

THINKING BEYOND IDENTITY, NATIONALISM, AND EMPIRE

A Dissertation
Submitted to
The Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Rachael Kamel
May 2016

Examining Committee Members

Dr. Laura Levitt, Department of Religion, chair

Dr. Rebecca Alpert, Department of Religion

Dr. Terry Rey, Department of Religion

Dr. Peter Gran, Department of History

ABSTRACT

This project explores how and why an Americanized form of Zionism became an effective movement in American Jewish life. In the quest for a just and lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, most scholarly attention has been focused on the state (and people) of Israel and the people of Palestine. As a result, we have focused too little attention on the role of support for U.S. nationalism in the American Jewish community in sustaining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I argue that a critical juncture in this process occurred in the early twentieth century, as the United States emerged as an international power.

Many of the early leaders of Americanized Zionism, such as Horace M. Kallen and Justice Louis Brandeis, began their careers as Progressive reformers and brought their ideas about social and political action with them into the Zionist movement. Brandeis in particular played a critical role in making Zionism acceptable to American Jews.

As this Americanized version of Zionism has become normalized in American Jewish life, the principle of Jewish sovereignty has become widely understood among American Jews to be an essential guarantor of Jewish safety. To understand the roots and implications of this stance, I explore the genealogy of the idea of sovereignty, as well as the binary opposition of “Arabs” and “Jews” in Euro-American thought. Americanized Zionism, I conclude, is less a product of Jewish ethnicity or religion than enactment of a commitment to U.S. nationalism as a fundamental aspect of American Jewish identity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In deepest appreciation to Laura Levitt, whose belief in me has made it possible for me to believe in myself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
FOREWORD	vi
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Nationalism, Sovereignty, and the Quest for Peace	1
Theory and Method	12
American Jews and U.S. Nationalism	16
Chapter Outline	26
CHAPTER 2. AMERICAN JEWS AND THE CHANGING HISTORY OF ZIONISM	38
Palestine and Jewish History	43
The End of the Era of Consensus	53
Enlarging the Compass of Discussion	65
Reconsidering the “Roads Not Taken”	69
CHAPTER 3. ZIONISM AS PROGRESSIVISM	97
The Progressive Era and Its Legacies	98
Horace Kallen: A Generative Thinker	103
The Pittsburgh Program	111
“Pioneering” and Settlement	115
Gender Trouble in the <i>Yishuv</i>	123
Conclusions	131

CHAPTER 4. LOUIS BRANDEIS ON THE “JEWISH PROBLEM”	134
Between Idealism and Pragmatism	134
Brandeis and His “Zionist Conversion”	137
“The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It”	141
The Balfour Declaration and Beyond	175
Conclusions	182
CHAPTER 5. ZIONISM AND CRITICAL THEORY	186
Introduction	186
Sovereignty and Secularism	189
Jewish Thought and Political Theology	199
Arabs and Jews	208
Conclusions	289
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS	264
BIBLIOGRAPHY	275

FOREWORD

I grew up as a secular Jew. Like many of my peers, I gravitated toward the synagogue world in my late 30s, as a way of strengthening my Jewish identity and impelled by a search for community.¹ A lesbian, a feminist, and a lifelong antiwar activist, I came to understand only in the early 2000s that each of these identities—or, better said, commitments—was heavily inflected with Jewishness.

Secular Jewishness, which flowered in the generation of my parents and grandparents, began to die away in my own generation—perhaps as a subtle aftereffect of the McCarthy period, or perhaps as an indication that the acculturation of American Jews had reached a stage where it was possible for many of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jewish immigrants to “forget” about being Jewish, even as we continued to enact the historical and cultural legacies of that experience. I am far from being alone in forgetting and later remembering many of the Jewish roots of my own identity.

I begin with these details of my own history because it provides an essential context for my current project. Despite more than 60 years of living as a Jew, despite spending a good 25 years committed to deepening my own understanding of Jewish

¹ The growth of interest in secular Judaism is reflected in David Biale’s Not in the Heavens: The Tradition of Jewish Secular Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). Also helpful is Laura Levitt’s “Impossible Assimilations, American Liberalism, and Jewish Difference: Revisiting Jewish Secularism,” American Quarterly (59:3, Sept. 2007, pp. 807-832). A precursor to each of these discussions is the classic essay by Isaac Deutscher, “The Non-Jewish Jew,” delivered as a speech to the World Jewish Congress in 1958 and later published in The non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1968).

culture and history, including Jewish religious practice, I still find it very difficult to “own” this experience. Jewishness belongs to someone else, with a different set of knowledge, skills, and experiences—but not, I am sure, to me.

This has more than a passing relationship to my own process of coming to affirm that I am a “red diaper” baby (slang for children who grew up in the communist movement). Because my parents were no longer politically involved by the time I was born, I thought for a long time that describing myself in that way was a form of conceit. Later, I came to understand that an integral part of this experience involves understanding oneself as part of a community that no longer existed—much like the secular Jewish movement that I (did not) grow up in. Such experiences of absence and disruption, I think, also serve as a powerful compass for collective memory.

What led me to this project can be best understood in terms of a series of wars, in Central America, Lebanon, and Israel/Palestine. I grew up in the era of the Vietnam antiwar movement, and I have understood each of these later conflicts in terms of that same basic template. (By contrast, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, so crucial in the “Jewish journey” of so many of my contemporaries, barely registered in my awareness.)

For most of the 1980s, I participated in local and national initiatives as part of the Central America solidarity movement, focusing on the U.S.-backed contra war against the Nicaraguan revolution, as well as the deepening violence and terror in El Salvador and Guatemala, both of which were also funded by the United States. As an antiwar activist, I believed it was my responsibility as a U.S. citizen to educate my community about the history and present status of U.S. involvement in the death squads and climate

of impunity in Central America. I sought likewise to raise awareness about how the United States armed and funded rightwing governments in the region, often in direct violation of congressional legislation that sought to short-circuit U.S. military involvement. Today, thirty years later, I see this as an honest, if somewhat unsophisticated, attempt to contest U.S. militarism and support local movements for national liberation. The politics and commitments at stake seemed to follow a direct line from the understanding of the Vietnam War I learned as I was growing up.

These involvements led me to become fluent in Spanish and, ultimately, to live in Central America from 1990 to 1995. I returned home with two decisions that have remained central to my life over the following twenty years. First, I made a conscious decision to eschew any professional involvement in work related to Latin America (my professional work over the following period as a writer and editor focused on “domestic” issues of immigrant rights, economic justice, mass incarceration, and the global economy). Second, I came to believe that involvement in my own community needed to be based in an understanding of my own political and social location.² Both commitments were grounded in my evolving understanding of my own history. Both,

² This discussion was introduced by Adrienne Rich in 1984 in “Notes Toward a Politics of Location,” published in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1986). Rich advanced this concept as a corrective to an ahistorical and Eurocentric understanding of the concept of “women.” A subsequent rendition, giving credit to Rich but also reflecting additional development of the discussion over the years, was Estelle B. Freedman’s “The Global Stage and the Politics of Location,” published in *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002). Both essays recognize the numerous challenges by women of color to the claim of “women” as a universal category, as initially asserted by the second wave feminist movement.

moreover, sought to reject a vicarious enactment of identity. Both moves, finally, grew out of my disillusion with (predominantly white) U.S. Americans who wielded their racial, national, and economic privilege in the unexamined belief that they were acting in solidarity with the peoples of Central America.

In 2000, my life changed profoundly in response to the beginnings of the second Palestinian *intifada*. Following my lifelong pattern, I joined with other American Jews, both locally and nationally, to build a new antiwar movement, focused on U.S. involvement in Israel/Palestine. Many of us sought to build relationships with Palestinian Americans and other Arab Americans, as well as Muslims of various national origins, with the goal of creating a multi-ethnic and multi-faith base for this movement.

Some of the lessons I faced were all too familiar, such as the role of the U.S. government and its military-industrial complex in funding and perpetuating yet another military conflict, with predictably terrible costs to civilian life and well-being. In other ways, this new juncture, however, was quite different from what I had encountered before, posing questions that this new antiwar movement was unable to answer.

I'll close this foreword by noting some of the questions that ultimately led me to this project. First, the model of "national liberation," which seemed to serve us in the 1970s and 1980s, has been exhausted—partly because of changes in the world scene related to the demise of the Soviet Union, and partly because of the inability of this model to chart a path toward sustainable peace and a livable life in Israel and Palestine. This brought into sharp relief the problematic nature of such concepts as "sovereignty"

and “self-determination” — once again, because of historical changes in the world scene and also because of the particular characteristics of Israel and Palestine, especially as these parts of the world are seen through the lens of those of us who are based in the United States.

Similarly, the alliance, or perhaps the identification, of the United States and Israel cannot be analyzed effectively with the established approaches of political science or international relations, because too many aspects of this relationship cannot be parsed in terms of rational or strategic considerations. As a result, I’ve found that cultural studies and religious studies offer far more powerful analytic tools. These are the disciplines that have allowed me to explore the role of gender, ethnicity, and racialization in the perpetuation of militarized violence, in which Israel/Palestine plays a paradigmatic if far from exclusive role in the world today. Such questions ultimately led me to think about what might be termed the secularized messianism that is encoded in the liberal nation-state and its enabling ideologies of progress and modernity.

Over the years, my sense has only grown that antiwar activism and solidarity movements focusing on Israel/Palestine are beset by questions that they are unable to answer and by social forces that they do not understand. This does not mean, of course, that scholarly inquiry can somehow rise above the toll of death, displacement, and destruction that we read about each day in the news. To the contrary, my deepest hope is that this project may help myself and others develop a deeper strategic sense of how to respond to such bitter and apparently intractable suffering.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nationalism, Sovereignty, and the Quest for Peace

This project grows out of my personal engagement with study and activism dedicated to the quest for a just and lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In my own case, I was one of many American Jews stirred to take action by the outbreak of the Second *Intifada*³ in the year 2000 by Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation.

As a newcomer to the issue, I was concerned to learn about the history of the conflict and of efforts to resolve it. From the beginning, I saw that understanding that history and its implications in the present was sharply divided by ethnic and religious loyalties.⁴ As a lifelong antiwar activist, I also brought my belief that civil society is a more reliable guide to conflict and its resolution than governments and their initiatives—a belief that has only been reinforced by everything I have learned in the intervening years.

³ “*Intifada*,” an Arabic term for civil uprising, is derived from a root meaning “shaking off.”

⁴ A useful account of the effects of such loyalties is provided by Jo Roberts in Contested Land, Contested Memory: Israel’s Jews and Arabs and the Ghosts of Catastrophe (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2013). As implied by the title of her book, she explores how the collective memories of Jewish Israelis and Palestinians are shaped by their understanding of history, which in turn shapes their visions of present-day realities and possible futures for both peoples.

After a number of years devoted to participation in the movement to end the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories, I began to feel the need to understand more deeply why it is so difficult to craft effective approaches to this issue. Many people I know, including members of my family, have decided such obstacles are impossible to overcome, and have turned away from a problem they believe cannot be resolved. For others, the cost of expressing critical views about Israel is simply too high, both personally and professionally. Still others have persisted in seeking an end to the occupation, despite their doubts that such efforts will ever come to fruition.

In my own case, I believed that a greater depth of understanding and analysis was called for urgently, and so I entered a graduate program in religious studies. The present project represents the culmination of that effort. In it, I seek to offer a reconsideration of Zionism from the standpoint of my own social location—my identity in place and time—as an American Jew, writing near the beginning of the twenty-first century.

I say this not to disregard the experiences and aspirations of Palestinians, whether they live in the diaspora or in the occupied Palestinian territories, or of Jewish Israelis, as they seek to build a more peaceful future for their country. It is my belief, rather, that political and social solidarity must begin with an understanding of one's own historical memory and the construction of one's own identity. In that sense, I would argue that understanding both Palestinian and Jewish Israeli experiences is necessary

but not sufficient—because an understanding that derives from a vicarious identification with someone else’s struggles is always incomplete.

Throughout this project, I have explored above all the question of how U.S. nationalism has shaped American Jewish identity. When Zionism began its life as a political and philosophical movement toward the end of the nineteenth century, initially it met with little support from most American Jews, as well as from the organizations they had created to defend their communal interests. In the World War I era, however, such attitudes underwent a sea change. In the early decades of the twentieth century, an Americanized form of Zionism was created and achieved broad acceptance—within both the American Jewish community and among key elements of the U.S. government and the broader society. This project explores the origins and impact of this change. Understanding this history can assist the growing number of dissidents in the American Jewish community, especially among younger generations, to see the relationship between Zionism and U.S. nationalism in new ways, as they seek to envision a different future for the American Jewish community.⁵

Such questions led me to begin by exploring the genealogy of contemporary notions of sovereignty. In the context of the current project, such a genealogical approach permits me to look in new ways at many phenomena that are taken for

⁵ The largest and best known dissident organization in the United States is Jewish Voice for Peace (jewishvoiceforpeace.org). For newer organizations, mainly representing campus organizing, see OpenHillel.org and If Not Now, When? (the latter is currently accessible as a page on Facebook).

granted as immutable, even eternal, realities. Similar questions arise with respect to the supposed enmity and binary relations between Arabs and Jews. I believe that unraveling these sedimented relationships is necessary if we are to imagine a different future for what is conventionally understood to be an intractable conflict.⁶ These questions have inspired this project as a critical theoretical intervention.

As I began to think about how to address these issues, I realized that I needed to begin by voicing an overarching critical perspective. It is my conviction that in many ways, we are having the wrong conversation in the American Jewish world—or, in scholarly language, that we are misidentifying our object of study, so that our primary focus of attention stays upon the state (and people) of Israel and the people of Palestine, and the various approaches they have taken to resolving the conflict that has held them in its grip over the past century. One result of the limitations of this perspective is the lack of theoretical attention devoted to the central role of the United States in sustaining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This misrecognition is broadly characteristic of relevant scholarly inquiry, particularly among scholars of Jewish Studies, and is echoed in much

⁶ A forthcoming volume by historian Kathleen Biddick, Make and Let Die: Untimely Sovereignities (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2015), offers an incisive critique of the contemporary discussion of sovereignty among critical theorists, focusing in particular on the many blind spots caused by their failure to take account of the continuity between medieval practices of sovereignty in western (Latin) Christianity and the putatively formative break that inaugurated the modern era. As a member of my doctoral committee prior to her retirement in 2013, Dr. Biddick introduced me to many of the key concepts and critical scholars discussed in this project.

contemporary discussion by journalists, social critics, and communal initiatives of every description.

By contrast, discussions of Israel and Zionism have generated an enormous and growing archive, from supporters as well as opponents of Israeli policy.⁷ What would it mean to bring the focus of such inquiries back to the United States—and the American Jewish community? For many Americans, both Jews and non-Jews, U.S. nationalism is so all-pervasive that it frequently becomes invisible to those of us who live inside this country—just as, in the words of the aphorism, “to a fish, water is invisible.” Relatively little scholarly attention has thus addressed the question of what has linked American Jews to our specific location inside the United States. Whether as members of the American Jewish community or as scholars of Jewish Studies, we may have widely divergent perspectives toward Israel and its place in Jewish life—but we assume without question that our relationship to Israel will not expose us to accusations of disloyalty as U.S. citizens.

⁷ For an illuminating commentary on the background and evolution of these issues, see Shaul Magid’s “Butler Trouble: Zionism, Excommunication, and the Reception of Judith Butler’s Work on Israel/Palestine” (*Studies in American Jewish Literature*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2014, pp. 237-259). Magid offers a helpful account of the evolution of scholarly appreciations of American Zionism in recent decades to contextualize his focus on current controversies involving feminist theorist Judith Butler. Not only is his main argument worth considering, the background he offers can help the reader understand what is at stake in the often heated discussions of Israel and Zionism.

This kind of latitude is routinely unavailable to Palestinian Americans and advocates of Palestinian rights.⁸ By contrast, such choices pose few risks to American Jews. The case of Jonathan Pollard is an instructive example. Pollard was convicted of espionage in 1985 for selling U.S. intelligence documents to the government of Israel. He was approved for parole in July 2015 after serving 30 years of a life sentence in federal prison. Significantly, coverage of Pollard over the years has addressed Jewish anxiety about being perceived as disloyal mainly by commenting on its absence.⁹

Nor do the vast majority of American Jews assume that identification with Israel calls on them to emigrate there, or, in the characteristic language of Zionism, to make *aliyah*.¹⁰ This differs in important respects from classic Zionist ideology, which does call on its adherents to emigrate. The Encyclopedia Judaica explains *aliyah* in these words:

Aliyah means more than immigration: it is a major ideal of Zionism and the primary means for its realization. It implies personal participation in the rebuilding of the Jewish homeland and the elevation of the individual to a higher plane of self-fulfillment as a member of the nascent nation.¹¹

⁸ For a recent report, see “The Palestinian Exception to Free Speech” which documents widespread and growing accusations of antisemitism and support for terrorism, directed primarily against students and scholars who speak out in support of Palestinian human rights.

⁹ See, for example, “Talk of Freeing a Spy for Israel Stirs Old Unease for U.S. Jews,” New York Times, 4 April 2014 (downloaded 30 Sept. 2015).

¹⁰ Literally, ascent.

¹¹ Louvish, Misha, and Fred Skolnik. “Aliyah,” pp. 660-661. Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2nd ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, eds. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. Downloaded 4 October 2015 from Gale Virtual Reference Library (galegroup.com).

Disregarding this imperative, however, was crucial to the emergence of an Americanized form of Zionism, as is explained further below in the chapter outline and in more detail in chapter 4. Significantly, the entry I have quoted above from the Encyclopedia Judaica, like many other conventional accounts, does not discuss the gap between the ideal of emigration and the reality of its rarity among both American and European Jews,¹² which has held true from the initial emergence of the Zionist movement up through the present.¹³ As a result, identification as a U.S. citizen, as an American Jew, as a member of the worldwide Jewish community, or as a supporter (or opponent) of Zionism, exist in a constant state of tension and indefiniteness. Key questions of sovereignty, citizenship, peoplehood, and the nation-state are thus left hidden in plain sight.¹⁴ Unpacking this conundrum has been a key impetus for my project.

¹² See, for example, Michael Berkowitz's Western Jewry and the Zionist Project (Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹³ Some observers make a direct relationship between the relative lack of immigration by Ashkenazi (western) Jews and Israel's promotion of immigration by Middle Eastern (Mizrahi) Jews, beginning in the 1950s. See the section on "Arabs and Jews" in chapter 5 of this dissertation for a fuller discussion of the emergence of the Mizrahim as an ethnic identifier among Israeli Jews. Key scholarly works on the issue include Ella Shohat's, Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), which is discussed in chapter 5, and Yehouda Shenhav's The Arab Jews (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

¹⁴ Collusion with the invisibility of U.S. nationalism, inside the Jewish community as well as in broader American society, may also be understood as a tacit requirement for being perceived as a loyal citizen—making it less of an innocent oversight than a deliberate and inherently politicized choice.

Outside the world of scholarship, civil society coalitions like the U.S. Campaign against the Israeli Occupation (endtheoccupation.org) and journals like The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs do question the place of U.S. military aid to Israel and the routine deployment of U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council (UNSC) to shield Israel from international censure sparked by Israeli violations of international law and Palestinian human rights.¹⁵ Such actions by the United States is particular to this issue; as Phyllis Bennis, a researcher at the Institute for Policy Studies, comments, “[m]ost of the U.S. vetoes cast in the Security Council in the 1980s and 90s, and almost all of those cast since the end of the Cold War, have been to protect Israel.”¹⁶

Campaigns by peace and anti-occupation advocates, however, seldom dig deeper in attempting to understand *why* the United States is wedded to such policies, or why such U.S. policies have generally been supported by American Jews—which perhaps explains why the anti-occupation efforts noted above have gained so little traction in terms of policy impact. This blind spot only supports my contention that

¹⁵According to an analysis of data from the U.S. State Department and the UNSC by the Jewish Virtual Library, between 1972 and 2011, the United States vetoed more than 40 resolutions by the UNSC that were critical of Israel. See “U.S. Vetoes of Resolutions Critical of Israel,” Jewish Virtual Library. Downloaded 4 October 2015 from www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/UN/sctoc.html.

¹⁶ Phyllis Bennis, “How does the US support Israel?,” in Understanding the Palestinian Israeli Conflict: A Primer. Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing, 2007. Electronic version published by the U.S. Campaign, by permission of the Trans-Arab Research Institute. Downloaded 4 October 2015 from www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?list=type&type=52#sthash.R1ROjUu2.dpuf. This primer provides a very accessible introduction to many issues regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

scholars as well as civil society organizations have generally failed to address the role of U.S. nationalism in perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most damagingly, the limitations of this approach have led some observers to conclude that unrestrained U.S. support for Israeli military policy is a result of Jewish influence, an explanation that can easily lead to antisemitic understandings of the contemporary scene, sometimes tacit and sometimes overt.

Pursuing these lines of inquiry has also led me to bring together the subfields of critical theory, cultural studies, Jewish studies, and American Jewish history. In general, the scholarship of Jewish studies and American Jewish history take the as settled the questions of sovereignty, citizenship, and the nation-state, and do not include them among the generative questions they investigate.¹⁷ By the same token, critical theorists seldom focus on the Jewish experience (least of all the American Jewish experience) in their explorations of nationalism, sovereignty and secularism. By placing the theory and methods developed by the latter side by side with the historical inquiries of the former, I open up new ways of understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as a defining—and urgent—experience of American life, particularly American Jewish life.

Grappling with this problem has also led me to argue for a shift in focus in both space and time. Geographically, this project explores how the American Jewish

¹⁷ A marked shift on this issue has begun to emerge in contemporary Jewish Studies. For a useful overview of this trend, see David N. Myers, “Rethinking Sovereignty and Autonomy: New Currents in the History of Jewish Nationalism,” *Transversal: Journal of Jewish Studies* 13:1, June 2015. Myers’s account, however, focuses on different currents in the European and Israeli discussion of such issues; many of the books he cites are published in the United States, but none address the United States itself as their focus of discussion.

community, through its institutional political role and the engagement of American Jews in their capacity as U.S. citizens and community leaders, has played a constitutive role in laying the foundations of intractable conflict in Israel/Palestine. I argue likewise that the most common temporal focus of attention on the World War II era, with its culmination in the foundation of the Israeli state, is misplaced. The Nazi Holocaust, which brought about the destruction and displacement of some two thirds of Europe's Jewish population, is unquestionably a world-historic tragedy. It is my belief, however, that crucial elements of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be better understood by focusing attention on the early decades of the twentieth century, and the interplay in that era among the American Jewish community, the *Yishuv*,¹⁸ and the U.S. government, and, more broadly, U.S. political elites. From its origins in the early twentieth century, Americanized Zionism has followed in the footsteps of U.S. nationalism by explaining and justifying U.S.—and later Israeli—power as both a historical imperative and a way of helping its protagonists, as well as their interlocutors, to advance their own social and economic development.¹⁹

Developments in the Middle East itself and among the European powers are, of course, crucial elements of this story—but they are not the only themes that need to be examined. This project will thus focus on the role of American Jews, working in concert

¹⁸ Literally, settlement; this Modern Hebrew term is generally used to refer to the pre-state Jewish presence in Palestine, particularly as populated by European Jews.

¹⁹ For a fuller discussion, see the discussion later in this chapter of “American Jews and U.S. Nationalism,” as well as Chapter 3 of this project, “Zionism as Progressivism.”

with the U.S. government, in laying the groundwork for what is most often seen as an insoluble conflict in Israel/Palestine. My goal is to illuminate an aspect of the origins of this conflict that has not previously been explored.

By undertaking this project I hope to address such questions as the following:

How has the Jewish nationalism asserted by Zionism interacted with U.S. nationalism?

In what ways do the pervasive assumptions of American exceptionalism, with its deeply seated historical and religious roots, serve as a bridge to Israeli or Jewish

exceptionalism?²⁰ What is the relationship between U.S. exceptionalism and Jewish

exceptionalism?²¹ When and how did the initial opposition to Zionism, which had characterized the American Jewish community since the late nineteenth century, give

way as a force in American Jewish life?

²⁰ "We're So Exceptional," an article by Canadian legal scholar Michael Ignatieff in the New York Review of Books (5 April 2012), provides a useful discussion of the role of American exceptionalism in undermining the efficacy of international tribunals, including the launching in 2002 of the International Criminal Court.

²¹ Tony Michels, "Is America Different? A Critique of American Jewish Exceptionalism," American Jewish History, 96:3, Sept. 2010.

Theory and Method

At this writing (in early 2016), attitudes and opinions within the American Jewish community are already undergoing a significant shift. Rather than simply documenting this shift in perspective, I believe it is important to explain *why* it is taking place, and how such changes relate to the overall credibility of both Zionism and U.S. nationalism. In the paragraphs below, I note theoretical approaches that I have found useful in deepening the discussion.

Critical Jewish Cultural Studies

This project situates itself within the multiple conversations of critical Jewish cultural studies, which, since the late 1990s, has sought to re-examine many central questions of Jewish history and Jewish identity.²² Broadly speaking, critical Jewish cultural studies questions whether the self-understanding of Jewish people (and Jewish communities) in different times and places is best understood in isolation, or by viewing both as part of many larger configurations, whose dynamics differ considerably in different locations and at different moments. It rejects the notion of an essential Jewishness, manifested across continents and historical periods, in favor of explanatory approaches that are both historically and culturally specific, an approach that I seek to follow in this project. As an interdisciplinary method, critical Jewish cultural studies

²² For the origin of this term, see Boyarin and Boyarin, eds., Jews and Other Differences (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

brings together Jewish Studies, with its focus on the Jewish experience (in my case, the American Jewish experience) and cultural studies, which, in the words of one definition, devotes nuanced attention to “the ways in which ‘culture’ creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations, and power.”²³

Two exemplary recent works of scholarship that combine Jewish Studies with post-colonial studies model the creation of such new types of connections, showing in profound ways how we are all implicated in one another’s stories. Aamir Mufti’s Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture²⁴ revisits the “Jewish Question” as a cultural template for what he terms “minoritization” in colonial India, sowing the seeds of conflict between Hindus and Muslims in postcolonial India and Pakistan. The “Jewish question,” sometimes known as the “Jewish problem,” is a term that primarily derives from European nationalism; historically, it has functioned as a rationale for antisemitism. European countries, particularly as they unified into nation-states during the nineteenth century, understood themselves to be “natural,” that is, to be a historically inevitable form of social and political organization. By contrast, European Jewish communities, whose existence crossed national and linguistic borders, were seen as deviant from this point of view, because they departed from this norm. From this perspective, Zionism may be understood as an attempt to “normalize” Jewish existence, by resituating Jews in “their own” country, in the belief that this would eliminate the leading motives for antisemitism. The classic

²³ “What Is Cultural Studies?,” Cultural Studies program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, downloaded 5 October 1915 from culturalstudies.web.unc.edu/.

²⁴ Aamir Mufti, Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

essay by Louis Brandeis, “The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It,” which is discussed in chapter 4, explicitly introduces Zionism as a way of “solving” the “Jewish Problem.”

Likewise, Michael Rothberg’s Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization²⁵ explores how anticolonial intellectuals during the Algerian revolution in the early 1960s drew on the memory of the Nazi Holocaust to illuminate the violence of colonial wars in Africa. Rothberg’s commitment to forging a multidirectional lens on history allows the reader to understand how the experience of colonial wars in Africa served as a template for the Nazi Holocaust, while the memory of the Holocaust, in turn, helped Algerian revolutionaries to make their case before world opinion.²⁶

Both works have served as an inspiration to me, not least by their successful creation of two-way lenses to interrogate key moments in modern history. Both, moreover, illuminate major issues in Jewish history by considering them in juxtaposition with important currents of postcolonial thought—abjuring more conventional approaches that consider the Jewish experience only in relation to itself. These works

²⁵ Michael Rothberg. Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

²⁶ In a chapter on Hannah Arendt (“The Limits of Eurocentrism: Hannah Arendt’s The Origins of Totalitarianism,” pp. 33–65), Rothberg argues that, despite her “unprecedented insights” about the links between the Nazi war machine and European colonial wars in Africa, Arendt falls prey to the “forms of blindness about race and colonialism” that were typical of her era, so that she is unable to see the two-way links between the humanity of Africans affected by colonial wars and the Jewish (and other) victims of Nazi genocide (see Rothberg, op. cit., pp. 37–38).

serve as a model for my explorations of sovereignty, nationalism, and citizenship in American Jewish life in the early twentieth century.

Israel-Palestine

Critical discussion of Israel-Palestine certainly exists in the scholarship of Jewish Studies, although, as noted above, it is largely focused on the geographical locations of Israel and Palestine themselves. Book-length studies of this nature include the work of Laurence J. Silberstein, including the Postzionism Debates,²⁷ a 1999 title that surveyed the work of the New Israeli Historians and critical sociologists, and his 2008 follow-up volume, Postzionism: A Reader,²⁸ which presents additional works by Jewish Israelis with a section of essays by American Jews.

Until relatively recently, Jewish Studies as a field has been reluctant to rethink the established historiography of Zionism, in which the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 is retrojected as the inevitable telos of twentieth century Jewish history. With Jews Against Zionism, a 1992 study of the founding in 1942 of the American Council for Judaism (ACJ), political scientist Thomas Kolsky became the first contemporary scholar to begin the work of recuperating the largely forgotten story of dissent from the Zionist

²⁷ Laurence J. Silberstein. Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture. New York: Routledge, 1999.

²⁸ Laurence J. Silberstein, ed. Postzionism: A Reader. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

consensus in the mainstream American Jewish world.²⁹ At first, Kolsky's book stood virtually alone in the scholarly world. More recently, it has served as a precursor to newer works reflecting the increasing diversity of American Jewish opinion on the question of Zionism. As discussed in Chapter 2, this shift in perspective has shaped the work of increasing numbers of younger scholars and has been manifested in the publication of new scholarly works that focus directly on this previously taboo terrain.

American Jews and U.S. Nationalism

Within and beyond Jewish Studies, studies of the place of nationalism in American culture often break the mold of the categories advanced to contain them. (In what follows, "insider" perspectives refer to how American Jews have seen themselves, while "outsider" perspectives refer to how Jews have been seen in the larger American discussion.) The three articles discussed below take the American Jewish community as their point of departure, but go on to make much larger claims about nationalism in American culture as a whole:

- Jonathan D. Sarna's influential article, "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture"³⁰;

²⁹ Thomas Kolsky, Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.

³⁰Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture," Jewish Social Studies 5:1 & 2, 1998.

- Eric L. Goldstein's "The Unstable Other: Locating the Jew in Progressive Era American Racial Discourse"³¹;
- Hilton Obenzinger's "Naturalizing Cultural Pluralism, Americanizing Zionism: The Settler Colonial Basis to Early-Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought."³²

"The Cult of Synthesis," the first of these essays, has earned its reputation as a classic of Jewish Studies. In investigating how American Jews have come to believe that "Judaism and Americanism reinforce one another,"³³ Sarna, a leading historian of American Jewish life, explores popular beliefs and material culture as well as scholarly discussions to make the case that the "cult of synthesis" has had an outsize impact on American Jews' understanding of themselves and their place in American history. In Sarna's eyes, such ideas have "represented more than a familiar exercise in group loyalty and patriotism. For some, at least, it also represented a bold attempt to redefine America itself."³⁴ Rather than representing the agenda of any single group in the

³¹ Eric L. Goldstein, "The Unstable Other: Locating the Jew in Progressive Era American Racial Discourse," *American Jewish History*, 89:4, 2001. Later published as chapter 2 of *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

³² Hilton Obenzinger, "Naturalizing Cultural Pluralism, Americanizing Zionism: The Settler Colonial Basis to Early-Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 107:4, 2008.

³³ Sarna, "Cult of Synthesis," p. 52.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

American Jewish community, argues Sarna, the cult of synthesis has “represented broadly shared ideals, embraced even by those who disagreed about lesser matters.”³⁵

In one notable example, Oscar Straus, the first Jewish cabinet secretary and one of the first presidents of the American Jewish Historical Society, “credited the ancient Hebrews with the first achievement of ‘a government of the people, by the people, and for the people,’ ” which “took place ‘1,500 years and more before the Christian era.’ ”³⁶ In seeking to understand the motives for such arguments, Sarna notes that “efforts to connect Judaism and the State sought to deflect, counteract, and even subvert [...] Christianizing tendencies,” thus “offering Jews a measure of reassurance [...] to neutralize the insecurity that proponents of a ‘Christian America’ naturally engendered.”³⁷ In the early twentieth century, America’s burgeoning Jewish population, growing through immigration from the Russian Empire and eastern Europe, had numerous reasons to feel insecure, including the social acceptability of antisemitism in housing and education, such as quotas for Jews in many institutions of higher education. One common response, as indicated by Sarna, was to rely on the culture and mythology of the U.S. Constitution and its refusal to designate any state religion, through the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. Although the motives behind the Bill of Rights had more to do with

³⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 55.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 55.

managing rivalries among Protestant denominations, the cult of synthesis allowed American Jews to resignify this constitutional language to their own advantage.

Sarna chronicles the role in extending and adapting the “cult of synthesis” of such key figures of early twentieth Jewish life as Horace Kallen, whose work is discussed in chapter 3 of the present project, “Zionism as Progressivism,” and Louis Brandeis, the focus of chapter 4, “Brandeis on the ‘Jewish Problem.’” Additional details of their roles are discussed in these chapters.

Overall, says Sarna, adherence to the cult of synthesis began to die away in the 1960s and 1970s, with the result that the synthesis ideal lost “much of its Jewish following,” which Sarna interprets as a product of “the divisive national debate” over the Vietnam War. As a result, he says, “Jewish expressions of patriotism markedly declined.”³⁸ Nonetheless, most American Jews continue to understand democracy and equality as core Jewish values, whose origins date back to the Hebrew prophets—a lasting legacy of the cult of synthesis, and an enduring feature of Jewish support for U.S. nationalism. Sarna’s essay illuminates how support for U.S. nationalism has functioned as an integral element of American Jewish identity since the early nineteenth century, embedded in a historical narrative which traces itself back to Christopher Columbus.³⁹

³⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

³⁹ Ella Shohat offers an alternative account to the American Jewish romance with Columbus in her essay “Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions: Columbus, Palestine, and Arab-Jews,” which is discussed in chapter 5 in the section “Arabs and Jews.”

Historian Eric Goldstein is also a respected figure of American Jewish scholarship; his landmark volume, The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity,⁴⁰ is an unparalleled study of the topic of American Jews and race. His 2001 essay, “The Unstable Other: Locating the Jew in Progressive Era American Racial Discourse,” first appeared in American Jewish History⁴¹ and is republished as chapter 2 of The Price of Whiteness.

Goldstein’s analysis in this essay is less focused on how Jews have seen themselves and more concerned with how Jews were seen from the outside in broader discussions of American national identity. As Goldstein notes, there was little public awareness of Jews in U.S. national discussion before the era of mass immigration from eastern Europe (1880-1920). Once Jewish migration began mounting, however — simultaneously with the growth of the industrial U.S. economy — “Americans’ ambivalent attitudes about modernity,” says Goldstein, “resulted in similarly ambivalent attitudes toward the Jews who symbolized its changes.”⁴²

Goldstein’s work offers an implicit contrast to Europe, where Jews have often been seen as the paradigmatic “other”; in the United States, where African Americans

⁴⁰ Eric Goldstein, The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

⁴¹ Eric L. Goldstein, “The Unstable Other: Locating the Jew in Progressive Era American Racial Discourse,” American Jewish History, 89:4, Dec. 2001, pp. 383-409.

