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RETHINKING THEOLOGY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

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Is Fracking Kosher?

A Case Study of the Jewish Response to Novel Fossil-Fuel Extractivism in the Marcellus Shale¹

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1. Introduction

Although hydraulic fracturing, aka hydrofracking or fracking,^{2,3} has been in use in some form since the 1860s, and commercially since 1949 [2], its widespread use to extract fossil fuels from unconventional deposits – such as the oil and gas⁴ trapped in shaleroak – only has emerged in the past dozen years. Consequently,

1 This work has been supported partially by an IGERT-SUN fellowship funded by the National Science Foundation (Award 1144616). Copyright © 2021–2022 David Krantz.

2 With apologies to Darrick Evensen, et al., who noted that the term “fracking” can be problematic, as it can have negative connotations, and its usage can be broader than its technical meaning [1], I prefer the term “fracking” because it is arguably the most commonly used term in public discourse. Subsequently, I am using “fracking” to cover what Evensen, et al., offer as the ideal alternative for the term: “the full range of processes and outcomes associated with shale gas/oil exploration, extraction, processing, transport, and development via hydraulic fracturing” [1]. Other alternative terms – such as “shale-gas development,” “unconventional fossil-fuel development,” “tight sands” and other permutations ad nauseam – do not necessarily connote meaning to the public.

3 In essence, water mixed with proppants such as sand and chemicals is injected at a high pressure into a well to crack or fracture the rock, allowing for trapped pockets of fossil oil and gas to flow into the well.

4 Fossil gas is commonly called “natural gas” as part of marketing designed to make it

both domestic and international production of fossil gas from fracking has boomed,⁵ dramatically transforming the energy system of both the United States and the world.

The development of fracking led to a response by anti-fracking environmental activists, or fracktivists (alternatively spelled fractivists), galvanized by non-profit environmental groups, and inspired by documentaries such as *Gasland* and concerns for myriad environmental issues – such as climate change, energy production, land use, drilling-induced earthquakes, noise pollution, air pollution and water pollution [7–11], including contamination of aquifers with carcinogens, neurotoxins and immunosuppressing chemicals [12–14] – with air pollution on its own contributing to decreased life expectancy and increased mortality rates, particularly among the poor, in and downwind of fracking-production areas [15–16]. While fracking may improve residents’ sense of place about their communities [17], fracking has led to boom-and-bust cycles near well sites, stressing local education, housing and health systems [18–19] – and the siting of fracking infrastructure may disproportionately affect ethnic minorities and the poor [20–22]. It is estimated that at least 15 million Americans live within one mile of a fracking well [23].

Fracking’s ills are theoretically a trade-off for reduced carbon emissions of displaced coal consumption [24], however methane leaks at wells actually may lead to more significant greenhouse-gas contributions than burning coal⁶ [27–29]. Fracking has created jobs, but the economic cost of its harm to air quality

sound less harmful than it is because the word “natural” is typically used to convey healthiness [3–4]. Fossil gas is actually mostly methane with small amounts of other gases, such as carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and water vapor.

5 Because the definition for fracking is not uniform, and because the process can be used to access unconventional deposits as well as to help stimulate or prime conventional wells, numbers for fracking can vary widely. But the upward trend of growth is clear. By U.S. government estimates, in 2000 in the United States there were about 26,000 fracking wells that produced 3.6 billion cubic feet of gas per day; in 2015 there were about 300,000 fracking wells that produced about 53 billion cubic feet of gas per day; and by early 2021 fracking wells were producing about 72 billion cubic feet of gas per day [5–6].

6 The work of Robert Howarth, et al., has been challenged, most prominently by Lawrence Cathles, et al. [25]. Howarth, et al., issued a rebuttal [26], which I find convincing. If nothing else, Howarth, et al., demonstrate that the environmental benefits of transitioning to fossil gas from fracking are far from guaranteed, and rather may be negligible or nonexistent.

and climate impacts alone may be more than five times its economic benefit [16]. And abandoned wells, aka orphaned or “zombie” wells, from both fracking and conventional drilling – including at least 3.2 million such wells in the United States – continue leaking methane and other pollutants long after their usefulness has ended, with capping and cleanup costs estimated to be in the hundreds of billions of dollars⁷ [30–33]. Liquefying fossil gas for export (commonly called liquefied natural gas, or LNG) further worsens fracking pollution, as cooling the gas to negative 260 degrees Fahrenheit (negative 162 degrees Celsius) is only 82 to 85 percent efficient – and U.S. exports of LNG have been skyrocketing year after year, from less than 3 billion cubic feet in 2013 to nearly 2,400 billion cubic feet in 2020 [34].

There also has been debate about whether fossil gas serves as a “bridge fuel” to renewables – part of a transition from coal to a decarbonized energy system – or whether it simply marks an energy transition from coal to gas [35–36]. Given that the infrastructure to drill for, transport and burn gas lasts many decades – and given that fracking also has been used to greatly expand extraction of oil, with fracking today responsible for at least half of U.S. oil production [23] – it seems that fracking and greater production and consumption of fossil gas are simply a bridge to continued carbon emissions, or a “bridge to nowhere” [28] that bursts through sustainability guardrails that keep consumption within planetary boundaries, the “safe operating space for humanity” [37].

As we delve further into the anthropocene, the epoch in which humans have become the most-impactful force changing the face of the planet, the dawn of the age of fracking may mark one more chapter in the history of the secular environmental movement, the focus of which has shifted to intersectional climate justice and stopping the global development of all fossil fuels, not just a single extraction method [38]. But what about theological responses to fracking?

The Jewish-environmental movement developed in part to counter the common misperception of the Torah, the Hebrew Bible, as the source of anti-environmentalism [39–41] – a critique leveled most famously (and without evidence) by historian Lynn White Jr. [42]. Like the secular response to fracking, the Jewish response to fracking is part of a continuum of environmental issues

⁷ Just capping and cleaning up the zombie wells in Texas alone is estimated to cost \$117 billion [30].

addressed by Jewish environmentalists. Yet the Jewish response to fracking is virtually absent from academic literature.⁸ Indeed, while research is growing on the social aspects of fracking [44–45], research on ethical aspects of fracking is limited [46]. Utilizing tools from history, journalism, oral history and phenomenology, this case study informed by oral-history interviews of key stakeholders examines the Jewish response to fracking in New York and Pennsylvania in America’s Marcellus Shale region – running southwest along the Appalachian Basin from the Finger Lakes of New York, through Pennsylvania and Ohio into West Virginia, while touching the northern tip of New Jersey, the eastern corners of Kentucky and Tennessee, and the western edges of Maryland and Virginia – the unceded ancestral lands of many indigenous peoples, including but not limited to the Adena, Calicuas, Cayuga, Haudenosaunee, Hopewell, Kaskaskia, Lenape, Mississauga, Myaamia, Oneida, Onondaga, Osage, Seneca, Shawanwaki/Shawnee, Susquehannock and Yuchi peoples.

