Ultimately, historians of Jewish experiences in the Americas have effectively looked to cemeteries to excavate inter and intra-Jewish dynamics, particularly as they relate to capital accumulation and racial encounters within imperial and colonial contexts. However, the focus on the Atlantic region reinforces an understanding of Jewish racialization as a binary process between Blackness and European whiteness, leaving unattended the removal of Indigenous peoples as another crucial racial imperative of imperial and settler colonial histories.

While the Sonoran Desert has not been a space through which Jewish cemeteries have been studied, cemeteries in the Sonoran Desert have been studied as monuments of colonial violence. Death, burial and memorialization practices among migrants, immigrant aid organizers, as well as Tohono O'odham peoples, are deeply implicated by tactics of border security since the passage of Prevention through Deterrence (PTD) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the 1990s. While the Clinton Administration passed NAFTA with promised to cheapen the exchange and transportation of goods across the continent and bring prosperity to Mexico, the neoliberal policy brought greater economic disenfranchisement of Mexican campesinos, and became another tactic of US imperialism that secured an undocumented, exploitative labor force in service of US corporations, primarily agriculture.[20] Simultaneously,

[19] Walia, *Border and Rule.*

[20] De León, *Land of Open Graves*, 6–8.

piecemeal policies of US border apprehension, like "Hold the Line" in Texas, "Gatekeeper" in California, and "Safeguard" in Arizona, were unified under the federal strategy known as Prevention through Deterrence, which pushed migration routes for undocumented border crossers into more dangerous regions in the Sonora Desert with devastating consequences. Within six years following the passage of PTD, border deaths from hypothermia, dehydration, drowning, and heat stroke increased 509 percent. [21] Scholars, artists, and activists have been connecting federal strategies of border governance and neo-liberal economic policies to the intentional production of migrant death in the US-Mexico border region, specifically the Sonoran Desert.

If interned Jewish bodies and Jewish cemeteries in the Americas can memorialize the Jewish immigrant's participation in settler colonial structures, the bodies of undocumented migrants illuminate colonial violence. Likewise, the spaces and monuments that have memorialized their deaths offer a critique of the systems that produced their deaths. Strategies and sites of memorialization marking the deaths of migrants in the Sonoran Desert are met with vigilante violence and state persecution that reinforce a racialized social order of belonging.[22] As

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[21] Walia, *Border and Rule*, 52. Importantly, PDT is an example of how US border enforcement has weaponized and made lethal a desert ecosystem that has sustained human life for thousands of years. Members of the Tohono O'odham nation have survived, thrived, and cultivated areas of the Sonoran Desert for millennia. The experiences of border crossers of the Sonoran Desert as dangerously lethal is not a reflection of the inherent violence of the natural landscape, but rather the consequences of US imperialism that has manipulated the terrain, pushing those who pass through the region into a foreign ecosystem without the knowledge or resources (inherited or acquired) required to navigate. See interview with Nellie Jo David of O'odham Anti-Border Collective in "Tear Down the Walls with the O'odham Anti-Border Collective," *Red Nation Podcast*, September 21, 2020, https://soundcloud.com/therednationpod/tear-down-the-walls-w-the.

[22] Neil Bernstein created an "offering" that provided water and shelter for migrants along a well know route between Sonora and Arizona in Arivaca. Bernstein was personally shot at by self-identified minute men and the structure was destroyed a total of six times. Jessica Auchter, "Border Monuments: Memory, Counter-Memory, and (B)Ordering Practices along the US-Mexico Border," *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (April 2013): 291–311. In 2018, Scott Warren and other volunteers of the Sonoran Desert-based humanitarian aid network, No More Deaths/No Más Muertos faced criminal charges for providing undocumented asylum seekers from Honduras with food, water and lodging. This is one of many examples as to how humanitarian aid in the US-Mexico border is criminalized by the US government. Ryan Devereaux, "Criminalizing Compassion: The Unraveling of the Conspiracy Case Against No

Jessica Auchter has argued, to mark and memorialize the lives and deaths of undocumented migrants threatens the project of state-making at the border, in part for how bodies of undocumented migrants expose the limited control of border governance, while revealing the underlying human violence upon which US state formation has always relied but tries to conceal. Furthermore, as Autcher posits, memorialization of undocumented migrants and victims of state policies of border enforcement demands that we grieve those that the state has deemed ungrievable and remember those the state demands we forget.[23]

Locating the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery in a landscape that the US government has turned into "a killing field, a massive open grave" is a starting point for thinking about which state structures that have marked Jewish lives as grievable, and Jewish memory as worthy of preservation, and why.[24] In sum, the following chapter builds off this existing body of literature between Jewish and US-Mexico Border Studies to explore the preservation of the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery and the strategies of border governance in the Sonoran Desert as connected through imperatives of settler colonial and neoliberal capitalist structures that collide in the border zone.

The Non-Profit Industrial Complex, Jewish Philanthropic Complex, and Prison Industrial Complex

The preservation model that sustains and funds the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery is a window into the interlockings between the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) and Jewish Philanthropic Complex (JPC). These frameworks shed light on the intersections of the American

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More Deaths Volunteer Scott Warren," *The Intercept*, August 10, 2019, https://theintercept.com/2019/08/10/scott-warren-trial/.

[23] Auchter, "Border Monuments," 310.

[24] De León, *Land of Open Graves*, 8.

state, capitalism, and American Jewish identity that have far reaching implications on the future for social justice movements broadly, and specifically among the progressive sectors of Jewish American organization. Drawing from these two concepts, I offer the new term, the Jewish American Non-Profit Industrial Complex (JANPIC), to capture the specific role that Jewish philanthropic capital plays in shaping organized Jewish American life.[25]

The NPIC has been theorized by Dylan Rodríguez in the critical text *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* (2007) as "the industrialized incorporation of pro-state liberal and progressive campaigns and movements into a spectrum of government-proctored non-profit organizations."[26] The roots of the NPIC, also described as the privatization of social services through neoliberalism, exist in a late-nineteenth-century context and within a system of primarily religious-based charitable giving. As a complex however, NPIC emerges in the second half of the twentieth century, during the post-Civil Rights era of the 1960s, the arrival of foundations signaled a significant shift for how organizing gets done and can be sustained, by encouraging movements seeking structural change, to model themselves after capitalist structures. In sum, the NPIC theory accounts for a system of relationships between the federal government, the owning classes, foundation and non-profits, wherein public monies are kept in the private sector through foundations that benefit from income and real estate tax exemptions. Furthermore, the cooption

[25] In an ethnographic study of Algeria, Judith Scheele argues that gravesites are not only a window into how people understanding death and violence, "but also how they construe social order, political legitimacy and historical continuity, in an environment where all of these have been severely disrupted." Similarly, I understand the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery as a way to understand how the JAPC orders, politicizes, and historicizes Jewish American identity in ways that negate the social order, political legitimacy, and historical continuity of other groups who share that environment. This competitive model of social and historical ordering is not inherent to Jewish organized life, but rather to Jewish American philanthropic ties to US settler and neoliberal structures. Judith Scheele, "Algerian Graveyard Stories," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 4 (December 2006): 859.

[26] Dylan Rodríguez, "The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex," in *Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, 21.

of social justice movements under the NPIC become monitored and financially controlled by public and private institutions they seek to change.

Recent work by Lila Corwin Berman has started an important conversation that locates many dimensions of the NPIC to describe the impact of philanthropic capital on Jewish American institutions, organizations, and identity. Theorized as the Jewish American Philanthropic Complex, Berman argues that historically and presently has "repositioned Jewish communal institutions into state actors," particularly in the realm of the American political economy.[27] While the NPIC theory focuses on and is critical of the systems of power, and the minority owning class, who benefit from the tax benefits of the non-profit designation, the JAPC helps clarify an uncomfortable truth that Jewish Americans have been among the vocal and influential actors of that very owning class. American Jewish donors, fundraisers and financial professionals have participated in and at times shaped the privatization of social services, and the overall neo-liberalization of the American pollical economy.

