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**The “Malestrom” at Christie Pits:
Jewish Masculinity and the Toronto Riot of 1933**

The night of August 16, 1933 witnessed one of the most brutal riots in Canadian history. When Nazi sympathizers waved a swastika flag at a baseball game in Toronto's Christie Pits park, Jewish players and spectators retaliated. For the next six hours, thousands of Jewish and gentile teenage boys attacked each other with unprecedented ferocity. As the issue of Jewish masculinity at Christie Pits has gone largely unexplored, two questions arise for the gender historian: to what extent did gender play a role in the actions of the Jewish rioters?; and how has gender shaped the way the riot is remembered in the Jewish community? This article argues that Jewish masculinity helped shape both the character and collective memory of the riot through the "macho-mensch" model, which highlighted the attributes of male physicality, ethics, and Jewish identity, and which excluded the role and commemoration of women.

Dans la nuit du 16 août 1933 se déroula l'une des émeutes les plus brutales de l'histoire du Canada. Confrontés à un groupe de sympathisants nazis brandissant un drapeau décoré d'une croix gammée lors d'un match de baseball qui se tenait au parc Christie Pits de Toronto, les joueurs et spectateurs juifs ripostèrent. Pendant les six heures qui ont suivi, des milliers d'adolescents juifs et non-juifs s'attaquèrent mutuellement avec une férocité sans précédent. Le thème du lien entre l'émeute de Christie Pits et le concept de la masculinité juive demeure largement inexploré. Or, deux questions, en lien avec ce thème, se posent à l'historien du genre. D'abord, dans quelle mesure le genre aurait-il joué un rôle dans les gestes des émeutiers juifs ? Ensuite, comment le genre aurait-il influencé la manière dont on se souvient de cette émeute au sein de la communauté juive ? Le présent article soutient que le caractère de l'émeute de Christie Pits et la mémoire collective qui prend celle-ci pour objet ont subi l'influence d'un modèle de masculinité juive de type « macho-mensch » qui tend à valoriser la corporalité masculine, l'éthique et l'identité juive et à refuser de commémorer ou même de reconnaître le rôle joué par les femmes dans le cadre de cet incident.

The night of 16 August 1933 witnessed one of the most brutal riots in Canadian history. Provoked for weeks by thugs hurling antisemitic epithets and brandishing swastika banners, young Jewish men had reached their breaking point. When Nazi sympathizers waved a large swastika flag at a baseball game in Toronto's Willowvale Park (otherwise known as Christie Pits), the Jewish players and spectators, along with local supporters, retaliated. For the next six hours, thousands of Jewish and gentile teenage boys attacked each other in a vicious clash that injured scores on both sides of the brawl. Surprisingly, this event went mostly undocumented by scholars until 1987 when sociologists Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir published their pioneering book *The Riot at Christie Pits*.¹ Although they illuminated many crucial features of the event, the authors did not cite gender issues as a distinct aspect of the riot, that is, to what extent – where the maleness of the combatants has simply been assumed or

ignored – gender played a role in the actions of the Jewish rioters, and to what extent this influenced the way the riot is remembered in the Jewish community.²

This article argues that Jewish masculinity helped shape both the character and collective memory of the riot. It borrows from Rebecca T. Alpert who points to a Jewish model of masculinity in the 1930s that she labels the "macho-mensch."³ Most notably personified by Jewish baseball great Hank Greenberg (1911–1986), the macho-mensch possessed three main traits: he was physical (macho), ethical (a *mensch*, the Yiddish word for a decent man), and overtly connected to his Jewish identity.⁴ In short, as Alpert notes, the macho-mensch was a "conqueror with a conscience."⁵ The Christie Pits riot advanced all three values of the macho-mensch, giving him the opportunity to affirm his physicality, ferocity, and strength, his virtuous opposition to cruelty, bigotry, and injustice, and his sense of Jewish specificity, belonging, and pride.⁶ These attributes afforded the Jewish participants a sense of Jewish male empowerment, righteousness, and distinctiveness, respectively, and later helped cement the riot as a significant expression of Jewish masculinity in the memories of the old-timers who had experienced the event. As Alpert examines the macho-mensch archetype within the male-dominated arena of sport, she fails to consider the role of women, a neglect also evident during and following the riot. This article seeks to redress this important oversight.

The Riot

In the summer of 1933, tensions between Gentile and Jewish teens in Toronto had been running high. Against the backdrop of virulent antisemitism in the very Protestant Toronto, where Jews were restricted from a variety of neighbourhoods, universities, professions, and clubs, signs openly marked places in the Beaches area of the city where Jews were not allowed.⁷ Groups of Nazi supporters donning swastikas paraded through this area, seeking to dissuade Jewish families from visiting the beach. Despite warnings from the mayor of Toronto to suspend such tactics, groups of Nazi sympathisers, comprised largely of local hoodlums, continued their mission of intimidation, spreading rumours of an impending antisemitic incident, attending local baseball games in which Jewish teams were playing, and jeering the Jewish players. On 16 August, during a well-attended evening game at Christie Pits between the St. Peters Church team and the predominantly Jewish Harbord Playground team, a small group of young men on a hill within sight of the crowd unfurled a large banner with a swastika emblem and raised their arms in salute. When the Jewish men in the stands saw the offensive scene, they went running toward the sign and attacked the men. For the next several hours and into the early morning hours, thousands of Jews and gentiles, as well as some Italians and Black-Canadians, battled each other. Although there were no fatalities, many rioters were injured in a melee the likes of which Toronto had never seen before.

Commemorating the Riot: Assumed and Absent Maleness

Levitt and Shaffir's book *The Riot at Christie Pits* links the riot to Jewish male spheres of activity in 1930s Toronto, such as bootlegging, gambling, boxing, and baseball, and also offers a descriptive treatment of the brutal male violence often associated with these pastimes as well as the riot. However, the authors offered no gender analysis, nor do they explore the riot as an expression of Jewish masculinity. In the fledgling years of masculinity history as a scholarly endeavour in the late 1980s and early 1990s (although women's history was at least twenty years old), Levitt and Shaffir did not consciously and meaningfully weave a gender analysis into their book. Even ten years later in 1997, Scott W. See only cautiously proposed the "daunting" task of investigating "the relationship between gender and collective violence in Canadian history."⁸ Although this connection between gender (and race and class) and violence was being studied by women's historians in the context of the private sphere, as related to sexual assault and wife battering, See remarked that "the linkage between gender and collective violence remains essentially unexplored in Canadian history."⁹ Perhaps only Judy Torrance, in her book *Public Violence in Canada, 1867-1982*, paid some attention in the 1980s to gender in the role of Canadian collective violence. She examines, albeit briefly, "Machismo values" as a factor in "the cultural legitimization of violence."¹⁰ As Torrance stated, "we know that young men tend to be in the forefront of public violence."¹¹

