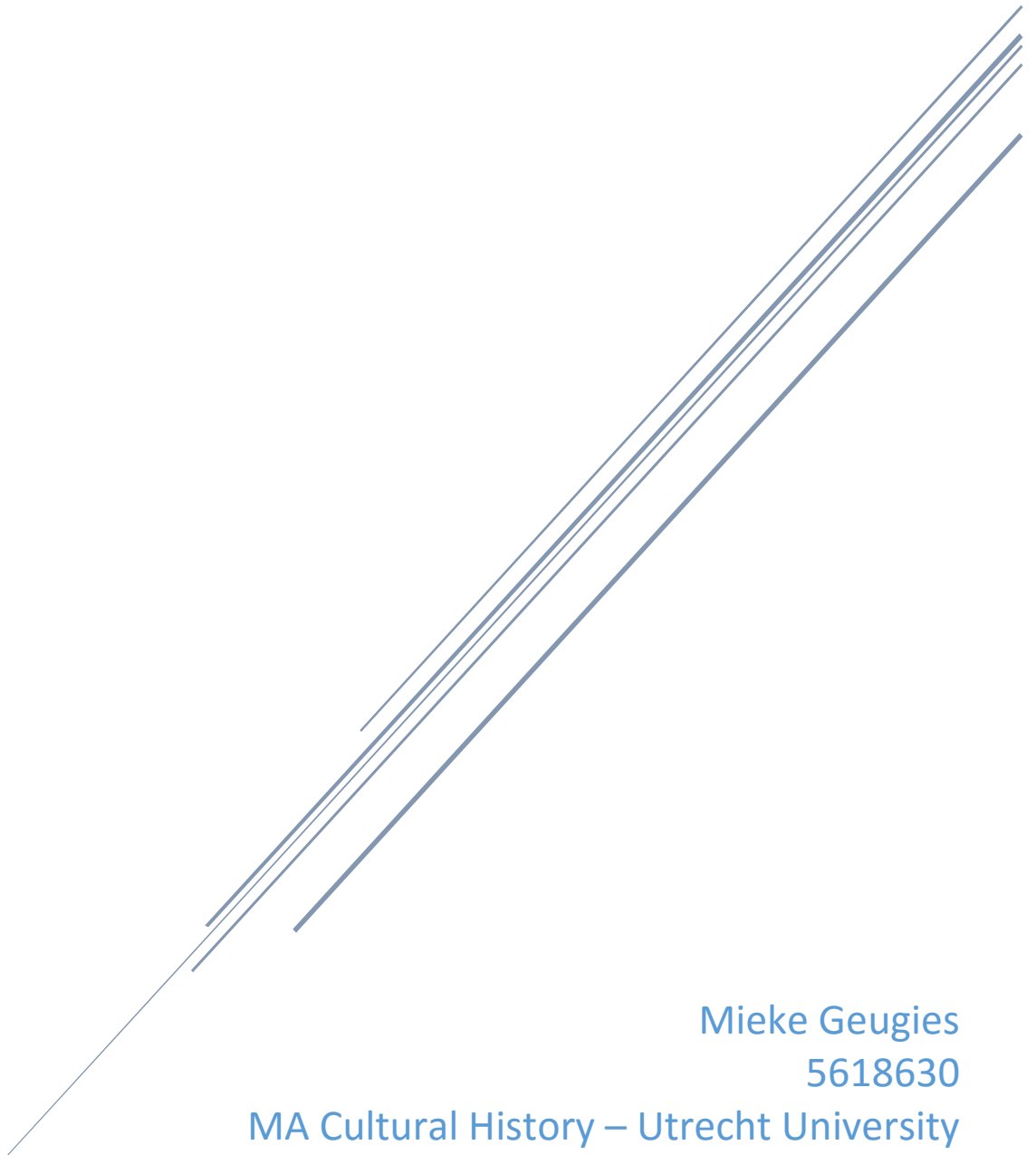


JEWISH AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

The Holocaust discourse in Jewish American newspapers,
1945 – 2000.



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Abstract

This thesis researches the Holocaust discourse in Jewish American newspapers in the period between 1945 and 2000. It analyzes the changes in this discourse, and what this shows about the self-image of Jewish Americans. The analysis is based on the theory of representation by Stuart Hall, and uses the method of digital newspaper analysis to form its arguments. The development of this discourse is analyzed in relation to the social and cultural changes Jewish American experienced in this period. Besides this, a comparison is made between the Holocaust public discourse among Jewish Americans and the development of this discourse in the Gentile American public sphere. The newspaper analysis is divided into two periods – 1945 until 1970 and 1970 until 2000 – because the late 1970s and early 1980s mark a dramatic increase in the development of the Holocaust discourse in Gentile America. This thesis argues that for Jewish Americans, the Holocaust was inherently connected to Judaism. In a time where assimilation and Americanization for America's Jewry became possible and popular, the Holocaust discourse served as a reminder of their Jewish background, culture, and religion.

Table of contents

Introduction	3
<i>The Holocaust in memory and history</i>	4
<i>Jewish people in the United States</i>	4
<i>Theory and methodology</i>	5
<i>Relevance and comparable research</i>	7
<i>Structure of the thesis</i>	8
Chapter one: The Holocaust among Gentiles and Jews	10
<i>The indifference toward the Holocaust in the US</i>	10
<i>The peak and decline of antisemitism</i>	13
<i>American Jewry</i>	14
<i>The Cold War and Communism</i>	15
<i>Jewish Americans post 1970</i>	16
<i>Post 1970: The Historikerstreit and the increase in interest for the Holocaust</i>	17
<i>Americanization and de-Judaization: the Holocaust as trope</i>	19
<i>Conclusion</i>	20
Chapter two: Remembering and rebuilding: 1945 – 1970	22
<i>The Holocaust and the binary between Jews and Gentiles in the US</i>	24
<i>The Holocaust as a warning for antisemitism</i>	28
<i>The Holocaust as a call for the revival of Judaism</i>	30
<i>Conclusion</i>	33
Chapter three: Remembering and reflecting: 1970 – 2000	35
<i>The Holocaust and Shoah</i>	36
<i>The Holocaust as trope</i>	38
<i>The Holocaust as a political tool</i>	40
<i>Remembering the Holocaust and the survival of Judaism</i>	43
<i>Conclusion</i>	46
Conclusion	48
Bibliography	51

Introduction

The Holocaust – the genocide on European Jews by Nazi Germany – is often regarded as the most evil act in the history of humanity and incomparable to other acts of genocide. It is therefore that the Holocaust, the Nazis and the Third Reich are still very visible in public debates, collective memory, and popular culture not only in Europe, but also the US and other parts of the world.¹ This thesis will research the Holocaust discourse in public debate through the analysis of newspapers between 1945 and 2000. More specifically, the research will focus on the change in Holocaust discourse among Jewish people in the US between 1945 until 2000. The research question for this thesis is: how was the Holocaust as a discourse constructed in the Jewish American press in relation to social and cultural changes within the Jewish communities in the United States, and what conclusions about the self-image of Jewish Americans can be drawn from these changes in discourse between 1945 and 2000? The analysis will thus not focus on the historical event that is the Holocaust and how it is described and remembered, but at what the meaning and employment of the Holocaust in the press tells about the self-image of the American Jewry. Sub-questions that are related to the main research question are: when did newspapers begin to use the term Holocaust, or Shoah? Does this differ from the use of the terms among Gentile Americans and Europeans? Secondly, does the Jewish-American press tend to portray the Holocaust as a unique, singular event, similar to the Gentile public discourse does? Is the Holocaust used as a trope, or model for speaking about other mass murders and genocides among Jewish-Americans?

In order to be able to answer the research question, the development of the Holocaust discourse will first be compared to the place the Holocaust has taken within Gentile American public life. Besides, an overview of the social and cultural changes of Jewish Americans between 1945 and 2000 will be given. The hypothesis for this thesis is that in contrast to Gentile US, in the postwar years the Holocaust was very present in the Jewish American newspapers, because for Jewish Americans, the Holocaust was inherently connected to their heritage and identity, and therefore self-image. However, as many Jewish Americans assimilated and Americanized in the period between 1970 and 2000, another hypothesis is that the Holocaust discourses were constructed similar between Gentile and Jewish Americans post 1970.² In addition, since the interest in the Holocaust and the victims of the Nazis dramatically increased in both public culture and scholarship, it can be expected that both discourses meet and perhaps even develop into one from the late 1970s or early 1980s onwards.³

¹ Deborah E. Lipstadt, 'America and the Memory of the Holocaust, 1950-1965', *Modern Judaism* 16 (1996): 195-214, Accessed January 18, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1396708>, 195.

² Edward S. Shapiro, *A Time for Healing. American Jewry since World War II* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 93.

³ Lipstadt, 'America and the Memory of the Holocaust', 195.

The Holocaust in memory and history

The victims of the Holocaust, and people who died during the Second World War as civilians or soldiers, are nowadays yearly remembered by many countries. Since 2005, the United Nations has established the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 27th of January every year.⁴ The official Jewish counterpart of this Gentile remembrance day is Yom HaShoah or Holocaust Day, which is held on 27 Nisan, either in April or May on the Roman calendar. Yom HaShoah has existed since 1951, and was officially inaugurated by the Knesset, the Israeli government. The date corresponds with the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, one of the major Jewish protests against the Nazis.⁵ Lots of museums have been established in- and outside of Europe that document and teach about the Holocaust, and ethnic and racial tolerance in general. Moreover, the Second World War and the Holocaust are today popular themes or genres in popular culture.⁶

Since the late 1970s, the Holocaust has been extensively researched in humanities scholarship. Before this, historians when researching the period of the Second World War mainly focused on the development of National Socialism, the structure of the Third Reich, and the decision-making by the Nazis that led to the Holocaust. The Holocaust itself and its Jewish victims were largely ignored.⁷ Before the 1970s, the Holocaust in itself did not exist as a discourse in the Gentile world, because the term Holocaust was not generally used to describe the murder of six million European Jews in the Nazi concentration camps.⁸ This thesis will research whether this can be argued within Jewish American communities as well, and whether this surge in interest for the Holocaust in the Gentile Western World has affected and influenced the Holocaust discourse in the Jewish American press.

Jewish people in the United States

The analysis of the research focuses on Jewish American communities in the US. As Jews who emigrated to the US over the centuries gradually shaped their own specific identity which was a mix of American and Jewish values, they are a community distinct from both Americans and other Jewish communities in for example Europe and Israel.⁹ The first Jewish immigrants arrived at the American mainland already in the seventeenth century, a century before the United States was founded. Jews were welcomed in the tolerant community of New Netherlands in what is now the New York City

⁴ 'About the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme', *The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme*, last modified 2011, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/>.

⁵ Elon Gilad, 'The History of Holocaust Remembrance Day', *Haaretz Daily Newspaper*, April 27, 2014, accessed June 16, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.587517>.

⁶ Lipstadt, 'America and the Memory of the Holocaust', 195-6.

⁷ Dan Stone, Introduction to *The Historiography of the Holocaust* by Dan Stone, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1-7.

⁸ Dan Stone, Introduction to *The Historiography of the Holocaust* by Dan Stone, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 2.

⁹ Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), *Ebook collection EBSCOhost*, accessed June 19, 2016, 1.

area.¹⁰ At this period, Jewish were thus as much immigrants as every European that moved to the New World colonies. When the United States was founded in 1776, the country was seen as a Christian nation which for example applied the Christian calendar, similar to Europe. From that period onwards, ‘How they [the Jews in America] negotiated between the Christian character of America and their own Jewishness provides one of the leitmotifs of their history.’¹¹ Jewish people thus have been part of American history since the earliest establishment of the colonies, and have experienced and participated in the development of the nation in what it is today.

However, from the early nineteenth until the beginning of the twentieth century, immigration to the US by Jewish people from Europe reached its peak. New immigrants were quickly taken in by those who had lived in the US for a longer period, making immigration attractive and successful. These people were however seen by some Gentile Americans as unwanted newcomers. These people experienced immigration as a threat to the existing society and culture of the US. Therefore, in the 1920s, the National Origins act which entailed immigrated quotas for all large groups of immigrants was ratified. Because of these quotas that prohibited many Jewish people from immigration and the Nazi reign that followed in the decade after, American Jewry began to transform into a community of native born Jewish Americans.

Areas of large Jewish communities could be found in and around New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia.¹² This thesis will focus on the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh area, and uses newspapers produced and written within this community. The first Jews settled in this area around 1840, and like the entire US, faced a great enlargement in the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century. Unsurprisingly, the establishment of the first Jewish American newspapers of this area that will be used as primary sources in this thesis was in this period of great immigration influx.¹³

Theory and methodology

The analysis of the Holocaust discourse in Jewish American newspapers will draw on the ideas by cultural theorist Stuart Hall. Hall wrote about representation and the approaches to analyzing meaning in cultural texts¹⁴. Since the linguistic turn, scholars agree that meaning is represented through language¹⁵. Language in this perspective does not solely mean written or spoken language, but also signs and symbols. In other words, objects or phenomena do not have their own, essential, fixed meaning, but their meaning is created in society by communication. This means that meanings can

¹⁰ Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 3.

¹¹ Idem, 4.

¹² Idem, 3-7.

¹³ ‘About the Collection’, *The Pittsburgh Digital Jewish Newspaper Project*, last modified 2012, accessed June 19, 2016, <http://digitalcollections.library.cmu.edu/portal/collections/pjn/about.jsp>.

¹⁴ Stuart Hall, ‘The Work of Representation’, Laurie Ouelette, ed., *The Media Studies Reader* (New York and London: Routledge 2012): 171-196.

¹⁵ Idem, 171.

change over time, or can differ amongst different groups of people. A meaning is encoded when a person writes or speaks into signs, and these signs are decoded by the mind of the person who listens. Decoding happens with certain concepts the mind already has stored. Communication is possible when people have the same conceptual map for the same sign, and thus generate the same meaning in their minds. The meaning of signs is arbitrary. Hall exemplifies this by writing about the meaning of the color red in traffic lights. The sign 'red' represents 'stop'. However, this meaning is a social construct, red does not always mean stop, and if a society would have agreed upon it, the color blue could also represent stopping¹⁶.

Hall's theory covers the production of discourse in the whole of society, but does not specifically include the press into his argument. However, the media is an important factor in the creation, but also perpetuation, of discourses. People who read newspapers rely upon the ethics of journalism, that whatever the newspaper publishes is the truth. Therefore people rely on newspapers as a source of knowledge and believe what is written. However, a newspaper is always written by people who live in a certain society, and thus adhere to certain discourses. Objective journalism is thus not possible. Moreover, the press decides if an event is newsworthy or not. This inclusion and exclusion is always done within a certain discourse, and is influenced by power relations. Newspapers are a valuable source for historical analysis, because they produce discourse, are within a discourse already, and are often read and trusted for their objectivity by many people.

As the interest for the Holocaust dramatically increased in Gentile US and Europe in the late 1970s and 1980s, this had as an effect that in the US the Holocaust is since this period often used as a trope or synecdoche. A trope is a rhetoric metaphor, or commonly used theme in cultural texts.¹⁷ In these cultural products – such as literature and film – in the US, 'the Holocaust has come to stand in for all race-based oppression'.¹⁸ The use of the Holocaust as trope is directly connected to the discourse of Holocaust exceptionalism, and will be explained in more detail in the first chapter.¹⁹ This thesis will analyze whether or not in the Jewish American newspapers, the Holocaust is also used as a trope from the 1970s onwards. By comparing the use of the Holocaust as a metaphor for all evil, arguments can be made according to the influence of mainstream US Holocaust memory on the Jewish American discourse.