Through this prism, Jewish American non-profits, federations, and endowments offer the same tax havens for the owning classes, as described under the NPIC. However, the connection to Jewish identity often means this accumulation wealth is be masked under terms like *tzedakah*, an ancient Jewish practice of giving, and the post-WWII, Holocaust cultural imperative of Jewish continuity. Berman's book sheds light on the challenge facing Jewish Americans generally, but particularly Jewish American organizations seeking to organize in support of progressive and leftist issues: it is the wealthiest members of the Jewish American community, whose political and economic ideologies seek to reinforce a neoliberal status quo, who control

[27] Lila Corwin Berman, *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 4.

the financial structure of Jewish American institutions broadly, including Jewish American non-profits.

Together, the JANPIC helps capture the neoliberal funding model that sustains the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery, and the financial and political framework through which it reflects Jewish American identity and notions of continuity. As a byproduct of the NPIC, the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery's proximity to the US-Mexico border wall also urges us to explore its connection to the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). What Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Dylan Rodriguez refer to as the "natural corollary" to the NPIC, the PIC is a framework for tracing intersecting interests and cooperation between the government and private corporations dedicated to the production of surveillance technology, policing, and incarceration, as solutions to social issues and inequalities.[28] Just as the PIC is central to methods of border governance in the Sonoran Desert, its own $500 billion industry, it also reflects the "the shared presuppositions and requirements of settler colonialism and neoliberal globalization."[29] As climate and political refugees travel north, toward the very country that created many of the conditions from which they flee, are criminalized by surveillance technologies sold to the US government by private security and technology companies and incarcerated in private detention centers.[30] Surveillance technologies help links global markets, just as they create continuity between policing strategies within settler colonial projects across border zones. Alongside US tech companies like Amazon

[28] This definition of the Prison Industrial Complex was assembled by Critical Resistance, an abolitionist coalition of organizers from across many spheres of society including activists, academics, formerly and currently incarcerated people, labor leaders, and religious organizations. The international movement seeks an end to the Prison Industrial Complex. See "What Is the PIC? What Is Abolition? The Prison Industrial Complex," *Critical Resistance*, accessed July 23, 2021, http://criticalresistance.org/about/not-so-common-language/; Andrea Smith, "Introduction: The Revolution Will Not Be Funded," in *Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, 8.

[29] Walia, *Border and Rule*, 80; Ahmad H. Sa'di, "Israel's Settler-Colonialism as a Global Security Paradigm," *Race & Class* (2021): 12, https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396821996231.

[30] Walia, *Border and Rule*.

that partner with US Homeland Security, Israeli surveillance technology companies like Elbit System have impacted the scale and scope of securitization along the US-Mexico border. The PIC offers a critic framework through which I analyze how the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery as a border-wall adjacent space, passively, supports racialized strategies of border governance, and illuminates how the global surveillance market functions between the US-Mexico and Israel-Palestine border zones.

The Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery preservation project has been envisioned and sustained through the interlocking collaborations of the Jewish American Philanthropic Complex and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex, or the JANPIC, and shapes strategies of Jewish historical preservation, and Jewish cultural continuity in the US-Mexico border region. The interplay of these neoliberal processes in the cemetery reflects how the institutionalization of Jewish American life through the NPIC has resulted in financial incentives to the wealthiest members of the Jewish American to invest in Jewish continuity. As the evidence will show, this has funded, and produced a spatial version of Jewish history that reflects and upholds liberal narratives of rugged Jewish individualism that celebrates European settlement along the border, and the neoliberal funding model on which Jewish continuity belongs.

Alongside the PIC, these frameworks reflect how the imperative of Jewish continuity along the US-Mexico is bound up and influenced by the political and economic commitments between the US and the gatekeepers of organized Jewish American life, and the Zionist project in Israel-Palestine. In sum, the JANPIC and the PIC frameworks reveal how the preservation of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery reflects an institutionalized model of organized Jewish American life. Under this model, Jewish continuity acquiesces to neoliberal strategies of capital accumulation, and settler colonial modes of racial control, in order to carry out and defend

fantasies of European belonging to land. The global surveillance market is the site through which such fantasies are commodified and rehearsed in the Sonoran Desert.

Institutionalizing Jewish Continuity, Preserving Jewish Pioneer History

Decades before the JANPIC existed, the American state was investing in the preservation of Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery. At the turn of the twentieth century, when the Sons of Israel Congregation bought the land on which they were to build their cemetery, nearly every state in the US had constitutional provisions or laws that made religious property exempt from taxation. Synagogues were included in this tax benefit for religious institutions, which allowed Jewish religious institutions to join Christian churches in the accumulation of profits that remained untouched by state and federal taxation. As Lila Corwin Berman cites, the value of synagogue property doubled between 1850 and 1860, which paralleled profit margins for other religious property in the US.[31] The tax-exempt status of the cemetery followed the land deed, when it was transferred to Anshei Israel, a Conservative Jewish congregation roughly one hundred miles north of Douglas. The date and reason for the transfer of the land deed to geographically distant Jewish institution remains unknown but was likely influenced by the departure of Douglas's Jewish community and the expansion of Tucson's Jewish community in the decades post-World War II. When interviewed by a local Jewish newspaper at the onset of the restoration project in 2016, the synagogue's leadership admitted to having not been aware of how, nor why they owned the property: "Someone must have donated it . . . the history is murky."[32]

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[31] Berman, *American Jewish Philanthropic Complex*, 19.

[32] Comment from Rabbi Emeritus Arthur R. Oleisky, cited in Del Grande, "Local Jewish Cemetery."

Between 2005 and 2014, the cemetery was for the first time, in the hands of private individuals. After a chance meeting in temple at Scottsdale, Arizona (253 miles north of Douglas), Richard Rosen and Jorge Ilitzky partnered up to buy the land from Anshei Israel. Rosen was initially drawn into the project based on previous experience documenting Jewish cemeteries across Eastern Europe; later in 2012, the tragic death of Rosen's son Landon at the age of twenty reactivated his commitment to restoring the space to honor his son's memory.[33] For Iliskly, the connection was personal. His family had settled in the region at the turn of the twentieth century, as active participants in agriculture and mercantile economies on both sides of the border, spanning Chihuahua, Sonora, and Arizona; as of 2016, Ilitzky lived in Mexico City, and works as a commodity trade on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and owns a cattle ranch in Chihuahua, Mexico (one hundred miles southeast of Douglas), echoing the cross-border and transnational economic legacy that rooted his family to the region over one hundred years ago.[34]

In 2014, after nearly ten years of privately managing the property, Rosen and Ilitzky donated the land to the Jewish History Museum and Holocaust Center of Tucson (JHM), also a 501(c)(3) organization classified as tax-exempt by the IRS under the designation "history museum." The restoration process began in earnest in early 2020 and has continued through the COVID-19 pandemic, and includes the resettling of gravestones, landscaping, a wrought iron security fence, solar lighting, and annual maintenance. While the JHM helped envision and manage elements of the restoration project, the financial management of the project, including fundraising and donation allocation, was operated by the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona

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[33] According to an interview in 2020, Rosen hopes to rename the street next to the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery for his son and see historical tours visit the site once the restoration is complete. Phyllis Braun, "Matching Funds Sought for Historic Borderlands Jewish Cemetery Restoration," *Arizona Jewish Post*, February 7, 2020, https://azjewishpost.com/2020/matching-funds-sought-for-historic-borderlands-jewish-cemetery-restoration/.

[34] Braun, "Matching Funds."

