

“A Cacophony of Voices”

American Jewish Power Politics and the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment

By

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Abstract

The enactment of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment is held up in the historiography as the outcome of a successful lobbying effort by the Soviet Jewry Movement, a mobilization of the “Jewish community” in America on behalf of its beleaguered kin in the U.S.S.R. In fact, as this thesis argues, the amendment saga implicated several Jewish *communities* in America, which brought differing and sometimes competing diasporic identities into the political arena. Through primary source analysis, this thesis foregrounds the “cacophony of voices” drowned out by the groupist paradigm of the “Jewish community” favored by both participants in and scholars of the Soviet Jewry Movement. In doing so, it highlights how various factions of politically-active Jews understood their social position in Cold War America — and how their self-understandings constrained their ability or willingness to advance what was seen as a particular Jewish interest.

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Introduction

On April 13, 1975, tens of thousands of American Jews marched down New York City's Fifth Avenue underneath signs that proclaimed "Let my people go," "The people of Israel live," and "Never again!"¹ They marched on behalf of Soviet Jews, who were agitating to emigrate from the U.S.S.R. en masse to escape state-directed "spiritual strangulation."² In a display of diasporic solidarity,³ they marched for human rights and against what many feared was a second Holocaust in the making. More than anything, they marched to make known their resolve.

The organizers of the march claimed they were "being watched closely in Washington... and Moscow," one journalist reported, adding, "Despite chilly and windy weather, the spirit of the marchers... was warm as they shouted slogans and sang Hebrew songs."⁴ American Jews had good reason to feel they were "being watched" by the great powers of the day — and even better reason to feel upbeat. Marching in their midst was Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, who had lent his name to a 1974 law conditioning favorable U.S. trade relations with the U.S.S.R. on the Kremlin's willingness to uphold the human right of emigration, i.e., to let Soviet Jews leave. In doing so, Jackson and the Jewish community had changed the contours of the Cold War. One organizer explained, "What we have accomplished is to bring about... a law which links emigration... to U.S. trade practices. Whatever happens from this point on in regard to our relationship with the Soviet Union must take place against the background of that law."⁵ The Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Act, as the law was officially known, struck some as proof that the Jewish community had come to wield disproportionate political power. "What is extraordinary,"

¹ Irving Spiegel, "100,000 March Here in Support of Soviet Jewry," *New York Times* 14 Apr. 1975

² Moshe Decter, "The Status of the Jews in the Soviet Union," *Foreign Affairs* 41, No. 2 (1963): 430

³ The demonstration was even called "Solidarity Sunday."

⁴ David Friedman, "200,000 March in Solidarity with Soviet Jewry," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin* 42, No. 71 (1975): 2

⁵ Jerry Goodman, "Immigration of Soviet Jews: Statistics; Jackson Amendment," Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 369, Folder C62, Center for Jewish History

the New York Times intoned, “is that the moral position of an ethnic minority representing 3 percent of the American population could eventually force another country to reverse its internal police policies...”⁶ To hear Gal Beckerman, the authoritative chronicler of the campaign for Soviet Jews, tell it, “The Jewish community could hardly believe what it had accomplished.”⁷

In most retellings, including Beckerman’s, the so-called Soviet Jewry Movement stars a diaspora lobby (namely, the Jewish community) which effected a major shift in U.S. foreign policy for the benefit of its kin in the U.S.S.R. In reality, the “Jewish community” at the center of this story was scored by divisions reflecting varied self-understandings of diasporic Jewish identity. These divisions ran deep. They gave rise to a “cacophony of voices” claiming, in one way or another, to speak for the communal whole.⁸ These voices never managed to arrange themselves into a chorus. Instead, Henry Jackson orchestrated the passage of the amendment himself, pitting (sometimes intentionally, other times inadvertently) various factions of American Jews against one another in the process. Ultimately, credit for the amendment belongs first and foremost to him.

Beckerman, in his masterful history *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*, asserts, “Nothing since [the Soviet Jewry Movement] has united American Jewry in quite the same way.”⁹ In fact, as the years-long saga of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment makes plain, the campaign gave the lie to the very notion of a “Jewish community” in the U.S. Consequently, this is not a story of a community’s empowerment but rather of its factionalization in the face of Cold War America’s political opportunity structure.¹⁰

⁶ Joseph Albright, “The Pact of Two Henrys,” *New York Times Magazine* 5 Jan. 1975

⁷ Gal Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010): 306

⁸ Murray Friedman, “Introduction,” in Murray Friedman and Albert D. Chernin, Eds., *A Second Exodus: The American Movement to Free Soviet Jews* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999): 2

⁹ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*: 530

¹⁰ Following Pauline Peretz, I define “political opportunity structure” as “a political system’s degree of openness or vulnerability to mobilization.” [Pauline Peretz, *Let My People Go: The Transnational Politics of Soviet Jewish Emigration During the Cold War* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2015): 102]

Argument

Against those involved in the Soviet Jewry Movement and those who study it, I argue that the disputes surrounding the enactment of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment implicated multiple Jewish *communities* rather than a singular “Jewish community.” In the spirit of Rogers Brubaker’s critique of “groupism,” I contend that the putative “Jewish community” is a “perspective on and construct of the world,” not a “substantial thing-in-the-world.”¹¹ To move beyond this paradigm, I construct a taxonomy of Jewish identity and power practices, applying it to the various factions of American Jews caught up in the amendment saga.

Talk of the “Jewish community” abounds in the Soviet Jewry Movement’s primary source record. For instance, in a March 1973 meeting, U.S. President Richard Nixon worried aloud that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which he vehemently opposed, could pass over his veto “if the Jewish community in this country is united on it.”¹² If his fears came to pass, the president vowed that “the responsibility will be on the American Jewish community.”¹³ Public statements from the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (an advocacy vehicle), to give another example, are replete with stock phrases like, “We call upon the American Jewish community...”¹⁴ or “On behalf of the American Jewish community, we continue to urge...”¹⁵ “By *invoking* groups,” Brubaker writes, leaders often “seek to *evoke* them, summon them, call them into being. Their categories are for doing — designed to stir, summon, justify, mobilize, kindle, and energize.”¹⁶ In the practice of politics, appeals to and from a group or category like the “Jewish community” have a heft that

¹¹ Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Groups,” *European Journal of Sociology* 43, No. 2 (2002): 164

¹² Conversation 14, Pt. A, Tape 880, 15 Mar. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

¹³ Conversation 14, Pt. A, Tape 880, 15 Mar. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

¹⁴ News Release, 02 Oct. 1972, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 25, Folder 2, Center for Jewish History

¹⁵ News Release, 14 Sep. 1973, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 25, Folder 3, Center for Jewish History

¹⁶ Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Groups:” 166

individuated arguments do not. For leaders like Richard Nixon and the NCSJ, then, the putative “Jewish community” functioned as a rhetorical device, not a declaration of fact.

“We must, of course, take... participants’ understandings seriously,” Brubaker continues, “But we should not uncritically adopt [their] categories of ethno-political practice as our categories of social analysis.”¹⁷ Yet, the “Jewish community” enjoys pride of place in the historiography of the Soviet Jewry Movement. For scholars like Pauline Peretz, the “Jewish community” serves as an analytical convenience, useful for drawing conclusions: “Beginning in 1974... the United States expressed its resolve to aid Soviet Jewry by adopting the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. At the forefront of this major change in foreign policy was the Jewish community,” e.g.¹⁸ For Beckerman, other journalists like J. J. Goldberg, and veterans of the campaign itself, the “Jewish community” becomes a triumphal claim: “The Jewish community saw that it could change laws, and in so doing change history,” e.g.¹⁹ Neither usage of this category addresses the assumptions undergirding it, taking for granted the supposed facticity of the “Jewish community.”

When evaluating the fault lines within the Soviet Jewry Movement, the historiography also “uncritically” accepts participants’ claims. Noting that “the disputatiousness of Jewish communal life is legendary,” scholar Henry L. Feingold explains, “Eventually, two umbrella organizations developed to undertake the challenging work of bringing the case for Soviet Jewry to Jewish and national attention:” the NCSJ and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry (UCSJ).²⁰ The NCSJ, comprising “most of American Jewry’s major defense and fraternal organizations,” represented the “establishment,” while the UCSJ, being “based on voluntary grassroots activism,” naturally

¹⁷ Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Groups:” 166

¹⁸ Peretz, *Let My People Go*: 331; See also Henry Feingold, “*Silent No More*:” *Saving the Jews of Russia: The American Jewish Effort, 1967-1989* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007) or William W. Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979)

¹⁹ J. J. Goldberg, *Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1996): 174

²⁰ Henry Feingold, *Jewish Power in America: Myth and Reality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008): 55-56

became known as the “grassroots.”²¹ Members of both organizations downplayed the differences that separated them. For example, one high-ranking NCSJ staffer dismissed the fact of “intra-communal” division as a “conflict about tactics,” while another, when asked if the organizational split negatively affected the Soviet Jewry Movement, answered, “I don’t think it was a negative. It got more people involved. How could it be a negative?”²² One leading grassroots activist also characterized this schism as simply a matter of tactics, asserting, “There certainly was an element of good cop / bad cop in the behavior of the establishment and the activists.”²³ It is almost as if these participants are trying decades later to preserve the fiction of the “Jewish community.”

In general, scholars of the Soviet Jewry Movement put a positive spin on the campaign’s fault lines — that is, if they acknowledge its “disputatiousness” in the first place. William Orbach, a religious studies scholar, offers that “this conflict should not be overemphasized not [sic] should it be viewed as detrimental. The American Jewish community needs both groups...”²⁴ It should not be underemphasized, either. Meanwhile, Michael Davis argues, “[While] it may seem that the two factions were working against each other... the multiplicity of strategies that they were able to employ as a whole... enabled their ultimate success.”²⁵ Instead of valorizing “disputatiousness” in this way, I second international relations scholar Stephen Hopgood’s incisive question: “When does diversity [within the “Jewish community”] pass from difference into fragmentation?”²⁶

²¹ Feingold, *Jewish Power in America*: 56

²² Jerry Goodman, “Interview with Charlotte Jacobson,” Soviet Jewry Movement Oral History Collection, I-548, CB, Folder 5, Center for Jewish History

²³ Walter Ruby, “The Role of Nonestablishment Groups” in Friedman and Chernin, Eds., *A Second Exodus*: 205

²⁴ William W. Orbach, “Conflicts and Developments within the Soviet Jewry Movement,” *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9, No. B-3 (1985): 395

²⁵ Michael A. P. Davis, “The Fault Lines of Freedom: The Division and Development of the Soviet Jewry Movement in the United States,” *Columbia University Journal of Politics and Society* 26, No. 2 (2016): 52; Cf. Stuart Altshuler, *From Exodus to Freedom: A History of the Soviet Jewry Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)

²⁶ Steven Hopgood in Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse, Eds., “The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews,” *H-Diplo Roundtable Review* 18, No. 21 (2017): 5

Ignoring Hopgood's question risks taking the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to be a "success" of a concerted American Jewish lobbying effort. Many scholars fall into this trap.²⁷ Many do not;²⁸ they fully appreciate, as his biographer does, that Henry Jackson "led the Jewish community on Jackson-Vanik; the Jewish community did not lead him."²⁹ However, these otherwise clear-sighted assessments remain rooted in the groupist paradigm of "community" and in so doing fail to explain why the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was not an American Jewish lobbying "success." I submit that the Soviet Jewry Movement's divisions account for the supporting role American Jews played in the amendment saga.³⁰ My primary aim, though, is not to explain that American Jews played second fiddle to Henry Jackson; rather, I am interested in understanding how the factionalization of American Jews constrained their ability or willingness to wield power for a Jewish cause.

Thus, I develop a taxonomy of American Jewish communities to demarcate the campaign's internal battle lines. First, the Soviet Jewry Movement drew in the Jewish establishment, which can be subdivided into a self-styled "generation of titans" operating in the bygone *shtadlan* mold and a "generation of managers" professionally engaged in representing the "Jewish community."³¹ Second, the campaign implicated the grassroots, which, in the tradition of Jewish nationalism, politicked on the streets while the establishment canvassed the halls of Congress. Third, the fight for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment involved American Jews working in the U.S. government; the strictures of their employment put pressure on them to place American interests over Jewish ones. Together, these factions tell a revealing story about the interplay of Jewish identity and power.

²⁷ E.g., Mohammed E. Ahrari, Ed., *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987); Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston: UPNE, 1992)

²⁸ E.g., Feingold, *Jewish Power in America*; Paula Stern, *Water's Edge: Domestic Politics and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979).

²⁹ Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011): 268

³⁰ Scholars who study interest group influence in U.S. foreign policymaking argue that "organizational unity" is the *sine qua non* of a successful lobby. [Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000): 110]

³¹ Peretz, *Let My People Go*: 20

Overview

Starting with relevant social scientific theory, I first turn to the field of diaspora studies, bringing Brubaker's critique of groupism to bear on the specific case of the "Jewish community" in America. Moving beyond this paradigm, I then introduce Yossi Shain's typology of diaspora actors, Ezra Mendelsohn's typology of modern Jewish political identities, Gabriel Sheffer's scheme of diasporic loyalties, and David Biale's reflections on Jewish power in America, mixing these heuristics together to strengthen my taxonomy.

Next, I briefly review the Soviet Jewry Movement and the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, situating the former in the sweep of twentieth-century American Jewish history and the latter in the context of U.S. politics during the Cold War.

Chapter 1 of this thesis examines the establishment faction of the Soviet Jewry Movement. Balancing fellow-feeling for Soviet Jews with a concern for the social position of Jews in the U.S. and the security of the state of Israel, this faction's leaders made for reluctant, if powerful, partisans of Jackson's amendment.

Chapter 2 concerns the Soviet Jewry Movement's grassroots. The activists who comprised this faction felt "secure enough in their Jewishness and in their Americanism" to openly agitate for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment qua Jews in a historic break with the establishment's preferred means of pursuing Jewish interests: "quiet diplomacy."³²

Chapter 3 analyzes Jews in the U.S. government. Under professional pains to act according to the credo "Americans first, Jews second" (as befitted assimilated American Jews), these officials perceived the Jackson-Vanik Amendment as a challenge to their political loyalties and responded accordingly.

