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SPEAKING TO A GROUP OF TEACHERS assembled in Palestine[1] in 1903, Haim Nachman Bialik, the national poet of Zionism, declared that "[W]hoever does not create all of his values from the land is half a man."[2] Indeed, the physically fit male body, "The Muscle Jew," had become the rhetorical idealization of Zionism's quest to create a new Jew by "returning" him to physical labor on the land.[3] Yet, if Zionism's gender was so blatantly male, how then were Jewish women to "return to the soil"? Hannah Meisel responded to such calls to manliness by fashioning a new Jewish woman. From her arrival in Palestine in 1909 as a farmer and teacher to her founding of the first Agricultural School for Young Women in 1926,[4] Meisel's career traces the course of a new feminine ideal and, in a wider perspective, Zionism's revaluation of gender after the Great War. It was a critical period. Between Herzl's death in 1903 through the Balfour Declaration's proposal of a Jewish "homeland" in Mandate Palestine at the end of the 1920s, the Labor Party in Palestine came to dominate the international Zionist movement and laid the foundations of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Meisel's work reflected the significant contribution of women to Zionism's idea of gender. From her stewardship of the first women's agricultural collective before the War to her world-wide quest after it for funding for her school, her view of gender responded pragmatically to the exigencies of time and place. By the end of the twenties her notion of gender flowed into the mainstream of Zionist idealism; or more accurately, perhaps, Zionism's mainstream flowed toward her.

The story of Zionism's gender shoves the academic historian into the realm of public memory, an arena of great interest to early Zionists, who

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saw education in history as a way to revitalize Jewish culture. Though never at the very center of the Zionist narrative,[5] female voices constituted a significant part of it. This was particularly true during the formative years of myth-making in the 1920s and 1930s, when educational institutions in the Yishuv, the Jewish community of Palestine, created heroes to inspire Jewish youth on "the Land" and in the Diaspora.[6] The Labor movement in Palestine churned out accounts of settler life that extolled the virtues of physical labor and presented the "pioneers" as modern versions of Biblical heroes. The corpus of heroic literature included reminiscences of women.[7] There is no better example than the collection of memoirs, created by the Council of Women Workers, that appeared first in Hebrew in 1930 and in other languages ever since 1932. It is devoted exclusively to women "pioneers" and contains detailed testimonies of endurance in the face of hardships that, most significantly, includes those created by some of the women's male colleagues. They do not in the least shy away from trenchant criticism of discriminatory hiring practiced by many of the Yishuv's institutions.[8] With the founding of various women's groups just after the Second World War, the female voice found expression through the popular media, including a women's magazine of distinction.[9] Early Zionists were quite well aware of female perspectives in the 1920s, not the least because women played a large role in forming those institutions. Though not at the very top, women acted publicly and politically on the Zionist stage—unlike Arabs, who were rarely spoken of and who rarely thought of themselves as sharing any common goals with the Zionists.

Current scholarship might be said to be catching up. While Arabs do not appear in Zionist myth, many Israeli scholars at work today consider the Arab component of the Zionist narrative crucial to understanding the Zionist enterprise as a whole. The issue has provoked a wide-ranging historiographical controversy over the relevance of Zionism in modern Israeli society.[10] Regarding women, the Zionist tradition of "engaged" scholarship continues in force. The image of women portrayed in feminist scholarship today assumes the same larger than life heroic qualities so characteristic of the early Zionist hagiographies, though recent portraits evoke sympathy for women as victims of their male-dominated environment rather than victors in their struggle for equality.[11] While earlier heroic portraits of Zionist women aimed at radical change within Zionist assumptions, recent feminist scholarship intends to subvert the Zionist claim of virtue altogether by declaring its historic advocacy of equality between men and women a "bluff."[12] The level of abstraction inherent in such formulations, whether those of the early Zionists or those of current

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feminist historiography, cloud a complex process of myth-making as well as the elusive character of social status and power in the lives of specific people in specific places. As fruitful as many of these broad generalizations might be as hypotheses, they rest on a weak foundation of fragmentary evidence torn from temporal context.

Thus, a typical claim, that "in the building of the State of Israel" men assigned women an "inferior status," provides no historical evidence and derives its authority from a chain of conjectures anchored in the oft-cited work of Dafna Izraeli.[13] For Izraeli, the rise of the women's labor organizations within the Zionist movement in Palestine of the 1920s is a story of "the struggle against male oppression." It was, in her view, a lost cause.[14] The trouble began in 1920, when the labor movement's flagship union, the Histadrut, diluted the power of women by refusing to put forward a separate electoral list for them.[15] Izraeli's account flows unsceptically from a 1950s memoir of the renowned "radical feminist," Ada Fishman-Maimon,[16] who proposed that, if refused representation on the organization's executive council, women should submit a separate electoral list. In an odd turn of events, considering that Izraeli wants to attribute a loss to the early feminists, "leading figures in the major parties" led the Histadrut to accept Fishman-Maimon's proposal and to allot two places for women on the executive council.[17] There are many ways one might seek to explain the stunning move whereby the male dominated Histadrut embraced a "radical feminist" program. Izraeli, however, passes over it without a word and instead continues with unsupported speculations about why the women were so "co-optable"[18] and the men so "expedient."[19] Though Izraeli recognizes the Histadrut's moves to include women during this period and to found and fund many feminist programs, she characterizes these as mere "concessions" made by the male-dominated labor movement as "the price" of gaining the women's political support.[20] At no point does she offer evidence of the men's motives—or, for that matter, the women's. It is passing strange that subsequent works quoting Izraeli would similarly overlook the widespread acceptance of "radical" feminist ideals by men in the labor establishment, or neglect to even entertain the possibility that the Zionist movement's actions might reflect substantial agreement between laboring men and feminists about the role of women in the new society under construction. Instead, current political commitments and the quest for a single, all-encompassing theory obscure a complex reality.

A notable exception to this form of "engaged" scholarship is Margalit Shilo's pioneering portrayal of the pre-World War I women's collective at

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Kinneret that laid the groundwork for the flowering of women's groups and programs after the War.[21] I propose to expand her focus chronologically by connecting Meisel's pre-War experience with the development of a new idea of gender equality that emerged full-blown within the Zionist movement after the War, when the settlement of Palestine became the chief aim of labor Zionism and when the settlement movement became the dominant component of the Zionist Organization. Meisel attempted to adapt her views of gender to reach the many constituencies within the Zionist movement from which she hoped to draw support. I set her evolving gender ideas within the context of Zionism's concept of manliness and focus particularly on the pervasive image of the "muscle Jew." After elaborating her synthesis of the various strands of gender thinking, I then show how the institutions of the Zionist movement, male and female, in Palestine and abroad reacted to her request for funding. In an effort to understand the attitudes toward gender of the Zionist movement as a whole, I follow Meisel's own conclusion that the clash between competing ideas of gender was not between progressive women and dominant men, but between men and women of the Zionist community in Palestine, on one hand, and, on the other, Diaspora sympathizers and donors, both male and female, who had no connection to physical labor.

MEISEL, MANLINESS, AND GENDER EQUALITY

The image of manliness in Zionism's call to the soil did not deter Meisel in the least. Hannah Meisel took seriously the Zionist project of transforming Jewish culture by educating a new generation that would be steeped in the value of physical labor and closely bound to an agrarian life as an antidote to the centuries of urban living that created what was deemed an effete and ineffective culture of subservience and useless intellectualism. Physical labor for women as well as men would restore the "natural" connection between Nature and Jew and create a new polity, at once more just as it was more healthy than the sickly Judaism of the Diaspora.[22] Unlike many others, Meisel arrived in Palestine uniquely prepared. She was the only woman with an advanced degree in agronomy, having completed her Doctor of Science thesis in France on the nurturing and germination of vegetable seeds.[23] Her initial task entailed a kind of paradox: how would she become a laborer while having earned an advanced degree? Was she not just the kind of Jew that Zionism scorned: an intellectual with little purchase on the hard ground of reality? Meisel's response shaped her entire

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career. She proposed a novel educational goal that would bring young women and girls out of the kitchen and onto the land at the same time that it would enhance, rather than reject, academic learning. Science would fit the specific needs of small-scale collective agriculture and enable it to survive and even flourish under difficult conditions. And science would be the new Jewish woman's domain, simultaneously saving the entire Zionist agricultural project as it lifted esteem for women's labor to a position equal to that of men. The transformation to be accomplished was thus both private and public. The personal change of each Diaspora woman in Palestine would transform Jewish culture as a whole. Yet, cleansing the Jewish soul of its Diaspora accretions never brought Meisel to emphasize personal over public goals.[24] Meisel united the development of personality with the larger civic goal of Jewish nationalism to build a modern state. Her first project was her own transformation. How could she turn her book-learning to "manly" labor on the land?