⁴² Ibid., p. 390. Pages referenced in the following paragraphs refer to Goldstein’s initial publication of this material in American Jewish History.

and Native Americans have occupied that role, the image of Jewish people, according to Goldstein, has been more contradictory. During the heyday of scientific racism in the early twentieth century, enormous attention was devoted to enumerating America's racial hierarchy. Since Jews did not fit easily into the country's racial binary, depictions of Jewish people in popular culture as well as scholarly discussion were positive as often as they were negative. A common thread linking all of these discussions, observes Goldstein, was the importance of the reification of "whiteness" to America's national identity. Many of the examples he cites involve efforts to stabilize white identity in the country's rapidly changing economic and demographic landscape. As Goldstein explains,

[T]he exceptional efficacy of a white identity was rooted in the notion of "civilization." An evolutionary concept, civilization denoted a stage of physical and moral development superior to those of savagery and barbarism, associated in the United States with African Americans, Native Americans and the peoples of America's newly acquired imperial colonies. The fixation on civilization and whiteness provided significant psychological benefits to white Americans during this time of massive change.⁴³

In chapters 3 and 4, I return to the discussion of "civilization" and its role as a guiding trope of Zionism as well as the ideology of the Progressive Era more generally. Among Jews as well as more broadly, the discourse of "civilization" combined masculinism with both national and racial identity.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 397.

Toward the close of his essay, Goldstein discusses the response of American Jewish leaders to this complex and contradictory panorama. Aware of the “importance of whiteness to American national identity, as well as of their own problematic position in the country’s racial schema,” they focused on crafting “a social identity [...] that would not interfere with their acceptance as white.”⁴⁴ Although the social acceptance of Jews as “white” was consolidated definitively in the wake of World War II, in the early twentieth century, leading figures in the American Jewish community actively sought to support the identity of American Jews as white—positioning them as an integral part of the “civilized” portion of humanity.

Goldstein’s work illuminates the importance that leading American Jewish organizations, such as the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and, more recently, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, have placed on supporting U.S. nationalism, both to demonstrate their support for the growing U.S. role in world affairs and to embrace the role they were offered as Jews in extending U.S. international influence.

Most recently, literary scholar Hilton Obenzinger has weighed in on contemporary controversies about how to understand early Zionist settlement in historic Palestine and its relationship to other types of colonial settlement. Obenzinger, a professor of comparative literature at Stanford University, considers such relationships in a 2008 article in the South Atlantic Quarterly, “Naturalizing Cultural Pluralism, Americanizing Zionism: The Settler Colonial Basis to Early-Twentieth-Century

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 409.

Progressive Thought.”⁴⁵ Unlike the two essays discussed above, Obenzinger aligns himself with an oppositional view of the nature of Zionist settlement, identifying Zionism as a form of settler colonialism, a view that is questioned or rejected outright by many scholars of Jewish Studies.

In this article, Obenzinger examines how important Progressive Era thinkers, including John Dewey, Horace Kallen, Louis Brandeis, and Israel Zangwell, faced a double challenge: “to ‘naturalize’ the increasing diversity of European immigration to the United States at the same time that they argued for ‘Americanizing’ support for Zionist settlement in Palestine.”⁴⁶ As Obenzinger observes, both developments took place in conjunction with the rise of the United States as a world power. Following the 1898 Spanish-American War, says Obenzinger, the United States became the ruling power in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Guam. The “pragmatist, progressive thinkers” considered in his article, he explains, shared “assumptions about the ameliorative, civilizing virtues of colonialism, even as they objected to expansionist [U.S.] policies” and opposed the more regressive views of such figures as Henry Ford.⁴⁷ Most of the Progressive Era thinkers he explores, by contrast, “entertained visions of an

⁴⁵ Hilton Obenzinger, “Naturalizing Cultural Pluralism, Americanizing Zionism: The Settler Colonial Basis to Early-Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought,” South Atlantic Quarterly 107:4, 2008.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 651.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 652.

America of diversity, variety, individuality, and difference.”⁴⁸ Almost none of them, to be sure, included African Americans and other people of color in their vision of diversity; white supremacy and the color line were not among the values they questioned.

After setting this context, Obenzinger turns to the biblical roots of American national identity. From the beginning of British settlement in what would later become the United States, the settlers used the Hebrew Bible to assert a “covenantal relationship with God,” which allowed them to “seize the land as a chosen people.”⁴⁹ The “chosen people” motif also guided European settlement in such areas as Northern Ireland, South Africa, and Palestine, “each in its own particular manner.”⁵⁰ Over time, “these American cultural narratives of providential destiny expanded to include exceptionalism, Manifest Destiny, and, ultimately, the concept of the American dream.”⁵¹ Obenzinger is far from alone in highlighting the religious, even messianic, roots of U.S. nationalism; as I will discuss below in the chapter outline, making such connections is a hallmark of the approach of “political theology,” an approach to political and historical analysis that integrates considerations of political theory, religion, and moral philosophy. Obenzinger’s analysis, however, is unusual in spotlighting the common vocabulary of

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Obenzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 653.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

U.S. and Israeli nationalism, as well as the prominence of similar messianic formulations in other sites of bitter conflict such as South Africa and Northern Ireland.

From the beginning, says Obenzinger, Israel/Palestine has played a critical role in the development of U.S. national identity:

Israel and Palestine have had a special role in the construction of U.S. national narratives because of overlying religious and cultural imperatives arising from an American fascination with Palestine as the Christian Holy Land, particularly the theological and ideological focus rooted in Protestant doctrines. [...] Many of the earliest settlers [in North America], such as the Puritans, saw themselves as creating a new Israel in a new Holy Land, and their aspirations for Jewish restoration in the old Holy Land figured in their developing nationalist narratives as a “restored” New World, covenanted people.⁵²

Obenzinger includes additional details to illustrate how Progressive Era writers such as Horace Kallen and Louis Brandeis reconciled their support for the rights of Jewish and other European immigrants in the U.S. context with their advocacy of Zionist settlement in Palestine. In the early twentieth century, both initiatives worked together to become important elements of how the narrative of U.S. nationalism was being reworked by American Jews and other immigrant communities. In the process, the American Jewish population has selectively chosen aspects of key narratives of U.S. national identity that allowed them to bolster their identity as a “civilized” white population and an important part of the growing geopolitical role of the United States. At that moment in history, American Jews were concerned to distinguish themselves from supposedly

⁵² Ibid., p. 654.

“backward” segments of the U.S. population such as African Americans or Native Americans.⁵³

Obenzinger’s account illustrates how the growth of Americanized Zionism both paralleled and enhanced the social visibility and acceptance of the growth of European—that is, “white”—immigrants in American society. Together with Sarna’s account of the “cult of synthesis,” Obenzinger’s analysis illuminates how Zionism and U.S. nationalism have functioned over the past century as a seemingly seamless whole.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

By following the models discussed in the previous section, this study has been developed as a project of textual analysis. It joins together influential works from the early twentieth century—the era in which Americanized Zionism became an accepted and effective social and political movement—with more recent critical scholarly work, which has revisited and in some cases revised long-standing interpretations of American Jewish thought. It documents change in multiple registers: the emergence of Zionism as a form of Jewish nationalism; the evolving relationship of the American Jewish community with the geostrategic ambitions and initiatives of the U.S. government; and

⁵³ “Passing Like Me,” an incisive 1999 article by cultural theorist Daniel Itzkovitz, charts changes over time in what began in the early twentieth century as a triangulated relationship among Black/White/Jewish identity but was transformed by the mid-twentieth century into the “socio-literary phenomenon of ‘Black-Jewish Relations’”; see Itzkovitz, “Passing Like Me,” ,” South Atlantic Quarterly 98:1/2, 1999, p. 50.

the gradual and still incomplete re-evaluation of the eroding orthodoxies of Jewish opinion relative to Israel and Zionism.

In each case, I consider the relationship between Zionism as Jewish nationalism and its relationship to U.S. nationalism. I make the case that the early decades of the twentieth century marked a critical turning point for the American Jewish community. As the United States became a world power, American Jews sought to reflect that power and, where possible, partake in it. It was in this context that Americanized Zionism became an acceptable and, eventually, a normative aspect of American Jewish life.

Zionism and Israel, I argue, have less to do with Jewish ethnicity or religion than with U.S. nationalism and the interests of the United States in projecting its power around the world. Among Jews and non-Jews alike, support for both Zionism and Israeli state policies has flourished most when it has reflected the needs and interests of the U.S. government—and has faltered when it has not.

Chapter 2: American Jews and the Changing History of Zionism

Critical scholarship is always best understood in relation to its historical moment. The chapter begins by noting the relative stability during nearly fifty years of support among American Jews for Israel and its policies, following the foundation of the Israeli state in 1948. From there, I go on to explore the unraveling of this consensus beginning in the 1990s, a trend that has only grown more pronounced in the twenty-first century.

I begin the chapter with Jonathan Boyarin's "Palestine and Jewish History," the final chapter of his book Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory.⁵⁴ This book was largely ignored when it was published in 1992, in no small part because it was one of the earliest scholarly works published in the United States that considered the Palestinian as well as the Jewish experience. As has occurred in many cases, perspectives like Boyarin's that were unthinkable when they were introduced eventually became unexceptional.

Next, I continue with consideration of selected essays from Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews,⁵⁵ an edited anthology that features contributions from many of the most important American voices in Jewish Studies. This book was based on a 1993 conference with the same name, which occurred at the height of the expectations that were engendered by the Oslo Peace Accords.

A third section, "Enlarging the Compass of Discussion," loops back to consider some of the "forgotten" discussions about Zionism that took place in the World War I era, with examples drawn from journals of opinion of that period. As these examples illustrate, a robust discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of Zionism took place during this period, decades before the founding of the State of Israel. Much of this discussion became invisible after 1948, but is now being revisited.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Boyarin. Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

⁵⁵ Allon Gal, ed., Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996 and Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996.

The chapter closes with discussions of two important works of Jewish history from the first decade of the twenty-first century: Between Jew & Arab by David N. Myers, which was published in 2009,⁵⁶ and Zionism and the Roads Not Taken by Noam Pianko, which was released in 2010.⁵⁷ Myers documents the existence of a vigorous critique of Israeli state policies far earlier than is generally acknowledged; Pianko's work, meanwhile, reflects the current interest in revisiting debates about nonstate Zionism—a discussion that was eclipsed by the triumph in 1948 of a more statist version of Zionism.

Chapter 3: Zionism as Progressivism

The next two chapters, chapters 3 and 4, offer detailed explorations of the emergence of Americanized Zionism.

In chapter 3, I argue that American support for Zionism is best understood as an outgrowth of Progressivism.⁵⁸ By the early twentieth century, Progressivism had ceased to be an effective force in American political life. It enjoyed an afterlife, however, as the

⁵⁶ David N. Myers. Between Jew and Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2009.

⁵⁷ Noam Pianko, Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010.

⁵⁸ The vocabulary of the Progressive Era lives on the description of social justice-oriented movements or policy initiatives as “progressive.” Contemporary usage of this term, however, differs in important respects from the conceptual ^{framework} of Progressivism; many of today's assumptions about the nature of social justice have changed almost beyond recognition over the past century, largely as an enduring impact of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-twentieth century.

guiding rationale for U.S. efforts to become a world power. Many of the early leaders of American Zionism, such as Horace Kallen, Louis Brandeis, and Henrietta Szold, the founder of Hadassah,⁵⁹ began their lives as Progressive reformers, and brought their ideas about social and political action along with them into the Zionist movement. In the process, they offered invaluable ideological support to U.S. geopolitical ambitions. After President Woodrow Wilson brought the United States into World War I in 1917, most Zionist organizations enthusiastically supported his plan to make the world “safe for democracy.”⁶⁰ Reflecting the belief of their day in “social engineering,” Kallen, Brandeis, and other American Zionist leaders saw Palestine as an ideal canvas for experimentation—even as an opportunity to reinscribe the American Dream, this time, they believed, with greater success.

Chapter Four: Louis Brandeis on the “Jewish Problem”

In chapter 4, I focus on Justice Louis Brandeis as a critical figure in the emergence of Americanized Zionism. As Jonathan Sarna observes in “The Cult of Synthesis,” Brandeis is remembered as the “preeminent twentieth-century exemplar of American Jewish synthesis. [...] This veneration of the justice's memory is reflected, to a

⁵⁹Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America, became one of largest Zionist organizations among American Jews and established itself as a fundraising powerhouse.

⁶⁰The statement was included in President Wilson’s April 2, 1917 speech before a joint session of the U.S. Congress, calling for a declaration of war against Germany so that the world could “be made safe for democracy.” The complete text of his speech is posted at the History Matters website (Source: Sixty-Fifth Congress, 1 Session, Senate Document No. 5; downloaded 16 Oct. 2015 from historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943).

considerable degree, the cult of synthesis personified. He became a model for the ages, proof that a great American did not have to be Christian.”⁶¹

The chapter begins with “Brandeis: Between Idealism and Pragmatism,” offering some introductory comments about Brandeis as a historic figure. A second section, “Brandeis and His ‘Zionist Conversion,’” discusses how and why Brandeis became a leader of the American Zionist movement at the age of 58. A third section offers a close reading of Brandeis’s 1915 pamphlet, “The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It.”⁶² Originally delivered as an address to the Eastern Council of Reform Rabbis, this statement has been widely reprinted, becoming a foundational text of American Zionism.

Brandeis played a crucial role in making Zionism acceptable and even welcome among American Jews. Beginning with his text on the “Jewish Problem,” he asserted that the Zionism he was advocating was voluntaristic, “for such Jews who wish to go [to Palestine] and their descendants,”⁶³ but involving no imperative for American Jews to immigrate to Palestine. Also important was his role in dispelling the anxiety of Jews of

⁶¹ Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁶² Louis D. Brandeis, “The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It.” The text used here follows the Brandeis collection in the archives of the Brandeis School of Law at Louisville University, which includes no page numbers (downloaded 8 May 2015 from louisville.edu/law/library/special-collections/the-louis-d.-brandeis-collection/the-jewish-problem-how-to-solve-it-by-louis-d.-brandeis).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

that era regarding “dual loyalty”: as Brandeis states in this address, “[l]et no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with Patriotism.”⁶⁴

In “The Balfour Declaration and Beyond,” the chapter continues with a discussion of the evolution of Brandeis’s views in the interwar years, as described by Allon Gal in his 2012 article, “Isaiah’s Flame: Brandeis’s Social Liberal and Zionist Tradition.”⁶⁵ As Gal notes, by the time of Brandeis’s death in 1941, “[a]ll of the major factions of American Zionism [...] reflected Brandeis’s new synthesis”⁶⁶ of Zionism, which Gal describes as a commitment to “social liberalism” along the lines of Progressivism while disavowing any explicit support for socialism; support for labor rights within a context of capitalist economic competition; and commitment to “democracy” within a statist vision of the Jewish future in Palestine. Although Gal is describing Brandeis’s vision of Americanized Zionism, the boundaries of this political vision also could also serve as a description of modern Jewish liberalism.

Chapter 5: Zionism and Critical Theory

The earlier chapters of this project discuss Americanized Zionism from a largely historical perspective, focusing on the evolution of scholarly appreciations of Zionism in

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Allon Gal, “Isaiah’s Flame: Brandeis’s Social Liberal and Zionist Tradition,” Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, 11:2, 2012, pp. 207-220.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 214.

chapter 2, followed by an account of the emergence of an Americanized Zionism as part of the American national narrative in chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 5, meanwhile, takes a step back to see how contemporary theoretical approaches can elucidate all of these phenomena by looking at the idea of sovereignty itself: where and how it originated, what it has meant in modern political life, and the results of its adoption by the American Jewish community as a widespread, but seldom examined, aspect of Jewish identity.

The chapter's first section, "Sovereignty and Secularism," considers the groundbreaking work of medievalist Kathleen Davis in her 2008 volume, Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time.⁶⁷ Davis's work challenges conventional narratives of European modernity, not least by questioning their historicity. She describes the familiar account of a "Middle Ages" mired in superstition and clerical rule, giving way to a modern social order based on freedom and rationality. This entire narrative, says Davis, functions mainly as an origin myth for the nation-state, as well as a rationalization for the emergence of colonialism in the sixteenth century.

The next section, "Jewish Thought and Political Theology," is based on the 2013 edited anthology, Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology.⁶⁸ Kathleen Davis's critical

⁶⁷Kathleen Davis. Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

⁶⁸Randi Rashkover and Martin Kavka, eds. Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013,

discussion of sovereignty, modernity, and Europe's territorial conquests has yet to be taken up within Jewish Studies. By contrast, a lively discussion among scholars of Jewish Studies, focusing on the notion of political theology, was developed through a pair of events in 2009 organized by Randi Rashkover, beginning with a symposium at her home institution of George Mason University and followed by a panel later that year at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion.

The importance of this discussion is explained by Rashkover and her coeditor, Martin Kavka, as corresponding to two basic motivations: the emergence in the twenty-first century of "cracks in the marriage between Judaism and liberalism"⁶⁹ and the resurgence among political theorists of interest in German jurist and legal philosopher Carl Schmitt, whose work is summarized by Rashkover and Kavka as stating that "all secular politics of modernity had maintained the theological structure of pre-modern accounts."⁷⁰

The chapter's final section, "Arabs and Jews," discusses the work of three contemporary scholars who challenge the supposed binary opposition of these two communities: Ammiel Alcalay's 1993 study, After Jews and Arabs⁷¹; Ella Shohat's 2006 collection, Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices,⁷² as well as some of her earlier essays; and

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷¹ Ammiel Alcalay. After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

⁷² Ella Shohat. Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Gil Anidjar's 2003 volume, The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy.⁷³ All three of these scholars raise important questions about the idea of Europe as a geocultural location—and the effacement, in European history and identity, of the essential contributions of Muslim and Arab culture.

Each of this chapter's three sections illuminate how American Jews understand themselves and their "others." Conflict and enmity is encoded into our understanding of ourselves and our history, a process that shapes the entire enterprise of "western" culture, as well as the American Jewish experience. As a result, efforts to transcend the logic of binary opposition often fall short, not least because of the limits to our understanding of the shaping of these historical narratives.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

The concluding chapter of this study summarizes the key points discussed in the earlier chapters, with an eye to highlighting how they relate to current discussions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the search for a more sustainable future for the American Jewish community.

As a form of Jewish nationalism, Zionism in its Americanized form, I argue, is best understood in relation to U.S. nationalism. A critical juncture in this process occurred in the early twentieth century, as the United States first emerged as an international power. At each step in its evolution, Americanized Zionism has been

⁷³Gil Anidjar. The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

responsive to the geostrategic ambitions of the U.S. government and its political and economic elites. For more than a century, the acculturation of American Jews has thus been bound up with their support for U.S. nationalism.

Despite the vast changes in the American Jewish community since that time, one belief that has persisted is the idea that “Jewish sovereignty” is the chief guarantor of Jewish safety. This why I have sought to develop such a detailed genealogical understanding of the idea of “sovereignty,” which, as Kathleen Davis points out, emerged as a way of legitimizing European territorial expansion beginning in the sixteenth century, tied to a largely fictive ancient history.

The experience of most American Jews, like the currents of modern Jewish thought that they are grounded in—including such ideologies as Zionism or liberalism—encode key secularized, which is to say, naturalized, notions of Christian universalism, which becomes known as “western” thought in its secularized version. From this perspective, it is difficult to know how to parse the debate about the meaning of “assimilation” and its alternatives. One might well argue that the quest for Jewish sovereignty, as asserted by Zionism, is itself a form of assimilation, because it mimics the model of Euro-American nationalism.

My goal in undertaking this project, as I have noted in chapter 5, has not been to propose a new theory of sovereignty, but rather to trouble our understanding of such concepts as sovereignty, modernity, and secularism. What assumptions about these concepts are sedimented into their discussion today—often lying below the surface of

our awareness? If we complicate our understanding of history along these lines, what new visions might be unlocked, not only of the American Jewish future but also of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

CHAPTER 2

AMERICAN JEWS AND THE CHANGING HISTORY OF ZIONISM

From its earliest expressions in the nineteenth century up through the present day, the understanding of Zionism among American Jews, as well as of other forms of Jewish nationalism, has undergone a continuous process of change. This chapter focuses less on the history of Zionism and more on a historiographical analysis of how the narration of that history has changed, first as historical documents were released by the Israeli government in the 1980s⁷⁴ and more recently as overall support for Zionism has responded to shifts in public sentiment in both Israel and the United States.

Following the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, support in the American Jewish community for Israeli policy and for what some have termed the “Israeli narrative” of history experienced nearly fifty years of relative stability, leading more than a few observers to conclude that the existence of the “Jewish state” and its official interpretation of Jewish history was a settled matter. As this consensus has begun to unravel, however, increasing numbers of scholars have begun to revisit this history and propose more nuanced understandings—and, in some cases, outright revisions—of its meaning. Meanwhile, the documentary record of previous eras indicates beyond

⁷⁴ See Laurence J. Silberstein. “Postzionism: A Critique of Zionist Discourse,” Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture, 9:2, 2002.

question that debates and differences of opinion in Jewish life are far more typical than any such settled consensus.

This chapter offers a doubled appreciation of recent American Jewish history, tracing the changes since the 1990s in how scholars have narrated the history of earlier eras in the development of Zionism, particularly Americanized Zionism. As with this project as a whole, close attention will be paid to the early decades of the twentieth century, the period in which the ideology of Zionism acquired its characteristic American personality, differing in significant ways from the classical Zionism as articulated in Europe and in the *Yishuv*.

It remains to be noted that this account focuses specifically on American Jewish memory. The Palestinian experience is thus discussed in terms of its intersections and interactions with the American Jewish experience. It is not possible, of course, to neatly separate the experience of different human communities. As a matter of principle, however, it seems important to specify that my focus here is on the American Jewish community, as it looks out at the global scene and develops a sense of its collective identity—which, of course, is intimately connected with its collective memory of prior eras. In no way should this be understood as an indication that the American Jewish experience, or interpretations of that experience, are more important or somehow “truer” than the experiences or aspirations of Palestinians. It is my belief, rather, that this type of explicit recognition of one’s own social location, as defined above in the Foreword, is a necessary precondition of any effective expression of human solidarity.

This chapter begins with a discussion of Jonathan Boyarin's "Palestine and Jewish History," the final chapter of his 1992 work Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory.⁷⁵ I contend that Boyarin's work offers both an early and a paradigmatic example of the shifts that have gained traction in scholarly narrations of Jewish history, beginning in the late 1990s.

Following that, I consider an example of the scholarly consensus that existed on the eve of this change, commenting on Envisioning Israel⁷⁶, an anthology edited by veteran Israeli sociologist Allon Gal. This volume offers a useful snapshot of scholarly discussions of Zionism in the early 1990s, with contributions from many of the most important voices in American Jewish Studies.

A third section, "Enlarging the Compass of Discussion," returns to the World War I era, to revisit some of the "forgotten" discussions about Zionism that took place at that time, with examples drawn from U.S. journals of opinion of the period. As these examples illustrate, a robust discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of Zionism took place in that era, decades before the founding of the State of Israel. Much of this discussion became invisible after 1948, but is now being revisited.

I close the chapter by exploring two of the most significant works of history inspired by this focus on the early twentieth century, published by historians David N.

⁷⁵ Jonathan Boyarin. Storm from Paradise, op. cit.

⁷⁶ Allon Gal, op. cit.

Myers⁷⁷ and Noam Pianko.⁷⁸ Both books illustrate the contemporary interest in revisiting discussions of nonstate Zionism as articulated in earlier eras. The goal expressed by both authors is to offer innovative approaches to unrealized hopes for peace and reconciliation in Israel/Palestine.

Historical scholarship, like every form of interpretation, is itself an artifact of history, changing over time in response to unfolding events, intellectual movements, and the emergence of new historical actors. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 provoked an unprecedented degree of dissension among Jewish Israelis, as well as causing a notable impact on opinion among American Jews. Not long thereafter, beginning in the mid- 1980s, Israeli understanding of the founding of the state was shaken to its core by the emergence of the "New Historians," building on official state records that had recently been declassified. The first in a series of carefully documented revisionist understandings of Israeli history was published in 1984 (in Hebrew, followed in 1986 by an English translation) by Tom Segev, in his book 1949: The First Israelis.⁷⁹ The impact of the work of Segev and those who came after him, as well as public reactions to their departure from the heroic narrative of Zionism and the founding of the

⁷⁷ David N. Myers, op. cit.

⁷⁸ Noam Pianko, Zionism and the Roads Not Taken, op. cit.

⁷⁹ Tom Segev. 1949: The First Israelis. New York: Free Press and London: Collier Macmillan, 1986. A slightly later book, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-49 by Benny Morris (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987) is perhaps somewhat better known in the United States than Segev's pioneering work. Morris later repented of his identification with post-Zionism and the New Historians, and began expressing his support for the expulsion of Palestinians in 2004, describing it as a historical necessity.

Israeli state, is ably recounted by Laurence J. Silberstein, first in his 1999 work The Postzionism Debates,⁸⁰ which was followed in 2008 by Postzionism: A Reader.⁸¹ Both were edited anthologies of key essays and book chapters featured in such debates.

Next, in 1987, the First Intifada gave Palestinian voices unprecedented visibility on the world stage. This in turn has provoked wide-ranging changes, in the self-understanding of Israelis as well as American Jews, as well as the collective memory of both communities. Such developments have likewise engendered new intellectual currents within the scholarly world.

At this writing, the voices of Palestinian intellectuals and organized movements have continued to proliferate, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and inside Israel, as well as within the Palestinian diaspora. As before, the impact on American Jews as well as Jewish Israelis has been profound, affecting self-understanding as well as interpretations of communal identity and collective memory.

Over the past twenty-five years, official peace initiatives, most often conducted under the auspices of the U.S. government, have repeatedly fallen short. Into this vacuum, the Palestinian-led civil society movement for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), launched in 2005, has begun to gain significant political traction, occasioning many heated debates both within and beyond Jewish communities, as well

⁸⁰ Laurence Silberstein. The Postzionism Debates, op. cit.

⁸¹ Laurence Silberstein. Postzionism: A Reader, op. cit.

as outright attempts to short-circuit open debate. The U.S. academic community, including student groups, has become increasingly involved in such controversies.

Such shifts in public opinion, like the evolution of policy initiatives, provide an important context for the evolving scholarly discussion. The latter, of course, is my primary focus in this study. In the next section, I begin my account of how this process has developed over the past twenty-five years.

Palestine and Jewish History

The title of this section recalls the final chapter of Jonathan Boyarin's 1992 volume, Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory.⁸² The book itself attracted scant attention when it was published, garnering a mere handful of reviews. The reviewers' comments indicated that the book's greatest strengths also became its greatest liabilities, including its attempts to break out of the restriction of Jews and Jewishness to the disciplinary confines of anthropology and ethnology, as well as within the presumed subject matter of cultural studies. As one reviewer commented in The American Ethnologist, "Storm from Paradise complicates all commonsense understandings of history, catastrophe, loss, otherness, and possibility."⁸³ Likewise, in Modern Theology, the reviewer commented that in the "dominant schools of postmodern 'cultural studies,' the Jews somehow retain their alterity, either as the group

⁸² Boyarin, op. cit.

⁸³ Virginia Domínguez, "Questioning Jews," review of Storm from Paradise, American Ethnologist, 20:3, p. 618,

whose identity lies only in its otherness, or, to the contrary, as a group that is denied its differential identity among the cultures of the oppressed.”⁸⁴ Boyarin’s work, as these reviewers suggest, has been faulted for being both too “assertively Jewish” and, at the same time, too unwilling to separate Jewish history and Jewish memory from the experience and aspirations of other human communities, particularly Palestinians. For most outlets, simply ignoring the book and the challenges it posed to all sides was simpler than grappling with them.

The origins of Storm from Paradise lie in one of the earliest public debates between American Jewish and Palestinian intellectuals over both the content and the legitimacy of their disparate collective memories. In 1985, in an issue of Critical Inquiry devoted to “‘Race’, Writing, and Difference,” the late Palestinian cultural theorist Edward Said contributed “An Ideology of Difference,”⁸⁵ one of the earliest articles addressed to a scholarly U.S. audience to speak forthrightly about the special status of Israel as a state generally held to be immune to criticism, noting that “anomalous norms, exceptional arguments, eccentric claims were (and still are) made, [...] conveying the notion that Israel does not entirely belong to the world of normal politics.”⁸⁶ Said began by noting that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 “seems to have broken, for the first time, the immunity from sustained criticism previously enjoyed by Israel and its

⁸⁴ Peter Ochs, review of Storm from Paradise, Modern Theology, 9:4, Oct. 1993, p. 427.

⁸⁵ Edward W. Said, “An Ideology of Difference,” Critical Inquiry, 12:1, Fall 1985.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1,

American supporters.”⁸⁷ He then went on to document telling examples of the unique lack of sympathy extended to Palestinians by liberal and progressive intellectuals in the West, “for whom issues of tyranny, social justice, and the violation of human rights are supposedly central.”⁸⁸ The liberal intelligentsia, contended Said, routinely failed to draw comparisons between the Palestinian experience and other cases around the globe of repression and discrimination, comparisons that would be considered unexceptional if it involved anyone else. In the case of Palestinians, he argued, even the mainstream liberal press uses a palpably different discourse, as illustrated by this passage from Martin Peretz, then editor of the liberal stalwart The New Republic, who opined, in a 1984 review of a play at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, that none of “the universalist prejudices of our culture prepared us for its Arab—a crazed Arab to be sure, but crazed in the distinctive ways of his culture. He [...] cannot discern between fantasy and reality, abhors compromise, always blames others for his predicament, and in the end lances the painful boil of his frustrations in a pointless, though momentarily gratifying, act of bloodlust.”⁸⁹

A few years later, with the First Intifada creating headlines around the world, Jonathan Boyarin, together with his brother, Daniel Boyarin, wrote a response to Said’s article, also in the pages of Critical Inquiry, under the title “Toward a Dialogue with

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 56. Said cites Peretz’s column “Washington Diarist” in The New Republic, 7 May 1984, p. 43.

Edward Said.”⁹⁰ They start out by asserting their support for Palestinian self-determination, explaining that their critique was motivated by their desire for “increased mutual empathy.”⁹¹ With that beginning, they continued by critiquing what they consider Said’s failure to offer an adequately nuanced account of Jewish history and the many burdens of discrimination and antisemitism faced by Jews in Europe, as part of the historical background to the development of the Zionist ambition to create a Jewish state in historic Palestine.

In an acerbic response, Said sought to bring the discussion back to the Intifada, “now in its eleventh month.” As he noted, “[t]he daily killings of unarmed Palestinians by armed Israelis, soldiers and settlers, numbers several hundred.”⁹² Questioning why Palestinians should be tasked with remembering the costs of antisemitism in Europe, Said continued, “I would have thought the Boyarins’ reminder—monumental in its irrelevance to the suffering Palestinians—ought to be addressed to their fellow Jews, precisely those soldiers and politicians who are now engaged in visiting upon non-Jews many of the same evil practices anti-Semites waged against Holocaust victims who are ancestors and relatives of present-day Israelis.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin, “Toward a Dialogue with Edward Said,” Critical Inquiry 15:3, Spring 1989, pp. 626-633.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 626.

⁹² Edward W. Said, “Response,” Critical Inquiry, op. cit., p. 634.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 636.

In “Palestine and Jewish History,” Jonathan Boyarin attributes the origins of the book to his attempt to take Said’s challenge seriously. After briefly recounting the changing meaning of the name “Palestine” at different moments of the twentieth century, he turns to the question of why the political demands raised by the First Intifada have been overwhelmingly perceived, in Israeli as well as American Jewish discussion, as an existential threat. The Intifada, in Boyarin’s eyes, challenges not only Zionist ideology but also “Western conceptions of state, territory, and nation—in the long run, the idea that state power can be satisfactory repository and guarantor of collective identity.”⁹⁴ At the same time, notes Boyarin, the Jewish experience over the course of the twentieth century has likewise challenged the “modern European conception of the proper organization of polities,”⁹⁵ which in turn is related to the “image of nation as an integral collective.”⁹⁶ As Boyarin continues, “[i]f the Israeli state, once established, is implicitly understood to be a *static* reality dependent on functional equilibrium, then a threat to any of its parts (including its self-generated history) is a threat to its very existence.”⁹⁷ It is thus “practically and not merely theoretically urgent

⁹⁴ “Palestine and Jewish History,” op. cit., p. 116.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.118.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

for those interested in welfare of both groups [Israelis and Palestinians] to insist that the state is neither static nor a body.”⁹⁸

A particular aspect of such Western conceptions of the nation, notes Boyarin, is the notion that the “path to peace and universal harmony lies in getting each group properly *placed*, in the place where it belongs.”⁹⁹ He continues by noting that “[l]ong before the twentieth century, the Jews were explicitly seen as an obstacle to this goal”¹⁰⁰, giving rise to the generalized support among modern Western political theorists as far back eighteenth century for the removal of the Jews from Europe. In this sense, the emergence of the Zionist movement in the late nineteenth century both echoed and reinforced key trends in European ideologies of nationalism. Over time, as Boyarin notes, the “Zionist belief that ultimately there was no collective ‘place’ for the Jews was borne out not only by Nazism but also by the refusal of the Western democratic powers to shelter more European Jewish refugees while there was still time.”¹⁰¹ As a result, the State of Israel came into being “as a simultaneously willed *and* forced gathering of a patently reconstituted people with a multivalent relationship to imperialism”¹⁰² — “reconstituted” in the sense that early Zionist settlers hailed from a broad range of

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 121.

national environments, preponderantly in Russia and eastern Europe; “multivalent” in the sense that this population included both recognized citizens of existing states and stateless refugees, as well as activists who believed they could best promote Jewish well-being by playing the interests of Western powers against one another. What Boyarin terms the “statist solution” to Europe’s Jewish problem was “extremely convenient” to “the post-World War II heirs of imperialism” —so much so that “in trying to defend its moral logic” they are “compulsively led to deny the flaws in their notions of polity that contributed to the crisis of Jewry.”¹⁰³

Following these reflections on nineteenth and twentieth century theories of nationalism, Boyarin offers a rather schematic list of the “main arguments in favor of Zionist Jewish nationalism,”¹⁰⁴ of which the most compelling include the revival of the Hebrew language and the dynamic cultural development it has engendered.¹⁰⁵ By contrast, several of the “promises” he lists for Zionism seem questionable from a contemporary perspective, such as “the creation of a society based on noncompetitive agricultural production and love of the earth.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Although Boyarin does not mention this, one cost of the development of Modern Hebrew was the suppression of Yiddish and Judaeo-Arabic.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 120.

Next Boyarin continues by enumerating “the costs and inadequacies of the Zionist program as implemented.”¹⁰⁷ First and foremost was the cost to Palestinians, as “the people who inhabited the land that the Zionists desired”; here Boyarin notes that it was not until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 that he himself was led to question the “standard Israeli historiography of the origins of the Palestinian refugees.”¹⁰⁸ A second cost cited by Boyarin is the “repression of Jewish, rather than Israeli” national cultures, suppressing and homogenizing the “countless vibrant Jewish subcultures [...] that were imported to Israel.”¹⁰⁹ This process had a particularly dislocating impact on Jews of non-European origin, particularly Jews from the Middle East.¹¹⁰ A third cost is cited by Boyarin under the heading of “security,” noting that “forty years after the founding of the state, Jewish citizens of Israel do not feel physically safe,” a situation which “bars Israeli Jews from dealing with their Palestinian Arab neighbors.”¹¹¹ Needless to say, in the nearly twenty-five years that have elapsed since Boyarin penned this statement, such insecurities have only been aggravated.