³² Stephen D. Isaacs, "So Who Has the Power? How Hard Do You Push in Foreign Policy?" *Present Tense* 1, No. 4 (1974): 25

Theory

There are two primary scholarly approaches to studying a people in dispersion, living between host society and homeland, in the social sciences. Following Maria Koinova, I label one approach “positivist” and the other “constructivist.”³³ Positivists tend to conceptualize diaspora in “substantialist terms as a bounded entity” whereas constructivists take this category as “an idiom, a stance, a claim.”³⁴

The positivist school has long dominated scholarship on Jews in America (and elsewhere). Thanks to their exilic history, Robin Cohen notes, Jews have traditionally been considered the paradigmatic diaspora, such that “the classical use of the term, usually capitalized as Diaspora and used only in the singular, was mainly confined to the study of the Jewish experience.”³⁵ For much of that history, Jews comprised corporate groups, which were legally and even physically set apart from their host societies. They were treated by Jewish and non-Jewish authorities as a body politic, not a collection of individuals. Appropriately enough, scholars treated them much the same way. The advent of contemporary diaspora studies, starting with William Safran’s foundational article in the inaugural issue of the journal *Diaspora*, codified this standard of treatment. Safran defined diasporas as “expatriate minority communities” sharing six characteristics: a historical experience of dispersion, a set of memories and myths about the homeland, a feeling of distance and unease vis-à-vis the host society, a latent desire to return home, a political commitment to the homeland, and a sense of solidarity stemming from that commitment.³⁶ For Safran, diasporas are genera, capable of being scientifically identified on the basis of their positive (read: real-life) features.

³³ Maria Koinova, “Diasporas and International Politics: Utilizing the Universalistic Creed of Liberalism for Particularistic and Nationalist Purposes” in Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, Eds., *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010): 150

³⁴ Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, No. 1 (2005): 12

³⁵ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, 2nd Ed. (London: Routledge, 2008): 1

³⁶ William Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return,” *Diaspora* 1, No. 1 (1991): 83-84

Gabriel Sheffer, who pioneered the study of diaspora politics, takes this mode of thinking to its logical conclusion, asserting that “diasporas are bona fide actual entities... [and not] invented or imagined communities.”³⁷

In the modern, post-emancipation era, this approach is increasingly ill-fitting with respect to Jews. For one thing, nationalizing states have sought to assimilate Jews, stripping them of their corporate status and thereby facilitating individualization. As Safran himself observes in the case of revolutionary France: “Sometimes the interest of internal unity requires that minority group relations with a (potential or actual) homeland be disrupted — in effect, that the diaspora character of a minority be ended.”³⁸ Or, as one delegate before the National Assembly put it, “The Jews should be refused everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals.”³⁹ For another, Jews themselves have often sought, when conditions permit, to assimilate into their host countries. The Jewish experience in America exemplifies this tendency *par excellence*. David Biale notes that “Jews were among the most fervent advocates” of “the [prevailing] ‘melting pot’ theory of American society, according to which all immigrants would surrender their identities in favor of a common American identity.”⁴⁰ Consequently, Ezra Mendelsohn asks, “Would America, a paradise for Jews as individuals, become the graveyard of Judaism and the Jewish collective?”⁴¹ Arguably, America would. By the middle of the twentieth century, Arthur Goren writes, “Precisely because Jews were fulfilling, at last, their aspiration to integrate into the society at large, identifying with the group and maintaining it were becoming increasingly matters of personal choice.”⁴² Of course, as Biale is careful to point out, the “melting pot” theory had fallen “out of vogue” by this time, and

³⁷ Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 245

³⁸ Safran, “Diasporas in Modern Societies:” 92

³⁹ David N. Myers, *Jewish History: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 74

⁴⁰ David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986): 194

⁴¹ Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 78

⁴² Arthur A. Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999): 294

so the “integration of Jews in America” no longer required “assimilation or the renunciation of Jewish identity.”⁴³ Thus Jews could, as a matter of personal choice, decide — through institutions like fraternal organizations, philanthropies, and synagogues — to opt into or out of the diaspora. Sheffer observes, “Decisions to join such entities and act on their behalf, perhaps leading to serious political consequences, are voluntary decisions on the part of individuals and small groups.”⁴⁴ That diasporic memberships are, by Sheffer’s admission, conditioned on “voluntary decisions” implies that they are not a category of “essentialized belonging,” i.e., that diasporas themselves might be “imagined communities.”⁴⁵

Those American Jews who opted into the diaspora claimed to speak in the name of the “Jewish community.” They are what Khachig Tölölyan calls the “diasporan fraction... active in political and cultural representation” — the equivalent of a nation’s “ethnic entrepreneurs.”⁴⁶ Scholars steeped in the positivist tradition tend to take this fraction’s claims at face value. But, as Brubaker points out, doing so “occludes the difference between the actively diasporan fraction and the majority who do not adopt a diasporic stance and are not committed to the diasporic project.”⁴⁷ In Feingold’s estimation, a majority of American Jews “remained... passive to the fate of their Soviet brethren,” only the “diasporan fraction” lobbied for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.⁴⁸ What is more, for all their talk of “community,” their struggle on behalf of Soviet Jews divided them. Brubaker warns, “We should not, as analysts, prejudge the outcome of such struggles by imposing groupness through definitional fiat.”⁴⁹ Scholars should not place the “Jewish community” at the

⁴³ Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*: 182, 194

⁴⁴ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*: 199

⁴⁵ Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora:” 12

⁴⁶ Khachig Tölölyan, “Rethinking *Diaspora(s)*: Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment.” *Diaspora* 5, No. 1 (1996): 18

⁴⁷ Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora:” 12-13

⁴⁸ Henry Feingold, “*Silent No More*:” 297

⁴⁹ Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora:” 13

center of the story of the Soviet Jewry Movement, then. He continues, “We should seek, rather, to bring the struggles themselves into focus, without presupposing that they... eventuate in bounded groups.”⁵⁰ This is my intervention. In applying it, I find that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga eventuated in factionalization.

To make sense of the ensuing factions, I turn to Yossi Shain, who disaggregates diasporas using an ideal-typical typology consisting of “core” members (namely, the “diasporan fraction”), “rear guard” members (to wit, “past diaspora activists who have drifted away”), and so-called “silent” members “whom diaspora elites, host governments, or home governments consider as potential recruits for diasporic politics.”⁵¹ Shain clarifies that “core and rear guard members are more accessible to empirical scrutiny, [while] members of the third group are mostly part of an ‘imagined community’... existing only in the mind of diasporic political activists, as well as home or host governments.”⁵² In this case study, the establishment and grassroots factions comprise the “core” membership of the Soviet Jewry Movement; Jews in the U.S. government can be regarded as “rear guard” members of the diaspora, who have “drifted away” from parochial Jewish politics on the assimilatory current running through the halls of power in America.

These categories of analysis correspond to certain intervals along the spectrum of modern Jewish political identity practices, ranging from assimilationism to integrationism to nationalism, outlined by Ezra Mendelsohn. “Assimilation,” Mendelsohn writes, “means to disappear [as a Jew] altogether and to achieve a new identity in place of the old one.”⁵³ Jews in the U.S. government during the saga of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment confronted an expectation of assimilation in their line of work — hence their status as “rear guard” members of the diaspora. “Integration,”

⁵⁰ Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora:” 13

⁵¹ Yossi Shain, “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* 109, No. 5 (1994): 816

⁵² Shain, “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy:” 816

⁵³ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*: 16

meanwhile, means acculturating or integrating “into the majority society without being entirely swallowed up by it.”⁵⁴ The Soviet Jewry Movement’s establishment operated in a long tradition of American Jewish integrationism. Establishment figures were heirs to the legacy of “German” or “uptown” Jews like Louis Marshall of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), who proclaimed, “The American Jew is an integral part of the American people,” and Stephen S. Wise, who, despite founding the American Jewish Congress (AJCong), once declared “I do not believe in hyphenated Americanism.”⁵⁵ They walked a proverbial tightrope as they balanced the sometimes-competing halves of their Jewish-American identities during the saga of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. They often clashed with more nationalistic Jews who, “after decades of emphasizing the American half of their Jewish-American identity, in the mid-1960s began... exploring their other half.”⁵⁶ The nationalists had a harder, more performative Jewish identity. Mendelsohn observes that they — in this case study, the grassroots — favored “open, strident, ‘proud,’ and fearless political behavior. They dismayed more cautious [read: integrationist] Jewish politicians with their demands for the convening of congresses...”⁵⁷ He adds, “They certainly regarded themselves as loyal citizens... but they had no compelling reason... to boast of their patriotism.”⁵⁸

The notion of “loyalty,” to which Sheffer devotes considerable attention, helps clarify the identity practices articulated by Mendelsohn. Assimilation, Sheffer writes, entails “total loyalty” to “host societies and government.”⁵⁹ Integration, on the other hand, occasions “dual loyalties,”

⁵⁴ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*: 16

⁵⁵ Robert S. Rifkind, “Confronting Antisemitism in America: Louis Marshall and Henry Ford,” *American Jewish History* 94, No. 1 (2008): 78; James Loeffler, “Nationalism without a Nation?: On the Invisibility of American Jewish Politics,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 105, No. 3 (2015): 380

⁵⁶ Michael N. Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016): 155-156

⁵⁷ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*: 22

⁵⁸ Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*: 19

⁵⁹ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*: 232

wherein “diasporans feel they owe allegiance to both the host country and homeland.”⁶⁰ Sheffer makes special mention of the fact that “core” members of diasporas “may face disparagement, false accusations, discrimination, and persecution” in their host countries as a consequence of their conflicted allegiances.⁶¹ Diaspora nationalism, Sheffer says, trades on “divided loyalties... according to which members of diasporas demonstrate loyalty to their host countries in the domestic sphere and loyalty to their homelands in regard to homeland politics and trans-state politics.”⁶² This concept requires some fine-tuning in the case of the grassroots, which, being non-Zionist, took its cues not from Israel (the ostensible homeland) but from Soviet Jews.

Jewish identity practices and patterns of loyalty informed how Jews framed and pursued parochial interests within the American political opportunity structure. Both the establishment and Jews in the U.S. government (to the limited extent that they acted qua Jews) adopted — or so Biale argues — a “political ideology” designed to elide the problem of dual loyalties via the assertion “that Jewish values are identical to American political values.”⁶³ Thus members of both factions argued that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment either helped or harmed American and Jewish interests in the same stroke. By comparison, the grassroots adhered to a “cultural ideology” which, Biale asserts, “sees Jews as one ethnic group in a pluralistic society.”⁶⁴ In line with this vision, grassroots activists — while paying lip service to “American political values” — pushed for the amendment in a demonstrative fashion befitting an interest group whose origins can be traced to the mid-1960s. Finally, Biale notes, no matter their identity practices or loyalties, Jews’ acceptance in America “has enhanced their power as individuals... at the expense of communal cohesiveness.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*: 226

⁶¹ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*: 226

⁶² Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*: 226

⁶³ Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*: 196

⁶⁴ Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*: 195

⁶⁵ Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*: 178

Context

To understand the divisions which scored the Soviet Jewry Movement, it is instructive to first survey the changing social position of Jews in twentieth century America.⁶⁶ In the first half of the twentieth century, up to the Second World War, Jews sought to assimilate en masse into the American “melting pot” (a term popularized by Israel Zangwill, a Jewish novelist, in a 1908 play of the same name starring a Jewish immigrant in New York City). Whether they immigrated a generation earlier from Germany or from Eastern Europe during the *belle époque*, Jews — helped along by prevailing anti-Semitism — saw security and socio-economic advantage in trading their Jewishness for “100 percent Americanism” (or, for a small subset, leftism). The postwar American experience inaugurated a sea change in the status of Jews. In suburbia, they became middle-class “white folks;” there, absent overt anti-Semitism, they had free reign to practice Judaism as one of America’s “great religions” or affect Jewishness as “symbolic ethnicity.”⁶⁷ Using the embryonic state of Israel as a receptacle for any particularistic impulses, Jews found that they could integrate into the U.S. without assimilating. As integration stripped away the more particularistic elements of their Jewishness, Beckerman observes that, by the 1960s, “something had fallen out of the center of Jewish identity” in America.⁶⁸ As if in response, that decade’s upheaval gave rise to “ethnic affiliation,” which “was in part initiated and nurtured by young leftists Jews who... reinvented their Jewish identities in the context of ongoing cross-racial activism.”⁶⁹ As the famous black-Jewish alliance broke down, the 1967 Six Day War turned this radical generation inward.

⁶⁶ N.B. This historical sketch is necessarily abridged and schematic.

⁶⁷ See Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Herbert J. Gans, “Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, No. 1 (1979): 1-20; Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955)

⁶⁸ Beckerman, *When They Come For Us, They’ll Be Gone*: 45

⁶⁹ Michael Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002): 155

They consequently turned to the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union. There, starting in the high Stalinist period (with the assassination of Solomon Mikhoels in 1948 and the 1952-1953 Doctors' Plot), "clearly and militantly anti-Semitic government policies" began to menace Jews.⁷⁰ In a 1963 *Foreign Affairs* article that kick-started the American campaign, Moshe Decter wrote, "Soviet policy places the Jews in an inextricable vise. They are allowed neither to assimilate, nor live a full Jewish life... Soviet policy as a whole, then, amounts to spiritual strangulation..."⁷¹ Faced with such a situation, Jews in the U.S.S.R. sought to leave. Almost to a person, the Kremlin refused to let them, reasoning that "Jews declaring that they wanted out of the socialist paradise seemed no less subversive than dissidents crying out for reforms."⁷² These so-called "refuseniks" subsequently faced harassment, imprisonment, and worse. Thanks primarily to the efforts of the Israeli government to publicize this situation, American Jews grew alert to the trials of their kin. "In early April 1964, 24 [Jewish] organizations established the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry (AJCSJ), an 'ongoing ad hoc' umbrella agency to coordinate action on the cause."⁷³ The AJCSJ would morph into the NCSJ circa 1971. Grassroots groups like the Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism (CCSA) began to crop up spontaneously; they "joined together in 1970 to create the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews."⁷⁴ "Conflict... emerged almost immediately," sociologist Shaul Kelner writes, "with the 'establishment' AJCSJ... advocating quieter work through official [government] channels" and the grassroots "preferring public protest."⁷⁵ Thus, the Soviet Jewry Movement was born.

