TOIL, SOIL, AND IMAGE:

GENDER AND NATION IN HEBREW GRAPHIC DESIGN

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PREFACE

Zionism was a Jewish nationalist movement of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries characterized by its liberationist, socialist, and utopian proclivities – a movement that sought spiritual and psychological renewal, cultural revitalization, socioeconomic transformation, linguistic revival, and political sovereignty.¹ Cultural Zionism, political Zionism, and religious Zionism are not mutually exclusive denominations: Zionism, like modernism or feminism,² has been a plural movement comprised of variegated subideologies engaged in constant dialogue and debate with each other.³

The secularization of Jewish life, which began during the Haskalah (the Jewish Enlightenment) of the late eighteenth century, antisemitic persecution, and the game various European nation-states played, which granted emancipation rights to Jews only to rescind them later, encouraged the development of a Jewish ethnic consciousness and contributed to the

¹ My definition closely follows Uri Zilbersheid's. See Uri Zilbersheid, "The Utopia of Theodor Herzl," Israel Studies 9, no. 3 (2004).
² In her criticism of "reactionary separatism" that has brought stagnation, bell hooks utilizes the term "feminist movement" or "feminist movements" rather than "the feminist movement" to imply a variety of feminist perspectives and directions. See bell hooks, "Men: Comrades in Struggle," in Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, Second ed. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000). Yosef Gorni asks, "Is it possible to speak of a single Zionist ideology, or should we regard Zionism as a set of ideologies, similar to liberalism or socialism?" See Yosef Gorni, "Thoughts on Zionism as a Utopian Ideology," Modern Judaism 18, no. 3 (1998): 244.
genesis of Jewish nationalism. The proponents of creating a sovereign Jewish state were “revolting against the powerlessness, passivity, and pious quietism they associated with the ghettoized Jewish life of recent centuries.” They sought to “extricate the Jews from a rhythm of national history such that the quality of their life at all levels was determined in the first instance by the treatment meted out to them by others... to cease to be object and become subject.”

One scholar interprets the disproportionate number of Jewish radicals filling the ranks of non-Jewish revolutionary movements in late eighteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe as a revolt against Jewish history; many of these radicals turned to socialist-Zionism once they saw the futility in dissolving deep-seated ethnic and religious hatreds of the Jews, though for others socialist-Zionism was the only form of both Zionism and socialism that they had experienced.

A movement for the common people, it nonetheless brought the most assimilated and affluent Western European and American Jews into its ranks and leadership. Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), whose variant of Zionism is called “general” Zionism or the first “political” Zionism in Zionist historiography, is one prime example.

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4 For more on how the Haskalah simultaneously facilitated in the assimilation of European Jewry and also the revitalization of Jewish collectivity see Gideon Shimoni, "Social Origins of Jewish Nationalism," in The Zionist Ideology (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995), 3-51.
7 Dowty: 6.
8 What about Zionism attracted and sustained the attraction of assimilated Western Jews?, Michael Berkowitz asks. His answer: "the movement created a form of nationalist thought and participation that drew on aspects of the European nationalisms acceptable to Jews... [It] incorporated aspects and symbols of traditional Judaism providing a common core of mythology for the movement." Despite "acrimonious" debates between different factions, the movement was held together by a "vague set of myths and symbols, which might mean different things to different people." Michael Berkowitz, Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xiv.
9 Zilbersheid has argued that the socialist tendencies of Herzl's pioneering variant of Zionism have often been overlooked due to the overwhelming presence of more radical leftist varieties. According to Zilbersheid, Herzl's socialist-utopian Zionism "culminated in the theory and practice of the kibbutz movement." See Zilbersheid: 81.
With his eye on the widespread poverty and persecution of the Jewish masses living in the Pale of Settlement,\textsuperscript{10} Herzl sought relief for Jewish suffering through the diplomatically-negotiated establishment of a sovereign Jewish state, an idea first raised by the physician-turned-Zionist activist Leon Pinsker (1821-1891) in his 1882 pamphlet “Auto-Emancipation.”\textsuperscript{11} A Budapest-born journalist and acclaimed writer of feuilletons, Herzl brought together all of the major groups engaged in Zionist activity for the First Zionist Congress, held in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland. As the “single most powerful force in transmitting Zionist goals and ideals,”\textsuperscript{12} the annual and later biannual meetings of the Zionist Congress revealed the tensions, ambivalences, and disunities of the Zionist movement as it laid out its program for \textit{aliyah},\textsuperscript{13} or immigration to Palestine,\textsuperscript{14} as well as its initiatives for cultural revitalization.

Zionism was “never” a “purely political matter”; its political philosophies were inextricably linked with socioeconomic realities and cultural concerns, constituting a “complex

\textsuperscript{10} The Pale of Settlement as a geopolitical and geo-cultural entity first took shape under the reign of Tsarina Catherine II, who issued an edict in 1791 barring Jews from residing in specific areas of the Russian Empire. The boundaries of the Pale determining where Jew were legally permitted to live were delineated under Tsar Nicholas I, who reigned from 1825-1855, to include fifteen provinces in Western Russian and ten provinces from the former Kingdom of Poland (incorporated in the Empire in 1815), though these boundaries were in a constant state of flux. See the section on East European Jewry in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., \textit{The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History}, Second ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 372-448.

\textsuperscript{11} In the aftermath of the bloody pogroms, Pinsker lost faith in the promise that emancipation would eradicate prejudices against the Jews of Europe, East or West. He considered antisemitism a disease to be eradicated by the creation of a Jewish state. See Mitchell Cohen, “Auto-Emancipation and Antisemitism (Homage to Bernard-Lazare),” \textit{Jewish Social Studies} 10, no. 1 (2003).

\textsuperscript{12} Michael Berkowitz calls the Zionist Congress a “novel innovation in Jewish political life, since it represented the first attempt to create a forum for Jewish national self-definition and policy that would include the whole of Jewry... [The Congress] fostered a political liturgy, national ceremonies, and a variety of myths which to a large extent determined the content of Zionist culture...” See Berkowitz, 8.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Aliyah} is a “value-laden” Hebrew term meaning “ascendancy” or “going up.” See Dan Caspi, “Propaganda in Israel,” in \textit{Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present}, ed. David Holbrook Culbert Nicholas John Cull, David Welch (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 193.

\textsuperscript{14} The name “Palestine” comes from the Romans, who occupied the land and popularized the term after 135 CE, when the Jews were expelled. In Jewish historiography, the name for the area which holds religious significance as well as being the historical site of Jewish existence before the expulsions is “Eretz-Israel,” meaning “The Land of Israel.” I will use Eretz-Israel to describe pre-state Israel.
social whole.” As a cultural and political force Zionism sought to influence people by harnessing the power of the poster from the earliest days of the movement. The initiative to create a national culture through the Hebrew language, which had been made obsolete after centuries of exile restricted its usage to sacral purposes, relied heavily upon posters to hammer in the message about the importance for immigrants to learn the language. Other posters encouraged orphaned children to join the kibbutz. Others yet sold the idea of Tel Aviv as the non-rural socialist alternative to the kibbutz, the first “Jewish city” in the Yishuv. In the years leading up to the establishment of the state and beyond, posters captured the “spectrum of parties, idealism, and utopianism marketed under the big tent of Zionism,” revealing great diversity in aesthetic approaches, from socialist realism to Art Deco, abstract cubism to neoclassicism.

Women appear frequently in these images as militants, mothers, farmers, labor activists, and biblical heroes. My interest lies in depictions of women in Zionist posters, especially posters

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15 Zilbersheid: 80.
16 For example, Herzl’s face, the most iconic figure depicted in early Zionist popular art, graced the cover of condensed milk cans, cigarettes, candy, pencils, and even lamps soon after the publication in 1896 of Der Judenstaat, an essential text in the Zionist canon where Herzl laid out his vision for a Jewish state and popularized the term “Zionism.” See Michael Berkowitz, "Picture a Nation! Poster Art Unearthed from Jerusalem’s Central Zionist Archive," Guilt and Pleasure, no. 1 (2006).
17 “Yishuv” refers the Jewish community in Eretz-Israel before the State of Israel was created in 1948. The New Yishuv was created with the first wave of Zionist immigrants who made aliyah. For more on aliyah see footnote 13.
18 Berkowitz, "Picture a Nation! Poster Art Unearthed from Jerusalem’s Central Zionist Archive."
19 The terms social realism and socialist realism are similar but not synonymous terms: social realism, according to the Oxford Companion to Western Art, is term used to describe nineteenth- and twentieth-century painting and sculpture “which is not only realistic in the sense of being representational but has a specific political or social content. The term originated in the context of the 1848 revolutions in Europe...” See Michelle Thomas, "Social Realism," The Oxford Companion to Western Art.

Socialist realism, while it can be considered a division of social realism, “insists that the power to identify and control the direction of this historic progression, and therefore to determine the correct representation of reality, is the exclusive property of the Communist Party.” It was the official, state-sanctioned artistic style of the early Soviet state. See Toby Clark, Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: The Political Image in the Age of Mass Culture (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 87.