Near the conclusion of this chapter, Boyarin notes that “[a]long with whatever benefits Zionism has brought, its destructive effects are all related to the disastrous

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 122

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 123.

¹¹⁰ For a detailed description of this issue, see the discussion of Ella Shohat’s work under “Arab and Jew” in chapter 5 of this dissertation, “Zionism and Critical Theory.”

¹¹¹ Boyarin, op. cit., p. 123.

concepts of modern European history, and in particular the attempt to ground collective identity in the authority of nation-states made up of culturally homogenous groups of citizens.”¹¹² For Jews and others who are unwilling or unable to relinquish such collective identities, “allying those identities with [...] the state is sooner or later disastrous.”¹¹³

What approaches does Boyarin recommend to balance the positive possibilities of collective identity with the demands of social and historical justice? “It is worth retaining a vectored historical narrative—a feature of the Jewish Bible that sets Judaism apart from the cosmologies of the eternal return—and the triumphalist conceptions of inevitable progress that is inseparable from the modern version of imperial European Christianity.”¹¹⁴ As he adds, “[t]he basic point remains,” that “interaction among Jews need not be based on all Jews living in the same place,” adding that “Jews need to exercise an infinite variety of ways to be both Jew and Other. Jews can only constitute themselves as such in relation with others who are both like and unlike them.”¹¹⁵

As regards the “corporeal well-being” of Jewish people, Boyarin argues for a “planetary, rather than a national or even regional, model of ‘security.’”¹¹⁶ Because

¹¹² Ibid., p. 126.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 127.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 128.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

“there is not a neat space available for the Jews, because Jews have only been able to attain their nation-state at the cost of [...] displacing (and thereby helping to crystallize the consciousness of) another nation, the Jewish experience turns out to be a paradigmatic example of the inadequacy of [...] nationalism.”¹¹⁷ In consequence, he concludes, “we should recognize the strength that comes from a diversity of communal arrangements [...] both among Jews and with our several others. We should recognize that the co-presence of those others is not a threat, but rather the condition of our own lives.”¹¹⁸

I began this chapter with Jonathan Boyarin because, as I have noted, his views were unthinkable to many scholars of Jewish Studies when they were first advanced, particularly in their integration of the Jewish experience with the Palestinian experience. Since then, both aspects of his views have achieved broad acceptance.

Next, I turn to the mainstream scholarly consensus on Zionism that had prevailed, as I stated above, since the foundation of the State of Israel. Although that consensus has certainly not been discarded, it has faced increasing challenges, from within as well as outside the academy—a turn of events that did not seem to enter into the calculations of the authors discussed in the next section.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 129.

The End of the Era of Consensus

This section focuses on the edited anthology Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews,¹¹⁹ which offers a useful snapshot of the state of scholarly discussion of Israel and Zionism in the 1990s. Edited with an introduction by sociologist Allon Gal, this volume is based on a U.S.-Israeli conference with the same title, held in 1993 at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, where Gal was then director of the institution's Center for the Study of North American Jewry.

Held at the height of the optimism engendered by the Oslo Peace Process, both the conference and the resultant anthology offered a platform to many of the most prominent voices in American Jewish letters. As many of the papers in this anthology argue, American Jews have supported a very particular vision of Israel and Zionism. In his introduction to this volume, Gal offers a brief history of how Americans have perceived and attempted to shape Zionism as a movement and also the development of Israel as a polity. As Gal maintains, American Zionism evolved as "complementary to American nationality and American Jewish communal existence," rather than seeking a "political substitute to group life in the United States."¹²⁰ The idea of Israel "as a new

¹¹⁹ Allon Gal, ed. Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews. Jerusalem: Magnes Press and Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996. Two of the contributions to this volume, by Michael Brown and Arthur Aryeh Goren, are discussed later, in chapter 3, "Zionism as Progressivism."

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 15.

and better society [...] was, in a way, the American dream coming true in a somewhat more favorable setting.”¹²¹

As Gal notes, the philosophy of cultural pluralism “has typified American Zionist thought since the early twentieth century.”¹²² Many prominent American Zionists “yearned for an Israeli model society,”¹²³ envisioning Israel as an “offshoot of a liberal compassionate America.”¹²⁴ A key document of American Zionism, the Pittsburgh Program, released in 1918 by the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) as a response to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, “barely reflected any nationalist sentiment,” emphasizing in its first clause “political and civil equality regardless of race sex, or faith of all the inhabitants of the land.”¹²⁵

In the years between World War I and World War II, says Gal, American Zionism began to shift away from its idealism, partly in response to the upsurge in nativism and overt antisemitism in the United States in the decade following World War

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., p. 20.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 22.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

¹²⁵ Ibid. The Pittsburgh Program is discussed in detail in chapter 3. The Balfour Declaration was a letter from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. The support expressed for a Jewish homeland in Palestine was inconsistent with statements by other British officials, offering support for Arab national independence in exchange for participation in Britain's military efforts against the Ottoman Empire

I, and partly in response to the emergence of a more militant nationalist sentiment among the Arab population of historic Palestine.¹²⁶ A new Zionist current, which Gal terms “survivalism,” began to overtake the previously popular ideal of Zionism as reflecting the “universal mission” of the Jewish people¹²⁷; by the 1940s, first in response to Nazism and then as the news of the Holocaust began to spread among American Jews, the ethos of “survivalism” and the idea of “Israel as an asylum-fortress” became the predominant note in American Zionism.¹²⁸

By the 1970s, what Gal terms a “synthesized version of Israel” returned to prominence in American Jewish sentiment. “The security and well-being of the state remained at the top of the agenda,” he asserts, “but the traditional expectation of an exemplary democratic society [...] was also revitalized.”¹²⁹ Successive political developments during the 1980s, such as Israel’s invasion of Lebanon and the first Palestinian Intifada, “have caused American Jews to look harder at [...] Israel’s polity and politics.”¹³⁰ Although the “mission rationale has been relegated to a minor position

¹²⁶ The emergence of Palestinians as a national or ethnic community is disputed among scholars. In his book, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2d ed. 2009), historian Rashid Khalidi argues that the modern sense of Palestinian nationality emerged beginning in the late nineteenth century, though he notes that a much longer history of the region is part of the cultural identity of contemporary Palestinians.

¹²⁷ Ibid, pp. 23-24.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 31.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

since the 1930s, the concern that Israel should be an enlightened polity has proven to be quite tenacious.”¹³¹

The lead essay in this volume, “A Projection of America as It Ought to Be: Zion in the Mind’s Eye of American Jews” (pp. 41-59), was contributed by Jonathan Sarna of Brandeis University, whose discussion of the “cult of synthesis” is discussed in chapter 1 as a key aspect of American Jewish identity. For American Jews, asserts Sarna, Israel has served for centuries as “a mythical Zion, a Zion that reveals more about American Jews than about the realities of Eretz Israel.”¹³² To substantiate his argument, Sarna focuses on three different examples from American Jewish history, drawn from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

Sarna’s first example comes from 1761, with a letter from the historic city of Safed in the northern Galilee appealing for funds to rebuild following a “devastating earthquake”¹³³ in 1759. The text of this letter “encapsulated in its language central images that Jews in Early America already associated with their brethren in Zion,”¹³⁴ with the latter seen as impoverished, suffering, and devoted to study. In each particular they were presented as the opposite of Jews in America, who were prosperous, free, and non-observant. “America, in this binary scheme, represented modernity’s lures and

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 35.

¹³² Ibid., p. 41.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 42.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

perils, while Israel symbolized tradition and suffering, with the promise of redemption.”¹³⁵

This binary opposition prevailed throughout much of the next century. As Sarna comments, “American Jews gave no thought to emulating the behavior of the Jews of the Holy Land, nor [...] did they imagine themselves returning there. Instead, Zion functioned for them as something of a counterlife: in conjuring it up, they caught a glimpse of a world that was practically the antithesis of their own, for better and for worse.”¹³⁶

Near the end of the nineteenth century, a different note was introduced with the publication of Migdal Zophim (The Watch Tower): The Jewish Problem and Agriculture as Its Solution. Although Sarna terms this “an unusual volume,” it actually represents an early articulation of themes that were soon to become central to Zionist ideology. Its author, Moses Klein, was a passionate advocate of “the movement to return Jews to the land through agricultural colonization.” For Klein, notes Sarna, “this was the only realistic solution to the problems of the Jewish people.”¹³⁷

According to Sarna, “Klein’s vision of an agrarian Palestine, a land where Jewish pioneers, inspired by patriarchs and prophets of old, worked productively, tilled the ancient soil, [and] revived the pure Hebrew language [...] represented an appealing new

¹³⁵ Ibid. , p. 45.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 46.

¹³⁷ Gal, Envisioning Israel, op. cit., p. 47.

image of the Holy Land that was beginning to take hold in American Jewish circles.”¹³⁸

As Sarna notes, this emphasis on the nobility of agriculture was “shared by many Christians, some of whom were simultaneously involved in establishing agricultural colonies in Palestine.”¹³⁹ Both groups were united by the ideology of “productivism,” the belief that “the only honest professions”¹⁴⁰ entailed the production of goods. This type of labor was counterposed to the decided lack of admirable qualities of commerce.

As Sarna notes, support among American Jews for the agricultural colonization of Palestine had been growing since the middle of the nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, the romantic image of the Jewish farmer had become a staple of Zionist iconography. Even those who did not support the Zionist endeavor agreed with the prescription of agriculture as a “Jewish panacea,”¹⁴¹ which would act as an antidote to antisemitism by offering an alternative to a life devoted to commerce. Here again, says Sarna, the “the Holy Land had come to symbolize something of a counterlife.”¹⁴²

Sarna’s third and final example focuses on the 1918 Pittsburgh Program, which crystallized American Jewish support for the Zionism and reinforced the intimate link between Zionism and Progressivism. This document extended the “utopian vision of

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 48.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁴² Ibid.

Zion” beyond “agricultural settlements” to a “full-scale ‘social commonwealth.’”¹⁴³ Not only social justice but also “social engineering” were “projected onto the landscape of the so-called New Palestine.”¹⁴⁴ Many Jews in the Progressive Movement of the day, “following the lead of Louis D. Brandeis,” then newly appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, “came to believe at this time that Palestine [...] could function as a testing ground for social experiments that proved impossible to implement in the United States.”¹⁴⁵

As Sarna suggests, the ideology of Progressivism had a decisive impact in shaping the nature of Americanized Zionism. The next two chapters of Envisioning Israel, by Michael Brown and Arthur Aryeh Goren, provide additional depth and detail to this account of the links between Zionism and Progressivism, and are discussed in chapter 3, “Zionism as Progressivism,” which focuses on the many interconnections between these two ideologies.

“Tangled Relations,” the final section of Envisioning Israel, includes five essays charting key changes in the U.S.-Israel relationship in the 1970s and 1980s. The first two essays, by Naomi W. Cohen, an emeritus professor at Hunter College and the Jewish Theological Seminary (“Dual Loyalties: Zionism and Liberalism”) and Jerold S. Auerbach of Wellesley College (“Are We One? Menachem Begin and the Long Shadow of 1977”), chronicle the many challenges to the axiomatic liberalism of the American

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 55.

Jewish community that had emerged in the twenty years preceding the “Envisioning Israel” conference. Cohen’s essay is unsurprising, reflecting her ultraconservative nationalist politics; Auerbach’s essay, on the other hand, offers a less ideological snapshot of the early 1990s, the moment in which he was writing.

As Auerbach notes, the declaration of the Israeli state was “followed by prolonged American Jewish detachment from Israel,”¹⁴⁶ from 1948 to 1967. Israel’s victory in the 1967 war, however, was followed by “impassioned identification” with Israel in many American Jewish circles. This situation prevailed until the election of Menachem Begin as Israeli prime minister, “which provoked a rising crescendo of American Jewish criticism of Israel that did not subside until Labor Party returned to power in 1992.”¹⁴⁷

In Auerbach’s eyes, “[l]iberalism enabled American Jews to overcome their minority vulnerability by submerging parochial Jewish interests in the greater American good.”¹⁴⁸ Begin’s rise to power, on the other hand, “sharply contradicted romantic American images of Israel as the land of muscular kibbutzniks.”¹⁴⁹ A more serious problem was posed by Begin’s presentation of himself as the global leader of the Jews rather than as the prime minister of Israel. A chorus of disappointment and criticism

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 337.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 337.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 341.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 342.

arose from liberal and left intellectuals, with Auerbach noting statements by such prominent figures as I. F. Stone, Arthur Hertzberg, Anthony Lewis, Bernard Avishai, and Thomas Friedman.¹⁵⁰ Israel's shift to the right, argues Auerbach, posed new problems for American Jews, as they faced conflicting loyalties—not between Israel and America, the classic conundrum of the early twentieth century, but between Israel and liberalism. The American Jewish commitment to liberal politics, considers Auerbach, “for so long a sources of identification with Israel, swiftly provoked their sharpened criticism of the Jewish state.”¹⁵¹

In his contribution to this volume, Steven M. Cohen, a leading figure in survey research on the American Jewish community, discusses the divergence between the published views of key intellectuals, as chronicled by Auerbach, and the available evidence about opinion in the Jewish community as a whole. In his contribution to this volume, “Did American Jews Really Grow More Distant from Israel, 1983-1993? A Reconsideration,” Cohen argues criticism of Israel reflected the opinions of intellectual circles but not of the rank and file, whose “attachment” to Israel showed little evidence of such controversies at the policy level. In an observation that accurately presages later developments, however, Cohen adds that survey research during this period shows a significant decline in interest in Israel among younger Jews, which he predicts would be reflected as a “gradual but persistent decline in Jewish support [for Israel] in the early

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 334-346.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 347.

part of the twenty-first century.”¹⁵² This change in attachment certainly accompanies the growth of political critique and controversy of more recent years. In Cohen’s reading of the available survey research, however, its cause seems to be both broader and more diffuse.

The final essay in this volume is by Jack Wertheimer, a professor of American Jewish history at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Wertheimer’s contribution, “Breaking the Taboo: Critics of Israel and the American Jewish Establishment,” profiles the development of a series of organizations that raised a voice of dissent from the uncritical vision of Zionism that became normalized after the 1967 war. His account covers four organizations that operated from the 1970s to the 1990s: Breira (1973-1977), New Jewish Agenda (1979-1992), the New Israel Fund (1979-), and Americans for Peace Now (1981-).

Wertheimer begins his account with the 1993 bid by Americans for Peace Now to join the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, an effort that was ultimately successful.¹⁵³ This effort “brought to public attention once again a bitter, often vicious, battle that had raised within the organized Jewish community of the United States for two decades.”¹⁵⁴ “Perhaps no other set of issues,” adds Wertheimer, “has provoked such intemperate mudslinging. [...] Opponents of the dissenting groups

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 371.

¹⁵³ More recently, the liberal Zionist organization J Street, conceived as an alternative to AIPAC, was refused entry to this conference in 2014.

¹⁵⁴ Gal, op. cit., p. 397.

have publicly cast them as traitors to the Jewish people, collaborators with the enemies of Israel [...] and a fifth column within the American Jewish community.”¹⁵⁵

Although Breira, the first such organization, challenged Israeli policy during the 1970s, more significant, in Wertheimer’s eyes, was its “rebellion against the leadership of American Jewry.”¹⁵⁶ Founded in 1870, B’nai Brith (“Sons of the Covenant”), is the oldest and largest Jewish communal organization in the United States. As the parent organization of two of the community’s most important nonprofits—the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Hillel Foundation—B’nai Brith became a key focus of the controversy around Breira. “As the employer of the largest contingent of rabbis associated with Breira,” notes Wertheimer, “the B’nai Brith Hillel Foundation was especially pressed to act” (402). From the outset, the ADL aligned itself with the opponents of Breira. The B’nai Brith at first resisted the ADL’s demands that it take action to quash expressions of communal dissent, with the organization’s president stating that the rabbis “participation [in Breira] in no way violated B’nai Brith policy.”¹⁵⁷ The vituperative nature of the continuing campaign of opposition toward Breira weakened B’nai Brith’s resolve, however, permanently diminishing its support for the legitimacy of communal dissent.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 398.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 400.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 403

Following the dissolution of Breira, a successor organization, New Jewish Agenda, was founded in 1979 by “disaffected members of Jewish organizations, refugees from the non-Jewish left, and former members of Breira.”¹⁵⁸ In its formulation of programs and positions, Agenda sought to bring together a political critique of Israeli policy with an affirmation of Jewish traditions. Its peace-oriented platform called for support for Palestinian self-determination, together with Israeli recognition of the PLO. Despite its careful attempts to participate in Jewish communal affairs, its gestures toward peaceful solutions evoked much the same response from more conservative Jewish voices, including calls to isolate Agenda in the hope that it would suffer the same fate as Breira. Nonetheless, according to Wertheimer, the group’s members were not “roundly attacked or ostracized, as Breira activists had been.”¹⁵⁹ As evidence of the greater success of its revised organizational approach, Wertheimer cites the admission of Agenda into “local Jewish councils or federations,”¹⁶⁰ in such locations as Kansas City, New Haven, Ann Arbor, and Santa Fe. “When it folded its operations in 1992,” he concludes, “New Jewish Agenda could point to a record of legitimization by the umbrella organizations of local communities.”¹⁶¹ The difference, Wertheimer notes, was due in part to “the greater receptivity of American Jewry to Agenda’s message regarding a

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 408.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 411.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 412.

solution in the Middle East.”¹⁶² The group’s effectiveness, in his eyes, was also due to its “far greater willingness than Breira to participate in the life of the Jewish community.”¹⁶³

Wertheimer’s essay concludes by discussing two American groups that have sought communal legitimacy by closely echoing the views of Israeli counterparts—the New Israel Fund, a small funding agency that focuses on “groups that embody its vision of what is needed in Israeli society”¹⁶⁴ and Americans for Peace Now, which operates as the U.S. affiliate of *Shalom Achshav* (Peace Now), a middle-of-the-road body that combines support for peace with a foundational loyalty to Zionism and the Israeli state.

Significantly, all of the positions that were attacked and decried as “outside the consensus” of the American Jewish community, from the 1970s up through the early 1990s, became normalized and legitimated almost overnight in 1993 with the emergence of the Oslo Peace agreements.

Enlarging the Compass of Discussion

Many historians and other scholars writing at the turn of the twentieth-first century have cast their eyes back to the early twentieth century, revisiting how concepts of the nation and nationalism, including Jewish nationalism, were discussed prior to the declaration of the Israeli state in 1948. The historical record shows a far more robust

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of Zionism in the decades before the founding of the State of Israel. Much of this discussion became invisible after 1948, but is now being excavated and revisited. Before turning to examples of this new tendency in Jewish Studies in the United States, I include some examples of such discussions 100 years earlier.

For a contemporary reader, one of the most striking features of this century-old debate is how timely many of the themes appear. In the following paragraphs, I offer examples from journals of opinion during the period just after World War I – one from the pages of The New Republic, and the other from Current Opinion: A Review of the World, a prominent journal of literary and political opinion, which was published from 1889 to 1925.

Many debates in this period concerned the compatibility of Zionism and liberalism, an ideological conundrum that continues to surface in contemporary discussions. A thoughtful example from 1919 is the article “Zionism: Tribalism or Liberalism?” by Morris R. Cohen, a prominent philosopher of the day, writing in The New Republic.¹⁶⁵ Cohen’s piece in TNR criticized Zionism as inherently anti-liberal, because it “rests on a nationalist philosophy which is a direct challenge to those who

¹⁶⁵ Morris R. Cohen, “Zionism: Tribalism or Liberalism?,” The New Republic, 8 March 1919. Background on Cohen is offered by historian Gabriel Kolko in *The American Quarterly* (Vol. 9, No. 3 [Autumn, 1957], pp. 325-336): “Cohen, who taught philosophy at the City College of New York most of his adult life, was one of the leading American philosophical rationalists of this century, highly critical of Dewey’s philosophical instrumentalism, and deeply concerned with legal theory, economics, education and the role of the scholar in society. Cohen emphasized principle, and few of his social criticisms escaped his concept of the role the search for true values should take in a democratic, rational society.”

believe in liberalism.”¹⁶⁶ Since the “restrictions against Jews” challenged by Jewish emancipation “have nowhere been completely removed,” Jewish intellectuals, he argued, are “peculiarly susceptible to the mystic and romantic nationalism which began in Germany as a reaction against the liberalism of the French Revolution.”¹⁶⁷ Such “idealistic Zionists,” he added parenthetically, “are quite willing to ignore the rights of the vast majority of the non-Jewish population of Palestine, quite like the Teutonic idealists with their superior *Kultur*.”¹⁶⁸

The year 1919 was critically important in Middle Eastern history because of the actions of the western powers at the Versailles peace conference. The victors in World War I aimed to establish a new international order, to be administered by the newly founded League of Nations, in the process reshaping the map of the Middle East. Under these auspices, the “mandatory” system was established to parcel out the territories of the former Ottoman Empire among the victorious European powers, redefining sovereign authority and reshaping national borders.¹⁶⁹

Also at issue in the Versailles conference was the question of the rights of national minorities within existing nation-states. American Jews had a sizable delegation

¹⁶⁶ Cohen, op. cit., p. 182.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ The enduring effects of political, biblical, and cultural maps and borders is addressed in Rachel Havrelock’s The River Jordan: Mythology of a Dividing Line (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

to this conference, some of whose members were advocating for the collective rights of Jews as a national minority in Russia and various states of eastern Europe, while others were advocating for the establishment of a Jewish national home—often termed a “commonwealth”—in historic Palestine. American Jewish opinion on the subject was deeply divided. According Current Opinion, “While the United States, the Vatican, and the governments of France and Italy “have all gone on record as favoring a Jewish State, the Jews themselves are far from being of one mind.”¹⁷⁰ Current Opinion cites a New York newspaper, The American Hebrew, a non-denominational journal of Jewish opinion, which worried that “the cause of liberty for Jews throughout the world has been lost sight of in Paris, due to the Nationalist agitation.”¹⁷¹ Many leading figures in the American Jewish community signed a petition that was delivered to the conference, opposing any such development as dangerously prejudicial to the rights of existing Jewish communities. Seeking to fairly present both sides, Current Opinion also quotes an article by a leading Zionist, Professor Israel Friedlaender of JTS, writing in The Century. Friedlander mocked the idea that the Zionists would establish a state religion, adding that the proposed Jewish Commonwealth would in no way “contradict the ideals of justice and liberty.”¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ “Cross-Currents in American Judaism: The Struggle for and against a Zionist State,” Current Opinion, 66:5, May 1919, p. 314. For additional information, see the ProQuest database, Publication 24217.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

Woodrow Wilson, of course, was unsuccessful in persuading the U.S. Congress to join the League of Nations. Partly because of this, post–World War I treaty agreements guaranteeing the collective rights of national minorities were never implemented, and the very concept of collective rights was eclipsed in discussions of international law for decades, until indigenous movements in Latin America and elsewhere put the issue back on the agenda of the United Nations in the 1980s. Nonetheless, under the leadership of Louis Brandeis, the Zionist contingent at the conference made important gains in framing the architecture of its eventual Jewish “commonwealth.” At the time, Brandeis and other Zionists assumed that the new polity would be constituted under the authority of the British Empire, which they imagined to be a permanent fixture of the international scene.

Reconsidering the “Roads Not Taken”

Many of the disagreements and debates that raged in the American Jewish community during the World War I era have re-emerged nearly a century later. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss two important works of Jewish history published in the first decade of the twenty-first century, reflecting how scholars of Jewish Studies have returned to some of these “forgotten” debates: Between Jew and Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz by David N. Myers¹⁷³ and Zionism and the Roads Not

¹⁷³ David N. Myers. Between Jew and Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2008.

Taken by Noam Pianko.¹⁷⁴ Both works reflect the continuity of current debates about Israel/Palestine with earlier discussions over Jewish sovereignty and the nation-state paradigm.

Myers, a professor of Jewish history at the University of California–Los Angeles and former chair the UCLA Center for Jewish Studies, has authored several well-received works on modern Jewish intellectual and cultural history. Pianko, chair of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Washington–Seattle, is emerging as an important scholar of American Zionism. In somewhat different ways, both volumes exemplify the return by contemporary scholars to earlier eras in the history of Zionism, as a way of elucidating the stresses faced not only by the State of Israel but by the Zionist project as a whole.

Both authors address the work of Simon Rawidowicz (1896-1957). As Pianko himself notes, Myers has played a central role in bringing scholarly attention to the ideas of Simon Rawidowicz (1897-1957). Born in Poland, Rawidowicz began his career in Berlin in the late 1920s, moving to London during World War II and then settling in the United States in 1948 at the age of fifty-one. He joined the faculty of Brandeis University not long after it was founded as a professor of Jewish thought, remaining there until his untimely death at the age of sixty. In the opinion of Myers, Rawidowicz has not received the attention he merits from the scholarly world.

¹⁷⁴ Noam Pianko. Zionism and the Roads Not Taken. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010.

As Myers explains, there are many reasons why Rawidowicz's work is less accessible to contemporary readers, not least because of his commitment to building a tradition of Hebrew letters outside of Israel. Moreover, says Myers, Rawidowicz's Hebrew style is idiosyncratic, steeped in literary allusions that range from biblical narratives to medieval philosophers, while avoiding many of the neologisms that emerged with the development of Modern Hebrew. More to the point, Rawidowicz's ideas contravened the tacit ethos of Cold War scholarship, which, as Myers points out, was an era of "a growing divide between ideas and action" (32).

While Pianko's book situates Rawidowicz as one of several Jewish thinkers concerned with nonstate (or counterstate) expressions of Zionism, Myers's text focuses on the attention paid by Rawidowicz to a single question: the treatment doled out after 1948 by the victorious Israelis to their newly created Palestinian minority (who had comprised, of course, a large majority of the population of historic Palestine until the creation of the State of Israel).

For reasons that, according to Myers, are not completely clear, Rawidowicz chose not to include this chapter in the original 1957 publication of his masterwork, Babylon and Jerusalem¹⁷⁵—perhaps, surmises Myers, because this chapter was likely to provoke enough controversy to overshadow Rawidowicz's main concern on Israel-Diaspora

¹⁷⁵ An English translation of Babylon and Jerusalem was published in 1957 by the Ararat Publishing Society of London, but is not readily available today. The epilogue to the original book, offering an extended summary of Rawidowicz's thought, was translated into English by Frank Talmadge and is published in Judaism, 18:2, Spring 1969.

relations. Now, newly translated into English by Myers with Arnold J. Band,¹⁷⁶ this chapter, “Between Jew and Arab,” forms the centerpiece of Myers’s book, representing the first time it has been published in any language.

By contrast, Pianko’s treatment of Rawidowicz focuses what Pianko terms “global Hebraism,” Rawidowicz’s belief that language and culture are a surer basis for national identity than political sovereignty. As such, Rawidowicz fits well into Pianko’s exploration of the largely forgotten traditions of nonstate approaches to Zionism. In the process, however, Pianko gives scant attention to two of Rawidowicz’s overriding preoccupations—the importance of an equal partnership between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora—or, in the symbolic language of Rawidowicz’s masterwork, *Babylon and Jerusalem*—and the dangers posed by the unwillingness of the Israeli government to repatriate the Palestinian refugees who fled their homes during the 1948 war.

Rawidowicz, as both Pianko and Myers point out, was a lifelong Zionist, committed to the revitalization of Jewish culture through Jewish settlement in Palestine (or, after 1948, in Israel), as well as the development of the Hebrew language. Where he differs from other Jewish thinkers, however, is in his refusal to designate one part of the Jewish world as the center, in relation to which all other Jewish communities are recast as a periphery. Instead, Rawidowicz spoke about the Jewish world as an ellipse, a geometrical figure with two centers. Writing decades before the emergence of such

¹⁷⁶ Band is an emeritus professor of Hebrew in UCLA’s Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures.

concepts as globalization or transnational communities, he presented no coherent political theory as such. His conviction was based rather on his intuitive conviction, that both Israel and the Diapora need one another. As Myers puts it, Rawidowicz believed that a “vibrant Jewish center in Palestine was a necessary but not sufficient condition for a flourishing Jewish nation.”¹⁷⁷

Why did Myers choose to unearth a document from the 1950s that had not seen the light of day for fifty years? As Myers comments in his introduction, “[I]ike Rawidowicz, I have become unsettled by the intoxicating effects of political power and sovereignty on the Jews. [...] I am drawn to Rawidowicz’s project of self-criticism, which enabled him to see that a major—if not *the* major—measure of Zionism’s success would be its treatment of the Arab Question.”¹⁷⁸

As Myers explains, Rawidowicz wrote his chapter less because of “reverence, compassion, and respect for Arabs than fear for the moral decline of the Jews (and the political consequences of such a decline for Diaspora Jewry).”¹⁷⁹ Writing in the 1950s, Rawidowicz was a living witness (and a vocal critic) of the deliberate truncation of Jewish historical memory about the 1948 war. To set the stage, Myers quotes Israeli historian Anita Shapira, who noted in a 2000 article that “the expulsion [of Palestinian Arabs], which at the beginning of the 1950s had been acknowledged as an obvious fact

¹⁷⁷ Myers, Between Jew and Arab, op. cit., p.3.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 17,

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 104.

of the war, was now transformed into a virtual ‘state secret.’”¹⁸⁰ As Myers adds, summarizing additional research published in Paris in 1959, “frontal discussion of the refugees was largely forgotten as Israeli public memory repressed the role of [...] Israeli forces in expelling thousands of refugees, ridding the landscape of traces of their presence, and denying them any prospect of return.”¹⁸¹ This suppression of historical memory, argues Myers, resulted from a “deliberate strategy by Israeli political leaders to shape the boundaries of the national memory.”¹⁸²

Between Jew and Arab, Rawidowicz’s recovered text, challenges this collective suppression of memory in great detail. As Rawidowicz argues, Israel’s Nationality Law of 1952 placed significant structural barriers to citizenship rights for those Palestinians who remained inside Israel. Moreover, he adds, such discriminatory laws “are insignificant compared to one major act of discrimination: the denial of repatriation imposed on the Arabs who left Palestine—or took flight from it with the outbreak of war.”¹⁸³ In response to the jubilation expressed by many Israelis about the departure of the refugees, Rawidowicz asks, “is this really a miracle for ‘Israel’? On the contrary, it is a trap. A snare that history has set for us, and into which we have fallen.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 106. Shapira’s article, “Hirbet Hiz’ah: Between Remembrance and Forgetting,” appeared in Jewish Social Studies 7, No. 1, 2000, p. 25.

¹⁸¹ Myers, Between Jew and Arab, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 145.

After devoting much of his career to fighting as a Jew for equal rights for national minorities, Rawidowicz was particularly incensed to see the acceptance within Israel of the same type of discriminatory juridical structure. "If it is not good for the state of Israel to have 'an alien national minority,' then it is not good for any country in the world to have a national minority."¹⁸⁵ As always, he kept his focus on the ultimate impact on the global Jewish community: "If the State of Israel is permitted to [...] cancel [Arabs'] right of property ownership and force them from their land [...] how easy would it be for the enemies of the Jews to justify the right to persecute the Jewish minority in the Diaspora?"¹⁸⁶

"Regardless of whether [...] Zionist movements acknowledged the reality of an Arab majority in Palestine at their inception," continues Rawidowicz, "it was impossible to ignore this reality in 1887, in 1917, and all the more so in 1948. The world knew of this reality and so did we."¹⁸⁷

Decades before the challenge by Edward Said with which this chapter began, Rawidowicz expresses a similar clarity of vision about the stakes involved. "The question of [the] refugees is not an Arab question," he states, "it is a *Jewish question*, a question that 1948 placed upon the Jewish people."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 173.

Noam Pianko, for his part, focuses on the early history of the Zionist movement and its relationship to various strands of nationalism in Europe and the United States. His book, which is based on his Ph.D. dissertation at Yale, focuses on the interwar period, when many contending versions of Zionism, as both an ideology and a political movement, were articulated and debated on both sides of the Atlantic.

Zionism and the Roads Not Taken revisits the work of three prominent American Jewish intellectuals— in addition to Simon Rawidowicz, he includes chapters on Mordechai Kaplan and Hans Kohn. All three, while known for their other contributions, are largely forgotten today as theorists and proponents of nonstate expressions of Zionism. The three represented distinct yet overlapping strains of thought, which Pianko characterizes, respectively, as national civilization, cultural humanism, and global Hebraism.

Contrary to the hegemonic narrative of Zionism, which depicts the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 as the overriding goal of the Zionist movement since its foundation in the late nineteenth century, during the interwar period, according to Pianko, “key Jewish intellectuals asserted Zionism’s mission as modeling an alternative to nation-state nationalism that would reconfigure the relationship between nationality, sovereignty, and international politics,” thus rendering their work an “untapped resource” for “expanding conceptual possibilities for Zionism and Jewish peoplehood.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Pianko, Roads Not Taken, op. cit., p. 3.

Pianko argues persuasively that the interwar period was significant because in the years following World War I “radical reorganization of global political structures seemed possible,” whereas after World War II the “nation-state paradigm became dominant.”¹⁹⁰ Focusing on this period thus permits Pianko to consider the results, historically and theoretically, of the fusing of the concepts of nation and state. Pianko’s goal in this book is to reinscribe the work of these three thinkers as contributions to Jewish political thought, as well as considering what their work might offer to contemporary global discussions regarding difference and the continuing dominance of the nation-state.

The thinkers included in Zionism and the Roads Not Taken were committed to theorizing Jewish identity while “eschewing the binary choices—homeland versus diaspora, political autonomy versus individual assimilation, and ties based on consent versus descent.”¹⁹¹ During their lives, however, all three thinkers “moved from the center of Zionist thought and action to being ideological outliers”¹⁹²—not because their ideas changed, but because “Zionism left them outside its evolving ideological parameters.”¹⁹³ Nonetheless, their work illuminates “the breaks, and more important, the surprising continuities between early twentieth-century efforts to conceptualize the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁹² Ibid., p.5.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

boundaries of the Jewish nation as distinct from national sovereignty and twenty-first century debates about identity in an era increasingly characterized by multiculturalism, transnational solidarity, and minority rights.”¹⁹⁴

In order to situate these three men in their contemporary milieu, Pianko describes their most important mentors, including Ahad Ha’am (Hebrew for “a man of the people,” the pen name of Asher Ginsberg [1856-1927]), and Martin Buber (1878-1965), leading proponents of cultural or “homeland” Zionism, as well as Russian historian Simon Dubnow, the originator of “autonomism,” a deterritorialized form of diasporism.¹⁹⁵ Ahad Ha’am and his followers advocated Jewish settlement in Palestine as a way of creating a new center for global Jewish life that would revitalize, rather than replacing, the dispersed communities of the diaspora. Also noted are several of these men’s key “conversation partners,” including American Zionist activists and theoreticians Horace Kallen, Judah Magnes, and Israel Friedlaender.¹⁹⁶ Less well-known today, but equally important to Pianko’s subjects, is Sir Alfred Zimmern, a leading figure in a British school of this period known as “internationalism.”¹⁹⁷ With the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 8. The origins of the three men reflected the diverse European roots of Jewish intellectuals of their period. Two were born in imperial Russia: Asher Ginsberg (Ahad Ha’am) was born near Kiev (today’s Ukraine), while Simon Dubnow hailed from Belarussia (today’s Belarus). Martin Buber was born in Germany, where he lived until he was denationalized in 1938 by the Nazis, who denied him entry after a trip to the *Yishuv*.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

exception of Dubnow, all of these figures identified themselves as Zionists. All of them, including Dubnow, share a critical perspective on the nation-state and its ancillary doctrines of national sovereignty and self-determination, which ultimately became the normative building blocks of international relations in the period after World War II.