Meisel's initiation into a life of labor began immediately upon her arrival in Palestine in 1909 when she joined the training farm at Sejera, considered by labor Zionists to be the cradle of the Zionist labor movement and its most renowned social creation, the *kibbutz*. She and her colleagues, much influenced by the collective ideals of European socialism and Russian Romanticism,[25] intended specifically to link physical labor to the liberation of women. She and six other women formed a separate collective under the tutelage of Eliyahu Krause, who welcomed the chance to promote Meisel's cause.[26] At the outset, Meisel accepted the more "radical" idea of gender equality, denying that physical differences between men and women should exclude women from highly valued field labor. Thus, she and her students partook of such "male" tasks as plowing with oxen. So important did she consider "male" work that she concealed her advanced agronomy degree from the authorities for fear of being reassigned to more a more "feminine" job.[27]

Like most of the socialist youth who came to Palestine in the decade before the War, Meisel despised as effete decadents the earlier Jewish settlers of the 1880s who employed others to labor, and she berated their daughters who "sit at home bored while hoping for their fiancés to return from Paris crowned with diplomas" in medicine and engineering. They would never take their places alongside men in the building of the new nation. Her dark view of previous attempts to create a new Jewish culture lent force to her own desire to separate herself from them. Hard physical labor of the "male" sort would do just that. It was, as well, an antidote to the intensely intellectual preoccupations that beset many of her idealistic colleagues,

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and she sarcastically mimicked their endless theoretical discussions about "things that have never happened on earth. . . ; the despair that lies within renewal, and the renewal that lies within despair."[28] Instead, Meisel adopted the radical pragmatism that became the controlling vision of her career. Only doing counts. Ideas and ideology follow.

From her experience of doing "men's" work at Sejera, however, Meisel learned that women need not—even should not—do "men's" work. When she founded the women's training farm at Kinneret in 1911 and became active in the Women's Worker Organization, she parted company with her more radical colleagues and espoused a concept of women's work based on what was "suitable" for women. Gender equality would no longer depend upon brute physical labor. Instead, she emphasized traditional work for female farmers, but sought first, to infuse it with prestige by making it scientific, and second, to re-value it by demonstrating its economic importance. A female worker should not be "required to do work which is not suited to her body" and to compete with men on the basis of physical strength. Instead, they would "work at tasks which were suitable for them": in the garden, the tree nursery, the barn, the chicken coop—all the areas close to the home.[29] While Meisel proposed a radical change in the nature of women's work which included physical labor, she maintained the conventional connection between women and the domestic setting. The home and its environs, now endowed with the cachet of science, belonged to these new women, while men would roam the fields.

Meisel found encouragement and funds for her Kinneret training farm from the men of the Zionist movement. By 1911, she had concrete support from Otto Warburg, soon to become the President of the World Zionist Organization, and Arthur Ruppin, who was about to assume the leadership of its local office in Palestine. Ruppin became one of the major figures of Zionism in Palestine and went on to found the Palestine Land Development Office and the Jewish National Fund, which together provided much of the tangible support for the entire Jewish settler movement. Both men enthusiastically adopted Meisel's plan to open a training farm expressly for women that emphasized "modern" agricultural education.[30] From the very outset, the liberation of women from traditional labor was the product of an alliance between Meisel and highly placed men within the Zionist establishment.

Meisel's training farm for women at Kinneret was not only the precursor of her Agricultural School for Young Women at Nahalal, but the cradle of a generation of influential women. Indeed, though only two dozen young women joined Meisel's training farm before the Great War, they include

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many of the legendary political and literary figures in the generation of "founders" who became icons, first of the Labor movement and then of the State of Israel.[31] From 1911 until the farm's close in 1917, Hannah Meisel and the women of Kinneret immersed themselves in an experimental environment that extended even beyond Kinneret to the Palestinian Jewish community at large, in which a widely varied crop of gender definitions flourished. Though gender equality before the Great War was not a universally accepted idea among Jewish men or women generally, views about gender cannot be characterized monolithically as "completely traditional."[32]

The shift to mixed farming in Palestine propelled Meisel's plan for the new Jewish woman. She argued that, if women used science to become the managers of gardens, dairies, and nurseries, they would make communal farms financially viable by reducing the communities' need for scarce cash. As the trend toward mixed agriculture increased the economic value and prestige of gardening, the value of women's work would rise and, with it, the status of women.[33] In acquiring science, women would acquire equality.

Before the Great War, Meisel's principal audience and source of inspiration was the small but influential group of women, many of them her students at Kinneret, who founded the Women Workers' Movement at a meeting in the spring of 1914.[34] They tended to see their difficulties as the consequences of decisions that women themselves made, not as the result of the actions of men per se. In her report on the meeting, Meisel explicitly acknowledged the comradely offer of the representative of the predominantly male Organization of Galil Workers, Eliezer Yaffe, to help women find positions as full members of the organization's farming collectives. This offer and others like it, according to Meisel, demonstrated that it was not men who held them back, but the women's own sense of their limitations. The assembled women, therefore, made "internal improvement" one of their goals[35] and decided to set up farms and schools to produce the new crop of women imbued with the values of physical labor and science.

Two years later in 1916, Meisel's detailed proposal for a permanent agricultural school for women combined science with motherhood. At the base of Meisel's plea lies the view that it is the woman as mother who creates culture. This echoed Ahad Ha-Am's call for "enlightened Jewish mothers" who would "fight for the existence of our people, its language and its spirit."[36] It was as mothers that women would contribute mightily to the nation. Just as her portrait of the new woman as a laborer imbued

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with science found favor among broad sectors of the Zionist establishment, so too did her focus on motherhood.[37] Yet, In Meisel's expanded definition of home, the new Jewish woman would leave the four walls of the house, not for the fields, but for the garden. And she would bring science with her.

Altering women's natures would lead them not only to an expanded concept of home, but it might well lead them beyond marriage to "work on their own," a central theme in Meisel's early publications. Though, she was fond of recalling that many of her graduates from the Kinneret farm took places alongside their husbands to ensure the financial stability of their farms, she nevertheless emphasized repeatedly the number who became independent producers and worked for themselves or as members of agricultural collectives.[38] The Great War closed her school at Kinneret in 1917, but Meisel stood poised to resume her plan for a permanent school at the earliest opportunity.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE "MUSCLE JEW"

Not all Zionists warmed to Meisel's plan for women. In Palestine, the older generation of Jewish farmers looked askance at the young settlers who questioned traditional notions of gender even in personal comportment, as evinced by the fashion of cross-dressing among elite women.[39] Among many European Zionists, the "new woman" evoked outrage. Had Max Nordau, until Herzl's death in 1904 the second most influential man in the Zionist movement, met Meisel, he would have described her as a "degenerate." According to his widely read diagnosis of Europe's ills, "degenerate" men dress like women, and "[w]omen who wish to please men of this kind wear men's dress, an eyeglass, boots with spurs and riding-whip, and show themselves in the street with a cigar in their mouths."[40] Nordau's attack on modernity shaped to some degree the world-view of the late nineteenth-century Zionist movement in Europe before its driving force shifted to Palestine in the 1920s. His rejection of modern Europe resonated even with many socialist Jewish immigrants to Palestine who sought to throw off the European stereotype of Jews as "racially" weak.[41] His antidote was the "muscle Jew." Unlike "coffeehouse Jews" of the Diaspora, the new Jews would "rise early and . . . not weary before sunset, . . . have clear heads, solid stomachs and hard muscles."[42] There was little room left for women, who, he believed, were inherently "sexual and instinctual." Though he supported women's right to vote, he granted to women an utterly "conventional" place in politics.[43]

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For those, unlike Nordau, who actually went to Palestine to become farmers and who experimented with novel ideas about gender, his "muscle Jews" rhetoric served to counter the image of subservience and weakness that they associated with Diaspora Jewry, but, at the same time, it also extolled precisely the traditional kind of manliness that seemed to require a traditional image of women as passive and weak. This idea of women was not the only one formed by the young Zionist settlers; the new sense of manliness led them, as well, to prefer "earthiness over intellectualism."[44] One of the principle architects of education for the Jewish community in Palestine lamented the tendency of Jews in the Diaspora to "grow their heads, already too big, even bigger, while shrinking their already small bodies even smaller." It was too bad, he noted that, while there were many Jewish scholars, there were few Jewish wrestlers.[45] So it was that the adoption of conventional notions of manliness created both anti-intellectual and anti-feminist tendencies even within the relatively progressive settler community.[46]

A mixed reception awaited the young Jewish woman who arrived into the Palestinian Jewish milieu in the decade before the Great War. Although Meisel's advanced degree was an unusual attainment, for either a man or a woman, she represented a larger cohort of immigrants of which women were at least as well, if not better, educated than their contemporary male colleagues.[47] In fact, since women were barred from traditionally religious Jewish schools, they were far more likely than Jewish men to have received the kind of secular, rather than religious, education that would equip them for a modern economy. In 1912 in Russia, almost twice as many Jewish girls as boys attended gymnasium.[48] This represented a marked departure from traditional Jewish patterns and accounts, in part, for the hope that, in the making of the new society, women would participate as men's equals. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear of protests from Zionist women who, once in Palestine, were relegated to such traditional jobs as cooking and housekeeping.[49]

Their rising expectations of gender equality faced the Zionist rhetoric of manliness head on. On one hand, the wave of Zionist settlers before the Great War adopted fashionable socialist notions of gender equality. On the other hand, Zionism also rejected the long-standing and pervasive image of the "womanly" and "effete" Jew by exalting manliness. Just as many settlers, both male and female, envisioned their new society as gender equal, so too did they embrace Bialik's and Nordau's vision of "muscle Jews" who rid themselves of internalized anti-Semitic stereotypes and consequent self-hatred.[50] Yet, if Jewish men were to be manly, in what

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sense were Jewish women to be womanly? For some women, Zionism's manly rhetoric presented no obstacle. If Jewish men were to become "muscle Jews," the women would become "muscle Jewesses." Far from rejecting Zionism's masculine trope, they embraced it and behaved as though the physical equality of women with men was based on strength, prowess, and endurance.[51] Yet, most women rejected the kind of gender equality that denied the physical distinctiveness between men and women.[52] Many women chose to answer Ahad Ha-Am's call for "enlightened Jewish mothers" who saw bringing up children as a national good.[53] Still others, such as Meisel and her colleagues, went to Palestine to build an ideal society under the flag of socialist Zionism. They had a wide range of gender choices available to them, but, unlike their Diaspora cohorts, they had acted upon their belief in physical culture as a personal and national cure, and so they confronted the Zionist rhetoric of manliness quite directly.