(JFSA), a 501(c)(3) organization through the IRS classification of "designated philanthropic, voluntarism, and grantmaking foundation." As former JFSA president Stuart Mellon explained, the federation "can be that source of strength when it's needed," that being the accumulation of funds needed to underwrite the project.[35]

At some point in 2020, the land deed was transferred from the JHM to the Landon Rosen Writer's Foundation, a Jewish American-run 501(c)(3) educational non-profit organization that according to IRS tax records, exists to "enable young adults from diverse backgrounds to collaborate and find harmony through their uniqueness and creativity."[36] While Rosen hopes that one day the foundation will offer scholarships and host annual seminars at universities, where writers can spend a few days, or weeks developing a written, or other creative "product which is geared toward peace," he is still generating capital for the foundation to realize these plans. Thus far, the foundation's budget, which has grown by way of reallocated funds from the JFSA, has focused on the restoration of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish.[37] During our conversation, Rosen echoed this sentiment, explaining that his non-profit and the JFSA are in sync to some extent: the federation receives donations for the restoration project, some of which are transferred to Rosen's non-profit to manage restoration efforts.

The non-profit designations and the accompanying income and real estate tax exemptions from which the JHM, the JFSA and Rosen's Foundation benefit, were inscribed into US law in

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[35] Mellon is quoted in an article about cemetery restoration. Braun, "Matching Funds."

[36] Landon N. Rosen International School of Writers for Harmony, April l7, 2018, Guidestar.org, https://www.guidestar.org/profile/47-2805844.

[37] Rosen explained that he sees his organization and the JFSA as in synch to some extent: the JFSA receives donations for the restoration project, some of which are transferred to Rosen's non-profit to manage restoration efforts. Alongside financing the restoration, the other use of funds from Rosen's non-profit has gone to acquiring Holocaust survivor testimonies, which he hopes will one day be used in seminars hosted by his non-profit. Richard Rosen, interview with author, May 28, 2021.

post-WWII era, under the presumption that such organizations offer a public service, or public good. Part of this logic was that the private sector was a more effective vehicle through which services and resources could be provided to poor and disenfranchised communities, than regional, state, and federal public sectors. As the theory of the NPIC exposes, however, this shift in the political economy was not about enacting more democratizing social change, but rather a coordinated effort between the government, corporations, and the owning classes to increase private wealth at the expense of public services while simultaneously monitoring social justice movements through the non-profit model.

Locating the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery through the JANPIC, we see how models for Jewish continuity are embroiled with the neoliberal collaboration between the state and the private sector and determined by the wealthiest members of the Jewish American community or owning class. The complexes have made it so that those who give the greatest "tzedakah" to Jewish American institutions to support the preservation of Jewish history and cultural continuity are most financially compensated by the US government.

I have witnessed first-hand how the JANPIC institutionalizes a model of Jewish continuity that is profitable under American capitalism and in service of those who most benefit under the same system. In March 2020, I facilitated an event called "Preserving Jewish History in Southern Arizona: A Mobile Learning Day," which coordinated a visit to the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery for around fifteen to twenty JFSA donors. I provided some historical context for turn of the century Jewish life in a border town like Douglas, taking care to emphasize the relational histories that shaped the canonical "Jewish pioneer" narrative. The "mobile-day of learning" however was first and foremost a mobile-day of fundraising for the JFSA, and donors in attendance to give generously so that a sacred site of Jewish history and ancestry in the

Sonoran Desert, so that it might be preserved for future generations. The higher the donation, the greater the tax benefit. Under American capitalism, Jewish continuity offers a consistent return on investment.

Just as the economic model of Jewish preservation and continuity works with, and reflects the ideologies neoliberal capitalism, the results of the preservation efforts also reflect liberal mythologies about European settlement. In 1993, when the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery was still under the ownership of Congregation Anshei Israel, the University of Arizona Hillel Foundation, and the Bloom Southwestern Jewish Archives (part of UA's Special Collections Library) launched a re-dedication project; both the Hillel and the Bloom archives are designated 501(c)(3)s and categorically Jewish American institutions dedicated to the preservation of Jewish history and Jewish continuity, especially in the academic realm. The re-dedication project included fencing and signage element, meant to restore the "southwestern look" of the space, which including a barbed wire fence around the parameter as well as a dedication plaque to the "Jewish Pioneers of Cochise County" (see fig. 4).[38] If the 1993 rededication plaque marked Jewish history along the border through the liberal narrative of European settlement as the inevitable march toward progress, the 2020 restoration project imagines Jewish continuity through a related, neoliberal narrative that captures the economic

Figure 3: Re-Dedication Plaque, 1993. Image courtesy of author, November 2018.

[38] Chanin, "Old Jewish Cemetery."

structure of Jewish continuity. Alongside the signage commemorating the Jewish pioneers, is an expanded plaque that names the various non-profit and family foundation entities responsible for the preservation of Jewish history in southern Arizona. Several feet away from the new welcome plaque is newly installed security camera, which towers over the gravestones, but is dwarfed by Homeland Security's surveillance towers just to the south along the border wall. Just as the Jewish pioneer is imagined as the liberal champion of settling the West through capitalist tenacity, Jewish philanthropic capital is the neoliberal pioneer, being rewarded by the state (via tax exemption) and the internal Jewish American community, for saving twice stolen land under US settler colonialism.

If the 1993 and 2020 markers reflect the liberal and neoliberal frameworks through which Jewish American institutions historicize themselves, they also reflect how Jewish histories in the US-Mexico border region are inscribed within the settler colonial narrative of European belonging that disappears Indigenous peoples. For Native peoples living under settler colonialism, to be disappeared is an issue of land and sovereignty.[39] These design elements reinforce a settler colonial narrative of European and Anglo dominance in several important ways. The 1993 re-dedication initiatives helped preserve a liberal narrative of Jewish settler history in the US-Mexico border region that upholds hegemonic frontier mythologies of the American West. The use of modern barbed wire to give the space a "Southwestern look" is closely linked to US settler colonial imperatives of territorial and capital accumulation, specifically for marking the boundaries of private land and industrial agriculture projects. [40]

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[39] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

[40] Chanin, "Old Jewish Cemetery." The use of modern barbed wire in the American West is closely linked to US settler-colonial imperatives of territorial and capital accumulation, specifically for marking the boundaries of private land and industrial agriculture projects. Created in 1873 for cattle farming by Joseph Glidden, barbed wire was widely used by white settlers to reinforce the privileges granted to them under the Homestead Act. It became known

Furthermore, the signage that greets one upon entering the cemetery recalls Jean O'Brien's term "firsting and lasting," which describes the settler imperative to position European settlement becomes as foundational, and casts Indigenous existence as ancient past, or non-existent.

Similarly, the 1993 plaque tells a story of the Jewish pioneer's foundational presence in Cochise County, the 2020 plaque acknowledges Jewish American philanthropists as securing a Jewish future on the land, and Indigenous histories are disappeared.[41] The process by which the Jewish cemetery was preserved and restored reflects the on-going racial implication of spatial memorialization in a settler colonial context. By centering the narrative of European Jewish arrival, the plaque tacitly suggests that human occupancy in that place had never existed prior. In sum, the funding structure and design elements of the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery restoration project reflect the ways the JAPC and the NPIC have created narrow models for how we remember and preserve Jewish American histories, and the capital incentives for investing in that version of history.

The Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery restoration project reflects the entanglements between preserving Jewish continuity and capitalism, and how that excludes those who invest Jewish continuity in non-capitalist ways. While Jewish philanthropic capital is acknowledged as the primary and official caretakers of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery, the actual caretakers of the cemetery remain unacknowledged in any official capacity. Since 2016, and alongside the fundraising initiatives of Jewish American institutions, the work of caring for the cemetery has

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as "the Devil's Rope" for the violence it enacted on the pre-existing mobility of all living beings in the ecosystem prior to colonization. Joanne Liu, *Barbed Wire: The Fence That Changed the West* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing, 2009).