Pianko demonstrates that such terms as “nationality” and “Jewish nationalism” possessed a notably different valence in the interwar years, often exemplifying what Pianko (following historian Rogers Brubaker) terms “counterstate” ideologies — “formulations that are ‘distinct from or in opposition to an existing state.’”¹⁹⁸ More recently, Pianko avers, contemporary scholarship has “dramatically expanded the definition of nationality to include non-statist expressions.”¹⁹⁹ As Pianko argues, “[s]ingling out the yearning for political self-determination as the primary historical or normative criterion for defining nationality fails to capture the historical diversity, psychological reality, or social networks that characterize national ties.”²⁰⁰ By contrast, distinguishing “state-framed” and “counterstate” understandings of nationalism “points the way toward rethinking historical approaches to Jewish political thought,”²⁰¹ which

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

has viewed “ideological and practical expressions of Jewish nationality” through the exclusive lens of its “state-seeking” proponents.²⁰²

The early Zionists discussed by Pianko positioned themselves as “opposed to the homogenizing effects of nation-state nationalism for ethnoreligious conformity.”²⁰³

Pianko aims to recuperate the “continuum of positions” in prestate ideologies “that regularly crossed what would now be regarded as ideologically incompatible positions,” blurring the “boundaries between Zionism and diaspora nationalism”²⁰⁴ and providing a basis for “Zionism’s challenge to state-seeking nationalism.”²⁰⁵ For these thinkers, “neither civic nor ethnic typologies,” when applied to the Jewish experience, “constituted a viable basis of Jewish collective solidarity.”²⁰⁶ Their ideas thus cannot be accurately understood by adopting the categories of mainstream political theory, which continues to posit a binary opposition between individual rights and ethnoreligious solidarity. The subjects of Zionism and the Roads Not Taken, Pianko believes, “attempted to create a trajectory of modernity that valued difference as the step beyond unity.”²⁰⁷ Thus, “only by [...] inserting diversity as the sine qua non of universal

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 16.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

harmony could Jewish nationalists justify their demands for collective recognition.”²⁰⁸

For strategic reasons, these thinkers felt obliged to frame their ideas “within existing categories of identity,” in large part because they “intended their arguments about Jewish collective cohesion—with its distinct confluence of religion, race, history, and homelessness—to serve as a universal model”²⁰⁹ for both Jews and non-Jews (Note that “homelessness” as used in this context is best understood as a synonym for statelessness.)

Pianko’s discussion of Jewish nationalism likewise shows that the usual rendition of political and cultural Zionism as contending ideologies also requires nuancing, if not outright reconsideration. Although the non-statist Zionists discussed in Zionism and the Roads Not Taken referred to themselves as “cultural Zionists” (following the lead of Ahad Ha’am), that does not mean that they were not political thinkers. As Pianko notes, “the association of national politics with the apparatus of the state [...] presumes that concepts of Zionism that prioritized cultural, spiritual, or religious revival had little relevance for political questions.”²¹⁰ Many of the followers of Ahad Ha’am, however, saw his theory of nationalism as a “direct challenge to state-seeking nationalism.”²¹¹ In this sense, non-statist Zionism was eminently political.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

²¹¹ Ibid.

At the close of his book's introductory chapter, "Breaking the Sovereign Mold," Pianko underlines the implications of his project for reconceptualizing the Jewish future. The statist Zionism that ultimately prevailed, he argues, "continues to limit possibilities for Jewish peoplehood."²¹² Pianko thus advocates "reopening conversations long ago frozen as taboo subjects" by "debating foundations of Jewish peoplehood that escape the logic of the sovereign mold."²¹³ Such an approach, he believes, offers the promise of redefining the people of Israel (*Am Yisroel*) for the twenty-first century as a group that exists across national borders and boundaries—and thus breaking through the "highly charged" conversation in the Jewish community between "activists denouncing Zionism and Jewish statehood as 'anachronistic' and the persisting unwillingness among Israel advocates to question the centrality of the state."²¹⁴ Beyond its significance for Jewish conversations, moreover, these "roads not taken" could offer valuable examples for other diasporic communities wrestling with similar problems, given that "globalization has fueled the preservation of particular allegiances within and across state boundaries."²¹⁵

Pianko begins his second chapter, "Sovereignty Is International Anarchy," by recounting Horace Kallen's "vehement" objections to the principle of "national self-

²¹² Ibid., p. 24.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.,

determination,” the U.S. position at the Versailles Conference that ended World War I.²¹⁶

In his statements at the time, Kallen asserted sources in the Jewish tradition for

“promoting the coexistence of diverse national groups within a single polity.”²¹⁷ As

Pianko comments, Kallen’s counterstate mode of Zionism was “not atypical” for

American or European Jewish thinkers in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Pianko offers a rich discussion of counterstate nationalism in the interwar years,

expressing his interest in setting “the historical and intellectual backdrop” for the

discussion in the following chapters of his principal subjects, who he describes as “three

of the most sophisticated expressions of interwar, counterstate Zionism.”²¹⁸ To this end,

he focuses in his second chapter on “a few zones of contact” that “demonstrate the

interconnectedness of Jewish and non-Jewish efforts to reject self-determination as the

template for nationalism.”²¹⁹ Significantly, Jewish thought in this era was influenced not

only by the Jewish textual tradition but also by “formulations of a multinational state” in

such areas as “late imperial Russia, national cultural autonomy within the Austro-

Hungarian Empire, British internationalism, and American cultural pluralism.”²²⁰

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

²²⁰ Ibid.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, scholar and American Zionist Israel Friedlaender had advocated drawing a clear distinction “between state and nationality, as has long been done with regard to state and religion.”²²¹ This stance allowed Jewish thinkers to resist “the totalizing claims of national sovereignty,” by “developing a theoretical distinction between organic bonds of national solidarity and the patriotic ties of citizens to the state.”²²² Calls for the recognition of “collective rights within the framework of the state,” notes Pianko, preceded World War I, as a strategy for managing the “ethnonational rifts” of the diverse populations of Central and Eastern Europe.²²³ The separation of nation and state also appealed to Jewish historian Simon Dubnow, for the support it would lend to his “comprehensive theory of Jewish nationalism,”²²⁴ that is, autonomism.

Beyond the Jewish community, meanwhile, Sir Alfred Zimmern advocated “liberal internationalism,” which he saw as an “antidote to the militarism and belligerent nationalism engendered by national sovereignty.”²²⁵ In Zimmern’s eyes, the alternative to a sovereign nation-state was the “creation of a ‘federation of nationalities’

²²¹ Ibid., p. 37.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 40.

or the establishment of a 'commonwealth.'" ²²⁶ Zimmern, Pianko notes, was sympathetic to Zionism, which he saw as an expression of his partly Jewish descent.

In a 1915 article, "Zionism and the Struggle for Democracy," Kallen sought to give a Jewish pedigree to his support for internationalism (the British version advocated by Zimmern); in Kallen's words, "'Zionism asserted the prophetic ideal of internationalism as a democratic and cooperative federation of nationalities.'" ²²⁷ Through influential articles like this one, Kallen introduced Zimmern's ideas to a number of Jewish thinkers, particularly Mordechai Kaplan.

Overall, the engagement of Kallen and other Jewish thinkers with "multinationalism, internationalism, and cultural pluralism" illustrated "a global phenomenon of synthesizing Jewish political thought with theories of nationalism opposed to national sovereignty." ²²⁸ As Pianko notes, a "common strategy for developing a collective identity between the poles of assimilation and autonomy" was the attempt to adopt, while seeking to resignify, "terms associated with German Romanticism, such as 'idea', 'spirit', and 'culture'" as a way of describing "the ties that bind Jews to one another." ²²⁹ As Pianko notes, however, this gambit fell prey to the inherent contradictions of its vocabulary. "The essentialist rhetoric of terms such as

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 41,

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

spirit,” he concedes, “was associated with the very theories of nationalism whose emphasis on descent and blood prevented the possibility of integration for minority populations.”²³⁰

As the interwar period drew to a close, conditions in the *Yishuv* became increasingly difficult, as “Arab voices began to challenge Jewish immigration and to assert their own demands for national recognition.”²³¹ Partly as a result of emerging hostilities on the ground, Pianko’s three subjects “grew increasingly disillusioned with Zionism; at the same time, Zionist ideology grew increasingly less open to counterstate visions of nationalism.”²³²

Although the delinking of nation and state failed to flourish after this time, Pianko concludes his second chapter by noting that “Jewish thinkers identified persisting weaknesses in the doctrine of national sovereignty,” particularly in terms of its limitations in “recognizing and understanding [...] multiple identities, including ties that bind stateless, diaspora, or transnational populations.”²³³

In his closing chapter, “Zionism, Jewish Peoplehood, and the Dilemmas of Nationality in a Global Era,” Pianko notes that the establishment of Israel as a nation-state eclipsed the hopes that “Zionism would introduce a radically different model of

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 58.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid., p. 59.

nationalism.”²³⁴ Not only did the founding of Israel gain broad support as a response to the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust, it also was bolstered by the emerging Cold War, through which “[s]tates, supported by one of two superpowers, exerted political control over their own populations and muffled the nationalist claims of ethnic minorities.”²³⁵ American Jews welcomed nation-state logic, which corresponded to their interest in “denationalizing Jewish identity” as well as asserting their experience as parallel to “those of other [white] immigrant groups.”²³⁶ “Echoing the rhetoric of Israel as homeland—despite the obvious fact that the vast majority of Jews had emigrated from European countries rather than from Palestine—bolstered the American-Jewish synthesis by facilitating the construction of an ethnic identity based on a homeland.”²³⁷ As a result, the legacies of Kaplan and Kohn were “erased or domesticated” and “cleaned up and reshaped” to fit “rigid categories of Zionism and Americanism” they had “struggled to complicate.”²³⁸ The Jewish experience, as Pianko reiterates, has never matched the “established categories of Western political thought.”²³⁹

Historiographic Interventions

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 178.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 179.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 181.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 182.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 183.

Zionism and the Roads Not Taken offers several useful interventions and corrections to the historiography of Zionism (and nationalism more generally). At the outset of his book, for example, Pianko notes that situating the thought of Rawidowicz, Kaplan and Kohn “in its proper historical context” shows that “the meaning of nationalism did not follow the smooth trajectory from imperial subject to national citizen mapped onto the first half of the twentieth century,”²⁴⁰ but was contested on multiple occasions by the Zionist thinkers of the day, as well as others.

Pianko has chosen his interlocutors because they offer a “counternarrative of Zionism,” by challenging the “increasingly dominant paradigm of national sovereignty.”²⁴¹ As Pianko notes, “a singular idea of Zionism, based on a conception of Jewish normalization through self-government and territorial sovereignty, emerged that overshadowed the diverse possibilities”²⁴² that characterized the Zionist movement during the interwar period.

Similarly, “the master narrative of modern Jewish political thought” limits itself to “two avenues for normalizing Jewish identity in the modern world—nationalists committed to achieving national sovereignty in the homeland and integrationists dedicated to affirming Jews’ patriotic attachment to their country of citizenship.”²⁴³ As a

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 12.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 14.

result, this “binary rubric” obscures the “fluid possibilities and elastic contours” exemplified by interwar movements.²⁴⁴

Recovering non-statist approaches to nationality and nationalism allows Pianko to examine his subjects “without a historical lens molded by events that occurred midcentury,”²⁴⁵ including the Nazi Holocaust and the foundation of the State of Israel. In this sense Pianko offers an important corrective to the anachronistic (not to say teleological) reading that the creation of the State of Israel was a foregone conclusion. Pianko’s subjects offered conceptions of Jewish nationality that “consciously disputed the either/or logic of the nation-state template by underscoring the compatibility of national autonomy and civic integration” as well as “categories of identity intended for homeland and diasporic settings.”²⁴⁶

As Pianko explains, Kallen, Kaplan, and other American Jewish intellectuals were also responding to the sharp rise in nativist and other forms of racialized thinking at the beginning of the twentieth century. A series of restrictive immigration laws in the late 1910s and early 1920s “exhibited the tremendous currency nativism and racial nationalism had achieved.”²⁴⁷ The U.S. Congress openly justified its actions as a response

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p.28.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 34.

to the “menace that [...] Jews and Italians posed to the United States.”²⁴⁸ The pressure for conformity was not limited to the defenders of eugenics and other forms of “scientific racism”; Pianko also cites the Christian Social Gospel Movement and the nominally secular reform movements of the Progressive Era for espousing “a unified, organic American identity” as part of a “shift from individualism to corporate identity.”²⁴⁹ As Pianko notes, “Progressives rejected the erection of racial boundaries to safeguard American biological purity,” but substituted “a monolithic vision of American nationality that eliminated [...] the political cultural and social spaces previously available to minority communities.”²⁵⁰ My next chapter, “Zionism as Progressivism,” explores the impact of this idea of national unity on the development of the *Yishuv*.

Pianko also seeks to complicate the memory” of Horace Kallen, most often remembered today as the architect of “cultural pluralism.” Kallen’s 1915 essay “Democracy versus the Melting Pot” is considered “the blueprint for the concept of cultural pluralism.”²⁵¹ Yet it “does not mention the term ‘cultural pluralism’ even once. [...] Instead Kallen uses vocabulary such as nationality, federation of nationalities, and

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 41,

commonwealth.”²⁵² This essay “framed the debate as part of a much larger question of nationality and its relationship to the American state.”²⁵³

Kallen “engaged American nationalism,” says Pianko, “at a time of tremendous insecurity for Jews, both in the United States and around the world.”²⁵⁴ “Constructing a counterstate paradigm” thus “emerged as one strategy for addressing” the concern that Jews would “remain permanent outsiders.”²⁵⁵ Once again, my chapter 3 explores the impact of Kallen’s ideas on the development of Zionist settlement in Palestine.

This more nuanced view of Kallen and his interlocutors also belies the Americanization of Zionism thesis, which Pianko terms “a central historiographical narrative in American Jewish history.”²⁵⁶ As Pianko describes the assumptions of American Jewish historians, “the separatist claims and political analysis of European Jewish nationalism had little relevance in the United States.”²⁵⁷ Yet “until recently, few scholars have analyzed Kallen’s claims about how his personal sense of discrimination” as well as his Zionist affiliation helped Kallen craft his vision of “integration without

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 42.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 42,

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

assimilation.”²⁵⁸ Kallen’s legacy, concludes Pianko, “provides an instructive example of how the history of American Zionism downplays Zionist ideology’s active opposition to homogenizing and exclusivist trends in American nationalism.”²⁵⁹

Blind Spots

Although Pianko’s work offers numerous useful insights into the history of Zionism in the early twentieth century, his presentation is nonetheless marred by a series of blind spots. One is his use of a series of terms that warrant more careful examination. An obvious example is “normalization,” included in several of the statements quoted above. In his use of this term, Pianko accepts without comment the implication that the Jewish experience is deviant and requires some sort of correction—a well-known antisemitic trope, which is, moreover, integral to most versions of Zionism.

Even more problematic is Pianko’s failure to interrogate the term “civilization,” particularly since it is integral to the viewpoint of one of his subjects, Mordechai Kaplan. (The trope of “civilization” and its implications, both racial and national, are introduced in chapter 1 and further elaborated in chapter 3.) In Pianko’s appreciation, “Jewish intellectuals struggled to align Judaism with such concepts as civilization, humanism, and progress at precisely the moment in which their qualifications for integrating were being challenged by alien acts, nativism, and discrimination in the United States and

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

Europe.”²⁶⁰ Pianko fails completely to mention, however, that the term “civilization” most often functions as code for white supremacy, a case that is made eloquently in Gail Bederman’s Manliness and Civilization.²⁶¹ Bederman shows how “disenfranchised intellectuals” (the term is Pianko’s; see p. 109) sought to resignify the term “civilization” to support different values; see, for example, Bederman’s chapter 2, “The White Man’s Civilization on Trial,” which discusses the work of such figures as anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells. In his references to this book, however, Pianko implies that Mordechai Kaplan’s work in Judaism as a Civilization parallels the interventions of Wells, W.E.B. Dubois, and others committed to the ideals of racial justice.²⁶² A more compelling case could be made that the use of this term by Kaplan and other Jewish intellectuals did less to challenge the inherent racialization of the concept of civilization, and more to shift Jewish people to the positive (that is, white) side of this divide. Likewise, he simply ignores the thoughtful gender analysis presented by Bederman in her discussion of the term “manliness” as a key element in the discourse of “civilization.” A similar critique could be offered of Pianko’s use of the term “progress,” another term that warrants more careful analysis. One again, I trace the implications of these concepts in chapter 3 of this dissertation, where I discuss the nationalist narratives encoded in Zionist ideas of

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 55.

²⁶¹ Gail Bederman. Manliness and Civilization. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

²⁶² See Pianko, Road Not Taken, fn. 31, p. 109.

settlement. Each of these terms, moreover, illustrates how Americanized Zionism has worked to align itself with U.S. nationalism.

In another important limitation, Pianko also fails to come to terms with the support for British imperialism that was integral to the ideology of “internationalism” espoused by Zimmern, Kallen, and, through them, Kaplan. In his second chapter, Pianko states that an “enduring British Empire held great hope for many Jews as an ideal political structure to mitigate their alien status as a stateless community”²⁶³; this observation occurs in Pianko’s account of the dialogue between Kallen and Zimmern, as well as the influence of their ideas on Kaplan. Later in the same chapter, Pianko does acknowledge the explicit racism and colonialism that was built into the ideas of (British) internationalism. Following political scientist Jeanne Morefield, for example, Pianko notes that “[g]uaranteeing limited cultural autonomy and universal rights deflected calls for self-determination among colonized populations.”²⁶⁴ He goes on to discuss Kallen’s adoption of the concept of noblesse oblige, which Kallen

proudly declared to be the “motto of the Jew” [...] because they, like the British, have a civilizing mission to accomplish among the primitive Arab population of Palestine [...] As Kallen explained, “the fellah of Palestine is a case of arrested development and enforced degradation typical of the whole Arabic speaking and Mohammedan world.”²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Pianko, Road Not Taken, op. cit., p. 40.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

This overtly racist discourse underlies the confident assessment that Jewish settlement in Palestine would have the benefit of “raising the standards of this population,” which, he adds, “sets the logical foundation for deferring (for an unspecified period) the individual and collective rights of the majority Arab population.”²⁶⁶

As Pianko notes, “placing Jews in the category of civilization reconfigured their position without challenging the hierarchies based on racial, geographic, or religious considerations.”²⁶⁷ Pianko quotes political scientist Jeanne Morefield’s assessment that the theories espoused by Zimmern and his followers were “muddled” — but does not explain convincingly why he believes that their views deserve reconsideration by contemporary scholars, despite their many flaws.

Despite these limitations, Pianko has offered an important revision of the conventional historiography of Americanized Zionism. His intervention, like that of David N. Myers, underlines how much the scholarly appreciation of Zionism has changed over the past twenty years.

Much like Pianko, many of the writers I have discussed so far emphasize the impact of Progressivism on the evolution of American Zionism. My next two chapters, “Zionism as Progressivism” and “Brandeis on the ‘Jewish Problem,’” argue that this interrelation is more than a detail in the evolution of American Zionism. These chapters chart the origins of the close relationship between U.S. nationalism and Zionism, a

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

relationship reflecting cultural and religious affinities that go well beyond questions of national interest.

CHAPTER 3

ZIONISM AS PROGRESSIVISM

Understanding the emergence and growth of Zionism in the American context involves appreciating its many overlaps and affinities with the Progressive Era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of the thinkers and activists who introduced Zionism to an American Jewish audience, such as Horace Kallen, Louis Brandeis, or Henrietta Szold, started out as Progressive reformers and brought their ideas about social and political action along with them into the Zionist movement. Many of them, as I discuss later in this chapter, knew each other and worked together. Although their formal leadership of the American Zionist movement was short-lived,²⁶⁸ many of the values and assumptions they brought with them had a decisive impact on the future of the *Yishuv*, as well as the Zionist movement in the United States. Many of their ideas about Zionism, moreover, have endured among American Jews until the present day. As I have noted above in chapter 1 in the section entitled “Perspectives on American Jews and U.S. Nationalism,” Americanized Zionism has served as an important vehicle for allowing the U.S. Jewish community to demonstrate their support for a nationalist U.S. agenda.

²⁶⁸ Brandeis and his supporters exercised formal leadership of the Zionist movement in the United States from 1914 to 1921. Their influence on the direction and views of the movement, however, continued to have a decisive impact well beyond that moment. More details are included in section “The Balfour Declaration and Beyond” in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

In this chapter, following a brief description of the Progressive Era, I turn to some of the intersections of Zionism and Progressivism, with sections on the figure of Horace Kallen and his impact on American Zionism; the Pittsburgh Program of 1918, a key Zionist statement; and, finally, a discussion of how ideas about gender, manliness, and pioneering took root in the American Zionist imaginary. The next chapter, “Brandeis on the ‘Jewish Problem,’” focuses on Louis Brandeis, who became the most important leader of Americanized Zionism from the World War I era up until his death in 1941.

The Progressive Era and Its Legacies

As many historians have noted, the Progressive Era is difficult to describe in terms of any overriding values or strategies. A useful overview is included in the Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History,²⁶⁹ which describes Progressivism as a reform movement that “swept through American public life from the 1890s through World War I,” triggered “by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and immigration.”²⁷⁰ According to this encyclopedia, what united progressive reformers was “not a shared vision but a vocabulary that allowed them to depict themselves as acting on behalf of the people and against selfish interests.”²⁷¹ This vocabulary included such ideas as “progress” and the

²⁶⁹Andrew Roberts. Encyclopedia of U. S. Political History. Washington, DC: CQ Press/Sage Publications, 2010. Web.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 1500.

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 1501.

importance of scientific expertise in legitimating policy proposals. More recent discussions have focused on the paternalism embedded in these ideas.

At its roots, Progressivism derived from religious reform movements, especially the proponents of a “Social Gospel,” who

rejected the emphasis that Protestants had traditionally placed on individual salvation and personal responsibility, arguing instead that Christians needed to focus on solving the larger social problems caused by industrialization, immigration, and urbanization. They believed that churches, businesses, and the government should apply a Christian ethic to correcting those ills.²⁷²

Ultimately, “religious reformers [...] lost their cultural authority as social scientists, politicians, and government bureaucrats came to dominate the reform movements.”²⁷³

As a result of the breadth of influence of Progressivism, this shared conceptual vocabulary sustained many initiatives, including some that were based on contradictory values. For example, Progressive reformers supported social justice and democracy, while upholding “experts” as privileged arbiters of social policy. Supporters of racial equality relied on key aspects of Progressive values in founding the NAACP in 1909; southern politicians, meanwhile, used the same language to frame appeals to “political purity and social order,” as they installed the Jim Crow system of legalized discrimination in the early twentieth century.²⁷⁴ Similarly, Progressives concerned with

²⁷² Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams. Encyclopedia of Religion in America. Washington, DC: CQ Press/Sage Publications, 2010, pp. 1776–1781. Web.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Encyclopedia of U. S. Political History, op. cit., p. 1503. Web.

the immigrants then pouring into America's cities embraced labor rights for immigrant workers, while calling on immigrants to "abandon their cultural identities" in order to "become unadulterated Americans."²⁷⁵

By the same token, changes in gender roles in this period inspired contradictory responses. Women reformers were prominent in the Progressive Movement, founding the settlement house movement in the late nineteenth century and agitating for the extension of voting rights to women, a demand that ultimately achieved success through the adoption in 1920 of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. At the same time, the growing visibility of women in public life inspired widespread male anxiety, leading some to develop a "highly masculine reform style"²⁷⁶ and a well-elaborated ideology of "manliness."²⁷⁷

Despite its many contradictions, the achievements of Progressivism were considerable. As noted in the Encyclopedia of Political Science,²⁷⁸ the movement's successes ranged from

constitutional accomplishments (e.g., the extension of votes to women, the direct election of senators, the foundation of a progressively scaled income tax) to the political achievements (e.g., the widespread establishment of the secret ballot, primary elections, state referendums and ballot initiatives, and the recall vote) to

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 1501.

²⁷⁷ My discussion of the ideology of "manliness" follows Bederman (op. cit.) in many particulars; see the discussion below in the section on "Pioneering and Settlement."

²⁷⁸ George Thomas Kurian and James E Alt. Encyclopedia of Political Science. Washington DC: CQ Press/Sage Publications, 2010. Web.

the economic feats (e.g., trust-busting, child labor laws, support for unionization, the minimum wage, and workers compensation).²⁷⁹

Each of these reforms, meanwhile, increased the size and power of government at every level. Under the Wilson Administration, notes the Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History, “the Federal Trade Commission [...] enshrined the concept of federal regulation of big business and the concomitant acceptance of the large corporation as a permanent part of the American economic landscape.” As a result, the encyclopedia continues, “progressivism's most fundamental legacy was to set the precedent for greater use of state power.”²⁸⁰

Across the ideological spectrum, initiatives based in the American Jewish community achieved unprecedented visibility in this era. Historian Hasia Diner notes that the coincidence of a series of demographic and political factors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries “made possible the formation, growth, and maturation of the largest, freest, and institutionally richest Jewish community in the world.”²⁸¹ American Jews became more visible, more assertive, and more willing to fight for their priorities. In one example cited by Diner, American Jewish organizations fought successfully to counter the National Reform Association in its efforts to promote

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 1363.

²⁸⁰ Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History, op. cit., p. 1504.

²⁸¹ Hasia Diner, “The Encounter between the Jews and America in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era,” Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 11:1, Jan. 2012, p. 4. Diner notes that her arguments in this piece are drawn from her book-length study, The Jews of the United States, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004.

Constitutional Amendment that would identify the United States as a Christian nation.²⁸²

Many American Jewish organizations that formed in the Progressive Era closely paralleled the agenda and strategies of other elements of the Progressive movement. For example, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), founded in 1893,

initially had a strong emphasis on religious education for Jewish women, but [...] quickly came to focus on social reform for immigrant women and their families. Its leaders helped pioneer the settlement house movement, championed civil rights for women and children, and organized vocational, educational, and social programs for Jewish women and children.²⁸³

One way of understanding Americanized Zionism is as an effort by American Jews to use the cultural and intellectual resources of Progressivism to strengthen the position of their ethnoreligious community in U.S. society, as well as the reputation of the Zionist movement itself. Although the Progressive movement did not address such values as diversity and social inclusion, which did not become prominent in American culture until a half-century later, American Jews, much like other marginalized segments of U.S. society, used Progressive ideology as a resource to improve their situation.²⁸⁴ At the same time they sought to counter the arguments of anti-immigrant

²⁸² Diner, "Encounter between the Jews and America," op. cit, p. 8.

²⁸³ Encyclopedia of Religion in America, op. cit., p. 1776.

²⁸⁴ Bederman (op. cit.) includes a thoughtful discussion of how such figures as Ida B. Wells used the vocabulary of Progressivism to undergird the anti-lynching movement, while others, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, used the same concepts to sustain racialized ideas of "savagery" and the threat it posed to "white womanhood." While Bederman does not address either the

commentators like Madison Grant, a prominent lawyer and one of the founders of scientific racism, who portrayed the entry of substantial numbers of immigrant laborers into the U.S. workforce as a threat to the wages and working conditions of “native” workers.²⁸⁵

Horace Kallen: A Generative Thinker

My discussion of the links between Progressivism and Zionism begins with Horace Kallen, a profoundly generative figure in the development of Americanized Zionism. This section draws on the work of Sarah Schmidt in her 1975 biography, Horace Kallen: Prophet of American Zionism,²⁸⁶ as well as more recent scholarly works, particularly Noam Pianko’s 2008 essay on “‘The True Liberalism of Zionism’: Horace Kallen, Jewish Nationalism, and the Limits of American Pluralism.”²⁸⁷ Kallen and his interlocutors developed an Americanized Zionism that served the ambitions of the United States to become an international power in the early twentieth century. I differ on this point from many scholars of Jewish Studies, whose work is largely limited to the development of American Jewish identity as well as attempts to counter the growing

conditions or the initiatives of American Jews, her discussion is relevant to this project at many points; see the section below on “Pioneering and Settlement.”

²⁸⁵ Grant’s 1916 volume, The Passing of the Great Race, sought to establish a “scientific” basis for racialized policies that favored eugenics in order to preserve the dominance of the “Nordic race.”

²⁸⁶ Sarah Schmidt. Horace Kallen: Prophet of American Zionism. New York: Carlson Publishing, 1995.

²⁸⁷ Noam Pianko, “‘The True Liberalism of Zionism’: Horace Kallen, Jewish Nationalism, and the Limits of American Pluralism,” American Jewish History 94:4, Dec. 2008.

nativism of U.S. society, without venturing into the larger framework of how the United States positioned itself on the global stage.

Social philosopher Horace Kallen (1882-1974) is most often remembered as the founder of “cultural pluralism,” a concept that is sometimes oversimplified as supporting different communities in the United States to affirm their cultural uniqueness while sustaining their identity as U.S. citizens. Missing from this account, however, is an appreciation of Kallen’s ideas about the importance of nationality and group rights to the culture of national belonging.

Recently, as part of the more nuanced appreciation of nonstate Zionism discussed in chapter 2, scholars have begun to revisit Kallen’s work, as well as his influence on some of the most important figures who brought Zionism into the American Jewish setting.²⁸⁸ Kallen was one of the founders of the Menorah Society, founded in 1906, and a frequent contributor to its *Menorah Journal*, launched in 1915.²⁸⁹ Both the organization and its journal were an important site of encounter in the early twentieth century for young American Jewish intellectuals. Although the term was not

²⁸⁸ David Weinfeld adds some interesting information about the origins of cultural pluralism in his essay, “What Difference Does Difference Make? Horace Kallen, Alain Locke, and the Birth of Cultural Pluralism,” published as a contribution to the edited volume Philosophic Values and World Citizenship, J.A. Carter and L. Harris, eds. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010).

²⁸⁹ See “Staying Afloat in the Melting Pot: Constructing an American Jewish Identity in the Menorah Journal of the 1920s,” American Jewish History, 84:4, pp. 315-331, and Mark A. Raider, The Emergence of American Zionism (New York: NYU Press, 1998). I cite Raider’s work extensively in this chapter because of the wealth of detail he has assembled about the growth of Labor Zionism in the United States. His work, while valuable, does not venture beyond the American Jewish community to address larger themes about the international role of the United States and its geostrategic ambitions.

used until later in the twentieth century, the Menorah Society and its journal were developing a secular Jewish identity.

When the Menorah Society began emphasizing the universalist values of Western culture more than Zionism, Kallen founded the Perushim²⁹⁰ in 1913, a semi-clandestine society, later joining with others to found the Labor Zionist Zeirei Zion. All of these groups brought together young Zionists and Progressive intellectuals. For Kallen and his followers, Zionism “demonstrated the compatibility of a specifically Jewish mentality and a secular humanist philosophy, under the rubric of national liberation.”²⁹¹

Although Schmidt’s biography of Kallen may be criticized as more hagiographic than scholarly, it offers a wealth of useful information. She argues compellingly for the influence of Kallen and his ideas on Louis Brandeis, an aspect of Brandeis’s development that has been overlooked or discounted by other historians, especially Melvin Urofsky, the leading authority on Brandeis.²⁹²

Kallen, whose father was a traditionally minded rabbi, was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States as a child in 1887. Schmidt emphasizes the importance of the American pedigree of Kallen’s thinking; as a young man, he chafed at what he

²⁹⁰ Perushim, also translated as “separate,” is a Hebrew term for the Pharisees.

²⁹¹ Raider, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁹² Urofsky has published extensively on Brandeis; his most recent work is Louis D. Brandeis: A Life (New York: Pantheon, 2009), discussed in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

saw as his father's authoritarianism and questioned the importance of Jewish observance and Jewish law. Nonetheless, while valuing his secular education, Kallen maintained a strong sense of Jewish identification throughout his life.

In her introduction, Schmidt considers several of the formative influences on Kallen's thinking, particularly in his education at Harvard University. One of his professors there was poet Barrett Wendell, who Schmidt credits with drawing Kallen's attention to the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible and relating these biblical texts to concepts of social justice current in the early twentieth century. Another one of Kallen's professors at Harvard, the noted philosopher William James, ultimately served as Kallen's dissertation director. Kallen, according to Schmidt, was one of James's "foremost disciples,"²⁹³ and James's philosophy of pragmatism served as an indispensable foundation for Kallen's thinking. Likewise, Wendell's emphasis on the Hebrew prophets re-emerged in Kallen's assertion that American Jews could "restore the valuable 'Hebraic note' to the 'harmony of civilization,'" accentuating their contribution to the "'American symphony.'"²⁹⁴ By the same token, James's idea of "manyness" as a central principle of pragmatism re-emerged in Kallen's cultural pluralism. Many other intellectual movements of the era, such as the movement for a Social Gospel, framed themselves unselfconsciously in terms of their Christian pedigree. Other advocates of Progressivism, meanwhile, presented similar ideas in secular terms,

²⁹³ Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

making them more appealing to Kallen and other American Jews (though one might argue that Progressivism's emphasis on the perfectability of human society is a fundamentally a Christian idea).

Noam Pianko points out that most discussions of Kallen have remained fractured along disciplinary lines, with discussions of race, ethnicity, and cultural pluralism separated from discussions of modern Jewish history and Zionism – with writers on both sides of this divide apparently unaware of early twentieth century discussions of the tensions between internationalism and national sovereignty, centered mostly on British circles during and after World War I.²⁹⁵ Pianko argues instead for contextualizing Kallen in terms of the “political and intellectual forces he faced as a Jew, a Zionist, and an American intellectual,” which he believes “reveals a far more nuanced struggle to welcome liberal theories and their promise of integration without the attendant rejection of robust collective boundaries.”²⁹⁶ In this way Kallen was unique among American intellectuals, by arguing that cultural difference is an asset, not an interference, with the construction of American identity. Pianko's article weaves together the “domestic” and “international” threads of Kallen's thinking, a synthesis that proved essential in the elaboration of Americanized Zionism.

Kallen's ideas about nationality and “hyphenated Americans” are an immediate precursor to the contemporary idea of “ethnicity.” Most discussions about ethnicity, of

²⁹⁵ See the discussion of Alfred Zimmermann's “liberal internationalism” in chapter 2.

²⁹⁶ Pianko, True Liberalism of Zionism, op. cit., p. 300.

course, remain inside the “domestic” frame of the United States. The concept of “nationality,” meanwhile, points to a presumed origin beyond the United States. Kallen, like Brandeis, makes frequent references to a territorial homeland to which U.S.-based nationalities hearken back; neither of them, meanwhile, saw any difficulty with the idea of ancient Israel as the “ancestral homeland” of the Jews, which both men framed as parallel to Ireland, Poland, or other “old world” homelands. Both, finally, thought exclusively of Europe as the location of such homelands—except, of course, for the “Holy Land.” As was common at the time, Eurocentrism defined the boundary between the “civilized” peoples of Europe and the “primitive” peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Kallen’s embrace of both Zionism and cultural pluralism offered a way to express his Jewishness—even though Judaism as a religion or Jewish observance as a way of life seems not to have been attractive to him. According to Schmidt, Kallen’s understanding of Jewish belonging rejected its religious underpinnings—“the theology, the rituals, the laws and regulations.” Instead, “he identified with what he called the Hebraic past of the Jewish people.”²⁹⁷ Kallen thus saw Zionism as a “secular Hebraic ideal,” offering him a way to “remain within the Jewish community.” On this basis he crafted his vision of Zionism, which “came to me rather in terms of the American Idea than in terms of what I had learned of *Torah* either at home or in *cheder*.”²⁹⁸ Among other

²⁹⁷ Schmidt, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

things, Kallen's reference to the "American Idea" bespeaks the centrality of the possibilities of self-fashioning in U.S. culture.