In Israeli graphic art of the 1950s, socialist realism was employed in the sense that the official symbols of Communist Russia were appropriated, even if they were symbols of Bolshevik Russia (the period of the late 1910s and 1920s) and not the symbols sanctioned during the Stalinist period of the 1950s.
produced by the Histadrut,²⁰ the general confederation of workers that embodied and anticipated the future socialist Jewish state.²¹

At its founding convention in 1920, the Histadrut proclaimed its appropriation of all areas of “constructive activity” in the Yishuv, the Jewish community of Palestine.²² It became the single largest employer in the Yishuv within a year of its founding and played a crucial role in the absorption and settlement of immigrants arriving in the 1920s and 1930s.²³ As the secretary-general for the Histadrut, David Ben-Gurion’s vision for revolution on one hand and normalcy on the other “cohered in a projection of Jewry reborn as ‘am oved,’ a ‘working nation.’ Posited was a creation of a specific class in a specific place – a Jewish working class in Palestine – as vehicle and embodiment, subject and object, of Jewish redemption.”²⁴

Labor Zionism, an umbrella term for Zionism in all its Marxist-socialist, non-Marxist socialist, Communist, and liberal-democratic permutations, was at its zenith in the 1950s – the era of *mamlakhtiyut*, generally defined as “statism” coupled with “civic-mindedness.”²⁵ Coined

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²⁰The full name is Histadrut HaKlakit HaOvdim Halvrim B’Eretz-Yisrael, translated in English as the General Federation of Hebrew Workers in the Land of Israel.
²²It is important to note that the Histadrut itself was not a political party, but an arena in which the varying leftist parties could compete. From within the Histadrut emerged the political party Mapai in 1930, the party that would dominate Israeli elections and politics from 1948-1977.
²⁴Ibid., 504.
²⁶Nir Kedar defines *mamlakhtiyut* as “a complicated, even dialectical political concept... that copes simultaneously with the form and substance of two basic characteristics of the modern state: sovereignty and norm.” English translations for *mamlakhtiyut*, which translate the term as “statism” or “statism”, are “sorely misleading because they ascribe to the Hebrew concept a pejorative nuance absent in the Hebrew.” See Nir Kedar, “Ben-Gurion’s Mamlakhtiyut: Etymological and Theoretical Roots,” *Israel Studies* 7, no. 3 (2002): 117. For more on the ideology of *mamlakhtiyut* and its implementation, see Avi Bareli, “Mamlakhtiyut, Capitalism and Socialism During the 1950s in Israel,” *Journal of Israeli History* 26, no. 2 (2007); Eliezer Don-Yehiya, “Mamlakhtiyut, Education and Religion in the Struggle over the Mass Immigration,” *Journal of Israeli History* 26, no. 2 (2007); Nir Kedar, “Jewish Republicanism,” *Journal of Israeli History* 26, no. 2 (2007).
by Ben-Gurion, *mamlakhtiyyut* was the operating principle guiding his policy decisions during his tenure as Israel’s first prime minister.\(^{26}\)

As a basic premise, my study assumes the legitimacy of the Labor Zionist movement and its efforts at reinventing Jewish existence and creating a society based on justice and equality, especially between women and men. It is by no means a study of the praxis of Labor Zionism or the historical successes or failings of the Labor Zionist movement in regard to its thrust for gender equality, for which there is a wealth of knowledge.\(^{27}\) Exhuming the social history of women in the Yishuv and early-state Israel and the ideological evolution of the Labor Movement is ancillary to the task of interpreting visual culture and therefore integrated into my analysis when helpful.

My study arrives at the intersection of discourses on gender and nationalism in visual culture; specifically, it is an investigation into how gender is implicated in the process of nation-building in poster art. It examines how Labor Zionism, especially in the *mamlakhtiyyut* period, manifested itself in graphic art through gendered tropes. There is a paucity of research on the Zionist, and later Israeli, visual arts during this period in general and on graphic art in particular. To my knowledge, this study is the first of its kind devoted to representations of women in Zionist posters.

I am forever indebted to my advisors Bruce Thompson and Tammi Rossman-Benjamin for their infinite reserves of patience, inspiration, and encouragement in this project and in other life pursuits. Without their belief in my abilities, unrelenting support, and guidance, such an

\(^{26}\) David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) served as Israel’s prime minister from 1948-1953 and again from 1955-1963.

undertaking would not have been possible. I am also grateful to Bettina Aptheker, who trusted me to take my own path. I want to extend special thanks to Shulamit Reinharz and Debby Olins at Brandeis University for giving me a unique opportunity as a Lily Safra Intern at the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute in the summer of 2007 to jumpstart my research into this exciting field.

Finally, I would like to express my enormous gratitude to my parents for their understanding and to my boyfriend, Alex Miller, for his patience, extraordinary culinary talents, and love.
PART I: INTRODUCTION

Performing the National Identity: Zionism and the Poster

The use of public space\textsuperscript{28} to further the objective of consolidating a national cultural identity emerged within the socialist-Zionist teleological framework as a tradition borrowed from Europe. The French Revolution, a grisly and sanguinary episode, performed its mantra of "liberty, equality, fraternity" in front of all to see and experience. Written on the walls were calls for an oppressed citizenry, clad in tricolor sashes and sans-culottes, to carry out the task of political revolution.\textsuperscript{29} Savants and saboteurs who orchestrated the French Revolution drew from the power of common citizens to crowd together in common cause, transforming the silent multitude into actors on the political stage. The poster had a crucial role to play in this development.

Its role was no less revolutionary in the Zionist circuit, though the Zionist revolution had little or nothing in common with the French Revolution. Public space functioned as a theater for the performance of the New Hebrew cultural identity in the years before and after the establishment of the state of Israel, a cultural identity emanating from traditional Jewish sources.

\textsuperscript{28} Margaret Kohn defines public space as "a human construct that facilitates seen and being seen... [having] both a physical and social dimension." See Margaret Kohn, "Review: [Public Space and Democracy]," \textit{The American Political Science Review} 96, no. 2 (2002): 407.

\textsuperscript{29} For more on poster and its role during the French Revolution, see Max Gallo, \textit{The Poster in History}, trans. Alfred and Bruni Mayor (New York: American Heritage Publishing, 1974), 17-38. "The posters were crude, the words direct, for in revolutionary times the poster cannot be subtle. It guides or demands; it invites denunciation or participation; it lists suspects; it incites people to hate. In short, it plays an active role in shaping events," Gallo, 17.
yet systematically opposed to it. In order to perform in this “theater of persuasion,” to borrow Susan Sontag’s phrase, Zionist organizations used the poster for *hasbara* campaigns. The poster was the perfect conduit for the delivery of such messages, including messages about gender.

**Gender and the National Self in Zionist Visual Culture**

Nationalism, as Sheila Katz notes, is “not biologically determined but rather a social construct composed of competing interpretations of real and imagined phenomena.” Benedict Anderson’s seminal study of nationalism proposed that the nation, as an “imagined community,” gains its sense of self once the forces of modernization take root.

Posters played a pivotal role in determining the cultural politics of Jewish nationalism, helping the “imagined community” to imagine itself in utopian terms. Born into the fervor of

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30 The “negation of exile” trope artificially bifurcated Jewish identity into “Old Diaspora” and “New Hebrew”: “At the beginning of the century, the small Jewish Yishuv in Palestine was still linked umbilically to the diaspora. The diaspora supplied the human resources to bolster its ranks and the funds to maintain its institutions (both religious and secular); it was the source of Jewish and Zionist political power. World War I provided a vivid illustration of the fact that the Yishuv was totally dependent on the Jewish diaspora: had it not been for the financial and other assistance sent by American Jewry to Palestine, it is doubtful whether the Yishuv would have been able to survive the severe deprivation and hunger... [T]here was a gnawing fear that the helpless Yishuv would suffer a fate similar to that of the Armenians.” See Anita Shapira, “Introduction,” in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 20-21.


32 The Hebrew term *hasbara* has several interconnected meanings: “information,” “explanation,” “publicity,” and “propaganda.” *Hasbara* is a euphemism that “signifies a kind of reaction, an act of defense, a more positive kind of propaganda to be distinguished from the negative, hostile variety... While ‘others,’ the proverbial ‘bad guys’ (primarily [Israeli] political rivals), engage in *taamula*, in Israel the ‘good guys’ practice *hasbara*... An aphorism popular among officials declares that the difference between the two terms is that propaganda works.” See Caspi, 191-192.


34 Benedict Anderson’s theory of nationalism contends that a sense of nation is contingent upon modernization, the growth of capitalism, and the rise of the vernacular language. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso Editions, 1983).

35 For more on Zionism as utopianism, see Gorni.
the modern metropolis before radio, billboards, or television, the didacticism, ubiquity, and pedestrian-style chic of posters made them an effective form of visual culture on the streets of Tel Aviv or Jerusalem. As political pedagogy, posters formulated a visual lexicon replete with symbols intended to buttress identification with the nation-state.

The repetition of particular images gives them sociocultural and political currency, providing the “cultural material for individuals to mold into identities,” and also “construct[ing] the parameters – however contradictory – of natural gender behavior and help set the terms of social and cultural debate.” If “poster art is an art of ideology,” how did socialist-Zionist ideology, through poster campaigns, implicate gender in the construction of a national identity? How did posters define the New Hebrew Woman in terms of appearance, the social space(s) she occupied, and her participation in the socialist-Zionist revolution? To what extent were depictions of the chalutzot, the female socialist-Zionist “pioneers,” revolutionary?

First, it is important to note that the New Hebrew Woman is a Jew of European origin, a member of the petty bourgeoisie who immigrates and becomes a productive laborer, especially

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36 John A. Walker and Sarah Chaplin define visual culture as “those material artifacts, buildings and images, plus time-based media and performances, produced by human labor and imagination, which serve aesthetic, symbolic, ritualistic or ideological-political ends, and/or practical functions, and which address the sense of sight to a significant extent.” See John A. Walker and Sarah Chaplin, eds., Visual Culture: An Introduction (London: Manchester University Press, 1997), 1-2. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett raises many questions of interest on the relationship between visual culture studies and traditional art history: “Is visual culture art’s residual category: that is, first there is art and then there is everything else, namely visual culture? Or, is visual studies art history’s nemesis, a counter-field that holds art history to account to the point that the study of art might become a subfield of visual studies? Or, is visual studies a subfield of art history, in the way that visual sociology, visual anthropology, visual communication, visual rhetoric, and visual cultural studies are subfields of their respective disciplines...?” See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Towards a Post-Disciplinary Jewish Subject," Images: A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture 1 (2007): 12.