Indeed, because chroniclers of the Christie Pits riot have always presumed the participants to be male, the Jewish rioters are not always identified in this way. Gerald Tulchinsky, for example, in his two-page description of the riot in his 1998 volume *Branching Out*, never overtly acknowledged them as male. Tulchinsky variously referred to them as "youths," "spectators," and "Jews."¹² Morton Weinfeld, in his 2001 book *Like Everyone Else...But Different*, referred to the men simply as "combatants."¹³ And Jack Lipinsky, in his 2011 monograph *Imposing Their Will*, also exclusively employed the terms "youth," "Jews," and "combatants."¹⁴ Likewise, when Heritage Toronto organization commemorated the riot's seventy-fifth anniversary in 2008, it erected an historical plaque which refers only to "youths," "fans," "team," and "Jews."¹⁵ Although the society's historians had "laboured for a year over how to cram the disputed whale of a tale into 150 little bronze words," their use of gender-neutral terms invariably serves to negate the significant feature of gender.¹⁶ Journalists, too, often reported generically that the riot marked the first time that "Jews" or the "Jewish community" retaliated against antisemitism, and rarely pondered the imprecision of these terms.¹⁷ Tulchinsky did note that Jewish reinforcements were "hurriedly summoned from pool halls, smoke shops, delicatessens, street corners, club rooms, an assortment of drinking and gambling establishments, and front verandas," but he neglected to point out that the majority of these places were overwhelmingly populated by men, and closely associated with Jewish male working-class culture.¹⁸

In Search of a Modern Jewish Masculinity

The palpable presence of this masculine culture in early Twentieth-century Toronto existed alongside the deep-seated image of the Jew as *mensch*. Entrenched in over a thousand years of Eastern European tradition, the *mensch* was moral, kind, gentle, and studious, traits which ran counter to the aggression and physicality of Christian manliness.¹⁹ As Warren Rosenberg stated, "the historically constructed (and conflicted) definition of what it means to be a Jew has depended to a large extent on the repression of violence."²⁰ Although partly self-imposed through adherence to Jewish law, this repression was also inflicted for thousands of years by a dominant culture that victimized Jewish men, denying them the opportunity for citizenship, military prowess, and the connected traits of power, fitness, and physicality.²¹

This is not to suggest, however, that violence was absent from Jewish life. Contemporary scholars of Jewish masculinity, including Rosenberg, note that "Jewish culture has always included a violent component."²² Whether in battle, street fights, political demonstrations, or labour disputes, Jewish violence was evident in the Bible through to the medieval period, and into the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries.²³ As Jack Kugelmass points out, "There was always...a muscular segment of the Jewish population, and it was a segment that could be called upon for communal self-defence."²⁴ But it existed alongside the powerful image of the *mensch*, who emphasized righteousness, education, and professional success, and who sought to resolve conflicts with prudence and civility.²⁵

Even with the aggression exhibited by Jewish young men during the riot, the notion that Jews shunned violence prevailed. Community leader Rabbi Samuel Sachs, Chairman of the League for the Defence of Jewish Rights, declared that "the Jewish population in Toronto will not countenance their action, because Jewish people do not believe in violence."²⁶ The Jewish agitators, maintained the Rabbi, "seem to have forgotten their religious teaching, which, above all, counsels against such violence." He suggested to the young Jewish rioters "not to allow themselves to become so easily provoked."²⁷ Even one of their representatives made sure to emphasize to the press that "we are not looking for trouble...Last night we were waiting in readiness, but refrained from going to any of the parks until scouts reported disturbances."²⁸ One newspaper reported that the Jewish repulsion for violence was reinforced by the fact that the Jewish rioters never directed it against the police.²⁹ As well, the only two arrests made by police were of gentile men, and four out of the five rioters sent to hospital with potentially serious injuries were Jewish – the victims, not the perpetrators, of aggression.³⁰

The newspaper reports, albeit biased in their contrasting representations of the Jewish rioters, reflected the tension among the Jewish men between their propensity

for diplomacy in some of their enemy encounters and their celebration of violence in others, and between their respective image as victims and their reputation as perpetrators.³¹ Both sides had their advantages and disadvantages: as victims, Jews were the sympathetic targets of bigotry and violence, but they were also cast as weak and vulnerable; as perpetrators, they were the tough and ethical guardians of religious tolerance, but they were also described as hoodlums and troublemakers.³²

The call by Jewish community leaders to suspend “Jewish strong-arm tactics” against the gentile gangs was rooted not only in religious doctrine, but in fears of an antisemitic backlash.³³ Concern arose that Jewish retaliation would reflect badly on all Jews, causing “a wave of antisemitic feeling that would cause grave injustices to hundreds of Jewish citizens who were entirely disassociated from the recent disturbances.”³⁴ Mayer Steinglass, editor of the *Jewish Standard*, reflected that the Jewish boys were undoubtedly well-intentioned in their actions “but they shouldn’t have adopted the methods they did.”³⁵

Clearly, as bemoaned by Sachs and Steinglass, the tenacious Jewish precept of non-violence had become less acceptable to young Canadian Jewish men like those in the riot.³⁶ They were witnessing the plummeting status of Jewish masculinity, which was most often perceived as negative, shaped by supposedly ineffectual immigrant fathers, a popular culture that glorified mothers, and, as evidenced in the summer of 1933 in Toronto, persistent antisemitism. By the 1920s and 1930s, immigrant Jewish fathers were suffering a declining status in the home. Furthermore, amid the Depression’s eradication of the male breadwinner, North American modernity was depriving men of their traditional patriarchal and religious authority, making them feel obsolete.³⁷ This emasculating loss of position only served to magnify the futility of their long-held advice to sons to resist physical retaliation in the face of antisemitic attacks.³⁸ These men, many once victims of pogroms in Europe, believed that the most prudent defensive strategy, and one consistent with the *mensch* model of dignified masculinity, was, in Levitt’s words, “Don’t make waves. Be quiet, it’ll pass.”³⁹ Moreover, contemporary popular culture, building on antisemitic notions of Jewish men as “scrawny, weak, and inferior,” often depicted them as spineless and anxious.⁴⁰ Jewish men were seen as assuming the traditional traits of women – they were frail, passive, and hysterical, an image that stunned, humiliated, and routinely fostered self-loathing in those men who had achieved the masculine badge of professional success.⁴¹ Moreover, immigrant fathers were overshadowed by the commanding presence of their wives who enjoyed a new sense of empowerment in the home. The Jewish woman as mother, as represented by the Biblical matriarchs, exemplified for the Jewish community fortitude, self-sacrifice, and survival. These enduring traits highlighted, especially within the mythologized *shtetl* family, her selfless devotion to family, community, and religion.⁴² In the face of Eastern European antisemitism, exile, poverty, and pogroms, the dutiful Jewish woman doggedly persevered, fiercely

preserving, nurturing, and protecting her family and Jewish values, even when immigrating and adjusting to turn-of-the-Twentieth-century North America. Here, the virtuous Jewish mother "remained the emotional 'heart of the family,'" a position which served to entrench in the New World the romantic and reverential image of *shtetl* Jewish motherhood.⁴³ By the 1920s and 1930s, new and prominent depictions of the Jewish mother began to appear in American popular culture which reinforced this iconic and sentimental image.⁴⁴ Indeed, because Jewish families were smaller by the 1920s, and because Jewish mothers generally did not perform paid work, they were able to dedicate more time and effort to fewer children, which contributed to the continued depiction of Jewish mothers as "self-sacrificing and devoted," and of Jewish fathers as insipid.⁴⁵