As early as 1906, Kallen presented a paper to the Federation of American Zionists in which he argued that "Zionism needed a new rationale, one based on reason and science"²⁹⁹ rather than on philanthropy or religious yearning. With this statement, Kallen began to downplay the traditional motivations of American Jews for community cohesion, resituating Zionism firmly as an expression of Progressivism. In the same passage, he affirmed Jewish contributions to world civilization, arguing on that basis that "the Jews deserved to live as a separate people in a country of their own."³⁰⁰ In this way, Kallen's logic begins with Progressivism and ends with nationalism.

In this 1906 paper and thereafter, Kallen's understanding of Zionism (much like the ideas he later developed on cultural pluralism) asserted a scientific basis, while recurring to a Romantic, even mystical, idea of the "spirit" of each people, which can only attain its "ideal development" through "permanent occupation of a definite territory."³⁰¹ Such combinations, however vexed they may seem to a contemporary reader, were part and parcel of the conceptualization of national identity and nationalism in the early twentieth century. As Pianko argues, such references to a

²⁹⁹ Ibid. The complete reference is included in Schmidt's footnote 17, p. 165 as H. M. Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," The Macabbean, Aug. 1906, p. 11.

³⁰⁰ Schmidt, op. cit., p. 25.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 28.

national spirit derive less from the more familiar genealogy of German Romanticism, and more from the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha'am (see "Reconsidering the Roads Not Taken" in chapter 2).

As noted at the beginning of this section, contemporary discussions of Kallen often reduce his ideas to cultural pluralism—which, as Pianko points out, are criticized today from both directions: "Kallen's dedication to group preservation is too steeped in racial categories for those interested in deconstructing collective boundaries and too unaware of racial categories for those committed to acknowledging their enduring primacy in American pluralism."³⁰² In Pianko's appreciation,

Kallen formulated his conceptions of Jewish nationalism and American pluralism against the backdrop of major shifts in the terminology of difference in the United States. Until the early twentieth century, "race," "culture," and "nation" had served interchangeably with other concepts of group cohesion. However, the rise of a more stridently racialized discourse that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s altered the conceptual landscape.³⁰³

Nonetheless, Pianko argues, pieces like "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot,"³⁰⁴ which is generally regarded as Kallen's manifesto, and other writings from that period offer "a subtle and counterintuitive critique that linked the preservation of diversity with the fulfillment of universal freedoms."³⁰⁵

³⁰² Pianko, "True Liberalism of Zionism," p. 300.

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 305.

³⁰⁴ Horace M. Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot: A Study of American Nationality," Part I, The Nation, 100:2590, 18 Feb. 1915. The second part of this essay appeared in the next issue of The Nation, dated 25 Feb. 1915.

³⁰⁵ Pianko, "True Liberalism of Zionism," p. 313.

The Pittsburgh Program

The merging of Zionism and Progressivism reached its zenith in the 1918 Pittsburgh Program,³⁰⁶ the official response by American Zionist organizations to the Balfour Declaration, which had been released by the British Foreign Office the year before. The American statement was released following the conclusion of World War I; the war's end, meanwhile, also made possible the merger of the Federation of American Zionists, founded in 1898, and the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs, an ad hoc body founded in 1914 which had brought coordination of the international Zionist movement to the United States during the war. The merged organizations became the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA).

The content of the Pittsburgh Program reflects a clear affinity with the ideals of Progressivism—with little, if any, relationship to previous Zionist writings.³⁰⁷ The body of Pittsburgh Program consists of seven short principles, beginning with “political and civil equality irrespective of race, sex, or faith, for all inhabitants of the land.”³⁰⁸ The second principle speaks of “the ownership of land” and “all natural resources and of all public utilities by the whole [i.e. Jewish] people,” which is justified in terms of “equality of opportunity.” The program likewise recommends application of “the cooperative

³⁰⁶ As noted in chapter 1, the “Pittsburgh Program” should be distinguished from the 1885 “Pittsburgh Platform,” one of the foundational statements of the Reform Movement in American Judaism.

³⁰⁷ See Gal, *Envisioning Israel*, op cit., p. 23.

³⁰⁸ The complete text of this document appears in Schmidt, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

principle [...] in the organization of all agricultural, industrial, commercial, and financial undertakings.”

The remaining principles seek to prevent “the evils of land speculation” as well as establishing a “system of free public instruction.” The only identifiable reference to Jewish culture appears in the final principle, which specifies that public education should be conducted in Hebrew, “the national language of the Jewish people.” The existence of Palestinian Arabs as the majority population of historic Palestine is acknowledged only indirectly, in the third principle, which refers to the importance of the “continuity of possession,” immediately after recommending “that all land should be owned or controlled” so as to “insure the fullest opportunity for development.”³⁰⁹

The Pittsburgh Program’s introductory paragraph invoked Zionism’s founding statement, issued in 1897 by the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, which, as reiterated in the 1918 document, defined the object of Zionism to be “the establishment of a publicly recognized and legally secured homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine.”³¹⁰ The recent Declarations of Great Britain, France, Italy, and others of the allied democratic states have established this public recognition of a Jewish national home as an international fact. Therefore we desire to affirm anew the principles which have guided the Zionist Movement since its inception, and which were the foundations laid down by our lawgivers and prophets for the

³⁰⁹ Schmidt, op. cit., p. 118.

³¹⁰ See Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/first_Cong_&_Basel_Program.html, downloaded 31 July 2014.

ancient Jewish state, and were the inspiration of the living Jewish law embodied in the traditions of two [thousand] years of exile.³¹¹

The 1918 American statement departs from the European original in several particulars. First, the Basel Program never asserted a biblical pedigree for itself, but focused rather on “national consciousness.”³¹² Many contemporary studies of Herzl’s ideas, however, do recognize the religious basis of his understanding of nationalism. Mark Raider, for instance, notes that Herzl drew on the image of the Maccabees to undergird their type of heroism in his vision of a Jewish renaissance. In the views of Herzl, notes Raider, “the fusion of prophecy and politics held the key to transforming Jewish reality, and he intentionally espoused a Zionist mythology of transcendent and metahistorical proportions.”³¹³ In the U.S. context, the explicit equation of Zionism with both the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible and the Progressivist principles noted above render the Pittsburgh Program a uniquely American statement, in both its religiosity and its assertion of Progressive ideology.

In both ideology and influence the Pittsburgh Program never transcended its origins as an American statement. Its principles were never adopted (or even

³¹¹ Cited in Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

³¹² Opening address to Basel Conference by Theodore Herzl, included in Arthur Herzberg, The Zionist Idea, p. 227.

³¹³ Raider, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

discussed) by the international Zionist movement,³¹⁴ which had resumed its ability to function following the end of World War I. Nonetheless, the ideas embodied in the Pittsburgh Program “became the official platform of American Zionism” under the leadership of Louis D. Brandeis.³¹⁵

As a social movement inside the United States, Progressivism underwent a steep decline during and after World War I. The ideals of Progressivism, particularly as refracted through Labor Zionism, nonetheless had an enduring influence on Americanized Zionism. Once President Woodrow Wilson brought the United States into the war in 1917, most Zionist organizations enthusiastically supported Wilson’s plan to “make the world safe for democracy.”³¹⁶ Influenced in part by U.S. patriotism as well as by the postwar vision implied by the Balfour Declaration, Labor Zionist organizations and labor-oriented elements in the *Yishuv* found a community of interest with the elite “Brandeis group,” then playing a leadership role in the international Zionist movement through the Provisional Executive Committee. Meanwhile, Progressive intellectuals (such as Brandeis and Kallen) saw Palestine as a small, underpopulated country that could serve as an ideal canvas for experimentation—perhaps even an opportunity to reinscribe the American Dream in another location with greater success.

³¹⁴ Schmidt, op. cit. p. 118.

³¹⁵ Raider, op. cit., p. 25.

³¹⁶ Raider describes Labor Zionist support for U.S. war efforts in detail; see p. 38ff.

“Pioneering” and settlement

The figure of the Jewish pioneer or *halutz* was essential to the emergence of an Americanized mythology of Zionism. In “The Zionist Pioneer in the Mind of American Jews” (pp. 69-124), the third chapter of The Emergence of American Zionism, Mark Raider offers a detailed cultural history of the imagery of pioneering or *halutziut*. Some of the same ground is covered in “‘Anu banu artza’ in America: The Americanization of the *Halutz* Ideal,” Arthur Aryeh Goren’s contribution to Envisioning Israel.³¹⁷

Raider’s book makes a compelling argument for the importance of Labor Zionism in both the *Yishuv* and growing support for Zionism the United States in the early twentieth century. The growing popularity of Zionism in American Jewish opinion resulted not only from the mass immigration of Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe to the United States, but also from the crucial intellectual and political support they received from elite leaders such as Horace Kallen, Henrietta Szold, and Louis Brandeis—support that was filtered through the ideology of Progressivism. In the process, previously unsympathetic elements of the community, such as the American Jewish Committee, found themselves obliged to support certain elements of the Zionist program, for example through support for the “upbuilding” of Palestine, which became a crucial channel for non-Zionist rabbis and other leaders to lend their support to Zionist initiatives in the pre-state era. In the process, more recent immigrants were able to significantly increase their voice in Jewish affairs, through campaigns for labor rights as

³¹⁷ Gal, Envisioning Israel, op. cit., pp. 81-113.

well as “democratization” of Jewish organizations.³¹⁸ Many of these trends were crystallized in the founding of the American Jewish Congress in 1918.

In the World War I era and later, the perception of “the pioneering enterprise in Palestine” effectively “reinforced American Jewry’s growing attraction to the Jewish state-in-the-making.”³¹⁹ In Europe, the *halutzim* had been “inspired by the message of radical socialism,” which led them to proclaim themselves “the advance guard of the Jewish people.”³²⁰ Most of their American supporters, however, were either unaware or unconcerned about the ideological niceties that provoked bitter divisions among various political tendencies among Zionist groups in Russia and Eastern Europe, as well as their Yiddish-speaking supporters in U.S. communities of recent immigrants. As a result, Labor Zionism won generalized support from the American Jewish community.

Ideologically committed Zionists embraced a philosophy of personal “self-realization (*hagshamah azmit*),” believing that “only a revolution in their personal lives

³¹⁸ See, for example, Matthew Silver’s 2008 article, “Louis Marshall and the Democratization of Jewish Identity” (*American Jewish History*, 94:1-2, pp. 41-69). Silver’s piece is useful both for placing the call for democratization and the growth of Jewish congress movements in a global context, as well as echoing Raider’s depiction of the complexity of interactions between elite segments of the American Jewish community and more recent immigrants.

³¹⁹ Raider, op. cit., p. 69.

³²⁰ Ibid., p. 72.

ould lead to the creation of a Jewish state.”³²¹ As Goren explains it, “becoming tillers of the land in the service of the nation also required an inner metamorphosis.”³²²

From its earliest manifestations, this version of Zionism was shot through with contradictions. Commenting on one of the earliest American Zionist organizations, Raider notes that “[o]n the one hand the members of the Hehaluz-Zion Circle subscribed to Herzl’s nationalist program and an East European view of organic Jewish nationhood. On the other, they acknowledged their debt to America’s pluralist tradition and responded enthusiastically to the call of Western liberalism.”³²³ Raider goes on to cite historian Anita Shapira, who has argued that this “paradox [...] was characteristic of early socialist Zionism, especially in the West.”³²⁴

As Raider notes, a commitment to personal involvement, culminating in emigration to Palestine, “separated the *halutzim* from mainstream American Zionist activity.”³²⁵ Nonetheless, support for the *halutz* movement inspired a broad cross-section of American Jews, for most of whom their involvement was entirely vicarious. As Raider

³²¹ Ibid., p. 74.

³²² Goren, op. cit., p. 81.

³²³ Raider, op. cit., p. 75.

³²⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

³²⁵ Ibid.

observes, “[t]his relationship was not unlike the traditional one that had existed for centuries between diaspora Jews and the Holy Land.”³²⁶

Goren describes “the figure of the *halutz*” as “the invention of the newly formed Zionist youth movements,” which made an “appearance only at the end of World War I.”³²⁷ The *halutzim*, meanwhile, built on the image of their precursors, the *shomer*, or “guard and lookout.”³²⁸ In discussing the transition from *shomer* to *halutz*, Goren quotes a 1912 address by Judah Magnes, who described the *shomrim* as “the beginnings of a Jewish militia” and “the beginnings of a new type of Jew,” who “were not defending their lives alone” but were “defending their country.”³²⁹ Similarly, the normally dry Henrietta Szold waxed emotional in describing the *shomrim* in a 1915 report, in which she said that they “had raised the dignity of the Jew in the eyes of his Arab neighbors. A Jew who is a good shot, and rides a horse, bareback if you will, with the same grace as the Arab [...] exacts respect.”³³⁰

Zionist organizers and publicists played consciously on the parallels between the *halutzim* and *shomrim* and the “cowboys of the Wild West.”³³¹ Raider cites a 1912 issue of

³²⁶ Ibid., p. 78.

³²⁷ Goren, op. cit., p. 84.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 85.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Raider, op. cit., p. 78.

Young Judean, a Zionist youth magazine, which figures the *shomrim* as “Jewish Minute Men,” noting that the new Jewish heroes “protect the frontier and defy the ‘half savage’ and ‘lawless’” Arab inhabitants, who threaten the Jewish settlements.³³² In a further echo of the mythology of the American West, the complete excerpt from The Young Judean portray the Arabs as robbers, who “help their Arabian countrymen to rob the Jews of the fruit of their toil.”³³³

Through this type of imagery, Zionist settlements in Palestine were seen as analogous to the settlement of the American West by people of European descent. The local Arab population, meanwhile, were placed in the role of Indians, serving as a foil to the Jewish settlers who were seen as “cowboys.” As Raider comments, American advocates of Zionism “echoed the New World myth of abundance and opportunity, and they deliberately linked their romantic conceptions of the American and Zionist frontiers.”³³⁴ Although Raider does not point this out, the ideals of “abundance” and “opportunity,” so enthusiastically greeted by American Jews, relied on the expropriation of Indian land and genocidal violence toward Native Americans.

For an American audience, both the *shomer* and the *halutz* were heroic figures, but whereas the *shomrim*, in Szold’s words, “prepared outlying regions for permanent

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., p. 79.

³³⁴ Ibid., p. 81.

settlement,” the “*halutz* stood for permanency and collectivism.”³³⁵ Goren, meanwhile, relates the transition from *shomer* to *halutz* to broader political developments after World War I, including the 1920 San Remo treaty among the victorious Western powers, which gave international support for the occupation of Palestine by Great Britain (the beginnings of the “British mandate”) and echoed the Balfour Declaration by charging Britain with establishing “a national home for the Jewish people.”³³⁶

Equally important—and equally vicarious—was the centrality of farming to the mythology of Americanized Zionism. American Jews, of course, had no cultural memory of peasant life; in Europe they were concentrated in commerce or finance by centuries of antisemitic custom as well as restrictions enacted by state authorities. In the United States, as they became acculturated most Jews aspired to careers in business or the professions. More recent immigrants and more impoverished segments of the Jewish population either eked out a living as small peddlers or entered into the industrial labor force, particularly in the garment industry.

Nonetheless, the idea that agriculture would provide a better life for the global Jewish population persisted in Europe as well as the United States. From the late eighteenth century, the European *maskilim*, followers of the Jewish version of the Enlightenment, saw the Jewish penchant for commerce as a major cause of antisemitism;

³³⁵ Goren, op. cit., p. 86.

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 87. For additional details on the San Remo treaty, see Council on Foreign Relations (<http://www.cfr.org/israel/san-remo-resolution/p15248>, downloaded 14 August 2014).

in the United States, this impulse was often translated into seeing agriculture as a more noble or productive form of labor.³³⁷ Among non-Jews as well as Jews, meanwhile, in the U.S. environment of the early twentieth century, a largely imagined nostalgia for a bygone era of farming was a characteristic response to the rise of industry and the steady growth of cities. Both of these tendencies fueled the Zionist romance with agriculture.

Although many different types of development were undertaken in the *Yishuv*, the romantic image of cooperative agricultural development became an enduring staple of the American imagination of the “upbuilding” of Palestine. Goren does note that “some Americans questioned the exalted place assigned to the *halutzim*”³³⁸; in addition to concerns about the “ideological rigidity of the kibbutz and the deleterious effect of collectivism on the individual,” such critics “questioned the economic viability of the kibbutz” which was “wasting limited resources” that could otherwise be used for industrialization and urbanization.³³⁹ Such questions, however, were overshadowed by the far broader romance with “the idyllic image of the *halutzim*” fostered by “American Zionist publicists and Jewish educators.”³⁴⁰ The pioneers and the communal settlements

³³⁷ Beginning in the nineteenth century, Jewish back-to-the land movements became popular in the United States and many parts of Europe. For example, see Moses Klein and his book advocating agriculture as a solution to antisemitism (see the discussion in chapter 2 of Sarna’s essay “A Projection of America as It Ought to Be: Zion in the Mind’s Eye of American Jews”).

³³⁸ Goren, op. cit., p. 83.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

they were building were “Zionism’s most exalted achievement. Not only were they in the forefront of the renewal of national life, they also offered the world a singular example of a democratic, egalitarian, and just society-in-the-making.”³⁴¹

A final contradiction was posed by the role of external philanthropy in making possible the self-realization advocated by Zionist ideologues. The *halutz* ideal was based on a philosophy of personal uplift, including self-transformation through training in agriculture, intended as a preliminary to emigration. Mark Raider illustrates what he terms “the elasticity of the *halutz* image” through his analysis of a 1919 communication from Louis Lipsky, the longtime chair of the Federation of American Zionists, reporting on a visit to the *Yishuv*. Lipsky, notes Raider,

stresses the unique character of Palestine and the transformational nature of Zionist efforts on the land. At the same time, he argues that the *Yishuv*’s stability depends on outside sources of funding. Philanthropic support of the *Yishuv* [...] is an extension of the self-realization of Zionist pioneers, [...] American Jewish charity is as important to the future of Palestine as is the labor of Jewish settlers.³⁴²

The romantic image of Zionist settlement, so popular among American Jews, was typical of the sort of “counterlife” described by Jonathan Sarna in his contribution to *Envisioning Israel*.³⁴³ Like the larger national narrative about the

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Raider, op. cit., p. 101.

³⁴³ See the discussion in chapter 2 of Sarna’s essay “A Projection of America as It Ought to Be: Zion in the Mind’s Eye of American Jews.”

settlement of the United States, this developing narrative of American Jewish identity closely paralleled the images and the logic of the U.S. place in the world.

"Gender Trouble" in the Yishuv

Tacit arguments about gender were part of every discussion of Zionism in the early decades of the twentieth century—one more way that the discussion about Zionism closely paralleled the larger Progressive movement. This section will unpack those arguments, using the theoretical insights of Gail Bederman in Manliness and Civilization as well as Daniel Boyarin's Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man³⁴⁴ to offer a gender analysis of the development of the *Yishuv* and of the culture of pioneering. Additional historical information is drawn from essays by Michael Brown, "Henrietta Szold's Progressive American Vision of the Yishuv" in Envisioning Israel³⁴⁵ and Baila Round Shargel's "American Jewish Women in Palestine: Bessie Gotsfeld, Henrietta Szold, and the Zionist Enterprise."³⁴⁶

In the early years of the twentieth century, both Jewish and general American discussions frequently identify concerns about "manliness" as integral to the political culture of the period. Daniel Boyarin, a professor of Talmudic Studies and rhetoric at UC Berkeley, explores the notion

³⁴⁴ Daniel Boyarin. Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

³⁴⁵ Michael Brown, "Henrietta Szold's Progressive American Vision of the Yishuv," in Gal, Envisioning Israel, op. cit., pp. 60–80. When Envisioning Israel was published, Brown was director of the Centre for Jewish Studies at York University in Toronto, where he continues as a member of the faculty.

³⁴⁶ Baila Round Shargel, "American Jewish Women in Palestine: Bessie Gotsfeld, Henrietta Szold, and the Zionist Enterprise," American Jewish History, 90:2, June 2002.

that Jewish men were unmanly or effeminate in Unheroic Conduct; of particular interest here is his discussion of Zionism as a plan for the remasculinization of European Jewish men in his seventh chapter, “The Colonial Drag: Zionism, Gender, and Mimicry.” Boyarin’s discussion ranges across such figures as Sigmund Freud, Max Nordau, and, finally, Theodor Herzl, noting that “Zionism was considered by many to be as much a cure for the disease of Jewish gendering as a solution to the economic and political problems of the Jewish people.”³⁴⁷ Manliness and Civilization, meanwhile, shows that anxiety over manliness extended far beyond the Jewish version of this concern. In discussing Theodore Roosevelt, for example, Bederman shows how a sickly youth, ridiculed for being effeminate at his entry into public life, created a masculinized persona as a rancher, a frontiersman, and, later, a warrior. Each was integral to his rise to the U.S. presidency in 1901.

Each of these scholars, moreover, albeit in somewhat different ways, shows how the cult of manliness was an inherently racialized project. Bederman notes that “Progressive Era men used ideas about white supremacy to produce a racially based ideology of male power.”³⁴⁸ Later, in a chapter devoted to the figure of Roosevelt himself, she states that he “depicts the American West as a crucible in which the white American race was forged through masculine racial conflict.”³⁴⁹ Daniel Boyarin, by contrast, focuses on efforts by European Jewish men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to

³⁴⁷ Daniel Boyarin, Unheroic Conduct, op. cit., p. 277. Boyarin’s discussion here builds on the work of George Mosse, Michael Berkowitz, and others.

³⁴⁸ Bederman, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 178.

escape their racialization by overcoming their effeminacy. In his discussion of Herzl, for example, Boyarin argues that many of Herzl's writings seek to find a way "for Jews to assume their proper status as proud, manly, warlike people—just like everybody else."

³⁵⁰ An American version of this theme is presented in "Manly Missions" by Sara Imhoff,³⁵¹ which argues that Protestant missions seeking to convert Jews to Christianity played on similar themes of the weakness and nervousness of American Jewish men.

A final parallel among these authors addresses the role of manliness in nation-building—which, in each case, includes a messianic component. Bederman argues that all three (manliness, racialization, and nation-building) are implicated in the "discourse of civilization," which "linked both male dominance and white supremacy to a Darwinist vision of Protestant millennialism."³⁵² For Bederman, the "hegemonic discourses of civilization conflated racial differentiation with the millennial drama of growing human perfection."³⁵³ This quest for civilization charged "the American race"³⁵⁴ to "continue striving manfully to wrest the world's 'waste spaces' from the inferior races

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 282.

³⁵¹ Sara Imhoff, "Manly Missions: Jews, Christians, and American Religious Masculinity, 1900-1920," *American Jewish History*, 97:2, April 2013.

³⁵² Bederman, op. cit., p. 25.

³⁵³ Ibid., p. 26.

³⁵⁴ In writings of the period, it is clear that for Roosevelt and others, the "American race" was limited to white Americans.

who were currently ‘cumbering’ them.”³⁵⁵ Boyarin, on the other hand, recurs to the concept of colonial mimicry to describe the intersections of race, masculinity, and nation-building. The idea of colonial mimicry was first advanced by postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, in his 1984 article “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.”³⁵⁶ The concept of mimicry, in which Bhabha drew on some of the psychological theories of French theorist Jacques Lacan, became one the foundational contributions to the emergence of postcolonial studies.

As Boyarin observes, “[i]f the political project of Zionism was to be a nation like all the other nations, on the level of reform of the Jewish psyche it was to be men like all the other men.”³⁵⁷ Normalizing Jewish racial and gender difference were thus integral to the Zionist project of nation-building. Americanized Zionism, meanwhile, drew liberally on the narratives of American national identity and U.S. discourses of nationalism.

Such links among racialization, gender, and nation building are almost universal, although they frequently remain tacit, in contemporary historical studies of the early years of Zionism. In “Henrietta Szold’s Progressive American Vision of the Yishuv,” his contribution to Envisioning Israel, Michael Brown discusses how Szold served as “an apostle of Americanism” to the *Yishuv*.³⁵⁸ Noting that Szold’s many contributions have

³⁵⁵ Bederman, op. cit., p. 184.

³⁵⁶ Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” October, 28:4, 1984.

³⁵⁷ Daniel Boyarin, Unheroic Conduct, op. cit., p. 177.

³⁵⁸ Brown, op. cit., p. 62.

been “widely acknowledged,” Brown uses the example of Szold in this essay as an entry point to discussing the influence of the United States on the development of the *Yishuv*. “The extent to which she exerted an Americanizing influence on *Yishuv*” and thereby “helped to make America, its Jews, and its ways less alien to the Jews of Palestine,” says Brown, “have not been adequately considered.”³⁵⁹ Like Brandeis and Kallen, Szold was one of the architects of the enduring impact among American Jews of the relationship of Progressivism to Zionism—an influence that clearly worked in both directions, affecting the *Yishuv* as much as the American Jewish community.

Szold’s influence, comments Brown, was all the more important because European Zionists in the pre-state era tended to react with resentment to American Jews, seeing them as a rival for “the bodies and souls of Eastern European Jews.”³⁶⁰ Very few of the Jews who settled in Palestine in this era, notes Brown, hailed from the United States. Nonetheless, he argues, Progressivism “should be credited” for “the technology and the notions of bureaucratic thought and scientific method that Szold brought to the health, education, and welfare institutions with which she was associated in Palestine.”³⁶¹

Ideologically and politically, Szold was a lifetime devotee of Louis Brandeis, who returned the admiration to the extent that, says Brown, he “paid

³⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 60.

³⁶¹ Ibid., p. 61.

her salary for years through a private arrangement” with the ZOA.³⁶² Among the many values they held in common was “the notion that ‘small is beautiful—and efficient’,” as well as “an appreciation for the little man [sic], respect for labor organizations, [and] a suspicion of great wealth.”³⁶³ Much like Brandeis, Szold assumed that the prospective Jewish commonwealth in Palestine would be chartered until the aegis of the British Empire; as Brown comments, “she was outraged when the United States withheld its assent to the British mandate over Palestine [...] ‘in order to protect the interests of the Standard Oil Company’”³⁶⁴

Brown abandons his respectful tone towards Szold when he comments on her support for a binational Jewish-Arab state in Palestine. “In the area of Arab-Jewish relations” he asserts, “Szold’s American baggage was most evident and also ultimately irrelevant, if not misguided.”³⁶⁵ Such “baggage,” he explains, included Szold’s “pacifism, her commitment to cultural pluralism, and her empathy for blacks.”³⁶⁶ Later she offered “tacit approval” to Brit Shalom, a binationalist organization, during the 1930s. In the 1940s, she served on the executive committee of Ihud, an organization founded to promote the idea of a binational state, along with Martin Buber and Judah Magnes. For

³⁶² Ibid., p. 64.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 65. Szold’s comments about the Standard Oil Company are cited to a 1922 dispatch; see Brown’s fnnt 12, p. 65.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

Brown, such figures and their larger circles “exhibited many of the patrician, reforming characteristics of American Progressives”³⁶⁷ — implying that the support of these figures for binationalism can only be understood as a form of paternalism. Largely because of Szold, Hadassah maintained its support for binationalism until her death in 1945.

A similar account is provided by the 2002 article, “American Jewish Women in Palestine,” by Baila Round Shargel. Shargel’s purpose in writing this articles is to highlight the role of Orthodox leader Bessie Gotsfeld alongside the much better known Henrietta Szold in building social and medical services in the *Yishuv*. Shargel describes the difficulties faced by both of these women in the political culture of the day: “both the Mizrahi Organization of America and ZOA³⁶⁸ viewed the women’s groups as mere auxiliaries, and either played down their accomplishments or took credit for them.”³⁶⁹ As a result, “the wives of Mizrahi Organization of America members had handed over the fruits of their fundraising efforts to the men, who then determined which projects to support.”³⁷⁰ Hadassah, the organization founded by Szold, faced similar obstacles. Both women fought tirelessly for organizational autonomy, directing funds to educational

³⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

³⁶⁸ The Mizrahi Organization of America represented religious Zionists, while the ZOA brought together secular activists. The Hebrew term “Mizrahi” (pl. Mizrahim) or “Eastern” was resignified in Israeli usage, when immigrants from the Arab Middle East redefined the term as an ethnic identity; see the discussion of Ella Shohat’s “The Invention of the Mizrahim” under “Arabs and Jews” in chapter 5 of the present study.

³⁶⁹ Shargel, op. cit., p. 149.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 150.

and medical projects that offered concrete services to women and their families, often against the express opposition of their male counterparts.

As with similar initiatives inside the United States, the imperative for social and racial control in such initiatives was ubiquitous. By Shargel's account, the women organized by Gotsfeld did not focus their efforts on "Ashkenazi Jews who shared their middle-class backgrounds and interests, but poor, untutored young women of Middle Eastern extraction."³⁷¹ Shargel notes the parallel to the work of the settlement houses of the Progressive Era: "This calls to mind the activities of the American-born Jewish women of Central European extraction who worked in the immigrant ghettos. Like Jane Addams in Chicago, patrician New York Jewish women devoted their efforts to people not of their class or social origins."³⁷² The work of Jane Addams took place some decades earlier than the Zionist efforts that Shargel is describing³⁷³; in both cases, however, the racialized paternalism is of Ashkenazi emigrés to Palestine closely parallels the attitudes of acculturated Jewish immigrants to the United States toward impoverished newer immigrants from Eastern Europe.

For Szold and Gotsfeld, as for the *halutzim*, conditions in the *Yishuv* entailed a series of paradoxes. Szold and Gotsfeld undertook tasks ranging from fundraising to programming, as well as coordinating an extensive network of U.S. women's groups to

³⁷¹ Ibid., p. 152.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Hull House, the first settlement house, was created by Jane Addams in 1889.

support their efforts. Nonetheless, as Raider comments, these early Zionist communities “simultaneously altered traditional gender roles even as [they] reinforced certain social patterns.”³⁷⁴ In one passage he cites, the unselfconscious derogation of women is palpable: “The Conquest of the Soil,” an account in a 1925 issue of The Young Judean, focuses on the strenuous physical labor of the young [male] pioneers.³⁷⁵ At lunchtime, the article explains, “the pioneers do not have to prepare their own meals,” because the “halutziot, young women workers and settlers [...] cook, wash house, mend for the men, and help them in other ways as well.”³⁷⁶

Conclusions

This chapter has chronicled the emergence of a distinctively American form of Zionism in the early years of the twentieth century, especially between 1910 and 1920. This Americanized Zionism paralleled both the ideology and tactics of Progressivism.

Many of the characteristic features of Zionism among American Jews were established in that period, with many continuing up to the present day. During this period, Zionism became normalized among American Jews as well as in broader discussions in the American public—a marked change from previous years, when Zionism was supported by only a small minority of American Jews.

³⁷⁴ Raider, op. cit., p. 99.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

This change in American Jewish opinion cannot be attributed to any single factor. Both the United States and the *Yishuv* developed a national mythology of pioneering and the frontier, in ways that brought together gender and racialization in the context of nation-building. In both societies, the frontier served as a screen on which powerful myths of manliness and heroism could be projected. At the same time, women in both societies were extending their scope of initiative and action—in ways that simultaneously reinforced and undermined the mythology of gender, racialization, and nation building in the service of “civilization.”

As Mark Raider comments, Kallen’s formulation of the Pittsburgh Program “gave Jewish nationalism a uniquely American cast.”³⁷⁷ At the same time, it was “Brandeis who put the stamp of American approval on the Labor philosophy of Zionism.”³⁷⁸ Brandeis “demonstrated that the values of Jewish pioneering, social justice, and democracy could not only be amalgamated but also translated into popular parlance and an effective program.”³⁷⁹ In the next chapter, I turn to the figure of Louis Brandeis, who became the predominant leader of Americanized Zionism.

Ultimately, the strongest links between Zionism and Progressivism rested on the secularized messianism of both ideologies. For Jews, Zionism offered the attractions of

³⁷⁷ Raider, op. cit., p. 153.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

normalization, in terms of gender and nation-building—and, though them, a kind of racial normalization as “white,” that is, as part of “Western civilization.”

CHAPTER 4

BRANDEIS ON THE ‘JEWISH PROBLEM’

Between Idealism and Pragmatism

For more than a century, Louis Dembitz Brandeis has endured as an icon of liberal and progressive values—not only to American Jews, but also within the larger American society. This chapter, while focusing on the critical role of Brandeis in the growth of Americanized Zionism, begins by offering some background about the larger context in which he operated. Next, in “Brandeis and his ‘Zionist Conversion,’” I comment on his role as a leading figure in the emergence and growth of Americanized Zionism. The third section offers a close reading of his iconic 1915 statement, “The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It.” The chapter continues with a fourth section, “The Balfour Declaration and Beyond,” reviewing the role of Brandeis in the American Zionist movement from the entry of the United States into World War I until his death in 1941. In the fifth section, I close the chapter with some concluding comments about Brandeis and his lasting contribution to the emergence and growth of an Americanized Zionist movement.

In his 2009 study Brandeis: A Life,³⁸⁰ Melvin I. Urofsky, a prolific legal and constitutional historian, describes the challenge of writing about Brandeis, given the multiple dimensions of his roles, as a lawyer, reformer, Zionist, and jurist. Nonetheless,

³⁸⁰ Melvin I. Urofsky. Brandeis: A Life. New York: Pantheon, 2009.

argues Urofsky, considering these and other roles “will [...] not give us a sense of a man who is certainly greater than the sum of these parts.”³⁸¹ In Urofsky’s eyes, Brandeis “wedded idealism to pragmatism”³⁸²; by the same token, Urofsky describes Brandeis’s attraction to Zionism as a result of “its idealistic nature.”³⁸³

As a Supreme Court justice, Brandeis “provided important bases of our modern jurisprudence, including a right to privacy and the rationale for why free speech is important in a democratic society.”³⁸⁴ His work as a Progressive reformer earned him the title of “the people’s attorney” —yet, as was common in the Progressive mindset of his day, he was also enthusiastic about “scientific management,” first proposed by engineer Frederick Taylor in 1903, which Brandeis welcomed as a way that “workers and management together could achieve the highest productivity, with more money for both.”³⁸⁵ Despite Brandeis’s enthusiasm, union organizers of the day dismissed “scientific management” as an attempt to legitimate speedups. Brandeis, however, was consistent in his commitment to the free-enterprise system, believing that “the market provided a moral proving ground” for economic life.³⁸⁶

³⁸¹ Urofsky, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. x.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. x.

Throughout his life, says Urofsky, Brandeis “never denied his origins” as a Jew, yet “nor did he broadcast them.”³⁸⁷ As he began his career as an attorney in Boston, Brandeis served many clients from the increasingly prosperous Jewish middle class; nonetheless, notes Urofsky, “his contributions to Boston Jewish charities remained minimal,” and he took no “leadership position in Jewish affairs until he joined the Zionist movement more than three decades later.”³⁸⁸

The first evidence of the growth of Brandeis’s interest in his Jewish origins dates to his role as a mediator in a historic 1910 strike of Jewish garment workers in New York, which provided Brandeis with his first experience with recent Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. (Brandeis’s own family had immigrated from Central Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, settling in Louisville, Kentucky, where they prospered as grain merchants.) By 1910, Brandeis was becoming well known as both a lawyer and a Progressive reformer. He was impressed with the garment workers, “many of them literate and articulate,” who “felt no sense of inferiority to their employers and treated them as equals.”³⁸⁹ In this context, says Urofsky, Brandeis “saw a new type of Jew: [...] willing to stand up for his or her rights, capable of arguing with the employer and demanding justice.”³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 253.