This thesis will look at newspaper articles through digital database research. It will make use of the databases of archives that have digitalized American newspapers, and will search for the keyword Holocaust, and keywords that are often associated with the Holocaust and the Second World

¹⁶ Hall, 'The Work of Representation', 174-5

¹⁷ 'Trope' *Meriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary*, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trope>.

¹⁸ Jennifer Glaser, 'Of Superheroes and Synecdoche: Holocaust Exceptionalism, Race, and the Rhetoric of Jewishness in America', Michael Bernard-Donals and Janice W. Fernheimer, eds., *Jewish Rhetorics: History, Theory, Practice* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press 2014), chapter 14.

¹⁹ Idem.

War. The method of digital newspaper research has some academic issues that have to be kept in mind. First of all, not all Jewish-American newspapers have been digitalized. Digitalization is a complicated, expensive project that will probably take several more decades to be completed, if it is ever completed. The data that will be used as sources for is thus not objective or representational for all Jewish-American communities, because not all newspaper titles and every copy of a certain newspaper are included in the database. However, digital newspaper research is a valuable academic method. Databases gives a scholar the opportunity to search for topics relatively quick by using keywords. This way, one filters the useful newspapers from the large quantity of not useful ones. Before the digitalization, doing research on newspapers took very much time, and to look into all Jewish-American newspapers of a large period would simply be impossible. Despite the limitations, digital archives allow scholars to do research in a new way and find new conclusions. Because of digitalization, this thesis is able to construct an argument on the Holocaust discourse in a large timeframe of sixty-five years. This allows for the research not on how the Holocaust discourse was constructed at one specific time, but how it has changed and developed throughout the decades and in relation to important historical events. Besides this, database research and especially keyword search enables the analysis not only of how people wrote about the Holocaust, but at what specific moments they wrote about it. However, it is important to keep in mind the limitations of this research method.

Newspaper articles from three Jewish American newspapers are used as primary sources for the analysis. In the analysis, issues from *The Jewish Criterion* from 1895 until 1962, *The American Jewish Outlook* from 1934 until 1962, and *The Jewish Chronicle* from 1962 until 2000 are included. These newspapers were distributed in Pittsburgh, western Pennsylvania and West Virginia.²⁰ The first Jewish community in Pittsburgh was established in the 1840s. In the 1880s, Jewish immigration to the area increased dramatically. Immigrants were primarily Yiddish-speaking Jews from Germany, Central and Eastern Europe, and Russia. *The Jewish Criterion* was the first local English newspaper, the establishment of *The American Jewish Outlook* in 1934 caused some competition between the two papers. Both newspapers reported weekly on local, national, and international news. In 1962 they were both closed by the United Jewish Federation, *The Jewish Chronicle* took their place. This newspaper is still currently being published, but the collection holds copies until 2010.²¹

Relevance and comparable research

As mentioned earlier, there exists an extensive body of research about the Second World War and the Holocaust, and on the way historians have researched these two topics. This thesis will fit into this large worldwide debate. There has also been more research published about the Holocaust in relation

²⁰ 'About Us', *The Jewish Chronicle*, accessed June 19, 2016. http://thejewishchronicle.net/pages/about_us.

²¹ 'About the Collection'

to newspapers. This thesis relates most to the book *Buried by the Times* by Laurel Leff.²² This book was published in 2005 and analyzes the way in which the Holocaust was represented in *The New York Times*, one of the largest newspapers in the United States which during the Second World War was owned by a Jewish American. More specifically, Leff has argued that news coverage on the Holocaust and the Nazi treatment of the Jews was largely absent in this newspaper during the period between 1939 and 1945.²³ Leff's article relates to this thesis because both look at the news coverage of the Holocaust in relation to the socio-historical background in the US during and after the War. Leff focuses on a newspaper that was run by a Jewish American during and after the Holocaust but was not inherently Jewish, whereas this thesis does use particularly Jewish American sources for its analysis.

This thesis adds to the extensive amount of research about the Holocaust, but brings in a new scope by focusing on American Jewry, thereby using this relatively new and promising method of digital newspaper database research. The analysis of the Holocaust discourse offers a new perspective on American Jewry and the social and cultural changes this community faced. Besides this, by comparing the changes in the Holocaust discourse of Jewish Americans with the changes of the public discourse of the Holocaust of Gentile Americans, it offers a reflection on the social and cultural developments of the American society between 1945 and 2000 in total. The way the Holocaust discourse shows something about the Jewish American self-image can be connected to larger research on and debates about immigration, ethnic identity, and acculturation of minority communities in the US in the past and present, not in the first place because these communities have been so successful.²⁴

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter of this thesis will provide the reader with an overview of the Holocaust discourse within the memory and history of Gentile US. Also, an overview of the development of the Jewish American communities in relation to the social and cultural changes within the US is given. This historical embedding is crucial to the interpretation of the Holocaust discourse in the Pittsburgh Jewish newspapers. The analysis of the Jewish American newspaper articles in this thesis is divided into two periods and is being discussed in the second and third chapter, respectively. Chapter two will cover the publications from 1945 until 1970, and chapter three will consist of the analysis of articles published between 1970 and 2000. The distinction between the postwar years and the last decades of the twentieth century is, except from conveniently dividing the total period covered in this thesis almost in half, also a logical choice because of the transition in Holocaust interest and thus discourse in the Gentile Western world. During the late 1970s and 1980s, the Holocaust discourse began to develop in Gentile US and Europe. Whereas it was until that time mostly non-existent in discussions about the

²² Laurel Leff, *Buried by The Times. The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²³ Leff, *Buried by The Times*.

²⁴ For examples, see the argumentation in chapter one by for example Jennifer Glaser, Henry Feingold, and Edward Shapiro.

Second World War, the Holocaust and its victims became the center of public and scholarly debate after this period. Therefore, comparison between the discourse among Jewish Americans in a period without Gentile interest for the Holocaust with a period where this was an important theme is fruitful.

Chapter One: The Holocaust among Gentiles and Jews

This chapter will serve as a historical framework for the analysis of the second and third chapter of this thesis. This chapter will first give an overview of the public discourse of the Holocaust in the United States between 1945 and 2000. The response of Gentile America to the Holocaust in a cultural and political sense will be used as a comparison to the Jewish American response that is analyzed in the upcoming chapters. The newspaper articles are to be understood within Jewish American context, but also within both the context of the position of the United States during and after the Second World War, and position of the Holocaust and the War itself within the public discourse of the US.

Next, this chapter will provide an overview of the position of Jewish people in the US. In the introduction, the history of Jewish immigration to the country has been covered. In this chapter, the position of Jewish Americans and their relation to Gentile Americans during and after the Second World War is discussed. Similar to the position of the Holocaust in the US public discourse, the position of Jews in the US is crucial for the interpretation of the newspaper articles. Since the analysis of the Holocaust discourse in these newspapers and the way Jewish American journalists wrote about this shows how they thought about others and themselves. The chapter first discusses the place of Holocaust discourse in the US, and the position of American Jewry in the postwar years. This corresponds to the analysis of the second chapter. After this, the period between 1970 and 2000 in relation to the same themes is discussed, which corresponds to the sources of the third chapter.

The indifference towards the Holocaust in the US

The postwar years mark a narrow interest in the events of the War with almost an exclusive focus on the perpetrator side. During this period, scholars predominantly studied the Nazi regime, how the Third Reich operated, and how it could come into being. Antisemitism and the Holocaust were seen as an effect of German fascism, but was not studied intensely for itself. Therefore, the major victims of the Holocaust, the Jews, were not the subject of study often.²⁵ During the Second World War, the United States initially wished to remain neutral and maintain the position as bystander.²⁶ During that time, the US was reluctant to provide any aid to refugees from Europe. The most well-known example of this is the voyage by the SS *St. Louis*, a ship which carried over one thousand Jewish people that had fled Germany in 1939. The US refused to grant them entry, as did other countries in the Americas. The ship had to return to Europe, and many of the passengers would eventually not survive the War.²⁷

²⁵ Stone, 'Introduction', 2.

²⁶ Tony Kushner, 'Britain, The United States and the Holocaust: In Search of a Historiography'. Dan Stone, ed., *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004), 256-7.

²⁷ Kushner, 'Britain, The United States and the Holocaust', 253-4.

The *SS St. Louis* story serves as an example for the attitude towards both Jews and refugees in general by Americans at the time. Nativism flourished and this was visible in the immigration policy of the US.²⁸ Many Americans were against granting entry to refugees in general, but there were also some who were specifically against Jewish refugees. Before and at the beginning of the War, it was the popular belief that the Jews of Europe brought their fate upon themselves, at least partially.²⁹

After the War, the majority of the American people proved to be indifferent towards the events of the Holocaust and the fate of the Jews.³⁰ However, in the first few years after 1945, the Holocaust was a major point of focus in Second World War discourse in US politics, both foreign and domestic. When the administration spoke or wrote about the War, the evilness and crimes of the Nazis were emphasized, which served as an encouragement for celebrating the liberation of the concentration camps by the allies.³¹ By using the Holocaust as a political strategy, the US put themselves in a position of victor and liberator, and not as Nativist bystander. The Holocaust discourse was one of perpetrator versus liberator, and also but less, while the victim side was ignored. This provided a discourse of black and white thinking, where the ambivalent, 'grey' bystander position was left out and therefore unquestioned.³²

There was not much interest for the suffering of the Jews and the poignant stories from the soldiers who returned from the Second World War. The War and the Holocaust were sometimes covered in books, plays, and films. These texts approached these topics with a positive outlook, did not cover the suffering of the victims and did not go into depth about the events of the Holocaust. These texts were always produced by non-Jewish Americans. For example, a play about Anne Frank, based on the diary she wrote while she and her family were hiding from the Nazis in the Netherlands, was adapted to the current discourse of the Second World War within the American society. It emphasized the good nature of the people and hope for the future.³³ This does not only show how the American public thought about the War, but also the current state of the US in terms of economics and culture. For Americans, the years during and immediately after the war meant prosperous times. The happy end to the play about Anne Frank shows how for Americans, the War meant something that was past and brought happier times with it.³⁴

During the postwar years – the 1940s and 50s – newspapers and television did not cover many war or Holocaust stories.³⁵ The Holocaust was thus only visible in the use of background or trope in popular culture texts. The reason for this is threefold. First of all, the US experienced a unique time of economic growth after the war. In this period of bloom, Americans felt more need to emphasize a

²⁸ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 6-7.

²⁹ *Idem*, 6-7.

³⁰ *Idem*, 4.

³¹ Kushner, 'Britain, The United States and the Holocaust', 254.

³² *Idem*, 256-7.

³³ Lipstadt, 'America and the Memory of the Holocaust', 197

³⁴ *Idem*, 197-8.

³⁵ *Idem*, 195.

positive future and a positive view on the opportunities for humanity, than to be reminded of the evil deeds that humanity was capable of. Similar to the reason why the Holocaust was adapted to the public in plays and book, because Americans had benefitted from the war period in economic and cultural ways, they could not relate to the horrors that both victims of the Holocaust and American soldiers had experienced. Whereas popular culture responded to this by making only hopeful, happy-ending stories about the war, the media did almost never cover any stories or analyses about the war or Holocaust.³⁶ Second, there was a political reason behind this silence. Directly after the War, the relation between the US and Russia changed from being allies to being enemies. The US politics and society were too occupied with this new enemy to think about the one they had recently defeated, Germany. Moreover, they needed West Germany as an ally to prevent the Russians from becoming too powerful. Therefore, the discourse on Germany was rather positive and forgiving, which left no room for Holocaust stories which contrasted this perspective. This discourse was created and perpetuated by both politicians and the press. The Holocaust discourse was besides controlled, sometimes even contained by US politics, because of the new alliance with West Germany³⁷. Third, the United States in ‘the fifties had been haunted much more by the “bomb” (and by McCarthyism, a particular trauma for many refugees from fascism) than by the Holocaust’.³⁸ The ‘bomb’ here means the two atomic bombs that the US threw on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, which caused the surrender of the enemy nation Japan. Although the bombs ensured the end of the Second World War, there were many debates going on in the about the ethics of these weapons, both in and outside the US. It can thus be argued that in postwar America, the Holocaust was not part of the public historical discourse, nor in academic debate.

Around the 1970s, there was only interest for the Holocaust and victim side of the War in US academia in Jewish Studies, by Jewish Americans.³⁹ This academic discipline was established in the late 1960s and early 1970s and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. In postwar scholarship, the Second World War and the Holocaust were seen as two distinctive topic. As the first was studied intensively, the latter was mostly ignored. ‘Research on the Jewish question had to be governed by the principle difference existing between Allied countries and European Jewry: the Allies fought for a democratic victory; European Jewry also fought, but for survival.’⁴⁰

Moreover, the term ‘Holocaust’ was in the postwar years not used by Gentile people in the US and Europe when speaking about the murder of six million Jews in the concentration camps. Terms that were used to describe the event were, among others, ‘permanent pogrom’, ‘recent catastrophe’,

³⁶ Lipstadt, ‘America and the Memory of the Holocaust’, 197

³⁷ Idem, 198-200.

³⁸ Atina Grossmann, ‘Shadows of War and Holocaust: Jews, German Jews, and the Sixties in the United States, Reflections and Memories. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 13 (2014), 99-114, 100.

³⁹ Gerd Korman, ‘The Holocaust in American Historical Writing’, *Societas* 2 (1972), 251-270, 270.

⁴⁰ Idem, 255-6.

and ‘the disaster’.⁴¹ The term ‘Holocaust’ had existed for centuries and translated from the Greek means ‘burnt whole’. It was sometimes used to describe disasters and violent conflicts, but was not exclusively tied to the Second World War catastrophe until the late 1960’s in the Gentile world. After this period, the meaning of Holocaust was inherently connected to this historical event, which contributed to the fact that it was seen as a unique and incomparable period in history. This change in meaning also helped to increase the research about the Holocaust.⁴² The boom in public and scholarly interest will be discussed later in this chapter.

The peak and decline of antisemitism

Another explanation of the lack of presence of Holocaust discourse in US public life is the dramatic increase in antisemitism during the war. During the war, Jews were not only seen as unwanted immigrants, but also as warmongers. Many Americans feared and overestimated the power that the American Jewry had on politics, culture and economics of the US. A speech by Charles Lindbergh in 1941 ‘differentiated between “us”, namely Americans who wished to stay out of World War II, and “them”, those disloyal groups agitating to bring America into the European conflict’.⁴³

Directly after the War, antisemitism declined. This was caused by a change in the meaning of antisemitism due to the Holocaust. Whereas before hatred towards Jews meant that Gentiles excluded them from society and culture, after the war it was associated with mass murder as well.⁴⁴ In 1949, a bill was proposed that stated that antisemitism was a crime. One of the major examples of both Jewish assimilation and American acceptance was interracial and interreligious marriage between Jews and (Christian) Americans.⁴⁵ Although antisemitism in the US decreased directly after the war, this did not entail that the Jews were suddenly seen as victims. In contrast, the decline of antisemitism caused that American Jews were now seen as Jewish Americans, with an emphasis on the American part. If anything, it meant a celebration of American culture, both by Americans who accepted Jews as Americans, and assimilating Jews. After the War, the US was seen as the exceptional country where people from all different backgrounds could flourish without restrictions.⁴⁶

During the 1960s and early 1970s, a sudden increase in Jewish studies and staff occurred at American universities. This was caused both by an increase in Jews attending college – because of assimilation and economic prosperity – but also by the acceptance of Judaism as one of the major religions within the US, and even as one of the pillars of the Christian American society. The major influence on the interest for Jewish studies was however the establishment of the state of Israel. Judaism and Hebrew were no longer only connected to religion, but now increasingly to culture and

⁴¹ Korman, ‘The Holocaust in American Historical Writing’, 259.