38 Berkowitz, "Picture a Nation! Poster Art Unearthed from Jerusalem's Central Zionist Archive," 1.

39 Chalutzot is the Hebrew feminine plural form of chalutza. The masculine plural is chalutzim, from the singular chalutz. Amos Elon provides the following definition: “The olim (immigrants) who went into agricultural work were called ‘chalutzim’, literally, ‘vanguard’, but in the current Hebrew usage charged with ecstasy such as was never associated with the closest English or American equivalent ‘pioneer’. In America, the ‘pioneer’ ethos stressed individuality, daring, go-gettism. In modern Hebrew, ‘chalutz’ connotes above all service to an abstract idea, to a political movement, and to the community.” See Amos Elon, The Israelis: Founders and Sons (New York: Penguin, 1983), 111-112.
on the kibbutz. This ideal, while established through the literature of the Second, Third, and Fourth Aliyot (1904-1930),\(^40\) is enshrined in the visual culture of the 1930s through the 1950s. Despite the historic presence and immigration of Jews of non-European origins before and after the establishment of the state, the history of which has only recently garnered scholarly attention,\(^41\) their representation is excluded entirely from Zionist posters. This is in keeping with the Zionist ideology, which sprouted from a Eurocentric mindset concerned with European Jewry. The absence of Mizrachi (Middle Eastern or North African) Jewish representation is particularly glaring during the *mamlakhtiyyut* period of Israeli history, when approximately 50,000 Jews arrived from Yemen alone between 1949 and 1950.\(^42\)

Through the poster campaigns of the 1950s, gender becomes enmeshed in the process of presenting the “national self.”\(^43\) Graphic designers “choose, construct, and manipulate the signs in order to define national self…”\(^44\) Their techniques of visual persuasion coupled with the sheer amount of repetition of particular gendered images helps to ingrain their projections of the New Hebrew society onto the society at large. Their presentations of the national self encourage viewers to become participants in the national endeavor of nation-building.


\(^44\) Ibid., 4.
While the literature and social history offer a portrait of the New Hebrew Woman in a variety of appearances, some of which can be characterized as revolutionary while others can be seen as more traditional, the graphic art of the period frequently presents a woman outside her usual role in the history of art and visual culture as icon, spectator, and producer of national culture. The New Hebrew Woman is not simply the object of heterosexual male desire and the target of his gaze. To some extent, however, she is masculinized, and must negate some of her essential femininity. Yet the representation of the New Hebrew Woman in poster art involves a process of negotiation between ideal masculinities and ideal femininities.

Socioeconomic transformation was the fulcrum on which Jewish renewal could be realized, with productive agriculture and the welfare state as preconditions for the utopian society.\textsuperscript{45} As imagined by the dominant Labor Zionist institutions of influence that relied upon the power of the poster, the New Hebrew Woman was an active agent in the realization of the socialist-Zionist revolution. Gender was employed in poster art specifically for the purpose of divulging the socialist-Zionist ideology.

**Compiling the Research: Theories and Methodologies**

There are two general categories of posters: The first kind is the commercial poster, whose purpose is to sell a product. The second kind is the propaganda poster, whose purpose is to sell an idea. My study is devoted to propaganda posters.

To begin, this study rejects the theory that art is destroyed through the blending together of “high” and “low” art forms. The infiltration of “low” art, “tailored” to the falsified desires of the masses, into the social space of “high” art, is what Theodor Adorno terms the “culture

\textsuperscript{45} Zilbersheid: 81.
industry.” According to Adorno, the “blending of aesthetics with its residual communicative aspects leads art, as a social phenomenon, not to its rightful position in opposition to alleged artistic snobbism, but rather in a variety of ways to the defense of its baneful social consequences.” The culture industry pretends to be art but fails to shift art historical paradigms. Its popularity notwithstanding, the culture industry is culture not chosen by the masses, but rather chosen for the masses by those interested in earning a profit, according to Adorno.

Although Adorno discussed primarily music, film, and television, his description of the culture industry and especially its technique as “one of distribution and mechanical reproduction” is broad enough to encompass other forms of visual culture, including both the commercial and propaganda poster. If the poster is seen as a product of the culture industry, the nuances of its function are overlooked. While “fine” or “high” art connotes for many a “special sphere of activity devoted to the pursuit of truth, beauty and freedom,” propaganda art for some, and the poster in particular, has a “sinister ring” to it, suggesting strategies of intimidation, manipulation, deception, and distortion. However, the propaganda poster is no more “sinister” or manipulative than a celebrated Renaissance painting by an “old master”; it is simply louder and quicker at reaching its audience.

As a form of visual communication, the poster “hovers” between art and commerce. The paradox of the propaganda poster is that due to its “material ephemeralness, it has, by its nature, to be visually enduring...” It must sustain the viewer’s interest long enough to relay information, yet to fully understand the totality of its importance in visual culture one must

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47 Ibid., 234.
48 Ibid.
49 Clark, 7.
unravel the multiple layers of meaning. So while the poster depends upon its ability to “communicate under pressure,” it also must “satisfy the expectations of different contexts… [by being] diverse and at times, contradictory.” This ability to be both bold and easily accessible while simultaneously offering “contradictory” messages makes the study of the poster intriguing.

The medium of the poster as the subject of scholarly investigation contains within it certain inherent difficulties. These include ascertaining the dissemination statistics of a poster, identifying the locations and strategies of dissemination, and gauging the effects of the poster on viewers in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Texts on the history of posters and graphic design bear the hallmarks of visual anthologies, fixating on the biographies and works of the major protagonists in design. Or the scholarship is categorized according to style. Style, however, is “not the only way of approaching the subject. To consider graphic design as deeply connected with other forms of visual and material culture often means extending research on design as part of a complex system.”

The study of Zionist posters contains even greater difficulties: The state of research investigating links between nationalist movements and modern art is in its “infancy” due to the widespread notion that nationalism is inherently hostile to modern art. The study of the visual imagery that constituted the Zionist project is especially paltry. There is no equivalent to Victoria Bonnell’s *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* or

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54 Aynsley, 8.
56 Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War*, xv.
Persuasive Images: Posters of War and Revolution from the Hoover Institution Archives edited by Peter Paret, Beth Irwin Lewis, and Paul Paret. While I benefitted from the generous gifts of poster collectors Micha Riss and George Blumenthal in New York City, who gave me cards with photographed images of their posters, most these posters have not been systematically categorized and classified, let alone researched. The detective work involved in classifying such images is worthy of a thesis unto itself.

Exhibition guides and coffee-table books provided some insight into the scholarly enterprise of interpreting posters as visual agents of cultural politics. I found only one comprehensive analysis of posters focused entirely on gender configurations and nationalism, which helped me immensely in framing my questions and organizing my findings. With the above-mentioned factors unknown throughout my study and lacking a singular theoretical approach to interpreting the images, I fused the most fitting conceptual and methodological frameworks together.

The capacity to decipher and perceive meaning in art is, as anthropologist Clifford Geertz observed, the “product of collective experience,” so that “art and the equipment to grasp it are made in the same shop.” Viewing visual culture as a collective product provides a conceptual framework for the interpretation of posters. Zionist ideology produced numerous ways of thinking about the social landscape. This means that where relevant, I have turned to other forms of cultural expression and social history.

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57 Laura M. Rother, “World War I Posters and the Female Form: Asserting Ownership of the American Woman” (Cleveland State University, 2008).
Yet “political, social and other ideas are [not] simply transposed into an aesthetic medium.” As Dalia Manor points out, the primary question that must be asked then is the questions of “how an ideology is translated into visual images, into composition, line and color. And conversely, how (and by whom) a set of ideas or beliefs can be seen in a particular visual image...”

In my study, the artworks themselves provide the points of departure. The secondary and tertiary evidence will become important, however, in understanding the metaphorical “shop” Geertz describes. My approach, however eclectic, draws largely from the framework established in Tim Jon Semmerling’s study, which in turn was adopted largely from Gillian Rose. In Rose’s Visual Methodologies, “semiology,” the study of how sign systems produce meaning, is combined with “discourse analysis,” in which the meanings signs convey are interpreted through “displays of similarity and difference, articulations of discourse in images, and demonstrations of institutional practices.”

In Part II I will provide a background of the ideological and sociohistorical landscape to explicate how the Zionist discourse constructed manhood and womanhood in the process of defining the New Hebrew nation. Part III will unpack the images through a combination of semiological and iconographic techniques, focusing on gender as a unit of analysis. Part IV consists of the conclusion, as well as analysis of another form of graphic art – a banknote. The images discussed in this paper are displayed in Part V.

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59 Janet Wolff, The Social Production of Art, as quoted in Ibid., 7.
60 Ibid.
61 “[I]n the study of art the only primary evidence is the work of art itself. Everything that has been said about it, even by the artist himself, may be important, but it remains secondary evidence. Everything that we can learn about the environment that produced it – historically, socially, culturally – is important, but again is only secondary or tertiary evidence.” See H. Harvard Arnason and Marla F. Prather, History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography, 4th ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998), 12.
62 Semmerling, 2.
63 This question is a reformulation of Sheila Katz’s categories of gender-nation relations. Katz, 5.
PART II

Mind, Morals, and Muscles – Gender and Nation in Zionist Ideology and Culture

It was at the second Zionist Congress in Basel on August 28, 1898, when Max Nordau (1849-1923), a physician and social critic, promulgated the idea of the "Muskeljudenthum," the "Muscle Jew." A crisis of manhood in fin de siècle Europe precipitated the revival of a physical culture movement in the mid-nineteenth century, borrowed from ancient Greece. Only a new cult of manliness, which preached for the renewal of "muscles, morals, and mind," could reverse the emasculating consequences of the bourgeois, bureaucratic lifestyle and turn-the-other-cheek gentility that had set in across Europe and America. Assimilated Jews such as Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau were seduced by what the physical cult of manliness offered Jewish men the opportunity to eradicate antisemitism by proving their manliness and adopting secular nationalism on par with other nationalist movements. First, the Zionist movement would need to challenge antisemitic stereotypes controlling the discourse on Jewish manhood.