One of the most significant creations of the their experiments in Palestine was a novel image of men. A significant component of Meisel's socialist heritage presented an image of the male that contrasted radically with the idea of men as warriors, a popular trope among European nationalists. The socialist generation of youth envisioned a new society built on the ruins of bourgeois Europe and explicitly rejected nationalism's glorification of force in favor of reason and equality. Women, being equally endowed with reason, would join men as equals in creating a more just society. Equality with men no longer required women to be warriors like men; indeed, they could preserve the prized aspects of traditional ideas of domesticity, such as home and motherhood, and make them valuable in the public sphere. The women's suffrage movement adopted the view of women as maternal and uniquely blessed with a women's "peculiar gifts," which would benefit society as a whole. "Maternal influences" rather than female politicians would tame the beastliness of Europe.[54] So while European socialists sought to revalue women's labor, they preserved what George Mosse has called "respectability," the hallmark of middle-class values that cherished the image of a nurturing woman. The results could be quite radical. Even Marx and Engels, "while wanting to replace the patriarchal family structure of their day with a family based on love and greater equality, were careful to stay within the boundaries of respectability."[55]

This sort of "respectability" allowed Zionist settlers to blend socialist and nationalist ideas without a sense of paradox. On one hand, they proposed a radically new concept of Jewish culture; yet, on the other, they relied on the "respectable" models of their middle-class upbringing.

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In Palestine, far from the settled patterns of European norms, the blend suited the makeshift character of their lives. In the Diaspora, however, Jewish nationalism assaulted the sense of respectability held by both Jewish and non-Jewish Europeans of the liberal middle-class. For the great majority of Enlightened Jews of Europe, identifying with a distinct and separate Jewish nation blocked the way to respectability as full fledged citizens of the European nations in which they lived. For European Jews who wished to be citizens equal to all others, the Zionist "muscle Jew" who sets out on his own to free himself of any desire to please was more than merely embarrassing. It amounted to a direct affront to Jewish respectability.

MEISEL'S SYNTHESIS

Hannah Meisel embodied both the radical and the respectable. While the strict house rules she established at her School in the 1920s calls to mind conventional middle-class notions of order and gender, she herself rejected her father's entreaties to follow the "respectable" path for women and avoid an academic career.[56] Her academic achievements certainly reflect the more "progressive" of middle-class sentiments of turn of the century Europe, but her immigration to Palestine in 1909 to join the Zionist settlers in hard physical labor was a radical departure from middle-class Jewish norms. Similarly, Meisel pointed the way from the gender paradox that combined manliness with gender equality. Her advocacy of women's appropriation of the "manly" realm of science accorded well with novel environment of post-War Palestine when agricultural settlement became the sina qua non of the Zionist movement. Even though the image of the "muscle Jew" continued to pervade Zionist rhetoric, Meisel's alliance with the men of the Zionist elite such as Warburg and Ruppin, who enthusiastically supported her as far back as her 1910 experiment at Kinneret, signals a broad transformation of Zionism's gender after the Great War.

Although the women's farm at Kinneret closed in 1917, Great Britain's recognition of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine at the end of the Great War ushered in a new era of optimism among Zionist settlers that presented fertile ground for Meisel's campaign for an agricultural school for young women. The Zionist movement in Europe revived, and the Women's International Zionist Organization [WIZO] formed in London. Renewed emphasis on agricultural settlements, culminating with the creation of the *kibbutz*, led Zionists to search for ways to turn urban European immigrants into collective farmers. But perhaps the most significant force

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that compelled a revaluation of gender during and after the Great War was time itself. The young men and women who arrived unmarried in their late teens before the War were now reaching an age when thoughts of settling competed with radical ideals of social renewal. As Baruch Ben-Avram describes the creation of the *kibbutz*, "groups of young wandering bachelors" were gradually transformed in the 1920s into fixed settlements with families.[57] The more radical notion of independent females faded. Instead, science would revalue women's labor. A scientific education that inculcates women with "a sense of worth" would give her a "feeling of responsibility, initiative, and independent security." As her scientifically informed labor became economically valued, so her status in society would improve, whether or not she became a mother. In 1922, this prescription[58] found support among local women connected with the labor movement.

What about men?

MEISEL'S MEN

How did Zionist men, the overwhelming majority of the Zionist movement's leadership in both Palestine and abroad, receive Meisel's ideas about the role of women? Manly rhetoric belied general support for gender equality, even before the War. Pre-War funding and compensation bear out a pattern of deeply held values about the new Jewish society and about the place of women in it. The Zionist movement at its very top was run by males who accepted Meisel's concept of the Jewish women as scientifically trained in agriculture. Her ideas about women's roles in society, though fairly radical in terms of European tradition, nevertheless evoked sympathetic responses not only at the level of the pioneering youth actually on the land in Palestine, but even at the level of the relatively staid European leaders abroad such as Warburg, the president of the World Zionist Organization. Other male leaders resident in Palestine, such as Arthur Ruppin, Yitzhak Wilkansky, and Eliezer Yaffe, were distinctly sympathetic and, even at times, vigorously devoted to women's causes even in this early period.[59] And although many settler groups before the War did not recognize women as independent, some training farms administered by the local office of the Zionist Organization under Ruppin paid women on the same scale as men. Sejera, where, between 1909 and 1911, Meisel first experimented with agricultural labor for women, was one of them. Women there earned what men did for comparable labor.[60] While Meisel recognized that some men were "satisfied with only Platonic support,"[61]

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she was well aware of substantial material aid from such male allies as Arthur Ruppin, who, as head of the Zionist movement's settlement office in Yafo, appealed persistently to the Jewish National Fund to fund Meisel's project at Kinneret in 1911. True, his request for 40,000 francs was met with an offer of only 6,000 francs, but he did manage to get five acres of land for the experimental farm for women.[62] Thus, even at this very early stage, the difficulties Meisel faced in implementing her plan for women's education did not entail a conflict between "progressive" women, on one hand, and, on the other, a male leadership of the Zionist movement that was sunk in traditional notions of gender. Rather, Meisel's experience led her to place the responsibility for the transformation of gender on women themselves and to view men as potential allies in a wider quest for just labor relations. After the War, a marked change brought the Yishuv closer to Meisel's outlook. Increasing numbers of men within the Yishuv were not only sympathetic to change in women's roles, but actively supportive. Writing for the Yishuv's moderate socialist newspaper in 1922, she observed that "[n]ow, the situation is different . . . women workers who are experts are willingly accepted in the majority of farms and find in them plenty of work opportunities." For Meisel, this amounted to a "a real change of values."[63]

She interpreted this change as evidence that an individual's relation to physical labor, rather than one's gender, determines the way one values women's labor. Thus, men who actually engaged in agricultural work tended to see women as productive workers, while the Zionist leadership of the Diaspora, having "no personal relation" to the life of physical labor, denigrated women's labor. She complained to Menachem Ussishkin, the head of the local Zionist Executive in Palestine, that opposition to her educational programs for women arose precisely from those men who have not yet shed the unhealthy values of the Diaspora in favor of a laboring life on "the Land."[64] For that reason, funds budgeted for women's education by the local Zionist Executive, which had close ties to the young settlers, were "quickly deleted by the inspectorate . . . sent by the Zionist leadership in London."[65] As Meisel never tired of pointing out to overseas visitors, the further one gets from physical labor on "the Land," the less apt one is to understand the travails of laboring women. So Meisel reframed the political problems besetting her plan for the scientific education of young women in terms of a conflict between Jews abroad who were alienated from "the Land" and from labor upon it, and those who derived their sustenance—and consequently their values—from agricultural work. Recalling Bialik's admonition in 1903 that he who does not derive his values from

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the soil is "half a man," it is clear that Meisel appropriated Bialik's 1903 call to manliness and directed it toward the service of gender equality. Since both men and women would work "the Land," they would have similar values, and their labor would be equally valued. In Meisel's post-War analysis, both men and women who could not derive their values from physical labor would fail to appreciate the value of her novel form of women's education. On the other hand, men and women who did, would support her. Men per se were not enemies.