⁷⁰ Zvi Gitelman, "Soviet Jews: Creating a Cause and a Movement" in Friedman and Chernin, Eds., *A Second Exodus*: 87

⁷¹ Decter, "The Status of the Jews in the Soviet Union," *Foreign Affairs* 41, No. 2: 430

⁷² Beckerman, *When They Come For Us, We'll Be Gone*: 113

⁷³ Shaul Kelner, "Ritualized Protest and Redemptive Politics: Cultural Consequences of the American Mobilization to Free Soviet Jewry," *Jewish Social Studies* 14, No. 3 (2008): 5

⁷⁴ Kelner, "Ritualized Protest and Redemptive Politics:" 5

⁷⁵ Kelner, "Ritualized Protest and Redemptive Politics:" 5-6

The sum total of the campaign's agitation in the late 1960s and early 1970s achieved little in the way of ameliorating the situation of Soviet Jews. The campaign did wake up Washington to the cause. It found a particularly receptive audience in Henry Jackson and Richard Perle, a key member of his senatorial staff who happened to be Jewish. Jackson, the child of Norwegian immigrants, made for an unlikely ally. "Where did he come from? He probably had never seen a Jew in his life," one NCSJ leader reminisced.⁷⁶ In fact, he had, having visited Buchenwald just a few days after its liberation. The experience left an indelible impression on him and, in conjunction with his deep-seeded hatred of communism, predisposed him to look kindly upon the cause of Soviet Jews. Jackson debuted his amendment in the Senate circa September 1971, without any prompting from American Jews. He enlisted Ohio Congressman Charles A. Vanik, a like-minded Cold Warrior, to introduce a complementary bill (drafted by Jewish aide Mark Talisman) in the House of Representatives. Becoming law in January 1975 after years of acrimonious debate within and outside Congress, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment formally withheld "most favored nation" trading status from "nonmarket economy" countries that denied or restricted their citizens' right of emigration.⁷⁷ The law thereby sought (mostly unsuccessfully) to entice the U.S.S.R. to let Soviet Jews out. ("Though the amendment was written in general terms, it was specifically crafted with Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union in mind," Geoffrey Levin stresses.⁷⁸) The debate over the amendment proved so ferocious because it imperiled America's foreign policy of détente, which rested in large part on expanded commercial ties between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor turned Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (also a Jew) fought it every step of the way.

⁷⁶ Jerry Goodman, "Interview with Charlotte Jacobson"

⁷⁷ 19 U.S.C. 2101 — Public Law 93-618, Trade Act of 1974, Title IV, Sec. 402

⁷⁸ Geoffrey P. Levin, "Before Soviet Jewry's Happy Ending: The Cold War and America's Long Debate Over Jackson-Vanik, 1976-1989," *Shofar* 33, No. 3 (2015): 65

Chapter 1

The Establishment

On September 26, 1972, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ) convened an “emergency session” in Washington, D.C.¹ The 120 leaders in attendance (none of whom had been elected in any meaningful sense of the word) gathered to formulate a response to an August 1972 Kremlin decree which levied a punitive exit tax on would-be (Jewish) emigrants.² Beckerman writes, “Something more than the usual statement of concern... was in order. Most of the participants had spent the past few weeks staving off the appalled anger of their communities.”³ Despite the pressure, the group had no concrete plan of action under consideration. As it happened, such a plan would present itself in the figure of Senator Henry Jackson. Having arranged through his aide Richard Perle to appear before the NCSJ, the senator took the stage at the Mayflower Hotel and “delivered a thumping twenty-minute speech” in which he introduced his eponymous amendment.⁴ According to the New York Times, Jackson thundered, “The time has come to place our highest human rights values ahead of the trade dollar... You know what you can do? I’ll give you some marching orders. Get behind my amendment. And let’s stand firm!”⁵ Evidently, Jackson’s plea struck a chord;⁶ “after a debate that lasted until three in the morning, the [NCSJ] finally decided unanimously to support the principle of the amendment.”⁷ This was no mean feat for Jackson. One member of his staff recalls that the establishment, fearing the emigration question

¹ William W. Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979): 133

² Albright, “The Pact of Two Henrys,” Feingold, “*Silent No More*,” 117

³ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*: 280

⁴ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 32

⁵ Albright, “The Pact of Two Henrys”

⁶ Stern reports, “His speech brought the applauding audience to their [sic] feet. He departed leaving behind Perle and [Morris Amitay, an aide to the like-minded Senator Abraham Ribicoff] to argue his case to the assemblage... Amitay reminded the audience of the consequences of official Jewish silence during the Holocaust...” (Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 32)

⁷ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*: 280-281

could complicate its work on behalf of America's "Jewish community" and Israel, had developed "cold feet" on the Soviet Jewry issue.⁸ Lighting a fire under these self-appointed leaders required all of Jackson's powers of persuasion. In succeeding, he set the NCSJ up for a fight with President Richard Nixon, who opposed the amendment. As Paula Stern observes, "Clearly it was a reversal of the popular image of the Jewish lobby twisting a senator's arm."⁹ Rather, a diehard Cold Warrior had recruited a minority group to serve his all-American cause. This "popular image" would be reversed time and again over the course of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga.

The very next day, Nixon met with a separate set of 32 Jewish leaders (who had "publicly identified themselves as his supporters for re-election") in New York City.¹⁰ His aim was to shore up the "Jewish vote" in the upcoming presidential election and thwart Jackson's attempt to pit this constituency against détente.¹¹ He assured his supporters "that the issue of Jewish emigration was being handled through 'quiet diplomacy' [with the Kremlin]."¹² Max Fisher, a Nixon confidant and the head of the Council of Jewish Federations, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), "The president made it clear he's not going to use this Soviet Jewry issue for political capital, and I think this is quite correct."¹³ The JTA's report continued, "Calling Nixon 'very forthright' on the matter, Fisher said he was 'convinced' the president was trying to 'help' Soviet Jews."¹⁴ If Fisher's remarks are any indication, Nixon's gambit appeared to have paid off. The president seemed to

⁸ Feingold, "Silent No More:" 337-338

⁹ Stern, *Water's Edge*: 33

¹⁰ "Jewish Leaders, Meeting with Nixon, Express Confidence in President's Handling of Soviet Jewish Emigration," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin* 39, No. 188 (1972): 1

¹¹ Consider that on August 17, 1972, White House Counsel Charles Colson wrote to Nixon advisor Alexander Haig, "All of our Jewish experts say that we are about to lose all of the important ground that we have gained with the Jewish vote over the present brouhaha with the Soviets. Is there no end to what has to be done to keep their vote solid?" [*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XV, Soviet Union, June 1972 - August 1974*, Eds. Douglas E. Selva and Melissa Jane Taylor (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2011): Document 27]

¹² "Jews Ask Nixon to Bar Credits To Soviet Until Exit Taxes End," *New York Times* 28 Sept. 1972

¹³ "Jewish Leaders, Meeting with Nixon, Express Confidence in President's Handling of Soviet Jewish Emigration"

¹⁴ "Jewish Leaders, Meeting with Nixon, Express Confidence in President's Handling of Soviet Jewish Emigration"

score another victory when Senator Jacob K. Javits, a New York Republican and perhaps the most powerful elected Jew in America, swore off the amendment, deeming it “unnecessarily irritating” to the White House.¹⁵ “For three days,” Javits “was able to hold off twenty-eight senators from signing the Jackson amendment” by pushing for milder legislation rebuking the U.S.S.R.¹⁶ He changed his tune upon realizing Nixon would not back this compromise but did the president the favor of staying quiet. “As a Jew,” Javits “was less susceptible to accusations of [anti-Semitism] and could delay taking a public posture while he negotiated wording of the amendment.”¹⁷ Plainly, Javits — along with Fisher and other established Jewish leaders — continued to have “cold feet,” fearing the consequences of politicizing the cause of Soviet Jews.

Nevertheless, support for Jackson’s initiative continued to grow in Washington. Senators lined up in droves to sign onto the bill. It would be a mistake, though, to attribute this development to the power or influence of American Jews. At this point in the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga, the Soviet Jewry Movement was still spooling up its lobbying campaign. Instead, a quirk in timing made signing onto the bill a political no-brainer. Congress was set to adjourn in October 1972, ahead of the aforementioned election, which meant that the amendment would not be considered until the next legislative session (in January 1973). Knowing this, Nixon permitted his party to support it. He did not want to create controversy around Jackson’s initiative, for fear of turning the emigration question into an electoral issue. The president reasoned that he could confront the amendment head-on after he had secured reelection. Thus, as one anonymous senator explained,

¹⁵ William D. Korey, “The Struggle Over Jackson-Mills-Vanik,” *American Jewish Year Book* 75, No. 1 (1974): 204. According to a draft of a statement in Javits’ archives, the Jewish senator also believed Jackson’s initiative was not “in the best interests of the United States and the American Jewish community.” Javits worried that the amendment could “set the future interests of farm-exporting states [which stood to gain from expanded U.S.-U.S.S.R. trade] against the interests of the Soviet Jews or the American Jewish community.” (Untitled Draft Statement, Senator Jacob K. Javits Papers, Collection 285, Series 4, Subseries 1, Box 80, Special Collections and University Archives, Stony Brook University Libraries)

¹⁶ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 36

¹⁷ Arlene Lazarowitz, “Senator Jacob K. Javits and Soviet Jewish Emigration,” *Shofar* 21, No. 4 (2003): 26

“Why did so many people sign the amendment? Because there’s no political advantage in not signing. If you do sign, you don’t offend anyone. If you don’t sign, you might offend some Jews in your state.”¹⁸ Once again, the “popular image” of Jewish control over the legislative process was subverted as senators — and, temporarily, the president — preemptively catered to anticipated Jewish interests.¹⁹ By the time Jackson introduced his amendment on October 4, 1972, some 72 senators had affixed their signatures to it.²⁰ More would add their names in the months to come. Morris Amitay, an aide to Jackson ally Senator Abraham Ribicoff, speculated, “So we would’ve gotten 71 [senators] on the Jackson amendment instead of 76” without Jewish assistance.²¹ When one such senator announced he would back Jackson’s initiative, he claimed to be “join[ing] with the American Jewish community...”²² In fact, he and the Senate were leading American Jews.

After all, American Jews — particularly, the establishment — were leery of getting on the Nixon administration’s bad side, despite their desire to aid Soviet Jews. This much can be seen in an October 4, 1972 NCSJ press release tepidly “welcoming” Jackson’s initiative.²³ The statement continued: “We applaud the diplomatic efforts made by President Nixon... and we believe that these efforts, in concert with this legislative action... should cause the Soviet Union to re-think its policy toward its Jewish citizens.”²⁴ This press release exemplifies the establishment’s conduct throughout the amendment saga. It was the conduct of the pro-amendment coalition’s “weak link,”

¹⁸ David E. Rosenbaum, “Firm Congress Stand on Jews in Soviet Is Traced to Efforts by Those in U.S.,” *New York Times* 6 Apr. 1973

¹⁹ As political scientists David Paul and Rachel Paul note, “ethnic lobbies, organizations, and citizens are not just trying to influence elected leaders: there is ample evidence of elected officials working to mobilize and influence ethnic communities.” [David M. Paul and Rachel Anderson Paul, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009): 22]

²⁰ Amendment No. 1691, S. 2620, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 118, Pt. 25: 33658-33659

²¹ Isaacs, “So Who Has the Power?”: 25-26

²² Sen. Alan Cranston, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 118, Pt. 25: 33666

²³ “News Release,” 4 Oct. 1972, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 25, Folder 2, Center for Jewish History

²⁴ “News Release,” 4 Oct. 1972

of a small but well-connected coterie faced with a tough choice between two powerful political patrons, unable to decide which bridge to burn.²⁵ It was the conduct of a “diasporan fraction” which felt itself to be under a cloud of suspicion, unsure of whether Jackson or Nixon provided the more convincing answer to the venerable question, “Is it good for the Jews?” Writing for *Commentary* circa February 1972, Norman Podhoretz observed, “The question bespoke a mentality no broader than the horizons of the [Jewish] tribe, and it carried an odor of alien worlds — of... the Russia of the Czars — which had long since crumbled to dust.”²⁶ By the standards of the present, he implied, such a “mentality” was old-fashioned; for Jews, the U.S. in the 1970s was a far cry from Russia in the 1870s (or, for that matter, in the 1970s). But Podhoretz and others still smelled anti-Semitism in contemporary America. He therefore mused, “I think they [the various sources of American anti-Semitism] warrant a revival among Jews of that ancient and prematurely laughed-off question, *Is it good for the Jews?*”²⁷ The establishment faction of the Soviet Jewry Movement operated from an identical position of existential insecurity.

The difference between the two wings of America’s Jewish establishment — the old guard, embodied in the figure of Max Fisher, and the new, represented by the NCSJ — lies in the extent to which they accepted their insecurities. Two incidents throw this difference into sharp relief.

First, on March 15, 1973, Nixon summoned Fisher to the White House to talk through the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Nixon began the meeting on a hostile note, greeting Fisher with a question: “What are you going to do for your country now?”²⁸ Implicitly, Nixon cast aspersions on Fisher’s patriotism, raising the accusation of dual loyalties that dogged most politically-active American Jews. Turning the screws even tighter, Nixon also told Fisher, “I know that, if it comes

²⁵ Peretz, *Let My People Go*: 224

²⁶ Norman Podhoretz, “‘Is It Good for the Jews?’,” *Commentary* 53, No. 2 (1972): N.P.

²⁷ Norman Podhoretz, “‘Is It Good for the Jews?’”

²⁸ Conversation 14, Pt. A, Tape 880, 15 Mar. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

to the interests of America... you put America first.”²⁹ (In his biography, Fisher would respond to this charge just as Stephen S. Wise once did: “My fundamental responsibility was as an American. Then as an American Jewish leader. And finally, I had my love for Israel.”³⁰) Nixon then warned Fisher that derailing détente via the Jackson-Vanik Amendment “will hurt the Jewish community in this country.”³¹ Leveraging his presidential claim to represent the American people *in toto*, Nixon promised Fisher that ordinary U.S. citizens would blame American Jews for endangering superpower relations — and treat them accordingly.³² In effect, the president sought to challenge the idea that Jews had found a secure home in America qua Jews. An audio recording of this encounter provides no indication of Fisher’s response to this heavy-handed attempt at persuasion, but the subsequent actions of the self-appointed Jewish leader demonstrate that he took the Nixon’s warning to heart. For Fisher and his coterie of *shtadlanim*, the security of American Jews was too high a price to pay for the relief of Soviet Jews.³³

Second, in January 1976, after the Jackson-Vanik Amendment debate had more or less been settled, the NCSJ butted heads with the militant Jewish Defense League in a confrontation that culminated in the latter occupying the former’s office. Apparently, the NCSJ staff on hand opted not to involve the police — a choice which earned them the opprobrium of then-chairman Richard Maass. In a scathing letter dated January 23, 1976, Maass wrote, “I cannot but conclude that the advice... to leave the JDL in the NCSJ office and ‘negotiate’ was given because you were

²⁹ Conversation 14, Pt. B, Tape 880, 15 Mar. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

³⁰ “Max Fisher, 96, Philanthropist and Adviser to Presidents, Dies,” *New York Times* 4 Mar. 2005

³¹ Conversation 14, Pt. A, Tape 880, 15 Mar. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

³² In an April 19, 1973 conversation with Kissinger, Nixon declared, “I won’t mind one god damn bit to have a little anti-Semitism [in America] if it’s on that [Soviet Jewry] issue.”