³⁹⁰ Meredith Hindley, “Impertinent Questions with Melvin I. Urofsky,” *Humanities* 31:1, Jan-Feb. 2010, p. 54.

Brandeis and his "Zionist Conversion"

For Urofsky and many other scholars, Brandeis's interest in Zionism later in his life has seemed like something of a puzzle. Attempts to explain this shift have focused on Brandeis's acquaintance in 1910 with Jacob de Haas, the editor of Boston's Jewish Advocate (who had served as a secretary to Theodor Herzl before immigrating to the United States), or his admiration for his uncle Louis N. Dembitz, an early supporter of the Zionist movement. A more compelling explanation, however, is offered by Sarah Schmidt in her article, "The Zionist Conversion of Louis D. Brandeis."³⁹¹ While recognizing the lasting influence of Brandeis's friendship with de Haas, Schmidt considers his change in perspective as due primarily to his friendship with Horace M. Kallen, whose perspective on Zionism was discussed in chapter 3, "Zionism as Progressivism."

Brandeis and Kallen became acquainted since 1903, when Brandeis's firm had provided pro bono legal services in a case Kallen was involved with, stemming from his employment as a resident counselor at Boston's Civic Service House.³⁹² Although once established their friendship would endure, for both men, their eventual involvement with Zionism was still a decade in the future.

³⁹¹ Sarah Schmidt, "The Zionist Conversion of Louis D. Brandeis," Jewish Social Studies, 37:1, Jan. 1975.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

An indication of the distance that Brandeis's thinking was destined to travel is offered by "What Loyalty Demands," a 1905 address that Brandeis delivered to an event marking the 250th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the United States. "In a country whose constitution prohibits discrimination on account of race or creed," said Brandeis,

there is no place for [...] hyphenated Americans. There is room here for men of any race, of any creed [...] but not for Protestant-Americans, or Catholic-Americans, or Jewish-Americans. [...] This country demands that its sons and daughters [...] be politically merely American citizens. Habits of living or of thought, which tend to keep alive difference of origin [...] are inconsistent with the American ideal of brotherhood, and are disloyal.³⁹³

In 1913, Kallen, who had left Boston to join the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, wrote Brandeis to share his own ideas about Zionist philosophy. Brandeis responded by expressing his "'great sympathy' with Kallen's point of view," but indicating he had no active interest in pursuing the "Zionist question."³⁹⁴ The following year, however, when World War I broke out across Europe, the Berlin offices of the World Zionist Organization were "dislocated."³⁹⁵ It became impossible for European Zionists to cross battle lines in order to confer. In response, Zionists from the United States, the largest neutral country, convened a conference that August in New York, where the Provisional Executive Committee for Zionist Affairs was formed. Brandeis was invited as a delegate to the conference—and Kallen approached him once again, this

³⁹³ A. T. Mason. Brandeis: A Free Man's Life. New York: Viking, 1946, p. 442.

³⁹⁴ Schwartz, "Zionist Conversion," op. cit., p. 26,

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

time asking him to assume the chairmanship of the new body. Brandeis “arranged [...] to join Kallen” for a private discussion “on the overnight boat trip from Boston to New York that would take both of them to the Zionist meeting.”³⁹⁶ Kallen’s files, says Schwartz, include an unpublished study on “The International Aspects of Zionism,” with a note “in Kallen’s handwriting” adding “‘copy presented to Mr. Brandeis, August 29, 1914.’”³⁹⁷ The memorandum reiterated many of Kallen’s ideas, such as “‘the equality of the different’ and the importance, to free men, of maintaining such differences.”³⁹⁸

Kallen’s ideas, comments Schwartz, were “new to Brandeis,” given that most of them were “not part of the standard European Zionist ideology”³⁹⁹ that Brandeis was likely to have learned from de Haas. The effect of Brandeis’s discussion with Kallen, and its contribution to his decision to accept a role as chairman the Provisional Executive Committee is, concedes Schwartz, a “matter of conjecture.” Yet over the next two years, she observes, “Brandeis was to repeat almost verbatim many of [the] points” formulated by Kallen.⁴⁰⁰ From that point on, Brandeis began speaking widely about the Zionist cause, making his own contribution to the understanding of Zionism framed by Horace Kallen. From then on, Brandeis remained actively involved in the promotion of

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 28.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

Americanized Zionism, both domestically and internationally — although he assumed more of a behind-the-scenes role after he was named to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1916.

With Brandeis as chair of the Provisional Executive Committee (PEC), many of his friends and supporters assumed leadership roles in the organization. As Mark Raider comments in The Emergence of American Zionism, the coalition between Progressive reformers and Labor Zionist activists had a decided impact on the nature of American Zionism. Raider adds that “the so-called Brandeis group, an elite coterie of Wilsonian liberals that included some of Kallen’s Perushim,⁴⁰¹ carried out the Zionist organization’s international assignments [...] On the domestic front, too, the Brandeis group’s formulation of American Zionist interests proved fundamental, and here the Perushim” played a critical role.⁴⁰² Likewise, the “campaign to elect the American Jewish Congress, a democratic assembly representing all of American Jewry [...] brought the Brandeis group into close association with the immigrant community.”⁴⁰³ As a result, “a strong bond developed between the Brandeis circle and the Zionist rank and file.”⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ See footnote 292 above.

⁴⁰² Raider, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 28

“The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It”

This section offers a close reading of Brandeis’s 1915 essay, “The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It.” It illustrates the many similarities between the thinking of Kallen and Brandeis, as they developed a uniquely American form of Zionism. This essay helped establish Zionism an effective—and respectable--social movement among American Jews of diverse social locations. As one of the founding texts of Americanized Zionism, it also demonstrates how Zionism became an important way of mobilizing support for U.S. nationalism.

The text was delivered as an address to the Eastern Council of Reform Rabbis in April 1915.⁴⁰⁵ It was one of many addresses delivered by Brandeis shortly after he became chairman of the Provisional Executive Committee. As I will discuss below, throughout this essay, what is not stated is often as important as what is included explicitly—sometimes because it was easily comprehensible to Brandeis’s 1915 audience, at other times because his tacit assumptions frequently hold the most powerful charge of his argument.

In an introductory paragraph, Brandeis begins by naming “the suffering of the Jews” over “nearly twenty centuries” as “the greatest tragedy in history.”⁴⁰⁶ This

⁴⁰⁵ The version of this essay discussed here is based on the collection of the papers of Louis Brandeis housed at the University of Louisville in Louisville, KY. (See www.law.louisville.edu/library/collections/brandeis/node/234, accessed 16 July 2013.) The version of the text discussed here does not include any page numbers; passages are cited according to the section they appear in.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

unelaborated yet thoroughly conventional sentiment functions here mainly to set up the assertion of its reversal: “the present is pre-eminently a time for hopefulness,” Brandeis states, because “the current of world thought is at last preparing the way for our attaining justice.” Specifically, Brandeis argues, “the war is developing opportunities which make possible the solution of the Jewish Problem.”

With this sentence, Brandeis initiates a tacit rhetoric of displacement which continues throughout this essay. The “Jewish Problem,” as a European construct, was not experienced directly by American Jews—particularly not the acculturated and affluent leaders of the Reform movement in the early years of the twentieth century, the original audience for this address. This statement might be understood as an expression of filial concern about the continuing incidence of anti-Jewish violence, most severe in that era in the Russian Empire. Alternatively, it may express a different “Jewish Problem” for acculturated Central European immigrants like Brandeis himself, who were uncertain about the impact that the mass immigration of impoverished Eastern European Jews, numbering more than two million between 1880 and 1914, might have on the social position of earlier arrivals.

Another tacit argument is reflected here in the unelaborated statement that “the war is developing opportunities,” a statement that launches the framing of Brandeis’s argument in terms of the great power politics of the day, a perspective that will continue throughout the essay. The principal “opportunity” perceived by Britain and its allies among the European great powers was the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, a theme

which Brandeis returns to throughout the essay—without, however, ever making explicit that he is talking about the Ottomans, or what “our attaining justice” would consist of—and for whom. Brandeis, significantly, sees the world from the vantage point of the British Empire—at a moment that was a full two years before the United States entered what was known as the time as the Great War and today is referred to as World War I.

Following these comments on Brandeis’s introductory paragraph, my discussion follows the sections as they were presented in the original text.

What the Problem Is

In the first full section of this essay, Brandeis voices his question in these terms: “[h]ow can we secure for Jews ... the same rights and opportunities enjoyed by non-Jews?” This language echoes the Basel Declaration, adopted in 1897 by the first Zionist Congress, organized by Theodor Herzl,⁴⁰⁷ which marked the birth of political Zionism. Here and throughout this essay, Brandeis begins each argument with a “we” that is never specified. Is he referring to “we Jews,” “we Jewish leaders (or Jewish elites),” or “we Zionists?” The distinction is never clarified, which allows Brandeis to speak from global Jewish identity that is assumed but never defined.

Even more significant is the use of the term “secure,” which implies an overarching power which could define the legal and juridical system under which Jews live

⁴⁰⁷ For details see the Jewish Virtual Library (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/First_Cong_&_Basel_Program.html, downloaded 21 March 2016).

(though then, as now, there was no single such system). Who, however, is this power? It is not likely that he is referring to the U.S. government, because Jews resident in the United States already enjoyed “the same rights and opportunities” as other U.S. citizens—nor, at this moment, did Brandeis or other Zionist leaders advocate for any specific actions by the U.S. government. Nor is it likely that he is referring to the Ottoman Empire, the ruling power in historic Palestine since the sixteenth century. Is he referring to the British Empire? To the European powers more generally—in their guise as the arbiters of “civilization?” Again, the meaning of this phrase is never specified, leaving his meaning open.

Also significant is Brandeis’s use of the word “opportunities,” which is generally understood as a reference to capitalist economic relations. As I note in chapter 3, the trope of “opportunity,” so enthusiastically greeted by American Jews, tacitly relies on the expropriation of Indian land and genocidal violence toward Native Americans (see p. 96).

In the next paragraph, Brandeis introduces a theme that separates this essay sharply from his previous adherence to Enlightenment ideas about individual rights, when he introduces the idea of collective or group rights. Brandeis distinguishes the situation of the “individual Jew” and “that of Jews collectively,” stating that any individual Jew should enjoy same rights as any other individual, while collectively Jews should have same rights “as do other groups of people.” Although he does not draw

attention to it here, this statement also represents a marked deviation from the values espoused by his target audience of Reform rabbis.

From there, Brandeis turns to a sharp critique of religious authorities, when he advances an understanding of the perennial question of “who is a Jew” that is both a secularist and politicized. He is critical of “Councils of Rabbis” that attempt to assert the power “to prescribe [...] that only those shall be deemed Jews who professedly adhere to the orthodox or reformed faith.” In contesting this formulation, he is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt’s understanding of identity as contingent on political context,⁴⁰⁸ when he asserts that the “meaning of the word Jewish in the term Jewish Problem must be accepted as co-extensive with the disabilities which it is our problem to remove.” The term “disabilities,” in this context, refer to what today would be called legalized (*de jure*) discrimination. In the next sentence, he returns to the more essentialist and racialized understandings of his day, when he goes on to say that such “disabilities extend substantially to all of Jewish blood.”

Brandeis concludes this section by offering an essentially postmodern appreciation of Jewish identity, when he adds that “we Jews, by our own acts, give a like definition to the term Jew.” The bonds of fellow feeling go “out to them instinctively in whatever country they may live, and without inquiring into the shades of their belief or unbelief.” Likewise, ethnic pride is not diminished “even if they have abjured the faith

⁴⁰⁸ See Hannah Arendt, “The Enlightenment and the Jewish Question” (pp. 3-18), in Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, eds., The Jewish Writings, New York: Schocken Books, 2007.

like Spinoza, Marx, Disraeli or Heine.” Returning to his rejection of religious authorities, Brandeis ends by affirming once again that “[d]espite the meditations of pundits or the decrees of council”—an apparent reference to the still emergent structures of the Reform Movement—“our own instincts and acts, and those of others, have defined for us the term Jew.”

Liberalism and Anti-Semitism

In the next section, Brandeis turns to Jewish emancipation in Western Europe and the hope it inspired that “Jewish disabilities would disappear before growing liberalism.” The call in Western Europe for “religious toleration” suggested that “a solution to the Jewish Problem seemed in sight.” Similarly, the political ascendancy of the ideology of “the rights of man” promised that “the complete emancipation of the Jews seemed at hand.”

As before, however, Brandeis is evoking an interpretation of history in order to refute it. He begins by noting considerable gains in civic and legal equality in “central and western Europe,” where “the Ghetto walls crumbled” and “the ball and chain of restraint were removed”—a situation that “seems almost ideal” when contrasted to “the cruel discrimination to which Jews are now subjected in Russia and Roumania [sic].”

“Anti-Jewish prejudice,” however, was not eradicated even in those parts of Europe where “civil liberty and democracy triumphed,” thus extending “fully to Jews ‘the rights of man.’” Brandeis offers the examples of the rise of antisemitism as a

racialized political movement in Germany,⁴⁰⁹ “a year after the granting of universal suffrage,” and the Dreyfus affair in France,⁴¹⁰ “a century after the French Revolution had brought ‘emancipation’.”⁴¹¹ Other examples he cites are the Aliens Act in Britain,⁴¹² “within a few years after the last of Jewish disabilities had been there removed by law,” and the Saratoga incident in the United States,⁴¹³ which “reminded us, long ago, that we too have a Jewish question.”

Brandeis completes this section by describing the “disease” of antisemitism as “universal and endemic.” He distinguishes the situation in the Russian Empire, which

⁴⁰⁹ Antisemitism emerged as a racialized political movement in Germany in the 1870s. For details see Werner Bergman and Ulrich Wyrwa, “The Making of Anti-Semitism as a Political Movement,” *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, July 2012.

⁴¹⁰ Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish captain in the French army, was falsely accused of passing secrets to the German army in 1894. His case became notorious as a marker of persistent antisemitism in French society. For details see the Jewish Virtual Library (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/anti-semitism/Dreyfus.html); downloaded 21 March 2016).

⁴¹¹ While Brandeis is correct in identifying France as the first modern European nation to extend Jewish emancipation, it was an initiative not of the French Revolution but of the post-revolutionary government of Napoleon Bonaparte.

⁴¹² The Aliens Act of 1905 was British legislation banning immigration from outside the British Empire, passed in response to growing immigration from Eastern Europe, especially by Jews. For details see the Jewish Virtual Library (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/judaica/ejud_0002_0001_0_00811.html), downloaded 21 March 2016).

⁴¹³ The Saratoga Incident occurred in 1877, when an elite hotel in Saratoga, NY, refused admittance to a wealthy Jewish banker, Joseph Seligman. The incident received extensive publicity at the time and was doubtless familiar to Brandeis’s audience.

he deems most serious, “with their Pale of Settlement” and “recurrent pogroms”⁴¹⁴; the significant discrimination faced by Jews in Germany; and “the mere social disabilities of other lands.” These are differences, he states, “in degree and not in kind.” Despite these differences, Brandeis repeats, the “Jewish Problem is single and universal.” It is, however, not “eternal. It may be solved,” a comment that refers back to this essay’s title.

Democracy and Nationality

In this section, Brandeis takes up the question of why “liberalism has failed to eliminate the anti-Jewish prejudice.” Because, he argues, “the liberal movement has not yet brought full liberty” —by which he means that countries with strong liberal traditions (or, as he says, “enlightened countries”) have “individual equality before the law,” yet “fail still to recognize the equality of whole peoples or nationalities.” The liberal approach founders, concludes Brandeis, because “[w]e seek to protect as individuals those constituting a minority; but we fail to realize that protection cannot be complete unless group equality also is recognized.”

This more individualized version of liberalism falls short, argues Brandeis, because it fails to take into account that “[d]eeply embedded in every people” is the need to contribute “their stone to the pyramid of history,” a phrase quoted from Giuseppe Mazzini, a leader of the Italian national movement’s group Young Italy and

⁴¹⁴ The Kishinev pogrom of 1903, which cost the lives 49 Jews through riots that broke out on Easter Sunday, as local police forces turned a blind eye, would have been familiar to Brandeis’s audience. For details see Monty Noam Penkower, “The Kishinev Pogrom of 1903: A Turning Point in Jewish History,” *Modern Judaism* 24.3, 2004, pp. 187-225.

theoretician of nationalism.⁴¹⁵ Brandeis continues in his own voice to say that “[n]ationality, like democracy,” has been a potent force animating progress, through giving hope and meaning (and, as Brandeis adds, “manhood”) to entire peoples. National self-assertion has worked, he says, for Ireland, the “southern Slavs” (a reference to what was to become Yugoslavia), Belgium, Greece, and Italy—and even the Welsh, “who had no grievance” with the British government, in Brandeis’s appreciation, but expressed their national feeling through the revival “of the old Cymric tongue.” In each of these cases, the peoples involved “developed because, as Mazzini said, they were enabled to proclaim ‘to the world that they also live, think, love, and labor for the benefit of all.’”

In the balance of this section, Brandeis addresses the question of whether the national self-assertion that he is advocating leads necessarily to military conquest and territorial expansion. “In the past,” he says, “it has been generally assumed that the full development of one people necessarily involved its domination over others.” What he terms “strong nationalities” are likely to “assume their own superiority, and come to believe that they possess the divine right to subject other people to their sway. [...] Wars of aggrandizement follow as a natural result of this belief.”

In concluding this section, Brandeis relies on an analogy with individual aggression—which he describes as inevitable in human communities “before democracy

⁴¹⁵ No citation is included in the text, leaving it unclear which of Mazzini’s many works Brandeis is quoting from. Mazzini’s words also echo the logic of Horace Kallen’s statements about the contributions of Jews and other “nationalities” to the “American symphony” (see p. 100).

became a common possession"--that is, it is "democracy" that makes it possible for people to live together peaceably. In the remainder of this paragraph, Brandeis appears to retreat from his advocacy of group rights to return to a more individualized understanding, when he states that "liberty came to mean the right to enjoy life, to acquire property, to pursue happiness in such manner and to such extent as the exercise of the right in each is consistent with the exercise of a like right by every other of our fellow-citizens." This classic conception of liberty "underlies twentieth century democracy" -- which, for Brandeis, has triumphed in "the western world." Even where it is not accepted as a "political right, its ethical claim is gaining recognition": in the optimistic (and profoundly teleological) vision of the early twentieth century, the regnant idea of democracy was judged to be an unstoppable force of history, whose eventual triumph was only a matter of time.

In the paragraph's closing sentence, Brandeis returns to his earlier advocacy of collective or group rights by saying that "our best hope for civilization lies not in uniformity, but in wide differentiation." This statement does not seem to follow the discussion of "liberty" in this paragraph; its implications, however, are drawn out in the following two sections.

Nations and Nationality

The next section, "Nations and Nationality," offers Brandeis's definitions of these key terms in a single long paragraph. The difference between the two, he notes, "is clear; but it is not always observed." In this context, "nation" for Brandeis seems to mean what

would be termed a “nation-state” in contemporary usage; the examples he provides include imperial powers, such as Britain and France, as well as smaller European countries.

Brandeis turns quickly to his main focus in this section, the concept of “nationality.” He continues by noting that “[l]ikeness between members is the essence of nationality, but the members of a nation may be very different. A nation,” he adds, “may be composed of many nationalities, as some of the most successful nations are.”

Brandeis’s list of “successful” nations begins with Britain, “with its division into English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish at home”⁴¹⁶; the phrase “at home” is an apparent reference to the imperial character of British rule, which, at the time this essay was written, was presumed to be permanent. The next “successful nation” to be mentioned is France, whose description begins with French Canadians and continues “throughout the Empire” with “scores of other nationalities.” The paragraph continues with smaller European countries, including Switzerland and Belgium, and concludes with “the American nation which comprises nearly all the white nationalities.” This sudden insertion of race into the discussion of nationality may explain some of the gaps in the

⁴¹⁶ The Irish Republic gained its independence in 1921, well after Brandeis wrote his address. The Easter Rebellion of 1916 was defeated by the British government; later, the division of Ireland between the primarily Protestant Northern Ireland, which remained part of Britain, and the primarily Catholic Irish Republic was declared in 1921.

discussion of the British and French Empires, as well as why French Canada is included as a “nationality” in the discussion of France.⁴¹⁷

Brandeis continues by asserting that the “unity of a nationality is a fact of nature” while “the unification into a nation is largely the work of man.” He also laments the “false doctrine that nation and nationality must be made co-extensive,” which he describes as “the cause of some of our greatest tragedies” and “in large part, the cause also of the present war,” a reference to World War I. The costs of this “false doctrine” include “cruel, futile attempts at enforced assimilation, like the Russianizing of Finland and Poland, and the Prussianizing of Posen, Schleswig-Holstein, and Alsace-Lorraine.” The countervailing threat is posed by the “panistic” movements,⁴¹⁸ which Brandeis critiques as serving as “a cloak for territorial ambitions.”

Brandeis concludes this paragraph by stating “[a]s a nation may develop though composed of many nationalities, so a nationality may develop though forming parts of several nations. The essential in either case,” he emphasizes, “is recognition of the equal rights of each nationality.”

⁴¹⁷ The French colonies in North America were transferred to British rule in 1763, and Canada was confederated as an independent polity in 1867, becoming part of the British Commonwealth.

⁴¹⁸ “Panistic” is a reference to the “pan-Slavic” or “pan-Germanic” movements of the day. (See fn 6, p. 20, in Brandeis on Zionism, published in 1942 by the Zionist Organization of America and reprinted in 1999 by the Lawbook Exchange (law@lawbookexchange.com).

Jewish Nationality

As Brandeis's argument continues, he turns to a recognized expert of his day, W. Allison Philips, who offers the following definition of "nationality" in a 1915 article⁴¹⁹:

"[a]n extensive aggregate of persons, conscious of a community of sentiments, experiences, or qualities which make them feel themselves a distinct people." The quote continues by citing such elements as "race, language, religion, common habitat, common conditions, mode of life and manners, political association." Such elements, says Philips, are "never all present at the same time, and none of them is essential." Philips continues by adding that "a common habitat and common conditions" may be "powerful influences at times in determining nationality." Nonetheless—and here Brandeis concludes his quote—"what part do they play in that of the Jews or the Greeks, or the Irish in dispersion?"

In the next paragraph, Brandeis elaborates on his interpretation of Philips: "See how this high authority assumes without question that the Jews are, despite their dispersion, a distinct nationality; and he groups us with the Greeks⁴²⁰ or the Irish, two

⁴¹⁹ Cited as "Europe and the Problem of Nationality," *The Edinburgh Review*, January, 1915, pp. 27-29. W. Allison Philips (1864-1950) was a noted British historian and prolific author; interestingly, he is also remembered as an opponent of Irish home rule. Facsimile versions of many of his books are available through the Hathi Trust Digital Library (see <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000400297>).

⁴²⁰ The reference is to modern Greece; see Philips's 1897 book, *The War of Greek Independence, 1821 to 1833* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co.); facsimile version at <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000653995>).

other peoples of marked individuality." Brandeis then loops back to Philip's definition of nationality: "Can it be doubted that we Jews, aggregating 14,000,000 people, are 'an extensive aggregate of persons'; that we are 'conscious of a community of sentiments, experiences and qualities which make us feel ourselves a distinct people', whether we admit it or not? "

Next, Brandeis disposes of possible objections: "It is no answer to this evidence of nationality to declare that the Jews are not an absolutely pure race." Such absence of racial purity, he concedes, is due no doubt to the "intermixture of foreign blood in the 3000 years which constitute our historic period." Nonetheless, "owing to persecution and prejudice," intermarriage "has brought very few additions" but has rather resulted in a decline in Jewish numbers. "The percentage of foreign blood in the Jews of today is very low," he asserts. "Probably no important European race is as pure."

Moreover, argues Brandeis, "common race is only one of the elements which determine nationality." Common experiences are "equally, perhaps more, important." Brandeis lists several kinds of common experiences: religion and its associated customs which have "bound us together," even though the Jewish population is "scattered throughout the world"; "common suffering," which has intensified feelings of "brotherhood"; and "the segregation of the Jew," which Brandeis takes to be a universal experience across history, "so long continued" as to "intensify our 'peculiarities' and make them almost ineradicable."

The Assertion of Jewish Nationality

Brandeis begins this section by asserting an analogy between the importance of individual development for “each child,” for whom “the aim of education should be to develop his own individuality, not to make him an imitator, not to assimilate him to others.” Brandeis argues that obviously the same principle holds true “when applied to whole peoples.” From there he asserts the “individuality” of “the Jew” coupled with the inherent worth of Jewish cultural traits: “Does any possess common ideas,” he asks, “better worth expressing?” Of all peoples, “those of two tiny states stand preeminent as contributors to our present civilization: the Greeks and the Jews.” The Jews, says Brandeis, “gave to the world its three greatest religions, reverence for law, and the highest conceptions of morality.” What Brandeis glosses as the Jewish teaching of “brotherhood and righteousness,” he argues, has “under the name of democracy and social justice, become the twentieth century striving of America and western Europe.” By the same token, “our conception of law is embodied in the American constitution,” which “proclaims this as ‘a government of laws and not of men.’” For the “triumph of our other great teaching, the doctrine of peace,” the ongoing war (described by Brandeis as “this cruel war”) is “paving the way.”

In the next paragraph, Brandeis draws out what he takes to be the most important choice posed for Jews by World War I. “While every other people,” he asks, “is striving for development by asserting its nationality [...] shall we voluntarily yield to anti-Semitism and, instead of solving our ‘problem,’ end it by noble suicide?” In

answering this patently rhetorical question, “let us make it clear to the world,” says Brandeis, “that we too are a nationality striving for equal rights to life and to self-expression.”

To bolster his argument, Brandeis turns to a “high non-Jewish authority,” R. W. Seton-Watson, quoting a passage in which Seton-Watson expresses the hope that the war will “give a new and healthy impetus” to a national Jewish existence.⁴²¹ For a contemporary sensibility, Seton-Watson’s philosemitism turns quickly to antisemitism, as he contrasts the “splendid qualities” of the Jews to the “false shame” that inspires Jews to conceal their identity—which, as Seton-Watson explains, is a primary cause of anti-Jewish prejudice and discrimination, implying that Jewish people themselves bear the chief responsibility for their oppression. Brandeis quotes with approval a lengthy passage in which Seton-Watson hopes that the war will give “freer play to [the Jews’] splendid qualities” as well as to “shake off the false shame” that leads Jews to “assume so many alien disguises.” It is “high time,” Seton-Watson continues,

that the Jews should realize that few things do more to foster anti-Semitic feeling than this very tendency to [...] conceal their true identity. The Zionists ... have long ago won the respect and admiration of the world. No race has ever defied assimilation so stubbornly and so successfully; and the modern tendency of individual Jews to repudiate what is one of

⁴²¹ Cited to *The War and Democracy*, by R. W. Seton-Watson et al., London, Macmillan, 1914, p. 284 (facsimile edition at <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002991911>). A second edition of the book was published in 1918. Seton-Watson (1857-1951) was known primarily as an advocate of national independence for various groups within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, particularly what became the nations of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia after World War I. His activities earned him the enmity of some in the British government, but were financed by his personal wealth, which dated back to his great-grandfather George Seton of the East India Company.

their chief glories suggests an almost comic resolve to fight against the course of nature.

With this conclusion—one of Brandeis’s few forays into the classic European Zionist ideology and its “negation of the diaspora,”⁴²² Brandeis is ready to turn to a direct discussion of Zionism.

Zionism

Brandeis situates his discussion of the Zionist movement as “standing against this broad foundation of nationality.” Crucially, he begins this section with a description of what Zionism “is not”—in particular, that it is not a movement to compel Jews (or anyone else) to resettle in Palestine; rather, “it is a movement to give Jews more, not less freedom.” Jews are compared to “practically every other people in the world,” who have the option “to live in the land of their fathers or in some other country.” Implicit in this statement is the limitation of this option to European nation-states; Brandeis makes much of the equivalence of the rights of “small nations as well as large,” but all of the examples he cites here are of European countries. Non-European peoples are either excluded from “civilization” by being dismissed as “savages,” or (as in the case of colonial India) are considered to be unprepared to enjoy the “freedoms” of civilized life. (My next chapter, “Zionism and Critical Theory,” explores the gulf between what has

⁴²² In many currents of classical Zionism, Jewish existence in the diaspora is suspended between the twin poles of the false promise of equality offered by Jewish emancipation, and the disappearance of Jewish identity threatened by assimilation. Only by transcending their diasporic existence, according to this understanding of Zionism, can modern Jews attain an authentic national life.

been termed “the west and the rest”; see especially the chapter’s initial section, “Sovereignty and Secularism.”)

The passage of centuries, even millennia, is elided when Jewish existence is compared to “Irish, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, or Belgian” life, all of which are mentioned as examples of smaller peoples or nations who “may now exercise” the right to live where they choose “as freely as Germans or English.” Following the conventional historical narrative (or, perhaps, origin myth) fashioned by the Zionist movement of his day, Brandeis assumes the transhistorical existence of an autonomous polity in ancient Israel, collapsing any distinction between ancient Israel and the European nation-states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He also fails to mention here the existence of such ancient empires as the Egyptians, Assyrians, or Babylonians, even though their presence and impact is ubiquitous in the narratives of the Hebrew Bible.⁴²³ (As will be seen below, however, at the close of this section these ancient empires are introduced into the discussion—when it supports the argument that Brandeis is crafting.)

Also implicit in Brandeis’s discussion is the complete invisibility of Palestinians, who are referenced neither as people nor as “a people.” Although it is never referenced explicitly, the Ottoman Empire, which appears in later sections of this essay, stands in for the Palestinian residents of this territory. Human life is thus understood exclusively

⁴²³ In the biblical narrative, for example, the northern kingdom (Judah) fell to the Assyrians after perhaps two generations of existing as the united monarchy of Judah and Israel; most discussions of the united monarchy, in Brandeis’s time and up until the present day, treat it as if it were eternal.

as existence as part of a sovereign polity, an understanding that has continued until today.

In the next paragraph, Brandeis articulates the aims of Zionist movement. Each phrase in this key paragraph merits careful examination. The first, quite lengthy, sentence specifies that the movement's efforts are aimed at "such Jews as choose to go there [...] and their descendants"; only a voluntaristic Zionism, or perhaps Zionism for someone other than those being addressed, could hope to achieve acceptance from Brandeis's audience of Reform rabbis.

Next the Zionist project is described as establishment of a "legally secured home" in Palestine. As noted above on p. 114, not specified is what overarching power will "secure" it—or under what juridical system. The sentence continues "where they may live together and lead a Jewish life." Although there is ample evidence of Brandeis claiming his own identity as a Jew throughout his life, it is also known that he never led a "Jewish" life in the sense of religious observance.⁴²⁴ Once again he is addressing the presumed wishes of someone else, rather than speaking for himself.

In this Jewish home, Brandeis adds, "they may expect ultimately to constitute a majority of the population." Here again Brandeis is relying on tacit argumentation, since

⁴²⁴ See Urofsky's (op. cit.) biographical sketch in chapter 1, "Louisville Roots," especially pp. 18-19. The Brandeis family, as was typical of Central European Jews of their era, esteemed culture and intellectual achievement, but were not involved in religious observance. In "Isaiah's Flame," meanwhile, Allon Gal notes that the longtime "roots of Brandeis's progressivism are the messianic family tradition, that is, the belief in Jacob Frank's universal redemptive message, and the tradition of European revolutions of 1848" (see "Isaiah's Flame," op. cit., p. 208).

he never clarifies on what this “expectation” is based.⁴²⁵ Likewise, the Jewish settlers in Palestine “may look forward to what we should call home rule,” a reference to the Irish independence movement of the day.⁴²⁶ Brandeis is thus advocating “home rule” as opposed to sovereignty—another indication that Brandeis imagined the prospective Jewish “commonwealth” in Palestine as a British dependency.

“The Zionists seek to establish this home in Palestine,” adds Brandeis, “because they are convinced that the undying longing of Jews for Palestine is a fact of deepest significance.” He continues with his own interpretation of this claim, which he argues is a “manifestation in the struggle for existence by an ancient people which has established its right to live.” Note here that a new concept, the “right to live,” has been added to Brandeis’s lengthy discussion of “nationality” in the previous three sections. Fleshing out this idea, Brandeis describes the Jews as “a people whose three thousand years of civilization has produced a faith, culture and individuality which enable it to contribute largely in the future, as it has in the past, to the advance of civilization.” Zionists believe, adds Brandeis, that “only in Palestine can Jewish life be protected from forces of

⁴²⁵ In 1914, the Jewish population of historic Palestine was estimated at 7.6 percent of the total population of the territory. (Based on <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=000636#graph1>, accessed 21 July 2013.) The figures cited here do not distinguish between more recent settlers—known by the Zionist movement of the time as the “New Yishuv”—and the historic Jewish minority in Ottoman Palestine, which they termed the “Old Yishuv.”

⁴²⁶ In Ireland, a range of different legislative and paramilitary efforts to achieve either home rule or independence persisted from the 1870s to 1921. At the time this essay was published in 1915, “home rule” referred to limited self-government, rather than independence. (See also footnote 422 above.)

disintegration; that there alone can the Jewish spirit reach its full and natural development." Once again, Brandeis is careful to specify that his version of Zionism is directed to "securing for those Jews who wish to settle there the opportunity to do so," which will redound to the benefit of "not only those Jews but all other Jews." At the close of this long and complex paragraph, Brandeis returns to the title of this essay, arguing that Zionism promises that "the long perplexing Jewish Problem will, at last, find solution."

The essay continues with a short paragraph reasserting the voluntaristic nature of this understanding of Zionism. "They believe" — that is, the Zionists — "that to accomplish this it is not necessary that the Jewish population of Palestine be large as compared with the whole number of Jews in the world." In a departure from his previously highly charged evocation of biblical history (see p. 125 above), Brandeis completes this thought with a dry recitation of historical information:

throughout centuries when the Jewish influence was greatest, during the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman Empires, only a relatively small part of the Jews lived in Palestine; and only a small part of the Jews returned from Babylon when the Temple was rebuilt.

In the next paragraph, which completes the section on Zionism, Brandeis returns to the emotional, almost messianic, tone with which he began:

Since the destruction of the Temple, nearly two thousand years ago, the longing for Palestine has been ever present with the Jew. It was the hope of a return to the land of his fathers that buoyed up the Jew amidst persecution, and for the realization of which the devout ever prayed.

The Zionist movement, asserts Brandeis, has transformed this pious hope into a historical possibility: "Until a generation ago this was a hope merely, a wish piously prayed for, but not worked for."

Brandeis's articulation of Zionism relies on the example of successful national movements of the early twentieth century:

The Zionist movement is idealistic, but it is also essentially practical. It seeks to realize that hope; to make the dream of a Jewish life in a Jewish land come true as other great dreams of the world have been realized, by men working with devotion, intelligence, and self-sacrifice. It was thus that the dream of Italian independence and unity, after centuries of vain hope, came true; [...] that the dream of Greek, of Bulgarian and of Serbian independence became facts.

Zionism a Fact

The next section marshals evidence that the Zionist program is well on its way to becoming a reality: "The rebirth of the Jewish nation is no longer a mere dream," Brandeis asserts, but "is in process of accomplishment in a most practical way" (practicality being the highest possible praise for Brandeis the Progressive reformer). Before delving into the details of the matter, however, Brandeis tarries with his story, which, he says, "is a wonderful one."