⁴² Idem, 261-2.

⁴³ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 5-7.

⁴⁴ Idem, 16.

⁴⁵ Idem, 39-42.

⁴⁶ Idem, 9-11.

politics.⁴⁷ The acceptance of Jewish people as students and staff was manifested with the appointment of the Jewish American Edward H. Levi as president of Chicago University in 1969. Soon, other Jewish Americans were selected for other important positions within American academia.⁴⁸ Although Jewish students encountered some discrimination and exclusion at first, in the late 1960s, universities reckoned for their Jewish students, for example they provided kosher meals and took into account the Sabbath. By the mid-1970s, Jews were the most educated ethnic group in the United States.⁴⁹

American Jewry

For Jews in the US, the period between 1945 and 1970 was inherently connected to the transformation of their self-image. Directly after the Second World War, whereas Americans felt victorious, the Jews felt loss and sadness. Not only did they lose relatives and friends, entire Jewish communities and the epicenter of Jewish culture in Europe was gone. The survival of Judaism in the US put the American Jews in a unique position. They were now left with the burden to preserve Judaism and Jewish culture and to help the Holocaust survivors. Their support was generous, but however almost exclusively financial and not cultural.⁵⁰ In a time when assimilation was now more possible than ever before and of increasing economic changes for American Jews, Jewish religion and culture were also threatened from within. During this period, many Jewish Americans were concerned about their task to preserve Judaism, and whether they were fit to the task of filling the vacuum created by the Nazi crimes against Jews. For some Jewish Americans, the fate of their people in Europe caused a decrease in the trust in God and his intentions for the Jews, and thus a decrease in their desire to keep Judaism alive. Also, people were afraid that for teens and students, Judaism would not be attractive. Because of the increase of Jewish students and the possibility for assimilation, young people came more in contact with Gentile Americans and their culture and values. It would therefore possibly be harder for them to be loyal to their Jewish identity and reject acculturation.⁵¹ Besides this, before the War the American Jewish diaspora communities were used to a constant flow of immigration and cultural replenishment from Eastern Europe. Now that the US was reluctant to take in refugees and with the cultural center gone, this caused yet another concern about the survival of Judaism and the ability of the Jewish Americans to ensure this.⁵² These concerns were raised after the war, but continued to exist within the next generation of Jewish Americans.

⁴⁷ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 79-82.

⁴⁸ Idem, 95.

⁴⁹ Idem, 100.

⁵⁰ Idem, 61.

⁵¹ Idem, 93.

⁵² Idem, 61.

The Cold War and Communism

The Cold War period brought more concern for Jewish Americans about their position in the US. In US politics and culture, the discourse of hate for the communist system dominated everyday life. McCarthyism flourished: named after rightwing republican Senator Joseph McCarthy, this social phenomena entailed the witch hunt for communist sympathizers who were seen as traitors to the free and democratic US. People were often accused of being communists at the least suspicion, without much binding evidence. This phenomenon comes out of the period of 'The Red Scare', in which the United States government tried to repress communism in the country and spread fear among its citizens about Soviet spies and the dangerous influence of communism to the core values of the US⁵³. In 1950, Jewish American Julius Rosenberg and his wife Ethel were arrested by the FBI and charged with espionage. On June 19, 1953 they were both sentenced to death. This caused great fear among Jewish Americans, who were 'automatically suspect... the people felt if you scratch a Jew, you can find a Communist' according to general counsel of the Anti-Defamation League Arnold Forster.⁵⁴ Not only were the Rosenbergs Jewish, so were all four of their defendants, linking Judaism to Communist sympathy even more.

During and after the trial, Jewish American leaders tried to persuade the American public and government that they were not sympathetic to communism. Therefore, they remained silent about the Rosenberg case and did not provide help. Besides this, they stressed the fact that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was actually anti-Semitic, an opponent of Zionism and Israel who attempted to destroy the Jewish culture in Soviet Russia, and that therefore, Judaism and communism were incompatible.⁵⁵

Contrasting to what the Jewish leaders wanted the US to believe, many American Jews were sympathetic towards Communism. Jewish people were already associated with communism from the 1930s onwards, when Russia was not an enemy as during the Cold War, but an ally, as for example in the Second World War.⁵⁶ Communist Jews consisted of two groups, one of young teens who were part of the 'New Left' protest movement of the 1960s. The other group were the so called 'red diaper babies', the children of Eastern European Communist Jewish parents.⁵⁷ For many of these young members of the sixties protest generations, the participation in these struggles and also in the civil rights movement meant an alternative form of Americanization or 'assimilation through protest.'⁵⁸

⁵³ James L. Gibson, 'Political Intolerance and Political Repression During the McCarthy Red Scare', *The American Political Science Review* 82 (1988), 511-529, 513.

⁵⁴ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 35.

⁵⁵ *Idem*, 36-7.

⁵⁶ Aaron Beim, 'The Cultural Frameworks of Prejudice: Reputational Images and the Postwar Disjuncture of Jews And Communism', *The Sociological Quarterly* 48 (2007), 373-397, 373.

⁵⁷ Grossmann, 'Shadows of War and Holocaust', 104-5.

⁵⁸ Grossman, 'Shadows of the War and Holocaust', 99.

In contrast to the common fear of Jewish Americans that McCarthyism and the Rosenberg case would again lead to a period of antisemitism, this turned out not to be the case. Antisemitism continued to decline in the US.⁵⁹

Jewish Americans post-1970

In this period, Jewish Americans main concern shifted from the physical survival of Jewry – with the center of diasporic Judaism that was located in Eastern Europe for centuries wiped out through the Holocaust, and the antisemitism many experienced at home – to the concern for the cultural and religious survival of Judaism. More and more Jewish Americans chose to assimilate, thereby abandoning their culture and religion.⁶⁰ Jewish Americans ties to Israel were loose and largely financial. Although actual antisemitism in the US had declined already directly after the Second World War, American Jewry's fear for its return also declined during the late 1980s and 1990s. The greatest concern for those who supported the survival of Jewish values among Jewish Americans was intermarriage. The numbers of Jewish people with a Gentile spouse moved from one out for fourteen in the 1960s to one third in the 1980s.⁶¹ For intermarried couples and their children, their self-image was often problematic. They felt neither fully Jewish nor fully Christian, and intermarriage offspring even founded an organization which tackled this feeling of being in between: Pareveh, the Alliance for Adult Children of Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage.⁶² At the end of the twentieth century, intermarriage was generally accepted and the survival of Jewish culture and religion was often met with apathy among Jewish Americans. As they continued to assimilate, their Jewishness became no more than an ethnicity or background, similar to for example Italian or Irish Americans.⁶³

Despite the large abandonment of Jewish culture and faith, for Jewish Americans, the new postwar generation of the 1970s and 1980s continued to debate about the Holocaust and reconsidered the role of Jewish Americans during and directly after the Second World War. One major question that was asked during this period, was: could the Jewish Americans have done more for the European Jewry, and do they bear guilt?⁶⁴ According to some, the Jewish Americans were indifferent toward the victims of the rising antisemitism in Germany, but the actual situation was far more complicated. There are multiple reasons for the ineffective response towards the Holocaust. During the Second World War, antisemitism flourished in the US, and many Jewish Americans were therefore afraid that fascism could also happen in the United States in the future. Many Jewish Americans thus preferred assimilation over their Jewish identity because it seemed safer to them to behave as Americans and

⁵⁹ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 36-38.

⁶⁰ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 229-30.

⁶¹ Idem, 233.

⁶² Idem, 236.

⁶³ Idem, 255.

⁶⁴ Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness. How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 205.

made economic success possible. Also, many of them did not know the extent of the horror that took place in the concentration camps until after 1945.⁶⁵ For Jewish Americans, the period between 1970 and 2000 was thus also a period of reflection on their own position during and after the Second World War.

Post-1970: The *Historikerstreit* and the increase in interest for the Holocaust

At the end of the Cold War, interest in the Holocaust and victim side of the Second World War dramatically increased, both in the public discourse in Gentile US and Europe, as in scholarship.⁶⁶ An effect of this surge of interest was the increased interest to study the Holocaust in numerous disciplines and subfields. However, Holocaust studies can be categorized in two major fields.⁶⁷ First, the study of Holocaust technology and Nazi decision-making. This field includes the intentionalism versus functionalism debate of the 1980s, in which some historians argue that development of the Third Reich and all the plans that Hitler made were targeted at the destruction of the European Jews, and others who believe that the Holocaust was indeed a ‘final solution’, ‘a gradually evolving process that was determined more by the circumstances of the war than by any preconceived plan by Hitler.’⁶⁸ The second field is that of Holocaust representation, which includes disciplines such as philosophy, literature, art history, geography, and sociology. This group of scholars focusses on the ‘human side’ of the genocide, by making use of eye-witness accounts, memory, diaries, and photographs of the Holocaust.⁶⁹ This Holocaust representation field often accuses the Holocaust technology field of only focusing on the perpetrator side of the Holocaust, and thereby ignoring the Jewish victims, which was similar to how the War was represented and researched in the postwar years Western World. Although many historians believe that cooperation between these fields would be fruitful, they remain two distinct bodies of research done by scholars of different disciplines.⁷⁰ The increase and maturing of Holocaust scholarship has also lead to the fact that historians have broadened their interpretation of the Holocaust. Similar to other fields of study, the Holocaust is contextualized in a transnational sense, and is related to themes of imperialism and colonialism, and compared to other genocides that have occurred before as well as after the Second World War.⁷¹

One of the major influential debates on Holocaust discourse and scholarship was the *Historikerstreit* among German intellectuals in the late 1980s.⁷² The debate was about whether or not the Holocaust should be regarded as a unique event, a deed of ultimate evil, or that it would be fruitful

⁶⁵ Idem, 223-4.

⁶⁶ Dan Stone, ‘Beyond the ‘Auschwitz syndrome’: Holocaust historiography after the Cold War’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 44.5 (2010), 554-468, 455.

⁶⁷ Dan Stone, ‘Recent Trends in Holocaust Historiography’, *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, (2003), 2-3

⁶⁸ Idem, 3.

⁶⁹ Idem, 2-3.

⁷⁰ Idem, 18.

⁷¹ Stone, ‘Beyond the ‘Auschwitz syndrome’, 454.

⁷² Nick Stargardt, ‘The *Historikerstreit* Twenty Years On’, *German History* 24 (2006), 587-607, 587.

to contextualize the murder of the European Jews and the Nazi decision-making about this to other genocides and acts of violence, especially the Soviet Regime with its Gulags and the Armenian genocide. This last side sought to find the causes for genocide by comparative research.⁷³ These ‘universalizers’ see a series of gruesome genocides, and see these events as a lesson about the true – brutal – nature of mankind. Their most convincing argument against the Holocaust being a unique, one-time event, is that acts of ethnic cleansing did not stop after the Holocaust. According to them, if the Holocaust was an event that could have only happened once, because after this the world would have learned their lesson from it, genocides could not have happened after 1945 anymore. However, mass murders for ethnic reasons have since happened in Cambodia, Uganda, among others.⁷⁴ This comparative stance is often taken by scholars and taught to students.⁷⁵ They analyze the Holocaust not only in its historical context, but also aim to de-emphasize the Jewish particularity, because besides around six million Jews, around five million other undesirable people were killed by the Nazis. Writers and poets often do something similar when representing the Holocaust. They want their readers to find relatable, universal truths in their texts, therefore they tend to leave the personal – Jews as victim – parts out, and focus on the acts of terror themselves.⁷⁶

The group of people who oppose the idea of the universalizers, are named the ‘particularists’. As stated above, these people do think that the Holocaust is an incomparable, one-time event that should be treated and analyzed as a unique historical event. An argument for this is that during the Nazi reign, the whole social, economic, and cultural system was aimed at removing the Jews from the German society: ‘death was not merely a by-product of the Nazi system ... it was the end product’.⁷⁷ Also, the Holocaust, and Auschwitz in particular, is still *the* cultural symbol for ultimate evil.⁷⁸ Jewish American historian Henry L. Feingold agrees with the particularists, but points out that the Holocaust was not unique in relation to other genocides because the Jews and other victims suffered more. He argues instead that the uniqueness of the Holocaust lies in its historical significance. The European society would have developed very differently if the Holocaust would not have happened. The Nazis did not only target the Jews in general, but wanted first to remove the intellectuals among them. There was a large group of Jewish intellectual, universal and modernist thinkers, who spread ideas and plans about a pan-European society that was not based on nation-states. With the silencing of this group, the Nazis protected their own ideology, which was largely based and legitimized by the idea of the nation-state, or Third Reich. Had this group of Jewish intellectuals not been murdered, the political, economic, and cultural landscape of Europe would have looked much different today.⁷⁹

⁷³ Stargardt, ‘The *Historikerstreit* 20 Years On’, 587.

⁷⁴ Feingold, *Bearing Witness*, 21.

⁷⁵ *Idem*, 20.

⁷⁶ *Idem*, 20.

⁷⁷ *Idem*, 23.

⁷⁸ *Idem*, 24.

⁷⁹ *Idem*, 24-36.

The *Historikerstreit* ‘marked one very public, prolific, yet failed effort to simultaneously admit the crimes of National Socialism, contain their magnitude, shift the terms of the debate and perhaps even definitively conclude it.’⁸⁰ The debate did not only concern the legitimacy of comparison, but also the way in which the Holocaust should be historicized. Striking is the time of the debate. By the end of the 1980s, the War generation was joined by historians from the subsequent generation, who did not experience the Second World War. Eventually, the debate ended with a victory for the ‘particularists’, who rooted for the uniqueness of the Holocaust. From the 1980s onwards, both in Europe and in the US, the discourse of the Holocaust as a unique and incomparable event has dominated public thinking.⁸¹

Americanization and de-Judaization: the Holocaust as trope

Because in Gentile public discourse, the Holocaust began to have such a unique and incomparable meaning, and because the term ‘Holocaust’ has become to exclusively denote the Nazi crimes towards the European Jewry, it is useful to be used as a trope or motif.⁸² Since the 1980s, this has often been done in American popular culture. Because of the use of the Holocaust as a trope, it is often Americanized. Its discourse changed over the years and was adapted to the current ideologies in American society. The direct effect of this Americanization was a de-Judaization of the Holocaust, which means that the discourse of the Holocaust was often kept general, thereby not going into depth about the suffering of the Jews or their personal eye witness accounts⁸³.