No relation of Meisel's highly placed male advocates would be complete without referring again at greater length to the most influential local voice in settlement policy, Arthur Ruppin.[66] As the Director of the Settlement Office of the local Zionist Executive before the War, he was instrumental in the founding of Meisel's collective at Kinneret back in 1908. He then became the Director of the Palestine Office and a member of the Zionist Executive. Although a socialist in his youth, Ruppin developed a blend of liberal social Darwinism with Zionism through which he sought to overcome "capitalism and the acquisitive instinct."[67] After years of work for the Zionist movement, however, his views became increasingly pragmatic. He came to downplay ideology in favor of "[t]echnical and managerial experience."[68] In Hannah Meisel, he met an ideal collaborator in his quest to engineer the settlement of Jews on the land. Both shared a vision of science as the tool of Jewish social and spiritual renovation. Largely in recognition of his efforts on behalf of the Agricultural School for Young Women, Ruppin became the chair of the School's steering committee in 1924.[69] His active participation in Meisel's projects both before and after the War illustrates the extent to which Meisel enjoyed the practical support of men within the local Zionist leadership.

Ruppin was not an isolated case. Meisel also brought to her side the most respected voice of agricultural science in the Jewish community of Palestine, Yitzhak Wilkansky. Arriving in Palestine in 1908 with a degree in Agronomy from the University of Köningsberg, he established an experimental farm which, by the end of the Great War, became a chief source of local agricultural knowledge. Wilkansky's primary concerns, as were those of Meisel, focused on adapting European agricultural knowledge to the local conditions in the Middle East and training immigrants in self-sustaining techniques. As a member of the locally powerful Executive Committee of the Zionist Organization in Palestine, he advised the World Zionist Organization on agricultural settlement, founded The Hebrew University's agricultural branch at Rehovot, and edited one of the most influential presses in Palestine.[70] Wilkansky believed in Meisel's vision of

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a novel role for women in the Zionist movement. Even before the War, he had acquired the reputation as a figure of inspiration among women settlers seeking technical education for their pursuit of gender equality.[71] Wilkansky went on to become an enthusiastic supporter of Meisel's school as the chair of its Preparatory Committee in 1924 and a member of its Supervisory Committee in 1931.[72]

The list of Meisel's male advocates lengthened after the War. If she were to choose a committed ally with substantial influence within the Zionist establishment itself, she could have chosen no better person than Akiva Ettinger. Ettinger studied agronomy at the University of Bonn and came to Palestine in 1914 as the manager of all Jewish National Fund properties. After the War, he became the Director of the Department of Agricultural Settlement. In his view, the new cooperative groups, later to be known as *kibbutzim*, would succeed only if their own members possessed the necessary agricultural knowledge to make them independent of outside experts. Technical agricultural education therefore had to take first place in the funding priorities of Zionism.[73] Education was, of course, also Meisel's central focus, but Ettinger shared as well her understanding of the special status, and consequently the special needs, of female workers.

At the close of the Great War, Ettinger sounded many of the themes developed earlier by Meisel and her colleagues and sought to explain gender differences as the products of European ghetto culture.[74] According to Ettinger, a woman had more difficulty than a man adjusting to pioneering life in Palestine, because she was "more tied to traditional rules of domestic living." When she came to Palestine, therefore, it was the woman more than the man who had to face the economic hardship of feeding a family. In addition, because European Jewish women had often had servants to do housework, they were unprepared for the rigors of life on the collective settlements in Palestine. For these reasons, women confronted more obstacles to becoming farmers in Palestine than did men. Nevertheless, Ettinger did not see these obstacles as the result of the woman's "natural" character. He thought, as did Meisel, that personal characteristics arose from mutable social culture. Nature could be altered and improved upon by a new kind of education that emphasized agricultural labor combined with professional qualifications. With this education, a woman need not choose between home or profession; rather, a profession and domestic responsibility might coincide so that a woman could, for example, be both an "architect and a mother." In that case, she would help build "the most beautiful and warm part of our national home as well as being the best qualified of architects." Similarly, her duties as a farmer were not simply the

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passive beautification of the home, but the active management of the dairy or the chickens. As Ettinger saw it, the woman's managerial role in the family farm required that her education cover not "merely" jam-making, but financial accounting as well. And just as Meisel entertained the possibility of women assuming careers outside the home as professionals, Ettinger could envision woman as research agronomists at experimental farms, in which case their education would be "very similar" to that for men. He hoped to see single women living as farmers "on their own accounts," or as teachers and researchers who could travel easily to schools and experimental stations as needed.

Ettinger's advocacy of nearly all the gender reforms developed by Meisel and her friends before the War made possible an effective alliance between the local Zionist leadership and feminists within the Labor movement. The Council of Women Workers urged Ettinger to establish women's training farms distinct from those of men. Since women "are not used to free, independent production without dependence on others," only in a separate group would their "potential productive powers" be developed. Then they could go out into mixed farms without "blurring" their "independence."[75] Throughout the 1920s, Ettinger championed the cause of the Women Workers and established many training farms exclusively for women in addition to accepting Meisel's invitation to serve on the Board of her Agricultural School for Young Women after its founding in 1926. Shortly before the establishment of the state if Israel in 1948, he looked back on the twenties and concluded that ". . . working agriculture would not have been realized without the independent women workers farms."[76] Yet even in the 1920s, and without the benefit of hindsight, Ettinger's persistence on behalf of Meisel's educational projects reveal that the distance between feminists and the local Zionist establishment within Palestine was small. It is hardly surprising, despite the view of modern feminist historiography, that the feminists' "radical" proposals at the founding conference of the Histadrut in 1920 found such overwhelming approval.[77] Very much a part of the local "establishment," Ettinger very publicly excoriated opponents of women's technical education[78]: "Let us cease the custom of blaming the Jewish women of Israel. . . ; the reasons for the current problem lie in the dominant condition and in the lack of interest on the part of the institutions of settlement." Ettinger made Meisel's opponents appear as marginal malcontents. By the end of the 1920s, over half a dozen training farms for young women had been founded.[79]

Meisel's highly placed allies in the local Zionist elite indicate the extent to which her novel ideas about women were embraced by the male

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leadership of the settler movement in Palestine, but beyond this small, if influential, group, the question remains to what extent the Zionist movement as a whole was receptive to her ideas. Meisel's search for the funds needed to found and operate her Agricultural School for Young Women provides an ideal arena in which to gauge the popularity of her ideas, for, in seeking support, she had to reach far beyond her local circle of friends. Though their opinions carried great weight in Palestine, Ruppin, Ettinger, and Wilkansky had very little power within the larger World Zionist Organization and very limited financial resources directly under their control. With their aid, Meisel sought to sell the plan for her school to the moneyed men and women in the Zionist movements of Western Europe and North America, a formidable task before the War and a daunting one following it. Although the Zionist Organization decided to focus on rural development in Palestine after the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the sources of financial support for such projects were disrupted by the Great War. Donors all over Europe had to recreate or invent the means of organized philanthropy. Even women's groups abroad provided no sure source of funding. The Women's International Zionist Organization, founded in London in 1920, became embroiled in a struggle with the local Zionist Executive in Palestine over control of various projects.[80] Finding a way through the tangle of egos, political interests, and conflicting ideologies of the Zionist movement was no mean task and one that Meisel would master only with time and experience.

Her collaboration with men such as Ettinger, who was already inoculated against the politics of voluntary organizations, proved a boon. Just before the 1920 founding of WIZO in London, Meisel and Ettinger collaborated to draw up a prospective budget for her school. Since Meisel had virtually no experience in accounting and financial administration, Ettinger and his assistants filled the gap.[81] As Chief of the Agricultural and Settlement Department, Ettinger appealed directly to one of the founders of WIZO in London for full financing of the school's establishment and its first year of operation. Initially Ettinger had promised that his Department would provide for half the first year's operating expenses as well, but within a week of his staff's determination of the school's actual expenses, he increased his Department's offering to cover the entire operating expenses of the first year.[82] Shortly after Ettinger began his efforts on her behalf, Meisel enlisted the aid of her old friend, Arthur Ruppin, who by then was strategically placed on the Executive Committee of the Zionist organization's activities in all of Palestine. She suggested that he write to yet another of WIZO's founders in London. Two days later, Ruppin did exactly that.[83]

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In the bargaining that followed the initial requests, Ettinger continued to act as Meisel's advocate, pleading with WIZO to restore cuts in funding and with groups in Europe to support various budget lines.[84] Squabbles among and between donors on one side, and Ettinger and Meisel on the other, continued right up to the founding of the school in 1926.[85] Yet, Meisel and her allies succeeded.

