

# Jewish History and the Ideology of Modern Sport: Approaches and Interpretations

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Where and how a society defines sport and the body reflects how its members define themselves. Coincidentally, sports in modern industrial and post-industrial societies have come to be parables tinctured with the issues and conflicts of race, ethnicity, and gender. Over the past century and a half, the advent and evolution of modern sport, and of course the Olympic movement, have been closely intertwined with Jewish history. Because they were rooted and molded simultaneously by predictable socio-cultural, psychological, and economic realities, these events also have greatly influenced and impacted each other. They evolved at a crucial junction in history. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the socio-political emancipation, accelerated pace of industrialization, economic empowerment, rise of political and racial anti-Semitism, and the ascent of political Zionism coincided with the rise of modern sport and the formative years of the Olympic movement. This was also the time of a radical and irretrievable transformation of the Jewish community from a religious to an ethno-culturally based community. The question of how sport and Jewish intellectual thought, ethics, and tradition interacts with each other is an intriguingly complex one. Every religion contains a distinct ideology and value system that, according to Max Weber, exerts powerful influences upon social action. Judaism is no different. Yet, an interpretation of Jewish religious ethics and its influence on modern life is compounded by ethno-cultural dimensions that have developed as a consequence of cultural and social forces beyond the boundaries of the Jewish community.

The purpose of this essay is to provide a critical view of the intricate relationship that exists between a secular transnational movement with somewhat vaguely defined religious trappings, such as international sport in general and the Olympic movement in particular, and Jewish religious tradition and ethno-cultural

ethic. More specifically, this essay will present recent research and examine questions about the nature and extent of Jewish sports participation in light of complex philosophical, societal, cultural, economic, and psychological forces. Although sport is only one manifestation of the creative energy of any given group, it has the power to project a representation that indelibly marks and identifies, both on the conscious and subconscious level, the image of its members. In scrutinizing the multifarious relationship between the Jewish community and modern sport, one must approach Jewish history and culture with a highly nuanced and interdisciplinary methodology, blurring well-established academic boundaries usually relegated to different domains of the intellectual spectrum. History is not an abstraction, although abstract lines of development can be discerned in the interaction of psychological, societal, and economic factors, as well as in the cultural traditions that shape and govern human societies.

Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the Olympic movement, piously intoned almost a hundred years ago that “Olympism is beyond ideology.”<sup>1</sup> However, like many of the diminutive French baron’s pronouncements, this remains in the realm of propaganda slogans. Like all international, or rather transnational organizations,



Members of Hakoah Köln at the creation of Jüdische Turnerschaft in 1903. Photo courtesy of George Eisen.

the world community has granted sport and the Olympic movement's claim for extraterritorial status, at least tacitly. During the past one hundred and fifty years, sport has been able to generate an aura of almost religious mysticism and mythology through groups of loyal followers, carefully choreographed rituals, and mystical images. "Sportianity," as some observers creatively termed it, has also developed a corresponding ideology, not unlike an institutionalized religion, which prescribes and vigorously promotes a repertoire of behavior, well-orchestrated ceremonies, and core myths that have the power to bind the believers together into a mass movement. I might also add that the Olympic movement, at least in its inception, was based on unwaveringly pacifistic principles.<sup>2</sup>

A serious discussion about the nature and philosophy of sport and the Olympic movement, beyond some metaphysical musings, to borrow a phrase from John Hoberman, "remains underdeveloped." Other than John MacAloon's cultural study of the psychology of Pierre de Coubertin and the creation of the Olympic movement, Hoberman has been the only scholar who deemed it necessary to address this issue. How world religions relate to sport and the Olympic Games and how religious attitudes govern sport and Olympic participation also remains, for the most part, in the domain of speculative philosophy, metaphysical musings, and often wishful thinking. Steven J. Overman's recent book, *The Influence of the Protestant Ethic on Sport and Recreation*, is the only seminal work that deals directly with the issue of religious ethic and its influence on sport. The lack of critical discussion about these issues is lamentable in light of how much religion utilized sports for its own purposes during the past hundred years.<sup>3</sup> Judaism, with its infinite ethical nuances and sheer complexity, compounded by a given host-nation's cultural value-system, national aspirations and sensibilities, and its relationship to sport and the Olympic movement, is even less explored or given critical scrutiny.

Even a cursory glimpse at the scholarly literature finds that the few philosophical papers on the theme of sports in Jewish history and culture look for rabbinical justification for attitudes toward sport as a human need and a social institution. This approach is somewhat misleading because it assumes specific religious objections or rulings against sports or Olympic participation either in the Bible or the Talmudic literature. However, there is no such ethical injunction. This is a case when a belief takes on a life of its own. Consequently, Jewish historians and social observers frequently fall into the trap of promoting a view of Jewish attitudes toward sport with a pronounced bias toward ethical values at the expense of a penetrating view of the interaction of these values with social, political, and economic factors.<sup>4</sup>

As a world religion, Judaism has frequently been characterized as highly rational in promoting religious and communal values that take into account both one's humanity and the idea of a "universal brother-sisterhood." Just like modern sport and the Olympic movement, the historical dispersion of the Jewish people is based, by necessity, on the principle of transnationalism with a global outreach. This transnationalism also advances a sense of "cosmopolitanism," a term that has regularly been hurled against Jews by those who promote anti-Semitic

ideologies. Jewish values, similar to those of the international sport movement, have had to grapple with the idea of an inherent conflict between transcendence and nationalistic aspirations and national psychologies. Finally, Judaism promotes a pacifist ideology, similar to that of the early Olympic leadership, with a strong aversion toward physical violence.<sup>5</sup>

The majority of sources agree, however, that the complex relationship between the ethos of sports, the Olympic Games, and Jewish religious and communal values, both in ancient and modern times, has been problematic at best and almost always wrought with contradictions. This created a marked philosophical strain in Jewish religious or communal thought, viewing sport, and explicitly “athleticism,” with a certain degree of discomfort and ambivalence. Going “deep into the recesses of the Jewish psyche,” as the historian Irving Howe, who chronicled so passionately turn-of-the-century Jewish New York, eloquently phrased it, was part of an intellectual “inheritance”—part of a pronounced ambiguity toward the “physical” and the body in general.<sup>6</sup> The question naturally arises as to why Jewish tradition and culture tend to undervalue and belittle Jewish achievements in sports. In a similar vein, I often have been mystified by people’s reaction, a mixture of amazement that borders on disbelief, and more often from Jews than gentiles, upon learning I was a boxer in my youth. Needless to say, the fact that my research sometimes covers topics focusing on Jewish sport participation is also greeted with a degree of skepticism and a pronounced indifference among many colleagues whose main interest is Jewish Studies.

If we are able to set aside for a moment some preconceived ideas and inherent biases, it is not hard for scholars to recognize that a community, straddling between two worlds, must develop a unique understanding of and rationalization for sport as a social institution. Simultaneously, scholars must understand how sport functions in promoting this community’s integration into a modern society. In this rationale, the fact that the emergence of sport as a mass movement and the rise of the Jewish community into the middle class coincided and naturally impacted and influenced each other becomes rather meaningful. We need to view the movement of Jewry into the ranks of the bourgeoisie not as a discreet or distinct category or a mere classification. Their ascent needs to be interpreted as the creation of complex social relationships with infinite communicative “nerve endings.” This momentum created a web of social relationships, where sport was to play a crucial role, that connected a tentative and precariously balanced middle-class minority to a coveted but class-conscious upper class, especially in Central Europe, and a restless and fermenting underclass from which Jews escaped only within the span of a generation. To adjust to general societal mores and norms or to be accepted by mainstream culture, no minority group or subculture can differ too drastically from that of society at large. Jewish religious philosophy, influencing in some degree even the most secular segments of the community, promoted the care of the body as an integral part of health. Maimonides, the most significant Jewish teacher of the Middle Ages, promoted not only hygiene but also exercises, though with moderation. Nevertheless, an overwhelming belief that the “intellect, a sense of moderation, cherishing of spiritual values and the cultivation of rational,

goal-directed activities,” has evolved into a central tenet of legitimate Jewish conduct. “Emphasis on the body, excess, blind instinct...” were looked upon with suspicion and ambiguity. John Hoberman stirred up some heated controversies in his recent book, *Darwin's Athletes*, by claiming that it seems impossible to speak of black physical superiority without implying intellectual inferiority.<sup>7</sup> With equal flippancy, one might reason that it seems impossible to speak of Jewish intellectual prowess without asserting a physical pathology. It is almost as if Jews are allowed to admit their athletic prowess as long as they feel guilty about it.

This pronounced philosophical ambivalence about one's body and what it can accomplish, coupled with relentless anti-Semitic discourse about the Jew as an alien body within the body politic, amplifies an already negative body image in Jewish consciousness. To conjure the negative physical and moral image of the Jew, one need not borrow the imagery of Adolf Hitler. It is hard to contradict the myth that Jews are “nimble in their mind but not in their body,” which has ingrained itself as much within the Jewish psyche as in the world's awareness. It is not easy to reconcile with the image of an athlete the honorific of “People of the Book,” bestowed by Mohammed upon the Jews.

Every religious or ethnic group has a stake in shaping its image by imagining its past. The Jewish community has eagerly adopted the image of the “People of the Book” to counteract its powerlessness in physical terms. We might suspect here a consciously created link between the “physical inferiority” of the Jews to a Jewish complicity in fostering an image that values “cerebrality” and “spirituality” over physicality. One is almost tempted to claim that in the Jewish ethos it is impossible to speak of Jewish intellectual prowess without implying physical inferiority. Underscoring this attitude, even a casual question about famous Olympic Jewish athletes might elicit only the name of Mark Spitz—and even that only after some hesitation. The names Agnes Keleti and Maria Gorochovskaia, who were among the most successful Olympic athletes of all time, would invariably elicit blank stares.<sup>8</sup>

How much of this is subconscious amnesia or a deliberately self-induced and perpetuated myth and how much is reality seems at first glance to be a mystery. Even more intriguing is the possibility that this myth has been inspired by outside factors, notably anti-Semitic restrictions and stereotyping that later were reinforced by Jewish responses. Sander L. Gilman, professor at the University of Chicago, has explored in a series of penetrating books the function of stereotypes as markers of sexuality, race, and ethnic self-hatred. Although often no more than myths, he writes, myths can become “powerful enough to substitute for realities.” A myth does not take hold without expressing a foundation of some truths. They are misleading truths, usually, but important ones; truth, for one thing, addressing the needs of those who elaborate and accept the myth, truth that gives some control over complex realities; truth to create the recognition of shared values (however shakily grounded those values may actually be). Gilman argues that as a means of dealing with the complex realities of our perception of the world, stereotypes are an outward reflection of an internal cognitive process by which the human mind attempts to understand structural patterns. In many ways,

humans are pattern-seeking animals, trying to carve out from chaos and randomness a sense of order. "For stereotypes," writes Gilman, "like common places, carry entire realms of association with them, associations that form a subtext within the world of fiction."<sup>9</sup> Of course, even the myths that simplify reality are not, in themselves, simple. Without getting mired in Anthropology 101, we must accept the fact that we are tribal. We are somehow able to accentuate continuously the difference between a host group (society at large) and the Other (subgroups). Groups often need enemies, real, imagined, or purposefully invented, in order to reinforce identity, unity of purpose, and "tribal" boundaries. When the stereotyped minority contradicts the image, groups deliberately create alternative explanations that confirm their entrenched perception of this minority. A case in point is the fabled rivalry between two Hungarian soccer teams during the inter-war period: one representing the nationalistic elements of the Hungarian right (FTC, green-and-white) and the other associated with "Jewish interest" (MTK, blue-and-white). In describing the playing style of the former, observers frequently employed adjectives such as "team with a fighting heart" and representing the "Hungarian heart," while the "Jewish" team was characterized as playing intelligently, "with brain." The symbolism in this stereotyping is unmistakable; the Jewish brain is at work here. Yet, the contradiction is also glaring; the players, Jews and Christians alike, came from the same socio-economic strata, and the number of Jewish players was almost equal on both teams.<sup>10</sup>

If we examine the other side of this story, a response to stereotyping by society led to a sizable apologetic literature that proclaims the glory of Jewish athletic successes. There is always a danger in individualizing group accomplishments. Though rarely venturing beyond the realm of the superficial hagiography of "Einsteins and Mendelssohns of sport," as Manfred Laemmer so insightfully noted, these works provide an exhaustive list of Jewish sport achievements. Less known to American scholars is a host of articles and books that came out of Germany in the 1930s. These were works that, in the context of the times, were necessary and highly appreciated by an oppressed minority. They made valiant efforts to dispel the notion of Aryan superiority, while at the same time, they refuted and repudiated the anti-Semitic Nazi notion of Jewish physical inferiority and dysfunction.<sup>11</sup> Without analyzing these and other works of that genre, one easily discerns a common thread in how these authors rationalize their objectives. The aim of the authors is to counter-balance the perception and prejudice that Jews are weaklings and physically inferior people who are unable to compete with their gentile counterparts. Bernard Postal, the author of the *Encyclopedia of Jews in Sports*, reflects this apologetic sentiment in 1965 by noting that "the notion of Jewish physical inferiority, which became part of Western folklore during Medieval times when other legends about Jews were widely accepted as true, accounts for the fact that the story of the Jew in sports has remained a largely unknown and ignored chapter of Jewish history." Later, he adds, "throughout their history the Jews produced men of brawn, speed and physical stamina who distinguished themselves in sport."<sup>12</sup>

It is hard to deny that the precarious balancing act of scholarship about Jewish attitudes toward physical activities can be menaced by the perils of sentimentality and apologia. Between a stubborn desire to impugn Jews as being too intellectual and an equally strong zeal to claim the opposite, a sober examination and assessment was provided by a third wave of Jewish sport scholarship. Gaining strength from the 1980s onward, this scholarly movement finally began to sketch a balanced picture. A handful of historians, spearheaded by Steven Riess and Peter Levine, were able to mine the hidden crevices of Jewish history that yielded a steady stream of scholarship about an ethnic heritage hitherto unknown to scholars.<sup>13</sup>

All this cannot negate the idea that in spite of this flow of articles and books in the past decade, no penetrating analysis has been produced about the philosophical issues inherent in the complex relationship between the Jewish community and sport—and the societal-religious factors that have shaped it. Jewish religious ethic (or as some define it, Judaic theology) idealistically promotes a hierarchy of values in which the body, sport, and the Olympic Games occupy a certain role and place. However, how much this coincides or overlaps with the Jewish communal ethic, formulated more on the practical level, has never been well defined. While learning has always been central to Jewish thinking, Judaism as a religious system has never advocated or subscribed to extreme asceticism as does Christian monasticism, or the Buddhist removal of oneself from the world, or Islamic mortification of the flesh.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the central message of Judaic tradition is that of becoming and remaining involved in the community and the world. The two main axioms centrally rooted in Jewish philosophy are (1) the primacy of the spiritual over the physical, without neglecting the latter, and (2) the sanctity of life, including a strong aversion to physical violence.

Even without resorting to apologetic rationalization, the idea that Jews as a group might have been one of the most successful ethnic groups in the history of modern sport and the Olympic movement has somehow been relegated to the periphery of Jewish consciousness. Undeniably, the number of Jewish participants and their credentials in various national sports movements and the Olympic Games is so conspicuous, so overwhelming that in practical terms it negates the assumption that Jews lack the necessary physical attributes, interest, or drive to be top-level athletes. This provides us with at least a glimpse that, all assertions to the contrary, the Jewish community needed and embraced various early gymnastic and sport movements and the Olympic Games for its own specific reasons. The two most critical questions that need to be addressed are (1) what is the motivation behind a deliberate marginalization, bordering on a self-induced amnesia, of sport and the Olympics in Jewish consciousness, and (2) what are the reasons, despite this marginalization, for the obvious successes of Jewish athletes in national, international, and Olympic competitions.

It is not easy to reconcile these two antagonistic impulses to reject and to adopt sport as a forum for national and communal legitimacy. These issues reflect a recurring philosophical quandary that persists almost unabated since the rise of modern sport. It centers on an inherent contradiction or conflict between what

we believe about the spirit of Judaism, or as one observer termed it, the Jewish “*neshamah*,”<sup>15</sup> and the idea of sport and the Olympic Games. To the uninitiated, the literal translation of the meaning of this word means little. When Jews speak about “*neshamah*,” I have come to understand that they are talking not only about Jewish “spirit,” or “soul,” but also about something inward and existential. They mean a sort of eternal goodness in the heart and the moral and humanistic commandments to belong to, help, and care about one’s own community and the world. This theme is an intriguing one and worthy of exploration. Jewish sport participation, just like Jewish existence, is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon. It is governed by a complex web of Jewish religious and communal ethics, a Jewish “*neshamah*,” that are overlaid by external (societal) economic, political, social, and psychological factors.