The use of the Holocaust as a trope in Western popular culture is often researched in contemporary humanities scholarship. An example of such a study is the article by Jennifer Glaser.⁸⁴ She has done research on the role of the Holocaust in US society. She argues that in the US, not only the Holocaust, but also Judaism is used as trope. Both the Holocaust and the Jewish immigration flow of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are Americanized, thus adapted to fit in with the existing discourses of American identity, which stops them from being essentially Jewish. These events are used in popular culture texts to hide or obscure the US’s own flaws when dealing with racial identity and ethnic minorities.⁸⁵

There are, according to Glaser, two major elements that are the ideological basis for American identity. First, there is the ‘Plymouth Rock’ myth that legitimizes the feeling of American exceptionalism. When the Pilgrims – one of the first groups of people to establish a settlement on what is now the North of the US – landed on this place they named Plymouth Rock, they encountered a very fruitful land on which they could build a colony. These people, who escaped religious prosecution in

⁸⁰ Stargardt, ‘The *Historikerstreit* Twenty Years On’, 587.

⁸¹ Idem, 588.

⁸² Glaser, ‘Of Superheroes and Synecdoche’, Jewishness as trope.

⁸³ Lipstadt, ‘America and the Memory of the Holocaust’, 197.

⁸⁴ Glaser, ‘Of Superheroes and Synecdoche’, Jewishness as trope.

⁸⁵ Idem.

England, saw this opportunity to settle on American soil as a gift from God, and as evidence that they were exceptional to God. The Jewish immigration stream of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has been connected to this idea of exceptionalism, and Plymouth Rock is replaced with Ellis Island. As a small Island next to Manhattan, Ellis Island was used in this period as a gateway for immigrants. Millions of people who came with ships to New York, were evaluated at this island before they were let into the country. The Jewish immigration acts as a synecdoche for all immigration from Ellis Island, and the island is seen as the first step towards the land of freedom, where Jews could live their lives without having to fear anti-Semitism. Connected to the Plymouth Rock myth of American exceptionalism, the US pictures itself as a welcoming country where refugees of Europe can start a new, better life.⁸⁶

Secondly, The Holocaust is also used to connect American identity to Jewishness. The US uses the Holocaust in popular culture to emphasize their own cultural pluralistic acceptance, ‘a redeemer nation’⁸⁷. Where in Europe anti-Semitic thinking led to the Holocaust, in the US, Jewish immigrants flourished. The success of Jewish immigrants is used as a synecdoche for all immigration to the US, to mask the problems with immigrants from other parts of the world. Glaser illustrates her argument with the film *X-Men, First Class*. Although the film is set in the Cold War era, it starts with a history of one of the main characters, who discovers his mutant super powers while being separated from his mother in a Nazi concentration camp. The Holocaust is used to represent all ethnic minority suffering, and the enemy, who represents the Nazis, is overcome by the Americans⁸⁸. This self-congratulatory use of Holocaust rhetoric exemplifies Glaser’s argument about the Americanization of the Holocaust. The film is not about Jews and the actual events of World War II, but is concerned with the discourse of America as the chosen one, thereby masking their own issues with race and ethnicity.

Conclusion

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, both the United States and its Jewish inhabitants experienced some large cultural, political, and economical changes. Whereas in the postwar years, the Holocaust did not occupy a large space in American public discourse, from the 1970s onwards, interest increased in the victims’ side of the Second World War both in popular culture and in scholarship. During this period, the ‘term’ Holocaust was adopted in the Gentile world. The Holocaust was in public life often seen as a unique, incomparable historical event, and the term thus had a distinct meaning. This uniqueness was however heavily debated among scholars, first during the famous *Historikerstreit* in Germany and later also in other countries by historians and academics of other disciplines. The Holocaust as a unique discourse also caused its use in popular culture as trope or metaphor.

⁸⁶ Glaser, ‘Of Superheroes and Synecdoche’, Jewishness as trope.

⁸⁷ Lipstadt, ‘America and the Holocaust’, 232.

⁸⁸ Glaser, ‘Of Superheroes and Synecdoche’, Displacement, Disavowel, and the Holocaust in *X-Men: First Class*.

For America's Jewry, their lives and self-image also underwent dramatic changes. During the War, antisemitism was very present in the US, which caused for Jewish Americans to be on guard, as they knew the possible consequences of antisemitism in Europe. Antisemitism dramatically declined after the War, and while Jews still were cautious because of their connection to communism, the postwar period also brought prosperous times for them. The possibility for assimilation brought economic stability, as well as social and intellectual success. However, Americanization and intermarriage also concerned many Jewish Americans, who feared for the survival of Jewish culture and faith.

The next chapters of this thesis will consist of an analysis of Jewish American newspapers. Here, the source material will be compared to the historiographical overview of this chapter. The differences in Holocaust discourse between Jewish and Gentile Americans will be discussed and an attempt at explaining these differences will be made. Besides this, the newspaper article sources will be compared to the history of the Jewish Americans and the social, cultural, and economical changes that they have experienced throughout the second half of the twentieth century as is described by the scholars in this chapter. This thesis will test their research and will attempt to explain similarities and differences.

Chapter Two: Remembering and rebuilding: 1945-1970

The first chapter has provided an overview of the changes the Jewish community in the United States faced on economic and cultural levels during the postwar years. Due to the murder of millions of Jews in Europe, the center of the World's Jewry was suddenly gone. Whereas before the Second World War, the epicenter of Judaism had been in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia for decades, the largest Jewish communities after the war were located in the newly established state of Israel and in the US.⁸⁹ In the postwar period, American Jews were to a great extent responsible for the preservation of both Judaism as a religion and as a culture or ethnicity. Since American Jews who had immigrated to the US already before the 1930s were not personally affected by the war, they also had the duty to provide aid to the suffering European Jewry as well as to Israel.⁹⁰ For the American Jewish communities themselves, the postwar years were prosperous. Antisemitism, while having increased heavily in the US before and reaching a peak during the Second World War, dramatically decreased directly after 1945. This allowed for Jews to economically support themselves better, but it also paved the way for assimilation. Besides being occupied with the preservation of Judaism overseas, American Jews thus also faced changes within their own community. However, antisemitism and its effect on daily life was still commonly feared among Jewish Americans.⁹¹

This chapter will analyze the place the Holocaust takes as a discourse among Jewish American community of the Pittsburgh area. Through an analysis of newspaper articles published by Jewish American periodicals during 1945 and 1970, I have found that the Holocaust as a discourse is primarily used in these newspapers as a reminder of the Jewish identity of Jewish Americans. In contrast to the mainstream American culture, where Holocaust remembrance did not take a significant place during the postwar years, in these Jewish American newspapers many articles were centered on the Holocaust and its aftermath. In a time of assimilation, the historical awareness of American Jewry differentiated them from their fellow Americans.

As they saw Judaism declining and the number of assimilated Jews growing, editors of these newspapers urged Jews to stay true to their cultural, religious and ethnic background. In these newspapers, the memory of the Holocaust is thus linked to the American Jewish self-image. Besides this, writings about the Holocaust also show the outward view of the journalists and editors of these newspapers. In the postwar years, the readers of the periodicals were often reminded of the position of the US in the Second World War. The indifference of the US government and soldiers towards the concentration camps and the Jewish refugees was often noted. The Holocaust thus also served as a

⁸⁹ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 61.

⁹⁰ Idem, 16.

⁹¹ Idem, 29.

means to warn the Jewish Americans that Jews were still not seen as equal to Gentile Americans. Moreover, the Holocaust as a discourse also served as a warning for the newspapers' readers. As stated in chapter one, although actual antisemitism was declining in the US after 1945, fear of antisemitism and the feeling of hate towards Jews among Jewish Americans themselves had not disappeared.⁹² The Holocaust served as a reminder of what racism could lead to, and warned people not to thrust Gentiles, and rely on their own community as much as possible. This chapter and the analysis of the articles is divided along the three themes linked to the Holocaust discourse as described above. All these themes relate to the Holocaust as a discourse and to the argument that this discourse reminded Jewish Americans of their Jewishness. First, the focus will be on the outward view towards Gentile Americans and American government policy after the Second World War by Jewish Americans. Secondly, this thesis will analyze how the Holocaust is used as a warning for antisemitism. Third and last, an analysis of the self-image of the American Jewish community and the call for the revival of Judaism in these newspaper articles will be provided.

The hypothesis was to find articles that were published around the time of the 27th of January, because this date marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and is today known as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Moreover, it was expected that most articles would appear around the time of Yom HaShoah, the Jewish Holocaust Remembrance Day that was inaugurated already in 1951. However, both the words 'Yom HaShoah' and 'Shoah' itself did not lead to any articles. From here this thesis concludes that the non-Jewish or Gentile term 'Holocaust' was used to describe the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis, instead of the Jewish term 'Shoah' in these newspapers. This was because the term 'Holocaust' was not used in the Gentile world to exclusively describe the Jewish genocide, and therefore did not exist as a discourse in mainstream US until the late 1970s as can be read in chapter one.⁹³ The word 'Holocaust' was thus used only by Jewish Americans in the US. Therefore, these newspapers did not need to distinguish between the Holocaust memory of the Jews and the discourse of Gentiles, and because the Jewish Americans were the only one to use the term 'Holocaust' in the postwar years, they controlled and perpetuated its meaning. In the postwar period, the terms 'Holocaust' and 'Shoah', connoted the same meaning, namely the murder of six million Jews in the Nazi concentration camps. From the late 1970s onwards, 'Holocaust' began to be used by Gentiles in the US and Europe as well. The emergence of this discourse caused debates about the Holocaust, which affected and influenced the meaning of the term. From that period on, 'Shoah' was used in the Jewish communities as well, arguably to distinguish between the Jewish and the Gentile discourse of the Holocaust. More about this can be read in the following chapter.

In the years after the Second World War, articles about the Holocaust in the newspapers that were analyzed are often published in September or the beginning of April. While these time periods did not meet the initial expectations, further analysis shows that these dates are not coincidental, but

⁹² Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 91.

⁹³ Stone, 'Introduction', 2.

linked to traditional Jewish holidays. The beginning of September in the Gregorian calendar is the time around Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Another important moment on the Jewish calendar is Passover or Pesach, a religious holiday that remembers the liberation of the Jewish people from Egypt by God. Passover is on the fifteenth of the Hebrew month Nisan, which corresponds to early April in the Gregorian calendar. Both Rosh Hashanah and Passover are generally important for Jewish people in both a religious and cultural sense. These are times when American Jews would be reminded of their Jewishness, and that their religion and culture differed from Americans. Besides this, both Rosh Hashanah and Passover have traditionally also been moments for reflection and remembrance. Thus, I argue that the Holocaust was fit by Jewish Americans into the already existing tradition of dwelling upon the past and remembering one's traditions. In the newspaper articles, connections are often drawn between the times that the Jews were slaves in Egypt as is told in the Torah (as well as in the Bible) and the Holocaust. Because Rosh Hashanah and Passover were already moments for reflection for the American Jews, it seemed suitable to remember the events of the Holocaust during these holidays as well. In the sections below I will go into further detail about the connections that were drawn between typical Jewish traditions and the more recent past of the Holocaust and its aftermath.

The Holocaust and the binary between Jews and Gentiles in the US

In the postwar articles of *The Jewish Criterion*, *The American Jewish Outlook*, and *The Jewish Chronicle*, the Holocaust serves as a reminder for Jewish Americans of their Jewish identity and traditions. The decline of antisemitism opened up a lot of cultural and economic opportunities for the American Jewry.⁹⁴ However, as can be seen through the discourse of the Holocaust, Jewish Americans also feared for the survival of Judaism. Since the American Jewry became the new largest Jewish community in the world after the Holocaust, these articles emphasized the duty of American Jews to remember their background, and protect their traditions. In this train of thought, the Holocaust was used to emphasize the difference between American Jews and Gentile Americans. The attitude towards the genocide of the Jews and the aftermath of the Holocaust differed heavily for Gentile Americans and American Jewry. As chapter one states, the US was not at all occupied with Holocaust remembrance between 1945 and 1970.⁹⁵ The articles below point these differences in interest for the Holocaust out, and thereby create a binary opposition between US citizens and Jewish Americans or Jewry in general.

The first article that criticized the US's attitude of indifference toward the Holocaust and its victims was written in *The Jewish Criterion* on October 26, 1945, some five months after the end of

⁹⁴ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 9-11.

⁹⁵ Stone, 'Introduction', 2.

the Second World War on the European continent.⁹⁶ The article was part of an editorial page, written by editor Milton K. Susman. In the article ‘Making victory stick’, Susman wrote about the American people, and how they felt that now they have won the war, the problems in Europe are over: ‘Most Americans are susceptible to complacency and never is that complacency so well nurtured as during the period immediately following a dark era such as we have just passed through’.⁹⁷ However, according to Susman, this was not the way things work in a war, especially not after this one. ‘The recent Holocaust which came precariously close to consuming the entire world left its scars of disorder and confusion’.⁹⁸ The Allies still had to make sure that the European countries that were enemies could now peacefully live together. They were as responsible for the aftermath of the war as they were for winning it. Therefore, Susman argued that American should donate their money, not as a gift to others, but to provide themselves with a better, more peaceful world. Investing money in rebuilding operations was the only way to make the victory meaningful according to this editor.⁹⁹

Although this newspaper editorial piece is rather short, it shows well how the editor drew a distinction between gentile Americans and the newspaper’s readers, the American Jewry of the Pittsburgh area. Susman started his article with a stereotypical description of the attitude of Gentile Americans. He regarded them as living in a selfish bubble, and lacking a feeling of responsibility and historical sense. Moreover, Susman stated that Gentile Americans were ready to donate to the wartime operations, but since surrender of Nazi Germany the American people saw their country’s duty as finished.¹⁰⁰ This suggests that the US was only ready to fight to win from their enemies, and had an attitude of indifference towards the victims of the Second World War, meaning both civilians of the European countries that were destroyed during the war, as well as the victims of the Holocaust. With this piece on the Holocaust aftermath, the writer implied a binary between Gentile Americans and American Jews, urging them not to think like Gentile Americans that their task is completed, but to help the people of Europe by donating money.

The second article that shows how the editors of these newspapers placed a binary between American Jewry and Gentile Americans was written in the form of a column also in *The Jewish Criterion*, on April 6, 1946.¹⁰¹ At this time, the War was almost over for a year. In this column, Geraldine A. Buerger pointed out the issue with the Jewish victims of the Nazi concentration camps. After the death camps were liberated, many people were unable to return home. There were still 50.000 of these so called ‘displaced persons’ (or DP), and they had become ‘prisoners of their

⁹⁶ Milton K. Susman, ‘Making victory stick’, *The Jewish Criterion*, October 26, 1945, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CRI/CRI_1945_106_026_10261945.

⁹⁷ Idem.

⁹⁸ Idem.

⁹⁹ Idem.

¹⁰⁰ Idem.

¹⁰¹ Geraldine A. Buerger, ‘Justice on Sabbatical’, *The Jewish Criterion*, April 5, 1946, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CRI/CRI_1946_107_023_04051946.

liberators'.¹⁰² Not only did the American army find it difficult to find a place for them: '[t]he Jews have been aimlessly shuttled back and forth from Camp Fuerth and Camp Poecking without accommodations or rehabilitation', they were also treated worse than the actual prisoners of war.¹⁰³ Although the former inhabitants of the concentration camps were clearly in bad shape, they were not a priority for the American soldiers concerning food, shelter, and clothes. These soldiers had even forged papers for Nazis, who could escape the area by pretending they were Jews.¹⁰⁴

Through this column, the writer wanted to get attention for the foreign situation to the Jewish readers of the newspaper. Although American soldiers were expected to treat the European Jews well, these victims were actually still being neglected and their fate was met with indifference, even after the Holocaust. This article was meant to open the eyes of the American Jewry, to show them that even though they are more accepted in the US, Jews are still seen as different by Americans. Not only were the displaced persons treated disrespectful, American soldiers also lacked a sense of urgency to punish the Nazis for their crimes. According to Buerger, this meant that the 'Jewish Question' was thus still unresolved. The Holocaust discourse was dominated by a sense of difference in attitude between Jews and Gentiles towards the War, the concentration camps, and its victims.