At the ceremony opening the Girl's Agricultural School at Nahalal in April 1926, Meisel found herself in the Zionist mainstream. Whatever difficulties she had in raising money, the high and mighty of international Zionism attended and blessed the proceedings.[86]

MEISEL'S WOMEN

Although Meisel praised the women of WIZO who funded her school and "saved the situation,"[87] her rosy portrait of WIZO's contribution belies a deep distrust born of substantial disagreements throughout a long relationship. Formed in London in 1920, WIZO reflected the views of women who, as unpaid voluntary workers subsisting on their husbands' incomes, did not generally conceive of women "on their own."[88] They were attracted to Meisel's emphasis on unique female abilities that precluded heavy field work. Yet their notions of women's work as bringing "cleanliness and beauty" to rural life, "decorating the dining hall," or avoiding competition with men in areas of male power such as politics,[89] represented exactly the sort of Diaspora decadence that Meisel sought to overcome. Nevertheless, these were the overseas audiences from whom Meisel sought funding, and she subtly transformed her School to fit their preconceptions. Unlike her plan of 1916, the 1920 proposal removed lengthy descriptions of women who would work as farmers on their own and focused instead on the educated woman who would "assist her husband in his farming."[90] In a letter to one of the founders of the Women's Zionist Organization in London, Meisel presented the revised, indeed "respectable," picture:

> The aim of the school is to train young Jewish women for work in general and to give them the necessary knowledge for managing the various branches of rural activity which come within the special scope of women's work. It will also develop initiative and a sense of responsibility among young women in their work so that they may afterwards fulfill their duties as the wives of working agriculturists or as independent workers (as members of Workmen's or Young Women's Groups, on a small holding of their own, or in some other capacity).[91]

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Responsibility and initiative still appear as the hallmarks of the new Jewish woman, who was to move from passive to active roles as she created the nation. Yet, women "on their own" appear as an afterthought. They might be "independent workers" in groups of youngsters, but the option of becoming farmers in their own right, an image elaborated at length in 1914 and 1916, is exiled to parentheses. Later, when addressing the New York Women's Committee in 1923, she pulled out all the stops. Leaving out any mention of collective life, she lingered instead on the warmth of the hearth as a refuge from the hardships that face the male worker:

> If, at least, our young [male] settler would have by his side an efficient woman, well-trained in those branches of farming usually managed by women, this would be an invaluable asset to any farm. Such a woman knows how to make a pleasant home and how to keep house with modest means; she knows how to take care of her family's health, and how to make the best use of the farm's produce; and sometimes her own expertly handled branches of farming, such as dairy and poultry raising, yield a profit which exceeds the proceeds of her husband's work.[92]

One can imagine the New York ladies so warming to the picture of the home's hearth as to glide right by the last phrase with barely a start. The possibility of a woman's economic value exceeding that of a man's is all that remains of Meisel's earlier emphasis on financial independence, and even that is softened by more conventional themes. It is difficult to say what part of the various pictures she drew of the "new" Jewish women expressed her own view, and what part she contrived specifically as a marketing ploy aimed at relatively conservative Diaspora women. The call to wide audiences, whether directed toward the socialist mothers of the Yishuv in Palestine or toward the wealthy volunteers of liberal Diaspora women's organizations, was successful. One can best appreciate Meisel's variations on a theme of the liberated women as she did: a range of images usefully employed for public ends. By 1924, WIZO had agreed to supply the major part of the School's operating budget.[93]

Yet, if the battle for funds was won, the conflict with WIZO's women had just begun in earnest. In her struggle for gender equality, she came to see the overseas women as much an obstacle as men. Far from casting gender reform as a battle against an entrenched male elite, she saw opposition arising from the peculiarities of Diaspora Jews, both male and female. Meisel acutely distinguished between the Diaspora's backward values and the Yishuv's progressive ones. Men of the "Zionist Leadership in London," the international seat of Zionism, had no "personal relation" to agricultural

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work and so were miserly regarding women's education. In the Yishuv, however, men such as her friends Ruppin, Ettinger, and Wilkansky were generous and sympathetic.[94] Her friend, Nechama Shor, confirmed her impression of Diaspora, as opposed to Yishuv, males. Writing from Vienna in 1923, Shor extolled the women of Vienna for selling their jewels in order to support Meisel's work and reported that it was the male leadership in London that forbade spending the money on "women's issues."[95] Clearly, Diaspora men were very much unlike the Yishuv variety.

The same was true for Diaspora women. Not withstanding the noble gesture of the bejeweled ladies of Vienna, Meisel focused on the corrupting affects of Diaspora culture upon women, especially those in WIZO. Nowhere is the gap between Meisel and the overseas women of WIZO more clearly revealed than in the "dirty boots" controversy that vexed her for a decade. She smarted under a continual barrage of criticism launched in the early 1920s by a visiting WIZO delegation from London who complained about "disorder" in everything from small budget irregularities to the students' "dirty boots and clothing seen lying about" Nahalal.[96] Meisel and her husband were among the founders of the legendary cooperative farm of Nahalal.

Founded in 1920, Nahalal was struggling to establish itself as financially viable and was facing enormous problems associated with reclaiming swampy land for agriculture. Nevertheless, the workers of Nahalal agreed to host a few of Meisel's students albeit under fairly primitive conditions even before special facilities had been built and the school regularly funded. Complaints from the middle-class ladies of London about conditions at Nahalal only confirmed Meisel's general idea that Diaspora philanthropists, whether male of female, did not endorse the values of the new Jewish homeland nor grasp the relation between the value of labor and the transformation of gender identity. Although the WIZO agreed in 1924 to undertake the lion's share of fiscal responsibility for the School, the support provoked a round of dickering when the promised funds did not arrive. The School's Administrative Committee, chaired by Meisel's friend, Arthur Ruppin, went so far as to issue an ultimatum to WIZO's leaders. If funds were not produced as promised, the Committee would simply disband.[97] On top of this, WIZO seemed to place in doubt Meisel's competence to run the school she had fought so hard to create. She complained bitterly to a friend that WIZO had taken away all the creative control of her job as director of the school and turned her into a "mere clerk." She wondered if she could continue her work in the absence of WIZO's "mutual understanding or spiritual engagement."[98] The funds,

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though less than promised, did arrive, but relations between Meisel and the WIZO ladies abroad did not improve.

WIZO went so far as to question Meisel's integrity when, in 1927, a year after the school's formal opening, the "dirty boots" controversy erupted once again. After reviewing several years of the School's account books, WIZO found that, in response to their earlier protest about "dirty boots," Meisel had bought new boots in Palestine and charged them to WIZO. In the spirit of righteous propriety, the London ladies objected: ". . . we said that we would pay for clothing, and she [Meisel] should have sent the shoe sizes to London so that we could send her the boots."[99] For Meisel, no statement better captures WIZO's misunderstanding of meaningful reform, for it rejected Meisel's entire argument that connected individuals, male and female, to the culture they create through labor. If a "healthy" culture was to thrive, the Jewish community in Palestine had to avoid imports and produce what it consumed. Therefore, boots must be made and bought locally. Unlike Diaspora Jewry, the Yishuv would have to depend upon its own labor. As the Zionist economy grew self-sufficient, so would the status of women in it be transformed. The conflict continued through the decade, and by 1930, Meisel felt that WIZO's persistent pettiness and its ignorance of local conditions "robs me of all joy in my work."[100]

Perhaps it was Meisel's experience with WIZO that encouraged her to set women's issues in the wider context of labor relations and to place the labor movement, rather than women's groups, at the center of her loyalties.[101] In this sense, the ideal of physical labor and the political success of the Labor Party subsumed her concerns about gender. Very clearly she claimed that the School would "implement" the ideal of the labor movement by enabling women to become productive workers who would emerge "more useful and more devoted" to the principles of labor Zionism. The primary principle to be learned was that all, including organizations, should follow from the experience of labor. So it was that working women themselves established the women's farm at Kinneret and the School at Nahalal. Only afterwards did donors arrive on the scene from abroad. There could be no fund-raising, drawing up budgets, making plans, and convening meetings before one experienced labor. Philanthropy could not labor; only laborers could. It followed that those who labored should direct the activities of those who raised money. Here, Meisel saw her efforts in the mainstream of socialist Zionism in Palestine, which combined the classic proletarian ideal with a cure for the degenerate life of Diaspora Jewry. Work on the land would set free the worker and remake the Jew. It would also create a modern Jewish woman.

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Only the Labor Movement and only physical labor on "the Land" would free women as it would free the Jewish people. Jews who choose to remain in the Diaspora, including the middle-class women of WIZO in London and North America, could not hope to understand this larger vision of Zionism. As long as they remained abroad beyond the experience of labor, they would fall back upon a narrow conception of women's issues isolated from their proper place in the concerns of those who worked "the Land."[102]

The Zionist movement embodied "the most conscious and the most intensive attempt to change the understanding of gender within the realm of nationalist assumptions."[103] Hannah Meisel's revaluation of gender was the result. She drew upon both the socialist and nationalist tendencies within Zionism. Though male toughness, a mainstay of European nationalist culture, remained a central trope of Zionist rhetoric, Meisel adopted the socialist version of gender, which extolled physical labor as a antidote for the injustices of class and race, and adapted it to women who would manifest their toughness in collective labor and in agricultural science. Meisel's pre-War farming experience at Sejera and Kinneret, as well as her post-War drive to raise funds from overseas donors, led her away from the more "radical" vision of women doing "men's work." Instead of heavy field work, women would become a repository of agricultural science in the collective settlements of British Mandate Palestine. As scientific knowledge increased the value of agricultural production, so the value of a woman's labor would rise and, with it, her social status.