There is always a wide gap, of course, between myth and reality. But, then, we cannot perpetuate mythologies about ourselves if these mythologies do not carry at least a kernel of truth. Chroniclers of Jewish life during the turn of the century in Eastern Europe described the *shtetl*—the small towns and villages in Poland, Belarus, and the Baltics. The picture they painted was of places where “emphasis on the body, excess, and blind instinct,” were looked upon with disdain. As with many myths, there is an element of truth in their depiction of a small Jewish town. Yet this idealistic portrayal of the Jew is still far from being accurate or fully justified because it neglects to mention external societal pressures, which obviously interacted with Jewish values.<sup>16</sup>

Culture, someone once noted, is the story we tell about ourselves or, rather, want to believe about ourselves. While Hassidic tales of pious rabbis have preoccupied the Jewish spiritual universe, there was always an instinctual fascination, indeed preoccupation, with the body. Can we call this an envy of a virile masculinity, as some scholars asserted, propagated by the surrounding gentile society? Or, and this can be also true, is it that concerned intellectuals had to address the issue of Jewish sport participation because of the squalid conditions in which a large segment of the Jewish community existed—from the little ghettos of Eastern Europe to the Lower East Side of New York? Finally, can one escape the designation of sport as an agent for assimilation and social and psychological integration in a rapidly rising, yet insecure, ethnic community?

In addressing these questions, it is fair to say that these three overlapping proposals interacted in propelling Jews to join the emerging attraction to the “virile” and “muscular” proposed by various nineteenth-century gymnastic movements, modern sport, and the Olympic Games. This psychological rationalization of the physical started with famous Jewish strongmen, who often protected the defenseless Jews in Jewish lore. With the rise of virulent racial anti-Semitism, especially as a backlash to emancipation, Jews became more and more radicalized in countering physical attacks with physical force as a means of self-defense.<sup>17</sup> In emphasizing the spiritual, we somehow fail to remember that in these same little *shtetles* there were also many Jewish “*shtarkes*” (strongmen)—porters, blacksmiths, and farmers who protected the community during anti-Semitic disturbances. They appeared in the popular imagination as a necessary

physical counterpart to the spiritual. They became an important and necessary component of a mental balancing act in a precarious Jewish existence within an increasingly complex and virulently anti-Semitic world. Yet, the list of Jewish “shtarkes,” among them Houdini, Breitbart, Greenstein, and even American gangsters, is quite impressive. I still remember from my childhood in Central Europe the folkloric stories and fables about the feats of the famous strongman Zisha Breitbart who could tear chains with his bare hands, break coins between his fingers and lift huge weights with his teeth. Even after three-quarters of a century, people recalled the strength of this Jewish giant with awe, admonishing show-offs with the words: “Do not play Breitbart.”<sup>18</sup>

Following Weber’s footsteps, Sander Gilman suggested that religious and ethnic identity have been a powerful force in shaping how Jews, through history, understand themselves—sometimes in spite of themselves. The most burdensome yet fundamental question is how an individual’s involvement and accomplishments in sport can be tied to his/her ethnic identity—especially in light of a rapidly transforming community.<sup>19</sup> In other words, how can we address the relevance of Jewishness to sport participation or how can we measure sport’s impact on broader issues of Jewish history and culture? That implies that we cannot avoid questions about definitions such as are the Jews a religious group, a race, a nation? Is being Jewish an active verb or is it simply about having Jewish blood and Jewish parentage? While some would define ethnic identity in biological terms (as Hitler did), it might be more correct to claim that ethnic identity is also a matter of self-definition and self-identification. In addressing the B’nai B’rith in Vienna, Freud mused that being Jewish involves sharing “many obscure emotional forces, which were the more powerful the less they could be expressed in words, as well as a clear consciousness of inner identity, the safe privacy of a common mental construction.” Similar sentiments resonate in Norman Mailer’s reflection on his identity, claiming that for him “being Jewish is a state of mind.”<sup>20</sup> Yet Jews possess all the essential ingredients of a viable ethnicity, which encompasses a common ancestry and history: a collective memory; a sense of peoplehood; a multiplicity of social, religious, and cultural institutions; and a distinctive cultural-value system clearly evident in the Yiddish (mixture of German and Hebrew) or Ladino (mixture of Spanish and Hebrew) languages, art, music, literature, and many other creative and aesthetic forms.

Another crucial point of departure in perceiving ethnicity is how a surrounding society formulates a classification of an individual’s ethnic or religious belonging. In this case, a considerable gap exists between American and European understanding of how to define an ethnic individual. Americans, who have always been more interested in class structures than race, ethnicity, or gender, are naturally content with a self-definition, a self-identification with a group, as the basis for ethnic identity. Europeans, on the other hand, are traditionally more preoccupied with ethnic, religious, and national classifications in which society at large defines one’s religious identity. Jean-Paul Sartre’s postwar work reflects accurately this sentiment about the nature of anti-Semitism. In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, he notes that societal perception and not self-definition predicates Jewish identity.<sup>21</sup>

Having said that, I turn to an equally portentous proposition: Do the Jewish people (Am Yisrael) possess in reality a homogeneous physical appearance? Although Jewish religious practices are relatively similar around the world, a homogenous Jewish culture and society, a "Jewish world conspiracy," is a mere by-product of anti-Semitic imagination. This misconception of Jewish homogeneity becomes even more glaring when one inserts into the anti-Semitic discourse a "typical" Jewish body, a characteristic Jewish physiognomy, and unique facial features. I have always wondered, just what does a Jew look like? During the nineteenth century, surveys of cranial types and hair and skin color were all the rage. Yet, racial theories were often confounded by the low percentage of blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryans and the high percentage of Nordic-looking Jews. As an ethnic group, Jews have always been influenced greatly by the host country in which they resided. Social and cultural research of Israeli society, showing marked physical and national differences between various Jewish groups from around the globe, have long ago dispelled the myth of a "Jewish" appearance. This is true both in temperamental and physical terms. Raphael Patai provides an overview of past research and notes a general consensus among the analysts that "the differences between Jews and non-Jews in any country are cultural or social rather than genetic."<sup>22</sup> No discernibly common Jewish morphological traits, such as height, hair and eye color, nose, and cephalic index, were found in repeated studies in Europe or America. Thus, the question of "looking Jewish" is a purely societal and cultural construct. The writer-director Philip Dunn observed that, along with a cultural transformation, American Jews have also undergone, over several generations, a process of "physical acculturation," of changing their physical appearance.<sup>23</sup>

In examining the complex relationship between Jewish values and sport ideology, one cannot rely on pure philosophical introspection and musing. The evolution of this relationship through the past 150 years projects the intersection of complex psychological, economic, and societal perspectives with an irretrievable transformation from a traditional-orthodox to an ethno-cultural Judaism. Thus, the five interlocking and perpetually oscillating principles governing Jewish philosophy toward sport participation came from trends that also shaped Jewish history and society in modern times: (1) Judaic theology, (2) anti-Semitism, (3) emancipation, (4) assimilation-integration, and (5) the Jewish labor movement and Zionism.

### JUDAIC THEOLOGY AND SPORT

Every ethnic or religious community is defined on the primary level by its own cultural-religious value system. Jewish religious attitudes toward modern sport and the Olympic movement carry the trappings of general guiding principles toward the body and physical existence. First, it is imperative to acknowledge that in the hierarchy of Jewish religious values, feats of physical prowess were invariably relegated to the "secular" and the "mundane." Secondly, there has always been a strong aversion in Jewish culture and tradition toward violent or blood

sports that often were the hallmarks of neighboring tribes, societies, and cultures.

The emphasis on spirituality that, according to Jewish belief, sets Jews apart from the outside world also contains a warning that emulating the “rude and coarse” behavior of our gentile neighbors leads to assimilation—a defense mechanism that has served to safeguard Jewish identity. One of the central prayers in Jewish liturgy, “Aleynu,” reflects this separation from the mundane world. It thanks God for “He hath not made us like the pagans of the world, nor placed us like the heathen tribes of the earth.”<sup>24</sup> It is not surprising, then, that a dynamic interaction between mainstream values and those of a subculture, such as the Jewish community, is necessary for harmonious coexistence. This striving for societal harmony, however, means that the values of the subgroup must be reconciled with those of the dominant society, which, on some level, always signifies a loss or at least a compromise by the sub-culture.

Another separating line, aligned with this rejection of “coarse behavior” (a form of “Sportianity”) in Jewish culture and mores, is a marked disdain, bordering on abhorrence, of physical violence. An English observer noted in the late eighteenth century that in the popular perception Jews are “among the most peaceable in England” and, in their apparent lack of interest in warfare, “the least of any people... addicted to a military life.” Three decades later, at the beginning of the Victorian age, a very similar picture emerges, intimating that Jews are worthy of praise as “remarkably peaceable people... they are rarely to be found engaged in any of the personal outrages that are so common in the metropolis... A Jew is a singularly quiet, inoffensive member of society.”<sup>25</sup> In quoting a nineteenth-century French observer, Patricia Vertinsky remarked that this characterization rapidly evolved into a racial epithet of “an incomplete race lacking physical courage and public spiritedness.” We can easily ascribe this peculiar Jewish mentality, as some observers have done, to two thousand years of precarious existence and powerlessness in the Diaspora. It is an odd, inadequate way of designating a philosophy based solely on reaction to outside pressures. The roots of this mentality toward violence and blood sports, though evolved and crystallized to its final form through the centuries, go much deeper. In reading the writings of the Old Testament, predating the powerlessness of the Jewish Diaspora, it is easy to notice a three thousand-year-old intellectual and moral heritage that still exerts powerful influence upon contemporary Jewish thinking. Of course, any discourse that relies on biblical tit for tat is doomed from the first word. The sacred texts also contain passages that describe cruelty and atrocities. Nevertheless, Judaic theology reflects a moral stance in Jewish philosophy toward the sanctity of life that is rooted in the Bible. Furthermore, Jewish religious traditions, as noted earlier, do not promote a theological dictate against sports or physical activity. There is only one value-system: the religious world-view of the T’nach (Old Testament). The Old Testament forms the moral and ethical basis of Jewish culture, which inevitably influenced Jewish attitudes toward sports and the Olympic movement. It is the belief of traditional Judaism that other areas of human life may or may not be in harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures. An essential conflict exists when these areas (and this would apply to fields such

as art, patriotism, or science, as much as to hunting, sports, and the “Olympic Spirit”) claim to make up autonomous ideologies.<sup>26</sup>

The story of Isau, the hunter, provides an instructive moment about the rejection, or at least relegation, of hunting to the periphery of Jewish consciousness. Hunting as a sporting activity has never assumed a central role in the lives of either ancient or modern Jewish communities. This custom, which had been practiced extensively by royalty in neighboring countries, never gained a pivotal role among the upper crust of the ancient Israelites. The fact that, as typical inner-city people, modern Jews have never warmed to this custom is well portrayed in one of Hemingway’s most controversial novels, *The Sun Also Rises*. In juxtaposing the unwittingly villainous Robert Cohn, who has won the boxing title at Princeton, with the protagonist Jake Barnes who, for Hemingway, exemplifies Christian virtues of “manliness,” the writer cannot hide his virulent anti-Semitism. Hemingway, a hard-drinking boxer, fisherman, and bull-fighting aficionado—a “real man’s man” —hates the interloper for his success as an athlete for all the wrong reasons. Although the Jewish boxer desperately wants to be accepted by his fellow Princetonians, he knowingly forfeits his right to be a “man” by refusing to live by the “code.” In choosing to stay with a woman rather than to participate in the manly act of fishing, he repudiates the traditional frontier values that made America great. The other characters, even the woman herself, act more manly than Cohn at the bullfights. To further illustrate his “defective masculinity,” Robert Cohn becomes physically sick at the sight of the brutal blood sport.<sup>27</sup>

When we discuss the issue of masculinity, there is always a perceptible danger in imposing a general cultural definition that is propagated by mainstream culture over that of a minority. How Christians and Jews define masculinity is an intriguing question. In this case, one must assume that, just like in medieval societies that extolled masculinity through knightly behavior, people in modern society associate masculinity with sports. Stephen Norwood addresses this issue by noting that “there are many ‘masculinities’” and that “masculinity may have long been more problematic for Christians than for Jews.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, an ideologically religious movement such as Muscular Christianity, which gained momentum during the nineteenth century and which Norwood considers a result of a “crisis in masculinity,” never took hold among Jews. The increased involvement of Jews in sport, both within the Zionist constellation and the Jewish bourgeoisie, represented exactly the opposite. They became more physical by moving away from religious Judaism toward secularism. In many ways, Jews, unlike gentiles, never equated masculinity with physicality. Norwood might be on solid ground in asserting that, for social and cultural reasons, Jewish men were probably more secure in their identity and masculinity than gentile men. Among the reasons he lists are (1) Jewish boys usually grew up in families where absent fathers were more the exception than the rule, (2) Jewish boys regularly interacted with older men when preparing for their Bar Mitzvah, and (3) Jews did not associate manhood with being a “breadwinner.” In addition, within the ethical dynamics of the Jewish family, the role of the father has always been radically different than in many ethnic cultures. Unlike other cultures, such as in Italian families

where the old village aphorism “never educate your children beyond yourself” prevailed, in Jewish families both girls and boys have traditionally been pushed to excel and surpass their fathers.<sup>29</sup>

Returning to the Bible, the story of Samson serves as another moral lesson. It provides the underpinning of a Jewish repudiation of “coarse behavior” and all that it entails—crude physical force without redeeming spiritual qualities. Indeed, the image of Samson, which presents a morality play about the futility of raw physical strength without a counterbalance of spiritual values, is not a positive one in the Jewish religious and communal philosophy, Samson projects brute force and an overindulgence in physical pleasures that serve as a cautionary tale against following the example of “the heathen tribes of the earth”—in this case the surrounding Philistines.

The deadly encounter between Goliath and the young David also conveys the message of mind over physical power. King David, a tragic though most revered character of Jewish history, is termed a “bloody man,” who must be denied the privilege and honor of building the Holy Temple in Jerusalem because of his violent reign. Instead, God selects Solomon, David’s son, a man of peace, to fulfill this project. The words of the prophet Zechariah sums this up well and in some sense defines the prevailing sensibility about spiritual power over physical power that is so forcefully advocated in the Old Testament: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit...”(4:6).<sup>30</sup>

Finally, complementing the Biblical literature, the two Books of Maccabees and the writings of a Jewish historian of the first century AD, Josephus Flavius, lend credence to the hostile attitudes of a large segment of ancient Israelites to Greek sports in general and gladiatorial contests in particular. Jews during the Hellenistic period (from the fourth century BCE to the Roman period), especially the upper classes, who actively pursued assimilation to Hellenistic cultural practices, participated in Greek athletic contests in ancient Israel. Trying to reconcile, however, Jewish religious practices with pagan athletic contests for the honor of Greek gods or Roman emperors led inevitably to conflict within Jewish society.

Thus, the aversion to paganistic physical manifestation of bodily excellence and accompanying violence has a strong anchor in antiquity. Historian Max Diamant tried to sum up this Jewish mentality by identifying the main difference between the Hellenistic philosophies of Greeks and Jews: While Greeks were looking for the holiness of beauty, Jews appreciated the beauty of holiness. Indeed, one of the major sparks that ignited the Hasmonean, commonly known as the Maccabi rebellion, was Jewish involvement in paganistic athletic practices. According to the Books of Maccabees, Jason the High Priest “gladly built a gymnasium under the very Acropolis” in Jerusalem where he and fellow Hellenizers, or assimilationists, “no longer showed any zeal for the offices of the sanctuary...and were anxious only to share the unlawful facilities of the palaestra in their keenness to challenge one another in throwing the discus” (2:iv. 7-20). Josephus Flavius gives substantially the same account, specifying that the High Priests exercised in the nude, Greek style.<sup>31</sup> Hyperbole aside, the Hasmonean

rulers quite readily adopted the same Hellenistic practices that precipitated the rebellion in the first place. Josephus also mentions that in addition to King Herod's own physical prowess and dedication to sports, his building of stadiums and hippodromes and inaugurating athletic games in honor of Augustus, he saved the ancient Olympic Games from bankruptcy by endowing gifts and revenues, upon which "he was generally declared in their inscriptions to be one of the perpetual managers of those games." In spite of his contribution to restoring the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, King Herod was detested universally by Jewish contemporaries and equally by later generations because, as Josephus soberly recounted, he "corrupted their [Jews] ancient constitution." His penchant for paganistic nude athletic exercises, deadly gladiatorial combats, and wild animal shows was received with revulsion by the majority of Jews and condemned rather harshly by religious authorities. These games, Josephus continued, were "opposite of Jewish customs... barefaced impiety to throw men to the wild beasts... [that] gave most distaste to the Jews."<sup>32</sup>

How little Jewish sensibilities have changed toward physical violence over two thousand years can be ascertained by a marked ambivalence about boxing and pugilists, the modern equivalent of the gladiators of antiquity. A carefully worded ambivalence about violence, in the face of Jewish victories in the ring, has been evident on the pages of the Jewish press. Even such a revered figure as Benny Leonard was accepted under the proviso that he is "a decent Jewish boy, unspoiled by success, who accorded proper respect to his mother." This attitude does not conflict with the words of Allen Bodner in his catchy book title, *When Boxing Was a Jewish Sport*. To be sure, Jewish boxers had their share of Olympic victories and world championships during the first three decades of this century. But, then, the America of the 1930s and 1940s can be dubbed with equal ease as the decades when basketball and golf were Jewish sports.<sup>33</sup> The most popular, or rather successful, "Jewish" sport still remains fencing, which provides a well-controlled means of violence. Reading the statistics, it is easy to see that of all the Olympic events, fencing might be considered perhaps the ultimate Jewish sport. It is not an exaggeration to say that Jews won more medals in Olympic fencing—based on their representation in the general population—in the first half of the twentieth century than any other ethnic or national group. Hungarian Jewish fencers were especially dominant on the Olympic scene, winning twenty medals during the first half of the twentieth century. Jewish fencers from England, France, and, in the later years, from the Soviet Union continued this success story. Ivan Osiier, president of the Copenhagen Jewish community, won a silver medal in 1912 in Stockholm and entered into the record books by participating in a record six Olympic Games. As a partial explanation of this success, it is worth contemplating the nature of fencing. What suits Jewish middle- and upper-middle-class sensibilities is that the participants retain the ability to control violence. Although Olympic fencing provides a platform for a special form of aggression, it also excludes, in effect, intentional injury to the opponent.