The eroding image of Jewish manhood called for invigorated traits of masculinity for a new generation of transplanted and Canadian-born young men. One characteristic promoted by assimilationist social reformers in North America was athleticism, long held as a signature feature of North American Christian manliness. With a cultural history that emphasized intense study and education, Jewish boys, perceived as overly cerebral, physically frail, and averse to and inept at sports, were seen as especially in need of athletic opportunities and instruction.⁴⁶ Indeed, participation in sports had commonly been discouraged by European parents who felt their sons' time was better spent pursuing scholarly or professional ambitions.⁴⁷ Irving Ungerman recalled that when he was a thirteen-year-old aspiring boxer in 1936 Toronto, "my mother called me a *shaqetz* (non-Jewish male) because I liked boxing. She thought that boxing was a gentile sport and not something a young Jewish boy should be interested in."⁴⁸ Jewish boys, eager to both fit in and participate in sports, responded keenly to the efforts by social reformers, both Anglo-Protestants and assimilated German Jews, to inculcate them with North American masculine values through organized sport.⁴⁹ To achieve this goal, settlement houses directed at Jewish immigrants, such as the Chicago Hebrew Institute, "claimed some of the best athletic facilities in the United States."⁵⁰ Although Jews in the old country had routinely participated and excelled in sports, and various North American Jews distinguished themselves as Olympic and professional athletes in the early Twentieth century, the notion prevailed that Jewish boys neither liked nor excelled at sports, and proved noteworthy if they did.⁵¹

Jewish boys were also attracted to a new "boy culture" which emerged as a reaction to a general "crisis of masculinity" in North America. This crisis was attributable to the emasculating features of industrialization, urbanization, and the women's movement, which allegedly produced a sedentary underling at work and a tamed, devalued family man at home. Boy culture promoted an autonomous, disobedient culture distinct from adult male civility and feminine domesticity, one whose shared rituals were shaped by the callousness that ruled the ghetto streets.⁵² With Americanization integrally tied to successful masculinization, many first-generation

immigrant boys, along with their American-born cohort, embraced this male bonding and bravado, with a few like Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky distinguishing themselves later as ruthless professional gangsters.⁵³ Warren Rosenberg points out that this culture of violence represented “a need for control” among immigrants to “replace anxiety with mastery.”⁵⁴ Satisfaction came with the sensory stimulation of “hand-to-hand combat” and full body contact, especially for the Jewish male whose allegedly feeble body had historically been denied the image and opportunity to directly avenge violence.⁵⁵ Most immigrant Jewish parents still perceived physicality as far less significant (and certainly more hazardous) than intellectual prowess. But in the early Twentieth century, athletic achievement and physical violence increasingly played a part in masculine identity for young, Canadian Jewish men like those in the baseball diamonds and bleachers of Christie Pits.

For many of those Jewish young men, however, simply aspiring to the brutal masculinity of the dominant culture proved unfamiliar, uncomfortable, and extreme. A distinctly Jewish and more inspiring model of masculinity could be found in the “muscular Judaism” promoted by the fledgling European Zionist movement of the 1890s. Drawing on rich biblical stories of valiant men who employed “physical force” for self-protection and in service to God, it sought to create “a new type of Jew” who was “corporeally strong,” “morally fit,” and “nationally minded.”⁵⁶ Alpert’s comparable American version of this archetype, the “macho-mensch,” possessed these same attributes: he was physical, ethical, and overt in his Jewish identity.⁵⁷ All three of these macho-mensch values were evident in the Christie Pits riot, and in the long-held memories of its witnesses.

The Rioter as Macho-Mensch: Physicality, Virtue, Identity

The physicality found in both sport and violence as expressed in the macho-mensch model played a crucial role in the importance of the riot. Indeed, the two were often linked for the Jewish community who maintained that promoting both athleticism and fight skills would make Jews better prepared to combat violent attacks.⁵⁸ The riot’s eruption at a baseball game helped establish the welcome association between Jews and athleticism. In the aftermath of the riot, the press consistently noted that Jewish men constituted most of the Harbord team playing that night and that they enjoyed a growing reputation as excellent players. Stories also highlighted the prevalence of Jewish sports teams generally, especially in baseball and basketball. These reports featured celebrated Jewish players, such as Harry Sniderman, who was “probably the best-known Jewish athlete in Toronto.”⁵⁹ As well, the riot underscored the notoriety of local Jewish boxers, as Sammy Luftspring and Baby Yak (Benjamin “Norman” Yakubowitz) were two of its most famous participants.⁶⁰ Luftspring would become the Canadian Welterweight champion in 1938 and 1939, and Baby Yak would become the Canadian Bantamweight champion in 1937.⁶¹

In addition to athleticism, fighting prowess was a great source of pride. Certainly, the press reports of 1933 demonstrate that Jewish rioters were only too glad to exhibit their forcefulness and ferocity. The prolonged absence of the police afforded the young men this opportunity to vent their rage.⁶² Brandishing baseball bats, iron pipe, and rocks, they retaliated, sometimes waving their weapons "as though they were dueling with swords."⁶³ "Like a swarm of maddened bees," they destroyed the giant swastika banner, and, in one incident, "pounced upon" a group of gentile young men and gave them "a thorough licking."⁶⁴ A representative of the Jewish young men declared that they would no longer rely on "passive resistance," and in the spirit of successful assimilation, credited their modern pugnacity to their Canadian upbringing which promoted the "British bulldog idea never to give up without a fight."⁶⁵ The Jewish young men resolved to ready themselves for combat, and, if need be, to "Die With Boots On."⁶⁶ The day after the riot one brash Jewish spokesperson pledged that if people in cars were again spotted yelling "heil Hitler," "we will have cars and trucks to cut them off, even if we have to force a collision. And even if they have their lead pipe with them, we'll give them something to remember us by."⁶⁷ In the hours and days after the riot, the Jewish participants felt exhilarated, "boasting of how many blows they had struck."⁶⁸

According to the macho-mensch model, the physicality expressed through athleticism or collective violence is necessarily accompanied by a code of virtue. As Stephen H. Norwood argues, "Although America's Jews increasingly embraced physicality, they insisted that it must be intertwined with ethical and spiritual values."⁶⁹ Indeed, the Jewish rioters were "not looking for trouble," but were intent on "voicing their protest against mistreatment by other racial groups."⁷⁰ A severely injured Solly Osolky reported to the *Star*, for example, that he began fighting only after he witnessed another boy attacked: "I happened to be right beside him, and I could not stand for it when they began to kick him and pile on top of him." He made sure to add, "Please get me right...I wasn't trying to start anything. I only butted in when a little fellow was getting a dirty deal."⁷¹ This incident was comparable to a notable episode the following night when a gentile gang about one-hundred strong "roamed the streets" for Jewish combatants, and, spotting none, viciously attacked Louie Sugarman, a Jewish medical student returning home from a tennis game.⁷² The case featured an outnumbered and defenceless Jewish young man, his intellectual pursuits and life-saving, professional ambitions presented in sharp contrast to the hooliganism of the gentile gang. Jewish ethics, then, seemed evident both during and immediately following the riot. They were also palpable several years later when, according to Danny Rosenberg, Jews drew on the principles fixed in the riot to become "more vigilant and organized in matters relating to their rights as citizens."⁷³ Rioters Sammy Luftspring and Baby Yak, in fact, who were destined to become members of Canada's Olympic boxing team in 1936, boycotted the Berlin Olympic games because

of Germany's mistreatment of Jews. In a statement at the time to the press, they concluded that "we would have been very low to hurt the feelings of our fellow-Jews by going to a land that would exterminate them if it could."⁷⁴