While this study is historical, focusing mainly on activity from 2011–2013, it may be even more relevant today as fracking has since revolutionized energy production in the United States and around the world – a fracking boom that may be facing a sooner-than-expected bust [47].

2. *Jews and Fracking*

From Jewish brothers Marcus Samuel, who invented the oil tanker, and Samuel Samuel⁹ – who together founded Shell Trading and Transport, which would later merge with Royal Dutch Petroleum to become Royal Dutch Shell [48–50] – to Jewish entrepreneur Leon Hess, founder of oil-and-gas giant Hess Corporation – which has been active in exploiting the Marcellus Shale and today is a major source of fracked oil from North Dakota’s Bakken Shale – there is a long history of Jews and fossil-fuel prospecting and extractivism. A number of Jew-

8 A Syracuse University undergraduate student’s 2013 honors thesis recounts some of the work of Aytzim (then known as the Green Zionist Alliance) and Jews Against Hydrofracking [43].

9 Yes, Marcus Samuel’s brother was named Samuel Samuel, with his first name the same as his last. The two brothers were also pioneers in European trade with Japan [48].

ish merchants, prospectors and investors were key to the development of oil fields in Los Angeles [51]. And there is even a Shalom Alechem¹⁰ oil field in Oklahoma [52–54].

Jews also played a big role in the development of fracking. George Mitchell – known as the “father of fracking” [55–57] – obtained some of his earliest financing from Jewish investors in Texas [58]. Along with Mitchell, Jewish wildcatter Sanford Dvorin was among the pioneers of fracking in Texas [59]. And before it was sold in 2011,¹¹ Samson Investment Company, founded by Jewish philanthropist Charles Schusterman,¹² was one of the largest privately held fossil-fuel-extraction and fracking companies in the United States [60–61]. Of course, the involvement of Jews in an activity does not in itself make the activity Jewish, just like Christmas is not a Jewish holiday even though it celebrates the birth of a Jewish boy. The Samuel brothers, Hess and the other Jewish pioneers of fossil-fuel development prove that there is a historical connection between Jews and fossil fuels, but there is no evidence that they were inspired by their Jewish identity or Jewish culture and laws in their fossil-fuel pursuits.

2.1 Energy Security and Independence Above All?

Fracking seems to have drawn its most Jewish supporters around the issue of energy security, also called energy independence – the desire, particularly in the Western world, for countries to produce enough of their own energy to not be reliant on imports from “unstable, unfriendly, undemocratic governments” [62], aka Arab countries, as typically implied and occasionally made explicit. (In the wake of 2020’s Abraham Accords that normalized relations between Israel and the Arab nations of Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates, many espousers of energy security and energy independence have shifted concern from Arab states to Iran,¹³ a petrostate that openly calls for the destruction

10 “Shalom alechem” is a traditional Jewish greeting, meaning “peace unto you.”

11 Not all of Samson Investment Company’s assets were sold; those that were retained were organized under Samson Energy Company [60].

12 In the past, both I and Aytzim, the all-volunteer nonprofit that I run, have received micro-grants from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation to support, respectively, personal and organizational environmental endeavors.

13 Iran’s large fossil-fuel resources, antagonism of Israel, proximity to Arab countries,

of Israel.) The concept of energy security was borne out of the 1956 Suez Crisis – the second war between Israel (the ancestral land of the Jewish people) and its Arab neighbors – and the ensuing Arab-Israeli wars in 1967 and 1973, along with the oil crises of the 1970s [63]. However, neoconservatives have utilized energy security and energy independence as veils for an “anti-environmental countermovement” [64], largely in the form of support for fossil-fuel extraction at the cost of both environmental and human health [64–65].

Conservatives have brushed off anti-frackers and others who oppose maximum fossil-fuel exploitation as ignorant, anti-progress zealots [66–67] “running against the tide of technology” [68], and as deceptive anti-science fear-mongering out-of-towners, as quintessentially portrayed in the film *Truthland: Dispatches From the Real Gasland* [69], produced by the Independent Petroleum Association of America, a lobbying group for fossil oil and gas companies, with funding support from America’s Natural Gas Alliance – which has since evolved into The Natural Gas Solution as a project of the American Petroleum Institute, the largest lobbying trade group for the U.S. oil and gas industry – by way of Chesapeake Energy Corporation, a multi-billion-dollar fracking company [70–72]. *Truthland*’s screenings – including at the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg and at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. [73] – primarily were sponsored by oil and gas associations as well as the libertarian group Americans for Prosperity (founded by petro-billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch) and the affiliates of the Republican Party and the conservative Tea Party movement [70,74]. America’s Natural Gas Alliance’s investment in *Truthland* was just a part of the \$80 million it spent to promote fracking, including hiring WPP¹⁴–owned Hill+Knowlton Strategies, the public-relations firm that “specializes in the creation of fake grassroots organizations” [75] and that famously “told America that tobacco had no verifiable links to cancer” [76]. Additionally, the fracking industry spent another \$747 million lobbying Capitol

and self-identification as an Islamic republic typically places it as an Arab country in the popular imagination even though it is not an Arab nation; only a small percentage of Iranians are Arabs as the vast majority of Iranians are Persian, Azerbaijani or Kurdish.

14 If not the single largest, WPP is one of the largest advertising companies in the world.

Hill over a 10-year span “to persuade federal authorities to ignore the dangers of hydraulic fracturing” [77].