When a scholar invokes a concept such as sport, it becomes essential to question how that concept correlates or is in dissonance with Jewish

understandings of that concept. A clear message of aversion to violent sports resonates in Philip Roth's memoirs, *The Facts: A Novel of Autobiography*, when he describes his motivation in choosing baseball because "unlike boxing or football, [it] had nothing to do with the menace of brute force unleashed against flesh and bones."<sup>34</sup> The fact that Jewish youth engaged in boxing in the first half of the twentieth century, both on the professional and collegiate levels, cannot negate this deeply ingrained notion locked within some chamber of our consciousness. On a somewhat similar note, I cannot easily forget the severe beating I received from my father upon his learning I was going to boxing workouts. Being twelve years old at the time, I was unable to explain to my irate father my reasoning for the workouts, although my rationale had to do with the environment. This parental



Nazi soldiers are forcing Jewish men to play "horsie" in the Minsk Ghetto. Sport went through a semiotic transformation in Nazi phraseology. It became an instrument of torment and degradation. Photo courtesy of Simon Wiesenthal Center.

objection, expressed in rather vivid terms, was not against sport per se, but against the violence inherent in boxing. In discussing this issue later with my mother, she was perhaps more rational in her reasoning than my father, and she argued that she had no objections to my participation in tennis. Living at the time in the most dilapidated district of Budapest, my terse retort that there was no tennis court in at least a ten-mile radius and a reminder of our social status, or lack thereof, brought home to her the reality that boxing made sense in these circumstances.

## ANTI-SEMITISM AND SPORT

The chronicle of human hate is a long and sorry tale. Anthony Julius captured the essence of anti-Semitism in defining it as “a way of imagining Jews, a pernicious, elaborate fiction, and not just a series of theorems about the Jewish people.”<sup>35</sup> In discussing anti-Semitism, indeed any form of discrimination, there is always a danger that we might succumb to the seduction of false sentimentality in describing an individual hurt or group rivalry. Racial and political anti-Semitism can be regarded as one of the cardinal factors that formed and shaped Jewish society in modern times. Stripped to its essentials, the question of anti-Semitism is less pure racism and more an irrational, almost psychopathological riddle. The fallacy that Jews are a race is a fiction that began to take shape in the later part of the past century as a consequence of emancipation. The late nineteenth century saw “the scientizing of anti-Jewish prejudices,” as John Efron states in his book, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in the Fin-de-Siècle Europe*.<sup>36</sup> Some Jewish scientists were just as convinced as German and Austrian physicians that the Jews, just like Germans, constituted a distinct race. This lent, wittingly or unwittingly, a scientific legitimacy to anti-Semitism that replaced religious affiliation as a base for exclusion. It is a tragedy of history that many of these race ideas were later borrowed, honed, and perpetuated by Hitler. It led to the Nazi notion that conversion to Christianity did not change the Jewish “race.” Anti-Semitism is a pernicious form of an intellectual virus with perpetual new mutations, constantly reinventing itself. It has evolved as a special form of hate directed at the Jewish people throughout history—branching out alternately as a “religious,” “ethnic,” “social,” and, finally, “racial” marker. The Nazis perfected this hate to a degree never experienced before. A flippant British intelligence officer once wryly observed that “anti-Semitism was quite fashionable until Hitler came along and over did it.” When we reduce the social, racial, and biological subtleties of anti-Semitism, it is easy to discern that its most vicious forms are often insidious rather than overt. Thus, it can encompass a whole spectrum of human behavior, from a simple verbal slight, to exclusion, lynching, pogroms, “eliminationist” and, ultimately, “annihilationist” anti-Semitism—for example, the Holocaust. As Pat Shipman’s penetrating book, *The Evolution of Racism*, so aptly demonstrates, human beings are plainly equipped with an instinct to fear, dislike, denigrate, and be violent toward people who appear to be from other tribes, groups, or nations.<sup>37</sup>

Nowhere is raw tribalism more readily tolerated than in sport. The theory that sport is just another form of ritualized aggression might be true. A more complete, though complex, explanation is that sport caters to an acceptable form of modern tribal impulses, which, in turn, reinforces our own territorial instincts. The aim of the game, after all, is to conquer and control the opponent’s territory. We are creating, to borrow a discredited Nazi term, a “Lebensraum”—a zone of control. In this context, the primal notions that sport is a substitute for warfare, as some observers have surmised, and that functionally sport creates new or reinforces old tribal boundaries seem valid. In watching the game of football and how the linesmen mark territory with their chain, I am always reminded of the

territorial signature of many animal species. Tribal symbols such as colors, flags, anthems, mascots, and specialized rituals that are so endemic to sport point further to the direction of the subconscious as we are defining our own tribal affiliation. Finally, rhythmic chants and songs by a crowd that belittles and demeans the opponent through anti-Semitic slurs and derogatory remarks are also a part of this tribal-instinct.<sup>38</sup>

The fact that no player might be identified as Jewish on a given team only reinforces the notion that there is a primal urge to dehumanize opponents by endowing them with imaginary vices. The old adage that to be anti-Semitic you don't need Jews is well proven by this concept. Sport is war by other means and war is sport by other means. The symbolic killing of the opponent by the speeding 120 mile an hour tennis ball or football touchdown is perhaps a vestige of tribal warfare, just as is the hunting down of the quarterback, literally and symbolically, by a pack of defensive linemen. It seems, then, we never outgrew this primal urge of setting up dividing lines to mark our physical or mental territories: Us versus the Other.

Of course, anti-Semitism is by no means a benign form of tribalism. Anti-Semitism introduces the most primeval form of tribalism, a hate that aims to demean and degrade the "enemy" in repulsive physical terms. The Nazi publication *Der Stürmer*, for example, created a visual and mental image of the Jew, which enabled later rationalizations for their extermination. If one repeats often enough these images, or lies as Goebbels once remarked, they reinforce each other, carving indelible marks on the subconscious. The Nazi racial laws were perhaps the most visible forms of symbolic, and later actual, separation of Jews from general society since the ghettos of the Middle Ages. Segregation from mainstream society served the purpose, as Daniel Goldhagen points out in his book, *Hider's Willing Executioners*, of turning Jews into "socially dead" beings. The central tenet here is that the host group limits all possible physical or verbal contact between the minority and the rest of society to a minimum, which redefines and enforces tribal boundaries and, far worse, creates a transition from "eliminationist" to "annihilationist" anti-Semitism. At first glance, one may fail to comprehend the diabolic nature of this process and how much sport served, on many levels, the purposes of genocide—the move from exclusion to actually killing people. As the ultimate exemplification of physicality and a basic measure of our own humanity, sport has always been eminently suited to create these tribal lines. There is no proof, and it might be far-fetched even to surmise, that the idea of the "Final Solution" was envisaged or contemplated during the early years of the Nazi era. However, it seems evident that the systematic elimination and exclusion of Jews from German sport organizations, swimming pools, recreational resorts, and later movie theaters and concert halls, was almost a prerequisite to the Holocaust. By excluding Jews from "physical" contact with their Aryan counterparts, the Nazi design aimed at dismantling the human personality of its victims at first, only later making their murder a "rational act" of cleansing the body politic (i.e., the nation) from a "vermin." Julius Bendorf, a participant at the Nazi Olympic training camp for Jews in Ettlingen in 1935, recalled that he was

never notified officially about his expulsion from his sports club in the small town near Frankfurt where his family lived for generations. There were no announcements. Rather, he and his fellow Jewish athletes became invisible as former friends abruptly severed all verbal communications with them. This action was almost like denying them the oxygen of human interaction. Bendorf's experience seems to confirm Goldhagen's contention of a logical development from physical exclusion to genocide: He barely survived the Holocaust after spending four years in five concentration camps.<sup>39</sup>

As a side note, in setting up strict exclusion of Jews from the cultural and sport spheres, the Nazis were not innovators—they followed the examples of their German ancestors. Mayer Rotschild, who founded a banking dynasty in the Frankfurt ghetto in the eighteenth century, could venture into the Christian part of the city on business but couldn't even pause for refreshment in a park.<sup>40</sup> Though the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin became a symbol, a cliché almost, for the blatant connection between sport and anti-Semitism, Nazi Germany was not alone, or the first, in implementing exclusionary policies on the sport field. These policies have been practiced extensively in the United States, especially against African Americans, and in other countries. On the fundamental level, anti-Semitism challenges and attacks the physical self-worth of an individual or a group. The central hypothesis here is that in order to reject the Jew, short of actually killing him, one must first degrade him, dehumanize him, and demonize him in "physical" terms. This is acknowledged by a fair-minded response to an anti-Semitic diatribe, written in 1830 in England, that the Jews are "filthy" and that they "stink" that pointed out that "One of the first receipts for having a man persecuted, is to impugn the credit of his corporal presence."<sup>41</sup> The logical outcome of this degradation is a belief in a stereotypical Jewish image of "defective masculinity." In this process of cognitive reasoning, the inherent message is that the Jew is less of a man than the Christian. Of course, this kind of stereotyping likely reveals far more about Christians' anxieties about their own maleness than about the Jews. In his book about Franz Kafka, Sander Gilman associated Jewish preoccupation with the body in the late nineteenth century with the rejection of the Jew by the athletic German youth movement and by English sports. Gilman lists a bewildering range of traits attributed to Jews, including neurasthenia, skin diseases, hypochondria, effeminacy, a deformed foot, and the "Jewish gaze," to mention just a few. Kafka's life is set in a typical Jewish middle-class family; the father, Herman Kafka, is a self-made man whose physical appearance and personal habits disgust the young intellectual. The father appears as an antithesis to the virile gentile world whose attraction is irresistible to the writer. In the winter Kafka used to exercise in the nude with the window open. Yet, he was never able to overcome his ambivalence about or become comfortable with his body.<sup>42</sup>

Such oddities seem less strange when seen in the context of Jews being different or perceived as such. Jewish recognition of, and self-consciousness about, anatomical differences, both real and imagined, is rooted in antiquity. The most immediately identifiable physical difference was the ritual circumcision as a tribal mark that separated the ancient Israelites from the surrounding people. This

deliberately promoted distinction has survived until modern times. The usage of “uncircumcised” as an adjective in the Bible connoted a derogatory designation of people, specifically the Philistines, as a people without culture and faith. King Saul, in the final stand against the Philistines, asked his faithful armor-bearer to kill him “lest these ‘uncircumcised’ come and make a mock of me” (First Chronicles, 10:4). The ancient practice of circumcision signified a conspicuous marker that could not be missed by observers. The ritual of circumcision, as the Roman historian Tacitus commented in the first century AD, “was adopted by them as a mark of difference from other men.” In this way, he emphasizes otherness, exclusiveness, and misanthropy. Tacitus has nothing but contempt for the “worst rascals among other peoples.”<sup>43</sup> Greeks and Romans also universally condemned this custom as barbaric. Eighteenth-century Christian public opinion was not less uncompromising in condemning this Jewish custom. Mother Midnight, a bawd and midwife in the British play by George Farquhar called *The Twin Rivals* (1702), tells the audience: “but the Child was left with me—the Father would have made him a *Jew* on’t presently, but I swore, if he committed such a Barbarity on the infant.” A much broader assault on the rite of circumcision indicates that it is a seeming breach of man’s natural state, terming it “a barbarous violation of the principles of Humanity.”<sup>44</sup> The fear of circumcision was easily woven into the wider fabric of anti-Semitic discourse that promoted two reiterative charges against the Jews: They engage in barbarous practices, and they remain unequivocally different from the rest of mankind. This Jewish distinctiveness and corresponding discomfort with the body has been formed and periodically reinforced by a history of rejection, persecution, and prejudice. In cultures and societies where circumcision was looked upon as a physical defect that ultimately translated into a moral defect, Jewish athletes naturally became not only aware of but acutely “self-conscious” about this difference. Reflecting this Jewish ambivalence about being different, the book of Maccabees from the second century BC records an interesting anecdote about Jewish priests who exercised in the nude but had cosmetic surgery to hide their circumcisions (1:15).

Nietzsche postulated that one is never aware of one’s own body until one is ill; one is also never aware of being physically different—whether the difference is real or contrived—until one is made repeatedly and consciously aware of this difference. This stigma, easily transformed from a physical to a moral pathology, attached to the Jewish race as a malignant force and projected its shadow over their participation in sports on the local and national level. Exclusion of Jews from sports clubs in Europe ceased completely with the conclusion of World War II. However, anti-Jewish statutes in club constitutions in America, advocating that no Jewish individual could gain admittance into many country clubs, remained largely intact until the 1970s.

In January 1962, the Anti-Defamation League of the B’nai B’rith issued the first report ever made on nationwide discrimination. Of 803 country clubs surveyed, only 224 were nondiscriminatory. Four hundred sixteen country clubs barred Jews completely, and eighty-nine had quotas. The report concluded that the “extent of discrimination against Jews by clubs is far greater than the levels of

discrimination against Jews in other areas such as education, employment, housing and public accommodation.”<sup>45</sup> In Minneapolis, characterized by Carey McWilliams in 1946 as the nation’s most anti-Semitic city, Jews were barred from the Boat Club, the Automobile Club, the Blue Lodes of the Masons, and the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions organizations. The Los Angeles Country Club and the New York Athletic Club, to bridge the entire breadth of America, would not accept Jews—even as guests of members in their dining room. There were also instances where clubs that accepted Jews at the end of the century excluded them by the 1920s because their number grew to a size unpalatable to Christian members. The case of the Union League Club of New York, founded by several Jews, is illuminating. In 1893, the son of the Jewish vice president of the club, Theodore Seligman from the famous banking dynasty, was rejected. Explaining this decision with exemplary lack of tact, the membership committee reasoned that it was “not a personal matter in any way, either as to father or son. The objection is purely racial.”<sup>46</sup> Finally, clubs frequently practiced covert anti-Jewish policies without explicit by-laws with their membership’s tacit consent. Even such giants as Sam Bronfman, the owner and president of Seagram, could not gain club membership in Canada’s elite clubs—the most painful rejection was the one by the Mount Royal Club. Barry Humphries, the Australian satirist who is best known to television viewers as Dame Edna Everage, approaches this subject deftly in one of his biting monologues. As one of the town’s middle-class Jews requests membership in the local golf club, the golf pro admits that “they’ve produced some wonderful people: scientists, musicians, giving money to hospitals . . . [but] if you let one in then you’ve got to let the rest in, and before you know where you are they’re running the whole blessed show.”<sup>47</sup>

It might seem overkill to quote Freud to justify the argument that psychological compensation through sports was a natural reaction to anti-Semitism. Jewish fears about Western societies’ obsession with Jewish physical differences led Jews to join the ranks of German, Austrian, and Hungarian dueling fraternities (*Burschenschaften* and *Landsmannschaften*), the *Deutsche Turnerschaft*, and sports societies in various countries, and embrace Olympism as a forum to dispel the myth of Jewish athletic inferiority. Roger Kahn, in reviewing some books about Jackie Robinson, reminisces about his childhood and how anti-Semitism propelled him to excel in sports: “In those distant days before the Holocaust, anti-Semitism was fashionable and the Christian boys in my grade took to calling me ‘Izzy,’ their not terribly subtle code-word for Jew. I was the swiftest running back at this school and I thought that if there were any way to escape the anguish of being called ‘Izzy,’ it would be to make just the best darn touchdown run. One afternoon I did, and the captain of our team rushed up to me in the end zone, his large Presbyterian teeth showing in a smile. ‘Nice run, Izzy,’ he said.”<sup>48</sup>

As Roger Kahn found out, success on the athletic field has not always translated into tolerance. Irving Jaffee, one of the most accomplished skaters in American history, was physically and verbally harassed by his teammates during the Lake Placid Games in 1932. An almost surrealist situation was created

when the staunchly anti-Semitic Lake Placid Club was awarded the organization of the third Olympic Winter Games. After the war, Jaffee recalled that “the ironic thing was that they [the President of the Club, Dr. Godfrey Dewey] had this party after the medal ceremony at the Lake Placid Club with Sonia Henie and they invited me.” In the end, Jaffee refused to attend the affair.<sup>49</sup>

We traditionally associate anti-Semitism with exclusionary or discriminatory practices in various societal institutions such as religion, government, and sport. The term “racism and sport” or “racism in sport” is a term one uses to describe this code of conduct. One of the lesser-known manifestations of anti-Semitism is when sport serves as a humiliating medium. Already in the early decades of the sixteenth century, under the otherwise liberal tenure of Pope Leo the Tenth, a form of degradation was devised by the Roman population in which twelve Jews were forced to run a race from St. Peter’s Square to the Castel San Angelo. This was an exhibition of sheer cruelty and bitter humiliation for the Jews, mainly old men who were forced to over-eat and appear near naked, who had to run the length of the Corso as soldiers chased them to make them move faster. The onlookers pelted the defenseless people with whatever came to hand. The Holy Father, seated on a balcony, shared this spectacle with the jubilantly yelling Roman crowd. Occasionally, one of the Jews would die of a stroke.<sup>50</sup>