67 See Hatt.
68 Pressner: 269.
The “Muscle Jew” was a concept that “resonated immediately because it brought mythic elements of the Jewish tradition to bear upon the turbulent historical reality of fin de siècle Europe, marked by both political uncertainty and a condensation of conflicting intellectual currents ranging from decadence to social Darwinism.”\textsuperscript{69} Antisemitic stereotypes about Jewish bodies were drawn both from the popular imagination and fed by official publications embedded centuries before Herzl and Nordau into the European trope on masculinity, such as a 1630 Venetian catalogue of “Jewish maladies” that touted the “scientific” evidence confirming that Jewish men menstruated.\textsuperscript{70} Created in 1516, the Ghetto Nuovo, as the first ghetto in history, functioned as an “urban condom” to protect Christians from the myriad diseases Jewish bodies were thought to harbor.\textsuperscript{71} Jewish men had transgressed the boundaries of gender,\textsuperscript{72} and their bodies had been “feminized.”\textsuperscript{73} 

The fin de siècle was an era in which “cultural prejudice was dressed as medical science, and given the appearance of modernity.”\textsuperscript{74} Jews were racialized in Europe’s mind by shifting the image of the Jewish body from the rhetoric of religious anti-Judaism to the rhetoric of pseudoscientific antisemitism.\textsuperscript{75} Moreover, in the nineteenth century, “Israelitish” features could be “bleached and tanned,” as Josiah Nott wrote in his 1855 \textit{Types of Mankind}, but “the Jewish

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.: 270.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 240.
\textsuperscript{75} In bringing together disparate strains of discourse, Sander L. Gilman reveals how the biological, medical and social sciences at the turn of the century racialized the Jew’s physical body. Sander L. Gilman, \textit{The Jew's Body} (New York: Routledge, 1991), 38.
features stand unalterably through all climates."76 The Jewish nose was linked with the circumcised penis, and Jewish feet were seen as deformed. Due to these deformities, Jews were deemed unfit for military service.77 In the cultural imaginings of Europeans, Jews were undoubtedly of a different, and inferior, race: "Jews and Blacks looked alike to Europeans because both were outsiders, united by their pariah status. But in the racialized mind of [late nineteenth-century] Europe, the Jews were quite literally seen as Black."78

The "scientific" studies carried out by physicians such as Nott participated in a discourse of emasculating Jewish men that would have strong reverberations throughout the nineteenth century. Jews were prohibited from serving in most militaries in Europe during the nineteenth century; they could neither prove their loyalty to the nation-state nor participate in the cult of true manliness. Emancipation was extended to Jews piecemeal.79 During the latter part of the century opportunities for the Jews of Europe to join the all-boys club slowly expanded, but were still constrained. Captain Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935), a paragon of successful Jewish assimilation into Western European society, would achieve symbolic status on multiple fronts.

One of the most pernicious blows to Jewish manhood exploded with the Dreyfus Affair of the 1890s, in which the wrongful conviction of Alfred Dreyfus for selling military secrets to the Germans during the Franco-Prussian War prompted a national soul-searching. What was the meaning of the French Revolutionary ideals of liberté, égalité, fraternité in light of the blatant antisemitism that led to the trumped up charges of treachery and mobs shouting "Down with the Jews!"? The Affair has, as one historian has observed, the longest bibliography in French history.

outside of wine and Joan of Arc. The violent "justice" Dreyfus received, with the shattering of his sword in a public ceremony, was more than public humiliation; the act of cashiering was tantamount to a symbolic castration.

The Affair left an indelible scar on the collective memory of assimilated European Jews, convincing them that no Jew would wholly be accepted into European society. It is this episode in history that many of the early Zionist thinkers, including Theodor Herzl, cite as triggering a conversion to Zionism. It therefore became an implicit goal of Zionism to salvage Jewish manhood "wounded by violence and degradation"; the deprivation of land in the diaspora signified "disgrace and futility." Jewish physical regeneracy – muscular Zionism, according to Nordau and his disciples – and national rebirth would be the panacea for the ills of European Jewry.

Another notorious event occurred in the Russian Empire just a few years after the Dreyfus Affair had roiled public opinion in Western Europe. On April 19, 1903 – Easter Sunday for parishioners of the Russian Orthodox Church – a ravenous mob, sanctified with the blessings of the local bishop and the local authorities, carried out a bloodbath against the town’s Jewish population of 50,000, pillaging homes and businesses, raping women and chopping off breasts, gouging out eyes and hacking people in half. The Kishinev pogrom of 1903 was another quake.
on the collective consciousness of European Jewish leaders, perhaps even more so than the Dreyfus Affair, penetrating the psychology, politics, and culture of European Jewry. It spurred young Zionists to immigrate to Eretz-Israel in what became known as the Second Aliyah (1904-1914), imbued with a new revolutionary fervor and the “militant mythos of autoemancipation.”

Ahad HaAm, a leader in the wing of “cultural” or “spiritual” Zionism, lamented the deaths but deplored the inability of Kishinev’s Jews to mount a strong defense: “It is a disgrace for five million human souls to unload themselves on others, to stretch their necks to slaughter and cry for help, without as much as attempting to defend their own property, honor and lives.” The poet who would become key to the Hebrew renaissance and Israel’s first “national” poet, Chaim Nachman Bialik, went to Kishinev to gather information such as photographs and eyewitness accounts of the atrocities in order to present them during the trial of the pogrom’s instigators, raise relief funds in the West for the victims, and pressure St. Petersburg to curb its sponsorship of antisemitic activities. The information he amassed and his experience collecting it “almost drove him mad.”

Bialik’s (in)famous poem “B’Ir HaHareiga” (“In the City of Slaughter) is a searing indictment of the failure of the Jewish community to rise up in defense against the enemy – a complete failure of Jewish masculinity. It is an “anti-epic” poem in which G-d the speaker “confess[es]” to the “abdication” of the G-dly throne. Bialik’s omission of Jewish resistance efforts in the poem, despite referencing them in his nearly 200 pages of notes, was deliberate; including such nuances would detract from Bialik’s goal of radically altering Jewish perceptions.

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86 Ahad HaAm, as quoted in Penkower: 194.
88 Penkower: 195.
89 ibid.: 196.
90 ibid.: 197.
that assumed mourning and violence as Divine retribution.91 Bialik utilizes extreme metaphors to expose the helplessness and passivity of Jews: “It was the flight of mice they fled, / The scurrying of roaches was their flight; / They died like dogs, and they were dead!”92

The poem’s potency was such that it would be recalled by fighting Jews facing a different enemy. Abba Kovner, a leader of the Vilna Ghetto resistance movement and member of the left-wing Zionist youth organization HaShomer HaTzair, urged his fellow Jews to take up arms. Drawing from Psalm 44:11 and Bialik, he said: “We will not be led as sheep to the slaughter!”93 Yitzchak Katzenelson, a poet who translated “B’Ir HaHareiga” into Yiddish while inside the Warsaw Ghetto, wrote that “Bialik saw our anguish, expressed it, and captured it for all time to come.”94 Bialik’s poem had sounded a clarion call for the urgency of organized Jewish defense – in the shtetls of Russia, in the forest of Naliboki and in the Warsaw Ghetto, and in the fields and towns of Eretz-Israel.

Jewish men would need to beef up their bodies if they were to accept the challenge of this call-to-arms. Max Nordau published Muskeljudenthum a few months after the Kishinev pogrom, and at the first conference of the Teacher’s Association of Eretz-Israel, held that same year in Zikhron Yaakov, the teachers discussed their role in the creation of “a generation full of strength and vigor, healthy in body and spirit, which would love its land and its tongue, a generation

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91 Ibid.: 196-197.
92 Chaim Nachman Bialik, as quoted in Ibid.: 197.
93 Ibid.: 213. After the Kishinev pogrom, Bundists and Labor Zionists organized self-defense groups in tzarist Russia. The Yiddish newspaper Der Freind (The Friend) argued that the actions of these groups in Gomel in September, 1903 rendered the event there a “fight rather than a pogrom.” These acts of armed self-defense were exaggerated by the tzarist authorities to incriminate Jews for inciting the violence. Thirty-six Jews and forty-one Christians were tried in 1904 for “rioting”. See Daniel Balmuth, "Novoe Vremia’s War against the Jews," East European Jewish Affairs 35, no. 1 (2005): 36.
94 Penkower: 213. Yiddish poets during the Holocaust channeled and “subverted” Bialik’s poetic legacy in different ways, appropriating the rhetoric of biblical prophets to give voice to female voices and to create a “nationally significant” literary genre in Yiddish. See David G. Roskies, "Bialik in the Ghettos," Prooftexts 25, no. 1+2 (2005).
loving labor.” Nordau believed gymnastics could cure Jewish muscles weakened by years of intensive studying and even more intensive persecution:

All the elements of Aristotelian physics — light, air, water, and earth — were measured out to us very sparingly. In the narrow Jewish street our poor limbs soon forgot their gay movements; in the dimness of sunless houses our eyes began to blink shyly; the fear of constant persecution turned our powerful voices into frightened whispers, which rose in a crescendo only when our martyrs on the stakes cried out their dying prayers in the face of their executioners. But now, all coercion has become a memory of the past, and at least we are allowed space enough for our bodies to live again. Let us take up our oldest traditions; let us once more become deep-chested, sturdy, sharp-eyed men.  