A number of Jewish (and seemingly Jewish) organizations – including the American Jewish Congress and the Council for a Secure America, which launched as a partnership between Jewish-American leaders¹⁵ and the Domestic Energy Producers Alliance [78], a fossil-fuel lobbying group – have supported achieving energy security and energy independence via domestic fossil-fuel extraction such as fracking. However, the most publicly vocal Jewish organization in support of fracking may be the American Jewish Committee¹⁶ (AJC), which has advocated for energy security since the 1970s [81–82] and is known widely as the “State Department of the Jewish people”.¹⁷ Although it founded and published the neoconservative bastion *Commentary* until 2007, the AJC remained “unrepentantly liberal” [83], appropriately given that twice as many American Jews identify as liberal than as conservative [84]. However, the AJC’s policies on Israel – like other mainstream Jewish organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League and American Israel Public Affairs Committee – align with the conservative Christian Right,¹⁸ even though they may disagree on domestic issues [88]. And that conservative leaning has carried over to the AJC’s stance on energy issues. Indeed, among mainstream Jewish organizations, only the AJC consistently has taken public stances on energy issues, supporting not just fracking [89] and the Keystone XL Pipeline [81,90–93], which would have brought more tar-sands oil from Canada to the United States, but even – at the behest of the governments of Azerbaijan and Türkiye (then known as Turkey), who committed to deepen their relationships with Israel [94] – the Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999 that eased the flow of oil from nations, such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan

15 Including Malcolm Hoenlein – board member of Israel’s Delek Drilling and executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations – and the late Samuel “Sandy” Eisenstat, philanthropist, founder of Abjac Energy and board member of a handful of other fossil-fuel firms [78–80].

16 Despite their similar names, the American Jewish Committee and American Jewish Congress are separate independent organizations.

17 But unlike the U.S. State Department, the American Jewish Committee lacks both a mandate from as well as accountability to its constituents.

18 Many of whose members, particularly Evangelicals, support Israel because of a belief that the presence of the Jewish state is a requisite precursor to the apocalypse, the return of Jesus, the rapture of those who believed in him and an eternity in hell for non-believers who did not convert to Christianity [85–87].

(but not Türkiye¹⁹), in the South Caucasus and Central Asia to the United States [94,100]. The AJC and other Jewish organizations may have played a role²⁰ in the legislation's eventual passage. Their support and potential benefits to Israel were discussed by the bill's sponsor, Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-Neb.), in a House committee [100], and Sen. Jesse Helms (R-S.C.), then-chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, discussed the AJC's endorsement in his Senate report on the bill [101].

The AJC Energy Security Symposium, held in Washington in 2003, featured about a dozen presentations of papers and statements from AJC leadership as well as Beltway insiders such as ambassadors, politicians and fossil-fuel representatives, including the chief economist of the American Petroleum Institute, who predictably argued against investments in renewable energy, against the precautionary principle and against the Kyoto Protocols, and concluded by suggesting that climate change is being caused by natural variations in the sun's activity [102–103]. While nodding toward biblical commands and implorations “to preserve the environment for future generations” [104], the AJC proceeded

19 Even though Türkiye would not directly benefit from the Silk Road Strategy Act, its oil-producing ally Azerbaijan would. Türkiye and Azerbaijan share a mutual dislike of Armenia, which opposed passage of the law. Armenia and Azerbaijan have fought over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region of ethnic Armenians that is part of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan and under control of the internationally unrecognized breakaway Republic of Artsakh. Türkiye's political predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, mass murdered an estimated 600,000 to 1.5 million Armenians (as well as Assyrians and Greeks) in what more than two dozen countries (as well as Jewish organizations including the AJC) recognize as genocide [95–97], a descriptor that Türkiye denies (which should be considered akin to Holocaust denial [98–99]). Religion plays a role as well: While Armenia, Azerbaijan and Türkiye are all technically secular states, Armenia's population is majority Christian and the populations of Azerbaijan and Türkiye are majority Muslim. Israel, which has relatively warm relations with both Azerbaijan and Türkiye, does not recognize the genocide but, unlike Azerbaijan, does not support Türkiye's efforts to deny the genocide either. Israel and Armenia have diplomatic ties but relations have soured over Israel's relationship with Azerbaijan.

20 The Republican-controlled House passed the bill by voice vote, as it courted neither controversy nor significant opposition, while the Republican-controlled Senate folded its version of the bill into the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2000 (an omnibus spending bill that funded the government), indicating that the Silk Road Strategy Act was not controversial in the Senate either, and as such likely would have been passed by the Republican-controlled Congress just the same without the support of the AJC and other Jewish groups.

to promote drilling for oil in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge – “[a]ssuming research bears out the presence of sufficient recoverable oil” [105] – as well as expansion of oil and gas pipelines, all for the sake of moving “away on all possible fronts from our dangerous dependence on foreign fuel sources” [106]. But the most telling detail about AJC’s energy stance may be that the then-chair of AJC’s national energy committee owns a chain of gas stations and car washes [104,107].

By arguing that upholding the Torah’s laws to protect the Earth somehow justifies drilling in wildlife refuges, the AJC showed that its use of Jewish tradition and law for its policy stances was merely a fig leaf to cover its support of energy security no matter the environmental cost and regardless of what the Torah actually says. Consistently, the AJC has justified its support for fossil-fuel projects not with Jewish values but rather with a distrust of petrostates that are “hostile” [81]. When public awareness of fracking and its dangers grew, the AJC maintained its stance for energy security and staunchly defended the extraction practice [89,93]. “We want to see development of these domestic resources go forward,” said Richard Foltin, AJC’s then-director of national and legislative affairs. “As safely as possible, but with an emphasis on allowing it to be done” [89].

This refrain that fracking and other domestic fossil-fuel investment must be done for the sake of energy security and that it can be done responsibly is a talking point of the American Legislative Exchange Council, perhaps better known by its acronym, ALEC. A “stealth business lobbyist” [108], ALEC drafts legislation for Republican lawmakers [108–109] and is funded in part with millions from the Koch brothers [110]. ALEC’s “Resolution on Responsible Resource Development,” first published in 2011, “encourages responsible resource development practices” while gushing about the virtues of fracking fossil gas [111].

In the name of energy security, other well-intentioned Jewish organizations, including the Rabbinical Assembly and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) – parent organization of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), one of the oldest Jewish-environmental initiatives – took a relatively more measured approach in passing resolutions that largely support fracking. While citing energy security in endorsing fracking as a means to job creation and reducing energy costs, they also cited Jewish tradition in calling for

stricter regulations of fracking [89,112–115] – a means of criticizing fracking while continuing to promote its development and implementation to support energy security. I served as a leadership fellow at COEJL at the time, and although my responsibilities did not include working on the JCPA resolution, I advocated on religious and environmental grounds for a full condemnation of fracking, to no avail. Since it was unclear at the time if anything that potentially impinged on the pursuit of energy security and energy independence would pass muster to members of the JCPA, the resolution was considered a victory by COEJL, which proudly announced the resolution’s passage to its members [114]. The components of the JCPA resolution that did criticize fracking, however, were so tempered from the initial draft to passage that Jewish environmentalists who worked on it from outside COEJL were disappointed with the outcome [116].