The most troubling question is how the traditional definition of sport can be applied to experiences of the Holocaust. The trauma of the Holocaust has been interwoven into the social, psychological, and political fabric of Jewish life since 1945, including sport. It is obviously hard to reconcile the Olympic motto of *Citius Altius Fortius* with the torture inflicted upon innocent people in the guise of sport during the Holocaust. The word “sport” went through a semiotic transformation in Nazi phraseology when it was habitually substituted for shooting or hunting down defenseless Jews or, in its less deadly usage, for physical humiliation. Among Holocaust historians, Daniel Goldhagen is perhaps the only one who has paid some attention to sport during the Holocaust and how it was turned into a form of degradation. The use of physical exercise as punishment later led to the physical elimination of Jews.<sup>51</sup> For example, after invading Russia, the occupying army forced elderly Jews to play “horsie” and other degrading games for the entertainment of the Nazis. Randomly administered punitive calisthenics, called “sport” by the conquerors, also became an everyday form of dehumanization for thousands of ghetto and camp dwellers. The bewildered description by a nine-year-old boy in Lithuania well exemplifies the terror of the population. The first Friday night of the occupation, the SS collected the men in the synagogue. Among the tortures inflicted by the troops, “The rabbi’s beard was cut... For a couple of hours [we had to do] all kinds of calisthenics... with your arms and crawling on the ground and jumping each time if you didn’t do it the way they told you, they tortured [you].” After he was taken to a work camp, this nine-year-old reported similar practices: “In the middle of the night the SA and the SS used to come in and they used to make us [jump] from our bunks and [do] all kinds of calisthenics—sports they called it.” Adam Cherniakow, the tragic Head of the Judenrat, routinely recorded in his diary the torture and debasement of Jews in

the ghetto by SS, and even by members of the Hitler Jugend, who forced the old and feeble inhabitants to perform exercises on the muddy streets of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Thus, the central question still remains: sport for whom, the persecutors or the persecuted? As Plutarch wrote in the first century AD: "Though boys throw stones at frogs in sport, the frogs do not die in sport, but in earnest." Can we really believe, with some modicum of sanity, that the hungry inmates of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, many Maccabi athletes among them, were willing participants in the production of a Nazi propaganda film, *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt*? The central scenes of the film portray the former Czech woman champion diving and portray teams with the Star of David on their shirts playing soccer. Of course, the contradiction between the traditional and this new Nazi version of sport, and the corresponding psychological humiliation of entertaining one's own captors, could not escape the attention of sharp-eyed observers. An inmate in Westerbork in the Netherlands, Philip Mechanicus sarcastically noted the contrived sport activities, especially boxing competition, in the camp and that "Commandant [Gemmecker] has said that he thinks Jews who work all day long need relaxation.... The Obersturmführer is such a good psychologist that he knows this law of life and has put it into effect here? Or is he merely a brutal egoist who lets the Jews amuse themselves for his own amusement and gives them something at the same time?" Introspective and modest, known by his beret and pipe, Mechanicus was a brilliant journalist, a European man of letters; he perished in Auschwitz. His diary outlines the bizarre social-cultural milieu of Westerbork: the sporadic interest in concerts, parties, revues, sports, and play activities, and the final bewildered realization that "Westerbork was another word for purgatory."<sup>52</sup>

The ultimate perversion of the concept of sport by the Holocaust—a shift from the elation and joy of human action and mastery of one's body and mind that we associate with sport—was in the race for life-and-death. The words of Sir Roger L'Etrange ring true: "Though this may be play to you, 'tis death to us" (Fable 398, *Boys and Frogs*, *Fables*). Camp guards customarily raced inmates to test their fitness for work. Thomas Keneally's documentary novel, *Schindler's List*, includes a vignette of a fifty-five-year-old woman, red cabbage rubbed into her cheeks to give them healthy color, literally running the race of her life, while being timed with a stop-watch by an SS doctor. Music was blaring from the camp's loudspeakers. "This was the true contest," one survivor recalled, "with your stomach turning and your breath thin, you ran—beneath the throb of the lying music for your golden life." One must place this quote in context. Those who came in last were taken away and killed.<sup>53</sup>

#### EMANCIPATION, ASSIMILATION, AND THE ANTI-SEMITIC BACKLASH

The history of anti-Semitism and sport is a long and twisted narrative in which sport inevitably plays a crucial role in the quest for emancipation and assimilation. This reinforced old prejudices and created new ones. One cannot

overstate the role of emancipation, and an almost predictable anti-Semitic backlash as its consequence, in molding the course of Jewish history from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. Jews faced two alternatives. One was to assimilate to surrounding cultures and adopt many of the secular institutions, such as sport—which the majority of Western European and American Jews did willingly. The other was to reject the whole new environment and remain firmly orthodox, which repudiated not only sport, but many other temptations of secularism. The turn-of-the-century quip that “there is no way Jews will survive without reinventing themselves wherever they live” is quite appropriate to describe the dictate of assimilation. Of course, this reinvention had to take into account the dilemma of “how we can manage to remain ourselves and become somebody else.” From the mid nineteenth century, many Jews viewed joining the main gymnastic movements and, more importantly, sport and country clubs and the Olympic movement as part of their “emancipation” from the old legal and social exclusions and from a “Jewish pathology.” Jews were described as intellectuals, cosmopolitans, and therefore artificially removed from nature. Echoing anti-Semitic stereotyping by the surrounding society, many Jews felt, especially many of the young, that this image of their people was correct and should be despised. George Mosse asserts that a recurring theme in turn-of-the-century Jewish literature is that “Judaism is sick because... [Jews] have become cut off from the strength of nature, from nonintellectual, noncompetitive sides of human existence.” For the majority of medical observers, as Jastrowitz presents in 1908 in the pages of the *Jüdische Turnzeitung*, the major Jewish disease was a neurological malady caused by civilization.<sup>54</sup>

Responding to the charge of physical inadequacy, participating in gymnastic and sports movements was just another facet of claiming equality and, simultaneously, manifesting patriotism. These movements, such as the Deutsche Turnerschaft, the Sokol, English Muscular Christianity, and of course the Olympic Games were as much a product of the nineteenth century as was the emancipation of Jews. In many societies, Jews considered the two as part and parcel—if Jews could join this fraternity of athletes, their membership would prove they were being accepted by the larger society. They could also use the opportunities presented by their participation in a social organization with Christians to prove the two could prosper by their association. Yariv Oren remarked that European Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, who had marginal status, “looked upon the society... [as a] positive reference group, which they tried to join by assimilation.”<sup>55</sup> Initially, the various gymnastic movements, sport organizations, and the Olympic movement materialized as a unifying force that promoted a brotherhood and sisterhood of all people and that would welcome and accept Jews as members.

By joining gymnastic societies and sports clubs, they also aimed to dispel the perennial accusations of “dual loyalty.” This was an old allegation, which gained new and reinforced vigor with the establishment of the State of Israel, that Jews of almost every country had to grapple with. In 1936, Avery Brundage used this charge venomously during the Berlin Olympic controversy. This “dual loyalty”

was thrown at Jews with the addition of a not-too-veiled threat of retribution if they did not support the American Olympic efforts. In writing to Albert Lasker of New York, Brundage warned the Jewish leader about “the great and growing resentment in athletic circles in this country against the Jews because of the activities of certain Jewish individuals and groups in seeking to prevent American participation in the Olympic Games next August....”<sup>56</sup> As is often the case with minorities striving for social acceptance and equality, Jews had to go beyond mere identification with the mainstream cultural values to prove their patriotism. Emma Lazarus perceived this eagerness to overcompensate and noted that “Jews are the intensive form of any nationality whose language and customs they adapt.”<sup>57</sup> By participating in sports and representing their countries in the Olympic Games, they became more Hungarian than the Hungarians, more French than the French, more English than the English, and more Russian than the Russians.

As a price to pay for assimilation, Jews adopted the host society’s goals and cultural imperatives willingly, absorbing and soaking up national attitudes, temperament, and mentalities along the way. Thus, Jewish responsiveness to and participation in various sport movements, although not unconditional, was a predictable and logical process. Their course of ethnic succession, “a historical pattern of one group replacing another in occupation, education, employment, and residence,” was reflected in the nature and extent of their sports involvement. Ethnic succession, as one of my colleagues flippantly remarked, seems too neat, too orderly. It is undoubtedly a very seductive theory that explains a lot. Jews, like every ethnic or immigrant community, progressed through their own social and historical evolution in such areas as occupation, housing, education, and in some unconventional areas such as crime and prostitution. Even more alluring is the theory’s possible explanation of their ethnic evolution in sport. For example, the Jewish reign in the ring neatly coincided with their emergence from the ghetto and their involvement with organized crime—the famed Murder Inc. Concomitantly, boxing also became a ticket for Jewish entrance into the universities in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>58</sup> It is an amusing fact, reflecting a deep-rooted Jewish commitment to the community, that Jewish gangsters many times contributed uniforms and food to youth and sports clubs. Predictably, through time Jews not only left the Lower East Side, so to speak, for the suburbs, but they also changed their own sporting pursuits in the process. The Olympic Games are an excellent gauge of ethnic succession as a historical process. The first three decades of the twentieth century are marked by Jewish victories in boxing, wrestling, and fencing (especially in Central Europe). However, by the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, basketball came to the fore. The main contender to represent the United States was the Long Island University team, which was two-thirds Jewish. The team refused to participate. As a response to anti-Semitic policies that excluded them from country clubs, the 1940s and 1950s saw the founding of Jewish golf clubs as a direct consequence of Jewish prosperity following the Second World War. In this light, we need not linger over the fact that by 1972 Mark Spitz was able to capture gold medals in swimming. Kerri Strug did the same in gymnastics in 1996. This signifies that the Jewish community has reached a point

where gymnastics, swimming, and other “country club” sports accurately reflect their socio-economic and political clout.<sup>59</sup>

After sport participation as a consequence of emancipation became one of the most tangible hallmarks of Jewish acculturation, increased Jewish visibility has elicited a virulent anti-Semitic backlash on the playing field. Literary critic Anthony Julius once noted that the emergence of racial-political anti-Semitism was “the price to pay for admission into the club of Modernism.” He meant, of course, the emancipation of Jews in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. Contrary to high expectations, a sad truism of emancipation was that it was mainly Jews who genuinely believed in it. Emancipation eliminated the problem of religious hatred by replacing it with a new problem: racial anti-Semitism. By the early 1930s, the fundamentals of the German perception were summed up by the Protestant theologian Gerhard Kittel in his book, *Die Judenzage*, when he argued that emancipation and assimilation did not meld Jews into German society. Rather, emancipation allowed Jews to infect the German people with their blood and spirit.<sup>60</sup>

Often, conversion to Christianity was the price for “joining the club.” Concurrently, it also demanded a full and unwavering identification with and loyalty to a country’s national goals and aspirations. While many sport clubs remained solidly exclusionist, especially in Europe, many were willing to accept Jews who had converted and who had shown a strong attachment to the nationalistic ideologies that were espoused by the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* and other nationalistic sports movements. Yet, the “irony of emancipation,” as John Roth termed it in one of his works, was the fact that the status associated with their achievements in sports also fueled an increasingly fierce anti-Semitic rejection of them as equals on the playing fields. Hannah Arendt characterized the freedom that emancipation offered to Jews as ambiguous and the equality it offered them as treacherous. Thus, instead of hastening social and psychological integration, emancipation accelerated the exclusion of Jews from sports on the individual, club, or even regional levels. The “Jewish question” in German gymnastics was born in April 1887 when the “Arierparagraph” made the *Erster Wiener Turnverein* “free of Jews.” Several years later, an entire regional branch of the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* in Austria, *Kreis XV*, adopted a similar resolution for expelling every Jew from all its gymnastic clubs.<sup>61</sup> Social and country clubs in Europe and America almost uniformly incorporated into their constitutions anti-Jewish statutes in some form. Among other things, Jews were not allowed to attend races at the famed Santa Anita racetrack in California until the 1940s. The exclusion of Jews from hotels and resorts had begun around the 1880s. Newspaper advertisements of ski lodges and vacation resorts regularly specified “Christian clientele only,” “Jews are not welcome,” and quite often “No Dogs, No Jews. No Consumptives.”<sup>62</sup>

Jewish responses to discriminatory policies were judiciously swift and predictable. For example, the establishment of the fabled “Borsch Belt” in the Catskills has garnered respectable scholarship. However, documentation of similar “Jewish-oriented” resorts across Europe and Australia remains more on the anecdotal level. Without entering into a Freudian polemic about the Jewish

subconscious, it seems that like many “middleman minorities,” a term coined by economist Thomas Sowell, Jews set out to emulate the dominant reference groups in their sporting and recreational practices. Because of covert and overt discrimination at the club level and in personal contacts, Jews established “parallel institutions” that corresponded to their socio-economic level and status in a given society. Thus, the creation of Jewish dueling fraternities and gymnastic societies in Central and Eastern Europe (like the Jüdische Turnerschaft), the Young Men’s Hebrew Association (later evolving into the Jewish Community Center movement) in America, and the Jewish golf and general sports clubs around the world can be directly assigned to anti-Semitic policies on the part of various Christian sport organizations. As Barry Humphries notes through the words of the golf pro: “Personally speaking, I wouldn’t have any objection if they started up their own club.” Indeed, that is exactly what they did. Jews who were barred from entering most of the country clubs and sport clubs responded predictably by establishing their own institutions across the globe. Almost all Jewish clubs, from Budapest to New York, Hollywood, Canada, and Australia, owe their existence to the exclusionary policies of Christian clubs. According to a 1924 survey, there were sixty-nine all-Jewish country clubs—originally organized by German Jews—across America. By the late 1940s, their number had increased ten-fold. The *American Hebrew*, a magazine that catered to America’s German Jews, noted in 1925 that out of the estimated 500,000 golfers more than 30,000 were Jewish—a number “entirely out of proportion with the Jewish proportion of the population.”<sup>63</sup> The majority of these golfers were German Jews eager for full immersion in American culture and society. Following the Second World War, the establishment of golf clubs and country clubs accelerated as upwardly mobile representatives of the “Ostjuden” purchased run-down golf establishments and refurbished them, making them more luxurious and exclusive than those of their gentile counterparts. One may detect a certain psychological trend as the Jewish community, being excluded from the country club scene, compensated for the slights endured in their quest for membership not only in a particular club but in the American promise of “equality.” In the process, the Hillcrest Country Club of Hollywood (established by German Jews in 1920, rapidly becoming a haven for the Hollywood elite) became much more exclusive—its 421,000 initiation fee was the highest in the country, higher than that of the Los Angeles Country Club. Groucho Marx (a more recently arrived Eastern European Jew) quipped that if it would have him as a member he would not want to join. Its membership was largely closed to Christians, including Joseph P. Kennedy, who tried to join.<sup>64</sup>

On the individual level, responses to anti-Semitism tended to concentrate on sports, which connoted prestige and nobility. As I have already mentioned, fencing became one of the favorite means in this quest. The question naturally arises why were, and are, Jews so particularly interested in modern fencing? What are the roots of this Jewish fascination with the science of the sword? One of the most plausible explanations is that fencing has been considered an elegantly aristocratic pursuit, closed to the Jews for thousands of years. It’s undeniable that the Jewish bourgeoisie enthusiastically embraced the cultural style and

corresponding affectations of European nobility and gentry, A more nuanced view, however, is that for the Jews the sword as a social symbol had powerful psychological connotation. Wielding a weapon satisfied a compensatory reflex, part of an attempt by the emerging Jewish community to identify itself with, and be accepted by, the ruling classes by engaging in a pursuit that was associated with virility, masculinity, and honor in many European societies. Dueling provided an answer to this Jewish quest. The preoccupation with “honor,” and especially the efforts to limit the sport to the acceptable (i.e., Christian and middle-class) members of society, made the pursuit of dueling even more appealing to Jews. An equally plausible rationale in the Jewish mind might have been that fencing, and especially dueling, supplied the ultimate claim for equality. In spite of a resolute condemnation of dueling as “un-Jewish” by religious authorities, one of the unanticipated consequences of emancipation was the rapid expansion of dueling to every strata of Jewish society. First, the mass influx of Jewish students into European universities predisposed them to fraternities in which fencing and dueling were an integral part. For example, at the University of Vienna, a hotbed of anti-Jewish activity by 1885, 23 percent of the student body was Jewish, rising as high as 41.4 percent among students in medicine. In Hungary, there were similarly impressive numbers; Jewish students constituted 31.33 percent of the total university enrollment.<sup>65</sup> Predictably, by 1890 all the university Burschenschaften were pronouncedly anti-Semitic. Many fraternities equated dueling, and the resulting hideous facial scars as a passport to integration into the host society and culture. The bearers of these scars were termed as “worthy of satisfaction” (*Satisfaktionfabig*), and the scars were a mark of honor in society. An apocryphal story tells how the world-renowned anthropologist Franz Boas, hearing an anti-Semitic insult in a cafe during his student days in Germany, threw the speaker out. The latter first challenged him to a duel but consequently apologized for his remark. Nevertheless, Boas insisted on following through with the fight. Indeed, he proudly bore his dueling scars from saber cuts in his student days. Sander Gilman noted that “the scar marked the individual... who was seen as a hardy member of the body politic.”<sup>66</sup> The historian Leo Heinrich, who was a disciple of Jahn, described in graphic terms the pleasure of physical pain: “the sight of my own new scars has something exalting about it for me, when I see beads of blood form on my flesh...”<sup>67</sup> Ironically, at the time when dueling was the ultimate proof of manliness, Jews were systematically excluded from major dueling societies in Austria and partially in Germany. In order to identify the “undesirables,” the Burschenschaften and Landsmannschaften had established the practice of listing religions next to names on the club roster by the 1890s. Jews, in turn, formed their own dueling societies, carving out a ferocious reputation as duelists. Upon being excluded from dueling with Austrian fraternities, members of Kadimah, a preeminent Jewish fraternity in Vienna, successfully challenged their Austrian counterparts in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Even the usually reticent religious establishment applauded their efforts.<sup>68</sup>