(Conversation 114, Tape 38, 19 Apr. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library)

³³ Mendelsohn defines *shtadlanut* as “the practice of dispatching Jewish ‘notables’ [i.e., *shtadlanim*] hat in hand, to negotiate with gentile leaders behind closed doors, in smoke-filled rooms.” (Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*: 22)

afraid of the publicity which would be connected with a police bust of fellow Jews.”³⁴ In needling their concern for the public image of “fellow Jews,” Maass accused his colleagues of being captive to the question, “Is it good for the Jews?” (and to the tribal insecurity that the question bespeaks). “In this situation, as in every other crisis which we have faced during the past four years,” he noted, “the only consideration for the taking of a position or action should have been, ‘What is best for Soviet Jews?’...”³⁵ Maass’ use of a modal verb phrase insinuates that concern for Soviet Jews *ought* to have been the NCSJ’s priority but *was* not. In light of this admission, his subsequent admonition to his colleagues — “Our personal reputations, our own security if you please, are secondary to Soviet Jews” — comes across as aspirational.³⁶ The staff of the NCSJ may well have aspired to take a more assertive stance its struggle on behalf of Soviet Jews, but, as their record during the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga shows, they had to be pushed and prodded into doing so. In the end, the NCSJ, like Fisher, put the security of American Jews first.

Indeed, the establishment’s performance during the rest of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga lays this bare. In January 1973, Representative Charles Vanik introduced the amendment in the House of Representatives, along with 235 cosponsors. According aide Mark Talisman, “The first sixty members were easy to get because they were from large Jewish areas. [...] Sixty [more] would go on as cosponsors because they were anti-Communist,” and the rest had to be cajoled.³⁷ Talisman did all the cajoling; the NCSJ’s Washington representative conceded, “We had nothing to do with cosponsorship” in the House.³⁸ Then, in March, Jackson reintroduced his amendment in the Senate, at which point the Kremlin suddenly began to waive the exit tax which had originally

³⁴ Letter, Richard Maass to Stanley Lowell, Eugene Gold, and Jerry Goodman, 23 Jan. 1976, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 12, Folder 2, Center for Jewish History

³⁵ Letter, Richard Maass to Stanley Lowell, Eugene Gold, and Jerry Goodman, 23 Jan. 1976

³⁶ Letter, Richard Maass to Stanley Lowell, Eugene Gold, and Jerry Goodman, 23 Jan. 1976

³⁷ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 55

³⁸ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 56

precipitated it. Correspondingly, the establishment's enthusiasm began to wane. Nixon smelled blood and, on April 19, 1973, he pressed the attack, calling a meeting with Fisher and several NCSJ officers. The president "first showed community leaders two unsigned communications in which the Kremlin had assured him that the tax would be suspended for an unlimited duration" and then delivered "a watered-down threat:" the Jackson-Vanik Amendment could incite the U.S.S.R. to change "the balance of power" in the Middle East.³⁹ Pauline Peretz contends that the conduct of the "community leaders" in this meeting indicated that they "were not generally won over by the administration's arguments."⁴⁰ Even so, after the meeting concluded "Fisher steered his flock... back to his Washington office to issue a statement 'even-handedly' applauding both the administration and the Congress for their efforts on behalf of Soviet Jews" that "noticeably" failed to mention the amendment.⁴¹ The effect of this omission was electric.

The community these leaders purported to represent erupted in open revolt. The NCSJ's New York affiliate, defying protocol, publicly reaffirmed its support for the amendment. Other constituent groups followed suit. One participant in the April 19 meeting reported receiving "calls from all over the country threatening him if he deserted the Jackson amendment; he believed [Richard] Perle was responsible for initiating these calls."⁴² The crisis came to a head in a stormy April 26 NCSJ plenum and an equally tense gathering of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, a body created "to represent the American Jewish community to

³⁹ Peretz, *Let My People Go*: 220

⁴⁰ Peretz, *Let My People Go*: 220

⁴¹ William Mehlman, "A Case of Bad Faith: Jackson-Vanik-Mills and the Jewish Establishment," *Times of Israel and World Jewish Review* Aug. 1974

⁴² Stern, *Water's Edge*: 78

Quoting Richard Maass, Jordan Hirsch confirms, "An enraged Richard Perle enlisted the UCSJ... who battered the establishment over their sudden vacillation and 'provoked an insurrection' and 'posed a threat' that Maass... could hardly ignore." [Jordan Chandler Hirsch, "The Gateway: The Soviet Jewry Movement, the Right to Leave, and the Rise of Human Rights on the International Stage" (BA Thesis, Columbia University, 2010): 79]

the U.S. government in matters related to Israel.”⁴³ At both fora, it became clear that a majority continued to hold fast to the amendment. Thus, on May 2, 1972, the establishment announced, “We believe the Jackson Amendment and the Mills-Vanik bills have contributed and will contribute to the effort to alleviate the plight of Soviet Jews, and we continue to support this legislation.”⁴⁴ The previous day, Max Fisher, Richard Maass, and Jacob Stein (of the Conference of Presidents) had given Henry Kissinger advance notice of this announcement. Resignedly, Kissinger told them, “Look, you go your way, and I’ll take my road, and we’ll meet in the fall,” when Congress was expected to hold a floor vote on the amendment.⁴⁵ Having alienated the White House, Jackson, and their rank-and-file, the “community leaders” walked away from this experience feeling deeply embittered. One “high-ranking” NCSJ officer complained, “Jackson’s office was no different from the administration in that they were trying to manipulate the Jewish community.”⁴⁶

In June 1973, Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev paid a visit to America. The NCSJ planned to protest his arrival, but Fisher and Stein vigorously opposed the move. “Denouncing Fisher as a ‘tool’ of Nixon and Stein as ‘afraid’...” one NCSJ staffer recalled that the pair pushed “to keep the number of demonstrators down to ten thousand.”⁴⁷ Their push succeeded; “to the activists’ intense frustration, the NCSJ organized a sparsely attended (12,000 persons)” protest in the end.⁴⁸ Frustration mounted when, on June 18, Fisher and Stein attended a state dinner held in Brezhnev’s

⁴³ Loeffler, “Nationalism without a Nation?” 393

These two bodies “operated under the understanding that major policy questions required approval by both.” (Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 80)

⁴⁴ “Jewish Community Supports Nixon’s Initiatives to Aid Soviet Jewry,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin* 40, No. 86 (1973): 3

⁴⁵ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*: 296

⁴⁶ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 78

⁴⁷ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 82

⁴⁸ Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews*: 141

honor — a move that struck many in the Soviet Jewry Movement as “an act of betrayal.”⁴⁹ Singling out Stein for censure, radical grassroots activist Yossi Klein Halevi inveighed, “Stein claims to have shared a few words with Leonid... And so, in one evening, our diaspora diplomat succeeded in setting us back ten years — to the ignoble days of that valiant *shtadlan*, Nahum Goldmann.”⁵⁰ The invocation of Goldmann was meant as a cutting insult. President of the World Jewish Congress and the “elder statesman of the Jewish world,” Goldmann was perhaps the *shtadlan par excellence*, who believed “it was simply bad strategy — and bad manners — to put the Russians on the spot.”⁵¹ In urging that “the struggle for the rights of Jews who remain in the Soviet Union be given equal priority with the struggle of other Jews to emigrate” or openly decrying such “extreme methods” as “picketing,” he personified the “hat in hand” timidity of a bygone generation of blue-blooded Jewish intercessors.⁵²

In July 1973, the Nixon administration, unwilling to wait until the fall, again went on the offensive. On a recent visit to Moscow, Kissinger negotiated the release of dozens of Soviet Jews, an achievement he touted to Fisher, Maass, and Stein in a July 19, 1973 confab. The four floated the possibility of compromise legislation unconditionally giving the U.S.S.R. most favored nation status that would also set up “some kind of monitoring” of the Soviet Jewry issue.⁵³ Seizing the opening, Kissinger expressed “his belief that Jackson could only go along with reformulation if he believed the Jewish community would not attack him for having reneged.”⁵⁴ The Jewish leaders

⁴⁹ Feingold, “*Silent No More*,” 299

⁵⁰ Yossi Klein, “Leaders Betrayed Russian Jews,” *Jewish Post and Opinion* 13 Jul. 1973

⁵¹ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*: 63-64

Goldmann opposed the formation of the AJCSJ in 1964.

⁵² “Fidler Defends Goldmann, Disputes Pincus’ View of Goldmann’s Speech,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin* 39, No. 19 (1972): 3; David Friedman, “Goldmann Raps U.S. Jews for Antagonizing USSR on Jewish Issue,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin* 43, No. 209 (1976): 2-3

⁵³ Undated, Unsigned Memo, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181, Box 30, Folder 2, Center for Jewish History

⁵⁴ Undated, Unsigned Memo

squashed the National Security Advisor's hopes, though, telling him that "the Jewish community would stand firm with the Jackson amendment."⁵⁵ In effect, they conceded they did not represent the "Jewish community." Maass then inadvertently leaked word of Kissinger's negotiations to the New York Times, which wrote up the confab in a way that implied waning Jewish support for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.⁵⁶ Having learned its lesson in April, the establishment scrambled to downplay the story. In a hastily-composed telegram, Stein clarified his continued "support of the Jackson amendment and the Mills-Venek [sic] bill."⁵⁷ Fisher was apparently upset by the affair. In a July 26 letter of apology, Maass sympathized, saying, "We walk a tightrope... and have to balance the considerable pressures which we receive from dedicated activists in the communities with our desire to be... very careful and circumspect in our relationship in Washington."⁵⁸ He then continued, "Our success in walking this tightrope was proven during the time of Brezhnev's visit here but not without considerable cost to us in terms of... support from segments of our constituency."⁵⁹ Here, Maass all but admits that, to him at least, the question "Is it is good for the Jews?" superseded the question "What is best for Soviet Jews?"

Finally, fall arrived. Vanik's version of the amendment was scheduled for a vote in the House circa October 1973. But on October 6, 1973, the Yom Kippur War broke out, presenting the Nixon administration with "an unexpected lever in dealing with Jackson-Vanik-Mills and the Jewish community."⁶⁰ Nixon and Kissinger rushed a familiar cast of "community leaders" to the White House to give them "the unmistakable impression that their continued backing of Jackson

⁵⁵ Undated, Unsigned Memo

⁵⁶ Bernard Gwertzman, "Brezhnev Pledge on Jews Reported," *New York Times* 21 Jul. 1973

⁵⁷ Telegram from Jacob Stein, 21 Jul. 1973, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181, Box 30, Folder 2, Center for Jewish History

⁵⁸ Letter, Richard Maass to Max Fisher, 26 Jul. 1973, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181, Box 30, Folder 2, Center for Jewish History

⁵⁹ Letter, Richard Maass to Max Fisher, 26 Jul. 1973

⁶⁰ Mehlman, "A Case of Bad Faith"

and Vanik might well jeopardize U.S. arms and economic support to Israel in its hour of peril.”⁶¹ Per the administration’s request, the NCSJ subsequently pressed for the delay of the House vote. Jacob Stein explained that “Israel’s safety was American Jewry’s paramount concern, and Jews therefore had to defer” to the administration.⁶² Emboldened, Nixon and Kissinger then leaned on the establishment to drop its support for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment altogether. Dutifully, the “community leaders” made preparations to do so. On November 5, 1973, though, they were stopped in their tracks. At a charged NCSJ plenum that morning, they were taken to task for their policy of “capitulation.”⁶³ In the afternoon, the “community leaders” were whisked into a meeting with Jackson, who reminded them, “The administration is always using you” (as if he was not).⁶⁴ “These mainstream Jews leaders were very nervous,” Perle (who was at the meeting) recalled, adding, “Scoop essentially said to [them], ‘You should be ashamed of yourselves’ [...] I think he more or less won them over again.”⁶⁵ The establishment threw in its lot with Jackson. Fisher and Stein communicated this to the White House, tails between their legs. Maass proclaimed, “The Jewish community cannot be put in the middle again.”⁶⁶

These November 5, 1973 meetings amounted to, in journalist Joseph Albright’s estimation, “the turning point in the long road” to the Jackson-Vanik Amendment’s enactment.⁶⁷ For then on, the establishment stood firmly in Jackson’s corner. The bill passed the House overwhelmingly in

⁶¹ Mehlman, “A Case of Bad Faith”

Of course, the U.S. was always going to resupply Israel for geostrategic reasons, but the establishment had no way to know this for sure.

⁶² Ruby, “The Role of Nonestablishment Groups:” 213

It is worth mentioning at this juncture that a) the establishment was Zionist in orientation, while the grassroots was not and b) the government of Israel actually helped create the NCSJ, though it deliberately took no position on the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

⁶³ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 98

⁶⁴ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*: 299

⁶⁵ Henry M. Jackson Foundation, “Richard Perle: “Development of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment,” YouTube Video, 3:36, Posted on 3 Feb. 2016

⁶⁶ Korey, “The Struggle Over Jackson-Mills-Vanik:” 233

⁶⁷ Albright, “The Pact of Two Henrys”

December 1973. The Nixon administration then tried to stall the measure in the Senate by initiating a months-long three-way negotiation between Kissinger, the Kremlin, and Jackson. The details of this convoluted negotiation are not germane to this thesis; suffice it to say that the establishment backed Jackson at every turn. With this negotiation wrapped up, a slightly moderated version of the amendment easily cleared the Senate floor, whereupon President Gerald Ford, Nixon's successor, signed it into law on January 3, 1975.