[41] Cochise County is named after the principal chief of the Chokonen band of the Chiricahua Apaches. This is one example of the disappearing tricks of US settler colonialism: the settler society will acknowledge an Indigenous presence by renaming the stolen land for the very people whose land was stolen. This symbolic acknowledgement of Indigenous past allows the settler to assume an Indigenous presence.

been a collective effort among current and former Douglas residents. Abraham Villareal, who is a Christian and originally from Douglas, started organizing monthly/bi-monthly clean-up trips with volunteers that are advertised on the Facebook group "Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery." Alongside Villareal's collective caretaking organizing, current Douglas-resident and neighbor to the cemetery, Gilbert Marrufo provides weekly maintenance for the space.

There is a long history of collective and interfaith caretaking of Jewish sacred sites, even and especially when the Jewish community has left the space. Aomar Boum's study of the history of Muslim caretakers of Morocco's Jewish sites de-exceptionalizes the relational, inter-faith practice of caring for Jewish sacred sites, even in the absence of the Jewish community; the last members of the Jewish community left the small town of Khmis Arazan in southern Morocco (and the site of Boum's study) left four decades ago.[42] Significantly, Boum's research underscores a strategy of Jewish continuity that is enacted through relational caretaking, even in the absence of Jews, that Villareal also employed. I wrote to Villareal before and after my first visit to the cemetery in 2018 and he explained that he used to visit the space as a teenager but saw the cemetery fall into disrepair. Even with the knowledge that Tucson-based Jewish institutions were interested and had the means through which to restore the site, Villareal organized groups "a few times a year to make sure that it [the cemetery] is not truly forgotten. I would love the place to become an educational site for the youth of Douglas, Arizona. There is a rich and complex history that is hidden from them."[43] Alongside the caretaking efforts, Villareal has written about the cemetery on a personal blog and launched a GoFundMe campaign ($3,000

[42] Aomar Boum, "Sacred Protectors: Crossing Boundaries of Time and Faith, These Muslims Safeguard Morocco's Holy Jewish Sites," *Jewish Journal*, January 10, 2018, https://jewishjournal.com/cover_story/229491/sacred-protectors-crossing-boundaries-time-faith-muslims-safeguard-moroccos-holy-jewish-sites/.

[43] Villareal, correspondence with author, November 12, 2018.

goal) to support on-going restoration efforts.[44] Villareal invests time and labor to caretake for the cemetery, because he wants to invest in his hometown, of which Jewish history is a part. To Villareal, the preservation of Jewish history in Southern Arizona, is about preserving the history of his town for himself and for the future generations of Douglas residents.

Villareal's model of collective caretaking represents a relational strategy of Jewish continuity that exists outside of the JANPIC and offers no capital incentive. As such, the collective caretaking efforts, that preexisted the official restoration project, remain absent from official histories of the cemetery, because such a model of Jewish continuity is illegible to institutional models of Jewish American identity. The legal and financial ties between the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery, the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona, the Landon Rosen Writers Foundation, and the Jewish History Museum of Tucson exemplify how the preservation of "Jewish history in Southern Arizona" or strategies of Jewish continuity have been absorbed by the dual processes of the JAPC and the NPIC. The funding structure of the cemetery is such that those with the most wealth, who can offer the greatest donations (tzedakah) to ensure Jewish continuity, also receive the greatest benefits from the federal government. In other words, securing Jewish land on the US-Mexico border earns you the greatest reward under American capitalism. Berman might locate this dynamic within broader trends in Jewish philanthropy of the late twentieth century, namely that the private accumulation of private capital within designated Jewish institutions and Jewish identity and Jewish futurity were symbiotic and interdependent.[45]

[44] Villareal's GoFundMe Campaign can be found at https://www.gofundme.com/f/jewish-cemetery?utm_campaign=p_cp_url&utm_medium=os&utm_source=customer.

[45] Berman, *American Jewish Philanthropic Complex*, 168.

Lastly, the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery exposes how institutionalized approaches to Jewish continuity, realized through the JANPIC, are influenced by and reinforce Zionist claims to land in Israel-Palestine. When asked about how he got involved in the restoration project and what it meant to him, Rosen volunteered that he is dual US and Israeli citizen, and his son currently lives in Jerusalem, and he remains very committed to protecting Jewish life, globally, and specifically in the state of Israel. As he reflected on what the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery meant to him, Rosen explained that "there's an emotional uplift when you enter that property. It's almost like when you land in Jerusalem. I don't know what it's about, but it's very spiritual, even though it's a little spot right next to our border on the American side. It basically has a rich meaningful feeling."[46] For Rosen, the preservation of the cemetery is not simply project through which is able to preserve Jewish continuity to land along the US-Mexico border, but also in Israel-Palestine.

Such comments help punctuate a crucial element of the JANPIC: as a neoliberal financial structure that controls Jewish institutions and Jewish identity and Jewish futurity, the JANPIC tethers those same entities to the Zionist project in Israel-Palestine. This element of the JANPIC institutionalizes a Jewish American political and economic commitment to the State of Israel and the Zionist project; notably, this dynamic reinforces the belief that anti-Jewishness, or anti-Semitism includes criticism of the Israeli state. While this reality holds resonance for understanding the structural limitations for progressive-leaning Jewish American non-profits, it also offers a framework through which we can analyze how the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery, a space operating under the financial structure of the JANPIC, interacts with the US-Mexico border, an ordering regime through which the PIC operates.

[46] Rosen, interview.

Jewish Continuity and Border Governance

As a corollary to JANPIC, the PIC offers a critical framework through which I analyze how the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery's proximity to the border-wall impacts the experience of traveling to and visiting the space. Specifically, the PIC framework helps to identify how the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery offers a passive landscape through which settler colonial and neoliberal strategies of border governance are rehearsed and deployed. While the JANPIC clarifies links between the state and Jewish American institutions invested in the preservation of Jewish history and memory, broadly. The geographic realities of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery demand the close consideration of state-making, which includes modes of border governances, as they are carried out (directly or passively) through Jewish American non-profits. As chapter two identified the ways in which Jewish settlement along the border was shaped by the economies of extraction and policing (as central strategies of building settler society) between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the restoration of the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery offers a window into how the memorialization of Jewish settlement is also shaped by late twentieth and twenty-first century strategies of border policing. In particular, the process of border policing through exclusion and territorial diffusions, on regional and transnational levels, shapes access to and the experience of visiting the cemetery.

The Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery is a space where visitors are forced to confront the legal, institutional and everyday practices of border exclusion that reinforces racialized notions of which persons belong and which persons are to be treated as undesirable refugees, or "illegal" migrant, regardless of legal status.[47] Just as border policing through exclusion distinguishes citizen from non-citizen, it also renders the lives (and deaths) of citizens as grievable and those

[47] Walia, *Border and Rule*, 79.

of non-citizens ungrievable."[48] The cemetery's proximity to the border wall, a primary tool of exclusion, marks the site of Jewish memory as a simultaneous tool of border governance and space from which exclusionary strategies like the construction of migrant illegality, can be rehearsed. In November 2018, during my first visit to Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery, I left the barbed-wire enclosing of the private property and while walking toward the border wall was immediately approached by US Border Patrol's familiar white and green Chevrolet Tahoe. The CBP officer rolled down his window and I swiftly explained that I was Jewish and pointing behind me, was here to visit the Jewish cemetery. Intrigued and almost apologetically, the officer said I "didn't look illegal," but my image had come up on the cameras and he had to check me out anyway.[49]

The racialized and gendered construction of human bodies as belonging, or unbelonging to the US settler state dates back to the Naturalization Act of 1790, which granted the right to naturalize citizenship to "free white persons" of good moral character.[50] While the racial dynamics of citizenship statuses continues through the late nineteenth century, as those of African Americans, American Indians, and Asian-origin contested their legal rights to belong, a turning point in the discourse of inclusion vs. exclusion coalesced in the 1920s nationally, but

[48] Auchter "Border Monuments," 292.