Another fertile ground for dueling since the mid nineteenth century was when large numbers of Jews entered into the ranks of officers in various armies in

which dueling was virtually mandatory. While the Habsburg military is not fully representative of other armed forces, by 1900, 18.3 percent of the Austro-Hungarian reserve officer corps were Jewish (not including the Jewish medical officers in the reserve), many times more than the proportion of Jews in the Dual Monarchy (4.5 percent). Even the most rabid anti-Semite had to think twice in Austria-Hungary before insulting a Jew, who could possibly be an officer, for if challenged by the latter, he had to fight or risk losing his status as an officer and a gentleman.<sup>69</sup>

A direct correlation between dueling and the rate of emancipation in various countries can also be discerned in the fact that a Jewish penchant for resorting to a weapon as an ultimate equalizer reached epidemic proportions within the bourgeoisie circles as well. Among those who did not shy away from picking up the saber or the pistol were such luminaries as Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, and Theodor Herzl, to mention just a few. A four-time Olympic gold medallist from Hungary, Dr. Jenő Fuchs, duelled against Dr. Oszkar Gerde, another Jewish Olympic champion, in 1910, and later against Dr. Marcel Barcsai, a Jewish congressman in the 1920s, and made headlines in the Hungarian press. In reading the dueling records of yore, one can only marvel about the power of the swords and pistols for leveling the playing field when a Jewish wood-merchant can wound the scion of one of the oldest aristocratic families, and a Jewish parliamentarian can provoke a decorated cavalry officer. A revealing statistic from fin-de-siècle Budapest shows that while the Jews constituted about 4.5 percent of Hungary's population, no less than nine out of seventy-one, or 13 percent, of those convicted of dueling (it was quasi-illegal) were Jews. Similar numbers were the norm in Germany, and during the last decade of the past century, the Dreyfuss trial cited equally impressive numbers regarding dueling in France.<sup>70</sup> Dueling became an accepted, indeed preferred means for combating anti-Semitic slights and insults. It was born out of a strong sense of frustration with the judicial system and the state, which failed to protect the community from psychological persecution. Thus, Theodor Herzl was not only the father of modern political Zionism, but "an imposing and elegant figure," who fought a duel under the *nom de combat* Tancred and became one of the "emancipated intellectual Jews for whom emancipation had brought as much anguish as happiness." It is an irony of history that when he was only twenty-five years old, he withdrew from the Albia dueling fraternity in Vienna because, as he wrote in his diary in 1896, it had denied duels to Jews, and he said the Albia members "are without honor and cowards." His comment that "a half dozen duels would very much raise the social position of the Jews"<sup>71</sup> reveals his realization that dueling demanded recognition of his honorable status, of his claim to a certain esteem and equality. Perhaps not coincidentally, the majority of Olympic fencing victories by Jews was in saber—the preferred weapon of dueling.

One may attribute this preoccupation with the sword to a psychological need to carve out respect with the tip of the saber. Less known is the Jewish response to exclusion from racetracks, which might provide another unmatched opportunity for some psychological insight. F. Scott Fitzgerald commented in *The Last Tycoon*

(1941) on the fascination with horses amongst the Hollywood elite: “Shtahr guessed that the Jews had taken the worship of horses as a symbol—for years it had been the Cossacks mounted and the Jews on foot. Now the Jews had horses and it gave them a sense of extraordinary well being and power.” This idea in the unfinished fictional account of Hollywood is supported by one of the participants in this milieu. Irene Mayer Selznick reminisces in her autobiography: “There was much ado about horses in Southern California in those years [1920s]... It was also rather dashing to wear riding clothes for casual attire....”<sup>72</sup> The Hollywood joke during this time that Jews had gone from “Poland to polo in one generation” belies the common perception of the upscale Jewish quest for social respectability. Hollywood was not the only place to discover this insatiable fascination with horses. Claire Pajackowska posited that Ralph Lauren, the popular Jewish fashion designer, appropriated the horseback polo player as his brand name and clothes icon because of a Jewish yearning for membership in a privileged class and to create an imaginary history of ease to substitute for the desperation of the Diaspora. Born into the Lifschitz family from Lithuania, Lauren ingeniously condenses “a number of symbols of the identity of upper-middle-class American culture with its idealization of ‘Britishness.’”<sup>73</sup>

To say that anti-Semitism is a trait practiced only by society at large is too easy. What is fair to say is that a large degree of Jewish “self-hatred” should not be discarded as fiction either. This term, often interchanged with Jewish anti-Semitism, is a valid label for a mode of self-abnegation that is directed within the community against an individual or part of the group. Jewish humor, for example, has a certain self-deprecating quality that creates a stereotype, an image of a “schlemiel” (a bumbler). Woody Allen is one of the most ardent perpetrators of this image. Yet, contrary to his projected and eternalized figure of a nebbish social “nudnik” (dork), even he, just like many of his contemporaries among Jewish American fiction writers, loves baseball. In fact, he admits that “he was a good athlete at school—a medal winner in track, a lead-off hitter and second baseman in baseball, and a schoolyard basketball player.”<sup>74</sup> While this is far from self-hatred, it reinforces the Jewish stereotype cemented in the popular imagination. It can express itself by a Jewish ambivalence, or even outright shame, toward their bodies, their own difference. Part of this self-hate is the very awareness of being, or perception of being, different; a consciousness that implies that because one is different, one is inferior. The Jewish nose assumes in this context a place of derision—a pathological sign. Sander Gilman mentions that the burgeoning number of plastic surgeries in the first half of the twentieth century may serve as a reflection of a Jewish desire to eliminate the source of this illness: “It is the internationalization of the negative image of the Jew, the desire not to be seen as a Jew, while retaining one’s identity as a Jew is one model of response to the sense of being seen as ‘too Jewish’ or, indeed, being seen as Jewish at all.”<sup>75</sup>

Emancipation in Western Europe might have actualized economic opportunities, but it also produced self-doubt and gave birth to a schism within the Jewish community. German Jews in the late nineteenth century created a new stereotype, “the Eastern Jew,” endowing it with pushiness, ignorance,

backwardness, dirt—an antithesis of the assimilated enlightened Jews. This polemic between good (German) Jews and bad (Russian) Jews continued in the United States. One was a productive member of German gymnastic societies and a generous contributor to charities while the other was dirty, sickly, lacked physical courage, and was uninterested in sports. The German Jews, who preceded Russians and Poles to America by several decades, were irritatingly paternalistic toward their “backward” brethren. Yet, they were genuinely concerned with the physical and mental debilitation caused by crowded and unhealthy living quarters and set out to “mitigate the dire consequences” of tenement living. The avowed aim was the rapid “Americanization” of this “unruly” multitude, and play and gymnastics figured prominently in this quest to revive the Russian Jews.<sup>76</sup> The gulf separating the two communities was not confined to socio-economics. It was also a cultural clash. The physical appearance of this “motley” group itself was offensive to the German Jews. Their distaste toward the newcomers was captured in one of the central addresses of the “First Jewish Women’s Congress,” held in Chicago in 1893. Minnie D. Louis, a stalwart of German Jewish philanthropy, expressed both her community’s revulsion and its desire to help: “The religiously enlightened matrons of our country, delivered from the oppressor’s yoke, must dive into the depths of vice to spread culture and enlightenment among our semi-barbaric Russian immigrants...” This German model for the rejuvenation of a nation through gymnastics and sport remained a central theme for the German-Jewish elite in the United States. In 1920, the psychologist A. Myerson attributed the psychopathology of the Jew to his rejection of sports and play. He provides a prescription: “Sport and play... form an incomparable avenue of discharge for nervous energy... Circumstances excluded the Jew from their wholesome influence . . .”<sup>77</sup> Not surprisingly, the Settlement Houses, the Educational Alliance in New York, and other educational institutions supported by German-Jewish philanthropy incorporated extensive physical education programs.<sup>78</sup>

It might seem somewhat ironic to suggest that German Jews were motivated to embark on their extensive philanthropic drive by their unease about the newly arriving ragtag, exotic collection of “Ostjuden.” Yet, their behavior toward their Eastern European co-religionists tends to support this claim. What Anna Freud has called “identification with the aggressor”—one of the defense mechanisms central to the incongruity of assimilation—may provide the answer. “Faced with an external threat (typically represented as criticism emanating from an authority), the subject identifies himself with his aggressor. He may do so either by appropriating the aggression itself, or again by adopting particular symbols of power by which the aggressor is designated.”<sup>79</sup> The representation of the Russian Jew magnified German Jewish insecurities and anxieties about their own image in the gentile community. There was also, of course, a large degree of perceived intellectual superiority in belonging to the German sphere of culture rather than the backward uncouth hordes of “Oriental Jews.” This sense of revulsion appeared even in the writings of Hannah Arendt, who spoke during Eichman’s trials in Jerusalem about an “oriental mob, as if one were in Istanbul, or some other half-

Asiatic country.” In describing the trial, she informed a friend that Eichman’s three judges were “the best of German Jewry” while Gideon Hausner, the chief prosecutor, was “a typical Galician Jew. . . probably one of those people who don’t know any language.”<sup>80</sup>

Paradoxically, Sephardic Jews, whose presence in America goes back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, looked down upon German Jews. Some of them belonged to the most gentrified country clubs in New York and the Deep South, and many of them had “bluer” blood than the Christian club members. The social line cut deep between Sephardic, German, and Eastern European Jews in every sphere of life. In nearly every American city of any size, there were at least two and sometimes three Jewish country clubs. For years, the most exclusive German-Jewish clubs—the Harmonie and the Century Country Club of New York, the Standard of Chicago, and the Phoenix of Cincinnati—enforced an unwritten rule against accepting “Orientals”: Russian Jews. The Sunningdale Golf Club in Scarsdale and the somewhat less prestigious Old Oaks Country Club, on the other hand, catered to an Eastern European clientele considered by German Jews as *arriviste*. Atlanta had three highly segregated Jewish country clubs—Sephardic, German, and Russian Jewish.<sup>81</sup>

#### THE ROLE OF SPORT IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Emancipation has always been a matter of state-initiated and state-sponsored legislation to extend equal rights in legalistic terms to an oppressed or discriminated minority. However, emancipation has never been able to deliver social and psychological equality because it has never carried the promise of full integration in a given society. We might discard Hitler’s comment in 1932, before his accession to power, that the Olympics are “an invention of Jews and Freemasons... a play inspired by Judaism which cannot possibly be put on in a Reich ruled by National Socialists” as one of his many irrational, discredited, and putrescent ideas.<sup>82</sup> However, it is undeniable that Jews were instrumental in popularizing sport and the rejuvenation of the modern Olympic movement. When social scientists finally conduct a thorough and dispassionate examination of this theme, they may reach the verdict that in spite of a stubbornly perpetuated belief, no other ethnic group was so closely involved and instrumental in the birth and promotion of modern sport. There are two plausible explanations that might shed light on this close connection between the Jewish community and modern sport. The first one is that while the lower-middle class in Central Europe steadfastly endorsed gymnastics, the diffusion of English sports in Europe in the last century was promoted by anglophile aristocratic circles in Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Czech lands, and elsewhere who were mimicking their British counterparts. The rising Jewish bourgeoisie became an integral part and beneficiary of the rapid industrialization of Europe. They were rebuffed by the anti-Semitic policies of various Turner societies and naturally gravitated toward the aristocratic upper classes and a movement that promised equality and valued individuality. The second rationale centers on the pronounced transnational ideology of modern

sport versus the narrow Pan-Germanism (and corresponding anti-Jewish policies) of the Deutsche Turnerschaft or the Pan-Slavism of the Sokol, which was more appealing to Jewish transnationalism and cosmopolitanism.<sup>83</sup> When a society demands of a minority total immersion in the dominant culture, tradition, and language, the minority group is forced by necessity to conform to some degree to the dominant value system.

The change in Jewry's class structure in various societies is crucial to the understanding of its attraction to and the degree and nature of its involvement in sport. Jewish involvement in athletics, beginning with the second half of the last century, corresponded with their rise in the ranks of the middle class in Europe and America and a conscious desire for integration into a host society. While becoming financially equal with the middle and upper classes, socially and psychologically they remained outsiders. Participating in sports was just another means by which the Jewish middle class pursued its social and psychological integration and assimilation.<sup>84</sup> We find that in societies where gymnastics and sports, and especially Olympic glory, are viewed as a national priority, Jews also became intensely involved in these activities. To understand this "psychological identification" with national goals, the Hungarian Jewish example is quite instructive. Jews have been overrepresented in Hungarian fencing successes, winning twenty-one Olympic medals between 1908 and 1936. However, the fact that the 1924 Hungarian Olympic soccer team also included eight Jewish players and that the gold-medallist water-polo teams in 1932 and 1936 had a major Jewish presence provides an even more convincing case. Constituting less than 5 percent of the population before the war, Hungarian Jews brought home a much larger percentage of medals from the Olympics and from world and European championships than their number in the general population would lead one to expect. By some estimates Austrian Jews, who were even less numerous than their Hungarian co-religionists, were awarded one quarter of the Olympic medals Austria won during the first four decades of Olympic history.<sup>85</sup>

Jewish successes, in theory, would parallel Hungarian aspirations for national glory, this is only partially true. The goals of a mainstream culture and subculture do not always overlap as tidily as scholars would like us to believe. The Hemingway novel cited earlier, *The Sun Also Rises*, provides a fascinating and perhaps correct psychological analysis of Robert Cohn's inner motivation that propelled him to the boxing championship at Princeton. The opening pages of the novel condemn Cohn for winning the title while not being committed to the core values of sport—he is not embracing the Christian code of "manhood." Literary critics have often portrayed him as one of Hemingway's most one-dimensional character. I see it differently; the figure of Cohn genuinely captivates me. On closer examination, I can discern a vivid inner life with all the doubts and anguish of an insecure minority in an alien environment. He presents the upwardly mobile Jew who commits the ultimate sin of using a quintessential American institution such as sport to gain social and psychological acceptance: "[The title] meant a lot to Cohn. He cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt on being treated as

a Jew in Princeton.” Cohn is physically inside, a boxing champion, yet he remains the ultimate outsider psychologically and socially. Although many consider Hemingway unsparingly anti-Semitic, he inadvertently reveals the loneliness, ambivalence, anguish, and unrelenting ostracism encountered by Jewish students in American colleges in the 1920s. Paradoxically, a survey conducted during the same decade has shown that Jewish students faced a no-win situation in the universities. In the research, Harvard students advocated limits on Jewish enrollment because of their poor hygiene, competitiveness, and “disdain for athletics.”<sup>86</sup>

Historian Richard Crepeau remarked that many in America believed in the power of “baseball...[to] play an important part in the Americanization of immigrants, since it was the purveyor of democracy.” Jews subscribed to this belief not only in America, but in Europe, Australia, and elsewhere. They genuinely believed in the power of sport to promote assimilation into and acceptance by mainstream society. Hartmut Becker has pointed out that the Deutsche Turnerschaft attracted middle-class Jews in a much larger number than their ratio in the general population would indicate. The final aim of these Jews was social integration and assimilation through gymnastics, sport, and the Olympic movement. This quest neatly corresponded with their quantitative transformation from “Jewish Germans” to “Germans of the Mosaic faith.”<sup>87</sup>

Philip Roth is frequently preoccupied with the issue of sport and Jewish identity in the great melting pot—or salad bowl. His *Goodbye Columbus* provides a rich text for analysis of the suburban Jewish world of the 1950s, where upper-class success was associated with all sorts of physical activities. Brenda Patimkin, the central character of the novella, is exerting herself at tennis and golf, and her brother is a successful athlete, a “crewcut proteus” who appears to Neil, a son of the lower middle class in Newark, as a giant as capable of drinking the country club pool water as of swimming in it. Riv-Ellen Prell finds that the Patimkins, who represent American success, “sweat the sweat of leisure” that has a strong affinity to class identification. The rationale for Jewish participation, thus, was not based on purely national glory or financial gain. Involvement in sports in a society where sport as a social institution is held in high esteem, in many ways is a form of belonging to and being accepted by the “great tribe.” Philip Roth rationalizes his own infatuation with baseball not by his dreams of becoming a major leaguer, but by the hope of “the bestowal of membership in a great secular nationalistic church from which nobody had ever seemed to suggest that Jews should be excluded.”<sup>88</sup>

Is it that the great novelist’s musings are merely another form of creating a fiction? Was there, indeed, an unconditional acceptance into this all-inclusive church? The fact that the exclusionary policies of this “great secular nationalistic church” affected a large number of Jews, Italians, Irish, and African Americans does not negate that many of these groups considered sport a means for “Americanization.” Turn-of-the-century progressive educators, Jews and non-Jews, understood the importance of sport in acculturation.