Jewish group identity is a crucial third component of the macho-mensch, and apparent among the participants in the riot. The existence of this articulated identity supports the long-held argument that "external stimuli," as in the form of antisemitic antagonism, is one path to greater Jewish cohesion.⁷⁵ Certainly the rioters were acutely aware of their shared historical persecution, and the overt slurs and threats by the gentile gangs only served to reinforce their collective group identity. The intimidation inspired the Jewish boys to put aside old clique rivalries, with the result that "these groups have more or less united, so that there is one large 'gang' or group of Jewish boys representing the Spadina Ave. district."⁷⁶ A representative of the men told the press that "rather than submit to the outrages that have been perpetrated on our race, we would die on the streets."⁷⁷ In one of the most intense episodes of the riot, Joe Goldstein, according to one witness, "stepped up to them [the gentile combatants] and said 'I'm a Jew, what are you going to do about it?,' whereupon they struck him unconscious."⁷⁸ When a rumour (which later proved false) subsequently spread that a young Jewish man had been killed, Jewish men urgently assembled a convoy of trucks and cars to avenge the perpetrators.⁷⁹ Following the riot, former rioter Sammy Luftspring, like many American Jewish boxers eager to express their ethnic pride in the ring, prominently donned a Star of David on his boxing shorts.⁸⁰

Memory and the Macho-Mensch

For the "Jewish old-timers" who remembered the riot as participants, witnesses, or supporters, the battle represented a seminal event – a momentous rite of passage for Canadian Jewish manhood recollected through the shared lens of the unabashed physicality, ethics, and Jewish identity of the macho-mensch.⁸¹ This collective memory has helped the riot assume "legendary status" among Jews, and, however male-centred, has offered a "usable" past for the entire community by encouraging group pride, cohesion, and distinctiveness.⁸²

As with the lived experience of the riot, male Jewish memory of the riot connected physicality to athletic prowess. In 2013, for example, eighty-seven-year-old Joe Black associated the riot to the Christie Pits Park, and connected the park to his childhood involvement in sports. He recalled that "it was my place. I went skating there. I played hockey there. I played baseball there."⁸³ Many of the older men who as former rioters publicly spoke about the incident had been aspiring wrestlers or boxers, and relayed this proud fact as an integral part of the riot story. They clearly enjoyed a good scrap, and recalled how their athletic training aided in the success of their fighting.⁸⁴

At the eightieth anniversary of the riot in 2013, the incident was memorialized with a baseball game in which local celebrities, media personalities, and politicians were invited to participate. A representative of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the group that organized the event, noted that "since the riots were born out of a softball game...we thought the commemoration should centre around a softball game as a symbol of showing just how far this city has come...as a leading multicultural city in the world."⁸⁵ Ironically, for the Jewish boys of the 1930s, sport was a symbol of a new corporeal masculinity which facilitated their assimilation as a defence against anti-semitism, a process far from the multicultural ideals celebrated at this commemorative softball game.

Fighting skills, toughness, and resistance for the Jewish old-timers also helped define the riot experience, perhaps most profoundly. As evident in Levitt and Shaffir's book, by 1987 these were characteristics fully worth celebrating and remembering. After all, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Six-Day and Yom Kippur wars in Israel affirmed this Jewish strength and fierceness. And by the 1980s, Jews were so firmly entrenched in Canadian society, with success in virtually every professional and creative field, they were in a solid position to revel in their history of opposition and defiance. The old-timers graphically detailed with cavalier pleasure the force and injuries inflicted on the enemy. Harvey Freeman, for example, a family member of Murray Krugel, boasted in a 1985 newspaper interview that Krugel "wound up with the Nazi flag after hammering some Nazi during the riot."⁸⁶ Murray Tate remembered in a 1984 newspaper interview that he along with some Jewish and Italian boys "fought a pitched war with the swastika gang and the Christie Pits gang. We cleaned them out after three days and nights of fighting."⁸⁷ Irving Ungerman, relaying his story in a colourful 2015 self-published memoir, did not fight in the riot itself, but he and his buddies did confront "the Hitler-lovers" in 1939 when they "drove down to Christie Pits, which was known as a hangout for these trash-talkers, and went shopping for the bigots. We found a few and introduced ourselves. By the time the police arrived, we were long gone. We left the damaged merchandise behind and returned feeling we had made a painful impact on them. I enjoyed this type of shopping."⁸⁸ The violence proved so enthralling for Toronto Jewish old-timers that some erroneously recalled being present at the riot.⁸⁹ As Levitt quipped, "if everyone who claimed to have been at the Christie Pits race riot actually were, there wouldn't have been any room to pull a punch."⁹⁰

The male bravado and pride that old-timers expressed and the post-fight euphoria that they recalled were rooted in the fact that the riot served as a rite of passage for Jewish boys and men who had routinely been branded weaklings or cowards, but who turned into warriors that August evening. Joe Black, who was seven years old in 1933, reported in a 2013 interview with *The Toronto Star* that his father was "a

mild-mannered man” who owned a confectionary near Christie Pits, but he grabbed a gentile rioter brandishing a weapon, and “took the guy’s arm, pulled it up behind him until you could hear it crack, dislocated the arm completely.” Black proudly recalled, “Let’s just say those Pit Gang boys got the shit knocked out of them.”⁹¹ As one Jewish rioter later recalled, many of the Jewish boys had been so useless as fighters, they “couldn’t even wipe their ass,” but “they got themselves a pool cue, a baseball bat or a brick, whatever.”⁹² Even “rabbis with beards” [Orthodox] mobilized.⁹³ One old-timer observed that “it was the first time...the Jewish community fought back... You see, Jews were always known...as a peaceful people and they wouldn’t fight back. They would take their licks.... And this is the first time they stood up...”⁹⁴ Lita-Rose Betcherman asserted in 1975 that, “In their toughness,” the Jewish rioters “were almost a prefiguration of the post-war Jews who founded the state of Israel.”⁹⁵

Along with being a momentous display of physicality, the Christie Pits riot is remembered as a principled battle, and is counted as one of many in a long line of righteous historical responses to antisemitic attacks. Baby Yak’s brother Max recalled proudly in a 1987 interview that his boxer brothers regularly fought local hooligans in Toronto in order to combat antisemitism: “whenever somebody said something antisemitic, they didn’t think twice...They were involved in that kind of activity from day 1...”⁹⁶ Veteran *Toronto Star* reporter Jocko Thomas, who was the first to cover the riot, noted in 1996 that “The swastika was as much a symbol of tyranny, torture and death to Toronto’s Jews as the storm troopers’ jackboots in Germany.” It should not be surprising, then, that “on Spadina Ave., Jewish residents, many with relatives in Germany being beaten by the Nazis, decided they wouldn’t take it [an antisemitic attack in Toronto] lying down.”⁹⁷ Indeed, the riot at Christie Pits, often remembered as “a battle honour,” regularly gets compared to various military and dissident victories over antisemitism and tyranny.⁹⁸ One scholar referred to the riot as a reaction to “a pogrom-like assault on the Jews.”⁹⁹ Some rioters later likened it to fighting overseas for Canada during World War II.¹⁰⁰ Another participant noted that “we were as proud as if we had gone to Entebbe.”¹⁰¹ In 1987, Rabbi Jordan Pearlson listed the Christie Pits rioters alongside the insurgents in the Warsaw Ghetto, the Jewish partisans in Poland, the Jewish resistance in Nazi-occupied France, and the Shomrim defence forces in a young Israel.¹⁰²