To borrow Maass' metaphor, the Soviet Jewry issue forced the establishment to walk a tightrope. Every step forward required "community leaders" to strike a new balance between the questions "Is it good for the Jews?" and "What is best for Soviet Jews?" Jackson's initiative, and the Nixon administration's opposition to it, raised the stakes of this balancing act. Under pressure, the establishment lost its footing. Jackson succeeded in upsetting the balance in his favor, and so the establishment, despite its reservations, fell in with him. Stanley Lowell, a onetime president of the NCSJ, later affirmed, "We did what Jackson wanted 99 percent of the time."⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Peretz, *Let My People Go*: 242

Chapter 2

The Grassroots

In late 1973, when the Nixon administration was pressuring the establishment to choose between supporting the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and supporting Israel, an NCSJ officer phoned June Rogul, the group's Washington representative, to warn her that Jewish "community leaders" were close to caving. "At that moment," Rogul remembers, "I realized I would likely jeopardize my job by sharing what I had just learned. But my commitment to the legislation as the best hope for Soviet Jews to be able to emigrate was paramount."¹ She apprised Richard Perle of the situation, who in turn "phoned one of the leaders of the Union of Councils [for Soviet Jews]."² According to Rogul, "The recipient of that call immediately got word out to UCSJ members... and mobilized action to press for holding firm on the amendment. The [administration's] effort to weaken support for Jackson-Vanik within the Jewish community had failed."³

As the standard-bearer for the Soviet Jewry Movement's grassroots, the UCSJ remained steadfast in its support for the amendment where the establishment sometimes faltered. Billing itself as the "loyal opposition" to the Jewish elite in America, the group resolved, "We shall act independently. [...] We shall avoid guiding our policy or action by the exigencies of either the governments of Israel or the United States."⁴ Deeming the UCSJ's emergence in the early 1970s "one of the major developments in the Jewish community," one observer wrote, "The more ethnic Jews have come to dominate politically. They are dominating the 'establishment'... [using] the charge, at times made explicitly and at times more covertly, that the major Jewish organizations

¹ June Rogul, "Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the Soviet Jewry Movement: Personal Reflections June Rogul," Sept. 2010, *Voices of a Vigil*, Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington: 6

² Rogul, "Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the Soviet Jewry Movement:" 6

³ Rogul, "Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the Soviet Jewry Movement:" 6

⁴ Letter from Louis Rosenblum, 06 Apr. 1970, Records of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, I-141A, Box 1, Folder 1, Center for Jewish History

don't give a damn about Jews.”⁵ Of course, the establishment did in fact “give a damn” — about American, Israeli, and Soviet Jews, in that order. Its relationships with the American and Israeli governments consequently informed its approach to Soviet Jews (and their captors in the Kremlin). The grassroots “refused to accept these limitations and insisted that the various established Jewish organizations were utilizing [them]... as an excuse for inactivity.”⁶ This faction traded on a loud, proud self-understanding of Jewish identity that emphasized the primacy of ethnicity. Certain of its place in the American society, the grassroots abjured the establishment's “realpolitik” in favor of idealism — or, more accurately, particularism. Picking up on the UCSJ's self-description as the “loyal opposition,” William Orbach notes, “As is often the case in politics, the party out of power could remain truer to ideological principles than those in power who had to recognize the pragmatic realities.”⁷ To fully appreciate these “ideological principles,” it is instructive to turn to the grassroots' vanguard: the Jewish Defense League (JDL).

Formed around the charismatic figure of Rabbi Meir Kahane, the marginal but militant JDL was “a distorted mirror image of the Black Panthers” comprising poorer American Jews who felt that the establishment had left them behind in pursuit of civil rights.⁸ The organization claimed to represent undiluted Jewish interests. “Following the bitterly anti-Zionist [read: anti-Semitic] Leningrad Trial in December 1970, during which two Jewish activists were initially condemned to death [by Soviet authorities] for involvement in an alleged plane hijacking,” the JDL launched a campaign of terror against Soviet diplomats in New York City.⁹ In one episode of this campaign, on October 20, 1971, a JDL extremist riddled the U.S.S.R.'s mission to the United Nations with

⁵ Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews*: 140

⁶ Orbach, “Conflicts and Developments within the Soviet Jewry Movement,” 395

⁷ Orbach, “Conflicts and Developments within the Soviet Jewry Movement,” 395

⁸ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone*: 155

⁹ Ruby, “The Role of Nonestablishment Groups,” 207

rifle fire before being apprehended. At the culprit's bail hearing, Kahane accosted prosecuting U.S. Attorney Robert Morse, who happened to be Jewish: "Not only don't you help the Jews, you hurt the Jews. I am ashamed you are a Jew!"¹⁰ Later, a New York Times reporter queried Kahane on this outburst, asking, "Now, this man [Morse] is an American official. What is his responsibility in such a case? Does he have a dual loyalty?"¹¹ Kahane's reply is worth quoting at length:

No, Mr. Morse has an obligation to the U.S. government. Let me try and explain this to you with a bit of a story. During World War I, there was a... very famous rabbi. He was asked by Jewish soldiers who had been drafted into the Russian Army whether they could eat pork, since that was the only thing served. He said, 'Yes, if this is the only food served, then eat it... But don't suck the bones.' My point was that Mr. Morse can come into the court and ask for his \$100,000 bail. You can ask for it — and you can *ask* for it. [...] He was sucking the bones.¹²

By Kahane's logic, Jews can "eat pork," that is, fulfill their obligations as Americans, so long as they do not "suck the bones," or allow those obligations to override their responsibility to their co-ethnics. Though he singled out Morse, the rabbi accused virtually all American Jews, be they assimilated or integrated, of "sucking the bones." The grassroots levied essentially the same accusation whenever it charged the establishment with betraying the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

In mid-1973, Kahane found himself on trial in Israel for attempting to smuggle firearms into the U.S. (He wanted to use the weapons to disrupt Brezhnev's June 1973 visit.) In defense, the JDL leader claimed he was trying to prevent a second Holocaust. On the stand, Kahane railed against those who felt his campaign of terror "might anger the American gentile and jeopardize... the America's Jew's position and ties with the non-Jew."¹³ He continued, "The sin of the Jew of our days is that he assimilates the views and norms of other people. [...] His imitation of the

¹⁰ Morris Kaplan, "Member of J.D.L. Is Freed on Bail," *New York Times* 23 Oct. 1971

¹¹ Walter Goodman, "Rabbi Kahane says: 'I'd Love to See The J.D.L. Fold Up. But—'," *New York Times* 21 Nov. 1971

¹² Goodman, "Rabbi Kahane says: 'I'd Love to See The J.D.L. Fold Up. But—'"

¹³ Untitled "Action Central" Alert, Records of the Union of Councils on Soviet Jews, I-140A, Box 1, Folder 6, Center for Jewish History

gentile... leads him to stand by his brother's blood and allow his own safety to take precedence."¹⁴ Such speechifying made Kahane "the most vivid example" of "the new tribalism" among young American Jews.¹⁵ "Kahane's fiery rhetoric... did not please the American Jewish establishment," Michael Barnett observes with understatement, continuing, "but there was no denying that his 'take-no-shit' Jewish nationalism appealed to a younger generation of [American] Jews who were influenced by the protests against the Vietnam War and their parents' presumed passivity during the Holocaust."¹⁶

It is no coincidence, then, that the UCSJ (compared to the NCSJ) skewed young. It should likewise come as no surprise that Kahane's courtroom tirade was reproduced in one of the group's newsletters. UCSJ founder Louis Rosenblum was no fan of Kahane's ("[Kahane's] method... is thuggish and counterproductive: the JDL's... shootings have turned Soviet officials into victims and the spotlight away from the treatment of Soviet Jews," e.g.¹⁷), but the similarities between their organizations cannot be overlooked. Assertive and action-oriented, both imbibed the martial teachings of revisionist Zionist Ze'ev Jabotinsky, even if themselves were not necessarily Zionist. In 1923, Jabotinsky founded Betar — a Jewish paramilitary outfit — on the concept of *hadar*, a Hebrew word which might be translated as "spirit." Kahane, who consciously emulated Betar, explained, "Hadar is pride. Hadar is self-respect. Hadar is dignity in being a Jew."¹⁸ These values

¹⁴ Untitled "Action Central" Alert

¹⁵ Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes*: 177

Writing in 1974, Stephen Isaacs opined that this "new tribalism" was "the ultimate proof of the Americanization of Jews in this country. [...] After decades of apologizing and deferring, they are expressing themselves openly, enthusiastically, and brashly — as is the true American way." (Isaacs, "So Who Has the Power?" 28)

¹⁶ Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes*: 177

"Never again!" — the cry around which so many in the Soviet Jewry Movement rallied — was first adopted by the JDL.

¹⁷ Louis Rosenblum, Interviewed by Daniel Rosenblum, 1996-1999, "Involvement in the Soviet Jewry Movement: A Personal Account, 1961-1978" *Cleveland and the Freeing of Soviet Jewry*, *Cleveland Jewish History*: 56

¹⁸ Meir Kahane, *The Story of the Jewish Defense League* (Jerusalem: Institute for Publication of the Writings of Rabbi Meir Kahane, 2000): 80

were foremost in the minds of UCSJ activists, too. UCSJ member Stuart Altshuler writes that his advocacy “reawakened American Jewry’s own pride in the indomitable and resolute spirit of an eternal people.”¹⁹

The JDL conceived of itself as a literal army fighting for particular Jewish interests. As their onetime mantra “Two Russians for every Jews” makes plain, they had few qualms about using violence to further those interests.²⁰ The UCSJ, by contrast, eschewed violence, but those who comprised the organization likewise thought of themselves in martial terms. UCSJ founder Louis Rosenblum saw his cohort as foot soldiers. He reminisced, “Our troops were out whenever it looked like the bill [i.e., the Jackson-Vanik Amendment] was threatened by an action of the [Nixon] administration...”²¹ To Alan Dershowitz, who served as counsel to the USCJ, the group’s combativeness was the source of its power. Thanks to “grassroots pressure,” he told to a journalist, “You can come into the [negotiation] room with the support of the Jews — you command some troops.”²² In short, in minds of UCSJ activists, the Soviet Jews were at war, and so were they. As Moshe Decter, an establishment figure who sympathized with their efforts, explains, “They couldn’t confront the Soviet Union, but they could confront... the American Jewish Committee, they could confront all the other Jewish organizations that were doing nothing.”²³

So they did. In 1971, Rosenblum raged, “Is it not strange that the nominal leaders of the richest Jewish community in history have not been able to find resources adequate to fund, on a regular basis, an effort to aid three million of their people in the Soviet Union?”²⁴ In his rage,

¹⁹ Altshuler, *From Exodus to Freedom*: 184

²⁰ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, They’ll Be Gone*: 214

The JDL’s use of violence against Soviet diplomats would soon earn Kahane and his followers lengthy stints in jail. By the start of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga, Kahane was out of the picture, having fled to Israel.

²¹ “Involvement in the Soviet Jewry Movement.” 83

²² Quoted in Altshuler, *From Exodus to Freedom*: 75

²³ Interview with Moshe Decter, Feb. 1990, American Jewish Committee Oral History Collection, Dorot Jewish Division, New York Public Library: 14

²⁴ Louis Rosenblum, Interviewed by Daniel Rosenblum: 43

Rosenblum fundraised for a UCSJ office in Washington, where the grassroots dreamt up the idea of linking superpower trade relations with Jewish emigration from the U.S.S.R.²⁵ They prevailed upon Representative Thomas Rees to introduce a precursor to the Jackson-Vanik Amendment on the House floor, which he did on May 4, 1972.²⁶ The move came as a slap in the face to the NCSJ, which had previously declared it would not bring the Soviet Jewry issue to Capitol Hill.²⁷ At this juncture, Rosenblum recalls, “We were blind-sided by Jerry Goodman [of the NCSJ] who called to tell Rees he opposed the bill, because [the] NCSJ’s policy called for ‘quiet negotiations’ with the Soviets.”²⁸ William Orbach speculates that Goodman’s intervention reflected “NCSJ anger at the UCSJ’s audacity in setting up a Washington office before the NCSJ did.”²⁹ In any event, Rees’ amendment effectively died in July 1972 after Goodman stepped in. Clearly, the establishment had power in Congress that far outclassed whatever weight the grassroots could throw around.

In the ensuing weeks, the Kremlin implemented its notorious exit tax on emigrants, and Senator Jackson began to draft his amendment in response. No special pleading was needed to enlist the UCSJ’s backing for Jackson’s initiative. The grassroots quickly became his most vocal base of support. When Charles A. Vanik introduced complementary legislation before the House, the UCSJ fell in behind it as well. Many grassroots Soviet Jewry activists regarded what would become Jackson-Vanik Amendment as a dream come true, and the UCSJ’s records are replete with calls to action and statements of resolve on the two bills’ behalf. In a March 1973 memo, the group’s lobbyist told the entire UCSJ membership, “We have a great deal to be thankful for and

²⁵ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 10-11

²⁶ Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews*: 130

²⁷ Beckerman writes, “A few months earlier [before Jackson debuted his amendment], Richard Maass had sent a memo to Jerry Goodman... saying that they should avoid upsetting détente. [...] ‘I am mindful that we do not seek to limit expanding trade — especially if President Nixon... favors large scale expansion.’” (Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll be Gone*: 280)

²⁸ Louis Rosenblum, 2007, “Political Action,” *Involvement in the Soviet Jewry Movement*, Cleveland and the Freeing of Soviet Jewry, Cleveland Jewish History

²⁹ Orbach, *The American Movement to Aid Soviet Jews*: 131

much more to be proud of.”³⁰ Writing just after Jackson first debuted his amendment, Rosenblum expressed pleasant surprise that “Jewish organizations, for once, maintained a strong determined front and worked to get out the vote, or at least did not oppose those who tried.”³¹ (He even credited the “radicalization of the NCSJ in their approach to the president and Congress” as an crucial reason for the initiative’s early success.³²) These expressions of thanks and surprise underscore the extent to which the grassroots played a secondary role in seeing the amendment become law. That Jackson never personally lobbied the grassroots is telling. That the UCSJ contented itself with meeting a junior White House official in September 1972, while the establishment was lavished with presidential attention, is likewise revealing.