### THE JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT, ZIONISM, AND MODERN SPORT

Two radical socio-political forces, the Bund (General Jewish Workers' Union in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia) and Zionism, emerged in the Jewish world during the late nineteenth century. Staunchly anti-Zionist and representing a rapidly expanding Jewish proletariat in Eastern Europe, the social-democratic Bund was established in 1897. Although lesser known than its Zionist counterpart Maccabi, Morgenstern (the sport and youth arm of the Bund) deserves at least a footnote in Jewish sport history. Devoid of nationalistic overtones, it was not as effective as Maccabi in addressing the needs of millions of Eastern European Jews. Nevertheless, it established an extensive network of Jewish workers' clubs. The Bund's interest in physical exercise was not so much an ideological statement as an ideological afterthought tied to Marxist and socialist doctrine. Nonetheless, it was an influential force in shaping Jewish consciousness of physical activities and sport. The Bund saw the solution to the Jewish Question as political, especially class-based, while the Zionists saw it as national struggle. The main difference between the two organizations was that the Bund attempted to adjust Jewish ethics and values to the precepts of Marxism while Zionism attempted to introduce a whole new nationalistic value system. Zionist preoccupation with the body, exercise, and later the Jewish Olympic idea (Maccabiah Games) was a direct consequence of industrialization, urbanization, and anti-Semitic pressures. The historian Howard Sachar once remarked that without anti-Semitism, political Zionism would not have gained momentum in the nineteenth century.

I believe it was Uri Avneri, an Israeli social critic, who once observed that to be genuine, a revolution must radically alter a culture. It is hard to deny that Zionist ideas, rhetoric, and course of action affected the Jewish masses and brought something radically new in Jewish history. First, Zionists broke away from the traditionalist values of the Jewish Orthodoxy. The most important aspect of this breach was the emergence of a political view in which Jewish "peoplehood or nationhood"—or race—rather than religion became the central tenet of Judaism. Just as race science played a role in the nationalism of France and Germany, it was to take central stage in Zionist philosophy. Samuel Weissenberg, Elias Auerbach, Ignaz Zollschan, and others from the medical profession as well as Heinrich Loewe, a folklorist, made a sustained and detailed case for the racial purity of the Jews.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly enough, many of these racial polemicists were also instrumental in the establishment of the Jüdische Turnerschaft (the Jewish gymnastic movement). They were scornful of the religiously sanctioned "meekness," so graphically described in the poetry of the Zionist poet Nachman Bialik, under anti-Semitic pressures. At the same time, Zionists had equal contempt for the Jewish middle classes for their bourgeois caution, for their social aspirations, for their belief in the judicial system that would rectify the injustices, for their entire range of assimilationist quests. Zionist doctrine wanted to create a broad national community by implementing a modern revolution through a movement that prided itself upon being a movement of youth. Zionism propagated this maxim by changing people's diet, dress, and work habits and by creating a

new body image. Zionists needed a physical component to their political platform for ideological purposes as much as for humanitarian ones. Thus, we need to draw a distinction between the growing assimilationist-minded bourgeoisie establishment, the Bundist social-democrats, and the Zionist ideology of sport. The bourgeoisie hoped to accelerate the process of assimilation through sport. It advocated a full immersion in the sporting life and ideology of a given country in the hope that sport participation would blur any vestiges of physical or spiritual difference, which might otherwise hinder full integration into the host society. The Bundists, on the other hand, believed that sport would bring the Jewish masses into the embrace of the international brotherhood of socialism by which full assimilation would be attained. Finally, Zionism used sports participation as a means of rejecting assimilation altogether. Zionists felt that sport was a natural outgrowth of a “normal” nationhood that retained its essential Jewishness—religious and ethnic. To create a Jewish nation-state, Zionists had to resort to a formula of “inventing a nation.” As a political and nationalistic movement, Zionism advocated the “normalization” of the Jews by transforming them into “a nation like any other.” The ideological basis for this daunting task was the doctrine that in order to erase the anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews, one must create a “New Jewish Man”—cleansed by physical toil and baptized by robust physical activity. In accomplishing this task, the Zionist movement followed a well-worn path. David Biale noted that “like other nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, Zionism was preoccupied by the physical and emotional degeneration of the nation and by the threat of demographic decline.”<sup>90</sup>

Hence the establishment of the Jüdische Turnerschaft, which later transformed itself into the Maccabi sport movement. Zionist interest in the physical revitalization of the Jewish people had been expressed as early as in 1898 at the second Zionist Congress in Basel. Two featured speakers at the meeting, Max Nordau and Max Mandelstamm, who were physicians by training, made back-to-back appeals for the advancement of physical training and functional fitness among European Jews. Their aim was as much to counter anti-Semitic claims of Jewish physical inferiority—after all, by that time Jews’ participation in the Deutsche Turnerschaft surpassed their proportion in the general population—as to address a genuine concern for the medical and hygienic aspects of ghetto living in Eastern Europe. “Zionism rouses Judaism to a new life,” declared Nordau. “Of this I am sure. It achieves this spiritually through the revival of common ideals, and materially through physical education of the new generation which will return to us the lost ‘Muskeljudentum’ (Muscular Judaism).” One must understand the context of this manifesto, which was directed both toward the effeminate Western and the malformed Eastern Jew. As a critic of late nineteenth-century culture, his polemical book, *Degeneration*, reveals Nordau’s concern with the malignant effects of modern culture on Jewish society. One scholar has written that “Max Nordau was able to assemble in one book nearly all the elements and many of the personalities involved in modernism. His word for it, however, was not modernism, but degeneration.” In 1884, he charged that “we stand in the midst of a serious spiritual national disease, a sort of black plague of degeneration

and hysteria.” He blames rapid urbanization during the second half of the nineteenth century and especially the modern metropolis, where life becomes hard to live.<sup>91</sup> His diatribes against degeneration did not spare Eastern Jews either. He addressed his call directly to the most oppressed and poorest segment of Jewish society, Jews of Eastern Europe—the unassimilated masses of “Ostjuden”—who suffered from some form of physiological and psychological disorders.

Zionism had been a movement based on Jewish self-criticism. Of course, the call of Max Nordau for the cultivation of a “Muskeljudentuni” at the second Zionist Congress in Basel in 1898 by itself would not explain early Zionist concerns with athleticism, or the lack of it, among Jews. Though the second speaker, Dr. Max Mandelstamm, is much less quoted, his impassioned argument for the immediate necessity of physical training is much more symptomatic of early Zionist thinking about and rationalization for the place of sport in Jewish culture. “The time has come to establish,” he suggested pragmatically, “besides the study and practice of the Hebrew language, and the teaching of Jewish history and literature in its main feature, Jewish social and gymnastic societies, where Jews freely can devote themselves to the exercise of mind and body” He was more specific than Nordau in reflecting on the plight of Eastern Jewry by declaring “that sick children, living in poverty, overcome the decay of their physiques through gymnastic exercises... The young minds should not, as has been the case until now, be overburdened by too much mental exertion. There is a need for physical training for greater number of people.” Mandelstamm’s comment, at the same congress, that decried the squalor of living conditions in the little shtetles of the “Ostjuden” puts Nordau’s remarks in proper context. Indeed, the parallelism of his plea to that of progressive German-Jewish reformers in the United States is striking. At the end of his entreaty, Mandelstamm embraced, as had the Turners and Sokols before him, the slogan “*men sana in corpore sano.*”<sup>92</sup>

These Zionist leaders drew an image of the shtetl as a place of squalor where children, hunched over the holy books, suffered from a “pathology of cerebrality.” One is tempted to compare the misery in these little Jewish villages and towns with the abject poverty of Lower East Side neighborhoods. The severity and prevalence of illnesses and the extent of destitution in the New World were not less than in Eastern Europe. Although Nordau and Mandelstamm talked about the rejuvenation of the downtrodden Jewish masses, they were speaking the language of the aspiring Jewish middle-class. Zionism, although tied to Judaism and sharing this notion with the assimilationists, bore the trappings of other nineteenth-century national movements—especially German *völkisch* ideology. The Norse epics stirred audiences in Germany and Norway, and Italy strived to reclaim its classical heritage by harking back to Roman glory. By appropriating the Maccabi name and heritage, a defining element of Zionism was its deliberate reach to antiquity for a sense of physical legitimization for the movement. Yet, it is ironic that the armed revolt of the ancient Maccabees was a holy war by zealots who sought to impose a theocracy in government and a fundamentalism in religious dogma, where gymnastics and athletics had no place, which is completely opposite to Zionist thinking. Finally, considering that one of the purported sparks

the kindled the flames of the Maccabi revolt was that Hellenized Jewish high priests in Jerusalem engaged in Greek gymnastic exercises in the nude instead of tending to their holy duties, this may seem an even more glaring contradiction. Early Zionists, just like their nationalist contemporaries on the right and left of the political spectrum, used gymnastics and sport for unifying, purifying, and energizing a future Jewish nation.

What drove Zionism to embrace sport and create the image of the Jewish Turner, indeed legitimize it through the name Maccabi, was less an innate belief in the institution itself than the necessity to conform to nationalistic political principles.<sup>93</sup> The ancient Maccabees thus became a symbol—a symbiosis between militarism and sport. Indeed, one cannot ignore the military implications of sport in Zionist thinking. The evocative words of Vladimir Jabotinsky of the militant Revisionist wing of Zionism, expressed this line of thinking best in noting that Diaspora Judaism “despised physical manhood, the principle of male power as understood and worshipped by all free peoples in history. Physical courage and physical force were of no use, prowess of the body. . . an object of ridicule.”<sup>94</sup> Like Jabotinsky, the Zionist leadership genuinely believed that masculine virtues would find expression in military prowess. Franz Kafka’s friend Felix Weltsch wrote in



The “Song Book” of Bar Kochba Berlin, established in 1898. The newly established Jewish gymnastic societies faithfully followed the German example of the Deutsche Turnerschaft’s völkisch ideology.

the Prague Zionist paper *Selbstwehre* that the Jews must “shed our heavy stress on intellectual preeminence . . . and our excessive nervousness, a heritage of the ghetto . . . We spend all too much of our time debating, and not enough time in play and gymnastics . . . What makes a man a man is not his mouth, nor his mind, nor yet his morals, but discipline . . . What we need is manliness.”<sup>95</sup> Indeed, Zionism envisaged sport not only as a means for better health, but as a means for self-defense both on the local and national levels. Zionists were not, of course, the first to speculate about the military benefits of gymnastics and sport, nor were their leaders the first to utilize them extensively. The Turnbewegung was the brainchild of Turnvater Frederich Ludwig Jahn, an arch-conservative who envisaged a prominent role for

the gymnastic movement in training the German youth for military service. Not surprisingly, Jahn's name often pops up in the numerous philosophical discussions and debates that were conducted on the pages of the *Jüdische Turnzeitung* around the turn of the century about the rationale and purpose of the Jewish gymnastic movement.<sup>96</sup>

Finally, Zionist ambitions were well served by the Olympic idea, a rallying point for the Jewish middle classes. The *Jüdische Turnerschaft* was definitely not a casual observer in the fight between gymnastics and modern sports, and consequently the Olympic Games, that was raging between adherents of the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* and promoters of English sports in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gymnastics, in the minds of the Turners, was equated with the unity, discipline, and nationalistic fervor in Germany. In their eyes, the decadent sports, which hastened the moral decline of bourgeoisie-capitalist England, were the symbol of unbridled individualism. The pursuit of "English" sports, according to proponents of gymnastics, was a social malaise of the rich assimilationists who were slavishly mimicking the British upper classes. The rising popularity of an expanding Olympic movement exacerbated this socio-ideological conflict. Sports signified the rapidly emerging Jewish bourgeoisie, which was pursuing social and psychological integration through sport.

In fact, the modern Olympic movement can be credited with providing a guiding example for the Maccabiah idea and with exerting powerful influences upon the inception and format of the Jewish Games. Originally proposed in 1912 as the Jewish Olympiad, the Maccabiah Games were held for the first time in Tel Aviv in 1932. Although they bear all the outwardly ceremonial trappings of an Olympic festival, the idea of the Maccabiah Games transcends pure athletic competition. The dominating philosophical principle of the Maccabiah Games is nationalist at its core. The Games' aim is to attract Jewish athletes from all over the world to Israel. Thus, as a quadrennial celebration, held a year after the Olympics, the Jewish Games emphasize the idea of participation over record-setting.<sup>97</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Historic context, relation to time and place, helps to explain Jewish attitudes and sentiments, love and hate, ambivalence and outright antagonism toward physical activities, sport, and the Olympic Games. Robert D. Kaplan noted once that "ethnic and national characteristics change far more slowly and are, therefore, better guides to future political trends."<sup>98</sup> We need to deal with a combination of enduring ideas and historical circumstances to understand the culture and ethos of sport and its relationship to Judaism. As often is the case, in speaking about Jewish attitudes, we easily become prisoners of our own mythologies. By the turn of the century, Jews were well on their way to achieving an economic success unrivaled in history. Over the course of several decades, they became the virtual middle class and the integral component of the intellectual elite in some countries. Corresponding with a dynamic process of assimilation and the parallel emergence

of political Zionism, Jewish society consciously transformed its value system from purely religious Judaism to an ethno-cultural “nationhood” Judaism. This transformation also facilitated a Jewish acceptance of sport and the Olympic movement and what they represented.

As an unforced marriage of ideologies, the emergence of modern sport movements and the Jewish community came together at a fortuitous moment in history. Although this notion might conflict with entrenched Jewish sensibilities, Jewish communities almost everywhere responded to the call of modern sport and the Olympic movement with unbridled enthusiasm. This was fueled as much by powerful incentives for socio-economic status as by the promise of social and psychological integration. Pierre Bourdieu came up with an ingenious theory, quite pertinent to our argument, about the use of the body in a social-cultural context. His theory points to the likelihood that lower classes use the body as an instrument to accomplish a variety of objectives. In contrast, the upper classes view the body as an end in itself—to care for it and beautify it.<sup>99</sup> An insecure middle class, with growing economic pretensions, Jews were looking for psychological and social acceptance and found the ideology of sport both acceptable and useful in assisting in this quest. The Turner movement, with its strong nationalistic and Judeophobic bent, obviously could not fully carry out this role. Sport represented a new spirit of individuality and entrepreneurial spirit. Thus, Jews became intimately involved in the propagation of “English sports” by breaking away from anti-Semitic Turner societies in Central Europe.

Nor can one discard the idea, so ingrained in the American imagination, that sport is a metaphor for life, encapsulating all its successes and heartbreaks, rejections and acceptances, exclusions and inclusions. In other words, institutions like sport suggests not just what a society is all about but what, in a more difficult sense, it ought to be. In the final account, sport offers simultaneously an ideology of nationalism and of transnationalism. There is no contradiction in this notion. It signifies the premise that a country or even a community can advance its own goals by engaging in an activity that transcends traditional political boundaries. In some degree, increased Jewish participation around the turn of the century was influenced by a genuine desire to dispel the stereotypical image of the weak, nonphysical Jew. I believe, however, that the fundamental motivation for their involvement rests on their conscious drive for social integration and acceptance. At the same time, we might have to reiterate the maxim that every ethnic group or subculture accepts and reforms societal institutions on its own cultural terms. It must translate these institutions to serve its needs, while adjusting them to its own cultural concepts and value system. We must also recognize that Jews as a cultural group accepted dominant societal values with a particular Jewish twist, under their own terms. This was true in the cases of dueling, crime, and, of course, sport.

It seems evident that there was, and still is, an inherent conflict between traditional (Orthodox) Judaism and the ideology of sport, at least autotelic sport. It reveals a philosophical tension between an ethno-religious community's past and present, between religious and ethnic Judaism, between a haunting sense of

continuity based on thousands of years of tradition and a poignant feeling of the inevitability of change. It is no wonder that Jews have been, and some are still, imbued with a sense of these tensions. Yet, in the social evolution from a purely religious to a more ethnic-oriented Jewish community, an accommodation had to be made. An ethnic or nation-based Judaism embraced sport and the Olympics as important vehicles for its own needs more willingly than did traditional Judaism. But even this espousal was conditional because sport and the Olympic Games for Jews are not viewed as an end in themselves. They merely serve as a means to accomplish goals that inevitably are rooted in their value system, goals which must be in harmony with their religious and cultural precepts. I still remember the haunting image of the old rabbi in the film *The Chosen*, based on Chaim Potok's novel, leading a group of children on a walk. In a trembling voice, he exhorts them to play baseball because in order to be free and transform oneself into a true American "you must play baseball."

Is art imitating life or real life imitating art? The answer, complex and contradictory as it may seem, is both. As a continually evolving community, scholars and the general public have been laboriously inventing facts in order to reinvent a functional history. On the same level of thought, we sometimes fail to understand that humans are often motivated by what they think and believe and not just by objective and measurable interests. The 1990s brought an interesting and more balanced reappraisal of Jewish involvement and achievements in sports. A certain hunger to rediscover a hitherto neglected morsel of an ethnic heritage is reflected in an increasing number of scholarly works as well as the burgeoning number of organizations, local and international, commemorating Jewish contributions to sports. Close to twenty various Sports Hall of Fame have been established today across America and Canada. Judaism, evolving at a crucial junction of its history from a religious to an ethnic community, carried an important ethical system to the portal of modernity. Their newly gained economic prominence forced Jewish communities to reinvent themselves by reconciling their religious mandate with the host societies' mainstream values and mores.