Hints of anti-Jewish stereotypes about the male Jewish body percolate through Nordau’s thinking: so entrenched was antisemitism in fin de siècle Europe that while its “loud” presence (such as violent pogroms) was easily detected, its “silent” manifestations (ideas about who is a manly man) dragged even its fiercest opponents into its orbit. Muscular Judaism sought nothing less than a revolutionary reconstruction of the Jewish body, both real and imagined.

In works by writers of the First Aliyah (1882-1903), the model of the New Hebrew was based on the myth of “biblical man, working the land and bond[ing] with nature” whose mission was to build the New Hebrew nation. According to Hebrew literature scholar Shachar Pinsker, literature was instrumental in Zionist nation-building because “Zionism emerged almost from the start as a kind of ‘literary utopia’” in the absence of territory and political sovereignty. Herzl, like other prominent Zionist movers and shakers, turned to literature in order to “teach Jewish men to reclaim the European masculine ideal,” which Herzl and other Zionists imagined as

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97 Shilo: 73.
98 Shachar Pinsker’s investigation looked at how literary texts from the time of the “Jewish national awakening, at the beginning of the twentieth century... employed and shaped various gendered symbolic figurations of the nation... [drawing] close attention to the internal fissures and tensions within [Zionism]... and thus challeng[ing] the homogenization that lay at the heart of Zionist attempts at nation-building.” See Pinsker: 106.
“compatible with a primordial ‘heroic past’ of the Jewish nation.” His utopian novel Altneuland (Old New Land), published in 1902 in German, has only recently been looked at through the lens of its “gender economy.” In Altneuland a dichotomy is established between Jewish and non-Jewish European men: Loewenberg, the Old-World Jew, is melancholic with “latent” homosexual tendencies, while Kingscourt, the Prussian nobleman, exhibits “the desired virile masculinity.” Loewenberg can achieve the “desired” virility only by ridding himself of his exilic idiosyncrasies and developing a new sexual-spiritual identity on the soil of Eretz-Israel.

If the New Hebrew man’s mission was to shoulder the revolution by transforming himself and his society, placing the needs of the nation above even religion, the New Hebrew woman’s participation in the Zionist project, as envisioned by the most respected Zionists—mostly men—was more ambivalent. For Herzl, equality for women was premised on the condition that they sublimate their political desires for their maternal roles in birthing the nation. Women’s roles were reduced to becoming “silent generators of national identity by bearing children at the right place with the right men at the right time in history.”

In his personal life Herzl’s relationship with his wife was strained by his incessant work for the cause of Zionism, but his mother held a “dominant influence” on him until his death. He had intended to cast strong, political women in starring roles, but these intentions, revealed through preparatory notes, gave way to entrenched, traditional ideas about women. Altneuland, like other contemporary Zionist utopian novels, dealt with women in a “romantic, patronizing

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99 Ibid.: 105-106.
100 Ibid.: 109-110.
101 Shilo: 74.
102 Katz, 99.
103 Ibid., 100.
105 Hertzberg, 201.
style, thinly veiling condescension and century-old prejudice." Rachel Elboim-Dror identifies three categories of women in Almeuland: the spoiled Diaspora Jewess, the traditionally submissive bourgeois woman of the new utopian society, and the professional woman who must either relinquish her career in order to perform her duties as wife and mother or remain a spinster in the service of the welfare state.

Herzl’s character David Littwak proclaims that in the "New Society, women have equal rights with the men." Yet his wife Sarah, who fronted the "radical" opposition to David at community meetings before the birth of their baby boy, is the booty of his conquest, her politicking and public life suppressed through marriage and motherhood. Sarah Littwak can participate as a full-fledged member in the New Society but chooses not to. She even expresses admiration for Fatma, the wife of an Arab friend of the Littwaks who is confined to her home. "If my husband wished it, I would live just as Fatma does and think no more about it," she declares. Educated women, who outnumbered educated men during the Second and Third Aliyot, presented a threat to emasculated men trying to assert their manliness. David Littwak eliminates the threat and recovers his masculinity from its degenerate exilic condition.

The trope of the nation as a woman, its language and territory as something to be conquered and fertilized by man, is endemic to nationalisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the Zionist nationalist narrative this trope was secularized in Modern Hebrew prose and poetry from its religious origins, employed since biblical times by prophets and

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107 Ibid.: 103-104.
109 Ibid., 75.
110 Ibid., 97.
111 Sheila Katz has noted that the "maintenance of power relations that bolster complex hierarchies of difference depend on the exclusion of women from political discourse." See Katz, 3.
112 Anne McClintock, "No Longer in Future Heaven: Gender, Race, and Nationalism," in Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 89-112.
poets. A major Hebrew poet of the Yishuv and the leader of a group of poets influenced by Russian symbolism, imagism, and futurism, Avraham Shlonsky deployed the trope of the “nation-as-mother” in describing the psycho-physiognomic land of Israel as “breasts flowing with milk.” In his poem “Amal” (“Labor”), the “good mother” “deliver[s]” her son “to toil” as a “road-builder poet of Israel.” According to Pinsker, Shlonsky utilizes religious language in a “double move” that both eroticizes and sanctifies physical labor. The image of the New Hebrew man as portrayed by Shlonsky is not anti-intellectual as some scholars maintain. Though it can be said that physicality and sexual potency are emphasized in the Zionist discourse on masculinity, ideally, physical prowess would be matched by intellectual acuity.

Nationalisms have frequently sprung from “masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope.” One scholar identified Zionism and masculinity as “synonymous.” While “phallocentrism” dominated Nordau’s Zionist characterization of the Muscle Jew, a “well-developed, semibalancing discourse” about female Muscle Jews also emerged in the journal Die Jüdische Turnzeitung (The Jewish Gymnastics Journal). Emanual Edelstein exhorted Jewish women in Die Jüdische Turnzeitung to embrace the Zionist ethos regarding the bodily revolution:

Daughters of Israel, whose beauty has radiated across all time since Sarah and is still uncontested, recognized, and sung today; there is a Miriam, a Deborah, a Judith, a Ruth and an Esther for you to emulate, names that can never be erased.

113 Pinsker: 111.
114 Ibid.: 112.
115 Ibid.
116 For example, see Daniel Boyarin, Carnal Israel Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
117 Presner: 290.
118 Cynthia H. Enloe, Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 44.
119 Shilo: 74.
120 Presner: 283. Die Jüdische Turnzeitung was a Berlin monthly or bimonthly that began publishing in May of 1900 until the outbreak of World War I, when the journal’s publication became sporadic. Publication ceased completely in 1921. See Presner: 293.
Take part in everything that endows your body with power, agility, and grace. Become a strong and healthy sex and you, too, will play an important part in helping to solve the Jewish question.\textsuperscript{121}

But it was only in 1911 that \textit{Die Jüdische Turnzeitung} published a piece by a female. Betti Eger, delivering a speech to the women’s division of the Jewish gymnastics association, argued, “We want to contribute to the health of our people’s body. We want to become strong muscle Jews.”\textsuperscript{122} Women’s primary purpose in the nation-building project, Eger continued, was to birth a nation of corporeally strong babes, a theme reiterated in the journal by the male contributors. Although mothers are crucial in the national task of revolution, symbolizing “the collective, as well as familial future,” they fall typically into a subordinate position within the constructs of the collective.\textsuperscript{123} If the dominant “phallocentric” ideology of the Zionist movement consigned to women the traditional task of motherhood, their “revolution” seems to have been stunted. How then did the visual culture differ in its idealization of the New Hebrew Woman?

\textsuperscript{121} Emanual Edelstein, as quoted in Presner: 287.
\textsuperscript{122} Betti Eger, as quoted in Ibid.
PART III: POSTERS

In 1934, Franz Krausz (1905-1998), a German-Jewish graphic designer, arrived in Tel Aviv after having spent a year in Barcelona. He had been a member of a leftist Zionist organization during his youth in Germany, and was imbued with the ethos of “muscular Zionism.” Shortly before his arrival in Israel in 1936, he had produced a striking poster entitled Eretz-Israel: Land of Our Future (Figure 1). The model for the iconic female image at the center of the poster was probably his wife Anni.

What is most arresting about this idealized portrait of a young woman who represents for this artist the Zionist future? Featured in three-quarter profile, her eyes gazing westward over her shoulder toward the sunlight, she exudes youth, health, strength, and revolutionary promise. This formulaic “forward-and-upwards look” is a recurrent semiotic code in Soviet socialist realism, signifying a “temporal overlap in which the present is infused with the spirit of the future.”124 Part of her face and most of her blouse remain in shadow. The blouse is white, without buttons, and we see one short or rolled-up sleeve in a corner of the frame: she has a youthful, athletic appearance, and could be about to participate in some kind of physical activity. She wears a red beret – a reference to the socialist movement, then on the rise in Barcelona in the period just before the Spanish Civil War. Her hair is relatively short and mostly covered by the beret. Her smile is bright white.

124 Clark, 89-90.
In the immediate background there is a partial view of a white building in the International Style, typical of Tel Aviv in this period. In the further background there is a utopian composite landscape, with ribbons of green, blue, and yellow color, suggesting agricultural fertility. The background of the poster therefore juxtaposes the urban modernism of Tel Aviv with the Zionist vision of an agrarian utopia. Half of the background consists of a blue sky, against which the Hebrew letters spell out “The Land of Israel.” In English, at the bottom of the image, we have the subtitle, “The Country of Our Future.”

Although this poster was never printed for distribution, it achieved a kind of iconic representation of the Zionist dream circa 1934. The over-the-shoulder gaze toward the sun, combined with the beautiful smile and the youthful, athletic figure, suggest hope for the future. The subtitle, “The Country of Our Future,” invites viewers of the poster to participate in the realization of the dream.