In the next paragraph, Brandeis describes what is known as the First Aliyah:

[A] few Jewish emigrants from Russia and from Roumania, instead of proceeding westward to this hospitable country [i.e., the United States] where they might easily have secured material prosperity, turned eastward for the purpose of settling in the land of their fathers.

This way of telling the story serves to emphasize the links between his U.S. audience and these early Zionist settlers, who might well have joined the millions of Jewish immigrants who left Russia and Eastern Europe for the United States. It also permits him to frame this early wave of immigrants as an expression of the difficult yet noble task of “settling in the land of their fathers.”

The story continues to emphasize the drama of these early attempts at settlement—leading up to the ultimate reversal of enormous obstacles, a rhetorical device that Brandeis has used before in this essay (see, for example, the discussion on p. 113 of Brandeis’s introductory paragraph). “To the worldly wise,” he concedes, “these efforts at colonization appeared very foolish.” The plan faced obstacles presented by “nature and man,” and the colonists were “ill equipped for their task, save in their spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice.”

The paragraph continues as Brandeis describes for the first time conditions under the Ottoman Empire, which, as noted above, is never referenced explicitly: “the land, harassed by centuries of misrule, was treeless and apparently sterile, and it was infested with malaria.” In another tacit reference to the Ottoman Empire, Brandeis adds that “the Government offered them no security, either as to life or property”—a tacit comparison, perhaps, to British as well as American society, where the security of property owners was of paramount importance, as well as the personal security of (racially) privileged residents.

The balance of this paragraph continues the story of the failure of these early efforts at settlement: "The colonists themselves were not only unfamiliar with the character of the country, but were ignorant of the farmer's life which they proposed to lead." Their lack of familiarity with farming is attributed to the discriminatory character of the legal systems they lived under in Czarist Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, since, as the sentence notes in continuation, "the Jews of Russia and Roumania had been generally denied the opportunity of owning or working land." The settlers, adds Brandeis, "were not inured to the physical hardships to which the life of a pioneer is necessarily subjected. To these hardships and to malaria many succumbed." Even those who survived these trials, he continues, "were long confronted with failure."

In the paragraph's final sentence, this unrelieved story of failure is suddenly reversed, when, says Brandeis: "at last success came." No details are offered to explain this turn of events, perhaps because Brandeis is now nearing a key narrative juncture, recasting Zionist settlers as "Jewish Pilgrim Fathers." At this point ideologically charged sloganeering takes hold of the text, which proceeds to assert that attaining success for Zionist settlement has established "two fundamental propositions:

"First: That Palestine is fit for the modern Jew.

"Second: That the modern Jew is fit for Palestine."

Brandeis's "fundamental propositions" complete his account of the reversal of fortune. This segment of his tale concludes by noting that "[o]ver forty self-governing Jewish colonies attest to this remarkable achievement."

Obscured by Brandeis's presentation is the fact that the First Aliyah – which, as he notes, was largely unsuccessful as a settlement enterprise – had been overtaken after several decades by a larger and more effective wave of Zionist immigration, known as the Second Aliyah. Most important to Brandeis, perhaps, is structuring the story in a way that permits introducing the trope of “Jewish Pilgrim Fathers” (see p. 129 above), a key rhetorical device developed by Brandeis that has had a lasting impact on the emergence of an Americanized form of Zionism.

The section continues with another story of reversal, in which the barren landscape described above has been reclaimed:

This land, treeless a generation ago, supposed to be sterile and hopelessly arid, has been shown to have been treeless and sterile because of man's misrule. It has been shown to be capable of becoming again a land “flowing with milk and honey.” Oranges and grapes, olives and almonds, wheat and other cereals are now growing there in profusion.

This laudatory description of the agricultural output of the “Jewish colonies” concludes the process through which the Zionist settlement of Palestine has been identified with the European settlement of America, at the same time that it is refigured as a “rebirth” of the land of ancient Israel through the biblical reference to “milk and honey.” Jewish immigrants, of course, were not among the land-hungry peasants who flocked to farm the territories opened up by the settlement of the United States; they found divergent opportunities of employment (and enrichment) in commerce and industry. Here Brandeis echoes the discourse of European Zionists (and the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, before them), in arguing that Jews should normalize their existence by

working the land rather than engaging in commerce. No suggestion is included, of course, that his American audience should do likewise.

The penultimate paragraph of this section changes its focus from agriculture to “spiritual and social development,” indirectly referencing the “new Jew” promised by classic Zionism, through changes “in the character and habits of the population,” coupled with institutional developments “in education, in health and in social order.” The most important such achievement, notes Brandeis, is the revival of Hebrew, “which has again become a language of the common intercourse of men,” after being considered a “dead language for nearly two thousand years.” (Needless to say, Brandeis does not consider the survival of Hebrew or Aramaic in either Jewish liturgy or Talmudic study.) Hebrew, he notes, can be used to facilitate communication among settlers of different national origins. But, he adds, “the effect of the renaissance of the Hebrew tongue is far greater than that of unifying the Jews. It is a potent factor in reviving the essentially Jewish spirit,” one of many references by Brandeis to the Romantic notion of “spirit.”

With this observation, Brandeis has completed his review of the current accomplishments of Zionism. “Our Jewish Pilgrim Fathers have laid the foundation,” he concludes. “It remains for us to build the superstructure.”

Zionism and Patriotism

In the next section, Brandeis seeks to dispose of the specter of “dual loyalty,” long a key argument against Zionism of the Reform Movement. “Let no American imagine that Zionism is inconsistent with patriotism” he begins, arguing that “multiple

loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent." Varied types of belonging and civic engagement render a man [sic] "a better American by being also a loyal citizen of his state, and of his city," followed by to loyalty to his family, his profession or trade, and his college or lodge. The discussion then shifts from these types of civic belonging to international movements of activism and advocacy that were current at the time "Every Irish American who contributed to advancing home rule," Brandeis states, "is a better man and a better American for the sacrifice he made." Likewise, every American Jew who aids in "advancing the Jewish settlement of Palestine, though he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there," is "a better man and a better American" because of this engagement. As with the discussion of the experience of Zionist settlement in the previous section, the language of "sacrifice" indexes this extension of the idea of patriotism, which Brandeis is detaching here from its established meaning of acting on behalf of the state and its initiatives.

In the next paragraph, Brandeis returns to quoting R. W. Seton-Watson's War and Democracy:

"America is full of nationalities which, while accepting with enthusiasm their new American citizenship, nevertheless look to some centre in the old world as the source and inspiration of their national culture and traditions. The most typical instance is the feeling of the American Jew for Palestine which may well become a focus for his declass   kinsmen in other parts of the world."⁴²⁷

⁴²⁷ See ftn 427 above; this passage is cited to p. 290.

This passage from Seton-Watson again dismisses the experience of emancipated or assimilated Jews as “déclassé,” at the same time as it supports Brandeis’s effort to legitimize the loyalties of immigrants to their countries of origin. As before, the analogy to Irish Americans serves to obscure the experience of American Jews through a double displacement, in which the “old world” of Europe is replaced by the eternal homeland of Palestine.

In the next paragraph, Brandeis argues that there is “no inconsistency between loyalty to America and loyalty to Jewry.” Seton-Watson’s claim that the “modern tendency” of Jews is to “conceal their true identity,” representing an effort to “fight the course of nature” (see p. 145 above), is contravened by Brandeis’s assertion that the “Jewish spirit [...] is essentially modern and essentially American.”

Brandeis devotes the next paragraph to fleshing out this characterization of the “Jewish spirit.” He notes that “America’s fundamental law seeks to make real the brotherhood of man. That brotherhood became the Jewish fundamental law more than twenty-five hundred years ago.” The identification of Jews and America continue throughout the balance of this paragraph:

America’s insistent demand in the twentieth century is for social justice. That also has been the Jews’ striving for ages. Their affliction as well as their religion has prepared the Jews for effective democracy. Persecution broadened their sympathies. It trained them in patient endurance, in self-control, and in sacrifice. It made them think as well as suffer. It deepened the passion for righteousness.

Brandeis's identification here of Jewishness and Americanism is an important expression of what Jonathan Sarna described as the "cult of synthesis."⁴²⁸

Brandeis concludes his discussion of Zionism and patriotism by taking the preceding points as proof that "loyalty to America demands rather that each American Jew become a Zionist." Rather than offering an argument, however, the discussion calls upon the terms and concepts it has mobilized throughout the preceding discussion of nationalities. **LL: show move** Participation in Zionist endeavors, he affirms, will have an "ennobling effect" that will "develop the best that is in us," so that we can "give to this country the full benefit of our great inheritance." The repository of that inheritance, "the Jewish spirit," with the longevity of its development through "centuries of sacrifice," should be "preserved and developed further," so that "in America as elsewhere the sons of the race may live lives and do deeds worthy of their ancestors." In this paragraph, logical argumentation is beside the point; the focus has moved to the romantic vocabulary of nobility, spirit, sacrifice, and inheritance. Only through such means may American Jews become "worthy of their ancestors."

America's Demand

Having laid out these messianic hopes, in the next section Brandeis contrasts such promises with the countervailing threat. "We must protect America and ourselves from demoralization," he warns—a menace to which "Zionism alone seems capable of

⁴²⁸ See "Perspectives on American Jews and U.S. Nationalism" above in chapter 1.

affording effective aid.” The culprit in this case is “our land of liberty,” where “all the restraints by which the Jews were protected in their Ghettos were removed,” leaving “a new generation [...] without necessary moral and spiritual support.” In response, “the only possible remedy [...] is the laborious task of inculcating self-respect, a task which can be accomplished only by restoring the ties of the Jew to the noble past of his race, and by making him realize the possibilities of a no less glorious future.” Here Brandeis echoes what today we would call the internalized oppression of the *maskilim*,⁴²⁹ by suggesting that self-respect is something that emancipated Jews need to learn. “The sole bulwark against demoralization,” he continues, “is to develop in each new generation of Jews in America the sense of noblesse oblige” – a goal that can best be achieved “by actively participating in some way in furthering the ideals of the Jewish renaissance; and this can be done effectively only through furthering the Zionist movement.” Here Brandeis is identifying Zionism as a unique source of progress in Jewish life.

In his next paragraph, Brandeis strays into frankly utopian discourse. “In the Jewish colonies of Palestine,” he says, “there are no Jewish criminals; because everyone [...] is led to feel the glory of his people and his obligation to carry forward its ideals.” He continues in this vein for the rest of the paragraph, cataloguing the inventors, scientists, craftsmen, and even the *shomrim* (guards) created by the “new Palestinian Jewry” to guard against the “criminal element.” (Since Brandeis has just stated that “there are no Jewish criminals,” one can only assume that the “criminal element”

⁴²⁹ The *maskilim* were Jewish followers of the Enlightenment.

referenced here are Palestinian Arabs; see “Pioneering and Settlement” in chapter 3 above, where Arabs are clearly identified as “robbers” on p. 95 and elsewhere.)

Zionism has also brought “inspiration to the Jews in the Diaspora,” Brandeis continues, quoting a prominent British journalist of the day, Henry Wickham Steed. The quote Brandeis selects from Steed praises Zionism by highlighting its difference from the abject Jews of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Here, Steed emphasizes the masculinization afforded by Zionism for Jewish students at Austrian universities: “Zionist students could gash cheeks quite as effectually as any Teuton, and [...] the Jews were in a fair way to become the best swordsmen of the university.” Previously, “they had wormed their way into appointments and into the free professions by dint of pliancy, mock humility, mental acuteness, and clandestine protection. If struck or spat upon by 'Aryan' students, they rarely ventured to return the blow or the insult.”⁴³⁰ As with Seton-Watson, Steed’s philosemitism is based on thinly veiled antisemitism, with praise for the masculinized Zionists offering a sharp contrast with the supposed abjection of most Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Our Duty

As he nears the end of his essay, Brandeis repeats his earlier assertion that “the Jewish Problem is single and universal” (see “Liberalism and Anti-Semitism,” p. 115). In consequence, “the Jews of every country should strive for its solution.” For Jews living

⁴³⁰ Quoted from Henry Wickham Steed, The Hapsbug Monarchy, London, Constable and Company, 1914, p. 176.

in the United States, however, he stresses that “the duty resting upon us [...] is especially insistent.” At this writing, as he notes, America’s three million Jews comprised “more than a fifth of all Jews in the world,” a population larger than anywhere “except the Russian Empire.” He also notes the diversity of the U.S. Jewish population, whose origins include “every other country,” as well as “every section of society, and [...] every shade of religious belief.”

“We ourselves,” Brandeis continues, are “free from civil or political disabilities, and are relatively prosperous.” Here Brandeis is addressing his audience of Reform rabbis; note that the final clause of this sentence belies the presence of numerous impoverished Jewish immigrants in urban areas, even though Brandeis’s efforts in 1910 as a mediator between garment workers and owners of garment factories are well documented. To this day, moreover, his involvement with the garment strike is routinely cited as an important factor in both Brandeis’s attitudes toward his own Jewishness and his later embrace of Zionism (see p. 108ff above).

Brandeis argues that the success of the effort he is calling for to solve “the Jewish Problem” is sure to find support from the U.S. public, which, he says, is “infused with a high and generous spirit,” ensuring “approval of our struggle to ennoble, liberate, and otherwise improve the condition of an important part of the human race,” namely, the world’s Jewish population (which, for Brandeis, is limited to the European Jewish population; he registers no awareness of the existence of equally large Jewish populations at that time in the Middle East and North Africa). Moreover, the “innate

manliness” of the U.S. population “makes them sympathize particularly with our efforts at self-help.”

An additional advantage, in Brandeis’s eyes, is “America’s detachment from the old world problem,” which would protect a Zionist movement based in the United States “from suspicions and embarrassments frequently attending the activities of Jews of rival European countries.” With his new rationale for an Americanized Zionism, Brandeis was also confident that the movement’s loyalty would not be questioned, noting that “a conflict between American interests or ambitions and Jewish aims is not conceivable. Our loyalty to America can never be questioned.”

As he nears the end of his essay, Brandeis closes this section with a call for action that summarizes and restates the points he has made throughout:

Let us therefore lead, earnestly, courageously and joyously, in the struggle for liberation. Let us all recognize that we Jews are a distinctive nationality of which every Jew, whatever his country, his station or shade of belief, is necessarily a member. Let us insist that the struggle for liberty shall not cease until equality of opportunity is accorded to nationalities as to individuals. Let us insist also that full equality of opportunity cannot be obtained by Jews until we, like members of other nationalities, shall have the option of living elsewhere or of returning to the land of our forefathers.

Significantly, Brandeis’s new Americanized Zionism identifies settlement in Palestine in the paragraph quoted above as an “option,” rather than a personal responsibility or a historic necessity. This was one of his most significant departures from the ideology of European Zionism.

Organization

Brandeis begins this brief concluding section with a recapitulation of the importance of his topic, stating that “[t]he fulfillment of these aspirations is clearly demanded in the interest of mankind, as well as in justice to the Jews.” Over the next two sentences, he shifts his focus to questions of implementation, noting that the program he has called for “cannot fail of attainment if we are united and true to ourselves. But we must be united not only in spirit but in action.” For such action—that is, the development of a Jewish “homeland” in Palestine—to be successful, he asserts, “we must organize. Organize, in the first place, so that the world may have proof of the extent and the intensity of our desire for liberty. Organize, in the second place, so that our resources may become known and be made available.”

By contrast to the bloody conflict then raging across Europe, “in mobilizing our force,” says Brandeis, “it will not be for war. The whole world longs for the solution of the Jewish Problem. We have but to lead the way, and we may be sure of ample cooperation from non-Jews.” To be successful, he continues, “we need not arms, but men; men with those qualities for which Jews should be peculiarly fitted by reason of their religion and life; men of courage, of high intelligence, of faith and public spirit, of indomitable will and ready self-sacrifice; men who will both think and do.”

Despite his disavowal of the need for arms, Brandeis continues the analogy with military mobilization: “we need [...] officers commissioned and non-commissioned, and common soldiers in the cause of liberty.” At the end of this paragraph, he again links his

call for organizing to preparations for war: "Organization ... can alone develop such leaders and the necessary support."

Maintaining the essay's apparent focus on military mobilization, the closing paragraph of this essay discards the earlier emphasis on a purely voluntaristic form of Zionism, identifying it for the first time as a requirement for Jewish loyalty:

Organize, Organize, Organize, until every Jew in America must stand up and be counted, counted with us, or prove himself, wittingly or unwittingly, of the few who are against their own people.

The Balfour Declaration and Beyond

Brandeis's signature essay on Zionism, which is discussed in the previous section, is a rich compendium of philosophy and exhortation for Americanized Zionism. After the United States entered World War I and Britain issued the Balfour Declaration—both in the year 1917—U.S. Zionists, as well as their counterparts across Europe, began to see the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine as a real possibility.

This section follows the years from 1917 to 1921, mainly following the research of Melvin Urofsky. The section ends with the analysis offered by Allon Gal in "Isaiah's Flame," covering the period from 1921 (when the Brandeis Group was ousted from its leadership role in the Provisional Executive Committee) until Brandeis's death in 1941.

After the United States entered World War I in April 1917, says Urofsky, for American Zionists "the world turned upside down," as the movement began to see the possibility of realizing their goal of achieving "international sanction of a Jewish

homeland in Palestine.”⁴³¹ Brandeis and other American Zionist leaders learned that Chaim Weizmann, a leader of the British Zionist movement, had been secretly negotiating with the British government, with the aim of “declaring Palestine a Jewish homeland once the British army had conquered” the territory.⁴³² After back-channel negotiations among Weizmann, Brandeis, and their respective governments, once the British government was assured of U.S. support, the British foreign secretary, Arthur James Balfour, “sent his famous letter to Lord Rothschild on 2 November 1917.”⁴³³ Following the Allied victory in 1918, Brandeis, like “most Zionists assumed that Palestine would maintain a British protectorate for decades to come,” so it “would be able to develop the just and humane society that Herzl had predicted.”⁴³⁴

At the close of World War I, Brandeis’s close advisory relationship with President Wilson gave him the opportunity to represent American Zionist opinion in important international deliberations, such as the 1919 Paris Peace conference, where American Zionists succeeded in attaining many of their objectives.⁴³⁵ As Mark Raider observes, the Provisional Executive Committee’s connections with Labor Zionism and

⁴³¹ Urofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, p. 516.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, p. 520.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 521.

⁴³⁵ Wilson’s presidency was marred, however, by his failure to gain congressional approval of either the Treaty of Versailles at the end of the war or for the establishment of the League of Nations.

its links to the movement's immigrant base "played a crucial role in persuading Woodrow Wilson's administration and the Allies, especially the British, of the Zionists' dominant importance in American Jewish affairs."⁴³⁶

Following the Paris Peace Conference, however, tensions between Brandeis and the Brandeis group, on the one hand, and Chaim Weizmann and his U.S. supporters, on the other, burst into overt contention. After the Allies voiced their support for the Balfour Declaration, Brandeis believed that the basic challenge of winning a Jewish homeland in Palestine had been solved, and the attention of the international Zionist movement should shift to reconstruction and economic development—which, as Urofsky observes, he saw as "a practical problem that practical people could solve."⁴³⁷

Urofsky's chapter 21, "Zionism, 1917-1921" (pp. 515-544), offers a detailed account of the tensions that tore apart the wartime unity of the Zionist movement, both internationally and in the United States. Brandeis alienated European Zionist leaders in particular by declaring that "the time for propaganda had ended and that for the real work had begun."⁴³⁸ He regarded the cultural work and support for diaspora nationalism that motivated many local Zionist organizations as a distraction,⁴³⁹ and political debates over theory as an outright waste of time. In the United States, he called

⁴³⁶ Raider, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁴³⁷ Urofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 532.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 534.

for a national movement where political positions would be determined nationally,⁴⁴⁰ shifting the balance of power in a movement based in dozens of small local organizations that had their own priorities.⁴⁴¹ Meanwhile, Weizmann's approach to funding mingled charitable contributions and investment funds, which Brandeis regarded as contradictory to basic principles of financial accountability.⁴⁴² Weizmann and his U.S. supporters scored points by challenging Brandeis's lack of *Yiddishkeit*, which Urofsky translates as "Jewish soul."⁴⁴³

Among the Zionist rank and file, Brandeis was deeply revered, because of his national visibility and the credibility he brought to the Zionist movement. When he declined to assume leadership of the World Zionist Organization in favor of continuing with his role as an associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, however, the situation became untenable.⁴⁴⁴ "No matter how much the immigrant Jewish community adored him," says Urofsky, "they would not accept a program handed down from Washington."⁴⁴⁵ At a ZOA conference in Cleveland in June 1921, the Brandeis group lost a crucial motion on financial accountability, and Julian Mack, who had stepped in as

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 525.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., p. 526.

⁴⁴² Ibid., p. 538.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., p. 524.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 536.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 539.

ZOA president when Brandeis was named to the Supreme Court, resigned. Thirty-six other members of the ZOA National Executive Committee followed him by resigning en masse.⁴⁴⁶

Despite this schism, notes Urofsky,

In the end, the practical policies that Brandeis championed prevailed, since he correctly analyzed the economic and fiscal needs of the movement. Within a very short time, Weizmann began to downplay political work, and instead emphasized practical efforts needed to rebuild Palestine.⁴⁴⁷

In the wake of this rupture, Brandeis said that he and his associates would be retiring from offices in the ZOA but not from Zionism itself. "Within days," notes Urofsky, "the Brandeis group met in New York, established the Palestine Endowment Funds to funnel money to projects [...] and began their wait for what they recognized as their inevitable return to power."⁴⁴⁸

Adds Mark Raider, "it was the Brandeis 'brain trust' that quietly implemented [...] a range of capital investment schemes such as the Palestine Economic Corporation, American Zion Commonwealth, and Palestine Land Development Company. In this way the Brandeis group circumvented official American and world Zionist policy."⁴⁴⁹

The evolution of Brandeis's views in the interwar years is chronicled by Allon Gal in his 2012 article, "Isaiah's Flame: Brandeis's Social Liberal and Zionist Tradition."

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 542.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 543.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 544.

⁴⁴⁹ Raider, op. cit., p. 28.

In Gal's appreciation, during the 1920s the growth of antisemitism and nativism caused Brandeis to de-emphasize the "liberal dimension in his ideology," leading him to craft a "new synthesis" for his understanding of Zionism.⁴⁵⁰ In 1924, the United States "drastically changed its immigration laws," imposing "an obvious racial and even anti-Semitic bias."⁴⁵¹ By the same token, Europe "had become drastically less hospitable to Jews."⁴⁵² Such developments led Brandeis to say, in a 1930 letter to Robert Szold, one of his closest Zionist associates, that the "belief [...] that the Jewish problem would be solved by growing enlightenment in the Diaspora must have been seriously shaken—if not shattered."⁴⁵³ Once Hitler came to power in Germany, Brandeis argued that "the answer to Nazism [...] was not only an anti-fascist struggle" but an effort to "enhance" the ability of the Jews to survive as a [...] sovereign nation."⁴⁵⁴

As Brandeis's commitment to Zionism became more pointed, in response to the emergence of armed conflict between Jewish settlers and Palestinian Arabs in 1929, he contributed "large sums of money for the self-defense of the *Yishuv*."⁴⁵⁵ When the British

⁴⁵⁰ Gal, "Isaiah's Flame," op. cit., p. 209.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., p. 209.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 210.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

government responded by curtailing Jewish immigration, Brandeis considered this to be a “betrayal,” and urged his followers to a “more independent, and self-reliant policy.”⁴⁵⁶

In Brandeis’s understanding, “social liberalism” entailed supporting “cooperative endeavors” while encouraging “competition, with an influential public sector enabling it.”⁴⁵⁷ In the United States as well as the *Yishuv*, Brandeis supported “social justice and workers’ rights, but always within the framework”⁴⁵⁸ of a competitive economy.

In this “new phase” in Brandeis’s Zionism, “he forged a personal and political relationship [...] with David Ben-Gurion.”⁴⁵⁹ Gal cites citing letters between the two dating back to 1934, reinforced by a public statement by Brandeis in 1936, opposing “moderate critics of Ben-Gurion (such as Judah Magnes).”⁴⁶⁰ By the mid-1930s, Ben-Gurion began to question Weizmann’s “philo-British” views, reorienting Zionist efforts toward the United States, “an orientation that relied on the support of American Jewish and non-Jewish public opinion.”⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 211.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 212.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 213.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

Gal sums up his article by noting that by the end of Brandeis's life in 1941, "[a]ll the major factions of American Zionists [...] reflected Brandeis's new synthesis."⁴⁶²

Conclusions

This chapter portrays the evolution of Brandeis's understanding of Zionism, beginning with his utopian vision of a Jewish "commonwealth" in 1915, in which the preservation of ethnoreligious difference is seen as a vital contribution to the "harmony of civilization," and ending with the frankly statist vision of Labor Zionism, as interpreted by Brandeis as he forged an alliance with David Ben Gurion by the 1930s.

As Brandeis became a Zionist leader in 1914, the influence of Horace Kallen allowed both men to develop an innovative Americanized version of Zionism. Statements like "The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It" reveal many traces of their collaborative thinking. In the process, Brandeis reframed his understanding of liberalism to incorporate ideas of group rights, as vested in what both Brandeis and Kallen termed "nationality." As Brandeis asserted, nationality, is a "fact of nature," while the constitution of nations (what today would be called "nation-states") is the "work of man" (see p. 120 above). In this way his evolving understanding of group rights reflected a Progressive understanding of science.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of Brandeis's Americanized Zionism is that it was purely voluntaristic, which doubtless is a good part of what made it acceptable to

⁴⁶² Ibid., p. 214.

American Jews. This characterization of Zionism is typical of American exceptionalism, in that it posits a solution for problems that most American Jews do not themselves experience, so that Zionism is framed here as a solution for the problems of somebody else.

Many of the other aspects of what Brandeis is propounding here are typical of Euro-American thought in the early twentieth century, including the idealization of science as blended with Romantic, even mystical ideas about the “spirit” of different nationalities or ethnic groups. Antisemitism is strenuously condemned, while its victims are largely blamed for their own misfortune, as when R. W. Seton-Watson, a “high non-Jewish authority,” laments the tendency of Jews to “conceal their true identity” (see p. 123 above). Here too, Zionism and the promise it offers of an autonomous “national existence” is prescribed as the solution for the problem of antisemitism.

In line with its utopian accent, Brandeis’s early Zionist writings predicted that the solution of the “Jewish problem” would not entail military combat. In “The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It,” for example, Brandeis confidently predicts that Zionist mobilization “would not be for war,” since the “whole world longs for the solution of the Jewish Problem. We [i.e. the Zionist movement] have but to lead the way, and we may be sure of ample cooperation from non-Jews” (see p. 137 above). In the closing paragraphs of this statement, however, Brandeis recurs to the image of military mobilization, when he states that “we need [...] officers commissioned and non-commissioned, and common soldiers in the cause of liberty” (also quoted above on p.

137). At the very close of this statement, he alters his emphasis on voluntarism, stating for the first time that support for Americanized Zionism is a necessary demonstration of Jewish loyalty. American Jews may not need to emigrate, but they do need to support the movement he is defining, or “prove themselves [...] of the few who are against their own people” (quoted on p. 137).

Little more than a decade later, of course, Brandeis offered enthusiastic support as well as significant funding to paramilitary forces in the *Yishuv*, as they faced armed opposition from Palestinian Arabs beginning in 1929.⁴⁶³ Not long thereafter, as Hitler came to power in Germany, Brandeis stated that German Jews “must leave,” adding that Jewish sovereignty in Palestine was more important than mounting an anti-fascist struggle in Europe.⁴⁶⁴

In the end, Brandeis’s Americanized Zionism echoes the pattern of most, if not all, movements for national self-determination, with early utopian ideas following the logic of nationalism toward military conflict and state sovereignty. Early plans for cooperative economic ventures in the *Yishuv* were complemented and ultimately overtaken by investment schemes, in this case combining state capitalism with private investment.⁴⁶⁵ When the British mandate proved an unreliable sponsor for Zionist settlement plans, Brandeis joined Ben Gurion in abandoning the search for “home rule”

⁴⁶³ See Gal, “Isaiah’s Flame,” op. cit., p. 210.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 211.

⁴⁶⁵ See Raider, op. cit., p. 28; Urofsky, op. cit., p. 144; Gal, “Isaiah’s Flame,” op. cit., p. 213.

as a British protectorate to a bid to become a U.S. client.⁴⁶⁶ Ultimately, with the war of 1948, Israel became a sovereign nation-state.

The next chapter, "Zionism and Critical Theory," seeks to place both Jewish thought and American Jewish history in a broader historical and theoretical context, as I show that the logic of Americanized Zionism follows patterns that are both longer and deeper, by exploring the ideas of sovereignty, political theology, and the binary opposition of Arab and Jew.

⁴⁶⁶ See Gal, "Isaiah's Flame," *op. cit.*, p. 213.

CHAPTER 5

ZIONISM AND CRITICAL THEORY

Introduction

For most American Jews, the ideas of sovereignty and self-determination, like the nation-state as an institution, are assumed to be settled questions. The notion of Israel as a sovereign state—often seen as a Jewish homeland—is widely understood to serve as a bulwark against the types of discrimination and persecution experienced over the centuries by European Jewish communities. Over the past 100 years, the notions of Jewish territorial sovereignty has become a central yet little examined aspect of modern Jewish identity. Both are taken to key lessons of European modernity.⁴⁶⁷ At this writing, important questions posed to this model have become increasingly insistent in American Jewish life. In particular, the toll of Palestinian civilian deaths in Gaza in the summer of 2014 has surfaced key questions about Israeli military policy, the role of irregular armies such as Hamas and Hezbollah in regional conflicts, and the viability of the “two-state” solution as a model for lasting peace and security. Meanwhile, student groups such as

⁴⁶⁷The experience of non-European Jewish communities, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, is often portrayed as an echo of the European experience. A more nuanced and even oppositional version of this story is told by such critical scholars of the history of Mizrahi (Middle Eastern) Jews as Ella Shohat, whose work is discussed below in the section *Arabs and Jews*. The background and implications of the massive displacement in the 1950s of the longstanding Jewish communities of Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere in the region is still hotly contested.

Open Hillel have challenged the efforts of institutionalized Jewish organizations to serve as gate-keepers for defining the limits of acceptable debate in Jewish communal life.

This chapter takes a step back from these contemporary discussions by examining the origins of the ideas of sovereignty⁴⁶⁸ and its relationship to secularism; of Europe (and the “West”) as a geographical and cultural location; and of Arabs and Jews as political and cultural identities. The three main sections in this chapter contextualize the arguments introduced in previous chapters, from contemporary attempts to complicate the image of Zionism and its relationship to the nation-state paradigm, as explored in chapter 2⁴⁶⁹; the formative role of the Progressive Era in shaping a uniquely American version of Zionism, as discussed in chapter 3; and the leading role of Justice Louis Brandeis in giving Zionism its characteristic American stamp, as well as its relationship to the geostrategic agenda of the U.S. government, the subject of chapter 4. To complete and contextualize my discussion in previous chapters, the present chapter offers a range of critical perspectives about the very idea of “Western civilization” as a

⁴⁶⁸ Conventional discussions of sovereignty trace its origins to the “Peace of Westphalia,” a 1648 treaty among European powers that brought an end to the Thirty Years War. The Westphalian system established a basic system of international law and respect (by its signatories) for one another’s territorial integrity. After the Second World War, the principles of Westphalian sovereignty were applied to individual nation-states, in contrast to older imperial systems such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Westphalian system has been criticized in any counts, but endures as the basic template for international relations.

⁴⁶⁹ A recent article by historian David N. Myers, “Rethinking Sovereignty and Autonomy: New Currents in the History of Jewish Nationalism” (*De Gruyter* 13:44–51, 2015) offers a useful review of scholarly trends on this topic over the past two decades.

global formation, in which the United States became hegemonic after World War 2 (and of which, despite its declining power, it still considers itself to be the leader).

This exploration takes us back several centuries, in order to examine how all of these ideas became naturalized and their origins forgotten in most contemporary discussion. My goal throughout is not to advance a new theory of sovereignty (or Zionism, or Progressivism), but rather to trouble our understanding of all of these phenomena by focusing on where these ideas, movements, and ideologies came from historically, and what assumptions are sedimented into their discussion today—often lying below the surface of our awareness. After a brief introduction, the chapter develops through three main sections: “Sovereignty and Secularism,” which examines the origins of the idea of sovereignty and its relationship to the origin and development of colonialism; “Jewish Thought and Political Theology,” which considers scholarly Jewish responses to the current interest in political theology and its effort to integrate politics, religion, and moral philosophy; and, finally, “Arabs and Jews,” which aims to unpack the assumed enmity between these groups.

As is generally accepted by scholars of history, religion, and international relations, the nation-state as an institution is a relatively new idea, achieving its current predominance only after the Second World War. Even as recently as the years before and after the First World War, divergent visions of nations (and states) were in active contention, as is reflected in the discussion in chapter 2 of recent works by David N. Myers and Noam Pianko, as well as some of the earlier discussions described in the

section “Enlarging the Compass of Discussion” (p. 56). As a result, the usual contemporary assumption that concepts such as sovereignty and self-determination have a fixed meaning, and that they moreover are accepted throughout the world, does not hold up against even a cursory examination of the historical record.

This chapter seeks to put Jewish Studies, particularly Jewish historical studies, in conversation with key works of critical theory and cultural studies. As in previous chapters, the focus of my discussion is on the experience of American Jews, with particular attention to the early twentieth century as a critical period during which many of the familiar features of Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were established. This process of de-naturalization, I believe, is necessary if we are to imagine a more livable future for Israel/Palestine, as well as a deeper understanding of the role of the United States and the American Jewish community in perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Sovereignty and Secularism

As documented in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED)⁴⁷⁰ the idea of a sovereign in the sense of a king or ruler first appeared at the end of the thirteenth century (the earliest quote cited in OED appeared in 1290). From the oldest recorded usage of this term, the concept of the sovereign was closely related to the idea of divine

⁴⁷⁰ OED Online. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014 (www.oed.com.libproxy.temple.edu/view/Entry/185332?rskey=w8ZlrI&result=1; accessed Nov. 07, 2014).

power; in the words of the OED, the term has been “freq[ue]ntly] applied to the Deity in relation to created things.” The corresponding abstract noun “sovereignty” began to appear in written documents beginning nearly a hundred years later, in 1376.

It was another five hundred years before the notion of sovereignty lost its linkage to royalty; the earliest mention of this shift cited by the OED is a quote from John Stuart Mill dated to 1860, referring to “[t]he supreme controlling power in communities not under monarchical government; absolute and independent authority.”

To understand the implications of this shift, however, it is important to consider the web of meanings that made possible the replacement of royal (or divine) power with the vesting of power in the citizenry. One of the most penetrating accounts of how sovereignty came to hold its current meaning is Kathleen Davis’s 2008 volume, Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time. Davis’s book, termed “paradigm-shifting” by more than one reviewer, offers a revisionist account of how the ideas of nations and sovereignty (as well as our cultural images of the Middle Ages and what we think of as the legal and economic system of feudalism) all emerged after the fact, beginning in the sixteenth century, in an era when emerging European powers needed to legitimate their territorial expansion and conquest, as well as the burgeoning Atlantic slave trade. All of these concepts were thus introduced as new narratives about the past—Davis terms them “origin myths”—which, like many contemporary ideas about the past, emerge as a way of explaining the evolving realities of the present, particularly in terms of their political stakes.