Statistics support my hypothesis that Jewish successes in sport served the legitimization of their own viability as a religio-ethnic community. This was especially true in the first half of the twentieth century. Jewish success on the sports field and the Olympic arena crested in the early 1970s, after which a definite decline is evident. However, we often tend to fall into the trap of equating sport participation with Olympic and professional sport successes. This period also corresponds with the emergence of the Jewish community, especially in America, that has such a degree of social, economic, and political acceptance and integration that it was able to relegate sports to the province of health, leisure, and country club status symbol. It might also help to explain why Jewish boxers used their fists during a certain evolutionary phase of the Jewish community and why their children moved on to basketball, tennis, golf, swimming, and gymnastics in subsequent periods. In this scheme of things, sport and the Olympic Games must be viewed not as an end to themselves but as a means to accomplish things that are important at any given time to the community. As we have seen over the

course of the twentieth century, cultural or religious idiosyncrasies, initially unrelated to society at large, constitute important influences on sport participation only for a limited time. A host society's value system then predisposes a minority community toward more eclectic cultural choices. Like all social institutions, sport needs to be placed into the context of culture. As John Hoberman so poignantly observed, even Max Nordau was willing to promote Muscular Judaism only if the motivating factor for Jewish athletic parity was governed by Jewish intellect. Nordau's pronouncement, however, is not tenable under societal stresses in modern national states—such as Germany, Hungary, or even the United States—where identification with national culture is paramount for economic, cultural, social, and psychological integration. It is when people begin to attach an inherent value to athletic achievement, as John Hoberman's recent book about the African American community suggests, that Jewish religious tradition must find itself at odds with the secular environment, forced to stand at some distance from the sports arena. I fear, to conclude on a sober note, that we lost some degree of innocence since the establishment of Israel, when the "tough Jew" or an Olympic medal in judo can replace the image of the victim. It is no longer possible to completely identify a multidimensional Judaism with the ecumenical values of the Jewish "neshamah," or spirit, however attractive and nostalgic those values may be to most of us and the rest of the world. An accommodation between Jewish values and the ideology of modern sport tells a deeper and less comfortable truth than the Jewish "neshamah," if truth rather than comfort is what we are seeking.<sup>100</sup>

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1. John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol; Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 6.
  2. The most comprehensive analysis of the relationship between sport and ideology belongs to John Hoberman, "Toward a Theory of Olympic Internationalism." In *Journal of Sport History* (Spring 1995) 22:1-37; and in *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1984). For pacifism of Pierre de Coubertin and his early supporters see, Dietrich Quanz, *Civic Pacifism and Sports-Based Internationalism*. "Framework of the Founding of the International Olympic Committee." In *Olympika* (1993) 2:1-24. Perhaps the most in-depth and intellectually stimulating account of Jewish participation in American sports belongs to Peter Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field, Sport and the American Jewish Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
  3. One of the best works that was published only most recently is by Steven J. Overman, *The Influence of the Protestant Ethic on Sport and Recreation* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1997). Also notable work was written by Robert J. Higgs, *God in the Stadium: Sports and Religion in America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995). See also Brian Gerard Milton, *Sport as a Functional Equivalent of Religion* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972); Charles S. Prebish, *Religion and Sport: The Meeting of Sacred and Profane* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1993); *Sport and Religion* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1992); *Sport and Religion* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1986); Benoit Joseph Bickel, *Religion et sport, essai historique et philosophique* (St. Maurice: Editions de l'oeuvre St. Augustin, 1944); Willi Schwank, *Kirche und Sport in Deutschland: von 1848 bis 1920* (Hochheim am Main: Schors-Verlag, 1979); Atef Mohamed E. Alogleh, *The Philosophy of Sport in Islamic Religion* (M.A. Thesis, University of Southern California, 1981).

4. Jeshaiahu Schwed, ed. *Hapeilut Hagufanit Bemabeshavah Hayebudit* (Giva'at Washington, Israel: n.d.); Meir Bakshi, "Physical Culture in the Writings of Maimonides"; and Jeshaiahu Schwed, "The Role of Physical Strength in the Teaching of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook"; and Victor Solomon, "Judaism and Sports." In the proceedings of an *International Seminar on Physical Education and Sport in the Jewish History and Culture*, ed. by Uriel Simri. (Wingate Institute, Israel, 1973); Morris Kurtz, "The Contribution of Traditional Jewish Sources in Disclosing the Influence of Greek Gymnastics on the Ancient Jewish Culture." In the proceedings of the *Society on the History of Physical Education and Sport in Asia and Pacific Area*, ed. by Uriel Simri. (Wingate Institute, 1974), 59-68; Jehoshua Leibowits, "Harambam al Hit'amlut." In the proceedings of *Tarbut Haguf V'harefirh* (Wingate Institute, 1976), 97-9; Danny Rosenberg, "Maimonides on Physical Exercise." In the proceedings of the *5th Canadian Symposium on the History of Sport and Physical Education* (Toronto, 1982), 267-274; Saul Ross, "An Investigation into the Jewish Concept of Ethics Regarding its Application to Sport: A Hierarchy of Ethics." In the proceedings of the *Second International Seminar on Physical Education and Sport in Jewish History and Culture*, ed. by Uriel Simri. (Wingate Institute, 1977), 29-40; and "Jewish Ethics and Sport: Toward Jewish Philosophy of Physical Education and Sport." In the proceedings of an *International Seminar on Physical Education and Sport in the Jewish History and Culture*, ed. by Uriel Simri. (Wingate Institute, 1981), 31-8; Daryl Siedentop, "Differences between Greek and Hebrew Views of Man." In *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education* (1971) 2:30-49. Ernst Simon, "The Judaic View of Sport." In *Sport in the Modern World: Chances and Problems* (Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1973), 595-9. Yehiam Soreq, "Rabbinic Aspects of Physical Culture and Sport Among Medieval and Renaissance Jewry." In the proceedings of an *International Seminar on Physical Education and Sport in the Jewish History and Culture*, 39-48.
5. It might be of interest to note that one of the founding members of the modern Olympic movement, Dr. Ferenc Kemény, representing Hungary, was Jewish. His close friendship with Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the Olympic movement, was based on their mutual adherence to pacifism. He committed suicide with his wife upon the order to wear the yellow star in 1944. The German representative was also reputed to be of Jewish descent. George Eisen, "The 'Budapest Option': The Hungarian Alternative to the First Modern Olympic Games." In *International Journal of Sport History* (May 1991) 1:124-32.
6. Irving Howe, *The World of Our Fathers* (New York: Book of the Month Club, 1976), 182-8; John M. Hoberman, "Sport and the Myth of the 'Jewish' Body." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Society for Sports History, Clemson University, Clemson, SC. May 27, 1989; and "Why Jews Play Sports: Do Sport and Jewish Values Conflict?" In *Moment* (April 1991) 42:34-39.
7. John Hoberman, *Darwin's Athletes: How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997).
8. Agnes Keleti from Hungary and Maria Gorochovskaia from the Soviet Union represented their countries in the gymnastic competitions in the Helsinki (1952) and Melbourne (1956) Olympic Games. Collectively, the two won seven gold, eight silver, and two bronze medals. Keleti defected from the Hungarian team and immigrated to Israel, becoming the national coach. Gorochovskaia hid her Jewish heritage until arriving to Israel in the late 1980s.
9. Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986) 4-5. *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality Race and Madness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985) 27.
10. Miklós Hadas and Viktor Karády, "Futball és társadalmi identitás." In *Replica* (June 1995) 17-18:89-119. FTC is the acronym for Ferencvárosi Torna Club. MTK stands for Magyar Testgyakorlók Köre.
11. Manfred Lämmer, "Ideological Tendencies in the Historiography of Sport in the Jewish Culture." In the *Proceedings of International Seminar* (Wingate Institute, 1973), 54-77.

- Harold U. Ribalow and Meir Z. Ribalow, *The Jew in American Sports*. New and revised editions. (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1981); Buddy Silverman, *The Jewish Athletes Hall of Fame* (New York: Shapolsky Books, 1987); Joseph Siegman, *The International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame* (New York: Shapolsky Books, 1992); Ken Blady, *The Jewish Boxer's Hall of Fame* (New York: Shapolsky Books, 1987). Muntner-Suessmann, *Leibesübungen bei den Juden von der ältesten Zeit bis auf die Gegenwart* (Vienna: Im Selbstverlage des Verfassers, 1926); Rudolf Philipp, *Wir Juden und der Sport* (Vienna: Union, 1921); Felix Pinczower, *Der Juedische Läufer* (Berlin: Berthold Levy, 1937); Kurt Schilde, *Mit dem Davidstern auf der Brust* (Berlin: Sportjugend, 1988); Martha Wertheimer, Siddy Goldschmidt, and Paul Yogi Mayer, *Das jüdische Sportbuch, Weg Kampf und Sieg* (Berlin: Atid, 1937).
12. B. Postal, J. Silver, and R. Silver, *Encyclopedia of Jews in Sports* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1965), 3.
  13. Besides writing a host of articles and book chapters, Steven A. Riess has initiated two landmark issues of the *Journal of American Jewish History* 74 (March, 1985) and 83 (March 1995). Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field, Sport and the American Jewish Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Steven A. Riess, ed. *Sports and the American Jew* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997).
  14. Stephen Sapp, *Sexuality, the Bible and Science* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1977).
  15. The Hebrew word "Neshamah" transcends the literal translation of "spirit" or "soul." It connotes a consciousness of higher values, humanistic ideas, and love of the Jewish people and humanity.
  16. Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl* (New York: Schocken Books, 1952), 149, 340-1.
  17. Moses Rischkin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 46; Livia E. Bitton, *A Decade of Zionism in Hungary, the Formative Years—the Post World War I Period* (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1968), 138-85.
  18. Little research has been done on Zisha Breitbart. However, much has been written on Houdini, the ultimate showman who still holds the fascination of the public. The latest was done by Kenneth Silverman, *HOUDINI!! The Career of Ehrlich Weiss* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996). A comprehensive account about the exceptional feats of one of the most celebrated Jewish strongmen, Joseph Greenstein, is provided by Ed Spielman, *The Mighty Atom, the Life & Times of Joseph L. Greenstein* (New York: Viking Press, 1979); see also Nathan Ausubel, ed. *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore* (New York: Vallentine & Mitchell, 1975), 224-262; Judd L. Teller, *Strangers and Natives, the Evolution of the American Jew from 1921 to the Present* (New York: Delacorte Press 1968), 88-92. For Jewish gangsters, see Albert Fried, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Gangster in America* (New York: Columbia University, 1993); Robert A. Rockaway, *But—He Was Good to His Mother, the Lives and Crimes of Jewish Gangsters* (Jerusalem: Gefen Pub. House, 1993). Recent work is done by Rich Cohen, *Though Jews, Fathers, Sons, and Gangster Dreams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998). See also Harvey E. Goldberg, *Jewish Life in Muslim Libya: Rivals and Relatives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). Chapter 2 describes how the Jewish underworld protected the community.
  19. My major concern here is the creation of mindless lists of "Jewish" athletes without any reflections to their generic bonds to their community. George Eisen, "Some Historiographical Problems in Writing the Sport History of the Jewish Culture." In the proceedings of *Society on the History of Physical Education and Sport in Asia and the Pacific Area* (Wingate Institute, 1977), 21.
  20. Quoted by Sander L. Gilman, *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 120; Norman Mailer made this remark in an interview to *USA Today*. April 25, 1997, 9A.
  21. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*. trans. George J. Becker. (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).

22. Raphael Patai and Jennifer Patai Wing, *The Myth of the Jewish Race* (New York: Scribner, 1975), 193. A groundbreaking study about Jews in New York was conducted by Maurice Fishberg, *The Jews: a Study of Race and Environment* (New York/London: Walter Scott, 1911).
23. Cited in an interview by Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: W.H. Allen, 1988), 241-42. See also Henry L. Feingold, *Lost Memory Cease: Finding Meaning in the American Jewish Past* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 2.
24. It is repeated several times during a service. See *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book*, (New York: Rabbinical Assembly of America and United Synagogue of America, 1985), 37.
25. A Christian [pseud.], *The Case of the Jews Considered*, 30, James Grant, *Life and Shadows of London Life*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1842); 2:251. Quoted by Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, 249,231; Patricia Vertinsky, "The 'Racial' Body and the Anatomy of Difference: Anti-Semitism, Physical Culture, and the Jews' Foot." In *Sport Science Review* (1995) 4, 1:48.
26. *Roots of Jewish Nonviolence* (Nyack, N.Y.: Jewish Peace Fellowship, 1981) and *Violence and the Value of Life in Jewish Tradition* (Jerusalem: Oz Veshalom, 984).
27. Gay Wilentz, "(Re)Teaching Hemingway: Anti-Semitism as a Thematic Device in The Sun Also Rises." In *College English* (February 1990) 52, 2:186-193.
28. Stephen H. Norwood, "My Son the Slugger: Sport and the American Jew." In *Reviews in American History* (September 1993) 21, 3-4:466-67.
29. George Eisen and David Wiggins, eds. *Ethnicity and Sport in North American History and Culture* (Boulder, Colo.: Greenwood, 1994), xiv.
30. Nathan Ausubel, ed. *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), 224-262.
31. Josephus Flavius, *Complete Works*. trans. by William Whiston. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publ., 1971), *Antiquities of the Jews*, XII:V:l; H.A. Harris, *Greek Athletics and the Jews* (Cardiff University of Wales Press, 1976), 30-31; Manfred Laemmer, "Jason's Gymnasium in Jerusalem." In the proceedings of the *Pre-Olympic Seminar on the History of Physical Education and Sport in Asia* (Wingate Institute, 1972), 51-70; and Manfred Laemmer, "Griechische Wettkämpfe in Jerusalem und ihre politischen Hintergründe." In Wolfgang Decker, ed. *Kölner Beiträge zur Sportwissenschaft*. Vol. 3, (Schorndorf: Hofmann-Verlag, 1973), 182-227.
32. Josephus Flavius, Ant. XV:VIII:1; XVI:V:1 and 3; Wars and XXI:I:8; *The 1st and 2nd Books of Maccabees*. *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1996); Manfred Laemmer, "Eine Propaganda-Aktion des Königs Herodes in Olympia." In *Perspektiven der Sportwissenschaft* (Schorndorf: Hofmann-Verlag, 1972), 160-73; and "King Herod's Endowment to the Olympic Games." In the proceedings of the *Pre-Olympic Seminar on the History of Physical Education and Sport in Asia* (Wingate Institute, 1972), 31-50.
33. Bodner, Alien. *When Boxing Was a Jewish Sport* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997). Steven A. Riess, "A Fighting Chance: The Jewish-American Boxing Experience, 1890-1940." In *Journal of American Jewish History* (March, 1985) 74:211-54. Peter Levine, "Basketball and the Jewish-American Community." In *Major Problems in American Sport History*. ed. Steven A. Riess. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); and "'Oy Such a Fighter!' Boxing and the American Jewish Experience." In *The New American Sport History*. ed. S.W. Pope. (Urbana, III.: Human Kinetics, 1997). See also Levine's book *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field, Sport and the American Jewish Experience*.
34. A reporter to the *New York Tribune* noted that for Jewish parents around the turn of the century the central concern was placed on the "physical welfare of the child." He noticed both boys and girls of "Hebrew parentage" played milder games than "other nationalities" because of their parents' restrictions. *New York Tribune*, July 5, 1896. Quoted in Allon Schoener. *Portal to America, The Lower East Side, 1870-1925* (New York Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 68-9.