Memories for old-timers also centred on their sense of Jewish group identity and unity, specifically as related to the location of the riot. With various ethnic groups in Toronto residing in distinct geographical areas, the recollected experience of Jewishness for the old-timers was heavily informed by their Jewish neighbourhoods west of Bathurst Street and just south of Bloor Street in proximity to Christie Pits, a link that speaks to the supremacy of place in the formation of memory.¹⁰³ Murry Tate remembered that the swastika gangs “roamed the streets and beat up old Jewish men going to shul [synagogue].”¹⁰⁴ Jewish identity was also informed by the gentile

enclaves that Jewish boys knew to avoid. A tearful Lionel Mernick, who commemorated the riot's anniversary in 2008, recollected that "I couldn't go into some of the parks. [People] would chase me out. It was a bad time."¹⁰⁵ Chuck Zaionz, who as a boy witnessed the riot, recalled "certain invisible boundaries that if you crossed, you either had to take care of yourself, or run like hell." Zaionz noted that as a result of this ethnic turf war, "large-scale street fights between Jews and non-Jews were not that unusual at the time."¹⁰⁶ According to testimony by some old-timers, there were those scrappy Jewish boys who participated in the riot with no knowledge of why it erupted, but when they saw their Jewish neighbours and friends spilling into those familiar streets, and running with weapons and riding in caravans, they felt obligated to defend their brothers.¹⁰⁷ Although recognizing that the victor in this battle was "ambiguous," one Jewish journalist in 1987 declared in the spirit of affirmative group identity, "I still can't shake the idea that our side won."¹⁰⁸

The Role of Girls and Women

The macho-mensch model as outlined by Alpert is a useful tool of analysis, but because she focuses on men in the athletic male arena, particularly in professional baseball, she neglects to consider the connection between the macho-mensch and the status of women, and the dynamics of heterosexual relations. Likewise, Levitt and Shaffir rarely reference women. Indeed, they gloss over one notable interaction between a group of boys and girls, and its disturbing sexual dimension. As the authors discovered, young Jewish men, upon learning of gentile girls donning swastikas on their swimsuits, went to the beach and "tore the bathing suits off these girls...We took bats, not real baseball bats, and paddled their rear ends for doing this and all that. They were screaming bloody murder."¹⁰⁹ Levitt and Shaffir opted not to critique this alarming episode, one in which young girls were sexually terrorized and abused, actions that extended well beyond banishing the swastika and battling other boys, and which were erroneously defended in adulthood by the use of fake bats.

With the riot described as, or presumed to be, a male-centered event, the peripheral yet significant role of women has been all but ignored, and their voices have been rendered silent in the recollected historical narrative. Although girls and women were neither members of the baseball teams nor, as far as anyone knows, active participants in the riot, they too were directly involved in, and affected by, the event. Scholars and the media since that time, however, have not investigated its impact on women nor sought them out as eyewitnesses, possibly because all of those injured or arrested were men, because the contemporary press rarely interviewed women, because women undervalued their own role and significance, or because men so immediately claimed the event as theirs.¹¹⁰ Indeed, like most battles, the riot was constructed by both the combatants and the press as a male-centred event, and was remembered by men whose traumatic and exhilarating participation made them

an exclusively Jewish “band of brothers” whose investment in the incident, they assumed, could never be appreciated as fully by others.¹¹¹ The omission of women seems especially absurd given that the great majority of people present at the riot were not actual participants (male), but spectators (male and female).¹¹² As Scott W. See reflected in 1997, however, women “appear as shadowy images in the histories of collective confrontations.”¹¹³

The book *The Riot at Christie Pits* did not account for any gender distinctions among Jews in perceptions of, attitudes toward, or involvement in, the riot.¹¹⁴ The “respondents” who gave interviews, for example, were not identified by sex, and in those cases in which sex can be discerned in their verbatim testimony, it is always male. These features of the book lead the reader to reasonably assume that all the testimonies came from a select group of men – or, as one reviewer wrote, “scores of old street-fighters.”¹¹⁵ In the 1996 documentary based on the book, only one of the ten on-screen interviewees is a woman, and she does not speak directly about the riot.¹¹⁶ The documentary also depicts no Jewish women in re-enactment scenes of the riot except, presumably, as spectators at baseball games.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, they are virtually absent from modern press and blog stories.

Women were there, however. In the only known surviving photograph of the riot, women can be seen on the street at the edge of the park, and the *Toronto Daily Star* reported that at the site of at least one street brawl, women and children “were standing on the corner at the time of the attack.”¹¹⁸ Other women, according to a rare press interview with a female witness, observed upheaval on the streets from their front porches: Mrs. C. Copen of Christie Street saw “three trucks full to overflowing with Jewish youths draw up in front of her house, and disgorge their contents.”¹¹⁹ The *Evening Telegram* reported that “a number of Jewish women” complained to police that a gentile agitator had brandished a four-inch hunting knife.¹²⁰ And as the mothers, sisters, and girlfriends of the rioters, they experienced the violence in intimate ways. A young woman, for example, was walking with twenty-two year-old Louis Sugarman on Grace Street when he was brutally attacked, although she was able to flee “unmolested.”¹²¹ Another young woman was with Louis Kotlick on Clinton Street when he was assaulted by twelve boys.¹²² And Kotlick’s sister Mina witnessed a man on Christie and Bloor Streets “hitting people with a baseball bat.”¹²³ Women offered up their homes as sanctuary to victims, and served as caregivers, tending to injuries, transporting the wounded to hospital, and securing and paying the bail money of those who were arrested.¹²⁴ The *Star* reported, for instance, that “between intermissions of riots, the injured were taken care of by an unidentified girl bathing their bleeding wounds with water.”¹²⁵ When the worst of the violence was over, women comprised many of the hundreds of Jewish residents who spilled into the streets, drifted into groups, “and held indignation meetings.”¹²⁶

And in the weeks, months, and years following the riot, in which many boys had suffered head injuries, mothers were left coping with the traumatic consequences.¹²⁷ It took Karen X. Tulchinsky's 2003 book *The Five Books of Moses Lapinsky*, a historical novel, to highlight this aspect of the incident. A story of one Jewish family's encounter with the riot, the book describes Sophie who was left caring for her five-year-old son Izzy. He "was struck on the head by a heavy blunt instrument. Perhaps a rock. Maybe a brick or a bat." Sophie was forced to acknowledge that "something has happened to Izzy's brain and he will never be the same again."¹²⁸

Fictional accounts of the riot have been far more attentive to women. Although Tulchinsky's novel has a male protagonist (a boxer, no less) and is set in a world that is "overwhelmingly male," her novel offers a rare examination of the riot in which there is a sensitive consideration of gender (and sexuality), including "feminine strength."¹²⁹ The same can be said for the 2005 novel *The Secret Mitzvah of Lucio Burke*, by Steven Hayward, which centres on Ruthie, a social activist, and her burgeoning romance with pitcher Lucio. Although the story features a close circle of likable male friends and various aspects of male teen culture, communist and feminist Ruthie is clearly the heart of the story.¹³⁰

Macho-mensch pride necessarily made no room for women who were rendered invisible in both the contemporaneous narratives and later memories of the riot. Although Jewish women certainly played a role in the conflict, it should not be surprising if they did not internalize or communicate the importance of a story that essentially excluded them from the start.