In September of that same year, the 'displaced persons' or Jewish refugee problem was still unresolved. *The Jewish Criterion* thus published another article on the matter, in the form of an editorial piece by Milton K. Susman.¹⁰⁵ Similar in tone as the article by Buerger, Susman addressed the ongoing issue of the former concentration camp prisoners. They still lived in detention camps, live of UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) rations, and their lives in general were miserable.¹⁰⁶ But unlike Buerger, Susman connected this European problem to international relations. Susman wrote about the recent events about the immigration of people to Palestine, and the appeal the US made to the United Kingdom to let these people settle in the area, but the UK ignored the situation. Also, the Anglo American Committee recommended to all countries to take in the displaced persons as refugees. However, the editor was critical of this, because the US had a very strict immigration policy itself, and had not taken in a lot of refugees before, during and after the Second World War. 'Yet we have studiously avoided this recommendation. We were too busy shedding tears of sympathy for the DP's and waxing indignant and the irresponsibility of other nations'.¹⁰⁷ The US congress was still opposed to lifting the immigration quotas for the victims of the Holocaust. Susman argued that the US, as a nation build on immigrants, should come into action instead of making appeals and recommendations to other nations.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Buerger, 'Justice on Sabbatical'.

¹⁰³ Idem.

¹⁰⁴ Idem.

¹⁰⁵ Susman, 'Making Victory Stick'

¹⁰⁶ Idem.

¹⁰⁷ Idem.

¹⁰⁸ Milton K. Susman, 'They Pray for America', *The Jewish Criterion*, September 13, 1946, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CRI/CRI_1946_108_020_09131946.

Similar to the column by Buerger of April 1946, the Susman editorial stressed the urgency of the situation with the Jewish displaced persons in Europe. These people were at this time still victims. They were still not free, and their hope of a better situation was fading.¹⁰⁹ Both these articles point out that Americans saw Jewish people as different. Although they were victims and refugees without a home, the US Congress was afraid for the ‘contamination’ of their country.¹¹⁰ Underlying this premise are bigotry and antisemitism. The next subchapter will go into more detail about the Holocaust as a warning for antisemitism. This article differs from the Buerger column in that it not only criticized the US, but also the UK and other countries that were not annexed by Nazi Germany during the War.¹¹¹ The problem with the displaced persons was urgent. Although the American soldiers were responsible for these Holocaust victims, the fact that they still lived in the camps under miserable conditions, points out that other countries were not willing to help them either.

Although the following article fits more into the subthemes of the Holocaust as warning for antisemitism and the Holocaust as an urge to revive Judaism that will be discussed later in this chapter, the opinion piece that Dr. Isaac Schwarzbart wrote in *The Jewish Criterion* of April 8, 1955 also criticized the attitude of the US and foreign nations towards the Jewish people during the Second World War.¹¹² It analyzed the position of the bystander during the Holocaust. As a Passover reflection, Schwarzbart discussed the remembering of the Holocaust and the rebuilding of Judaism. According to him, Jewish Americans had to realize that although the US and other countries had often claimed after the War that they did not know about the concentration camps and the final solution, they actually did know and often chose not to interfere. ‘The truth is that the obligation to save the Jewish people in Europe from extinction was not conceived as a paramount and it was not recognized that by ignoring the fate of the Jews the democratic nations were betraying their own self-interest.’¹¹³ Like the articles above, Schwarzbart thus used the discourse of the Holocaust to point the difference of War experience between Jewish people and other nations. Whereas the Jews of Europe did not have a choice and could not defend themselves, the other nations could have helped, but instead only looked after themselves. The lack of help – both political and small efforts – and the focus on self-interest reminded the Jewish American reader that the people from these countries saw the Jews as different.

This subchapter has analyzed how the journalists from the Jewish American newspapers wrote about the Holocaust in a discourse of difference and binary oppositions. Although this point of view is very similar to the discourse of the Holocaust as a warning for antisemitism, the texts above had an outward perspective. They point out how Gentiles saw the European Jewry as being different from them, and how they were therefore treated differently, during and after the Second World War. The

¹⁰⁹ Susman, ‘They Pray for America’.

¹¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹¹ Idem.

¹¹² Dr. Isaac Schwarzbart, ‘Remembering and Rebuilding’, *The Jewish Criterion*, April 8, 1955, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CRI/CRI_1955_125_026_04081955.

¹¹³ Idem.

next will analyze how these differences in attitude towards the Holocaust between the American Jewry and the Americans also led to warnings for the continuation of antisemitism. The articles below portrayed a more inward view, and a connection of the Holocaust directly to antisemitism in the US, rather than targeted at the European Jewry or Jewish people in general.

The Holocaust as a warning for antisemitism

Besides a reflection on the attitudes of the Allies and occupied nations during the Nazi reign, ‘Remembering and Rebuilding’, the article by Schwarzbart was first and foremost a warning to the Jewish American readers about antisemitism and the survival of Judaism.¹¹⁴ With describing the actions – or the lack thereof – of the US and European countries during the Holocaust, the writer wanted to show that antisemitism was not solely a Nazi Germany trait, but was very common among the people of the US and the rest of Europe as well. Although the Holocaust itself was put into practice by Nazi Germany, Schwarzbart told the reader that other countries neglected to help despite desperate appeals from the European Jewry, and were therefore partially responsible for the murder of six million Jews in the concentration camps. Antisemitism did not end when the peace treaty was signed, and American Jews should thus still be aware of the risks in their lives, even though they were not the actual victims of the Holocaust.¹¹⁵

Susman and Buerger, who wrote the articles about the Jewish displaced persons, also emphasized the continuity of antisemitism through the Holocaust. Both journalists argued that the problem with the DP’s was due to the fact that they were not only seen as different, but even as unwanted.¹¹⁶ The Holocaust victims were seen as problematic, but their situation was not met with empathy. ‘[A]nd always they [the displaced persons] hear the ominous rumblings of racial hatred, Hitler’s legacy to humanity.’¹¹⁷ Not only were the American soldiers anti-Semitic, so was the United States Congress. Behind the refusal to let the refugees into America lay racial bigotry and the fear of these Jews ruining the country.

Schwarzbart’s article was published some one and a half years after the capitulation of the Germans. Susman warned for the continuing of antisemitism after the Second World War as early as October 1945. In the same editorial section that the first article that was discussed was placed, are two other pieces of writing by the *Jewish Criterion* editor. It is interesting to notice that the entire editorial section of this weekly newspaper is dedicated to the War aftermath. The second editorial piece discussed the lawyer Major Winwood from the British army, the defense attorney for ‘the Beast of Belsen’ Josef Kramer, former commander of the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen.¹¹⁸ Susman wrote

¹¹⁴ Schwarzbart, ‘Remembering and Rebuilding’.

¹¹⁵ Idem.

¹¹⁶ Susman, ‘They Pray for America’; Buerger, ‘Justice on Sabbath’.

¹¹⁷ Susman, ‘They Pray for America’.

¹¹⁸ Milton K. Susman, ‘A Man and His Job’, *The Jewish Criterion*, October 26, 1945, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CRI/CRI_1945_106_026_10261945.

that Winwood is anti-Semitic himself and that he sympathized with his Nazi client. Winwood felt that all his client has done was destroying the ‘dregs of the ghetto’.¹¹⁹ This clearly anti-Semitic statement points out not only that racism towards Jewish people was not just a Nazi trait but common among allied countries as well, it also shows how anti-Semitism was common among people from allied countries as well. Although the British helped to liberate the European mainland, this does not mean that they were accepting of Jews. This article can thus be interpreted as a warning for Jewish Americans to not let down their guard. Anti-Semitism was still ongoing even after the Holocaust had shown the consequences of such racism, and since British people were still anti-Semitic, Americans could be as well.

To emphasize this even further, Susman’s third editorial piece discussed anti-Semitism within the US.¹²⁰ It portrayed the statements by *The New York Daily News* columnist John O’Donnell. This newspaper, with over two million readers at the time, was and still is one of the most popular in the United States. According to Susman, O’Donnell had gotten a lot of publicity due to ‘... the fact that in his column he has continued to snipe at Jews in the style of Hitler’s unlamented Beobachter.’¹²¹ In this column written on October 3, 1945, called ‘Capitol Stuff’, O’Donnell accused influential Jewish Americans from removing General Patton from office, supposedly because the General slapped a Jewish soldier in a hospital once.¹²² Although both the story about the removal of General Patton and the story that he slapped a Jewish boy are not true, both O’Donnell and the newspaper did not retract the column or apologized. Susman argued that Jewish inhabitants of New York should boycott *The New York Daily News*, as they ‘can strongly affect the date of the News’.¹²³ Later, the New York newspaper did retract the column, and O’Donnell did apologize for his writings.¹²⁴

Above has been analyzed how the Jewish American newspapers of the Pittsburgh area wrote about the Holocaust in relation to a warning for Jewish Americans. In this context, the Holocaust means difference between Jews and Gentiles. These journalists and editors held skeptical viewpoints towards the acceptance of Jews as ‘normal’ citizens, as they showed with their articles about the treatment of Jewish refugees – or displaced persons – in former occupied Europe and the reluctance of the allied countries to take in these refugees. As a result of this, these papers also warned the readers for the continuing antisemitism. As can be seen in chapter one, antisemitism peaked during the war in the US, and dropped in the postwar years.¹²⁵ However Jewish Americans were still on guard for the

¹¹⁹ Susman, ‘A man and His Job’.

¹²⁰ Milton K. Susman, ‘Hate-Journals in America’, *The Jewish Criterion*, October 26, 1945, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CRI/CRI_1945_106_026_10261945.

¹²¹ Idem.

¹²² ‘O’Donnell “Daily News” Columnist, Apologizes to Jews; Says His Charges Were Untrue’, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 21, 1945, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.jta.org/1945/10/21/archive/odonnell-daily-news-columnist-apologizes-to-jews-says-his-charges-were-untrue>.

¹²³ Susman, ‘Hate Journals in America’.

¹²⁴ ‘O’Donnell “Daily News” Columnist’.

¹²⁵ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 9-11.

treatment of their community in the US, for long after the War. The articles above warned the readers that antisemitism was still common, even after the destructiveness of the Holocaust. In this sense, the Holocaust discourse was linked directly to the daily lives and future of the Jews in America.

The Holocaust as a call for the revival of Judaism

In addition to the pessimistic outward view posed by these newspapers towards Gentile America, the makers of these papers felt the need to urge the Jewish American community to stay close to their ethnic and cultural identities. The postwar years were a time where assimilation for Jewish people in the US became possible and relatively easy.¹²⁶ These journalists were therefore afraid for the future of Judaism, both inside and outside the US. The articles reminded the Jewish Americans that they were now the largest Jewish community in the world after the Holocaust, and were therefore responsible not only for the future of Judaism within their own communities, but also, to help the European Jews and the establishment of Israel. The articles below show an inward view towards Judaism after the Second World War in relation to Judaism, both as an ethnicity and as a religion. The Holocaust in these articles was still meant to emphasize how ‘others’ can hurt the Jews, but this discourse was now also related to a call for the rebuilding and revival of Judaism. These articles are even more linked to the Jewish holidays of Passover and Rosh Hashanah. As is mentioned earlier, these are moments for Jewish people to reflect on and remember their past, and think about the future. Therefore, the Holocaust discourse and the call for the revival of Judaism was at these times perhaps even better received, because these periods reminded the Jewish Americans of their Jewishness already simply because their fellow Gentile Americans did not participate in these cultural traditions.

The first article that speaks about the responsibility for helping the European Jews and the settlement in Palestine in relation to the Holocaust was published in April 1952.¹²⁷ In the editorial section of the Passover edition of *The American Jewish Outlook*, the editor wrote an article that created an analogy between the period Jewish people traditionally remember during Passover, and the recent events of the Holocaust. During Passover, Jews remember their exodus from Egypt where they were held as slaves many centuries ago. According to the editor, Passover ‘could indeed transcend the centuries and observe instead the mass immigration into Israel – and too, into other world havens – of the world’s Jewry left suffering and painfully alone after the holocaust that was the Nazi terror.’¹²⁸ Since the original Passover period was followed by a period of chaos and then rebuilding, the contemporary Jewish people should do the same, so that they could show their strength and ability to revive their culture and religion. The editor acknowledged that much had been already done by the Jewish Americans to help the European Jews and Israel, but he also thought that their task is not yet

¹²⁶ Shapiro, *A Time for Healing*, 9-11.

¹²⁷ ‘The Analogy Continues’, *The Jewish American Outlook*, 11 April 1952, accessed June 26, 2016,

http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/OUT/OUT_1952_035_025_04111952/OUT_1952_035_025_04111952

¹²⁸ Idem.

fulfilled. More so than other communities and people, Jews needed the support of their own to be able to survive and thrive.¹²⁹

Through the Holocaust discourse, this editor thus urged the Jewish readers of this newspaper to help maintain Judaism in and outside of the US. Outside the US, they could help Israel and the European Jews with for example donations. Within their own community, they had to keep the Jewish traditions alive and give the recent events of the Holocaust a place within existing cultural traditions, so that these traditions would be observed by future generations as well. The editor had a positive view on the survival of Judaism, writing that Jewish Americans had already accomplished a lot that they can be proud of. He urged them to continue their support until the analogy of Passover is completed and ‘right will ultimately reign and good shall come of this experience.’¹³⁰

As is mentioned earlier, besides Passover the Jewish New Year or Rosh Hashanah also has proven to be a period of many reflections of the Holocaust in the Pittsburgh newspapers. Rabbi Mordecai Gladstein wrote an article named ‘The Good Life... Thoughts For the New Year’ in September 1953.¹³¹ In this article he reflected on the past years and praises the unique character of the Jewish people. According to him, Jews have ‘a passion for life [and] a fanatical way to live, despite all obstacles’.¹³² This will to live was portrayed in the way that the Jewish people from all over the world put so much effort in rebuilding Israel after such a horrific event that was the Holocaust. However, ‘if the Jew has a demand for life, life has a demand of the Jew’.¹³³ The Rabbi reminded the Jewish people of the fact that they all have a mission from God, to make sure that they live as good Jews, so that Judaism survives. The Nazis had not succeeded to wipe out the Jewish people altogether, and now the remaining Jews had the task to revive and rebuild, since after the Second World War, the Jewish communities in the US together formed the largest Jewish settlement. Also, they had not been physically or economically been affected by the War because they did not live in an occupied country and did not experience the Holocaust or other Nazi crimes targeted towards Jews. American Jews are therefore most equipped and have the most resources to ensure the survival of Judaism.¹³⁴

The article written by Isaac Schwarzbart discussed earlier concluded with an urge for the revival of Judaism.¹³⁵ The main question American Jews had to keep asking themselves was: how could it have happened? Reflection on the Holocaust had to play a major part in the remembrance of the event, according to Schwarzbart. ‘That is the essential task: to remember and build with love and devotion. Those who think that such rebuilding can be done mechanically and without a constant

¹²⁹ ‘The Analogy Continues’.