Meisel did not see her struggle for gender equality as a battle against atavist males. Rather, she found willing and even eager support from men throughout the local Zionist establishment in Palestine. There can be little doubt that Meisel felt far more comfortable with her male friends on her School's Administrative Committee—Ruppin, Ettinger, Wilkansky, and Krause—than she felt in the company of Diaspora donors, male or female. Her varied experience with WIZO led her to distrust overseas organizations and to adopt the standard Labor Zionist view of Diaspora culture as decadent. The culture of dispersion, not men, was the enemy of Jewish renewal in general and of women's liberation in particular. Living on "the Land" and by "the Land" was the remedy. In this sense, physical labor, not gender, was Meisel's prime criterion of identity. She considered herself a Jewish worker in the Jewish homeland and a female member of the Zionist Labor movement. All else was the politics of finding donors. By the time the Agricultural School for Young Women opened in 1926, the Zionist mainstream had flowed toward her. Nearly a quarter of a century

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after Bialik had proclaimed that "[W]hoever does not create all of his values from the land is half a man," Meisel and her students embodied this transformed image.

Notes

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1. By Palestine, I refer to the land under the sovereignty of the Ottomans until the end of Great War, when it became a British Mandate, and which, in 1948, became the State of Israel.

2. Haim Nachman Bialik, "Speech to the Founding Session of Teachers Conference in Zichron Ya'akov in 1903," in David Kimchi (ed), *Jubilee Anniversary of the Organization of Teachers*, VI (Jerusalem, 1903–1904) 396–7 [Hebrew].

3. See George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man. The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford, 1996) 119–22, 151–3; Mosse, *Confronting the Nation. Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover, 1993) 161–75; Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948* (Oxford, 1992) 12–13.

4. All English translations from Hebrew use "girls" for "tza'irot." See "Prospectus" (6 February 1920) and "Suggested Program" Director to Eder (29 March 1920), Central Zionist Archives [henceforth, CZA], S15/20100I and F49/1224, respectively; and *Survey of an Agricultural School for Girls* (11 July 1920), CZA, S15/20100II. Nevertheless, Meisel had reservations about the use of a term that might connote inferior status. She was sufficiently vexed to have written to the poet laureate of the Zionist movement, Haim Nachman Bialik, to ask for the appropriate Hebrew term for female students aged 18 and older, "the majority of whom are not married." See Meisel to Bialik (4 February 1924), *Copy Book of Outgoing Letters*, p. 426, Archives of the Jezreel Valley Regional Council [henceforth, AJVRC], 96.01. I have not found Bialik's response, but the printed program for the opening ceremony of the school in April 1926 (CZA J41/401) uses the English word "girls." I have adopted the translation of "young women" to convey Meisel's sense in current American English.

5. Billie Melman, "From the Periphery to the Center of History: Gender and

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National Identity in the Yishuv, 1890–1920," *Zion* [Jerusalem], 62(3) (1997) 243–4. Although, the story of women is not represented in the "central narratives" of the Yishuv's history, it has been "extensively" documented.

6. On Zionist myth-making, see Anita Shapira, "The Myth of the New Jew." in her *New Jews, Old Jews* (Tel-Aviv, 1997) 155–74 [Hebrew]. I use the term "Land" as Zionists did to denote the "Land of Israel," particularly those areas of land that were the Biblical homeland of the Jews.

7. A typical example is Bracha Habas and Eliezer Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book* (Tel-Aviv, 1947) [Hebrew]. See especially, Bracha Habas's introduction for the ideological basis of this collection in the 1930s.

8. Council of Women Workers in Palestine, *Women Workers' Accounts—A Compilation* (Tel-Aviv, 1930) [Hebrew]; and the first English edition of Rachel Katznelson-Rubashow [Shazar] (ed), *The Plough Woman: Records of the Pioneer Women of Palestine* (New York, 1932 [reprinted: 1975]) [First Hebrew edition: Council of Women Workers in Palestine, Women Workers' Accounts—A Compilation. Tel-Aviv, 1930].

9. In 1925, the Organization of Jewish Women in Erez Yisrael and the Women's International Zionist Organization published a trial issue of *Woman. A Monthly Dedicated to the Life and Interests of the Woman in Erez Israel*, which began regular monthly publication and spoke for "the broad center of the social democratic left." See p. 124 in Hanna Herzog, "Women's Voluntary Organizations—A Forgotten Chapter in the Historiography of the Yishuv," *Cathedra*, 70 (1994) 111–33.

10. For surveys in English of the "revisionist" controversy in Israel, see Anita Shapira, "The Past is Not a Foreign Country," *The New Republic* (29 November 1999) 26–36; Gulie Ne'eman Arad, "Israeli Historiography Revisited," Special Issue of *History and Memory*, 7(1) (1995) 5–7; Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates. Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (London, 1999).

11. For example, compare the overtly hagiographic treatment in Karla Rosovsky, "Hannah Meisel Shochat: Jubilee Honors for the Pioneers," *Bimat HaIsha*, 14 (1971) 54 [Hebrew], and Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi, *Manya Shochat* (Jerusalem, 1976) [Hebrew], with the feminist scholarship of Shulamit Reinharz, "Toward a Model of Female Political Action: The Case of Manya Shochat, Founder of the First Kibbutz," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 7(4) (1984) 275–84, and Barbara Swirski and Marilyn P. Safir (eds), *Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel* (New York, 1991).

12. Swirski and Safir, *Calling the Equality Bluff.* For similar versions, see Dafna Izraeli and Deborah Bernstein, "The Women Workers of the Second Aliyah," in Israel Bartel, Ze'ev Tsachor, and Yehoshua Kaniel (eds), *The Second Aliyah*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1997) vI, 305. See also Deborah Bernstein, "The Women Workers' Movement in Pre-State Israel, 1919–1939," *Signs*, 12 (1987) 454–70; Deborah Bernstein, *The Struggle for Equality: Urban Women Workers in Pre-State Israeli Society* (New York, 1986); Dafna Izraeli, "The Women Workers' Movement: First Wave Feminism in Prestate Israel," in Deborah Bernstein (ed), *Pioneers and*

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Homemakers, Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel (New York, 1992) 183–209. For other versions of this article, see Izraeli, "The Women Workers' Movement in Pre-State Israel from its Beginning to 1927," *Cathedra*, 32 (1984) 109–40 [Hebrew]; and "The Zionist Women's' Movement in Palestine, 1911–1927: A Sociological Analysis," *Signs*, 7(1) (1981) 87–114.

For more nuanced and historical treatments, see Melman, "From the Periphery to the Center of History," 243–78; Ophra Greenberg and Hanna Herzog, *A Voluntary Women's Organization in a Developing Society. The Contribution of WIZO to Israeli Society* (Tel-Aviv, 1978) 95–6 [Hebrew]; and Herzog, "Women's Voluntary Oranizations," 131–133 [Hebrew]. *The Hebrew Encyclopedia* presents the most widely accessible picture of Israeli culture (Tel-Aviv, 1992) [Hebrew]. Volume 6, part 2: "The State of Israel" (455–65) contains an essay by Dafna Izraeli on the "Position of Women" in modern Israel with only passing references to history, while part 1: "Pre-State Israel" (735–80) contains no essay devoted specifically to women. Its historical review of the period in question makes no mention of women, and the extensive chart of pioneer collectives mentions no women's' collectives or women's training farms.

13. The chain of citations begins with Eyal Kafkafi, "Psycho-Intellectual Aspect of Gender Inequality in Israel's Labor Movement," *Israel Studies*, 4(1) (1999) 188–211, who, on p. 189, cites pp. 455–6 in Deborah Bernstein's "The Women Workers' Movement . . ." in *Signs*, in which an anecdote about discrimination against women in heavy road building during the 1920s serves to support the claim that ". . . the initial innovative striving for equality and liberation weakened as conservative moves to reinforce inequality and reestablish women's traditional roles in society strengthened." In support, Bernstein cites Dafna Izraeli, "The Zionist Women's' Movement. . . ," who posits such a "shift," though the evidence is open to wide interpretation.

14. Izraeli, "The Zionist Women's Movement. . . ," 113.

15. *Ibid.*, 103.

16. *Ibid.*, 110. See also Ada Fishman-Maimon, *Fifty Years of the Women's Labor Movement, 1904–1954* (Tel-Aviv, 1955) [Hebrew].

17. *Ibid.*, 103.

18. *Idem.*

19. *Ibid.*, 106.

20. *Ibid.*, 111.