For many Jews, the riot at Christie Pits was a David and Goliath story in which a relatively small number of beleaguered but determined young Jews were able to retaliate against arrogant, bigoted hoodlums and defy the evil forces of antisemitism. But the incident was especially a watershed moment for the battling Jewish young men. For them, it was more than a manifestation of physicality or righteousness or group identity: it was the perfect storm that inspired the momentous, simultaneous expression of all three macho-mensch values. The riot at Christie Pits was a test of their tenuous manhood, an ordeal which they judged a distinctly masculine victory. It helped counter the deficient Jewish masculinity of their old-world fathers, and served to affirm their own rightful place in Canada. For the Jewish old-timers whom these boys became, the riot was also remembered within this macho-mensch ideal. And in a post-Holocaust era, their resistance became retroactively infused with their bittersweet satisfaction at perpetrating the ultimate macho-mensch revenge: maiming menacing Nazi thugs in the name of six million murdered Jews.¹³¹

1

Cyril H. Levitt and William Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1987). A new edition of the book (with new Foreword and Postscript) was published by Toronto's New Jewish Press in 2018. For example, the riot receives no mention in Benjamin G. Sack, *History of the Jews in Canada: From the Earliest Beginnings to the Present Day* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1945), Israel Medres, *Between the Wars: Canadian Jews in Transition* (Montreal: 1964), Stuart E. Rosenberg, *The Jewish Community in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1971), Erna Paris, *Jews: An Account of Their Experience in Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1980). Two notable exceptions of this neglect are Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties* (North York, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1975) and Stephen A. Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979).

2

Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, "The Swastika as Dramatic Symbol: A Case-Study of Ethnic Violence in Canada," 77-96, in Robert J. Bryn, William Shaffir, and Morton Weinfeld, eds. *The Jews in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 92. Levitt and Shaffir noted that in addition to the virulent antisemitism in Toronto that summer, especially the flaunting of the swastika, five distinct features contributed to the riot: the initial absence of police who could have curtailed the violence; the proximity of the riot to a Jewish enclave of supporters; free time by rioters to engage in the fighting; newspaper reports of escalating tensions; and the more combative approach by young Canadian Jews over their immigrant parents in battling antisemitism. There is no mention of gender as a factor.

3

Rebecca T. Alpert, "The Macho-Mensch: Modelling American Jewish Masculinity and the Heroes of Baseball," in Raanan Rein and David M.K. Sheinin, eds. *Muscling in on New Worlds: Jews, Sport, and the Making of the Americas* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 108-109.

4

Ibid. Fulfilling all three ingredients of the macho-mensch – as physical, ethical, and Jewish-identified – Hank Greenberg proved himself a superior athlete (physical), enlisted

in the Air Force during the Second World War (ethical), and refused to play an end-of-season game in 1934 in order to attend synagogue on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur (Jewish-identified). See Ibid., 109-114. Many other Jewish athletes in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s adhered to the macho-mensch model. See Stephen H. Norwood, "American Jewish Muscle: Forging a New Masculinity in the Streets and in the Ring, 1890-1940," *Modern Judaism* 29, 2 (May 2009): 184-85. In labelling the first trait, Alpert uses the term "athletic," but I have utilized the broader term "physical," which incorporates both athleticism and other forms of physicality. Alpert does not quantify the proportions of each trait that comprised the macho-mensch.

5

Alpert, "The Macho-Mensch," 109.

6

Ibid.

7

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 34-37. In 1931, there were 45,305 Jews in Toronto (about 7.2 per cent of the city's total population), 25,264 of whom were foreign born, mostly from Poland and Russia. They comprised 18.6 per cent of the residents of Ward 5, which included Christie Pits. Most Toronto Jews spoke both Yiddish (mother-tongue) and English (second language). Jewish youth (between the ages of five and twenty-nine years) made up a significant 55 per cent of all Toronto Jews (compared to the 43.3 per cent of youth that comprised the city's total population). See Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 32, 39.

8

Scott W. See, "Nineteenth-Century Collective Violence: Toward a North American Context," *Labour/Le Travail* 39 (Spring 1997): 29-30.

9

Ibid., 30.

10

Judy M. Tarrant, *Public Violence in Canada, 1867-1982* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 96, 97.

11

Ibid., 139.

12

Gerald Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Niagara Falls, NY: Stoddart Pub, 1998), 198-99. Lita-Rose Betcherman also employs these words in idem, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf*, 57. Only in her concluding analysis does she refer to the Jewish boys as "some tough sons of Jewish immigrants." See p. 59.

13

Morton Weinfeld, *Like Everyone Else...But Different: The Paradoxical Success of Canadian Jews* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 325.

14

Jack Lipinsky, *Imposing Their Will: an Organizational History of Jewish Toronto, 1933-1948* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 43-44. Only when he quotes a participant does the word "guys" get used.

15

Riot at Christie Pits Historical Plaque, http://torontoplaques.com/Pages/Riot_at_Christie_pits.html

16

Brianna Goldberg, "A Riot's Lasting Legacy," *National Post*, 16 August 2008, A10.

17

Only *Star* writer Rosie DiManno took care to consider, and make more precise, her use of the word Jews: "This one time, Toronto's Jews – the teen boys, at least – fought back...." See Rosie DiManno, "Remembering the Riot of Christie Pits," *The Toronto Star*, 10 August 2013, A2.

18

Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 198.

19

Warren Rosenberg, *Legacy of Rage: Jewish Masculinity, Violence, and Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 1, 2.

20

Ibid., 4.

21

Ibid., 19-20; Alpert, "The Macho-Mensch," 101.

22

Rosenberg, 4.

23

See, for example, Ibid., 24; Alpert, "The Macho-Mensch," 102; Norwood, "American Jewish Muscle," 171-72.

24

Jack Kugelmass, "Why Sports?," in idem, ed. *Jews, Sports, and the Rites of Citizenship* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 4.

25

Nathan Abrams, "Muscles, Mimicry, Menschlikyat, and Madagascar: Jews, Sport, and Nature in US Cinema," in Raanan Rein and David M.K. Sheinin, eds. *Muscling in on New Worlds: Jews, Sport, and the Making of the Americas* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 124-26; Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin, *Searching for My Brothers: Jewish Men in a Gentile World* (New York: Perigee Trade, 2000), 3-5.

26

"Swastika Feud Battles in Toronto Injure 5 Fists, Boots, Piping Used in Bloor Street War," *The Globe*, 17 August 1933, 2. Rabbi Sachs wore several community leadership hats: in addition to being chair of the social justice group mentioned above, he was the spiritual leader of Goel Tzedec (University Avenue Synagogue) and was head of the Committee on Education and Culture for the Canadian Jewish Congress. See Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, p. 280, e.n. 45.