¹³⁰ Idem.

¹³¹ Rabbi Mordecai Gladstein, ‘The Good Life ... Thoughts For the New Year’, *The American Jewish Outlook*, September 11, 1953, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/OUT/OUT_1953_038_021_09111953/OUT_1953_038_021_09111953.

¹³² Idem.

¹³³ Idem.

¹³⁴ Idem.

¹³⁵ Schwarzbart, ‘Remembering and Rebuilding’.

renewal of the memory of the great catastrophe will build on shifting sands. For to rebuild without such memory is to create an empty husk or a body without a soul.’¹³⁶ Where the previous articles called for the revival of Judaism despite the Holocaust, Schwarzbart actually saw the Holocaust as an important part for the rebuilding. Essential to the Jewish people is their historical consciousness. Therefore, they had to rebuild their culture and identity with the Holocaust in mind, because without this memory the rebuilding would be futile.¹³⁷

Both the Gladstein and Schwarzbart articles, as well as the editorial comment discussed earlier had a positive stance on the ability of the Jewish American people to make sure that Judaism survives. Both praised the Jews for their will to live and to thrive, and to help other to do the same. The next articles however, portrayed a more pessimistic standpoint. These writers were afraid of the survival of Judaism, both in and outside the US. They think that these articles needed to be written in order to remind the Jews of their task to ensure the survival of Jews and Judaism.

The article of 24 April 1959 written by Nehemiah Robinson, the director of the World Jewish Congress’ Institute for Jewish Affairs in New York, was a reflection of the Jewish world between 1933 and 1958.¹³⁸ This period marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the Nazi reign. He wrote about that for centuries, the center of Judaism in the world was located in Eastern Europe and Russia. However, from 1933 onwards the situation for Jews changed with the rise of National Socialism. During the Holocaust, from the nine and a half million Jewish people, six million were murdered.¹³⁹ After the War, Jews could migrate to Israel, which was another reason for the emptying of the previous center in Eastern Europe. This leads to the fact that the American Jewry is now the largest community of Jewish people in the world. According to Robinson, after the Holocaust,

‘[t]he main danger to survival lies now in assimilation and dejudaism. In the fight for physical survival Jews were objects only. ... To survive culturally, the Jewish people must become the subject, the master of its destiny and seek refuge in the old traditional Jewish values adapted to the new circumstances.’¹⁴⁰

This article posed a contrasting view to the editorial piece of April 1952, seven years earlier. Robinson argued that while the Jewish people were busy helping the Europeans rebuild and the state of Israel, they did not notice that their own culture and religion needed reflection as well, whereas the 1952 article argued that looking after other Jews is essential to Judaism and the Jewish people.¹⁴¹ However

¹³⁶ Schwarzbart, ‘Remembering and Rebuilding’.

¹³⁷ Idem.

¹³⁸ Dr. Nehemiah Robinson, ‘The Changed Jewish World: 1933-1958’, *The American Jewish Outlook*, April 24, 1959, accessed June 26, 2016,

http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/OUT/OUT_1959_049_026_04241959/OUT_1959_049_026_04241959 .

¹³⁹ Idem.

¹⁴⁰ Idem.

¹⁴¹ Idem.

both used the Holocaust for advocating the revival of Judaism and to remind the readers of the newspaper about their background.

The last article that will be discussed in the relation to the Holocaust as a call for Judaism was published in *The American Jewish Outlook* in September 1961.¹⁴² The opinion piece by Meir Charniak was, like many other articles, a Rosh Hashanah reflection. It looked back at the year in which Adolph Eichmann, a Nazi member of the SS who was a major organizer of the Holocaust, was trialed and executed. Charniak discussed the Holocaust in relation to the fate of Judaism, and focused especially on the religion. He wrote examples of how some Jewish people had lost their faith due to the Holocaust, where for other people the horrors they had to face caused a revival of their spirituality. A major question that Jewish people asked themselves in the postwar years, was: ‘have we been, as a people, as Jews, fairly judged? Or harshly judged, and punished?’¹⁴³ For many Jewish people, the Holocaust was difficult to fit in with their religious beliefs. Because of the different religious responses to the Holocaust, many people were afraid that Jews have lost their unity and togetherness. However, the writer believed that although their ‘faith is shaken’, that Jewish people were able to adapt and revive, and find their sense of unity again.¹⁴⁴ Through the narrative of the Holocaust, the writer wanted to point out that the Holocaust had not brought an end to Judaism. According to Charniak, for many Jews, their Judaism and faith was what brought them strength and what kept them going during the horrible time that they were locked into the Nazi concentration camps.¹⁴⁵ People must thus not question their faith and future, but persist and use the Holocaust as a motivation to help Judaism survive.

Conclusion

In the postwar years of 1945-70, the Holocaust discourse was related to the changing self-image of American Jews. It specifically reminded them of their background and emphasized the difference between them and other Americans. The writers and editors of the Pittsburgh newspapers thought that this was important for the survival of Judaism in a time where the American Jewish community was the new center of Judaism, but at a time when many people chose to assimilate and trade their traditional Jewish values for typical American ones. This chapter hereby shows the self-image of the Jewish community through the meaning of the Holocaust. It shows the trend of assimilation and the fear for the survival of Judaism as a result, but is also reflect the fear towards others that many Americans Jews felt at the same time, as was pointed out in the first chapter of this thesis. Even after

¹⁴² Meir Charniak, ‘Rosh Hashanah Reflections’, *The American Jewish Outlook*, September 8, 1961, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/OUT/OUT_1961_054_020_09081961/OUT_1961_054_020_09081961 .

¹⁴³ Idem.

¹⁴⁴ Idem.

¹⁴⁵ Idem.

antisemitism rates dropped in the US, Jewish people often still did not feel accepted in the US, and were still on guard for a possible change in attitude by Americans towards their fellow Jewish citizens.

These articles show how the Holocaust discourse reflect on the Jewish American self-image in the postwar years in two ways. First, in the newspaper articles, the Holocaust served as a reminder of the differences between Jews and Gentiles. These articles discuss how badly the European Jewry was treated by American soldiers, and how reluctant the allied countries are to take in these refugees, for the fear of cultural 'contamination'. Also, examples of antisemitism in the US are pointed out in these articles to warn the readers of the newspapers. Moreover, the Holocaust discourse serves as a call for the revival and rebuilding of Judaism in the US. The Holocaust in these articles reminds the Jewish Americans about the fact that they are now the largest Jewish community, and therefore have the duty to help other Jewish people, as well as to keep Jewish traditions alive within their own community, to ensure the future of Judaism.

Chapter Three: Remembering and Reflecting 1970-2000

In chapter two the discourse of the Holocaust among Jewish Americans has been analyzed by making use of newspaper articles originally published in the Pittsburgh area between 1945 and 1970. This chapter will focus on the period between 1970 and 2000. From the 1970s onwards, the interest for the Holocaust among non-Jewish people both in Europe and the United States experienced a dramatic increase, as can be read in the first chapter of this thesis. This was the period of the well-known *Historikerstreit* in Germany, and the Second World War and the Holocaust began to appear more in literature and popular culture.¹⁴⁶ This new popularity of the Holocaust in Western culture also caused the event to be Americanized and deJudaized. The Holocaust was used as a trope, as the ultimate portrayal of evil.¹⁴⁷ In the second chapter it is argued that this sudden interest in the Holocaust and the War among Gentile Americans is contrasted to the peripheral place the Nazi crimes against the Jews took in public life during the postwar years. This chapter will therefore compare the discourse of the Holocaust in Jewish American newspapers post-1970 with the previous analysis conducted in chapter two. It will question whether the way Jewish American newspapers discuss the Holocaust has been changed in relation to the way it was written about directly after the War, since the discourse of the Holocaust has dramatically changed in Gentile America. One initial difference for Jewish American newspaper readers in the Pittsburgh in relation to chapter two is that since 1962, they had only one newspaper to choose from. *The American Jewish Outlook* and the *Jewish Criterion* were both discontinued, and *The Jewish Chronicle* was founded instead. The analysis of this chapter will thus be based on this newspaper only.

In the chapter below one can read how similar to the postwar period, the Holocaust discourse foremost meant remembering the Jewish victims of the Nazi reign, and thereby also served as a reminder of the Jewish background and culture for Jewish Americans. Articles were often written in periods of remembrance. In the newspapers published between 1970 and 2000, typical moments for remembering the Holocaust continued to include Rosh Hashanah and Passover or Pesach. However, the official Jewish Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom HaShoah was added to these traditional reflective moments of the Jewish culture. Although Yom HaShoah was founded as early as 1953 by the first Israeli government, the Remembrance Day had not gotten much attention in the Pittsburgh newspapers until the late 1970s. Another difference in the articles about the Holocaust between the postwar and this this period, is that whereas the postwar publications mainly consisted of writings by editors, journalists, and religious experts, from 1970 onwards an increase in letters to the editor can be

¹⁴⁶ Stone, 'Beyond the Auschwitz Syndrome', 455; Stargardt, 'The *Historikerstreit* 20 Years On', 587.

¹⁴⁷ Lipstadt, 'America and the Memory of the Holocaust', 197.

noted. Arguably, this is because Jewish Americans were influenced by the increase in Holocaust debate in Gentile America, both in cultural memory and scholarship. Whether they regarded this as positive or negative, it presumably had as an effect that Jewish Americans also started to think about the meaning and the use of the Holocaust, making the Holocaust also for Americans a more debatable public discourse.

Besides remembrance, post-1970 articles that discussed the Holocaust often did this within a political discourse. The events of the Holocaust were often compared to current events in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Articles were thus, besides being linked to specific moments of remembering and reflection, also often written in reaction to the news. A link was drawn between antisemitism and the indifferent attitude of the allied countries towards the fate of the European Jews during and directly after the Second World War, with for example the situations of Ethiopian Jews and Jewish people living in the Soviet Union that were the topic of discussion during these decades. Criticism on the Gentile attitude towards the Holocaust also took shape in the fear for Holocaust revisionism.

This thesis argues that in relation to the postwar years covered in chapter two, Jewish Americans still emphasized the differences in attitude towards the Holocaust between Jewish and Gentile Americans. However, with time creating more distance towards the Holocaust, there was also room for debate about the meaning of the Holocaust in the twentieth century and in the future. Therefore, the Holocaust discourse was, similar to the postwar period, still inherently connected to the Jewish American self-image. An analysis of this discourse thus shows how Jewish Americans thought about themselves, often in relation to the other, either Gentile Americans or other Jewish communities.

The Holocaust and Shoah

One of the most striking result of the analysis of the Pittsburgh newspapers in the previous chapter was the use of the term ‘Holocaust’ instead of the Jewish word ‘Shoah’. There are different ways of writing the term which include ‘Shoah’, ‘Shoa’, and HaShoa(h), but since ‘Shoah’ is the most well-known term, this thesis will use this word when referring to the Jewish term for the Holocaust. As was described in the second chapter, from 1945 onwards, the Holocaust was used to describe the genocide of the European Jews by the Nazis during the Second World War by these periodicals. In Gentile Europe and the US however the term was not generally used until the 1970s.¹⁴⁸ From the 1970s onwards, the term ‘Shoah’ was used in *The Jewish Chronicle* alongside the word Holocaust. The first article that used both Shoah (Shoa) and Holocaust was published in April of 1979 and consists of a guide to Yom HaShoah, the Israeli official Holocaust Remembrance Day, published as a supplement to the newspaper.¹⁴⁹ It summarized the events of the Second World War, Hitler’s rise to power,

¹⁴⁸ Korman, ‘The Holocaust in American Historical Writing’, 270.

¹⁴⁹ Yom Hashoa Ve Hagvurah Committee of the Community Relations Committee of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, ‘Holocaust, a Family Guide to Yom Hashoa’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, April 19, 1979, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1979_018_011_04191979.

antisemitism, Jewish protests, and obviously the murders that took place in the concentration camps in Europe. Although the article wrote about this day, the term 'Holocaust' was still used to describe the event. Strikingly, the title of the article read: 'Holocaust, A Family Guide to Yom Hashoa'.¹⁵⁰ From the 1980s onwards, Yom HaShoah appeared in more articles, but the term 'Shoah' as a replacement for the word Holocaust did not appear until the early 1990s.

No research on this phenomenon of word change can be found, and there does not appear to be an explanation in the newspaper articles analyzed for this thesis either. A possible explanation is that the term 'Holocaust' shows the assimilation or the need for assimilation by Jewish Americans. These newspapers have adopted a Gentile term instead of 'Shoah' which is more often used in other communities, for example in Israel. This could indicate that the publishers wanted to prevent emphasizing difference between Jewish and Gentile Americans, or that they at least wanted their fellow American citizens to understand what the articles discuss. However, this is unlikely, since the term 'Holocaust' was adopted directly after the Second World War, which was a period in time when the newspapers actually used the Holocaust to emphasize the differences between Jewish people and Gentile America. As can be read in chapter two, the Holocaust was deployed as a reminder for the American Jews of their Judaism and the duties that followed from this ethnic and cultural identity. Moreover, the use of the term 'Holocaust' was not widespread among non-Jewish people until the 1980s. It would therefore be highly unlikely that the choice for Holocaust instead of Shoah was related to assimilation and closing boundaries.

However, this thesis argues that the sudden increase in the use of the word 'Shoah' in the Pittsburgh newspaper does relate to the Jewish American attitude towards Gentile America. This phenomenon can be explained in two ways. First, the sudden and dramatic increase of the importance of the Holocaust in American public life and culture caused the term to become the primary signifier for the murder of six million Jews in the Nazi concentration camps in a relatively short time. Instead of 'Jewish genocide' or 'genocide of the Jews', the 'Final Solution' got its own distinct word.¹⁵¹ To distinguish between how the Jewish Americans and the Gentile Americans related to the Holocaust, the term Shoah was adopted in *The Jewish Chronicle*. Whereas, according to the Jewish American newspapers, before the 1970s the Holocaust in the Gentile world was most often met with indifference, the use of the word was not widespread and the meaning was therefore controlled most by the Jewish Americans themselves. Moreover, the widespread use of the word in combination with more public attention and academic research on the Holocaust, in the late twentieth century, the term began to mean more than just the murder of six million Jews. Since the Nazi concentration camps also inhabited prisoners of war, members of the resistance, Roma and Sinti, homosexuals and other unwanted persons which counts for the death of between eleven and seventeen million people, the

¹⁵⁰ 'Holocaust, a Family Guide to Yom Hashoa'.