“It’s again, Israel – the perceived needs of Israel by the American-Jewish political establishment trumping every other ethical or moral thing that’s right and them making a decision of some idea of what’s good for Israel’s security is more important than protecting the environment of the United States,” said Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, then-director of the social-justice organizing program at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College [116].

Jewish-organizational support for fracking and fossil fuels has not precluded support for renewable energy, indicating a preference for a “fundamentally flawed” [117] all-of-the-above energy approach that secures neither an adequate response to climate change nor the long-term sustainability of energy supply [117–119] – an approach of those who are fossil-fuel abusers, if not fossil-fuel addicts [120]. Indeed, the petroculture of those pushing energy security reflects the Republican Party’s “drill, baby, drill” ethos – in this case, the notion that if it is not Arab- or Iranian-produced energy, then it must be good.

Too few consider more effective ways to support the Jewish state. After millennia of exile, multiple genocides,²¹ dozens of expulsions and uncountable other forms of persecution, including rampant violent acts of anti-Semitism that continue to this day, the instinct for Jews to protect Israel at all costs is natural, as Israel is both our homeland and our safeguard. Yet how does support for fracking and fossil fuels protect Israel? On the contrary, as a small coastal na-

21 Over the last millennium alone, Jews have been the victims of one genocide after the other, including the Holocaust, the pogroms, the Inquisition and the Crusades.

tion straddling arid and semi-arid climatic zones, Israel is particularly threatened by climate change [121–123], brought on and continually worsened by the burning of fossil fuels.

Rising sea levels threaten some of Israel’s largest cities [121]. As the world bakes, Israel’s arid zone is predicted to move northward by 300 to 500 kilometers (186 to 311 miles), effectively swallowing its semi-arid zone, meaning higher temperatures and more wildfires, drought and desertification, further stressing scant water supplies [121–123]. Corresponding heat waves – including even a single day of severe heat – and other forms of extreme weather already are leading to measurable increases in Israeli deaths [121,124]. And air pollution of particles 2.5 micrometers and smaller – the vast majority of which comes from the burning of fossil fuels – leads to an estimated 1,609 to 2,452 Israeli deaths annually, many multiples of the number of Israelis who typically die annually from car accidents, homicides or terrorism [125–129]. Every year about as many Israelis die from air pollution than the total of all the Israelis who have died in all of terrorist acts since the modern state was founded in 1948 [125,130]. Those of us who care about Israel should be concerned about wars and terrorism, but we must remember that burning fossil fuels is far more deadly [131–133].

Additionally, few people even ask if actions focused on energy security are actually effective. The American fracking boom clearly has not made the world safer from autocratic petrostates such as Russia; nor has fracking made America or Israel safer from Mideast petrostates such as Iran and Syria. Indeed, “[n]o matter how little oil America gets from the Gulf, the region will continue to matter for as long as the world remains dependent on its oil” [134] – and because of the global market for fossil fuels, the world will be dependent upon fossil fuels from autocratic petrostates as long as people continue using fossil fuels [134]. In that sense, the best course for energy security and energy independence would be a substantial investment in and complete transition to renewable energy. Real energy independence is independence from fossil fuels.

Promoting U.S. energy security in order to help Israel also falsely assumes that the best way to support Israel is to thwart Israel’s neighbors. Regardless of the disputed role that climate change may have played in sparking Syria’s civil war [135–136], climate change poses a potentially destabilizing force in the re-

gion [137], and thereby poses a threat to Israel's security [138–139]. Because climate change threatens Israel with both internal climatic harm and external violence spillover from its neighbors, supporting climate-change abatement and adaptation strategies along with Arab-Israeli cooperation may pose a better path to increased security and wellbeing for Israel. Excluding climate impacts, Israel's safety will be secure when its neighbors (as well as the territories under Israel's direct and/or nominal control) have a vested interest in Israel's survival, which in turn is developed through mutually beneficial cooperation and friendship. The climate crisis provides an excellent opportunity for Israel and its neighbors to work together to address a shared problem.²²

22 While such cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians largely has been lacking – indeed, the entrenchment of the Arab-Israeli conflict is thwarting renewable-energy projects in the West Bank [140] – cooperation between Israel and Arab states took a big step forward in November 2021 with a deal brokered by U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry in which the United Arab Emirates (through its state-owned renewable-energy subsidiary Masdar) will build a 600-megawatt solar-power plant in Jordan to send energy to Israel, which will use the electricity to desalinate water to send back to Jordan at a rate (including earlier water-sharing deals) of 200-million cubic meters annually [141–143]. The AJC, however, only offered (very) faint praise. Rather than issue a timely press release via PR Newswire, as it has done with its promotion of fossil-fuel projects, the AJC did not make a formal statement about the multilateral solar-water deal. Instead, a month after the pact's announcement, the AJC's chief policy and political affairs officer – in an op-ed published on the virtually unknown website Newslooks and republished on the AJC's own website – briefly mentioned the agreement as part of a review of the anniversary of the Donald Trump-brokered Abraham Accords [144]. In the month between the signing of the multilateral solar-water deal and the Newslooks op-ed, the AJC issued three press releases through PR Newswire: one announcing an AJC fellowship program [145], one urging Bosnia-Herzegovina to continue banning Holocaust denial [146], and one praising passage of the U.S.-Greece Defense and Interparliamentary Partnership Act of 2021, itself a strengthening of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 that supports development of fossil-gas extraction, pipelines, research and other gas infrastructure – including development of LNG terminals encircling the Eastern Mediterranean – by Cyprus, Greece and Israel [147–150]. Essentially, the AJC strongly supported agreements for multilateral fossil-gas development between Cyprus, Greece, Israel and the United States while largely ignoring the multilateral agreement between Israel, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and the United States to develop solar energy.

2.2 Jews Against Hydrofracking

The Jewish resistance to fracking may have begun with a solar composting toilet. It was 1995 in California’s Yosemite National Park, and Mirele Goldsmith found the technology amazing, but its treatment angered her [151]. “They had a sign begging people to not throw their trash in the toilet,” she said. “But I was appalled that anyone could be so insensitive as to throw their trash in that toilet” [151].

One of the most prolific grassroots Jewish environmentalists was born. Goldsmith enrolled in an environmental-psychology PhD program, completing her dissertation on a grassroots organizing effort to protect New York’s drinking water [151–152]. A few years later she saw the Academy Award-nominated documentary *Gasland* [153] – a catalyst for the anti-fracking movement [154] – and she knew she had to do something about fracking, particularly because the film depicts fracking in the Marcellus Shale, the same basin of gas-rich rock that sits under the Croton and Catskill/Delaware watersheds that were providing drinking water for her and millions of others in New York City. But she also was greatly troubled by the damage to the Earth itself – a mistreatment she later described as a nightmare, an unwanted but very public abuse from which people are looking away rather than preventing [151,155].