For this artist, as for other poster artists, including the Shamir Brothers, there was an implicit equation between the idealized representation of the young woman, and the equally idealized representation of the beautiful land — here a composite of utopian urban and agrarian elements. The female image at the center of the poster is the Zionist equivalent of Marianne in the iconography of the French Republic: the beautiful young female becomes the matrix of the national identity. But there is an obvious difference between Marianne and this iconic female Zionist: French artists such as Delacroix and Daumier called attention to Marianne’s femininity by revealing her breasts, whereas Krausz makes no attempt whatever to sexualize his subject. The contours of her breasts are flattened by the perspective and hidden by the text of the letters.

\[\text{Note:} \quad ^{125}\text{Doreet LeVitte-Harten and others, } Die Neuen Hebräer: 100 Jahre Kunst in Israel (Berlin: Nicolai, 2005), 313. ^{126}\text{For more on the iconography of Marianne, see Maurice Agulhon, } Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981).\]
Since the Renaissance, European artists had tended to exhibit women as objects of desire through a heterosexual male gaze. John Berger’s seminal *Ways of Seeing* described how the history of art and visual culture deemed the act of seeing itself as a gender-specific activity:

“[M]en act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.”

To be a woman in public meant to be subjected to the male gaze – to be put on display. But in Franz Krausz’s poster, the young woman holds the reins to how she is seen, even if she does not confront the viewer directly. Her gaze is directed toward the future. She is an image of modernity, of hope, of the future, and perhaps a new understanding of the status of women in the Zionist project. By portraying her in such a way, Krausz has given the New Hebrew Woman agency and empowered her to participate on equal terms in the project of nation-building.

A decade later, Maxim and Gabriel Shamir (the Shamir Brothers) produced a series of recruiting posters for the ATS, the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the women’s branch of the British Army during the Second World War. In Palestine, about 3,600 Jewish women “from all walks of life” served in the British forces between 1942 and 1946, mostly in Egypt, but also in Palestine, Lebanon, Italy, and Austria. Even if the radical social changes in women’s newly found opportunities for advancement in the military were of an ephemeral nature in the social history of women in the Yishuv and later in the state of Israel, women were nonetheless empowered by the ideal:

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129 Anat Granit-Hacohen, "Female or Feminist Initiative – Hadassah Samuel and Yishuv Women Recruit to the British Forces in World War Two," in *Association for Israel Studies 23rd Annual Conference* (The Open University of Israel, Ra’anana, Israel: 2007), 1.
"There is no doubt that most women experienced their military service as a fulfilling and empowering personal experience, but the venue which started out as a female initiative also became a female failure and disappointment. It had a potential, both in number and by being a precedent in Jewish history, to accelerate long aspired equality of rights for women, but it did not ‘translate’ into real social change. Recruits and most women leaders saw war as a time when gender and social order was turned upside down, therefore unusual acts may be practiced. They did not think in terms of shaping a new form of gender discourse."\textsuperscript{130}

The Shamir Brothers’ posters for this organization drew on gendered tropes. They presented Jews, including Jewish women, as participants in the nationalist project, even if they were being invited to serve in a British rather than a specifically Jewish army.

In a poster created for both the ATS and the WAAF (the Women's Auxiliary Air Force) in 1943 (Figure 2), the Brothers present a trio of uniformed, smiling female soldiers marching in stride. Each represents a different branch of the Service: two wear dresses, and one wears a belt and pants. Each wears a distinctive kind of head covering to indicate a different possibility for women’s participation in the war: a brimmed hat that indicates affiliation with WAAF; a kerchief to indicate work with food or machines; and a pointed hat to suggest affiliation with the army. The uniforms are olive-green, the shoes are boot-like and masculine, the hair is just long enough to indicate their gender. The postures are straight while the three bare left arms, which are nearly identical, and the three raised right legs in mid-step, suggest a kind of synchronized marching rhythm. There is no question about their gender, but neither is there any emphasis on secondary sexual characteristics. Here is a new possibility for female participation in the national project: women, like men, can enroll in the armed forces and serve in positions of importance. They are not domineering, but they do command admiration, attention, and respect. They radiate confidence and cheerfulness.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 6.
There is a splash of blue sky in the very vaguely drawn background, but no attempt to suggest the contours of a landscape. The Hebrew text above the heads of the women suggests that they are speaking directly to the viewer, inviting her participation. And an exclamation point after the Hebrew letters makes the invitation emphatic.

The Shamir Brothers adapted the Zionist image of the New Hebrew Woman to a military context, whereas Krausz's poster had placed a single figure against an idealized Zionist landscape. Here we no longer have a single iconic figure but a trio marching in unison. The military appears, not in a sacrificial or sanguinary context, but as a noble opportunity for service. The individual woman is part of a collective: the three figures are so closely intertwined and the arms and shoulders are placed in such a way as to suggest they form a single organism with three constituent bodies. Given the laws of perspective the placing of the arms is visually impossible—all the more reason to see the trio as a harmonious team.

Another ATS poster of the early 1940s (Figure 3) announces in English, "It's your turn! Join the ATS," in red and black letters at the top of the poster. A young woman in an olive-green uniform, with a chevron of three stripes on her shoulder, and a brimmed ATS hat shading her eyes, confronts the viewer directly with her penetrating gaze. The stern face and deep shadow over her eyes call attention to the gravity of her message. In her hands she holds out the open jacket of an olive-green uniform, as if to reach out of the poster and place it on the viewer. Her arms are raised to make the gesture more emphatic.

The English letters at the top of the poster appear in two different typefaces as well as colors. The official message, in the black capital letters of the sans serif style (the same Art Deco or international typeface style that appeared in Krausz's poster), urges the viewer to join the ATS. The more personal exhortation, in red cursive type that partially overlaps the black
type, announces with urgency, “It’s your turn!” and emphasizes its point with an exclamation mark.

At the bottom of the poster, in Hebrew letters, we have another message, translated, “Put on your clothes of glory, reflecting your worth.” The sublime language quotes from one of the most important and well-known prayers of kabbalat Shabbat, or the Friday night Sabbath service. This prayer would have resonated especially strongly with Jewish women, even secularized ones, because it represented the Sabbath as a bride and recalled the general association between the Sabbath and feminine roles. The appropriation of the language of prayer by the Shamir Brothers for the purpose of military recruitment was a clever strategy of appealing directly to the ethos and pathos of female viewers. The cognitive dissonance associated with the paradox of fulfilling the Zionist mission of nation-building through service in the British army, an imperial power that at times encouraged Jewish political sovereignty but at other times actively repressed it, is thus resolved.

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As an essential organ in the body building of the nation, the Histadrut amassed an arsenal of Zionist symbols to propagate a collective identity based upon its socialist-Zionist principles. Socialist-Zionism, according to Ben-Gurion,

is not class-ism at all, but rather the negation of class contradictions, the negation of class privilege; the necessary aspiration of the workers and all those for whom Zionism comes become class politics is to a united and free Jewish nation with equal rights, within which there are no class differences and contradictions, but rather the economic and social equality proper to a free nation.\(^{131}\)

\(^{131}\) David Ben-Gurion, as quoted in Cohen, “Between Revolution and Normalcy: Social Class in Zionist Political Thinking,” 261.
To understand the posters of Labor Zionism, the philosophy of Ber Borochov (1881-1917), a prominent Marxist-Zionist intellectual is also particularly relevant. Borochov argued that socialism could transform the Old Jew into the New Hebrew by replacing religious Judaism with civil religion:

[Socialism is] a total worldview that provides a solution for the most profound gropings and quests of man’s spirit... and the foremost advantage and strength of socialism lies in the fact that it puts an end to all religious quests. For, through human, worldly means, it fulfills all those spiritual needs whose fulfillment religious faith sought to find in G-d.\footnote{122}

Through the creation of new national holidays such as May Day, Borochov believed, such a transformation would occur.

Once planted into the soil of Eretz-Israel, the holiday, featuring a massive parade, speeches and songs, dances and dramatizations, became an important social ritual.\footnote{133} Participation was of course voluntary, though large urban events appealed to the collective national and civic obligations.\footnote{134} The spectacle transformed the crowds into active agents of Labor Zionism’s ideals:

As a factor in political consolidation and mobilization parades are even more effective than gatherings. The “display of power” is most evident in a parade, which also provides the supporters of a movement with an opportunity for active participation. May Day parades, in which tens of thousands of people participated, were held in most cities and towns throughout Israel to express “the solidarity of the working class.”\footnote{135}

\footnote{133 Ibid.: 143-144.}
\footnote{134 Yael Reshef and Anat Helman, “Instructing or Recruiting? Municipal Posters in 1920s and 1930s Tel-Aviv,” in \textit{Association for Israel Studies 23rd Annual Conference} (The Open University of Israel, Ra’anana, Israel: 2007), 5-6.}
\footnote{135 Don-Yehiya and Liebman: 144.}
Celebrants on the kibbutz would sing the “International,” the anthem of socialist movements worldwide, even before singing the “HaTikvah” (“The Hope”), the Zionist (later Israeli) national anthem. Although the holiday did not replace traditional Jewish holidays (few others accepted Borochov’s yearning for the total “abolition” of Judaism), it demonstrated the aggregated cultural and political hegemony of Labor Zionism during the late Mandate and early statehood years: schools cancelled classes, government offices closed for the day, and the economy ground to a halt in order to celebrate May Day. The marriage between socialism and Zionism seemed a natural fit, and the conflation of international socialist symbols with uniquely Zionist tropes in posters made this a marriage for the masses.

One strategy of graphic designers in 1950s-era Israel involved maximizing visual elements and minimizing verbal ones so that “reading” the image did not require fluency in the modern Hebrew language. The immigrants arriving in contravention to British immigration policy during the British Mandate and later during the early years of statehood arrived not as chalutzim, or pioneers, as the youthful immigrants stirred by strong Zionist convictions were called, but olim (immigrants), largely refugees from the Holocaust, North Africa, and the Middle East. Operating within the linguistic limitations imposed by an Israeli society comprised of newcomers, the Shamir Brothers relied on Hebrew passages and expressions from the Torah, Talmud, and holiday songs recognizable to religious and secular Jews alike for the poster’s verbal component.