21. Margalit Shilo, "The Women's Farm at Kinneret, 1911–1917: A Solution to the Problem of the Working Woman in the Second Aliyah," *Cathedra*, 14 (1980) 81–113 [Hebrew]; English version: L. I. Levine (ed and trans., *The Jerusalem Cathedra* (Detroit, 1981) vol. 1, 246–83. This is the pioneering work on the status of women before the First World War. All citations here refer to the English version.

22. On the Zionist idealization of physical labor, see p. 23 in Anita Shapira, "Introduction," in Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (eds), *Essential Papers on*

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Zionism (New York, 1996) 1–29; Eliezer Schweid, "The Rejection of the Diaspora in Zionist Thought: Two Approaches," *Studies in Zionism*, 5(1) (1984) 43–70 [see pp. 150–56 of the reprinted article in *ibid.*, 133–160.

23. Anna Maisel [sic], *Recherches anatomiques et taxinomiques sur le tégument de la graine des légumineuses* (Université de Besançon, 19 June 1909). I thank Ester Hakim for this citation.

24. For a contrast, see Yael Gordon quoted on p. 13 in [Hannah Meisel], "From the Conference of Women Workers of the Galil," *HaPoel HaTza'ir*, 7(37) (9 July 1914) 12–14 [Hebrew]. For the conflicting goals of personal and political development in a wider frame, see Henry Near, *The Kibbutz and Society, 1923–1933* (Jerusalem, 1984) 32–8 [Hebrew].

25. See Derek Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy. The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918* (Bloomington, IN, 1991) 13–37; Baruch Ben-Avram, "The Emergence of the Kvutza from the Aspirations of the Pioneers of the Second Aliyah for Autonomous Labor," Cathedra, No. 18 (January 1981) 118–23 [Hebrew]; Henry Near, "To Each His Own Degania," *Cathedra*, 29 (1983) 63–88 [Hebrew].

26. Shilo, "The Women's Farm at Kinneret," 253, 256–8. See also Y. Harari, *Wife and Mother in Israel* (Tel-Aviv, 1959) 343 [Hebrew]; David Tidhar, *Encyclopedia of the Pioneers and Builders of the Yishuv*, 6 (Tel-Aviv, 1955) 2603–5 [Hebrew]; Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 26–32.

27. Sarah Kriegser, "The Beginnings of Our Agricultural Training," in Habas and Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book*, 506–7. See also Rachel Yanait-Ben-Zvi, *Eliyahu Krause* (Jerusalem, 1963) 22–3 [Hebrew]. Tchiya Lieberson noted that, under Krause's direction, "there was no distinction made between the type of work done by women and that done by men." See her *Chapters of My Life* (Tel-Aviv, 1970) 58–9 [Hebrew].

28. Hannah Meisel [Mamashi], "The Question of the Woman Worker of the Galil," *HaPoel HaTza'ir*, December (1910) 4–6.

29. Quotations from Kriegser, "The Beginnings of Our Agricultural Training," in Habas and Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book*, 507, describing Meisel's views at Kinneret in the spring of 1911. See also, Yael Gordon, "The Trials of Transformation," Habas and Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book*, 545.

30. Shilo, "The Women's Farm at Kinneret," 256–8; Harari, *Wife and Mother in Israel*, 343–4; Shmuel Dayan, *With the Founders of the Settlement* (Tel-Aviv, 1966), 235 [Hebrew].

31. Meisel estimated that 70 women passed through the women's farm program at Kinneret between 1911 and 1917. See Meisel, "Rural Education for Girls," *At this Moment*, 3 (1916) 58–61 [Hebrew]. Among the more notable of Meisel's Kinneret students were Leah Meron-Katznelson, Hanna Chizik, Atara Kroll, Mina Zevin, Sara Kriegser, Sarah Malkin, Leah Meisel-Vilkanski, Shoshana Blaustein, Rachel Blaustein, Sarah Shmuklar, Tamar Leshansky-Shavi, Rachel Katznelson-Shazar, Batya Brenner, Batya Shein, and Shifra Shturman. See Shilo, "The Women's Farm

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at Kinneret," 258–9; Harari, *Wife and Mother in Israel*, 344–5; Dayan, *With the Founders of the Settlement*, 233–9.

32. As does Margalit Shilo in "The Women's Farm at Kinneret," 248. She adds that women experienced "no change in their traditional status or functions" (p. 248). For an opposing view that emphasizes diversity and experimentation during the pre-War period, see Melman, "From the Periphery to the Center of History," 243–78.

33. Meisel, "Rural Education for Girls," 56–8.

34. [Hannah Meisel], "From the Conference of Women Workers of the Galil," *HaPoel HaTza'ir*, 7(38) (17 July 1914) 12–13 [Hebrew] (see also 7(37), Note 24, above).

35. *Ibid.*, 7(38) (17 July 1914), 13; Henry Near, *The Kibbutz Movement: A History, vI. Origins and Growth, 1909–1939* (Oxford, 1992) 50–2.

36. Meisel, "Rural Education for Girls," 61; and Ahad Ha-Am, quoted in Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Jewish Education in Israel, vI: 1854–1914* (Jerusalem, 1985) 151–2 [Hebrew].

37. On Zionist education and pragmatism, see Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Jewish Education in Israel, vII: 1914–1920* (Jerusalem, 1990) [Hebrew] 383–5; Anita Shapira, *Berl. The Biography of a Socialist Zionist* (Cambridge (UK), 1984), 31–9.

38. *Ibid.*, 61.

39. See Melman, "From the Periphery to the Center of History," 259–66. For an example of the reaction against women in men's clothing, see excerpt from Moshe Smilansky, "First Meetings," in Habas and Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book*, 696–7.

40. Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (Lincoln, NE, [1892]1993) 538–9. On Nordau in the Zionist movement, see Mosse, *Confronting the Nation*, 161–175; Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 151–4; Michael Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914–1933* (Cambridge (UK), 1997) 106–08; P. M. Baldwin, "Liberalism, Nationalism, and Degeneration: The Case of Max Nordau," *Central European History*, 13 (1980) 99–120; Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History* (New York, 1987) 108–18 [Hebrew]; Shapira, *Land and Power*, 12–13; John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race. Jewish Doctors and Race Science in fin du siècle Europe* (New Haven, CT, 1994) 168–9.

41. Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York, 1991) 38–53.

42. Max Nordau, "Muscle Jew" in *Zionistische Schriften* [1909], quoted in Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 152. See also Elboim-Dror, *Jewish Education. . .*, II, 351–9; and Rachel Elboim-Dror, "Women in Zionist Utopias," *Cathedra*, 66 (1992) 111–42 [Hebrew].

43. Mosse, *Confronting the Nation*, 140, 164, 174. On Jewish utopian visions of gender, see p. 106 in Elboim-Dror, "Gender in Utopianism: the Zionist Case," *History Workshop Journal*, 37 (1994) 99–116.

44. See Shapira, "Introduction," 23.

45. Yehudah Grosovsky, "Rural Schools," *Shiluach*, 4 (1897–98) 264–5 [Hebrew].

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46. For images of gender in contemporary literature of the Yishuv, see Nirit Reichel, "'Roots' or 'Horizons': The Image of the 'Ultimate Pupil' in Erez-Israel, 1989–1933," *Cathedra*, 83 (April 1997) 64–5 [Hebrew].

47. See 383 in Yosef Gorny, "Changes in the Social and Political Structure of the Second Aliyah between 1904 and 1940," in Reinharz and Shapira (eds), *Essential Papers on Zionism*, 371–421 [reprinted from original publ. 1975].

48. Elboim-Dror, *Jewish Education*. . . , I, 51.

49. For a selection compiled well after the events, see Rachel Katznelson-Rubashow [Shazar] (ed), *The Plough Woman*.

50. Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 95–6; and Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 151–3.

51. Melman, "From the Periphery to the Center of History," 255–6. See also, Gordon, "The Trials of Transformation," 547; Aliza Shidlovsky, "The Trials of Absorption," Habas and Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book*, 557; and Dayan, *With the Founders of the Settlement*, 237. For women in the early paramilitary groups, see Ya'akov Goldstein, *The Forefathers of the Israeli Defense Forces. Bar Giora and HaShomer Underground Associations, 1907–1935* (Tel-Aviv, 1994) 66 [Hebrew].

52. See Goldstein, *The Forefathers of the Israeli Defense Force*, 62–3. and Near, *The Kibbutz Movement: A History, vI.*, 40.

53. Quoted in Elboim-Dror, *Jewish Education*. . . , I, 151–2.

54. Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 119–22; and George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York, 1985) 111.

55. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 184. See also pp. 9, 97, 191, 111.

56. See, "House Rules," in *Program. Agricultural School for Girls* (Nahalal, 1927–1928) 11–13, CZA, J41/401 [Hebrew]. On her relation with her father, see Karla Rosovsky, "Hannah Meisel Shochat: Jubilee Honors for the Pioneers," *Bimat HaIsha*, 14 (1971) 54 [Hebrew].

57. Ben-Avram, "The Emergence of the *Kvutza*," 119–20. Meisel, older than most of her colleagues, married in 1912 at the age of 29. Her entire sojourn at the women's farm at Kinneret between 1912 and 1917 was undertaken in her husband's absence.