Ultimately, the NCSJ, comprising dozens of august American Jewish organizations, could stake a stronger claim to speak for the fictive “Jewish community.” By 1975, the NCSJ was billing itself in press releases as “the major coordinating body for Soviet Jewry activities... representing four million Jews in the United States.”³³ Conversely, the UCSJ’s membership around this time numbered some 50,000 people. In 1973, UCSJ Chairman Harold Light challenged NCSJ staffer Richard Cohen to defend the establishment’s undemocratic composition. Cohen countered with the assertion that “the National Conference on Soviet Jewry is the most representative body of Jewish life” with “much broader representation than the Union of Councils.”³⁴ He continued, “The [UCSJ]... as a militant, knowledgeable Soviet Jewry group, is a self-created and self-proclaimed

³⁰ “Washington Action Advisory,” 11 Mar. 1973, Records of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, I-140A, Box 1, Folder 5, Center for Jewish History

³¹ Lou Rosenblum to Action Central, 09 Oct. 1972, Records of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, I-140A, Box 1, Folder 4, Center for Jewish History

³² Lou Rosenblum to Action Central, 09 Oct. 1972

³³ E.g., “Yom Kippur for Soviet Jews,” 09 Sept. 1975, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 26, Folder 1, Center for Jewish History

³⁴ “Audio Tapes — 1973 — Light, Harold — Speaking with Dick Cohen of National Conference on Soviet Jewry,” Records of the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews, I-505, Box 99, Folder 47, Center for Jewish History

group. You represent only yourselves.”³⁵ Light conceded the point. While this does not validate Cohen’s spurious assertion about the representativeness of the NCSJ, it serves to point out that American politicians had an easier time believing that currying favor with the establishment could unlock Jewish votes and campaign contributions. Hence Goodman’s ability to nip Thomas Rees’ amendment in the bud. However, the UCSJ could play a trump card: it “accepted this claim [about the NCSJ’s representativeness] as legitimate, in theoretical terms, but then argued that [the NCSJ] failed to adequately represent the will of their constituency, American Jews.”³⁶

The supporting role assigned to the UCSJ proved to be of critical importance to the passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. “Leaders of groups like NCSJ,” William Ruby reminds, “were answerable not only to a wide and often contentious coterie of Jewish organizations with which they were affiliated... but, in a less obvious but very real way, to the Israelis as well.”³⁷ Because this big tent group often found itself divided on the question “Is it good for the Jews?” the NCSJ often wavered during the debate over the amendment. By contrast, the grassroots’ thick, ethnic self-understanding engendered no such misgivings. Thus the grassroots was well-equipped to goad the establishment. In fact, Jackson’s office often called upon grassroots activists to do just that. Richard Perle and the UCSJ, in particular, appear to have had some kind of understanding. Rosenblum admits, “During my visits to Washington, I often met with Richard in his office or at his home in the evening.”³⁸ Perle simply states, “Scoop depended in getting Jackson-Vanik through rather less on... the moneyed Jewish establishment. [...] He relied rather more on young groups.”³⁹ Paula Stern probably offers the authoritative word on the matter: “[Jackson’s] office got busy

³⁵ “Audio Tapes — 1973 — Light, Harold — Speaking with Dick Cohen of National Conference on Soviet Jewry”

³⁶ Orbach, “Conflicts and Developments within the Soviet Jewry Movement,” 395

³⁷ Ruby, “The Role of Nonestablishment Groups,” 201

³⁸ Louis Rosenblum, Interviewed by Daniel Rosenblum: 86

³⁹ Henry M. Jackson Foundation, “Richard Perle: “Development of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment”

pumping up ‘grassroots’ pressure under the Jewish leaders. The most effective way for Jackson to keep the Jewish leadership [read: the establishment] in line was to remind them when necessary that they, too, had constituents...”⁴⁰ At several points, these “reminders” resolved potentially amendment-defeating crises.

Notably, on April 19, 1972, when Max Fisher maneuvered the establishment into issuing a press release that made no mention of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (raising concerns that American Jews had lost their stomach for the legislation), the UCSJ sprang into action. Rosenblum got on the phone with Kyrill Khenkin, a friend based in Moscow who had extensive contacts among the Soviet Union’s refusenik population. According to a recording of that conversation, Rosenblum told Khenkin:

Let me give you a bit of Jewish history. If you recall in the Middle Ages, there were Jews who were wealthy or influential who had access to the kings and princes. These people were called *shtadlans* [sic]. These people served as an interface between the Jewish community and the ruling powers. Often, they had the interest of the Jewish community at heart, but oft-times, being individuals, they had their own interests at heart. They sought to advance their own position. You understand?⁴¹

The link Rosenblum drew between *shatdlanut* and self-interest (as opposed to Jewish interest) is arguably ahistorical, but the UCSJ founder was speaking of the present, not the past. In comparing the establishment to the *shtadlanim* of yore, Rosenblum sought to raise the familiar charge that “community leaders” in America did not “give a damn about Jews.” He then continued, “I would think a message or communication would be in order.”⁴² Subsequently, on April 23, 1972, “more than one hundred Soviet Jewish activists sent an appeal from the Soviet Union to American Jewish

⁴⁰ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 78

⁴¹ “Audio Tapes — 1973 — Light, Harold— ‘Sakharov and News Conference,’ ‘Perle Spots,’ Richard N. Perle,” Records of the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews, I-505, Box 99, Folder 49, Center for Jewish History

⁴² “Audio Tapes — 1973 — Light, Harold— ‘Sakharov and News Conference,’ ‘Perle Spots,’ Richard N. Perle”

leaders.”⁴³ Rosenblum submits that this “reminder,” in combination with “the angry and indignant cries of ‘betrayal’ from American Jews,” served to stiffen “the resolve of this wavering group of so-called Jewish leaders.”⁴⁴

To the grassroots, “[any] hint of less than 100 percent support of Jackson was taken as a betrayal” — not just of Soviet Jews but also of American Jews, many of whom had internalized the JDL’s admonition, “Never again!”⁴⁵ To the grassroots, Brezhnev was a second Hitler, and the plight of Soviet Jews was tantamount to a second Holocaust. In June 1973, Si Frumkim of the UCSJ’s Los Angeles affiliate alleged that the establishment asked him not to protest a Brezhnev-Nixon summit in California, saying, “They told me it would be bad manners.”⁴⁶ He responded with defiance: “Brezhnev represents a country that has declared war on the Jewish people. [We] will not relax our pressure until free emigration is permitted to all those who wish to leave.”⁴⁷ This invocation of “war” highlights the gravity with which the grassroots treated the Soviet Jewry issue. It also generated alarm within the establishment, which feared the grassroots might try to disrupt Brezhnev’s visit, JDL-style. At the time, AJCong President and NCSJ leader Arthur Hertzberg phoned the UCSJ’s Harold Light to say: “Don’t be disrespectful... Don’t call Nixon a bum... Being a lout is going to be counterproductive... Be very firm, but don’t be JDL.”⁴⁸ Hertzberg’s plea makes plain where the respective priorities of the two factions lay.

⁴³ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 81

Korey observes that the appeal’s “language was strong and designed to remind American Jewry of the Holocaust. The closing paragraph was particularly poignant: ‘Remember, the history of our people has known many terrible mistakes. Do not give in to soothing deceit. Remember, your smallest hesitation may cause irreparable tragic results. Remember, your firmness and steadfastness are our only hope’...” (William Korey, “Jackson-Vanik: ‘A Policy of Principle’” in Friedman and Chernin, Eds., *A Second Exodus*: 103)

⁴⁴ Louis Rosenblum, Interviewed by Daniel Rosenblum: 85

⁴⁵ Stephen S. Rosenfeld, “The Politics of the Jackson Amendment: A Piece of Baggage with Many Different Handles,” *Present Tense* 1, No. 4 (1974): 23

⁴⁶ Klein, “Leaders Betray Russian Jews”

⁴⁷ “American Jews Preparing for Arrival of Brezhnev,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily New Bulletin* 40, No. 111 (1973): 2

⁴⁸ “Audio Tapes — 1973 — Light, Harold — Brezhnev Visit; JDL; Speaking with Arthur Hertzberg, Lipner,” Records of the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews, I-505, Box 99, Folder 48, Center for Jewish History

The establishment, as has been demonstrated, assigned a high priority to the concerns of American Jews. It therefore placed a premium on unity and sought to keep differences of opinion from spilling out beyond the confines of the “Jewish community.” In 1974, for instance, Hertzberg’s AJCong came close to backing away from the Jackson-Vanik Amendment; “only the intercession of [NCSJ President] Stanley Lowell... prevented an open split in Jewish opinion from becoming newsworthy.”⁴⁹ (Recalling the establishment’s trials during the amendment saga, it is no wonder that the NCSJ came to fear the printed word.) Grassroots activists keenly exploited this sensitivity. For example, during the Yom Kippur War, Si Frumkin warned Richard Maass, “The administration is pressuring the Jewish community to choose between Israel and Soviet Jewry. [...] We insist other Jewish organizations similarly resist these pressures. The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews will *openly* oppose any defection from the J-M-V bills.”⁵⁰

Frumkin and other grassroots activists operated out of the conviction that Jackson’s initiative was a “Jewish amendment.” The “cultural ideology” of ethnicity to which they subscribed led them to consider any defection from the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (even after it became law) treasonous. Consequently, they put the AJCong, which in 1976 began to overtly question the wisdom of linking U.S.-U.S.S.R. trade to Jewish emigration, in their crosshairs. In 1978, AJCong leaders “testified in front of... Congress, offering their support for a bill that would have extended further credits to the Soviet Union for grain purchases, a move that indirectly contravened the terms of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.”⁵¹ The UCSJ reacted with fury, publicly proclaiming it stood “unequivocally opposed” to subverting the amendment.⁵² Privately, on the margins of a copy

Frumkin’s protest proceeded without incident.

⁴⁹ Feingold, “*Silent No More*,” 141

⁵⁰ Undated Telegram, Si Frumkin to Richard Maass, Records of the National Conference for Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 1, Folder 7, Center for Jewish History [Emphasis added]

⁵¹ Levin, “Before Soviet Jewry’s Happy Ending,” 68

⁵² Assorted Newspaper Clippings, Records of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, I-410, Box 12, Folder 5, Center for Jewish History

of AJCong official Phil Baum's testimony, one UCSJ staffer scrawled, "They should hang him by his balls."⁵³

Ironically, some grassroots activists also began to have doubts about the amendment. In an internal memo dated January 25, 1979, one UCSJ leader wrote, "To say we support the amendment unconditionally... will satisfy the anti-Soviet feelings that some of us may have. [How] will it help Soviet Jews?"⁵⁴ Emphasizing the need for "flexibility," she continued, "If we do not have some kind of negotiating posture we may lose everything, given enough pressure... The Jews are not invincible and while we do have some influence on the Congress, our 'power' is not limitless."⁵⁵

For many in the UCSJ, "flexibility" meant attacking the Stevenson Amendment, an article of legislation which put a cap on the dollar amount of U.S. trade credits to the U.S.S.R. Many partisans of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment believed this cap — which was not conditioned upon the Kremlin's willingness to let anyone emigrate — undercut the "carrot and stick" mechanism by which the Jackson-Vanik Amendment operated. But the UCSJ leader put the kibosh on the notion of targeting the Stevenson measure for repeal, in line with her conception of the Soviet Jewry issue as a specifically Jewish cause set apart from the broader political questions of the day. She wrote: "[The UCSJ] should not, and cannot, involve itself with the Stevenson Amendment," precisely because the measure did not directly touch upon the Soviet Jewry issue.⁵⁶ She continued, "We can only fight for the repeal of the Stevenson Amendment as American citizens, not as Jews or as Soviet Jewry activists."⁵⁷ She believed the only appropriate way to take a stance on more expansive Cold War political questions was to focus on what was "good for Americans," rather than what

⁵³ Phil Baum to CRCs, 27 June. 1978, Records of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, I-410, Box 12, Folder 5, Center for Jewish History

⁵⁴ Irene Manekofsky, "Current Status of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment," 25 Jan. 1979, Records of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, I-410, Box 12, Folder 5, Center for Jewish History

⁵⁵ Manekofsky, "Current Status of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment"

⁵⁶ Manekofsky, "Current Status of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment"

⁵⁷ Manekofsky, "Current Status of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment"

was “best for Soviet Jews.” Her statement further implies that grassroots activists saw themselves as fighting for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment exclusively qua Jews, without any regard for the “exigencies” of American interests. In this respect, they believed they were joined by the man Yossi Klein Halevi called “the only Jewish leader left in America — Senator Jackson.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Yossi Klein, “Jackson Amendment Betrayed,” *The Jewish Post and Opinion* 4 Jan. 1974

Chapter 3

Jews in the U.S. Government

Thus far, this thesis has analyzed two cohorts of Jews whose divergent understandings of their social position in the U.S. affected how they pursued a particular Jewish interest (in the form of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment). The establishment, evincing a profound sense of anxiety about the status of American Jews, proved unassertive in its support for the amendment; the grassroots, which, as a group, felt more securely Jewish, was correspondingly more proactive. Lacking the establishment's institutional clout, however, the grassroots did not possess the former's entrée into the halls of political power.

The present chapter concerns a third cohort of American Jews: those who walked the halls of political power as U.S. government officials. In their capacities as appointed or elected officials, members of this cohort found themselves under heightened suspicion of harboring dual loyalties. (Consider, as a barometer of the political climate at the time, that in 1973, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright claimed "Israelis control the policy in the Congress," or that in 1974, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff George Brown remarked, "[Jewish influence] is so strong you wouldn't believe now."¹) Henry Feingold consequently describes this cohort as "men of high station whose transaction with the majority culture required a playing down of their Jewish origins in favor of patriotism."² They might be considered "professionally" assimilated American Jews. Though few, if any, were "perfectly" assimilated, all were under pains to place U.S. interests before particular Jewish ones — i.e., to demonstrate, as Gabriel Sheffer puts it, the

¹ See Will Maslow, "Jewish Political Power: An Assessment," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 66, No. 2 (1976): 350

² Feingold, *Jewish Power in America*: 30

N.B. There were many Jewish women in the U.S. government during the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga (notably, Representatives Bella Abzug and Elizabeth Holtzman).