[49] Ethnography in Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery, November 2018. Details - I smiled and nodded, eager to feign and perform a common understanding that: 1), illegality is an actual human condition; 2), illegality is a human condition that is embodied and visible; and 3), I was not the visible embodiment of illegality. Performing a belief in illegality in a place like the border zone is a waste of time. The state has already claimed your body, marking it as legal or illegal. The exchange with CBP gave way to something approaching an embodied belief in my own legality. My white skin, the driver's license in my pocket that finally had my updated name and gender assignment, my Patagonia-brand vest, it all became capital for proving to the state that no, I did not look illegal, and therefore I wasn't illegal. I didn't have to pretend to believe in illegality, because in the border zone, the state had already claimed my body as legally belonging.

[50] Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 37.

specifically in the US-Mexico border region. With the onset of visa and passport requirements and the establishment of US Border Patrol in 1924, the border zone, and specifically the act of crossing the border, became a crucial space through which the state began to manage the inequitable distribution of rights and protections of citizenship between citizens and immigrants. Relatedly, the illegal status became a central tool to mark undocumented immigrants as persons living with the abstract and far-reaching social, political, and economic conditions of illegality.[51] Through the twentieth century and through the present day, US immigration control, including the US Border Patrol, has been central to racializing (and specifically Mexicanizing) a system of unequal social relations that emerge from and reinforce the constructed legal/illegal binary.[52]

The racial and class inequities that are reinforced through immigration control were indeed central to my body as appearing legal. When the Border Patrol agent told me that I did not "look illegal," this meant that my body did not conform to the confluence of gender, class, and complexion that Border Patrol officers have been trained to police, often regardless of legal status. As the *New York Times* has quoted from an official from the Department of Homeland Security, "We can't do our job without taking ethnicity into account. We are very dependent on that."[53] This meant my ethnicity, my fair complexion and clearly branded Patagonia-vest (est. cost $99 USD), existed outside the complexion-inflected class specificity of Border Patrol

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[51] The condition of illegality affects virtually every facet of one's life in the United States, from employment to housing access, health case, owning property, education, and civic participation. See discussion on Border Patrol and illegality in Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 9–10.

[52] Hernández, *Migra!* 10.

[53] Todd Miller, *Build Bridges, Not Walls: A Journey to a World Without Borders* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2021) , 5.

practices that Kelly Lytle Hernández refers to as "Mexican Brown."[54] Alongside gender, class and complexion, I argue that my pronouncement of my Jewishness and physical proximity to a site of Jewish memory also played a role in affirming my legal inclusion to the state. Libby Garland's work has historicized the coordinated efforts between the 1920s and 1960s to isolate discussions of Jewish immigration to the US from discussions of illegal immigration, what Garland refers to as a process of "de-illegalizing" and a byproduct of political efforts on the part of Jewish American citizens.[55] The decades following the World War II era in the US, notably the Holocaust, the establishment of the Israeli state, and the Cold War (notably the Soviet and Iranian contexts), worked to bolster the efforts of American Jewish activism, casting European and Middle Eastern Jewish migration to the US as deserving and in turn, create more robust, legal pathways for Jewish migration, that also severed "the official association between Jews and illegal immigration."[56]

The Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery is a space where methods of border governance can rehearse and reinforce the bifurcation between Jewishness and illegality. In the eyes of the state, my body as legal is not only because of how it does not conform to the category of "Mexican Brown," but because of my self-proclaimed Jewishness and connection to a designated Jewish space. The Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery, a spatial expression of the JANPIC, tacitly acts as an extension of border governance, where white Jewish bodies are claimed as legal and belonging, and posthumous Jewish bodied as grievable and worthy of protection by the state,

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[54] Hernández's conceptual and rhetorical tool to capture the types of persons who live/lived within the Border Patrol's sphere of suspicion was based off correspondence records, complain files and cultural artifacts that summarize the tacit embodied distinctions that Border Patrol officers policed. Hernández, *Migra!* 10.

[55] Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 3.

[56] Garland, *After They Closed the Gates*, 13.

financially and militarily. Rather than exposing the ruptures in border enforcement and the inherent violence on which settler society relies, the cemetery reinforces the permanence of white settlement in the Sonoran Desert by preserving the legacy of Jewish pioneers and their contributions to state-making and border building through capital expansion.

Second, the cemetery site exposes the extent to which US border policing is enforced through "internal bordering" practices, or the practices of immigrant surveillance that are practices within the nation-state.[57] The Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery is located in the one-hundred-mile border zone between Arizona's southern border with Sonora, MX, a space that Harsha Walia refers to as a method of border governance based on "territorial diffusion." For those visiting the cemetery from anywhere north of Douglas, AZ on the US side of the border, you are likely to encounter an internal Custom's and Border Patrol check point along one of the state-routes, on the northbound side of the road. I have visited the cemetery on three separate occasions between 2018, 2020, and 2021 and I have never been stopped at a CBP check point. Because I do not "look" illegal, my vehicle is waved right through the check point, and I am able to drive away with my constitutional rights intact. For those whose bodies have been marked by mechanisms of exclusion as illegal or undesirable however, CBP does not hesitate to use its legal powers to stop and search vehicles all throughout the one-hundred-mile jurisdiction.

The cemetery exists within this expansive jurisdiction, where racialized surveillance is ubiquitous, and the experience of being undocumented or looking undocumented in such a space is intentionally made to be "intolerable."[58] There is an inherent paradox of a 501(c)(3) designated space located within a one-hundred-mile zone of territorial diffusion, where racialized border

[57] Walia, *Border and Rule*, 84.

[58] Walia, *Border and Rule*, 84.

surveillance is internalized beyond the border itself. While the state has determined the cemetery to be protected under the 501(c)(3) designation, ostensibly for its capacity to offer a public service, the state simultaneously enforces a strategy of border governance that marks the cemetery space and the surrounding one-hundred-mile zone as intolerable and violent for many members of the public, specifically those groups that have been racialized as looking illegal.

Third and finally, the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery may also shed light on the constellation of corporate and military connections between US and Israeli settler colonial projects as they manifest in border zones and strategies of border securitization. During my initial visit to the cemetery in November 2018, standing between the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery and the border wall, the CBP officer instructed me to head back toward my ancestor's graves, but not before raising his hand in a salutary gesture and shouted, "Shalom!" before driving away. As an American Jew with a lifetime of involvement in organized Jewish American communities, including a K–8 Jewish day school, synagogues, and other Jewish institutions, the word *shalom*, the Hebrew for hello, goodbye, and peace, was very familiar to me. However, the utterance of *shalom* from a non-Jewish, US Border Patrol officer next to the US-Mexico border wall provokes an entirely different set of associations that have little to do with religious or spiritual practice, and more to do with how the PIC connects US settler colonialism and Jewish nationalism across border zones.

The utterance of the Hebrew word *shalom* from a federal agent of US border enforcement, recalls the ways that US settler colonialism, Jewish nationalism and neoliberal globalization interact through the PIC, and the global surveillance market. Beginning in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, and more visibly in Palestine in the decades prior to the Nakba and Israeli statehood (1948), the politics of language within the Zionist movement reframed the

Hebrew language and culture outside its historically limited religious and scholarly Jewish contexts. Instead, Hebrew was recast as central to the Jewish nationalist project, and the language through which certain masculinizing, racial and colonial projects imperatives of Jewish nationalism would be realized. While Hebrew, as a linguistic and cultural practice in post-1948 Israel-Palestine was experienced and embraced differently across different groups and different settings, the establishment of a "Hebrew language society" as the linguistic status quo was central to the Zionist project and Israeli nation-building.[59] The utterance of the word *shalom* from US CBP calls our attention to the way institutions and agents of US border governance are linked, ideologically and materially, to Israeli strategies of border governance.