27

"To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," *The Evening Telegram*, 17 August 1933, 2.

28

"Die With Boots on' Jewish Boys Slogan," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 19 August 1933, 2

29

"To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2. The police did not show up at the park until an hour after the start of the riot. It took them several hours to disperse the crowds and stop the fighting. In the days following, the police were widely criticized for their lack of preparedness, and for their heavy-handed intervention at lawful rallies by groups like the CCF whom the police deemed suspect; indeed, on the evening of the riot, most of the force was disbanding a peaceful demonstration at another park. See Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 26-27, 160-63, 175-77.

30

Ibid.; "Swastika Feud Battles in Toronto Injure 5 Fists, Boots, Piping Used in Bloor Street War," 1.

31

Levitt and Shaffir note these biases, calling the *Evening Telegram* "the most anti-Jewish of the Toronto newspapers," and branding the *Toronto Daily Star* as "the outspoken champion of the Jewish minority." These prejudices must be considered in assessing the various perceptions by the press of the riot. See Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 27. For a discussion of antisemitism in the Canadian press in the early to mid-1930s, see Richard Menkis and Harold Troper, *More than Just Games: Canada and the 1936 Olympics* (Toronto: 2015), 34-42.

32

For example, after being verbally assaulted by a gentile ruffian, one Jewish boy was severely beaten, despite the fact that he was "a well known amateur boxer." See "To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2.

33

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 166-67; "To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2.

34

"To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2.

35

Ibid.

36

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, pp. 167-68.

37

Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 137-8. The decline of Jewish manhood in America contrasted sharply with the belief by some early Twentieth-century commentators that once in America, the sheepish European Jewish man, transformed by American liberty, would experience a new surge of manhood." See Beth S. Wenger, "American Jewish Immigrants and the Invention of Europe," in Ira Robinson, Naftali S. Cohn, and Lorenzo Ditommaso, eds., *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 178.

38

Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf*, 59.

39

Goldberg, "A Riot's Lasting Legacy," A10.

40

Todd Samuel Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (London and New York: Routledge Jewish Studies Series, 2007), 2; Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation*, 137-38; Joyce Antler, *You Never Call! You Never Write!: A History of the Jewish Mother* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007): 25-26.

41

Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation*, 137-41, 155; Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 2.

42

Antler, *You Never Call!*, 7, 15.

43

Ibid., 16.

44

Ibid., 16, 17; Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation*, 126-27. Songs like Sophie Tucker's 1925 signature ballad *My Yiddish Mama* and films like the 1927 melodrama *The Jazz Singer* feature loving, old-world Jewish mothers "frozen in time," and the grateful children who needed and cherished them. See Antler, *You Never Call!*, 17-25. The quotation appears on p. 25.

45

Antler, *You Never Call!*, 35-36. A significant portion of this paragraph is excerpted from Monda Halpern, *Alice in Shandehland: Scandal and Scorn in the Edelson/Horwitz Murder Case* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 107-109.

46

Gerald R. Gems, "Jews, Sport, and the Construction of an American Identity," in Raanan Rein and David M.K. Sheinin, eds., *Muscling in on New Worlds: Jews, Sport, and the Making of the Americas* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 87.

47

Michael Brenner, "Introduction: Why Jews and Sports," in Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni, eds., *Emancipation through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 3.

48

Irving Ungerman, *Think and Respect* (Toronto: 2015), 37.

49

Gems, "Jews, Sport, and the Construction of an American Identity," 87.

50

Ibid., 89, 90.

51

Nathan Abrams, "The Jew in the Gym: Judaism, Sports, and Athletics on Film," in Leonard J. Greenspoon, ed. *Jews in the Gym: Judaism, Sports, and Athletics* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2012), 53-56. For recent sources on the successful participation of Jews in sport in pre-Holocaust Europe, see, for example, Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni, eds., *Emancipation through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006) and Jack Kugelmass, ed., *Jews, Sports, and the Rites of Citizenship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); for recent sources on the successful participation of Jews in sport in pre-World War II North and South America, see, for example, Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Judaism's Encounter with American Sports* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), Raanan Rein and David M.K. Sheinin, eds., *Muscling in on New Worlds: Jews, Sport, and the Making of the Americas* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), and Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Constant Challenge: Sports and American Judaism* (London: Toby Press, 2017). In a Canadian context, sources on individual Jewish athletes will prove more fruitful. For information on Fanny "Bobbie" Rosenfeld (1904-1969), for example, gold-medal winner at the 1928 Olympic Summer Games, and "Canada's Female Athlete of the Half-Century," see Christina Burr and Carol A. Reader, "Fanny 'Bobbie' Rosenfeld: A 'Modern Woman' of Sport and Journalism in Twentieth-Century Canada," *Sports History Review*, 44 (2013): 120-143.

52

Rosenberg, *Legacy of Rage*, 22-23.

53

Ibid., 22, 23.

54

Ibid., 30.

55

Ibid.

56

Ibid., 3; Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 4, 1, 2.

57

Alpert, "The Macho-Mensch," 108-109. For Alpert, the American version of Zionist nationalism translated into macho-mensch young men "making claim to American values and openly and proudly presenting themselves as Jews."

58

Norwood, "American Jewish Muscle," 169.

59

See, for example, "Did Not Think Riot Serious, Says Draper," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 17 August 1933, 2.

60

Ontario Sports Hall of Fame, Sammy Luftspring, <http://oshof.ca/index.php/honoured-members/item/90-sammy-luftspring>; "Streetfighter Baby Yak was Boxing Champ," *The Canadian Jewish News*, 29 January 1987, 31.

61

Mike Silver, *Stars in the Ring: Jewish Champions in the Golden Age of Boxing* (New York: Lyons Press, 2016), 199, 264.

62

Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf*, 59.

63

"To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2.

64

Ibid. This comparison in the *Evening Telegram* of the Jewish boys to "a swarm of maddening bees" could be interpreted as antisemitic.

65

"Die With Boots on' Jewish Boys Slogan," 2; Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf*, 59.

66

"Die With Boots on' Jewish Boys Slogan," 2.

67

"To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2.

68

This sense of exhilaration is captured by one Jewish rioter who, recalling victory, declared "I think for a week we were higher than a kite."

See Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 161; "To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2.

69

Norwood, "American Jewish Muscle," 179.

70

"Die With Boots on' Jewish Boys Slogan," 2.

71

"Christie Pits: Thousands battled in Canada's worst anti-Semite riots," *Toronto Star*, 3 December 1992, 3.

72

The figure of one hundred gang members appears in "Calm Prevails Again in Swastika War Zone," *The Globe*, 18 August 1933, 1; "Hoodlum Street Gang Attacks Young Jew," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 18 August 1933, 3.

73

Danny Rosenberg, "Athletics in the Ward and Beyond: Neighborhoods, Jews, and Sport in Toronto, 1900-1939," in Ralph C. Wilcox et al., eds. *Sporting Dystopias: The Making and Meanings of Urban Sport Culture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 148.

74

Sammy Luftspring with Brian Swarbrick, *Call Me Sammy* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1975), 85.