¹⁵¹ Stone, 'Beyond the Auschwitz Syndrome', 455.

term Holocaust became a broader term to describe all the victims of the Nazi reign.¹⁵² In order to distinguish between the ‘Jewish genocide’ only and the total event of the systematic murder of people in the camps, ‘Shoah’ was adopted in *The Jewish Chronicle* to relate to just the Jewry, and ‘Holocaust’ to signify the entire catastrophe. This shows how the Holocaust is a discourse, and that it changes its meaning in relation to trends in society and culture. The meaning of language is not fixed but is under constant negotiation.¹⁵³

The Holocaust as trope

The dramatic increase in public interest in the Holocaust and the use of it in popular culture had an effect on the meaning of the term also in other ways. As can be read in the first chapter of this thesis, the Holocaust was Americanized and deJudaized in popular culture in the US, and was thereby used as a trope, a signifier for ultimate disaster and evilness.¹⁵⁴ ‘[T]he evocative power of the term *Holocaust* has begun to extend its use tropologically to contemporary considerations of the destruction of groups other than Jews’, Vivian Patraaka argues.¹⁵⁵ ‘Perhaps this is precisely because the term *genocide* functions as a delimiting generic, while *Holocaust* brings with it all the protocols of the unspeakable, the incommensurate, and a sense of unlimited scope to the pain and injustice’.¹⁵⁶ The specific and unique use of the word ‘Holocaust’ to signify the catastrophe caused by the Nazis, as well as the uniqueness of the event itself made the Holocaust a useful trope to be applied to other catastrophes, or to signify violence, death, and despair in books, TV, and film. The term was employed for multiple purposes among Jews as well. In the subchapter below it will be explained how in the Jewish American newspaper *The Jewish Chronicle*, the Holocaust was also applied to and compared to other contemporary events in the late twentieth century. Although this phenomenon was not displayed as often as in American popular culture, it still is significant to mention because it demonstrates a change in discourse, and it shows that different discourses of the Holocaust were possible during the same period and within the same community.

The Jewish Chronicle of 22 August 1985 published a letter to the editor titled ‘Spiritual Holocaust’.¹⁵⁷ In this letter, a reader voiced his concern for the establishment of a Mormon institution of the Church of the Latter Day Saints next to the Hebrew University in Israel. The goal of this center was to convert the Jewish students to Christianity, more specifically Mormonism. The writer of the letter was concerned that this caused a ‘spiritual Holocaust’, because the conversion of young Jewish

¹⁵² Vivian M. Patraaka, ‘Situating History and Difference: The Performance of the term Holocaust *Holocaust* in Public Discourse’, in: Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin, eds. *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, University of Minnesota Press (1997), 54-78, 54.

¹⁵³ Idem, 54-5.

¹⁵⁴ Glaser, ‘Of Superheroes and Synecdoche’, Jewishness as trope.

¹⁵⁵ Patraaka, ‘Situating History and Difference’, 54-5.

¹⁵⁶ Idem.

¹⁵⁷ Josefa Carmel Core, ‘Spiritual Holocaust’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, August 22, 1985, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1985_024_028_08221985.

students to Christianity would prevent them from carrying out the Jewish traditions and thereby ensure the survival of Judaism. Josefa Carmel Core, the writer of the letter from Jersey City, New Jersey, wrote this letter to encourage Jewish Americans to write letters to the Mayor of Jerusalem, as well as to the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres to voice their protest ‘to stop these deceitful soul snatchers from completing this missionizing center.’¹⁵⁸

Although this article did not discuss the events of the Holocaust in its text, it does use the term in its title. Because the word has gotten such a distinct and unique meaning in society, it is however immediately clear to the reader of the newspaper what Core means. The Holocaust is used as a trope here, to draw attention and to emphasize the seriousness of the conversion of Jewish students by the Mormon Church in Israel. With spiritual Holocaust the writer means to address the threat that Judaism faces from within. If its younger generations are not interested in the Jewish religion, culture, and values, or even convert to a different religion, this threatens the survival of Judaism, just as the Holocaust threatened the survival of Judaism.

There are however also people who feared the degradation of the term ‘Holocaust’ that the widespread use of the word can cause. In the *Chronicle* of 12 October 1989, in another letter to the editor, a reader from Pittsburgh was concerned about the change in meaning of the Holocaust.¹⁵⁹ He criticized another writer of a letter to the editor a few weeks earlier, who addressed the Treblinka concentration camp as a slaughterhouse. Alexander Zwillich, the writer who was himself a Holocaust survivor and lost his family in a camp, argued that it is inappropriate to use a term that means the killing of an animal for a place where people were killed ‘by animals’, thereby referring to the Nazis. He ‘firmly believe[s] the destruction of European Jewry should not be trivialized through the use of clichés.’¹⁶⁰ First, this letter in the newspaper shows how the writer of this letter saw the Holocaust as a unique event in history that can and may not be compared to other events or atrocities. Secondly, it also shows how the meaning of the Holocaust as a discourse underwent changes and that its meaning was negotiated in society constantly. Even among Jewish Americans the meaning was not agreed upon. Whereas in the newspaper articles of the postwar years, the Holocaust – although it was linked to different themes – more or less inhabited a constant meaning, this meaning now got debated among Jewish Americans. In non-Jewish America and Europe, the Holocaust had taken in a larger space in the public debate in since the late 1970s. This article of 1989 shows how the debate about the Holocaust in the Gentile world also influenced and encouraged the debate among Jewish Americans. Whereas one Jewish American thought that the deployment of the term ‘Holocaust’ to point out other current affairs in the world, another believed that people should watch out for the degradation and trivializing of the term.

¹⁵⁸ Core, ‘Spiritual Holocaust’.

¹⁵⁹ Alexander Zwillich, ‘Trivializing Holocaust’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, October 12, 1989, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1989_028_035_10121989.

¹⁶⁰ Idem.

The Holocaust as a political tool

In the Jewish American newspapers the Holocaust was still referred back to when discussing contemporary atrocities towards Jewish people in the world post-1970. During the time period discussed in this chapter, there was major attention for the circumstances of Jewish people in the Soviet Union, as well as the Jews of Ethiopia. In both cases, the fear was addressed towards Jewry that lived under Communist regimes. In Ethiopia, a dictatorship of the communist 'Derg' movement that was supported by Soviet Russia took over the power in 1975. Over the next decades, different groups fought for power in the country which resulted in a civil war and a major famine. A large Jewish population lived in Ethiopia, which are called Beta Israel or Falashas. In Israel, people debated whether these people originated from Israel, which would allow them under Israeli law to move back to Israel at any time. It was decided that the Falahas belonged to the 'lost Isrealite tribe of Dan' in 1975 and could thus be welcomed as refugees to Israel. Some eight thousand Falashas immigrated to Israel independently. In what was called Operation Moses, a rescue mission in 1984, eight thousand Jewish Ethiopians were rescued via neighboring country Sudan. As they were prohibited to leave the country, Operation Moses had to remain secret. However, the news was leaked in the press, which caused the end of the mission.¹⁶¹

In a letter to the editor in *The Jewish Chronicle* of June 16, 1983, Michael Schwarcz, a Jewish American from Pittsburgh, voiced his concern for the fate of the Falashas.¹⁶² Schwarcz described the Ethiopian Jews as people who stayed true to their fate and background even when this was made extremely difficult for them. They were desperate to move to Israel because it is 'the last hope of these Jews to survive both physically and spiritually.'¹⁶³ However, the American Jewry had an attitude of indifference toward these fellow Jewish people, and in Pittsburgh very little support had been given to the American Association for Ethiopian Jews which attempts to get the Falashas out of Ethiopia. The writer compared the indifference that the Jewish Americans have towards the Beta Israel to the indifference of the world towards the European Jewry during the Holocaust, '[t]oday a similar apathy is preventing thousands of Ethiopian Jews from being saved from relentless persecution.'¹⁶⁴

The Holocaust was thus used here as a mirror for the Jewry of Pittsburgh and the rest of the US. As one can read in the second chapter, in the postwar years the Jewish American newspapers often published articles that criticized the indifferent attitude of the Gentile West towards the Jewish refugees, and also often urged the American Jews to donate to help them. With the reference to the Holocaust, the writer of this letter takes the reader back to this time when help was also desperately needed, and thereby makes a point that people should provide aid for its contemporary issue as well.

¹⁶¹ 'Operation Moses – Aliyah of Ethiopian Jewry (1984)', *Ministry of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption*, accessed June 27, 2016, <http://www.moia.gov.il/English/FeelingIsrael/AboutIsrael/Pages/mivtzaMoshe.aspx>.

¹⁶² Michael Schwarcz, 'Save them now', *The Jewish Chronicle*, June 16, 1983, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1983_022_018_06161983.

¹⁶³ *Idem*.

¹⁶⁴ *Idem*.

Similar for the concern voiced by the newspapers for the fate of the Ethiopian Jewry is the fear for the survival of Judaism in the Soviet Union. The appearance of a newspaper article in *The Chronicle* of May 1972 and another in July of 1985 show that this concern by Jewish Americans stretched over more than a decade.¹⁶⁵ As journalist Carl Arpert wrote in the 1985 article, Jews were ‘held against their will and not permitted to study their people’s history, language or culture.’¹⁶⁶ Under the communist regime in the Soviet Union, anti-Semitic propaganda was very common and Jewish people were forced to assimilate in Russia since before the establishment of the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁷ The anti-Jewish policy of the SU also included exclusion from cultural activities and blaming them for numerous social problems. Besides this, on an international level, the Soviet Union had an ‘outspoken anti-Israeli attitude’.¹⁶⁸

The article of 1972 was written by *The Jewish Chronicle* executive editor Albert W. Bloom and discussed the National Solidarity Day for Soviet Jews that was held by the end of April of that year.¹⁶⁹ This event was organized by different Jewish American as well as some Christian organizations as a call for action for President Nixon, who would visit the Soviet Russian government in May. Whereas other nations had brought the topic of the Soviet Union Jews under discussion when they visited the SU, Nixon had until that moment remained silent. People who joined the National Solidarity Day event protested against this.¹⁷⁰ This event, dubbed ‘Solidarity Sunday’ by Bloom, ‘brought together Jews and Christians at a series of meetings, rallies, and other such public events in nearly 100 cities’ to rally for basic human rights for the Russian Jews, which includes the permission to leave and enter the country freely.¹⁷¹ The major reason for the need for President Nixon to put the issue on his agenda, Bloom stated, is that ‘we had our frightful lesson of World War II when Jewish communities were too weak, too timid, or too terrorized to demand before the world, that the Nazi German murderers were stopped in their tracks’.¹⁷² The editor compared the current situation in the Soviet Union, which he called ‘ethnocide’, the killing of Jewish culture, with – the according to Bloom – euphemistic term ‘genocide’ used to describe the Holocaust. Therefore, it was the duty of Jewish Americans to protest and help, and the duty of President Nixon to raise the issue during his visit to the Soviet Union. The timidity and complacency that belonged to the Holocaust must not

¹⁶⁵ Carl Arpert, ‘Desire to do something’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, July 18, 1985, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1985_024_022_07181985; Albert W. Bloom, ‘Solidarity Is... Only When It’s Plus 364!’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, May 4, 1972, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1972_011_010_05041972.

¹⁶⁶ Arpert, ‘Desire to do something’.

¹⁶⁷ Arieh Tartakower, ‘The Jewish Problem in the Soviet Union’, *Jewish Social Studies* 33 (1971), 286.

¹⁶⁸ Idem, 285.

¹⁶⁹ Bloom, ‘Solidarity Is’.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Jewish, Christian Leaders Appeal for Mass Support of National Solidarity Day’, *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, April 27, 1972, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.jta.org/1972/04/27/archive/jewish-christian-leaders-appeal-for-mass-support-of-national-solidarity-day>.

¹⁷¹ Bloom, ‘Solidarity Is’.

¹⁷² Idem.

happen again, and therefore the editor urged the readers of *The Chronicle* to not only protest and rally, but also write a personal letter to their President.¹⁷³

Carl Arpert wrote his article in 1985 from Haifa, Israel, where he amongst others was invited to a conference about the Jewish people in the Soviet Union and their current situation.¹⁷⁴ There, they were urged to participate in the struggle of the Russian Jews. Arpert wrote that although Israel and the Soviet Union had recently come to terms about permitting the Russian Jews to leave the country, many of them chose New York over Israel. Besides that this is ‘a slap in the face to Israel ... it could also endanger the possibility of escape for others left behind’.¹⁷⁵ This already resulted in the fact that fewer permission forms to exit the country had been granted. Although a meeting had been organized to help the Soviet Jewry, the writer felt a sense of impotence. He compared this to how the American Jews felt during the Second World War and the Holocaust. The position of Jewish Americans was the same during the 1980s as during the 1930s and 40s, ‘[w]e are members of that generation which lived out the Holocaust years in the comfort and security of the United States, and which today looks back with mixed feelings of perplexity at our impotence at the time.’¹⁷⁶ Arpert stated that Jewish Americans had often in the twentieth century had the urge to do something more, but also were limited in their ability to help. The journalist thus did not blame the attitude of the Jewish Americans, but analyzed this feeling of today’s impotence and argued that it is similar to that of the Second World War. Many Jewish Americans, the writer included, asked themselves whether history is repeating itself. Arpert argued that they should repress this sense of frustration and should keep in mind the successful rescue missions of Israel in relation to Jewish inhabitants of Yemen and Ethiopia, which occurred the decades before this article was published.¹⁷⁷

In comparing the contemporary feeling of impotence and frustration, and the urge to help in relation to the fate of the Soviet Jewry, with similar feelings that Jewish Americans had during and directly after the Second World War, the Holocaust is in these articles used as a reminder as well as a political tool for action. Because the Holocaust discourse is so filled with sadness and frustration, it is useful to apply to other situations concerning the world’s Jewry. It becomes clear from the three articles discussed above that the discourse of the Holocaust as trope that has dominated the thinking about the historical event in the Gentile Western world can also be applied to the journalists and editors of the Jewish American newspaper. It can therefore be argued that in these articles at least, the Holocaust is seen as a singular and unique event. Its meaning transcends the term genocide because Holocaust does not only mean the murder of six million European Jews, but also the entire cultural and technological processes involved that allowed for it to happen, as has been stated by Tartakower

¹⁷³ Bloom, ‘Solidarity Is’.

¹⁷⁴ Arpert, ‘Desire to do something’.

¹⁷⁵ Idem.

¹⁷⁶ Idem.

¹⁷⁷ Idem.

in the section above.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, this thesis argues that the Holocaust discourse of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s includes another meaning for American Jews, namely emotions of grief, guilt, frustration, and impotence. Because the Holocaust as a discourse means all this, it was directly known what the writers of these articles intend to say when they compared the Holocaust to more recent events involving Jewish people from all over the world.

Remembering the Holocaust and the survival of Judaism

Similar to the postwar period that was analyzed in chapter two, post-1970s the Holocaust was still linked to the current state of Judaism, both within the American Jewish community and outside. Issues that were discussed in the newspapers included assimilation and intermarriage, Zionism, and the reconstruction and survival of Judaism. Besides this, there was also discussion about the Holocaust directly, in the forms of the way in which the historical event must be remembered, but also in relation to Holocaust revisionism and denial. In this subchapter, this issues will be discussed and the way in which the Holocaust as a discourse is employed will be analyzed.

On April 18, 1985, in the week of Yom HaShoah, *The Chronicle* published an article written by Rabbi Richard Marcovitz that discusses this Remembrance Day.¹⁷⁹ The Rabbi connected the response to the Holocaust to the narrative about Aaron in the Torah. When his children died, he responded with silence and held his peace. According to Marcovitz, the world did exactly the same during the Second World War, which resulted in the murder of six million Jews in the concentration camps. In the Jewish community the question was often raised whether or not the Holocaust should be remembered, forty years after it occurred, and whether it is not better to put it behind them. According to the Rabbi, the Holocaust should not be met with silence and forgetting, but should be remembered. It ‘is an irrevocable responsibility that we, as Jews, must shoulder’.¹⁸⁰

Striking about this article is the contrast in attitude towards the Holocaust between Jewish and Gentile Americans. As has been stated earlier, the US and Western Europe experienced a dramatic increase in interest for the Holocaust in the 1980s. Whereas before the Holocaust and the Jewish victims did not dominated public and academic thinking about the Holocaust, it certainly did from this period onwards. However, as Marcovitz stated, Jewish people asked themselves whether it is not better that this pivotal moment in history is forgotten. Besides this, it is interesting that this is one of the first articles on the Holocaust that spoke about the Holocaust in relation to Yom HaShoah, the official Jewish Remembrance Day, as has been discussed in the first subchapter.