While the Labor movement refrained from early Bezalel-style biblicality, it converted biblical motifs into a program of civic religion. Incorporating religious phraseology in the

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service of socialist-Zionism granted legitimacy to its ideological aspirations, including the sociopolitical process of inscribing May Day into the official calendric system. So while May Day had zero roots in either Jewish or Zionist tradition, once installed, the holiday gained broad social support, cutting across class lines even as the urban proletariat and the agrarian kibbutznik were extolled as models par exemplar. With the stamp of religious or mythical-historical legitimacy, the poster could promulgate its secular socialist-Zionist objectives; this is precisely the operating method of the Shamir Brothers’ “How Wonderful It Is To Be a Free People,” a May Day poster produced for the Histadrut from 1953 (Figure 4).

Featuring a young, corporeally strong woman and man in profile, a hammer slung over his shoulder and a sheave of grain cascading over hers, the poster culls its visual cues from a Communist visual canon that elevated the worker into its new pantheon of heroes, but locates its subjects as the modern-day protagonists reenacting the Exodus from Egypt. The hammer identifies the male figure as a blacksmith, a staple embodiment of labor in early Soviet posters. Drawing from Slavic folklore, which granted the blacksmith Herculean status as someone endowed with sacred and heroic abilities, and a painterly tradition from Italian Renaissance that portrayed the Greek god Hephaestus with hammer in tow, the blacksmith became the archetypical proletarian. Perhaps the most “universal” of the nonagricultural workers, the


141 Ibid., 30-31.
blacksmith’s work of forging wheels, hoes, and scythes enabled agriculture itself.\textsuperscript{142} Two main variants of his representation emerged in Soviet posters: the “composed and dignified” blacksmith, hammer at his side, emphasizing his skill, dignity, and poise; and the blacksmith-in-action, striking an anvil for example, emphasizing his physical supremacy.\textsuperscript{143}

As “commercial” artists functioning within the capitalist city center, the Shamir Brothers were certainly not Communist in their political ideology, however socialist they were in their iconographic orientation. Unlike their contemporaries in Soviet Russia, they did not produce their work in a stifling authoritarian environment. \textsuperscript{144} While the image of the blacksmith was officially censured and discarded after 1932 in Stalinist Russia and its reappearance rare, \textsuperscript{145} the Shamir Brothers employed the blacksmith next to the agricultural worker in order to illustrate the marriage of industry and agriculture. The blacksmith, venerated as the ideal in Bolshevik Russia, became anathema to cause of Communism in Stalinist Russia; in Israel, the blacksmith (and other worker-types) became the apotheosis of the New Hebrew Man. The Shamir Brothers could pick-and-choose their icons from the vast reserves in the socialist visual canon, mixing Soviet elements with non-Soviet socialist elements. Semiotically, the Shamir Brothers tap into a communist arsenal of symbols; stylistically, they adhere to the modernism of Henri Matisse.

The poster’s title comes from the text near the bottom, which invokes a passage from the Passover \textit{Haggadah}, the book telling the story of Jewish thralldom in Egypt to a miraculous

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 26-27.
\textsuperscript{144} Relative pluralism existed in the arts under Lenin, but in 1934 Joseph Stalin declared Socialist Realism as the official aesthetic of the Soviet Union and implemented autocratic cultural policies. According to Toby Clark, Socialism Realism “insists that the power to identify and control the direction of this historic progression, and therefore to determine the correct representation of reality, is the exclusive property of the Communist Party.” See Clark, 73, 85, 87.
\textsuperscript{145} The image of the blacksmith became dangerously “bourgeois” and incongruous with the new visual language needed for the First Five Year Plan. Bonnell, 34.
“birth” as a free people, which was turned into a song:146 “Avadim hayinu, hayinu; ata b’nei chorin, b’nei chorin” (“We were slaves to Pharaoh and now we are free.”) With every generation exhorted to imagine a personal deliverance from G-d during the course of the Passover seder,147 the festive meal in which the Haggadah is read, the poster exhorts newcomers to the newly-established State of Israel to cast off their identities as refugees and recast themselves into chalutzim experiencing freedom for the first time, as their forebears had done in the days of Moses.148

Kibbutzim also produced hundreds of different kinds of haggadot (plural of haggadah), participating in a long history of reinterpreting and recontextualizing the Passover story within the context of the current social or political concerns: “the aim of the textual midrash [homiletic interpretation of Scriptures] was to recall the ancient events and at the same time to freeze the vitality contained in them... In the early period of the Second Aliyah, Eretz-Israel seder s were based on feelings tied to moods, encounters with the landscape, large convocations, youthful singing and dancing, abbreviated Passover texts, the blurring of traditional roles as well as the longing for the parents’ home. People were unaware that a cultural revolution was taking place.”149

The kibbutz was “built in the shadow of the destruction, extermination and bereavement of the Jewish people.” But the haggadah presented an opportunity for “identity reconstruction

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146 Haggadah literally means “a telling”, from the Hebrew verb “to tell” (I haggid). The Hebrew word for Egypt is Mitsrayim, meaning “narrators.” The journey from slavery to freedom is likened to birth in the Talmudic literature; the Israelites are conceived in the “womb” of Egypt, experience a violent passage out of the “place of narrators” through a watery channel (like a pregnant woman’s water breaking), and become “alive” as a nation with Moses at the helm. It’s a psychic journey as well, from the servile/infantile state to a free/existing state.
147 “B’chol-dor v’idor hayayim aidam le’eret et-etzem k’eloo hoo yatsav miMitsrayim” (“In every generation each individual is bound to regard himself as if he had gone personally forth from Egypt.”) From the Haggadah.
148 Muki Tsur’s study of nearly 500 haggadot reveals how the socialist-Zionist ethos crystallized in the celebration of a new Passover seder with new haggadot: “For the Zionist revolutionary... the actual experience of the Exodus took place not via a memorial ritual but in the search for freedom by immigrating to Eretz-Israel and investing in the landscape, art, politics, and labor from which the Jewish people had been detached for so many generations.” See Muki Tsur, "Pesach in the Land of Israel: Kibbutz Haggadot," Israel Studies 12, no. 2 (2007): 76.
149 Tsur: 76, 81.
and social engineering... reflect[ing] the pioneers’ unwillingness to accept this situation and their thirst for life’s positive side, love’s reawakening, and a world free of bondage and misery. The kibbutz members’ lives were filled with labor in Eretz-Israel, the building of a moral society, and the deep awareness of the enormity of the challenge they faced.”

The chalutzim of the Third Aliyah (1919-1923), comprised of some 35,000 young people who brought a “radical wind to the country,” introduced innovations to the Passover seder such as the mass collective meal (held in the large dining hall or underneath the stars) and the incorporation of music and drama into new rituals. The Passover seder “became the kibbutzniks’[members of the kibbutz] declaration of messianic faith.”

As Passover is celebrated in the springtime, it coincides every year with the harvest of cereals. Some socialist-Zionist kibbutzim revived the ancient ritual of the reaping of the omer, the barley harvest, with a ceremony in which “girls from the kibbutz, with bundles of grain on their heads, would present a pageant of song and dance.” In the 1953 May Day poster, the female figure holds the grain. This motif, repeated in other Histadrut posters, references the revival of the ancient Jewish custom as well as an investment in socialist iconography, which prominently displayed grain-carrying farm women. Bonnell argues that in the early 1930s a new emphasis “on women’s participation in agricultural labor” in which the “attributes of youth, agility, and fitness were directly linked to the labor function... focused attention on production, not reproduction.” Although the reasons for the use of the female farm worker with grain motif within the Soviet and Israeli contexts have little or nothing to do with each other, 

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150 Ibid.: 75.
151 Ibid.: 81-82.
152 Ibid.: 95.
154 Ibid., 105.
155 A new image of the female peasant in Soviet Russia emerged at a time when rural women vigorously resisted forced collectivization in farming during the first collectivization campaigns of the early 1930s. The
Bonnell’s interpretation of the focus on “production, not reproduction” can be applied to the iconography of female kibbutzniks in Zionist posters, especially the posters featuring a cropped image in profile such as the 1953 May Day poster.

Quoting visually El Lissitsky’s poster for the Soviet Exhibition in Zurich (1929), the Shamir Brothers literally bind the pair of figures together: the thick, black line that denotes the back of female figure’s head delineates the hairline (or cap line) of the male figure. In making the two figures heads’ virtual twins of each other, the image stresses the socialist-Zionist commitment to equality between the women and men.

With their heads tilted upwards and westward, signifying a “temporal overlap in which the present is infused with the spirit of the future,” the poster captures the youthful energy and hopefulness of the pair. The figures are flattened and simultaneously given perspective through shades of color. She wears the typical kerchief of the kibbutznik, while his hair modulates into the earth-brown tone that dominates the foreground of the image. Stripped of its theological content, the Passover story contains mythical elements in this Passover-May Day poster: It makes a specific claim about the status of women and the possibilities for women in the New Hebrew society.

difference between the baba (traditional peasant woman) and the kolkhoznitsa (new collective farming woman) amounted to more than just age; the Soviet authorities were defining who was a good Soviet citizen and who was not. The women who opposed forced collectivization of their lives, which amounted to a critical mass of peasant women, were derided as anti-Communist heretics. See Victoria E. Bonnell, "Iconography of the Worker in Soviet Political Art," in Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 101-123.