Since 2001, and after September 11th specifically, settler strategies of border governance along the US-Mexico border increasingly mirror strategies of Israeli surveillance toward Palestinians. The confluence of settler colonial imperatives and neoliberal global capitalism have created the context for corporate agreements between US Homeland Security and the private Israeli surveillance sector, as Israeli-made surveillance technologies move from Gaza to the Sonoran Desert, criminalizing undocumented migrants and native peoples on their ancestral homelands and US-designated tribal nation.[60] Cooperation between US state and Israeli

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[59] Liora Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 1–5.

[60] Collaborations between US and Israeli settler colonial projects in Arizona have also played out in the political arena, including a 2018 state law requiring state contractors to confirm they are not participating in boycotts of Israel, including the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. The law was blocked by a federal court for violating contractor's First Amendment right to freedom of speech. In 2019, a new law was put into place by Gov. Ducey that limits anti-boycott certification to for-profit companies with over ten employees and government contract valued at over $100,000. While the law no longer will impact many individuals and small businesses, the law's restructuring means that it will continue to shape some labor practices in Arizona, despite the federal court's ruling of the law as unconstitutional. Brian Hauss, "Arizona Lawmakers Running Scared After Anti-Boycott Law Ruled Unconstitutional," ACLU, April 16, 2019, https://www.aclu.org/blog/free-speech/arizona-lawmakers-running-scared-after-anti-boycott-law-ruled-unconstitutional. BDS tactics that target the Israeli economy began in 2005 in response to an explicit ask by over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations that the international community join them in solidarity to bring accountability to the state of Israel's human right's abuses, including the ongoing occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the Golan Heights; discrimination against

corporate entities have played a role in the transformation of a region that has sustained human and ecological life for thousands of years, into lethal PTD corridor. In 2019, the Tohono O'odham lands on the US side of the border became one of the most militarized communities in the US, after US Customs and Border Protection contracted Elbit Systems, Israel's largest private arms company to construct fifty-three surveillance towers along the southern Arizona border, which can do the work of "100 agents."[61] NICE, a company founded by seven ex-IDF soldiers secured a contract with former Maricopa sheriff and self-identified "America's toughest sheriff" to provide one of his prisons with closed circuit TV camera.[62] Some of the same technology that Elbit has sold to the US government has also been used throughout the Israeli occupied territories in Palestine, including Gaza and the West Bank. During the years following the passage of PTD/NAFTA in 1994, the US Border Patrol increased in size from 4,000 agents to 21,000, public and private Israeli entities have trained US Customs and Border Protection, Homeland Security official and thousands of US law enforcement officers in counter terrorism and border and perimeter security.[63] Known by some communities as "Deadly Exchange," the

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Palestinian citizens living in Israel; and state-refusal of Palestinian refugee rights. Boycott, Divestment campaigns have been used globally and in different historic moments, as a non-violent social movement escalation strategy. "JVP Supports the BDS Movement," Jewish Voices for Peace, accessed July 23, 2021, https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/jvp-supports-the-bds-movement/.

[61] Todd Miller, "How Border Patrol Occupied the Tohono O'odham Nation," *In These Times*, June 12, 2019, https://inthesetimes.com/article/us-mexico-border-surveillance-tohono-oodham-nation-border-patrol; Will Parish, "The US Border Patrol and an Israeli Military Contractor Are Putting a Native American Reservation Under Constant Surveillance," *The Intercept*, August 15, 2019, https://theintercept.com/2019/08/25/border-patrol-israel-elbit-surveillance/.

[62] Todd Miller, *Empire of Borders: The Expansion of the US Border Around the World* (London: Verso Books, 2019), 78. Before becoming a proxy for enforcing racist US immigration policies in the 2000s, Arpaio published a book: Joe Arpaio, *America's Toughest Sheriff: How We Can Win the War Against Crime* (Manila: Summit Publishing Group, 1996).

[63] Miller, *Empire of Borders*, 77–78.

trainings on surveillance and policing practices of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) happen on many levels of US policing, including the FBI, Border Patrol agents and city police forces.[64]

My interaction with the CBP serves as a reminder to the existence of these linked infrastructures of US and Israel surveillance that are upheld through on-going collaborations between their respective settler colonial projects and the global neoliberal economies. Additionally, is a reminder that twenty-first-century links between US and Israel colonial projects have helped reinforce the notion that Jewishness, alongside class, complexion, and gender, can also be a marker of inclusion and belonging to the state. Building off the political advocacy of post-World War II American Jews, the deep ties between US and Israeli forms of border governance also reinforces the uncoupling between Jewishness and illegality. In turn, we might consider how the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery as a space, passively, reinforces the same exclusionary logic of border governance, where white Jewish bodies do "not look illegal," while undocumented migrants and Indigenous bodies remain targeted by Border Patrol's profile of who does look illegal.

Reimagining Jewish Continuity on Stolen Land

Building upon this dissertation's earlier case studies that show how US settler colonial structures have shaped commercial and territorial strategies of European Jewish American continuity in the US-Mexico border region, this final chapter demonstrates how the shared requirements of US settler colonialism and neoliberalism structure institutional models of Jewish American life. The Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery offers a unique site through which to trace how imperatives of settler colonialism and neoliberalism impact Jewish American institutions, identity, and notions of continuity. In particular, the cemetery's proximity to the US-Mexico

[64] "About Deadly Exchange," Jewish Voices for Peace, accessed July 23, 2021, https://deadlyexchange.org/about-deadly-exchange/.

border wall, a landscape created through a multi-century settler colonial process and reshaped in the late twentieth century by imperatives of neoliberal global capitalism, offers an analytic space through which to identify how Jewish American institutions relate to the state's colonial and economic projects.

Through the framework of the JANPIC, the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery reflects the active ways that Jewish institutions, identity, and strategies of continuity have acted on behalf of the neoliberal imperatives of the US political economy, while the PIC highlights the indirect ways that the imperative of Jewish continuity in the cemetery supports settler colonial strategies of border governance. If the Bisbee-Douglas Cemetery shows us the existing limitations of what Jewish continuity means under the model of privatized Jewish capital, it also offers a speculative container through which we might imagine a radically different alternative.

The model of collective caretaking already underway is an important start for imagining how we might build an anticapitalist model of Jewish continuity that operates relationally, regionally and across difference. A relation and regional model of Jewish continuity could mean that the imperative to preserve Jewish history in southern Arizona works in solidarity with O'odham land and water defenders working to protect the sacred sites, including ancestral burial grounds, in Quitobaquito Springs and Monument Hill, inside Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument just two hundred miles west of Douglas along the border.[65] New visions of Jewish

[65] In 2020, enhanced surveillance and expanded wall construction near the Yuma-Sonoyta crossing along the southwestern Arizona border with Sonora has destroyed lands and waters sacred to the Tohono O'odham Nation, including ancient burial sites, while disrupting migratory pilgrimages for O'odham peoples who live on the Mexican side of the border. Sacred sites like Monument Hill, which has supported human and ecological life for over sixteen thousand years, blasted in the name of border security, were inside the territorial boundaries of Organ Pipe National Monument. Under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, O'odham lands allegedly were protected under some of the strictest public land designations. Like the memorializing migrant deaths, which exposes the lethal human dimensions to border security, the desecration of O'odham lands sheds light on the continued hypocrisy of US federal land protections granted to Indigenous nations. Amy Goodman and Nellie Jo David, "O'odham Land Defenders Lead Indigenous Resistance to Trump's Border Wall amid Militarized Crackdown," *Democracy Now*, October 12, 2020, https://www.democracynow.org/2020/10/12/organ_pipe_national_monument_border_wall.

futurity in the border region could also mean working in solidarity with organizations, activists and artists who transform spaces of violence and death produced through the PIC into resources of humanitarian aid.[66] While this dissertation does not offer such histories, there is a wealth of lessons that we might draw from Jewish and Jewish American inter-racial organizing and social movements, particularly for immigrant justice.[67] Whatever new directions arise, the practice and method of Jewish continuity in the border region must be radically reimagined as a collective effort that works across difference and outside of private philanthropic capital. If Jewish continuity should have a future as an organizing praxis, it must counter the narrative of the Holocaust as an exceptional genocide, and instead, reimagine Jewish continuity as an urgent and relational practice of resisting on-going genocides, within and beyond the US-Mexico border region.