¹⁷⁸ Tartakower, ‘The Jewish Problem in the Soviet Union’, 285.

¹⁷⁹ Richard M.E. Marcovitz, ‘Portion of the Week’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, April 18, 1985, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1985_024_009_04181985.

¹⁸⁰ Idem.

Five months after this article, an editorial piece by Joel Roteman was published.¹⁸¹ The article was a reflection on the events of the past year. According to the editor, the past year had been contradictory, both good and bad things have happened. Memorable events include the increase in interest for religions, the heroic actions of Israel in for instance Operation Moses, where the safety of Ethiopian Jewish people was ensured by agents of Mossad, and the prosperous period for Jewish Americans, who are ‘the most free, most secure, best educated, healthiest Jews ever’.¹⁸² However, according to Roteman there were also current events that caused much concern in the Jewish world. These included the conflict between Israel and its neighboring Arabic countries, the protest against the Ethiopian Jewish refugees, and ‘Jewish dropout rates, intermarriage rates, the rise of violent anti-Semites and Holocausts revisionists [and the] tensions between Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative.’¹⁸³ In this article, the focus lies on the negative events that occurred in 1985 and in the years before, which shows that Roteman was concerned both about the state of Israel and international relations between Jews, Gentiles, and Arabs, as well as situations closer to home. With Jewish dropout rates, the editor meant the amount of Soviet Russian Jews that have not immigrated to Israel, but chose other Jewish communities, primarily the US. As stated earlier in this thesis, this trend was troubling, because it could jeopardize the agreement between the Soviet Union and Israel to let these people leave the country. Moreover, many of the Russian Jews that immigrated to the US chose to assimilate, which jeopardized the survival of Judaism in itself.¹⁸⁴ Roteman’s mention of intermarriage rates also points out that the writer was concerned about the state of Judaism in the US.

Moreover, the editor noticed the trend of Holocaust revisionism. Holocaust revisionism is not exactly the same as Holocausts denial, but revisionists do not believe in the narrative that is commonly accepted and that is analyzed by historians. A famous revisionist is American scholar Arthur R. Butz, a professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University and editor of *The Journal of Historical Review*.¹⁸⁵ Butz wrote a book on the subject published in 1977 in the US. In this book, he argues that the Holocaust ‘legend’ is believed because of three reasons. The first was the pile of bodies British and American troops found in camp Dachau – which were actually victims of typhus according to Butz, the lack of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe after the Second World War, and the fact that historians back up the ‘hoax’.¹⁸⁶ Possibly, editor Roteman referred to this publication in this newspaper article.

¹⁸¹ Joel Roteman, ‘By Dickens, we’ve got it’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, September 26, 1985, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1985_024_033_09261985.

¹⁸² Idem.

¹⁸³ Idem.

¹⁸⁴ William D. Montalbano, ‘Israel Troubled by Soviet Jews ‘Dropout’ Rate’, *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1988, accessed June 16, 2016, http://articles.latimes.com/1988-06-02/news/mn-5844_1_soviet-union.

¹⁸⁵ Arthur R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century: The Case Against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry*. Institute for Historical Review (1976).

¹⁸⁶ Idem, Xxi.

The decade of the 1990s also shows that the Jewish community of Pittsburgh held discussions about the state of Judaism in the US. In this column titled 'Time Out For Teens', student Hollee Schwartz reflected on the school year that had just ended.¹⁸⁷ Students thought about their identity: 'Jewish American or American Jew? was but one of the issues that we addressed this year.'¹⁸⁸ Also, they were concerned about antisemitism on the campus and Holocaust revisionism in the US and wanted to take action against this. Schwartz and other students believed that these topics, although controversial, should be discussed among students.¹⁸⁹

Although in hindsight, the revisionist trend has not become a dominant trend in Europe and the US, it is understandable that this would cause great concern among Jewish Americans. Adherence to Holocaust revisionism did not only posed a threat to the remembrance of this historical event in Gentile America, it could also serve as a legitimacy for anti-Semitism, if Jewish people themselves were blamed for making up this 'legend'. In these articles there is no direct discussion of the Holocaust. Instead, Roteman and Schwartz were concerned about the place that the Holocaust took in the contemporary society of that time. The lack of Holocaust recognition could be a sign of the worsening of the condition of Judaism in the US.

The last article that will be discussed in this chapter was published in *The Chronicle* of 12 July 1990.¹⁹⁰ Rabbi Baruch Poupko discussed what he saw as the current situation for Jews in the US. He saw some positive trends in these times, for example 'phenomenal revival and renaissance of Jewish scholarship', and a new religious commitment to the Torah by some.¹⁹¹ However, the Rabbi, like editor Roteman, was also concerned for the dramatic increase in intermarriage and assimilation 'which is offering to Hitler on a silver platter that which he could not attain on the battlefield'.¹⁹² In other words, Jewish Americans were causing the demise of Judaism themselves.

Although implied, the Holocaust served here as a motivation for the commitment to Judaism. According to Rabbi Poupko, it was the survivors of the Holocaust who immigrated to the US after the Second World War, who were responsible for the commitment to the Jewish faith and the increase in scholarship. Poupko called these Jewish Americans 'Torah giants'.¹⁹³ He thus clearly distinguished between those Jewish Americans that had immigrated to the US before 1939, who did not experience the Holocaust, and those who immigrated as survivors of it. Whereas the first group chose to abandon their faith and ethnicity by intermarriage and assimilation, the latter group was dedicated to the survival of Judaism in the US.

¹⁸⁷ Hollee Schwartz, 'Time Out For Teens', *The Jewish Chronicle*, June 27, 1991, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1991_030_020_06271991.

¹⁸⁸ Idem.

¹⁸⁹ Idem.

¹⁹⁰ Baruch A. Poupko, 'Portion of the Week', *The Jewish Chronicle*, July 12, 1990, accessed June 26, 2016, http://doi.library.cmu.edu/10.1184/pmc/CHR/CHR_1990_029_022_07121990.

¹⁹¹ Idem.

¹⁹² Idem.

¹⁹³ Idem.

Conclusion

Whereas the employment of Holocaust as a trope differs from the discourse in Jewish American newspapers in the postwar years as has been analyzed in the previous chapter, the employment of the Holocaust as a warning and distinction between Jewish and Gentile Americans, and as a call for the revival of Judaism is still visible in the articles post-1970. In the postwar years, articles often directly linked to the events of the Holocaust and its effect directly after the Second World War, with for example the displaced persons crisis. In the last decades of the twentieth and the first of the twenty-first century, the Holocaust is more employed as a trope, to refer to contemporary problems in society, both inside and outside the United States. The Holocaust is thus mentioned both in articles with an outward political perspective and in those who portray and inward reflection of Judaism in the US. During the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the journalists of *The Jewish Chronicle* published many articles about their concern for the fate of Judaism in the world. Topics outside the US include the harsh conditions of the Jews of Ethiopia and the Soviet Union. They also feared for the continuation of Judaism within the US. Similar to the articles published in the postwar years, the Holocaust was employed to voice a concern about intermarriage and assimilation, and as an attempt to prevent the demise of Judaism in the US that these trends had as an effect, according to these journalists.

In these decades, the Holocaust was thus used as a trope and compared to other contemporary events. This essay argues that the Holocaust was seen among Jewish Americans as a unique, singular event that has its own distinct set of meanings. Besides the meaning of horror and grief, that could be similar to the discourse among Gentile Americans, for Jewish Americans, the Holocaust also implied frustration and guilt, because they could not prevent the murder of six million of their people from happening. Because the Holocaust was seen as a unique event in history, journalists were able to compare it to current political events that dealt with the state of Jews all over the world. When the Holocaust was mentioned in a newspaper article, its meaning and the comparison with current events became immediately clear to the reader.

Although the term 'Shoah' was employed in the articles post-1970, and there was some attention for Yom HaShoah as the official Remembrance Day among Jews, the dominant term for addressing the murder of six million Jews remained the Gentile 'Holocaust'. This was similar to the articles published in the postwar years. The sudden use of the term 'Shoah' can be explained by the need to distinguish between the murder of the Jews and the total amount of Nazi crimes against people, since in the Gentile world, the Holocaust discourse began to be broader and more inclusive. Also striking here is that in contrast to publications in the postwar years, the Holocaust was no longer primarily discussed and reflected on during Passover and Rosh Hashanah. Instead, the Holocaust discourse was connected to recent events/news in the world, and these specific times of publications were thereby lost.

One of the major concerns during the postwar years among Jewish Americans was the fear for antisemitism. In these later years, this fear has been replaced for the fear of Holocaust revisionism. As

antisemitism in the US declined rapidly in the second half of the twentieth century, Jewish Americans were freer than ever, and were able to prosper. However, the trend of Holocaust revisionism greatly concerned the community, because of its possible threat of accusing the Jews of lying about the Holocaust, which could cause for a revival of antisemitism.

Conclusion

Overall, the analysis of this thesis has pointed out that for Jewish Americans, the Holocaust was inherently connected to their self-image. Following the theory of representation by Stuart Hall, this research has drawn the following conclusions on how Jewish Americans say themselves and their relation to Gentile America by analyzing the changes in the Holocaust discourse in Jewish American newspapers. It is argued that this discourse was inherently related to themes of assimilation, differences between Jewish Americans and Gentile Americans and –on a larger scale – differences between Jews and Gentiles in Europe and other parts of the world. The Jewish American newspapers that were analyzed show that the Holocaust discourse served as a reminder of the Jewish background for Jewish Americans, who increasingly assimilated and Americanized during the second half of the twentieth century. In the postwar years, many Jewish American journalists felt that the historical awareness of the Jews differentiated them from the Gentile American public, who was accused of being indifferent towards the Holocaust and its victims. To answer the research question – how was the Holocaust as a discourse constructed in the Jewish American press in relation to social and cultural changes within the Jewish communities in the United States, and conclusions about the self-image of Jewish Americans can be drawn from these changes in discourse between 1945 and 2000? –, the discourse of the Holocaust was thus constructed in relation to the preservation of Judaism and Jewish identity. This discourse shows the concern the Jewish American journalists, and later also the Jewish American people, both for the physical survival of Jews in and outside the US, and for the spiritual and cultural survival of Judaism in a time of increasing assimilation.

An example of this concern for survival and therefore the employment of the Holocaust discourse to remind the Jewish Americans of their Jewish identity are the specific times that articles about the Holocaust were published in these newspapers during the postwar years. Holocaust remembrance can be most often seen in April and September, which correspond to the Jewish holidays of Passover and Rosh Hashanah or the Jewish New Year. These moments have been traditional moments of reflection for Jewish people. The Holocaust remembrance is incorporated in these traditional reflective periods, which makes the Holocaust discourse ultimately connected to Judaism. This phenomenon can only be found in the postwar years. As the second chapter has demonstrated, the period from 1970 until 2000, the Holocaust is more occupied as a political tool and therefore often mentioned whenever something occurred regarding the World's Jewry. Also, instead of during Rosh Hashanah and Passover, the Holocaust is now remembered at Yom HaShoah. Although the moments when the Jewish American journalists wrote about the war have changed in this period, the connection to Judaism is thus still visible.

The first sub-question reads: when did newspapers begin to use the term Holocaust, or Shoah? Does this differ from the use of the terms among Gentile Americans and Europeans? As chapter two

has pointed out, the Jewish American newspapers have used the term ‘Holocaust’ since directly after the War to describe the genocide on the Jews by Nazi Germany. Unlike the hypothesis formulated in the introduction, the Jewish term ‘Shoah’ was not used until the 1980s by the Jewish American journalists. The term ‘Holocaust’ which is today associated exclusively to the Jewish genocide and has become a mainstream public and academic discourse in the 1980s, was during the postwar years only used by Jewish Americans in the US. During the 1980s, the newspapers also began to use the word ‘Shaoh’ and ‘Yom HaShoah’, the official Jewish Remembrance Day. This increase of the word Shoah arguably took place because the Jewish American journalists wanted to differentiate between the Jewish discourse, in which the Holocaust connoted a different meaning and was associated with themes of loss, responsibility, and the physical and cultural survival of Judaism, and the Gentile discourse, in which the Holocaust meant not only the Jewish genocide, but also the murder of Sinti, Roma, and other unwanted persons by the Nazis. The Gentile Holocaust discourse established in the late 1970s and early 1980s was associated with different themes of evilness, binaries of perpetrator versus victim, and included scholarly debates like the *Historikerstreit* and the functionalist versus particularist debate. The word choice when describing the historical event can be interpreted as another method to distinguish between the Gentile and the Jewish American discourse.

The answer to the second sub-question of this research – does the Jewish-American press tend to portray the Holocaust as a unique, singular event, similar to the Gentile public discourse does? Is the Holocaust used as a trope, or model for speaking about other mass murders and genocides among Jewish-Americans? – is also related to the development of the Holocaust discourse in the Gentile US public sphere. To start, an increase in letters to the editor is noted in the *Jewish Chronicle* publications after 1970, which demonstrates that similar to the increase in public interest among Gentile Americans, the Holocaust discourse gained more interest among Jewish Americans, who also started public debates about the Holocaust meaning in the present and future, besides just remembering the event and its victims.

The articles that have been analyzed in the third chapter point out that similar to Gentiles, Jewish Americans also used the Holocaust as a trope. In the newspaper articles, the Holocaust is implied as an exceptional and ultimate evil historical event, which must not happen again. Unlike the Holocaust as trope discourse that is often seen in American cultural texts, in these newspapers, the Holocaust is not Americanized and stripped of its Jewish character, but contrastingly used to point out injustices done against the world’s Jewry. Whereas during the postwar years, the articles focus on the actual event of the Holocaust, its aftermath in relation to the victims and refugees, and the remembrance, from the 1970s the Holocaust is thus often used as a metaphor and applied to other contemporary developments in the world. The Holocaust as trope however continued to be associated with Jewishness and Judaism.

As is stated in the introduction, this thesis is meant to serve as an addition to the existing scholarly debate about the Holocaust discourse. Its contribution lays in the fact that the relative new

method of digital newspaper analysis has been applied, which makes the evaluation of the Holocaust discourse from a new perspective possible. However, since there are also limitations to this thesis both in method and in scope, further research on this topic is necessary. The digitalization of newspapers and especially Jewish American newspapers is far from completed, which entails that the available sources for this thesis were limited. The research was based on three newspapers which were originally published in the same area. In order for representative claims to be made about the discourse of the Holocaust among all Jewish Americans, more research is therefore important. Besides this, in this thesis, the choice is made for a wide scope and a focus on multiple decades. It is recommended that more focused research is done on the specific changes in the Jewish American Holocaust discourse in the late 1970s and 1980s, since this period was marked by a dramatic increase in public and scholarly debate among non-Jewish people in Europe and the US. Furthermore, as discourses are under constant development, further research could also focus on the contemporary Holocaust discourse in the first decades of the twenty-first century since these are left out in this thesis.

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