156 Ibid., 72.
157 Clark, 89-90.
PART IV: CONCLUSION

Scholars have questioned how if the crux of muscular Zionism was the vindication of Jewish manhood and the reconfiguration of the Jewish man, how were Jewish women able to participate in the redemption of the Jewish people and “return to the soil”, as poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, urged Jews everywhere to do? The visual culture of Zionism offers some answers in its multiple portrayals of the New Hebrew Woman, the chalutza. But it did not develop in a vacuum. As Patricia Simons has said, “Visual art, it can be argued, both shared and shaped social language and need not be seen as a passive reflection of pre-determining reality.” Thus the creators of Zionist posters preferred looking to the ideology rather than the social reality for their artistic inspiration because in a way, they helped create the social reality by transforming the ideology into a visual language accessible for the masses.

While recognizable protagonists of these narratives do not appear in posters, the stories of women such as Manya Shohat, Henrietta Szold, Rahel Yanait Ben-Zvi, Hannah Senesh, and Hannah Meisel – women with the audacity to transgress the gender-defined borders of their times – served as wellsprings for imagining and perfecting the ideal New Hebrew Woman in Zionist visual culture. Because Hannah Meisel founded the first agricultural school for young women in the Yishuv, and creating a new Jewish society through agricultural labor reigned supreme in the Zionist imagination, I will discuss her story to the extent that it is relevant.

159 Simons: 15.
towards an understanding of how aspects of real women's lives were incorporated into the graphic arts-generated image of the ideal chalutza. The "myth of the liberated Hebrew woman, strong and omnipotent... created another myth – that of the equality of women in the new society. These myths were nourished and influenced by the appearance of various exceptional women... who became symbols of the society that wished to attain the unattainable and convert a utopian vision into reality."¹⁶⁰ As an exception to the rule, Meisel's story could help foster national identity by presenting a national self that viewed equality between men and women as a national imperative.

Negotiating her identity as an elite intellectual and a Zionist activist at a time when the predominant Zionist ideology scorned the "effeminate" cosmopolitan culture of European Jewry, Hannah Meisel, who came to Palestine in 1909, fused her academic training as an agronomist with the physical labor of the agriculturalist into an ideology for young women. For Meisel, "...science would be the new Jewish woman's domain, simultaneously saving the entire Zionist agricultural project as it lifted esteem for women's labor to a position equal to that of men."¹⁶¹

By the time she founded the women's training farm at Kinneret in 1911 she had parted from the notion that gender equality rested on women performing the same tasks of "brute strength" as men performed, and instead formulated a new concept for women's work in the garden, tree nursery, and barn.¹⁶² Though she maintained the "conventional connection between women and the domestic setting," endowing the home and its environs with the "cachet of science" and incorporating physical labor was a "radical change."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Shilo: 91.
¹⁶² Ibid.: 140.
¹⁶³ Ibid.
The training farm at Kinneret closed in the aftermath of the First World War. But Meisel was determined despite the diasporic Zionist leadership’s reluctance to fund women’s educational programs in Palestine. In her 1922 article titled “Agricultural Education for Women Workers,” published in the *HaPoel HaTzair* journal, she wrote that funds allocated by the local Zionist Executive for women’s educational and agricultural initiatives were “quickly deleted by the inspectorate . . . sent by the Zionist leadership in London.” Without several key Zionist men, Meisel might not have succeeded in acquiring the necessary funds from abroad to establish the Girl’s Agricultural School at Nahalal, which was founded in April of 1926. She enjoyed support from Yitzhak Wilkansky, “the most respected voice of agricultural science in the Jewish community of Palestine.” An advisor to the World Zionist Organization on agricultural settlement, Wilkansky also founded The Hebrew University’s agricultural branch at Rehovot and edited an influential press. His endorsement of Meisel’s agricultural ambitions for women made him a “figure of inspiration among women settlers seeking technical education for their pursuit of gender equality.”

Akiva Ettinger, an agronomist who came to Palestine in 1914 as manager of all Jewish National Fund (JNF) properties, was another diligent friend of Meisel’s and even provided funding for the school’s first year of operation as the Chief of the Agricultural Settlement Department. Ettinger believed that European ghetto culture had obstructed the opportunity for women to achieve equality. Yet, because they were weaned on bourgeois values that allowed for domestic servants and wetnurses and cooks to function in the household, the *chalutzot* faced

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164 Ibid, 142.
165 Berg: 147.
166 Ibid.: 148.
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid, 151.
additional challenges in becoming farmers that men simply did not face.\textsuperscript{169} Agricultural schools provide the skills needed to confront these challenges and transform the pampered diasporic ladies into pioneering New Hebrew women.

Meisel had to traverse a “tangle of egos, political interests, and conflicting ideologies of the Zionist movement” in order to establish the Agricultural School at Nahalal. Recruiting help from male friends Akiva Ettinger and Arthur Ruppin, she finagled her way into securing funding from the Women’s International Zionist Organization (WIZO). Yet it was the “culture of dispersion,” the bourgeois society ladies of WIZO and their gentlemen, who were extremely skeptical of the radical changes in gender roles and relations plowing ahead in Palestine that were inimical to women’s liberation.\textsuperscript{170} The ideological chasm regarding the role of women in society prompted the development of a tenuous and ambivalent relationship between Meisel and the WIZO.

By the end of the 1920s, over half a dozen training farms for young women had been founded.\textsuperscript{171} Ettinger reminisced on the eve of the establishment of the state if Israel in 1948 that “working agriculture would not have been realized without the independent women workers farms.” Historian Gerald Berg believes that Ettinger’s persistence on behalf of Meisel’s educational projects typified the ideological alliance between feminists and the local Zionist establishment: “Though male toughness, a mainstay of European nationalist culture, remained a central trope of Zionist rhetoric, Meisel adopted the socialist version of gender, which extolled physical labor as an antidote for the injustices of class and race, and adapted it to women who would manifest their toughness in collective labor and in agricultural science.”\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{169} Berg: 149.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.: 156.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid, 150.
\textsuperscript{172} Berg: 156.
The New Hebrew Woman on the banknote that the Shamir Brothers (Figure 5) created could very well have been one of the young women at the Nahalal Agricultural School. Despite being designed in 1959, over ten years after the establishment of the state, the banknote draws on a visual lexicon of Labor Zionism representative of the experiences of the chalutzim of the Second (1904-1918) and Third (1919-1923) Aliyot, but codified and consolidated during the Fourth (1924-1930) and Fifth Aliyot (1932-1939).

The Shamir Brothers had emigrated from Latvia in 1935 and arrived at a propitious time for the graphic arts scene in pre-state Israel. With the Levant Fairs and Maccabiah games of the 1930s and the opening of the port of Tel Aviv in 1936, opportunities to showcase Jewish “Palestinian” art and graphic design for commercial purposes increased considerably. Tel Aviv of the 1930s had thoroughly digested muscular Zionism into its cultural milieu, with posters selling the Zionist dream as an agrarian utopia, and to a lesser extent, a revolutionary kind of urbanism; the Shamir Brothers’ New Hebrew Woman is a celebration of the Nordauian ideal of the Muskelfjudenthum.

Her doughty appearance notwithstanding, there seems to be a certain “feminine” softness to her. The dress she wears appears atypical of the garb worn by workers of the kibbutz. A shirt and pair of shorts characterized the kibbutz uniform, even for religious kibbutz women who were able to circumvent traditional codes of modesty in clothing because of the scorching heat.\textsuperscript{173} Wearing a dress would seem highly inappropriate for the chalutza, the New Hebrew Woman of a revolutionary society. Additionally, the particular dress she wears resembles the shirtdress of a nurse, an important occupation that was nonetheless filled solely by women in the mid-twentieth century, making it less valuable by society’s standards. With the basket of oranges placed precisely at the point where she would deliver a child, the banknote seems to reinforce the notion

\textsuperscript{173} Lilach Rosenberg-Friedman, conversation with Talia Coutin, Waltham, MA, July 31, 2007.
that fecundity is her most valuable contribution to society. The Shamir Brothers have fashioned a woman who is fulfilling the biblical commandment to “be fruitful and multiply”, in both the metaphoric and real senses. For the New Hebrew, “intellectual acuity is matched by physical prowess,” and the new society could only be created with the birth of the next generation.\(^\text{174}\)

She’s not toiling to produce the fruit, but delivering it.\(^\text{175}\)

This role seems less than revolutionary. The hidden assumption in viewing her motherhood as compulsory and un-revolutionary, however, reveals a false dichotomy between motherhood and the possibility for women to occupy other valued roles in society. When the image of the sketch (Figure 6) is compounded with the image of the actual banknote, a more nuanced portrait of the muscular Zionist society in the 1950s emerges. Whereas the gaze of the banknote sketch is direct, the gaze in the actual banknote is tilted sideways and upwards, the heroic posture that we saw in Franz Krausz’s poster. The detail in the actual banknote is also richer than in the sketch. We can read the insignia on the lapel of the shirtdress and see that the woman is not only a *chulatza* on the kibbutz, but a *chayala*, a soldier, as well, giving vibrancy to the radical ideals espoused by labor Zionism. While she is bearing the fruit of the kibbutz – both oranges and children – she is also the sole guardian of the kibbutz, the sole defender. She is both mother and militarist, feminized and masculinized. Her very body, then, becomes the site for the sociocultural tensions that play out in the debates over nature of the New Hebrew Woman. As we have seen, the New Hebrew Woman, as imagined by the dominant form of Zionism – Labor Zionism – came in a variety of guises in poster art.


\(^{175}\) Ellen Smith, conversation with Talia Coutin, Waltham, MA, August 2, 2007.
PART V

FIGURE 2: Shamir Brothers, ATS and WAAF poster, 1943
FIGURE 3: Shamir Brothers, “It’s Your Turn! Join the ATS,” 1940s
FIGURE 4: Shamir Brothers, “How Wonderful It Is To Be a Free People,” May Day poster for the Histadrut, 1953
FIGURE 5: Shamir Brothers, Half-Pound Prutah, 1959
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