[66] Autcher, "Border Monuments."

[67] In an interview featured in *Protocols Magazine*'s issue on the theme of *tikkun*, or repair, Tucson-based Jewish social worker and community organizer speaks about her work supporting Central American asylum seekers during the Sanctuary Movement in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas in the 1980s. Melrood's testimony emphasizes how an inclusive and relational understanding of the Nazi holocaust in the 1930s–1940s, helped guide her solidarity work with those fleeing genocide in Central America in the 1970s–1980s. Laurie Melrood and Ariel Goldberg, "Sanctuary," *Protocols*, no. 5 (2019), https://prtcls.com/article/sanctuary/. Rachel Buff's exploration into the twentieth-century history of multiracial coalition building for immigrant rights in the US through the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Border (ACPFB). Histories of Jewish American participation are among those included in tracing how the ACPFB responded to and organized against repression, discrimination, detention and expulsion in migrant communities. Rachel Ida Buff, *Against the Deportation Terror: Organizing for Immigrant Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017).

Conclusion

Based on a four-year, interdisciplinary historical and ethnographic study, *The New Jewish Pioneer* traces how European Jewish Americans engaged with structures of capitalism, colonization, and narratives of continuity on the US-Mexico border. The central aim of this study is to prove that between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the racial and spatial aspirations of US imperialism in the US-Mexico border region created the conditions for European Jewish immigrants to access social, economic, and racial belonging to a white settler class. The secondary aim of this regional history is to provide context for understanding how current, organized Jewish American life in the border region, remains ensconced by the capital, racial and territorial imperatives of US imperialism. The analysis draws from federal, state, and organizational archival records between Mexico and the US, as well as place-based, autoethnography at a Jewish cemetery in Douglas, Arizona.

As discussed in chapter one, I reveal that the historiography of Jewish immigration to and settlement in the American West, upholds a triumphalist liberal narrative that overlooks the relational and colonial contexts in which Jewish socioeconomic and racial belonging developed. Through a settler colonial framework, I review the secondary source literature on colonial-era Sephardic histories in northern New Spain and nineteenth-century Western Jewish histories published between 1950 and 2000. What I refer to as Jewish pioneer literature, this foundational historiography conceived of the US-Mexico border region as an exceptional space of religious, economic, and political freedom and social belonging for Jews living in liberal, Western contexts. Not until the 2000s and the "racial turn" in US and Mexican Jewish Studies, do scholars begin to locate these histories beyond the Jewish pioneer framework, and within a more

expansive lens that attends to the required, racialized violence of Western colonialism and capitalism. I align my scholarship amongst this cohort of scholars who historicize Jewish inclusion into liberal nation-states in the West, as a relational process that proceeded alongside, and was reliant upon, the exclusion of American Indigenous, Afro-descendant, Asian, and Mexican-origin peoples from the same liberal projects.

The first of three original case studies, chapter two revises the dominant nineteenth-century Jewish pioneer narrative and writes the Jewish border entrepreneur into the history of capitalist and military expansion across the "new" American Southwest and Northern Mexico. Jewish border merchants between Baja California, Sonora, and Arizona, helped expand and profited from the economies of extraction, policing, and revolution. Between the two Californias, I trace the family histories of Louis Mendelson and Maximiliano Bernstein, who participated in and benefited from the emergent cross-border mining and shipping industries. The socioeconomic mobility and inclusion of European merchants to the industrializing border region was inseparable from the white supremacist, racial aspirations of Mexican modernity under the regime of Porfirio Díaz.

Next, the history of the Goldbaum family in the Arizona-Sonora border region emphasizes how policing, alongside capitalism, also reinforced Jewish belonging to a white settler class. Lastly, the history of the Capin family reflects how the commercial livelihoods of Jewish border merchants became directly entangled in the militarization of the region during the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). Together, these case studies reflect how the same settler colonial project that created the US-Mexico border region in 1848 also created the conditions for Jewish immigrants to assume roles as commercial intermediaries between binational state, corporate, and military entities. A settler colonial framework clarifies that commercial

middlemen are not separate or above the geopolitical contexts in which they exist; rather, commercial intermediaries may serve active and necessary roles in expanding a racial and colonial project.

Chapter three turns toward a similar cohort of Jewish entrepreneurs in late-nineteenth-century California, who looked toward Northern Mexico as a site of capitalist, territorial, and demographic expansion. I argue that the plan to establish a semi-sovereign Jewish nation-state in Baja California, Mexico sheds light on roles that US imperialism and Mexican modernity played on early movements for Jewish nationalism. The dream to build a "Palestine on the Pacific" was one among numerous political movements for Jewish nationalism in the late nineteenth century that envisioned Jewish continuity through liberal articulations of peoplehood, citizenship, and territorial belonging. According to primary sources located during this research process, the plan endured in different iterations through at least 1939. While there are several studies that explore non-Palestine-focused movements for Jewish nation-building, scholars have yet to consider how such models of Jewish nationalism were influenced by extra-European colonial projects, most notably, US imperial state formations in North America.

The fourth and final chapter leverages the historical foundation of this dissertation to explore how the past inclusion of Jewish border merchants into a white settler class shapes narratives and strategies of Jewish continuity in the present. The Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery in Douglas, Arizona, offers a monument to the life and death of Jewish border merchants under the economies of extraction, policing, and revolution. Since the 1990s, the cemetery has undergone several restoration efforts to preserve this legacy of the "Jewish pioneers of Cochise County." Meanwhile, the surrounding Sonoran Desert landscape has been transformed by immigration policies and material technologies of surveillance, which continue to

endanger the continuity of other groups and reinforce a racialized, social order. The spatial juxtaposition between the cemetery and the border wall invites us to consider how the Jewish relationship to land reflects on-going, racial inequalities that settler society produces. I argue that the cemetery is not only a window into the past process of Jewish inclusion under capitalism, but also the present, and evolving relationships between incorporated, Jewish American identity and neoliberal and settler colonial imperatives along the border.

Drawing together scholarly critiques of philanthropy, and the non-profit and prison industrial complexes, I offer the Jewish American Non-Profit Industrial Complex as an analytic framework for understanding how neoliberal and settler colonial imperatives shape, and can be deployed through, Jewish American institutions. As scholars before me have shown how the NPIC is fueled by neoliberalism's simultaneous disavowal of, and financial investment in, racialized state-sanctioned violence, the Bisbee-Douglas Jewish Cemetery is a discursive placeholder for exploring how Jewish philanthropic capital simultaneously funds progressive institutions and pro-state, white supremacist, space-making imperatives. In short, the institutionalization of Jewish American identity and organized life in the American Southwest has recast Jewish American non-profits as vehicles through which neoliberal and settler colonial ideologies of nation-building can be carried out.

This interdisciplinary data set demonstrates how modern Jewish settlement, socioeconomic mobility, and continuity was affirmed by the imperatives of US settler society along the border region. Furthermore, the data reflects how Jewish inclusion remains an on-going and evolving project, which presently can be realized through the interpolation of organized Jewish American life into pro-neoliberal and state structures. By historicizing the foundational decades of Jewish incorporation and protection under capitalist and military

expansion across the US-Mexico border region, I show how the contemporary institutionalization of Jewish American life also serves the racialized (white supremacist) and neoliberal requirements of US imperialism and settler colonialism across and beyond the US-Mexico border region.