Goldsmith signed up for a Food & Water Watch-run bus trip to the state capital of Albany to call for a fracking ban in New York. Her seatmate on the bus was Eric Weltman, the New York-based organizer extraordinaire for Food & Water Watch, a Washington-based nonprofit. Goldsmith and Weltman became fast friends. The anti-fracking movement already had organized artists against fracking, chefs against fracking, kayakers against fracking, local elected officials against fracking, poets against fracking – so Weltman thought, why not Jews against fracking? The son of progressive Jews, Weltman grew up in Highland Park, N.J., as a progressive Jew with a keen sense of justice, so helping organize Jews to fight fracking was a natural fit for him [151,156].

Together, Goldsmith and Weltman strategized what a Jewish anti-fracking movement could look like for a community focused on energy security. It was February 2011. Goldsmith heard through her friends that Jewish summer camps in the Catskill Mountains north of New York City and in Eastern Pennsylvania’s

Pocono Mountains were being approached by fossil oil and gas companies such as the Hess Corporation and being offered deals worth millions of dollars in exchange for rights to frack on their land. In March she wrote an op-ed about it for *The Forward*, one of the Jewish-American community's largest, oldest and most respected newspapers [151,156–158].

“Today, we have a choice: We can take the money and hope for the best. Or we can turn down the money and do our best to protect the land, water and people from this dangerous form of gas extraction,” Goldsmith concluded in her op-ed. “We have the opportunity to teach our children a lasting lesson about Jewish values. What do we want that lesson to be?” [157]

Goldsmith dug in deeper, making lists of Jewish summer camps and calling them, inquiring which had signed fracking contracts. One of *The Forward's* staffers followed up on Goldsmith's investigation and produced a front-page story. Contracts had been signed as early as 2008, including not just Jewish summer camps in New York and Pennsylvania but in New Jersey as well [151,158]. Fracking became more than energy security, and more than about a threat to water in faraway places, such as the flammable water of Western Pennsylvania pictured in *Gasland*. Fracking clearly threatened the water supply of the New York metropolitan area, home to the largest concentration of Jews in the country. And with plans to frack at Jewish summer camps, fracking threatened their children. Although fracking already was underway in Pennsylvania, it was not yet legalized in New York or New Jersey. Jews began contacting Goldsmith with their concerns [151].

Rabbi Arthur Waskow responded by calling upon Jews to read more about fracking; to contact their children's summer camps and request that they not sign contracts with frackers; to seek fracking bans from their state legislators; to ask that their congressional representatives repeal what's known alternatively as the Halliburton Loophole and the Cheney Loophole²³ in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that exempts fracking from the Safe Drinking Water Act; to sign a Food & Water Watch-organized petition for a national fracking ban; to organize showings of *Gasland*; to protest fracking at interfaith events scheduled for early that September in Philadelphia; and to use the Shabbat in October when Jews

23 Named after Dick Cheney, then-U.S. vice president and former CEO of Halliburton, a fossil-fuel company with significant investments in fracking.

read from the Torah portion of Noach²⁴ “to address fracking and other threats to our planet, and act to heal our Earth” [159]. Waskow framed his arguments religiously, writing that it is “a profound violation of Jewish wisdom and values for summer camps or other Jewish institutions to sell the rights to use their land in ways that will poison God’s and humanity’s earth, air, food, and water” [159].

In July, Goldsmith reached out to me and a few dozen other Jewish environmentalists involved in the Green Hevra,²⁵ the now-dormant network of Jewish-environmental organizations, via emails with subject lines like, “Mobilizing Jews on Fracking - What you can do NOW.” In August we met several times by phone. I participated along with Goldsmith, Weltman, the Jewish social-justice advocate Honey Heller, and prominent Jewish environmentalists such as Jonah Adels, z”l²⁶, Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, Jonathon Feinberg, Jessica Haller, Adriane “Ace” Leveen, Liebling, Rachel Jacoby Rosenfield, Sybil Sanchez, Nili Simhai, Yoni Stadlin, Rabbi Lawrence Troster, z”l, Waskow and Rabbi Shawn Zevit. Leveen reported that she, Rabbi Howard Cohen, Liebling, Troster and others were developing a source sheet of Jewish perspectives on fracking. We volunteered to send the source sheet to the mailing lists of Aytzim (then known as the Green Zionist Alliance), Hebrew Union College, the Rabbinical Assembly, and the Reform Jewish Voice of New York State in time for the High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). Liebling, Waskow and Weltman encouraged us to take a Food & Water Watch bus to an anti-fracking “Shale Gas Outrage” rally and corresponding conference in Philadelphia. We proposed attempting to involve 100 synagogues to host 100 events and showings of *Gasland* in the following six months leading up to Tu B’Shvat, Judaism’s most renowned environmental holiday. We discussed whether we should organize our efforts under a preexisting project, such as Jewcology²⁷ or the Green Hevra, but

24 The section of the Torah that tells of the flood that covers the face of the earth and destroys most creatures outside of Noach (Noah in English), his family and the animals they saved on the ark they built.

25 Then known as the Green Chevre, an alternative transliteration for the Hebrew word for a social group.

26 The designation z”l is a Jewish honorific for the dead, standing for the Hebrew phrase *zichrono livracha* for men and *zichronah livracha* for women, basically meaning “of blessed memory.”

27 Jewcology.org, which was built to serve as an online platform for the movement and is now a project of Aytzim.

those ideas did not gain traction. By September, Haller and Jewish anti-fascist activist Daniel Sieradski built a website and helped Goldsmith design a logo, which features a spouting derrick inside a Jewish star with a slash going through the derrick like a no-smoking sign. Goldsmith proposed we call ourselves “JoNAH: Jewish Network Against Hydrofracking.” Via email we debated other names, such as Rabbi Daniel Swartz’s suggestion of “Jews Against Fossil Fuels,” Adels’ suggestion of “Jewish Energy Action Coalition,” and my suggestion of “Jewish Anti-Fracking Network.” Many of us felt that inclusion of the word “against” would help lend our group clarity and focus, leading a plurality to embrace Haller’s naming suggestion: Jews Against Hydrofracking [151,160–165].