75

Calvin Goldscheider, "Macro and Micro Insights into Contemporary Jewish Identities: Europe, Israel, and the United States," in Robinson, Cohn, and Ditommaso, *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity*, 296-97. The author seeks to challenge this argument; the Preface of this book reminds us that there is no one Jewish identity, and that Judaism and Jewishness are themselves contested terms and concepts. See Ira Robinson, Naftali S Cohn, and Lorenzo Ditommaso, "Preface," in idem, *History, Memory, and Jewish Identity*, p. ix.

76

"Die With Boots on' Jewish Boys Slogan," 2.

77

Ibid.; Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf*, 59.

78

"Six Hours of Rioting Scores are Injured," *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 August 1933, 3.

79

"Hail Hitler,' is Youth's Cry," *The Globe*, 17 August 1933, 2.

80

Norwood, "American Jewish Muscle," 181; Luftspring with Swarbrick, *Call Me Sammy*, 76.

81

See for example, Rosie DiManno, "Remembering the Christie Pits Riot," *The Toronto Star*, 10 August 2013, 1. For use of the expression "Jewish old-timers," see Paula J. Draper, Review, *Urban History Review* 17. 3 (February 1989): 220. For "old-timers," see Weinfeld, *Like Everyone Else...But Different*, 326.

82

For "legendary status," see Morton Weinfeld, Review, *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 14. 2 (Spring 1989): 239; For "usable" past, see Nicole Neatby and Peter Hodgins "Introduction," in idem, eds. *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History* (Toronto: 2012), 5.

83

Steve Simmons, "80th Anniversary of the Christie Pits Riot," *Toronto Sun*, 10 August 2010.

84

Murray Krugel had been a middleweight wrestler and Olympic hopeful in the 1920s, Murray Tate had been an amateur boxer, and Irving Ungerman had been an aspiring boxer who eventually became a renowned Toronto boxing promoter. See Mark Dodick, "Family Reunion Rekindles Past," *Canadian Jewish News*, 4 July 1985; Paul Lungen, "Gold Plaque Bittersweet Award for Murray Tate," *Canadian Jewish News*, 24 May 1984, 24; Ungerman, *Think and Respect*, 46-47, 133-63.

85

DiManno, "Remembering the Riot of Christie Pits," A2; Simmons, "80th Anniversary of the Christie Pits Riot."

86

Dodick, "Family Reunion Rekindles Past."

87

Lungen, "Gold Plaque Bittersweet Award for Murray Tate," 24. At almost sixty years old, Tate boasted of his sixty push-ups a day, and was still proud "to show off his powerful biceps."

88

Ungerman, *Think and Respect*, 27, 48-9.

89

Bernie M. Farber, "Christie Pits Riot was a Turning Point for Toronto," *Toronto Star*, 15 August 2013, A23.

90

Goldberg, "A Riot's Lasting Legacy," A10.

91

DiManno, "Remembering the Christie Pits Riot," 1, 2.

92

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 162.

93

Ibid.

94

Ibid., 50.

95

Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf*, 59.

96

"Streetfighter Baby Yak was Boxing Champ," 31.

97

Jocko Thomas, "Riot at Christie Pits: A day of shame in Toronto's history," *Toronto Star*, 10 August 1996, 37.

98

R. Neil Matheson, "The Donnybrook in the Ball Park: The Riot at Christie Pits," *The Globe and Mail*, 21 November 1987, C21.

99

Arnold Ages, "Busy Canadian Jewish Academics are Writing," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, 17 September 1987, 18.

100

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 50.

101

Ibid., 161. Entebbe is a reference to the heroic 1976 raid by the Israeli Defence Forces who rescued hijacked Israeli passengers held hostage by Palestinian terrorists at a Ugandan airport. The President of Uganda, Idi Amin, had supported the actions of the terrorists.

102

Rabbi Jordan Pearlson, "Facing up to Ugly Provocation," *The Toronto Star*, 5 December 1987, M7.

103

See James Opp and John C. Walsh, eds. *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), *passim*. The reverse is also true: Simon Schama in his book *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995) notes that "landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock." See pp. 6-7.

104

"Gold plaque bittersweet award for Murry Tate," 24.

105

Rita Poliakov, "Plaque Commemorates Christie Pits Riot," *Canadian Jewish News*, 28 August 2008, 6.

106

Lewis Levendel, "Zaionz calls on lay people to get more involved," *Canadian Jewish News*, 8 May 1986, 23.

107

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 161-62.

108

David Lewis Stein, "Toronto when bigotry was in full bloom," *Toronto Star*, 8 November 1987, A18.

109

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 122. Of the thirty-one charter members of the Swastika Club, eight were women. Although some women were seeking to form a female auxiliary, Ganter declared that the Swastika Club was "open to all creeds and both sexes as long as they are over eighteen years of age." See pp. 125, 128.

110

"Many are Injured in Park Rioting," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 17 August 1933, 1. Eleven young men were listed as more than slightly injured, mostly with trauma to the head, and two young men were arrested.

111

For a discussion on wartime commemoration and gender, particularly the exclusion of women, see Cecilia Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage, and Memory: 1850s-1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 87, 163-64.

112

Goldberg, "A Riot's Lasting Legacy," A10. William Shaffir stated here that "we're guessing that no more than 200 or 300 people actually took part in the violence, and there may have been a couple of thousand spectators."

113

See, "Nineteenth-Century Collective Violence," 30.

114

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 272, endnote 24, for example.

115

Matheson, "The Donnybrook in the Ball Park: The Riot at Christie Pits," C21.

116

The Riot at Christie Pits, documentary directed by Peter Williamson, and produced by Canwest, 1996. The one woman is Toby Ryan, a "Teacher and Social Activist" (she was, in fact, the co-founder of a communist theatre company, a trained dramaturge, and a director and playwright. See the Toby Gordon Ryan Collection fond at the University of Guelph Library), who addresses the 1930s popularity of the Orange Order and the prejudice against social agitators. Despite the glaring omission of women eyewitnesses, one reviewer of the documentary asserted that "the film's greatest contribution is as oral history." See Christopher Harris, "Film Unveils Racism," *The Globe and Mail*, 15 August 1996, E2.

117

The Riot at Christie Pits, documentary.

118

"Christie Pits Riot," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christie_Pits_riot; "Six Hours of Rioting Scores are Injured," 3.

119

"Die With Boots on' Jewish Boys' Slogan," 2.

120

"To Prosecute All Who Show Swazi Emblem," 2.

121

"Hoodlum Street Gang Attacks Young Jew," 3.

122

"Youth Cannot Walk After Being Waylaid," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 17 August 1933, 1.

123

Ibid.

124

"Six Hours of Rioting Scores are Injured," 3; Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 160, 179.

125

"Six Hours of Rioting Scores are Injured," 3.

126

"Swastika Feud Battles in Toronto Injure 5 Fists, Boots, Piping Used in Bloor Street War," 2.

127

For example, see Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 164.

128

Karen X. Tulchinsky, *The Five Books of Moses Lapinsky* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2004), 35.

129

"The Five Books of Moses Lapinsky," *Quill and Quire*, 2, <http://www.quillandquire.com/review/the-five-books-of-moses-lapinsky/>; Joanne Cohen, "A gentle, gay Moses," *Daily Xtra*, 1 October 2003, 2, <http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/gentle-gay-moses-55243>.

130

Steven Hayward, *The Secret Mitzvah of Lucio Burke* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2005).

131

Levitt and Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, 200-201.