I employ a settler colonial critique as an analytic framework and conceptual methodology to capture the ways that state policies of removal, extraction, accumulation (i.e., taxation) and policing have collectively shaped how Jews experienced social and economic inclusion to US settler society along the border since 1848. Furthermore, centering the US-Mexico border region as an analytic space to understand a Western Jewish past, underscores the history of the region as a real, and imagined site of religious refuge for European Jews, beginning in the sixteenth century, under Spanish colonialism. And lastly, by locating Jewish philanthropic capital within the Jewish American Non-Profit Industrial Complex, this dissertation provides a foundation for exploring how strategies of Jewish historical continuity are interwoven with the surrounding racial and colonial context.

In sum, the interdisciplinary approaches of *The New Jewish Pioneer* intervene and offer new ways to write Jews into the histories of settler colonial and neoliberal economies in the Americas, and the related racial ordering at the US-Mexico border. By locating the settlement and experiences of Jews within a structural analysis of power, I draw on conceptual methodologies that are central to the Ethnic Studies disciplines, while enriching both Jewish and Chicana/o Studies. This dissertation contributes to the study of Jews and capitalism in settler colonial contexts, and uniquely weaves modern Jewish history into the historiography of the US-Mexico border region, and bridges critical scholarship between Jewish American philanthropic capital and the non-profit and prison industrial complexes in the US.

The New Jewish Pioneer is not a history of radical, progressive Jewish modes of organizing, nor a narrative of ancestral wisdoms that might be used to survive our contemporary apocalypses and genocides. On the contrary, the history I trace reflects how US settler colonial structures along the US-Mexico border have deployed Jews as white settlers and embraced Jewish American institutions as proxies for the private redistribution of stolen capital. Part of my commitment to practicing Ethnic Studies pedagogies meant writing honestly, and relationally, about the historical and ongoing relationships between Jewish racial and economic inclusion to US settler society and the processes of dispossession, disappearance, and exclusions on which it relied, and relies. A relational treatment of Jewish histories in the American West exposes difficult and violent truths, many of which were overlooked and unaccounted for in my experience growing up and being educated in Jewish community in California in the 1990s and 2000s.

With this foundation, I hope to move toward a different, but related avenue of research that excavates alternative and counter Jewish histories along the US-Mexico border. Rather than stories of interpolation into the status quo, I hope to explore histories of how Jewish Americans, independently and collectively, have challenged and disrupted US settler colonial and capitalist imperatives nationally, and along the US-Mexico border, specifically. Notably, my personal and professional longing to connect with Jewish American histories of resistance has coincided with a broader moment of soul searching amongst Jewish American institutions, organizations, and some Jewish Studies scholars. Increasingly over the last decade, there is a growing awareness of the relationship between mainstream Jewish American institutions, and neoliberal capitalism,

and the related challenges of organizing *as* Jews, and in solidarity, with social justice movements.[1]

Part of this soul-searching effort has exposed the limitations for progressive change and anti-racist coalition building between Jewish Americans and other groups, whether through on the ground organizing, or within the academy. As highlighted by Lila Corwin Berman's scholarship on Jewish American philanthropy, the financial foundation of most Jewish American institutions dictate that Jewish identity reflect the neoliberal, secular values of American capitalism.[2] Necessarily, the narratives of Jewish American rebellion, disruption, and radical coalition building, will necessarily take place outside of formally organized Jewish American life; this reality will guide my future research directions.

As a second book project, I hope to trace Jewish American coalition building within immigrant organizing spaces in the US and the racial-religious politics of asylum. At the intersection of social movement histories, interracial and interfaith organizing, I will begin with the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s, with careful consideration of the geopolitical and

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[1] In 2014, the Jewish American movement If Not Now was founded. What was an immediate response to Israel's invasion of Gaza, the organization sustained itself under the goal of disrupting American Jewish institutional support for the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. Under the Trump presidency (2016–2020), more mainstream visibility regarding enforcement of US immigration laws and policing, and growing coalitions between Black Lives Matter, Indigenous resistance movements for #landback across the US and Palestinian liberation, rippled throughout Jewish American organizing, academic and media spaces. In 2018, the 72-year-old secular Jewish magazine *Jewish Currents* rebranded to account for a new audience of "millennial Jewish radicals." In response to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's use of the term "concentration camps" to describe state sanctioned practice of family separation and caging children at the US's southern border, the Jewish-led mobilization, Never Again Action emerged, affirming the NY representative's characterization, and serving as a container for ongoing organized Jewish resistance to US strategies of immigrant exclusion. Rumblings were even seen amongst the ranks of the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), the founding institution for the development of Jewish Studies methodologies and pedagogies, through the formation of the Jewish Scholars Activist Network (JSAN) in 2019, responding to an executive order by President Trump to "combat anti-Semitism," through further criminalization of Palestinian liberation struggles on college campuses. Josefin Dolsten, "*Jewish Currents*, a 72-Year-Old Left Wing Magazine, Wants to Appeal to Millennials," *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, April 17, 2018, https://www.jta.org/2018/04/17/united-states/jewish-currents-72-year-old-left-wing-magazine-wants-appeal-millennials; Yaron Steinbuch, "US Holocaust Museum Denounces AOC's 'Concentration Camp' Remarks," *New York Post*, June 24, 2019, https://nypost.com/2019/06/24/us-holocaust-museum-denounces-aocs-concentration-camp-remarks/.

[2] Lila Corwin Berman, *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

ideological structures that drive some Jewish American individuals (and institutions) to be rebellious, to be traitors of imperialism, and to organize collectively across racial and ethno-religious differences. My cursory review of the literature has indicated a dearth of academic scholarship on the topic of Jewish American participation in late-twentieth-century social movements. While Central American and Religious Studies has produced many studies on the Sanctuary Movement, no research has closely considered the significance and scope of Jewish American participation. Likewise, Jewish Studies has overwhelmingly focused on mid-twentieth-century struggles for Black liberation as the entry point for exploring Jewish American solidarity within US social justice movements.

I came to this possible research topic in fall 2020, when I began processing the personal archival collection belonging to a mentor and Jewish community elder in Tucson, Arizona. The source base reflects her decades of immigrant's rights work, and time volunteering in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas during the US Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s. The collaborative archival process, which has included autoethnographic witnessing, has opened my eyes to the many untold stories of Jewish radicalism, resistance, and refusal. Significantly, I am learning how independent, Jewish American organizers have wielded Holocaust memory (and other histories of Jewish exclusion) as "multidirectional" memories and tools to mobilize interfaith and interracial solidarity and coalition-building.[3] Through personal correspondence, newsletters, periodicals, recorded testimonies, and poetry, the collection sheds light on a significant, but

[3] Beginning in the late 1960s, Holocaust memory has been institutionalized and at systemic and global levels as an exceptional narrative of modern genocide. As Norman Finklestein and others have argued, this institutionalization has served to solidify the identity of Jews as perpetual victims, influence US and Israeli politics, and justify ongoing, colonial violence against Palestinians and others. When Holocaust memory is located within a broader genealogy of genocides (what Michael Rothberg might refer to as a multidirectional memory framework), even as a rhetoric of solidarity, charges of anti-Semitism are never far off. Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London: Verso, 2000); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

underexplored facet of Sanctuary Movement history that unfolded across interfaith and interracial networks between Central America, the US-Mexico border region, and South Texas, specifically. I hope that my ongoing archival commitments to this project will establish a foundation for my forthcoming research that situates Jewish American history within the broader history of US social movement activism and immigrant rights. Methodologically, I look forward to honing my archival skills, while also incorporating oral testimony and ethnography into my research design process.

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