35. Robert S. Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred* (New York: Methuen, 1991) and Julius, Anthony, *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form* (Cambridge: University Press, 1996).
36. John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in the Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994). In my view, this work is perhaps the most in-depth and influential work about the race-rage during the nineteenth century.
37. Julius. *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form*, 97. Gerhard Kittel, *Die Judenfrage* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934). An earlier edition was published in 1933. See also Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians Under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Albaus and Emmanuel Hirsch* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), 55-8; Shipman, Pat, *The Evolution of Racism, Human Differences and the Use and Abuse of Science* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).
38. For example, the Hungarian sociologist, Gyöngyi Földesi-Szabó, recorded in her recent research on racism in Hungarian soccer a whole slate of anti-Semitic chants. One of the commonly recited ditties is: Dirty Jews, Dirty Jews! Jewish lackeys, Jewish lackeys! To the gas chamber, to the gas chamber! Football, Racism and Xenophobia in Hungary: Racist and Xenophobic Behaviour of Football Spectators." In *Racism Xenophobia in European Football*. eds. by Udo Merkel and Walter Tokarski. (Munich: Meyer & Meyer, 1996), 175.
39. The number of suicides among Jewish athletes as a consequence of discrimination perhaps never will be known. Among the known cases were the already mentioned Dr. Ferenc Kemény from Hungary. László (Blum) Borsodi, the noted Hungarian fencing instructor, who was also a high ranking officer in a prestigious military college, shot himself two days before the order to wear the Yellow Star. Surprisingly, he received a funeral with full military honor. Interview with Dr. Francis Zöld, July 25, 1997.
40. Mentioned by Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners, Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 126; Julius Bendorf Interview, 1936 Olympics by George Eisen. Videocassette. January 28, 1997, Amateur Athletic Foundation, Los Angeles. Amos Elon, *Founder: A Portrait of the First Rothschild and His Time* (New York: Viking, 1996).
41. *Westminster Review* (1830) 13:193. The response was to a sermon by William Cobbett, *Good Friday; or, The Murder of Jesus Christ by the Jews*. (London: Published by the Author, 1830).
42. The best analysis of this topic belongs to Patricia Vertinsky's "The Racial Body and the Anatomy of Difference: Anti-Semitism, Physical Culture, and the Jews Footl," 38-59. Sander L. Gilman, *Franz Kafka: The Jewish Patient* (New York: Routledge, 1996); and *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1991).
43. Tacitus, "The Histories." In *The Great Books of the Western World*. ed. Mortimer J. Adler, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 295.
44. "The Twin Rivals" IV I. In *The Works of George Farquhar. A Peep into the Synagogue*, 32-33. Quoted by Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, 139-47.
45. Robert H. Boyle, *Sport, Mirror of American Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 203-4.
46. Stephen Birmingham, "Our Crowd" *the Great Jewish Families of New York* (New York: Wallaby Editions, Pocket Books, 1967), 261-62; Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation*, 249-50.
47. Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 90-3, 156-62, 282-84. Tibor Nyilas, one of the most accomplished fencers of the United States, was converted to Christianity at age two. He was not a member of the New York Athletic Club (his gentile wife was), though he represented it in competitions. He was not allowed to enter the dining room in the early 1960s. Interview with Dr. Francis Zöld, November 12, 1996. Barry Humphries, *The Life and Death of Sandy Stone* (Sydney, Australia: Pan Macmillan, 1990), 43. Special thanks to Amanda Smith, presenter for the

- Sports Factor, ABC Radio National, who brought to my attention and provided material on anti-Semitism in Australian golf.
48. *Los Angeles Times*, *Book Review*. Sunday, September 22, 1996, 12.
  49. Maxwell L. Howell, and Reet A. Howell. "The Jew in Ice Sports—America's Forgotten Heroes." In the proceedings of the *Second International Seminar on Physical Education and Sport in Jewish History and Culture* (Wingate Institute, Israel, 1977), 112-23; "He Sold His Gold So He Could Eat." In *Newsday*, February 10, 19-20; George C. Ortloff and Stephen Ortloff, *Lake Placid: The Olympic Years, 1932-1980* (Lake Placid: Macromedia, 1976), 67-8.
  50. This cruel custom started on February 9, 1466, and continued for nearly two centuries. Sam Waagenaar, *The Pope's Jews* (La Salle, Ill.: Alcove Press, 1974), 137-44; Paul Borchsenius, *Behind the Wall, The Story of the Ghetto*. trans. Reginald Spink. (London: G. Allen, 1964), 95-6.
  51. George Eisen, *Children and Play in the Holocaust, Games Among the Shadows* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, 386-88.
  52. Gertrude Schneider, *Journey into Terror: Story of the Riga Ghetto* (New York Ark House, 1979), 118-19; Eric H. Boehm, *We Survived: The Stories of the Hidden and the Hunted of Nazi Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 270. Philip Mechanicus, *Year of Fear: A Jewish Prisoner Waits for Auschwitz*. trans. Irene S. Gibbons. (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968), 145.
  53. Thomas Keneally, *Schindler's List* (New York: Touchstone, 1983), 269.
  54. Cited by Sander Gilman, "The Jewish Body: A Foot-note." In *People of the Body, Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*. ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz. (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1992), 231; See also, Vertinsky, "The 'Racial' Body and the Anatomy of Difference," 45-47.
  55. See Yariv Oren, "Sociological Aspects of Physical Education and Sport in the Jewish Culture." In the *Proceedings of the International Seminar* (Wingate Institute, 1973), 78.
  56. Letter of March 30, 1936, Brundage Collection, Box 234 (U.S. Olympic Association and U.S. Olympic Committee). The debate whether Avery Brundage was a rabid anti-Semite is by now beyond doubt. See Allen Guttmann, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
  57. Emma Lazarus' comment is quoted in the exhibit *Too Jewish—Armand Hammer Art Museum*, Los Angeles, 1997.
  58. Riess, "A Fighting Chance: The Jewish-American Boxing Experience, 1890-1940." 211-54. Peter Levine, "'Oy Such a Fighter!' Boxing and the American Jewish Experience."
  59. George Eisen, "Ethnicity and Social Class: Historical Trends in American Sport." In *Proceedings of the HISPA International Congress*, ed. J.A. Mangan 1985, 125-37; Gerald Sorin, *The Nurturing Neighborhood, the Brownsville Boys Club and Jewish Community in Urban America, 1940-1990* (New York New York University Press, 1990), 25-7. One of the lesser known sagas of sports history is the extensive Jewish involvement in collegiate boxing in the United States. Interview with "Hotsy Alperstein." October 7, 1996, Washington D.C. The most delightful account of the emergence of the Jewish country club was written by Peter Levine, "The American Hebrew Looks at 'Our Crowd': The Jewish Country Club in the 1920s." In *The Journal of American Jewish History* (March 1995) 83-1:27-49.
  60. Julius. *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form*; Gerhard Kittel, *Die Judenfrage*.
  61. Hajo Bernett, "Opfer des 'Arierparagraphen': Der Fall der Berliner Turnerschaft." In *Stadion* (1989) 15:29-44; Hartmut Becker, *Antisemitismus in der Deutschen Turnerschaft* (Sankt Augustin, 1980); and "The Jews and Antisemitism in the German Gymnastic Movement, 1810-1933." In the proceedings of the *Second International Seminar on Physical Education and Sport in Jewish History and Culture* (Wingate Institute, Israel, 1977), 70-8.

62. *American Hebrew*. November 15, 1889, June 6, 1890, and June 20, 1913. Quoted in Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation*, 249-50.
63. Phil Brown, "Catskill Culture: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Resort Area Seen Through Personal Narrative and Ethnography." In the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* (April 1996) 25:83-119. Bea Kraus, "South Haven's Jewish Resort Era: Its Pioneers, Builders & Vacationers." In *Michigan Jewish History* (Winter 1994) 35:20-25. *American Hebrew*, June 6, 1924, 121-23 and February 6, 1925, 381. See also Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching, Entering the Mainstream 1920-1945* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 59-61. *American Hebrew* June 5, 1925; quoted by Peter Levine, "The American Hebrew Looks at 'Our Crowd,'" 37.
64. Hajo Bernett, "The Encroachment of the 'Voelkisch' Antisemitism on the German Gymnastic Festival—1923." In the proceedings of an *International Seminar on Physical Education and Sport in the Jewish History and Culture* (Wingate Institute, 1973), 133-46; Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation* 52, 4; George Eisen, *Maccabiah Games: A History of the Jewish Olympics* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1979), 1-19; Stephen Birmingham, *The Rest of Us, the Rise of America's Eastern European Jews* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), 253-55, 277. Glendale Country Club of Winnipeg, Canada; the Monash Country Club; and the Cranbourne Golf Club in Australia are prime examples to this trend.
65. William O. McCagg, Jr., *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary* (New York: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1972). At the same time, only 8.6 percent of Vienna were Jewish. Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 156-57. Avigdor Löwenheim, "Zsidók és a párbaj." In *Múlt és Jövő* (Fall 1992) 4; Mentioned also in Raphael Pataki, *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 379-85.
66. Naomi W. Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation, The German Jews in the United States 1830-1914* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1984), 276. Sander L. Gilman, *The Visibility of the Jew in the Diaspora: Body Imagery and Its Cultural Context. The B.G. Rudolph Lectures in Judaic Studies* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University, 1992) 18. See also Konrad H. Jarausch. *Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany: the Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton, N.J.: University of Princeton Press, 1982).
67. Leo Heinrich, *Meine Jugendzeit* (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1883), 62.
68. Kevin McAleer, *Dueling, The Cult of Honor in Fin-de-Siècle Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 155; Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 160-61; Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 347-76.
69. István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism, a Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 133. The only place Jews could not obtain an officer's commission was in Prussia.
70. Pataki, *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology*, 379-85; Vilmos Clair, *Párbaj Codex* (Budapest, n.p. 1914), 5-58; Ernest Cremeieu, *La campagne antisemitique les duels, les responsabilites: Memoire avec pieces justificatives* (Paris: Alcan-Lévy, 1892). The Hungarian press reports a duel as late as 1937, between the Olympic fencing champion, Dr. Sandor Gombos and a fencing instructor. The duel was mandated by the Hungarian Military's Honor Board. Szombat, July 17, 1937.
71. Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Controversy of Zion, Jewish Nationalism, the Jewish State, and the Unresolved Jewish Dilemma* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1996); This interesting theory is the product of lively discussions with the noted fencing master, Dr. Francis Zöld, who was part of this process. Being the son of one of the most decorated high ranking officers in the Habsburg Monarchy, his father was later elevated to general by Admiral Horthy, he became acquainted with the entire fencing constellation of the twentieth century. Quoted by Jay Y. Gonen, *The Psycho-History of Zionism* (New York: n.p., 1975), 277; Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, 160-61.

72. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Last Tycoon* (Harmondsworth: Easton Press, 1960), 5; Irene Mayer Selznick, *A Private View* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), 39.
73. Claire Pajaczkowska and Barry Curtis, "Assimilation, Entertainment, and the Hollywood Solution." In *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity* eds. Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 247-48.
74. John Lahr, "The Perfectionist." In *The New Yorker* (December 9, 1996), 68. For Jewish American baseball fiction, see Eric Solomon, "Jew and Baseball: An American Cultural Love Story." In Eisen and Wiggins, *Ethnicity and Sport in North American History and Culture*, 75-102; and Jews, Baseball, and the American Novel." In *Arete: The Journal of Sport Literature* (Spring 1984) 1:43-65.
75. Sander L. Gilman, *The Visibility of the Jew in the Diaspora: Body Imagery and Its Cultural Context* (Ithaca: The B.G. Rudolph Lectures in Judaic Studies, 1992), 21-28.
76. Another prominent example of German Jewish woman who, although often confrontational, made major contribution to the Russian Jewish community was Julia Richman—the often embattled Superintendent of Schools of Greater New York. Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy, *The Settlement Horizon* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1922), 332.
77. Quoted by Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred*, 303.
78. Gary Goodman, "(Re) Creating Americans at the Alliance." In the *Journal of Ethnic Studies* (Winter 1979) 6, 4:1-28; Dorinson, Joseph. "The Educational Alliance: an Institutional Study in Americanization and Acculturation." In Immigration and Ethnicity: American Society—"Melting Pot" or "Salad Bowl." eds. Michael D'Innocenzo and Josef P. Sirefman. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992), 93-107; Gems, Gerald R. "Sport and the Forging of a Jewish-American Culture: The Chicago Hebrew Institute." In *American Jewish History* (March 1995) 83-1:15-26
79. Cited in *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, eds. J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis (London: Norton, 1973), 208.
80. Quoted by Amos Elon, "The Case of Hannah Arendt." In *The New York Review of Books* (1997) XLIV/17:28.
81. Gary Goodman, *Choosing Sides: Playground and Street Life on the Lower East Side* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979); Birmingham, *The Rest of Us*, 298-99; Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation*, 51-2, Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845-1915* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1976).
82. Duff Hart-David, *Hitler's Games. The 1936 Olympics* (New York: Century, 1986), 54.
83. A scholarly discussion about the diffusion of modern sports belongs to Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record, the Nature of Modern Sport* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); and *Games and Empires* (New York Columbia University Press, 1994). Eisen, *Marcabiah Games: A History of the Jewish Olympics*, 1-19.
84. Tax records show that by 1870, 80 percent of German Jewry belonged to the bourgeoisie and 60 percent were in upper income brackets. Less impressive, but similar trends were evident in Bohemia and Hungary. Jacob Toury, *Soziale und Politische Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, 1847-1871: Zwischen Revolution, Reaktion u. Emanzipation* (Dusseldorf: Droste, 1977), 114, 277; Wayne Goldstein, H. *Influence of Jewish Parents on Children's Sport Participation and Socialization* (M.S. Thesis, Springfield College, 1993); Donna J. Leonard, *Attitudes Toward Physical Activity as a Function of Religious Affiliation* (M.S. Thesis, Ithaca College, 1975).
85. Andrew Handler, *From the Ghetto to the Games, Jewish Athletes in Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, East European Monograph Series, 1985). For the demographics of Hungarian Jewry, see Randolph A. Braham, ed. *Hungarian-Jewish Studies* (New York: World Federation of Hungarian Jews, 1966), 237-60; A letter by Dr. Hans Morgenstern, April 2, 1988; a letter by Dr. Paul Haber, November 11, 1996.

86. Wilentz, "(Re)Teaching Hemingway," 188; "Dinnerstein." In *Antisemitism in America*, 84-88. William T. Ham, "Harvard Students on the Jewish Question." In *American Hebrew* (September 15, 1922), 406. Two of the most revealing works about the difficulties facing Jewish students in American academia are Dan Oren, *Joining the Club: a History of Jews in Yale* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985) and Susanne Klingenstein, *Jews in the American Academy, 1910-1940* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991). The best work that explores Harvard's role in the construction of the late 19th-century manly ideal belongs to Kim Townsend, *Manhood at Harvard, William James and Others* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).
87. George L. Mosse, "The Influence of the Völkisch Idea on German Jerry." In *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute*, ed. by Max Kreuzberger. (New York, 1967), 87; Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus: Studien zur Judenfrage der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987); Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promise Land: the Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893-1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975). German Jews opted to belong to the German gymnastic movement even in the New World. William M. Kramer and Norton B. Stern, "The Turnverein: A German Experience for Western Jewry." In *Western States Jewish History* (April 1984) 16/3:227-29.
88. Riv-Ellen Prell, "Why Jewish Princesses Don't Sweat." In *People of the Body, Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, 348-49.
89. Elias Auerbach, "Die jüdische Rassenfrage." In *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* (1907) 4/3:332-61; Heinrich Loewe, *Proselysten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der jüdischen Rasse* (Berlin: [Soncino-Gesellschaft], 1926); Ignaz Zollschan "The Jewish Race Problem." In the *Jewish Review* (1912) 2/11:391-408. An extended discussion about Zionist race philosophy is provided by Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 123-174.
90. Perhaps the best source for emergence of the Jewish labor movement is Moshe Mishkinsky, "The Jewish Labor Movement and European Socialism." In *Jewish Society Through the Ages*. ed. H.H. Ben Sasson. (New York, 1973), 284-96; Tobias, Henry J. *The Jewish Bund in Russia, from Its Origins to 1905* (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1972); David Biale, "Zionism as an Erotic Revolution." In *People of the Body, Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, 284. See also Howard M Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. 2nd ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1996); Bernett, "Opfer des 'Arierparagrafen': Der Fall der Berliner Turnerschaft;" Hartmut Becker, *Antisemitismus in der Deutschen Turnerschaft*.
91. Milton Painter Forster, "The Reception of Max Nordau's Degeneration in England and America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1954), 317. Quoted also by P.M. Baldwin, "Liberalism, nationalism, and Degeneration: The Case of Max Nordau." In *Central European History* (June 1980) 13/2, 104. Max Nordau, *Die conventionellen Lügen der Kulturmenschheit* (Leipzig: B. Schlicke, 1884), 1.
92. II. *Zionisten-Kongress zu Basel 1898. Stenographische Protokoll* (Vienna: Atid, 1898), 24, 89-90; Max Nordau, "Muskeljudentum." In *Jüdische Turnzeitung* (1900) 1:10-11, 51-53, 62-67, 75-79; See also "Muskeljudenthum." In *Die Welt*. (1902)1:2,4; "Rückblicke auf dem (II.) Kongress." In *Correspondence #10* (December 1898), 1-2, DD/2/7/10/1, Central Zionist Archives (Hereafter cited as CZA), Jerusalem; George Eisen, "Nationalism, Zionism and the Emergence of the Juedische Turnerschaft." In *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*. 1983.
93. See George L. Mosse, "The Influence of the Völkisch Idea on German Jewry," 81-114.
94. From Jabotinsky's introduction to *Chaim Nachman Bialik: Poems*. ed. L.V. Snowman. (London: n.p. 1924), ix-xv. Quoted in David Biale, *Power & Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 137.
95. Ernst Pawel, *The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka* (London: Collins Harvill, 1988), 205. Also quoted in Gilman, *Smart Jews*, 23.

96. "Die Stellung der 'Deutschen' zur 'Jüdischen' Turnerschaft." In *Jüdische Turnzeitung* (1905) 6:19. Quoted in Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of a Nation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 88.
97. See Eisen, *Maccabiah Games: A History of the Jewish Olympics*; Hoberman, "Sport and the Myth of the 'Jewish' Body," 5.
98. Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York: Random House, 1996), 186.
99. Pierre Bourdieu, "Sport and Social Class." In *Social Science Information* (1978) 17:819-40.
100. John Hoberman, *Darwin's Athletes: How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race*; Eisen, "Introduction." In *Ethnicity and Sport in North American History and Culture*. XIII; Eliezer L. Segal. "Why the Olympic Spirit Lacks a Jewish Neshama." In *Jewish Star* (September 1, 1987).