58. Meisel, "Agricultural Education for Women Workers," *HaPoel HaTza'ir*, 15(38) (22 September 1922) 5 [Hebrew].

59. For Yaffe's and Wilkansky's support of laboring women, see Kriegser, "The Beginnings of Our Agricultural Training," in Habas and Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book*, 508. Also see Ben-Tzion Yisraeli , "On the History of 'The Farm'," in *ibid.*, 424; and S. D. Yaffe, "Kinneret of Long Ago," *ibid.*, 429–434. Wilkansky went on to become an enthusiastic supporter of Meisel's school as the chair of its Preparatory Committee in 1924 and a member of its Supervisory Committee in 1931. See "Minutes of Preparatory Committee for the Agricultural School for Girls at Nahalal, Jerusalem," (8 January 1924], CZA J41/401; and "Minutes of the Supervisory Committee of the School," (22 November 1931), CZA J41/402. On Ruppin, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 80–102.

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60. Compensation at Sejera was remarkably equitable, as indicated by contemporary payrolls. Of the four women out of 47 men and women, Meisel was paid more than most men, probably a result of her advanced education. Only two men made more than she; David Ben-Gurion, later Israel's first Prime Minister, was paid 20% less than Meisel, since he lacked an advanced education. Of the other three women, one made as much as Meisel, and two received what most of the men did. See, Sejera: Feuille de paie, No. 7 (avril 25/1910). Private Archive. I am indebted to Yaron Reinhold for bringing this document to my attention.

61. Meisel, "Rural Education for Girls," 61.

62. See Dayan, *With the Founders of the Settlement*, 235; Ruppin (29 June 1911), CZA L1/20; and Meisel to Ruppin (31 October 1912), CZA L2/555I.

63. Meisel, "Agricultural Education for Women Workers," 6. In her nuanced study of women in the period up to 1917, Shilo claims, contrary to Meisel, that "the traditional disparagement of women's work remained." See Shilo, "The Women's Farm at Kinneret," 281.

64. Meisel to Ussishkin (6 December 1922), CZA S2/586.

65. Meisel, "Agricultural Education for Women Workers," 5.

66. See Margalit Shilo, *Experiments in Settlement. The Eretz Yisrael Office, 1908–1914* (Jerusalem, 1988) 33–61 [Hebrew]; Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 80–110; Shilo, "Arthur Ruppin," in Bartel *et al.* (eds), *The Second Aliyah*, vIII, 320–30.

67. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 91.

68. *Ibid.*, 102.

69. "Minutes of the Founding Meeting of the Committee for a Study Farm for Girls at Nahalal," Tel Aviv (15 May 1924), CZA J41/401.

70. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 123–5, 148; Penslar, "Yizhak Elazari Wilkansky," in Bartel *et al.* (eds), *The Second Aliyah*, viii, 146–47 [Hebrew]; *Tidhar, Encyclopedia of the Pioneers and Builders of the Yishuv*, v2 (1947) 933–4 [Hebrew].

71. See Kriegser, "The Beginnings of Our Agricultural Training," in Habas and Shochat (eds), *The Second Aliyah Book*, 508. Also see Yisraeli, "On the History of 'The Farm'," in *ibid.*, 424; Yaffe, "Kinneret of Long Ago," *ibid.*, 429–34.

72. See "Minutes of Preparatory Committee for the Agricultural School for Girls at Nahalal," Jerusalem (8 January 1924), CZA J41/401; and "Minutes of the Supervisory Committee of the School" (22 November 1931), CZA J41/402.

73. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 98, 144–5, 147–8; Tidhar, *Encyclopedia of the Pioneers and Builders of the Yishuv*, v6 (1955), 2652–3.

74. Akivah Ettinger, "Agricultural Education of Jewish Girls," *HaPoel HaTza'ir*, 12(1) (22 November 1918) 21–3 [Hebrew].

75. Council of Women Workers to Ettinger, "Women Workers' Farms. Purpose" (c.1920), CZA S15/20102.

76. Akivah Ettinger, *With Jewish Farmers in Our Land* (Tel-Aviv, 1944) 154 [Hebrew].

77. See notes 13 and 14.

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78. Akivah Ettinger, "On the Question of Guidance in House Keeping," *The Woman*, 7 (1927) 9 [Hebrew].

79. Greenberg and Herzog, *A Voluntary Women's Organization in a Developing Society*, 46–8. The training farm for young women at Afula was run by Sarah Malkin, one of Meisel's students from pre-War Kinneret days. By 1940, there were over 600 girls enrolled in seven agricultural schools. See *Addresses Delivered to the WIZO Twentieth Anniversary Celebration* (8 January 1941), CZA F49/1224.

80. On fund-raising problems and the conflict between WIZO and the Zionist Executive, see Berkowitz, *Western Jewry*, 86–7, 183–6.

81. Ettinger to Meisel (9 March 1920), CZA S15/20100II; and Ettinger to Meisel (18 March 1920), CZA S15/20100II. For the actual budget estimates, see Agricultural and Settlement Department to Meisel (28 March 1920), S15/20100II.

82. Ettinger to Edith Low Eder (29 March 1920), CZA S15/20100I. Eder joined with Rebecca Doro Marks Sieff to found WIZO in 1920. See also Ettinger to Meisel (4 May 1920), CZA S15/20100II.

83. Meisel to Ruppin (4 November 1921), CZA S55/259; Ruppin to Sieff (6 November 1921), CZA S55/259. Rebecca D. M. Sieff with Edith Eder founded WIZO in 1920.

84. Meisel to Ettinger (5 June 1920), CZA S15/20100II; Ettinger to Meisel (23 June 1920), CZA S15/20100II; Meisel to Ussishkin (6 December 1922), CZA S2/586. A useful summary of the funding campaign is set out in Meisel to Danziger (1923), CZA F49/1270.

85. "Minutes of the Founding Meeting . . ." (15 May 1924), CZA J41/401; Rosenblit to Krause (16 July 1924), CZA J41/401; Rosenblit to Krause (28 August 1924), CZA J41/401; Meisel to Rosenblit (28 October 1924), CZA J41/401; "Minutes of the Administrative Committee of the Women's Agricultural School" (13 November 1924), (15 February 1925), (19 April 1925) CZA J41/401, (15 May 1925), CZA J41/401.

86. See *Program for the Opening of the Girls Agricultural School at Nahalal* (7 April 1926) CZA J41/401.

87. *Addresses Delivered to the WIZO Twentieth Anniversary Celebration* (8 January 1941), CZA F49/1224.

88. Greenberg and Herzog, *A Voluntary Women's Organization in a Developing Society*, 95–6; and Herzog, "Women's Voluntary Organizations," 131–3.

89. For a characterization of the mainstream women's organizations, see Herzog, "Women's Voluntary Organizations," 125; Greenberg and Herzog, *A Voluntary Women's Organization in a Developing Society*, 96, 100; Berkowitz, *Western Jewry*, 182–6.

90. "Prospect," English translation (17 August 1920), CZA S15/20100II, 6.

91. "Suggested Program for the Establishment of an Agricultural School for Jewish Girls" (6 February 1920), enclosed in Director to Eder (29 March 1920), CZA S15/20100I, 1.

92. Meisel-Shochat to Mrs. Danziger, New York Women's Committee (1923), CZA, F49 /1270.

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93. Meisel to Mrs. Samuel (11 May 1924), *Copy Book of Outgoing Letters*, v1, 197–8, AJVRC 96.01; "Minutes of the Administrative Committee. . . ," (15 May 1924), CZA J41/401.

94. Meisel, "Agricultural Education for Women Workers," 5–6. The highly edited version edited by the Ministry of Education, *History of Women's Education for Settlement. Stories of Kinneret and Nahalal* (Tel-Aviv, 1967) 11–15, omits much of Meisel's stinging criticism.

95. Shor to Meisel (17 June 1923), AJVRC 103.03.

96. For the criticism and Meisel's reaction, see Meisel-Shochat to Danziger (1923) and Enclosure (before October 1922) , CZA F49/1270.

97. "Minutes of the Administrative Committee," Jerusalem (30 June 1924), CZA J41/401. For elements of the funding dispute, see also Rosenblit to Krause (16 July 1924); and Meisel to Rosenblit (28 October 1924), both in CZA J41/401.

98. Meisel, Letter (27 July 1924), *Copy Book of Outgoing Letters, v1,* 281, AJVRC 96.01.

99. WIZO Executive, London, to Doniach, Secretary of WIZO in Palestine (13 January 1927), CZA F49/1270.

100. Meisel to Mrs. Frieman (30 March 1930), AJVRC 110.05. Meisel understood well that, by 1930, donors in Canada and London were suffering under constraints imposed by the stock market crash in 1929. On the effects of the crash, see Secretary of WIZO, London, to WIZO's Palestine Executive (5 December 1929) CZA F49/1285.

101. Meisel (20 February 1927), *Copy Book of Outgoing Letters, v2, 1926–1927,* 263–6, AJVRC 96.02. Quotations are from p. 263.

102. *Idem.*

103. Melman, "From the Periphery to the Center of History," 246–7.

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