At the Shale Gas Outrage protest outside the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, Liebling, Waskow and Rabbi Malkah Binah Klein sounded the shofar, the Jewish ritual horn, and that night Liebling organized an hour-long interfaith “Blessing the Waters” liturgy, including blessings and appreciations offered from the Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish and Lenape traditions – the beginning of his application of Jewish tradition to anti-fracking activism, Liebling said [116,166–167]. The next day, Liebling and his wife, Lynne Iser, coordinated a conference titled “Freedom From Fracking: Building Strategies Together” at Congregation Rodeph Shalom, established in 1795 and standing today as the oldest Ashkenazi²⁸ synagogue in the Western Hemisphere. The conference was a secular event, and undoubtedly most of the 100 people in attendance were not Jewish, but nonetheless it featured many Jewish speakers, including but not limited to Liebling, *Gasland* director Josh Fox, Rabbi Eli Freedman, and Sandra Steingraber, considered by some to be the literary heir to Rachel Carson. Liebling and Cheryl Pynch, a pastor at Summit Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, led a session discussing religious environmental principles and how religious congregations can work to protect their communities from fracking [167–170].

Both the Shale Gas Outrage and its corresponding Freedom From Fracking conference were held midweek to coincide with Shale Gas Insight 2011,²⁹ a major pro-fracking conference held by Marcellus Shale Coalition, a fracking indus-

28 Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of Eastern European descent.

29 The Marcellus Shale Coalition continues hosting conferences, although in 2013 it shortened the conference name to “Shale Insight” [171], perhaps in acknowledgment that increasingly fracking was being used to extract fossil oil as well as gas.

try group, at the convention center. Speakers included Tom Corbett, then-governor of Pennsylvania, and Tom Ridge, former governor of Pennsylvania and former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security [116,172–173]. Both pro- and anti-fracking organizers said 1,500 people attended their respective events [174–175]. Executives of fracking companies gave Corbett’s election campaign more than \$1.8 million and indirectly funneled another \$1.6 million to him while the Marcellus Shale Coalition paid Ridge’s consulting firm Ridge Global \$900,000 a year and paid his lobbying firm Ridge Policy Group another \$900,000 a year to advocate and lobby for fracking [176–177].

Although Liebling ran the Freedom From Fracking conference at the request of Protecting Our Waters – a grassroots secular nonprofit that formed in Philadelphia to protect Pennsylvania and the Delaware, Ohio and Susquehanna river basins from the dangers of fracking – he said that organizing against fracking was a natural expression of his Jewish values. Liebling’s Jewish-environmental activism began in October 1978 when, following the partial meltdown of the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station, he and a handful of other Jews among the thousands of Clamshell Alliance members that protested at the construction site of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant built a sukkah, a ritual Jewish hut for the holiday of Sukkot, for what they called “Sukkot at Seabrook” [116,169,178–179].

In the early days of fracking, and following decades of industry astroturfing (stealth marketing designed to appear grassroots) and other propaganda touting the virtues of “natural” gas in order to convince the public that gas cooking and heating was better than electric [3–4], there was a lack of understanding among Jews about fracking, aside from *Gasland* and television advertisements from fossil-gas companies, Goldsmith said [151]. Prominent Jewish environmentalists discussed being unsure about whether fracking was good or bad, were saddened by that ambiguity and our collective role in creating the climate crisis, and did not like the prospect of a fissure among Jews or within the nascent Jewish-environmental movement [180–182]. But to Goldsmith and Jews Against Hydrofracking, the question and the corresponding choice were clear. “They were advertising on TV, pro-natural gas in New York. They talked about energy independence,” Goldsmith said, adding that she saw fracking and the fight

against it as both a Jewish issue and a challenge to Jewry. “We have our values – if we don’t act on them, what kind of Jews are we?” [151]

Jews Against Hydrofracking developed a dozen resources connecting Jewish values with opposition to fracking. Troster turned to Job 28:9–13, which says that humans touch every flinty rock, overturn mountains by the roots and carve channels through rock – all in the search for wisdom that can only be provided by God (not by drilling) [183]. Leveen discussed how Psalm 104 details how so many kinds of animals rely on the same fresh water that we humans do, and that Psalm 107 says that when that water becomes contaminated through our wickedness that freshwater springs dry up and fruitful land becomes salt marsh [184]. Cohen compared the way that fracking effectively steals fresh water while denying the problem – “unjust water appropriation” [185] – to the way that the ruler Avimelech denied there was a problem after his servants effectively stole Abraham’s well (Gen. 21:25–26). And Liebling compared the call of the fracktivists to the biblical call of Jonah – do we not fight fracking because, like Jonah, “we think we will fail, look foolish, or provoke anger?” [186]

Although Liebling and Waskow were involved with Jews Against Hydrofracking initially, fairly quickly we developed separate fights against fracking due to our different locations. Goldsmith had the advantages of New York’s large Jewish population and that fracking had not yet been approved there. Whereas in Pennsylvania, there was a relatively smaller Jewish population and fracking already was a reality, something that could be managed but not necessarily eliminated. Correspondingly, Liebling and Waskow, while still grounding their work in Jewish values, proceeded to fight fracking mostly in interfaith contexts, and Goldsmith and Jews Against Hydrofracking focused more on organizing Jews [116,151,156].

In the ensuing months, Jews Against Hydrofracking members encouraged phone calls to and collected signatures for Food & Water Watch and Protecting Our Waters letters to the Delaware River Basin Commission calling for a fracking moratorium in the basin [187–189]; to Joe Martens, then-commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), calling for an extension of the comment period on the state’s environmental-impact statement for fracking, for that environmental-impact statement to not be rushed, and for regulations to be developed before any fracking permits would

be issued [190]; and to Andrew Cuomo, then-governor of New York, calling for new protections for public drinking water, investment in energy efficiency, and a ban on fracking [191–193]. For the most part, the letters did not cite Judaism or Jewish tradition. However Jews Against Hydrofracking members encouraged attendance, participation and promotion of opposition to fracking as consistent with Jewish values at meetings of the Delaware River Basin Commission in Trenton, N.J., at an anti-fracking press conference outside of Cuomo’s office in Albany, and at an NYSDEC hearing in Manhattan [193–195]. In encouraging Jews to support a fracking moratorium at the Delaware River Basin Commission meeting in Trenton, Adels cited the 2nd-century sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who taught that if a seafaring traveler drills a hole under their own seat, all on the boat are imperiled [194]. But in Jews Against Hydrofracking meetings, members expressed concern about opposition from Jews pursuing an energy-security agenda [195].³⁰

Jews Against Hydrofracking prepared talking points for encouraging Jews to fight fracking, including the urgency of tackling fracking while it was not yet approved in New York State; that fracking constitutes “an extreme form of fossil fuel extraction” with toxic chemicals that pollute air, land and water; that clean water is more vital to human existence than gas; and that the “Torah teaches that we have responsibility for each other, for future generations and for the earth” [197].