“total loyalty” expected of “those who were inclined toward assimilation.”³ Henry Kissinger, Nixon’s National Security Advisor turned Secretary of State, and Richard Perle, an aide to Jackson, fit this description. Both figures — Jews by external ascription, if not by practice — framed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment exclusively in terms of American interests. (Of course, they disagreed over whether the amendment advanced those interests.) As, officials they exercised considerable political power — far more than any of the other Jewish players in the amendment saga. Because of how they exercised it (as “professionally” assimilated Jews), AJC lobbyist Hyman Bookbinder observed in 1974: “It’s idiotic to deny that there are powerful American Jews. But it doesn’t add up to power for Jews *as* Jews.”⁴

Ironically, historian David Biale, writing in 1986, asserts that “Soviet Jews were compelled to renounce any Jewish identification as the price for entering the power structure.”⁵ However, the exact same set of social pressures (albeit, in much less vicious form) constrained American Jews serving in the U.S. government.⁶ Biale believes that the “social basis for the power of Jews in America is the extraordinary integration of Jews into American society, an integration that does not require assimilation or the renunciation of Jewish identity.”⁷ Admittedly, this was increasingly the case by the 1970s. For every Senator Jacob K. Javits, who made “very little of his Jewishness” (except where appropriate, e.g., on the stump), there was a Representative Ed Koch, who made no bones of his.⁸ Kissinger and Perle were joined in Washington by some Jews who were comfortable pleading a specifically Jewish case for the Jackson-Vanik Amendment — despite any potential

³ Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*: 232

⁴ Isaacs, “So Who Has the Power?” 25

⁵ Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*: 181

⁶ This was especially true while Nixon was occupied the White House. Recall that the president posited the existence of a “Jewish cabal” in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and had his staff draw up a list of Jews employed by the agency in 1971. Two officials who appeared on the list were subsequently transferred.

⁷ Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*: 181-182

⁸ Nathan Glazer, “Javits: The Autobiography of a Public Man, by Jacob K. Javits,” *Commentary* 72, No. 6 (1981): N.P.

negative consequences.⁹ Morris Amitay, an aide to Senator Abraham Ribicoff, explained, “There are... guys at the working level up here [on Capitol Hill] who happen to be Jewish, who are willing to... look at certain issues in terms of their Jewishness, and this is what has made this thing [the amendment] go very effectively in the past couple of years.”¹⁰ Mindful of negative consequences, Amitay and others, much like the establishment and grassroots, carefully constructed “the identity [or equivalence] of American and Jewish interests and values.”¹¹ They went to great lengths to avoid having the amendment seen as a “Jewish amendment,” following the lead of non-Jewish champions (like Jackson) and drawing in other political constituencies (such as labor unions) in an attempt to “kosherize” it.¹² Revealingly, Amitay believed himself to be speaking off the record when he described legislative aides “who happen to be Jewish.” To the extent, then, that he and others saw the amendment “in terms of their Jewishness,” they did so privately. Thus, they were responding (differently) to the assimilatory pressures that also acted upon Kissinger and Perle. The American political opportunity structure tolerated interest groups lobbying the government from the outside, as in the case of the establishment and grassroots. As journalist Stephen Rosenfeld noted in 1974, “[Such] ‘ethnic’ appeals as the Jackson Amendment, whereby a minority seeks to influence American policy for the benefit of its kinsmen abroad, are, one can say, as American as apple pie...”¹³ It did not, however, tolerate conflicted loyalties inside the U.S. government.

⁹ Sheffer writes that those openly exhibiting dual loyalty may face “disparagement,” etc. in their host societies. Morris Amitay faced worse. In July 1977, his home was bombed by an anti-Semite. (Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*: 226)

¹⁰ Isaacs, “So Who Has the Power?” 27

¹¹ Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*: 197

¹² Mark Talisman speaking at “The Legacy and Consequences of Jackson-Vanik: Reassessing Human Rights in 21st Century Russia,” F. Joseph Dresen and William E. Pomeranz, Eds., Kennan Institute Occasional Paper No. 305 (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2010): 17; Barnett, *The Star and the Stripes*: 181 Rosenfeld reported that the amendment was described as “a piece of baggage with many different handles” which an “unholy alliance” of human rights advocates, Cold Warriors, labor unions, Jews and other “ethnic” Americans of Eastern European descent could grab on to. (Rosenfeld, “The Politics of the Jackson Amendment.” 22)

¹³ Rosenfeld, “The Politics of the Jackson Amendment.” 18

Kissinger's example is particularly instructive in this regard. Nixon and members of his presidential staff distrusted the National Security Advisor turned Secretary of State on account of his Jewish background. In a March 9, 1971 conversation with Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman on America's Middle East policy, the president opined, "Anybody who is Jewish cannot handle it. Even though Henry is, I know, as fair as he can possibly be, he can't help but be affected by it. You know, put yourself in his position. Good God! You know, his people were crucified over there. Jesus Christ!"¹⁴ Haldeman offered, "Well, what he ought to recognize is, even if he had no problems at all on it, it's wrong for... American policy in the Middle East to be made by a Jew."¹⁵ Nixon assented.

This distrust spilled over into Kissinger's management of the Soviet Jewry issue. Around 1972, amidst the evolving Watergate scandal, an increasingly embattled Nixon handed Kissinger the reins of American diplomacy, which meant that the National Security Advisor took the lead in formulating the White House response to the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Though the president did not explicitly voice the same set of concerns about "a Jew" making American policy toward a country oppressing fellow Jews, his wariness revealed itself in subtle ways. In a May 6, 1972 conversation with Kissinger, for example, Nixon complained that American Jews had hitherto failed to express sufficient appreciation for his efforts to help Soviet Jews emigrate. "None of the Jewish community here does that except for you and Taft Schreiber," the president griped, lumping Kissinger in with a longtime ally who belonged to the American Jewish establishment.¹⁶ "I don't consider myself part of the Jewish community," came Kissinger's response.¹⁷

¹⁴ Douglas Brinkley and Luke Nichter, *The Nixon Tapes: 1971-1972* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014): 143

¹⁵ Brinkley and Nichter, *The Nixon Tapes*: 144

¹⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XIV, Soviet Union, October 1971 - May 1972*, Eds. David C. Geyer, Nina D. Howland, and Kent Sieg (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 198

¹⁷ Ibid.

Virtually all sources suggest that Kissinger studiously avoided bringing his Jewish identity, such as it was, to work with him. On April 19, 1973 — the day Nixon met with Max Fisher and other “community leaders” in a bid to undermine American Jewish support for what would become the Jackson-Vanik Amendment — the president told Kissinger, “It’s about God damn time the Jew in America realizes he’s an American first and a Jew second.”¹⁸ Without a moment’s hesitation, the onetime refugee from Nazi Germany replied, “I couldn’t agree more.”¹⁹ Kissinger, then, strikes the observer as a model assimilated Jew. He had renounced his Jewish identity, transforming himself into a true-blue American occupying one of the most powerful political appointments in the land. He even remarked, “America has given me everything. [...] I don’t know what other Jews expect of me, but I consider myself an American first.”²⁰ It must be remembered at this junction, though, that the assimilated Jew, just like the Jewish integrationist and the Jewish nationalist, is an ideal type.²¹ Nixon constantly reminded Kissinger of his origins, and Kissinger, for his part, did not allow himself to forget. Nixon aide Leonard Garment (who was also Jewish) noted, “Kissinger could never — in fact, would never — shed his Jewishness.”²² In practice, if not in reality, then, the top U.S. diplomat was ineluctably Jewish. Tellingly, Kissinger would privately bemoan the “God damn anti-Semites” running the White House.²³

The National Security Advisor turned Secretary of State’s private understanding of himself as a Jew has incited great academic debate. Noam Kochavi asserts that “the Jewish intellectual

¹⁸ Conversation 114, Tape 38, 19 Apr. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

¹⁹ Conversation 114, Tape 38, 19 Apr. 1973, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

²⁰ Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005): 561

²¹ Ezra Mendelsohn writes, “In politics, as in life, theory in one thing, reality another. Political typologies are fun to play with, even helpful... in trying to understand the subject, but they do not always correspond to real life.” (Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*: 35)

²² Leonard Garment, *Crazy Rhythm: From Brooklyn And Jazz to Nixon's White House, Watergate, And Beyond* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2001): 187

²³ Jeremi Suri, “Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 32, No. 5 (2008): 728

sensed Nixon's anti-Semitic streak and was concerned that any hint of pro-Jewish policies on his part might be exploited by bureaucratic rivals," implying Kissinger merely suppressed some true fellow-feeling for Jews.²⁴ Jeremi Suri implies much the same when he writes, "In his relationship with a prejudiced president and a prejudiced public, Kissinger worked hard to anticipate potential accusations about a... Jewish conspiracy."²⁵ Biographer Walter Isaacson is content to label him "complex" and "contradictory."²⁶ Gal Beckerman, meanwhile, offers this assessment: "Kissinger, an enigmatic man... whose ideological allegiances were sometimes as hard to pin down as his gravelly, German-accented voice was to understand, was not one to feel the tribal pull."²⁷ This lay closer to how both the establishment and grassroots read their opponent. The NCSJ archives make no mention of Kissinger's Jewish background.²⁸ The UCSJ likewise accepted that Kissinger would give them no quarter, while the more extreme figures within the grassroots like Yossi Klein Halevi labeled him a "traitor" and a "self-hater."²⁹

Kissinger's self-understanding is ultimately unknowable to anyone but himself — but his actions bespeak a certain contempt for the Soviet Jewry Movement. He often voiced exasperation over American Jews' efforts to derail détente via the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Anticipating the challenge posed by the amendment in early September 1972, Kissinger asked Leonard Garment, "Is there a more self-serving group of people than the Jewish community?"³⁰ To which Garment

²⁴ Noam Kochavi, "Insights Abandoned, Flexibility Lost: Kissinger, Soviet Jewish Emigration, and the Demise of Détente," *Diplomatic History* 29, No. 3 (2005): 511

²⁵ Suri, "Henry Kissinger, the American Dream, and the Jewish Immigrant Experience in the Cold War:" 728

²⁶ Isaacson, *Kissinger*: 149

²⁷ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone*: 287

²⁸ This is rather significant because the NCSJ noted other White House officials' Jewish backgrounds. For instance, in an August 22, 1979 internal memo, an NCSJ officer wrote, "I had a productive meeting at the NSC today with... Marshall Brement. Brement is a Jew... He is basically sympathetic to our cause..." (Untitled Memo, 22 Aug. 1979, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 16, Folder 3, Center for Jewish History)

²⁹ Klein, "Jackson Amendment Betrayed"

³⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XV, Soviet Union, June 1972 – August 1974*, Eds. Douglas E. Selva and Melissa Jane Taylor (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2011), Document 33

replied: “None in the world.”³¹ This brief exchange clearly demonstrates that neither Garment nor Kissinger were “willing” — even in private — to look at the Soviet Jewry issue “in terms of their Jewishness.” After Jackson introduced his amendment, Kissinger told Nixon on October 2, 1972, “Well, if they want to serve their own Jewish interests... I have a violent objection to one minority group holding the foreign policy of this country ransom for co-religionists who are not American citizens.”³² More infamously, he also admonished the president on March 1, 1973, “Let’s face it: The emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union is not an objective of American foreign policy, and if they put Jews into gas chambers in the Soviet Union, it is not an American concern.”³³ This extreme remark landed him in hot water when it came to light in 2010, although some wrote it off as an exercise in toadying to the anti-Semitic Nixon.³⁴ Regardless, Kissinger’s statements, taken together, show that the top U.S. diplomat meant it when he said, “I consider myself an American first.” In the same March 1, 1973 conversation with Nixon, Kissinger even inverted the grassroots’ favorite charge, declaring that the “Jewish community... is behaving traitorously.”³⁵ In so doing, he evinced, if not a fervor for assimilation, then at least an anti-particularistic bent.

Kissinger’s primary sparring partner throughout the Jackson-Vanik Amendment saga was not the “Jewish community” at large but Richard Perle, Jackson’s trusted lieutenant who was of Russian Jewish parentage. The two reportedly despised each other. (Kissinger showered Perle with insults, calling him a “bastard” a “son of a bitch,” a “son of Mensheviks who thinks all Bolsheviks are evil,” and worse.³⁶ The author sincerely regrets his failure to find any comebacks from Perle,

³¹ Ibid.

³² Conversation 8, Pt. A, Tape 790, 2 Oct. 1972, Nixon White House Tapes, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

³³ Michael Gerson, “When Foreign Policy Isn’t Realistic,” *Washington Post* 21 Dec. 2010

³⁴ E.g., AJC Executive Director David Harris — who headed the NCSJ’s Washington office for a time — said, “Perhaps Kissinger felt that, as a Jew, he had to go the extra mile to prove to the president that there was no question as to where his loyalties lay.” (Clyde Haberman, “Decades Later, Kissinger’s Words Stir Fresh Outrage Among Jews,” *New York Times* 6 Dec. 2010)

³⁵ Gerson, “When Foreign Policy Isn’t Realistic”

³⁶ Isaacson, *Kissinger*: 612

who was not known to be mild-mannered.) Like Kissinger, the future neoconservative lodestar did not demonstrate any feeling for “the tribal pull” as he shepherded the Jackson-Vanik Amendment through Congress. Yet Perle found himself painted with the proverbial brush of Jewish identity by friends and foes alike. In a June 1973 conversation, for example, the AJCong’s Arthur Hertzberg confronted Harold Light of the UCSJ on Perle’s involvement with the Soviet Jewry Movement. Hertzberg asked, “Is Perle, the guy on Jackson’s staff... associated with you, as a Jew?”³⁷ Light responded incredulously: “No! He’s an aide. [...] No politician would be [a part of our group].”³⁸ However, Perle features prominently in the memoirs of various UCSJ activists, and one could be easily forgiven when reading their reminiscences for thinking that the senatorial staffer served as the stridently Jewish grassroots’ “man on the inside.” Meanwhile, June Rogul, who anchored the NCSJ’s presence in Washington, located Perle in an “informal group of... aides, predominantly Jewish” with whom she worked closely.³⁹ Finally, in October 1974, Kissinger even “outed” Perle during a meeting with Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz. The meeting veered into a discussion of the charge that “American Jewish writers are the main troublemakers against détente” — which Dinitz vehemently protested.⁴⁰ This prompted Kissinger to interject: “Richard Perle.”⁴¹

By most accounts, Perle’s Jewish origins hardly figured into either his self-understanding or his politics. Citing an anonymous “keen observer,” Paula Stern alleges, “Jackson first infected Richard with Jewish concern and then [Perle] re-infected Jackson.”⁴² Gal Beckerman writes that Perle was primarily “motivated by his Cold Warrior outlook.”⁴³ Consequently, Perle saw in the

³⁷ “Audio Tapes — 1973 — Light, Harold — Brezhnev Visit; JDL; Speaking With Arthur Hertzberg, Lipner,” Records of the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews, I-505, Box 99, Folder 48, Center for Jewish History

³⁸ “Audio Tapes — 1973 — Light, Harold — Brezhnev Visit; JDL; Speaking With Arthur Hertzberg, Lipner”

³⁹ Rogul, “Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the Soviet Jewry Movement.” 4

⁴⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, Volume XVI, Soviet Union, August 1974 – December 1976, Ed. David C. Geyer (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2012), Document 55

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 24

⁴³ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We’ll Be Gone*: 284

Kremlin's August 1972 exit tax "a convergence of all he was opposed to: it was a violation of human rights and a reminder of a brutal Communist system that had to be defeated..."⁴⁴ Just like Kissinger, then, Perle framed the Soviet Jewry issue (along with America's relationship with the state of Israel) in term of American interests — only Perle, unlike Kissinger, discerned plenty of reasons for the U.S. to get involved.⁴⁵

American Jews, in Perle's mind, were troops to be enlisted in his anti-U.S.S.R. crusade. Perle deployed them against Jewish "community leaders" and members of Congress that he felt were in need of exhortation.⁴⁶ (UCSJ officer Stuart Altshuler writes, "Perle... utilized the UCSJ... to rebuke American Jewish leaders."⁴⁷) American Jews, though, constituted a restive fighting force. Perle — again, like Kissinger — frequently expressed contempt for them. He told one journalist in 1974, "The Jewish organizations are incompetent and unrepresentative... You talk about Jews in politics. They're a pain in the neck."⁴⁸ AJC Executive Director and NCSJ officer Bert Gold recalls receiving a tongue-lashing from Perle after expressing reservations about the Jackson-Vanik Amendment: "No sooner did I even finish [my] first question when he fell upon me like 16 tons of bricks, suggesting the very asking of the question suggested a selling-out..."⁴⁹ Grassroots activists were not spared his anger, either. Content with their performance during the amendment saga proper, Perle turned on the UCSJ in the ensuing years when the group floated the

Beckerman adds, though, "[Morris] Amitay made him see the tribal reasons for supporting a bill that would help fellow Jews."