In October, Liebling testified before the Philadelphia City Council when it was considering a resolution to ask the city to file an *amicus curiae* brief in support of lawsuits brought by the New York State Attorney General, the National Parks Conservation Association, New York-based Riverkeeper and Bristol, Penn.-based Delaware Riverkeeper Network, seeking to block the Delaware River Basin Commission from approving fracking before first complying with the National Environmental Policy Act by doing an environmental-impact study. The resolution passed unanimously [198–200]. Two months later, Liebling testified before the Susquehanna River Basin Commission in a Wilkes-Barre, Penn., meeting on permits sought by 14 fossil-gas companies to use the basin’s water for fracking. Liebling asked the commissioners to imagine the

30 Goldsmith addressed the concern publicly in 2013, writing that “fracking [is] not the answer to energy security” [196].

people they love drinking polluted water before they approve the use of more water for fracking in Pennsylvania [116,201]. “Allow the time for science to tell you what the impact of fracking is,” implored Liebling, wearing a kippah, or yarmulke, that covered his head in Bukharian³¹ style. “We do not need this gas tomorrow. There is no rush in allowing these permits. You can say ‘no’ to them. You have to decide if you’re going to be Good Germans or if you’re going to stand up for what is right” [201].

When the commission’s then-project-review manager (and current executive director), Andrew Dehoff, recommended approval of water for fracking, fracktivists in attendance responded with boos and chanting “This is a crisis” and “River Basin community,” ending Dehoff’s testimony prematurely and almost drowning out the commissioners as they voted unanimously to approve a dozen of the permit applications [116,202].

In March 2012, Liebling returned to testify a second time before the commission, this time in Harrisburg, the state capital of Pennsylvania, and again he challenged the commissioners to not be like the “Good Germans” who remained silent during the Holocaust [116,203]. “I am not comparing this to the Holocaust, certainly not, but the principle is the same,” Liebling explained to *The Patriot-News*, the local newspaper, which described him as a “snowy-haired rabbi” who is the son of Holocaust survivors. “I learned at a very young age that it is important to stand up for what you believe in and not allow bureaucrats to make decisions that imperil people’s lives” [203].

About 20 fracktivists attended, chanting “I pledge to protect the Susquehanna” as the commissioners approved 40 permits to withdraw water for fracking. Police surrounded the fracktivists and threatened them with arrest if they did not stop protesting; they continued but no arrests were made [116,202].

In New York, Jews Against Hydrofracking did not reach its goal of 100 showings of *Gasland* or even 100 anti-fracking events before Tu B’Svat in February 2012. And even though Jews Against Hydrofracking was always an informal all-volunteer grassroots group, in the ensuing three years we had an outsized influence on fracking discourse among Jews – particularly so given the silence of so many mainstream Jewish organizations on the issue.

31 Bukharian Jews come from the Central Asian region that was the historic Emirate of Bukhara and today is Uzbekistan and parts of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Jews Against Hydrofracking continued with phone calls and letters to legislators and attending a plenitude of Food & Water Watch-organized protests – typically cosponsored by both Aytzim and Jews Against Hydrofracking, along with many other groups – in New York and Albany, where Goldsmith commonly carried a Jews Against Hydrofracking placard adorned with the group’s logo sandwiched between the words “God’s Creation” and “No Contamination,” consistently drawing other Jews to meet her. Jews Against Hydrofracking intended to follow up with Jewish organizations that passed resolutions on fracking and seek other organizations to do so. About 30 rabbis were contacted to talk about fracking. Plans were made for screenings of *Gasland*’s sequel, *Gasland Part II*, and to encourage B’nai Jeshurun, a synagogue on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, to adopt fracking as an issue. I suggested hosting an anti-fracking themed Tu B’Shvat meal, making an anti-fracking video with Jewish celebrities, and working with subversive pranksters The Yes Men – all ideas that never came to fruition, largely for lack of organizational capacity. While Jews Against Hydrofracking telephone meetings continued attracting a dozen or so members and new volunteers – such as Janna Diamond, who volunteered to run the group’s Twitter account – much of the organizing burden fell disproportionately on Goldsmith. In December 2014, Cuomo banned fracking in New York State, and with its mission accomplished, Jews Against Hydrofracking went dormant [151,204–208].

In Pennsylvania, Liebling facilitated a session on strategic anti-fracking campaigning at “Winning a Moratorium on Fracking in Pennsylvania,” a Protecting Our Waters conference held in State College, Penn., in February 2012. He also organized smaller follow-up Freedom From Fracking conferences in September 2012 and September 2013 with help from a Shale Gas Outrage steering committee of about 10 fracktivists representing organizations such as Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Tour de FRACK,³² Damascus Township, Penn.-based Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, and the Harrisburg-based group Gas Truth of Central PA. The second and third Freedom From Fracking conferences were hosted at the Friends Center – “the Quaker hub for peace and justice

32 Tour de FRACK (Freedom Ride for Awareness and Community Knowledge) was a trio of fracktivists who over two weeks biked 644 kilometers (400 miles) on a winding route from Butler County, Penn., to Washington, D.C., to raise awareness about the dangers of fracking and deliver an anti-fracking petition to Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency and the White House [209].

in Philadelphia” [210] – and coincided with Shale Gas Outrage protests against simultaneous conferences held by Marcellus Shale Coalition at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Liebling said that he and Waskow tried to get arrested in 2013 by blocking the doors to the fracking conference at the convention center, but police simply picked them both up and moved them away from the doors. Liebling organized interfaith “Blessing the Waters” ceremonies after each of the protests [116,171,211–216].

Fracking is ongoing in Pennsylvania, so the fight against it has been ongoing as well. Liebling has continued to attend protests and speak out against fracking, as the fight has expanded from opposing the use of freshwater for fracking to opposing the construction of fracking infrastructure and addressing a potential fracking tax. In 2014, Liebling was one of six leaders featured in a short fracking-ethics film in which he cited Jewish values – the Jewish responsibility for Earth stewardship (Gen. 2:15) and that we are forbidden from corrupting God’s world because if we do then there will be no one to repair it for us (Kohelet Rabbah 7:13) – as a warning against embracing fracking. In 2015, Liebling led a two-hour silent protest meditation for 100 fracktivists outside the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (better known as FERC) in Washington – where they were met by 30 officers from the Department of Homeland Security – for the commission’s rubber-stamp role in approving fracking projects. Wearing a tallit – a Jewish ritual prayer shawl – and a rainbow kippah, Liebling said that the protestors should spend their meditation listening to the Earth. In 2016, Liebling, Swartz, Waskow, Rabbi Julie Greenberg and Rabbi Carl Choper joined Buddhist, Christian and Islamic clergy from the nonprofit Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light for an anti-fracking “MORALtorium” protest and lobby day at the State Capitol in Harrisburg. And in 2018, Pennsylvania Fracking Health Impacts – a coalition of about 40 anti-fracking nonprofits and community groups – featured Liebling in a video seeking Penn. Gov. Tom Wolf’s help for those hurt by fracking [116,217–222].

In New York, Food & Water Watch also has pivoted to opposition of fracking infrastructure, because even though New York has banned fracking, it has not banned fracked gas, and new pipelines and facilities to liquefy gas and receive liquefied gas from Pennsylvania have been planned. But the fight against

fracking infrastructure continues without Jews Against Hydrofracking and Goldsmith, who has moved on to other climate-activism projects [151,156].

3. Conclusion

Set in a specific time and place, this case study of the Jewish reaction to fracking in New York and Pennsylvania is not generalizable to other cases, but this study nonetheless presents interesting findings. Perhaps most significantly, there was a large power differential between those who supported fracking and those who opposed it. The pro-frackers tended to be well-funded and sizable – billion-dollar companies, large nonprofits and governmental bodies – and the anti-frackers tended to be small in size and working with little or no fiscal support. Jews Against Hydrofracking, for example, operated without paid staff and without funding. Given the amount of work that remains to fight fracking infrastructure and fight fracking outside of New York, Jews Against Hydrofracking’s dormancy is disheartening, but the lack of institutional resources coupled with an all-volunteer structure posed longevity challenges. The group did, however, work with partner organizations such as Food & Water Watch, which is continuing the fight. In New York, success was found through the work of a network of small, dedicated groups rather than through a single party. Jews Against Hydrofracking may have played an important role in the fight, but it was still a small role [151,156].

One might reasonably ask why larger mainstream environmental organizations that today support a transition to 100-percent renewable energy were not more vocal in opposing fracking. For some, the answer may be fiscal. The Sierra Club, for example, received more than \$25 million from the fossil-gas industry, mostly from Chesapeake Energy Corporation, over three years before the premier environmental group, citing the need “to leapfrog over gas whenever possible in favor of truly clean energy,”³³ refused further support from the fracking giant [223–224]. Many large Jewish organizations also remained silent, but for different reasons. “The Jewish community [mainstream] response to

33 The Sierra Club used “truly clean energy” because of the way that the fossil-fuel industry has coopted the term “clean energy” to include forms of gas and coal.

fracking was pitiful,” Liebling said in retrospect. “It was a combination of silence, apathy and concerns about energy security – and I don’t think the energy security concerns were the concerns of the mass Jewish people, but they certainly were the concerns of the people who run organizations like JCPA” [116].

Although Jewish activists in New York and Pennsylvania worked together at first, each battle became a local one. If, however, environmental protection is contingent upon having local protectors, then who is protecting remote areas? And who is protecting land populated by those who support resource exploitation? Indeed, while fracking was banned in New York, fracking has boomed in rural Colorado (Niobrara-Codell Shale), North Dakota (Bakken Shale), Oklahoma (Mississippian Shale) and Wyoming (Niobrara-Codell Shale) along with conservative Louisiana (Haynesville Shale), Ohio (Marcellus Shale and Utica Shale) and Texas (Barnett Shale, Eagle Ford Shale, Haynesville Shale and Permian Shale) [225].

Unsurprisingly, many of the Jews who fought fracking – including Goldsmith, Iser, Liebling and Waskow – expanded their climate activism over the years. Goldsmith moved on from Jews Against Hydrofracking after New York’s fracking ban, but using lessons from that experience – such as distributing leadership responsibilities and holding in-person meetings instead of conference calls to build community – she quickly launched new grassroots projects, co-founding the Jewish Climate Action Network in New York, the Jewish Climate Action Network in Washington, and the Jewish Earth Alliance in Washington. In a way, running and following Jews Against Hydrofracking enabled Goldsmith to successfully launch her other initiatives [151]. And for further example, Liebling and Waskow participated in a civil-disobedience “Pray-in for the Climate” at the White House organized by Interfaith Moral Action on Climate³⁴ [226]; Liebling and Waskow were arrested at an Interfaith Moral Action on Climate-organized Passover-timed protest against the fossil-fuel pharaohs – “Big Oil, Big Coal, Unnatural Gas” – at the White House [227–228]; Liebling and Iser organized a retreat for climate-change activists through Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light [229]; Liebling and Iser traveled to the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Tribe to express solidarity for their protests against the Dakota Ac-

34 Interfaith Moral Action on Climate is an all-volunteer group based in Washington; I serve on its steering committee and its board of directors.

cess Pipeline [230]; and Liebling and Iser were arrested in Washington while protesting in support of the Green New Deal [231]. And as fracking's rise propelled the United States to become the world's largest supplier of fossil oil and gas [232] (and the second-largest producer of energy overall [233]), fracking helped morph the push for extreme extraction from energy security to energy domination, an entrenchment of the perspective that the Earth exists for us to exploit rather than steward. "All of the forms of extreme extraction – fracking, tar sands, deep water Arctic drilling, mountaintop removal – all of those things are like raping the Earth," Liebling explained in the documentary, *The Ethics of Fracking*. "They are a violation of what our religious traditions tell us about the human responsibility to be good stewards over the Earth" [222].

Lastly, there was a difference in type of justification employed by each side of the Jewish debate on fracking. Whereas Jewish pro-frackers relied nearly exclusively on politically secular arguments around energy security, Jewish anti-frackers anchored their arguments in both the values of secular environmentalism as well as in Jewish law, tradition and history. To Jewish anti-frackers, fracking was not simply bad for the environment – fracking was not kosher³⁵. Jewish tradition, particularly laws regarding Earth stewardship, clearly is inconsistent with fracking processes and outcomes. But what about the Jews who have supported fracking? In relation to this case study, fracking may be like bacon – some Jews might like it, but it remains unkosher.

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35 Most see the Jewish laws of kashrut as only governing food; here I am using the term "kosher" as a Jewish substitute for "permissible" and in the vein of eco-kashrut, for which the term means "ethically suitable."

*Jewish World Service; and as a member of the board of directors of the American Zionist Movement and Arizona Interfaith Power & Light.*³⁶

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