⁴⁴ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone*: 276

⁴⁵ Perle once said of Israel: "[I would be] for defending Israel even if it were populated with South Vietnamese. There are sound strategic, political, economic reasons for supporting that piece of real estate *per se*, though obviously there's an emotional attachment beyond that..." (Stern, *Water's Edge*: 24)

⁴⁶ For example, in July 1, 1974 phone call with Hal Light of the UCSJ, Perle said, "[Senator Jacob] Javits in particular is a problem. [...] I think any heat you can turn on Javits would be useful."

("Audio Tapes — 1974 — Light, Harold — Speaking with Richard Perle of Sen. Jackson's Office," Records of the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews, I-505, Box 99, Folder 58, Center for Jewish History)

⁴⁷ Altshuler, *From Exodus to Freedom*: 90

⁴⁸ Isaacs, "So Who Has the Power?" 25-26

⁴⁹ Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone*: 291

possibility of taking a softer line vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. No transcript of his rebuke can be located, but it must have been explosive, because in a May 4, 1979 letter, a UCSJ official wrote Perle to say, “Our conversation yesterday was most discouraging,” adding, “We feel that it would be a violation of our obligation to the movement to follow your office unquestioningly...”⁵⁰ On August 21, 1979, Perle told an NCSJ staffer that he “was concerned that the Union [of Councils] was slipping away from the ‘hard-line’ posture.”⁵¹ The same staffer reported, “He is particularly anxious to keep the NCSJ ‘in the Jackson fold’,” testifying to Perle’s paramount commitment to his boss and his boss’ amendment.⁵²

During these 1979 discussions with the establishment and grassroots, Perle may not have couched the prospect of defection from “the Jackson fold” in the language of betrayal, but his actions, refracted through NCSJ and UCSJ memos, reveal a suspicion of American Jews as traitors to the Cold War cause.⁵³ It bears repeating, to quote historian Michael Galchinsky, that Perle “struggled for the relief of Soviet Jews... not out of respect for civil or human rights [or, least of all, any sort of diasporic solidarity], but out of a deeply-entrenched anti-Communism that was part of [his] American identity.”⁵⁴ For Perle, Soviet Jews were but a means to an end — and so were American Jews. When American Jews threatened, by attenuating their support for the amendment, to stop serving as instruments, they became Perle’s opponents. When they stopped acting in what Perle believed was America’s best interest (an aggressive stance towards the Soviet Union), they behaved treasonously.

⁵⁰ Robert Gordon to Richard Perle, 04 May 1979, Records of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, I-140A, Box 1, Folder 13, Center for Jewish History

⁵¹ Untitled Memo, 22 Aug. 1979

⁵² Untitled Memo, 22 Aug. 1979

⁵³ A 1979 *Jerusalem Post* article speaks of “sources close to Jackson” who “bitterly accuse” those in favor of waiving the Jackson-Vanik Amendments of “abandoning” the amendment’s “original intent.” (Wolf Blitzer, “Split on Soviet Emigration,” *Jerusalem Post* 13 Jun. 1979)

⁵⁴ Michael Galchinsky, *Jews and Human Rights: Dancing at Three Weddings* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008): 70

Kissinger and Perle, whether out of conviction or prudence, eyed the both factions of the Soviet Jewry Movement warily, but the same cannot be said for other Jews in the U.S. government. Senatorial aide Morris Amitay, as mentioned above, did not put much daylight between himself and the campaign for Soviet Jewry. In his much-quoted 1974 remarks, he explicitly advertised the power of Jewish staffers “to make the decisions in these [Jewish] areas for... senators.”⁵⁵ Amitay added, “All you need is a certain commitment...” — presumably, to particular Jewish interests.⁵⁶ This “commitment” drew Amitay close to the NCSJ in particular. He made an appearance at the organization’s June 3, 1974 annual meeting (where he was introduced on a first-name basis, as “Morrie”); there, he spoke almost exclusively in the first-person plural (e.g., “We are in for a very crucial time”).⁵⁷ One might think Amitay sat on the NCSJ’s board. At that same meeting, an NCSJ officer, praising Amitay as “a pillar of strength for us in the Senate,” quipped, “We consider him one of the family.”⁵⁸ The NCSJ officer then reminded the audience that no recordings of the meeting were permitted — reflecting an imperative to keep this relationship under the radar.

Mark Talisman, an aide to Representative Charles Vanik and the actual author of the text of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, was another such figure. Paula Stern notes, “Talisman was highly visible on Capitol Hill in battles for Jewish causes.”⁵⁹ Like Perle, Talisman pit grassroots activists against recalcitrant members of the House of Representatives. When a compromise bill threatened the amendment in September 1974, “Vanik informed... Talisman, [and immediately] a call went out from Washington to the Southern California Soviet Jewry movement.”⁶⁰ The author of the compromise bill recalled, “That very night, until 2:00, I was getting phone calls at home

⁵⁵ Isaacs, “So Who Has the Power?” 27

⁵⁶ Isaacs, “So Who Has the Power?” 27

⁵⁷ “NCSJ Plenum, Washington DC, Part II,” 3 June 1974, Records of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, I-181A, Box 369, Folder M19, Center for Jewish History

⁵⁸ “NCSJ Plenum, Washington DC, Part II”

⁵⁹ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 56

⁶⁰ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 88

from good friends of mine who very irately wanted to know why I was selling out the Jewish cause.”⁶¹ Unlike Perle, Talisman did not turn on the Soviet Jewry Movement the moment it began to rethink the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. He evinced an overriding commitment not to the amendment but rather to Soviet Jews. That commitment, in part, pushed him to leave Vanik’s office in 1975 to become the Washington representative of the Council of Jewish Federations, an establishment group. The same overriding commitment to Jewish interests led Morris Amitay to assume the directorship of AIPAC in 1974.

Amitay and Talisman — unlike Kissinger and Perle — clearly wielded influence as Jews. But, like Kissinger and Perle, their positions were shaped by the external structures that held up the anti-Semitic, anti-communist American political arena. All were subjected to pressure to be Americans first and Jews second (at least, in public). Kissinger and Perle responded to this pressure by trumpeting American interests. Amitay and Talisman, meanwhile, responded by conflating Jewish and American interests, leaving parochial lobbying to grassroots surrogates. As Feingold writes, “The rules governing the play of power do not permit an ethnic community armed with a measure of power, even when it is disproportionate, to dictate policy to a powerful host nation.”⁶² From this perspective, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was not — as has often been claimed — a “Jewish amendment” packaged as a Cold War salvo.⁶³ If anything, Feingold continues, “The microhistory presents evidence of a complex story that shows an uncertain Jewry allowing itself to be used [by Jews, and non-Jews, in the U.S. government] for Cold War purposes.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ Stern, *Water’s Edge*: 88

⁶² Feingold, *Jewish Power: Myth and Reality*: 60

⁶³ These claims followed closely on the heels of the amendment’s enactment. Consider this February 6, 1976 JTA report: “An article in the February issue of Readers Digest alleging that Congress was ‘wrecking’ the administration’s foreign policy, in some instances due to the influence of ‘a powerful lobby, that of Jewish Americans,’ was inserted into the Congressional Record today by Senate Deputy Minority Leader Robert P. Griffin...” (“Prof Denounces Jewish Lobby,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin* 43, No. 26 (1976): 3

⁶⁴ Feingold, *Jewish Power: Myth and Reality*: 49

Conclusion

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment “episode” of the Soviet Jewry Movement featured a crowded cast of characters who introduced varying Jewish self-understandings into the American political arena, with divisive results. Senator Henry Jackson first enlisted the Jewish establishment, whose old and new guards believed to different degrees that the amendment could upset the careful balancing act they performed with “many American Jewish interests, of which Soviet Jewry was only one, and certainly not the most crucial...”¹ Sensing that the amendment’s aggressive approach to the Soviet Jewry issue might inflame their dual loyalties as Jewish-Americans, establishment figures were dismayed to find Jackson’s office and the White House tugging at opposite ends of the hyphen. Consequently, they declined to wholeheartedly deploy the considerable political clout their institutional bona fides afforded them. The more unabashedly ethno-nationalistic grassroots faction of the Soviet Jewry Movement saw pusillanimity in the establishment’s prudence. Unafraid to exhibit their divided loyalties, “the younger [grassroots] often pulled the older [establishment], sometimes kicking and screaming, along” in support of the amendment.² They were able to do so because their means of exercising power — namely, projectiles and phone calls — affected image-conscious Jewish “community leaders” most of all. Both the establishment and grassroots, though, were putty in the hands of a third cohort of American Jews: those in the U.S. government. The more assimilated among them used the power of their offices to coax the Soviet Jewry Movement into serving their conceptions of America’s best interests. Others, under professional pains to demonstrate the “100 percent Americanism” becoming of the assimilated, quietly advocated for the amendment qua Jews through Soviet Jewry Movement activists.

¹ Orbach, “Conflicts and Developments within the Soviet Jewry Movement:” 390

² Orbach, “Conflicts and Developments within the Soviet Jewry Movement:” 391

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment — when assessed in terms of its stated purpose — proved historically ill-suited to the task of facilitating Soviet Jewish emigration from the U.S.S.R. When Gerald Ford signed the amendment into law, expectations ran high (even inside Henry Kissinger’s State Department) that the Kremlin would permit 35,000 or more Jews to leave in the coming year.³ Less than two weeks later, Moscow cancelled its existing trade agreement with Washington; by December 31, 1975, only 13,000-odd Jews had been given permission to emigrate.⁴ Annual Soviet Jewish emigration totals did rise through 1979, as the Kremlin angled for a waiver from the restrictions imposed by the amendment (which was not forthcoming), before falling to record lows as the Cold War re-intensified. In the end, Jews were not allowed to leave the U.S.S.R. en masse until Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the position of General Secretary of the Communist Party.

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment did serve to put the Soviet Jewry issue permanently on the superpower agenda. The law’s evident failure to do much more than that, though, engendered tremendous acrimony within the Soviet Jewry Movement, which for years reverberated with cries of “betrayal” as “community leaders” and grassroots activists debated whether Soviet Jews would benefit from granting the U.S.S.R. “most favored nation” status. “In sum,” writes AJC consultant and Kremlinologist Marshall I. Goldman, reflecting on the eventual exodus of Soviet Jews, “one cheer for the JVA [Jackson-Vanik Amendment]; two cheers or more for Mikhail Gorbachev, and no cheers for the latter-day efforts of the Jewish community.”⁵

Goldman should have known better than to speak of the “Jewish community.” As early as 1978, the AJC’s Hyman Bookbinder concluded, “We thought it not very useful or appropriate to

³ Bernard Gwertzman, “Ford Signs the Trade Act; Soviet Issue Is Unresolved,” *New York Times* 4 Jan. 1975

⁴ Levin, “Before Soviet Jewry’s Happy Ending,” 67

⁵ Marshall I. Goldman, “Jackson-Vanik: A Dissent” in Friedman and Chernin, Eds., *A Second Exodus*: 122

have that image in the American mind of a single American Jewish community.”⁶ Bookbinder’s shrewd observation captures the central thrust of this thesis.

Of course, a few caveats are in order. First, this thesis tells a uniquely American story, for only the U.S. has provided such fertile soil for the multiplication of diasporic Jewish self-understandings. Second, that story is grounded in a Cold War context. As scholar Michael Galchinsky observes of American Jewish political power in this setting, “Influence depends on confluence.”⁷ Supporters and detractors alike may have framed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment as a “Jewish amendment,” but it was enacted all the same primarily on the strength of Senator Henry Jackson’s Cold Warrior credentials.

Bearing these limitations in mind, I wish to suggest, as Hyman Bookbinder said, that it might not be either “useful or appropriate” to analyze other diasporas and their political behaviors through the paradigm of “community.” Robin Cohen notes, “The Jews are not a single people; they have a multi-faceted, multi-located history,” a mere fragment of which is on display here.⁸ The same necessarily holds for other peoples. In this respect, this thesis does not tell a uniquely Jewish story. It invites researchers to challenge the paradigm of “community” in other contexts and recover the rich “cacophony of voices” so obscured.

⁶ William J. Lanouette, “The Many Faces of the Jewish Lobby in America,” *National Journal* 13 May 1978

⁷ Michael Galchinsky, “Jewish Power in America: Myth and Reality (Review),” *American Jewish History* 95, No. 4 (2009): 378

⁸ Cohen, *Global Diasporas*: 34-35

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