From its earliest beginnings, Davis explains, the importance of periodization has revolved around competing theories of sovereignty. Trained as a medievalist, Davis started out by wrestling with the problem of how and when the “Middle Ages” was developed as an idea; archival data about this period, as she notes, is most often overwhelmed by the received assumptions she is picking apart, such as the image of widespread subjugation and irrational superstition as characteristic of the medieval. She finds her answer in the dynamics of periodization, through which the concepts of feudalism, and later the “Middle Ages,” came into being—not in their own time or even as a result of the birth of humanism and other intellectual shifts that are conventionally assumed to mark the beginning of the Renaissance, but centuries later—as a foil for belief in the modern world. Modernity, in short, depends on the contrast provided by the idea of “Middle Ages.”

Periodization, in the sense of the medieval/modern divide, has done its most important work in the arenas of political and legal thought. Beginning with the Atlantic slave trade, jurists and, later, historians sought to portray slavery (and its brutality) as characteristic of a distant European past. Similarly, as Davis notes at the close of her introduction,

The construction of a “medieval” period characterized by irrational superstition was fully involved with the identification of colonial subjects as irrational and superstitious. [...] There was no “superstitious, feudal Middle Ages” *before* colonialism, and doubtless there never would have been without colonialism; vice versa, colonizers could not have mapped and administered foreign lands

and bodies as they did without the simultaneous process of imagining such a “Middle Ages.”⁴⁷¹

The intricacies of Davis’s argument are detailed in the succeeding chapters of her book.

First to emerge was the narrative of a “feudal European past,” which “took shape through a search by sixteenth century jurists for Europe’s legal origins.”⁴⁷² In their debates, explains Davis, they “vied over a feudal origin story as the basis of sovereign legitimacy”:

At the very moment that the colonial slave trade began to soar [...] feudal law and slavery were grouped together and characterized as characteristic of Europe’s past and a non-European present. To this history we owe the later, persistent association of the Middle Ages with subjugation.⁴⁷³

“By the close of the sixteenth century,” Davis concludes, “the narration of a ‘feudal’ European past was securely entrenched,”⁴⁷⁴ and the details of how it came to be created had been forgotten. Key concepts of periodization, most of which remain familiar to this day, thus portray modern life as governed by reason, by contrast to medieval societies, which (according to this narrative) were mired in superstition fostered by the rule of religion. A similar role is played by the narrative of constantly rising political freedom in Europe (and later the United States), so that the idea of

⁴⁷¹ Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

political freedom is understood as a key aspect of modernity—by contrast to the subjugation that supposedly characterized medieval life.

In the second part of her book, Davis turns her attention to secularization. Like most contemporary critical scholars, Davis considers “religion” and “secularism” to be mutually constitutive concepts, which “took shape through a double process by which Europe simultaneously narrated its own secularization and mapped regions elsewhere in the world according to newly consolidated concepts of ‘religion’ and religious heritage.”⁴⁷⁵ Her discussion of secularization thus maintains its focus on the relationship of periodization and colonialism.

In many particulars, Davis follows Talal Asad, whose 2003 volume, Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity,⁴⁷⁶ calls for, and in the process establishes, an “anthropology” of secularism as a political-ethical doctrine. Like Asad, Davis raises pointed questions about the “triumphalist” narrative of the Enlightenment, in which the rights and freedoms offered by the nation-state to its citizens are framed as a product of secularization. Both, similarly, see secularism as a fundamentally political project.

Asad’s immediate point of reference is the “terrorist” attacks of 9/11/2001, and the various discourses of violence (“ours” and “theirs”) that it engendered. In considering a conventional understanding of these events, which have played such a

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 77.

⁴⁷⁶ Talal Asad. Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.

formative role in our national discussion over the past decade, Asad argues that analysts of every orientation would do well to examine contrary points of view. As he inquires,

What politics are promoted by the notion that the world is *not* divided into modern and non-modern, into West and non-West? What practical options are opened or closed by the notion that the world as *no* significant binary features, that it is, on the contrary, divided into overlapping, fragmented cultures, hybrid selves, continuously dissolving and emerging social states?⁴⁷⁷

Davis agrees that “Asad is certainly right” in arguing that such binaries function as a fundamentally “political move,” which she challenges throughout her book. She finds, nonetheless, that Asad sustains the “hegemony” of the concept of the modern, even as he questions it—in no small part because he accepts, rather than questioning, the role of medieval/modern periodization as a “principal means by which the idea of the ‘modern’ emerged.”⁴⁷⁸ Thus even as he critiques the liberal-humanist valorization of the “sovereign self” as the root of individual freedom as well as modern ideas of political sovereignty, he is ultimately constrained, in Davis’s appreciation, by the boundaries of the “‘world’ sovereignty already decided.”⁴⁷⁹ According to Davis, Asad thus collapses the “modern” and “secular” world(s) in his discussion, by assuming that they are one and the same. The role of modernity is therefore doubled in his discussion, making it

⁴⁷⁷ Asad, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁷⁸ Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

impossible to see clearly how “periodization binds the ‘modern’ and the ‘secular’” together.⁴⁸⁰

In her introduction, Davis sketches the relationship between secularization and sovereignty, noting that—

secularization has been understood to narrate the modernization of Europe as it gradually overcame a hierarchized and metaphysically shackled past. [...] This is the familiar Enlightenment, “triumphalist” narrative of secularization—for which the privatization of religion, along with the freeing of the European imagination from the stranglehold of Providence, came to mark the political qualities designated as “modern,” particularly the nation-state and its self-conscious citizen.⁴⁸¹

As with many contemporary critical scholars, Davis’s discussion of sovereignty begins with an examination of the ideas of Carl Schmitt (1888-1985), a German jurist and legal philosopher who is best known today for his critique of the fundamentally theological nature of theories of the modern liberal nation-state, beginning with his 1922 volume Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty.⁴⁸²

For many years, scant attention was paid to Schmitt’s writings, largely because of his infamous decision to join the Nazi Party when it came to power in 1933. Schmitt’s prominent role in Nazi affairs was short-lived, however, falling prey to “academic competitors” who viewed him as a “turncoat who had converted to Nazism only to

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁸² Carl Schmitt. Translated by George Schwab. Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985. I return to different aspects of Schmitt’s theories in each section of this chapter; see additional discussion under “*Jewish Thought and Political Theology*,” p. 155, and “*Arabs and Jews*,” p. 161.

advance his career."⁴⁸³ Schmitt was nonetheless an unrepentant supporter of Nazi ideology. He remained "an important figure in West Germany's conservative intellectual scene to his death in 1985 [...] and enjoyed a considerable degree of clandestine influence elsewhere."⁴⁸⁴

Schmitt frames his analysis of sovereignty in terms of secularization. He departs, however, from the conventional "narrative of Europe's extrication from theological constraints," in order to develop an analysis of "the transference of theological forms to the politics of an ostensibly 'secular' state, in which theology thus becomes immanent."⁴⁸⁵ Schmitt thus argues that the growth of the constitutional order of the modern state is based at its core in what he terms "secularized theological concepts."⁴⁸⁶

Davis extends Schmitt's insights by bringing the discussion back to medieval/modern periodization, which, she argues, "provides the means for disavowing the continuity of theological forms." Thus "a reified 'Middle Ages,'" serving as "the exemplar [...] of the 'religious' or pre-secular state, is inevitably ushered in to act as a foil for the modern, secular, rational state."⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸³ Edward N. Zalta, ed. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2015 (plato.stanford.edu).

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

Davis finds an important precursor to her work on periodization in the postwar writings of expatriate German philosopher Karl Löwith, who argued that the definition of historical periods has no inherent objectivity; “to the contrary, they are a means of legitimizing political ends.”⁴⁸⁸ Echoing Schmitt, Löwith also argued that “modern historical concept such as Progress are secularized versions of Christian concepts, particularly eschatology.”⁴⁸⁹ In other words, the secular ideal of “progress” evokes the ultimate creation of a perfected social order as its limit point. Similarly, Davis quotes Löwith in his argument that “the secular messianism of Western nations is in every case associated with the consciousness of a national, social, or racial vocation which has its roots in the religious belief of being called by God to a particular task of universal significance,”⁴⁹⁰ an argument that echoes the thinking of Louis Brandeis, Horace Kallen, and others in many particulars.

As Davis recounts in her explanation of how she came to write this book, periodization, secularization, and sovereignty operate as a series of linked concepts, none of which can be adequately explained without reference to the others. She ends her discussion with examples of how the ideas of “feudalism” and other forms of presumed backwardness continue to play an integral role in contemporary political discussion. In her epilogue, she considers a 2007 broadcast by National Public Radio (NPR) about

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

Pakistan in the waning days of the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf. She quotes the NPR broadcast as stating that “unrest in Pakistan is fueled not only by religion and politics, but also by an ancient system of feudalism.”⁴⁹¹ The broadcast continues with a capsule account of “two previous prime ministers, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif,” neither of whom were successful in “end[ing] the undemocratic grip that feudalism has on Pakistani politics.”⁴⁹²

As Davis comments, “‘feudalism,’ apparently, is a story with more work to do.”⁴⁹³ NPR’s portrait of the Musharraf regime oscillates among descriptions of “religious extremism,” “feudalism,” and “rogue nation” behavior:

These negative characteristics are precisely those that the United States would prefer to associate [...] with “developing” nations that it monitors and aids or that it invades and occupies, and to keep safely distant from reports of its own problems with political and economic corruption, “religious extremism,” and presidential behavior. No mere slur in this context, “feudalism” solves the problem by putting temporal distance between modern democracy and rogue nation behavior.⁴⁹⁴

Once again, argues Davis, the concept of “feudalism” is “mapped onto Europe’s past and a [third world] present, always as a marker of what must be left behind.” The difference between a “potentially stable Pakistan that could act as an ally” and its

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p. 132.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

obverse, a “dangerously unstable Pakistan,” is thus always described in terms of the country’s “inability to overcome its own past.”⁴⁹⁵

The narrative of “feudalism” does several kinds of work for reports like this one. Pakistan’s problems can thus be attributed to ancient cultural patterns, without mention of either centuries of colonial rule or Britain’s “parting gift of Partition.”⁴⁹⁶ By contrast, the brutality of slavery and related forms of subjugation are kept safe in Europe (and America’s) past, “so that the story of rising freedom and democracy could unfold as antithetical” to these backward parts of the world. Similarly, secularization “turns political difference into temporal distance.”⁴⁹⁷

In her concluding comments, Davis notes that the “problem with the ‘grand narrative’ of the West is not simply one of linearity and the myth of ‘progress’.” The problem is rather that it relies on medieval/modern periodization, “a process that retroactively reifies categories and erases their history.”⁴⁹⁸

Jewish Thought and Political Theology

Davis’s critical discussion of sovereignty, modernity, and Europe’s colonial expansion has yet to be taken up by Jewish Studies. By contrast, a lively discussion among scholars of Jewish Studies, focusing on the notion of political theology, was

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 133.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 134,

developed through a pair of events in 2009 organized by Randi Rashkover, beginning with a symposium at her home institution of George Mason University and shortly thereafter through a panel at that year's meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Key contributions to that discussion are published in the edited anthology, Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology.

The need for this discussion is explained by Rashkover and her coeditor, Martin Kavka, as corresponding to two basic motivations: the emergence in the twenty-first century of "cracks in the marriage between Judaism and liberalism"⁴⁹⁹ and the resurgence among critical theorists of interest in Carl Schmitt, whose work is summarized by Rashkover and Kavka as stating that "all secular politics of modernity had maintained the theological structure of pre-modern accounts of sovereignty."⁵⁰⁰ Schmitt revived the term "political theology," note Rashkover and Kavka, "as a critical weapon against political theorists who might defend their systems as naturally grounded, immune to the influence of a metaphysical agenda."⁵⁰¹ Schmitt's writings gained their current prominence in the post-9/11 era, when political and social theorists began finding considerable value in his critique of liberalism, particularly in what he saw as its untenable claim to political neutrality.⁵⁰² As Rashkover and Kavka frame it,

⁴⁹⁹ Rashkover and Kavka, op. cit., p. 1.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁰² Other scholars trace the resurgence of interest in Schmitt to such phenomena as the end of the Cold War and accompanying erosion of Soviet influence over the eastern bloc, beginning in

liberalism's "false claim" to neutrality is exposed because "it has already decided upon a metaphysics of the human as sovereign."⁵⁰³ By contrast, "authentic politics is rooted in the affirmation of non-neutrality," which Schmitt explains "in terms of the distinction between friend and enemy."⁵⁰⁴ "By linking politics and theology," Rashkover and Kavka continue, Schmitt did not mean to suggest simply that modern theories of the state are "analogous to the structure of divine sovereignty," but rather that "the state's primary task is to protect its citizens from existential threats represented by enemies. By taking on such duties," they conclude, the state "assumes a salvific significance."⁵⁰⁵

Schmitt and his contemporary interlocutors, explain Rashkover and Kavka, can be criticized as purveyors of representations of Judaism as well as Jewish political thought in terms of longstanding (and fundamentally antisemitic) tropes of Judaism's overly particularistic and legalistic nature, which is most often introduced as a foil to the "universalistic" nature of Christianity. This mutually constitutive binary between Judaism and Christianity, they note, is based on images of Judaism dating back centuries, all the way to the letters of the apostle Paul. They are, moreover, reproduced

1989. See Annika Thiem's "Schmittian Shadows and Contemporary Theological-Political Constellations" (*Social Research* 60:1, Spring 2013), which traces the reception of Schmitt's ideas from the 1920s up through the present day. Thiem argues that the contemporary vogue of political theology is due to a combination of "leftist critiques of liberalism and neoliberalism" after the demise of the Soviet Union, followed by "postcolonial critiques of secularism as a political principle, historical assumption, and philosophical commitment" (1).

⁵⁰³ Rashkover and Kavka, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

without nuance in the writings not only of Schmitt's early supporters but also in the writings of well-known contemporary critical theorists such as Giorgio Agamben or Slavoj Žižek.

Rather than simply critiquing Schmitt and his interlocutors, however, the essays published in Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology bring the writings of important Jewish philosophers and theologians into the discussion, focusing in particular on key twentieth-century thinkers such as Leo Strauss, Hermann Cohen, Hannah Arendt, Franz Rosenzweig, and Martin Buber. Many of these thinkers were important conversation partners for Schmitt at the time he was developing his ideas. In addition, they consider many of the same philosophical and political questions as Schmitt and his followers, while writing in an explicitly Jewish voice, most often with a thorough grounding in traditional Jewish texts, as they consider the relationship of reason, revelation, and what (following Leo Strauss) is most often termed "theopolitics," which may be defined as the ultimate moral basis of political existence and its relationship to *halacha* or traditional Jewish law. Though these figures reached varied conclusions about theopolitics, for each of them, argue Rashkover and Kavka, the "engagement between political theology and Jewish thought presses Jewish thought to present more rigorous and reflective analyses of Judaism's political relationship to the modern liberal nation-state."⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

What would such an analysis look like? The most visible Jewish critiques of liberalism as a political philosophy, contend Rashkover and Kavka, are Zionism, on the one hand, and “the turn to a Jewish multiculturalism”⁵⁰⁷ on the other — two apparently divergent ideologies that nonetheless pose similar limitations, particularly in their failure to adequately interrogate the nature of the power that they espouse and the moral grounding upon which it is based. In the end, the strongest argument for the necessity of the encounter between Jewish thought and political theology lies precisely there, in the importance of articulating a moral vision for political life, without foundering on the shoals of exclusivity, on the one hand, or a false universalism, on the other, both of which are unwilling to come to terms with the prerogatives of power that underpin the liberal nation-state. As discussed in chapters 2 through 4, the earliest American proponents of Zionism asserted its compatibility with liberalism, often through enormously vexed argumentation; their opponents in American Jewish intellectual life most often upheld liberalism as the preeminent guarantor of civil equality and other democratic values. In both Israel and the United States, however, recent decades have shown that both positions are questionable at best.

Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology is a dense book, with more than a dozen essays tracing how Jewish philosophy and political thought have grappled with key questions of sovereignty and political theology that have come to prominence recently, in response to contemporary critiques of liberalism and the exercise of state

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

power by liberal nation-states. In the remainder of this section, I will comment on just one of these essays, “Power and Israel in Martin Buber’s Critique of Carl Schmitt’s Political Theology” by Gregory Kaplan. Buber (1878-1965) was a contemporary of Carl Schmitt. His best-known work, I and Thou, was published in 1923; it was a decade later, as the Nazis came to power, that Buber wrote most forcefully against the ideas put forward by Schmitt. Significantly, Buber was still living in Germany at the time; it was not until 1938, when the Nazi government refused to allow him to re-enter the country on his return from a trip to the *Yishuv* that he was coerced into emigrating to pre-state Palestine. Kaplan’s account of this later Buber “tracks the argument Buber has with Schmitt [...] in order to reckon its value for contemporary thinking about Israel and power.”⁵⁰⁸ Not only does Kaplan excavate a surprisingly contemporary vein in Buber’s thinking, he also succeeds in bringing to life the uncertainties that beset any project of serious moral philosophy in the early years of the Nazi regime. In the process, Kaplan challenges his readers to consider the development of Nazism as if its ultimate defeat were not inevitable—to think, with Buber, about what it might have meant to encounter Nazism, and Schmitt as one of its most prominent proponents, when its future was still undetermined.

The most important difference between Schmitt and Buber, Kaplan argues, is that Schmitt “collapses politics and theology in order to construct a united front against

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 155.

[...] 'the enemy.'"⁵⁰⁹ Buber, by contrast, never loses sight of the danger that "politics and theology make a combustible pair," with the capacity to "wreak more destruction on humankind than any other ill fortune." If "held in delicate balance," however, they "can foster healing and wholesome human activity."⁵¹⁰ Buber, argues Kaplan, makes a distinction between power as seen from above and from below. "God sanctifies the world through a call for taking the responsibility of holding power. [...] Power is not possessed, on this view; it is received. [...] In the view from below, power rightly deployed not only makes for survival but also enables the creature to aim for salvation. 'This loan,'" says Buber, "'can be revoked if it is not managed' properly."⁵¹¹ Buber thus maintains the moral grounding of responsibility in political life as a practical expression of divine power.

By contrast, Kaplan cites one of Schmitt's best known views, in which he "asserts that the 'sovereign is he who decides on the exception.' As a result, the sovereign retains a 'monopoly' on the establishment of rightfulness or lawfulness."⁵¹² "For Schmitt," explains Kaplan, "the authority of the state is not the representation of competing interests through negotiation" — the conventional portrait of the liberal polity — "but the resolution of controversy through the embodiment of the nation in the exceptional

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p. 156.

⁵¹² Ibid., p. 163.

power of the [...] leader.”⁵¹³ Buber bases his theological understanding of political life in an extended analogy with marriage—not simply as a relationship between self and other, but “because in meeting the other it admits a third, another other whose presence-in-absence necessarily disrupts the identity and possibly heals the disparity of the relationship between one and another, neighbor and stranger, friend and foe.”⁵¹⁴ Not only negotiation but also reconciliation and even salvation are made possible by transcending the binary of self and other and understanding that any human community involves a multiplicity of relationships.⁵¹⁵

Kaplan closes his essay by recalling the controversy that surrounded Buber following his forced emigration to pre-state Palestine. The schools of both philosophy and Bible at the young Hebrew University refused to admit Buber to their faculties, declining requests from university leaders such as Judah Magnes and Gershom Scholem. Instead, Buber concluded his professional career as a professor of social philosophy, in a new Department of Sociology that Hebrew University created to employ him.⁵¹⁶ As Kaplan comments, “[i]t is striking how Buber’s critique of the overweening power

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., p. 167.

⁵¹⁵ Buber’s postulation of “marriage” as an alternative to Schmitt’s emphasis on the binary relationship of friend and enemy may seem outmoded to contemporary readers, who may bristle (as I did) at his presumably heteronormative assumptions. Nonetheless, Buber’s point here, while quite schematic, offers a way to transcend the binary relation of self and other by affirming that human relationships are inherently based on a multiplicity of encounters.

⁵¹⁶ Rashkover and Kavka, op. cit., p. 168.

asserted by Nazism, which threatened the demise of Europe, was translated into a critique of that asserted by Jewish nationalism."⁵¹⁷ Buber's "'Hebrew Humanism' bespeaks an effort to face the dilemma concerning how God separates from the world and relates to humanity through the particularity and universality of Israel."⁵¹⁸ Buber's inaugural address in his new position, "The Demand of Spirit and Historical Reality," continued his critique of Schmitt by focusing on the importance of taking political responsibility. As Kaplan notes, "[s]pirit corrects abuses of power by recalling the powerful to their responsibilities to those who [...] suffer under power."⁵¹⁹

A few weeks after his arrival in Palestine, with his own home in Germany "plundered after *Kristallnacht*," Buber "controversially [...] link[ed] Nazism to political agency generally, including the agency of a so-called Jewish state."⁵²⁰ Speaking about the armed rebellion against the British authorities then underway by local Palestinian Arab forces in the "Great Arab Revolt," Buber wrote in the local Jewish press to warn against violent reprisals by Jewish irregulars as well as Jewish soldiers under British command,

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., p. 169.

⁵¹⁸ At the time under discussion, before the founding of the State of Israel, the term "Israel" should be understood in its traditional meaning as a reference to the Jewish people or the global Jewish community.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., p. 170.

⁵²⁰ Ibid., p. 172.

arguing that “force does not repel so much as reproduce aggression and instill more ill will.”⁵²¹

Buber’s complex understanding of political theology never found acceptance among Jewish intellectuals. Kaplan concludes his essay by noting that —

In his lifetime Buber was not only internally exiled by Israeli society but also roundly rejected by the Jewish intelligentsia”. Since then, regretfully, Jewish theology has, with increasingly rare exception, plunged into the most egregious style of power politics imaginable.⁵²²
Far from following Buber’s example, both the Israeli government and the

American Jewish community have been more closely aligned with the vision of sovereignty proposed by Carl Schmitt, both in the importance they place on identifying the enemy and in their penchant for declaring the necessity of states of exception — a suspension of juridical order — as a response to supposed existential threats.

Arabs and Jews

What is Europe such that it has managed to distinguish itself from both Jew and Arab, and render its role in the distinction, the separation, and the enmity of Jew and Arab invisible — invisible, perhaps most of all, to itself?⁵²³

My discussion of sovereignty concludes with a consideration of the supposed binary opposition between “Arabs” and “Jews.” Every discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict encodes the terms “Arab” and “Jew” in multiple ways. Any attempt to reach beneath the surface of contemporary understandings — whether shaped by a

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid., p. 174.

⁵²³ Anidjar, op. cit., p. xviii.

sincere wish for mutual understanding or immersed in polemics—is doomed to incoherence, however, without understanding how the identity of both groups is mediated by an invisible third party: Europe. (As Talal Asad and others have noted, the addition of the United States renders the two entities as “the West,” so that the United States is included by proxy in such locutions as “Western civilization.”)

In this section, I explore the work of three authors who use a critical understanding of literary, historical and religious discourses to disentangle this relationship: Ammiel Alcalay’s landmark 1993 study, After Jews & Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture; Ella Shohat’s 2006 collection, Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices, as well as several of her earlier essays; and, finally, a Gil Anidjar’s 2003 volume, The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy.

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, my goal of the present discussion is not to suggest an alternative theory of ethnic identity and its relation to sovereignty, but to help the reader understand how the accretions of previous eras make it difficult, if not impossible, to imagine alternative ways of seeing the situations that confront us today.

Ammiel Alcalay: After Jews and Arabs

Alcalay’s After Jews and Arabs uses literary history as an entry point to the broader history of the region, which he terms “the Levant writ large,” which he later describes as including present-day Portugal and Spain, southern France and Italy, the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Israel/Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and parts of West Africa and India. The

centrality of the Levant as a civilizational space “remains true right up until the full or partial dissolution of these Sephardic, Levantine, Ottoman, Arab, and Persian Jewish communities and their massive transfer to Israel in the 1950s.”⁵²⁴

Beginning with the “postmodern myth of the Jew as other” and its grounding in the trope of the “people of the book,”⁵²⁵ Alcalay explores the literary and historic realities of the Jews who were rooted in the various countries of the Levant. His book, published not long after his experiences of living in Jerusalem during the First Palestinian Intifada, challenges Zionist historiography and collective memory on many grounds. Along with Ella Shohat and Gil Anidjar, he raises an important challenge to the erasure of Judeo-Arabic as a linguistic and textual tradition. Each of them, albeit in different ways, argue that the millennial history of Jewish communities in the Middle East has been effaced in order to bolster the structures of European/Ashkenazi hegemony, in the context of the Zionist solution to the “Jewish problem.”

⁵²⁴ Alcalay, op. cit., p. 21. Younger scholars who have followed Alcalay’s lead include historian Liora Halprin of the University of Colorado and literary scholar Lital Levy of Princeton University. See, for example, Halprin’s Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920-1948 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) or Levy’s Poetic Trespass: Writing Between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁵²⁵ Alcalay, op. cit., p. 1. In Euro-American culture, such images as the “Wandering Jew” are reflected in historical narratives that range from Christian persecution of Jews to the modern nationalist notion that Jews, lacking a sovereign state, have remained “outside” of history. More recently, as cultural theorists have focused on difference and “othering,” the image of the Jew has become a paradigmatic example of alterity. Alcalay seeks here to underline the difference between such tropes based in European history and what he later terms the “native Jew in a native space” (see Alcalay, p. 27) as more characteristic of Jews in the Arab world.

Building on his magisterial grasp of history and languages, Alcalay's book is evocative and suggestive, rather than a sustained text on the history of Jews in the Middle East. His purpose is to provoke and destabilize conventional discussion, within and beyond the Jewish world. His first challenge, taken up by both Shohat and Anidjar (as well as critical theorists such as Talal Asad), is to dominant narratives regarding the history and identity of Europe and "Western civilization," noting that references to the active and productive presence of Arabic and Islamic civilization, including the Jewish communities of the Arab world, has been systematically excised from our understanding of the emergence of Europe as both a geocultural and historical space, a silence that is reflected in educational curricula as well as popular understanding.

Drawing by turns on poetry, literature, and statistical/sociological data, the subordinate status of the Middle Eastern majority of Jews in the new state of Israel is taken "not as a reflection of the class nature of Israeli society, but of the fact that they come from non-modern and culturally backward societies,"⁵²⁶ an observation based on the work of Israeli sociologist Shlomo Swirski. Swirski's careful analysis of the "ethnic division of labor" for those who are "locked out of the power structure"⁵²⁷ illuminates many of the fault lines between Ashkenazi and so-called "Oriental" Jews. In this context, notes Alcalay, "'return' might simply mark the beginning of a new exile."⁵²⁸

⁵²⁶ Alcalay, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Summing up the project of his book toward the end of its introduction, Alcalay identifies three overarching themes:

[F]irst, the relationship between Jews and Arabs in the literary, cultural, historical, social and political planes as seen through paradigmatic historical moments and encounters. Next, [...] the relationship of the Jew to the Arab within him- or herself. And, finally, to chart the relationship of the native Jew to a native space, namely the Levant, a notion so foreign to the modern dogma of the Jew as eternal stranger that it might appear almost unthinkable.⁵²⁹

This space of the “Levant writ large” is framed by two limit points. The first is the “roughly 60-year period from the 1930s to the present”⁵³⁰ during which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become an indispensable lens for understanding this reality. (In Alcalay’s appreciation, the present terms of the conflict were largely in place by the 1930s, an important departure from the conventional understanding that the founding of the State of Israel is best understood as a response to the Nazi Holocaust.) The other limit point revolves around the first Arabic translation of the Hebrew Bible and the appearance of Arabic meters in Hebrew poetry by the tenth century. “These two literary events also mark [the completion of] ‘the sweeping social and economic changes’” of the ninth century, as Jews completed their transition from being a “primarily agricultural to a primarily urban people.”⁵³¹

Alcalay notes that the framework for his study is—

primarily historical: Jews lived and traveled, settled down and created, from one end of this realm to the other throughout the roughly thousand-

⁵²⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

year period in question [...] My central concern has been to trace the development and erosion of the [...] mobility, diversity, autonomy, and translatability possessed by the Jews of the Levant for such a long time.⁵³²

The loss of this history, of even the ability to remember it, is an immense human tragedy that emerged through the dislocation of memory, language, and literature that has accompanied the Zionist project, including its instrumentalized approach to “population transfers” and its reductive and hostile approach to the Jewish history, traditions, and cultures of the Levantine world.

Although Alcalay finished this volume in 1989, he was unable to find a publisher until four years later, when the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords opened up space for more critical approaches to Israeli history. This lengthy delay is recounted in Alcalay’s essay, “Behind the Scenes: Before After Jews and Arabs.”⁵³³ Most significant for the present discussion is his exhaustive documentation in this account of the refusal of recognized “experts” in the field, serving as anonymous reviewers at various university presses, to engage with his arguments, let alone grapple with the many challenges his work offered to conventional historiography, particularly the one-dimensional depiction of the historical experience of Jews in the Islamic world. Once published, the book was almost completely ignored by scholars in the fields of Jewish studies, literary studies, and Middle Eastern studies.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ This essay is published in Alcalay’s Memories of Our Future (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1999), a collection of his articles and commentaries written between 1982 and 1999,

Much like the contributions of Jonathan Boyarin discussed in chapter 2, “American Jews and the Changing History of Zionism” (see p. 36), however, Alcalay’s work touched a series of chords whose resonance has only grown over time. Twenty years after the initial publication of *After Jews and Arabs*, scholars from around the world discussed the book’s impact in two symposia, one held at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, in November 2012, followed by a similar colloquium at the Center for the Humanities at the City University of New York (CUNY) in October 2013. Both events documented as well as celebrating the impact over time of Alcalay’s work.

Dr. Joyce Zonana, a professor of English at CUNY’s Borough of Manhattan Community College, participated in both symposia. In “A Poetics and Politics of the Possible,” published in 2012 in *The Levantine Review*,⁵³⁴ she discussed both Alcalay’s book and the Georgetown event. Like many participants in both symposia, Zonana spoke to the book’s importance to her own personal and professional development.

Similar ground is explored in a poignant account of Zonana’s own life experiences, included in her remarks at the CUNY event:⁵³⁵

I grew up as a child of immigrant Jews from Egypt in Brooklyn in the 1950s. As I was growing up I had no sense of where I belonged. My parents had been genuinely at home in Cairo prior to their departure in 1951. Although our life was shaped by my parents’ Levantine existence—the food we ate, the music we listened to, the way they welcomed guests—they didn’t give me very much

⁵³⁴ *The Levantine Review* is a newsletter of the Levantine Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

⁵³⁵ The extract below is an edited excerpt of Zonana’s comments at the CUNY event. For the complete video, see videostreaming.gc.cuny.edu/videos/video/1088/in/channel/21/

information about the past. What I realized much later is that the wounds left by that break were much too recent for them to talk about.

I grew up feeling profoundly Egyptian and profoundly Jewish, but I didn't know what that might mean or how it fit into a larger context. On the streets of Brooklyn the little knowledge I had was constantly being challenged. My classmates would say to me, "you're Jewish, really? And you don't eat gefilte fish? You don't speak Yiddish?" Children would say things to me like, "there's no such thing as an Egyptian Jew; all the Jews left Egypt a long time ago, that's what Passover is about." I had no way of answering them.

As I got older it didn't get any better. My colleagues and friends would treat me as if I was somehow an oxymoron, that there was no such thing as an Arab Jew. Egypt was exotic, ancient, and very far away. Finally, in the mid-1990s I decided that I had to do something to explain myself to myself—and also to others. Somehow I stumbled on *After Jews and Arabs*. My mind was completely blown. Suddenly I was able to make some sense of our Levantine roots.

I think that one of the things Ammiel does is to give back to someone like me the cultural heritage that I never had. For me being introduced to that gave me a very different sense of who I could be. What he does in the book is open up that space in which I was able to find myself and find my voice.

Ella Shohat: Arab-Jews and Ethnic Fractures

More recently, the work of Ella Shohat, a professor of cultural studies at New York University, has played a key role in shaping both scholarly and popular understanding of the history and identity of Jews who trace their origins to the Middle East. Shohat's highly politicized writing—especially her identification as an Arab-Jew⁵³⁶—was at first tremendously controversial in U.S. and other Western academic circles. Over time, however, many of her key points have become increasingly accepted

⁵³⁶ My usage here, particularly in hyphenating the term, "Arab-Jew" follows Shohat.

by the scholarly mainstream.⁵³⁷ For my present purposes, I have devoted careful attention to Shohat's early as well as more recent work because it is useful in unraveling many taken-for-granted assumptions about Jews and Arabs, as well as Western scholarly hegemony and intra-Jewish orientalism.

To understand the impact of the work of both Alcalay and Shohat, it should be noted that Jews with roots in Middle Eastern countries have constituted a majority of the Israeli population since the early 1950s. Initially known in Israel as "Sephardic" or "Oriental" Jews, by the late 1990s this population had renamed itself "Mizrahi" (eastern) Jews, a linguistic choice with multiple political consequences.⁵³⁸ Concentrated initially in "development towns," Mizrahi Jews have long contested their marginalization and discrimination at the hands of Israel's Ashkenazi elite—through the "counter-history" of Israeli literature documented by Alcalay, through activist movements like the "Black

⁵³⁷ See, for example, the recent article by Lital Levy and Allison Schachter, "Jewish Literature / World Literature: Between the Local and the Transnational" (PMLA 130.1 [2015]). For Levy and Schachter, many of Shohat's once controversial arguments provide an unremarkable background to their intervention in this most mainstream of literary journals, as they propose a thoroughgoing reorientation of the idea of Jewish literature, including the languages it is written in, its relation to the "major" languages of the Western (i.e. colonial) world, and, most interesting, the tracing of circuits of transmission and translation along the colonial "periphery."

⁵³⁸ "Sephardic" Jews trace their ancestry to the Iberian Peninsula, and to the countries where they found shelter after their expulsion from Spain in the fifteenth century (such as Holland or Turkey). "Ashkenazi" Jews began settling in Western and Central Europe in the tenth century CE. "Mizrahi" Jews, finally, trace their descent to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). With Ashkenazim—that is, Jews of European descent—occupying elite roles following the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the use of the term "Sephardim" for immigrants from MENA is best understood as a way of effacing their actual heritage. In this context, the emergence of the term "Mizrahim" may be understood as a form of cultural resistance.

Panthers” of the 1970s,⁵³⁹ and through the emergence of an influential intelligentsia in the community’s third generation.⁵⁴⁰

An Israeli emigré, Shohat has written widely about postcoloniality, feminism, and the politics of representation. Her earliest writings focused on Israeli cinema; a revised edition of her landmark 1989 text, Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation, was published in 2010.⁵⁴¹ She has been a leading voice in the articulation of the Mizrahi experience, and was one of the first (and most intellectually prominent) voices to assert her identity as an Arab Jew to an English-speaking public, making her a controversial figure for many sectors of American Jewish opinion, not least because of the challenge posed by this terminology to an essentialized understanding of Arabs and Jews as eternal opposites. Shohat was an early and important scholarly voice in exposing the ethnic fractures in Israeli society, countering the conventional assumption of a

⁵³⁹ As Shohat comments, “‘Mizrahim’ took on some of the resistant quality of the black/white discourse established by the Black Panther movement in the early 1970s, itself a proud reversal of the Ashkenazi racist epithet *shvartze khayes* (Yiddish for ‘black beasts’) and an allusion to the black liberation movement in the United States” (see Ella Shohat, “Invention of the Mizrahim,” Journal of Palestine Studies, 29:1, 1999, p. 14.)

⁵⁴⁰ In addition to Shohat, significant critical voices in the Mizrahi community include Yehouda Shenhav, whose book The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006) appeared in the early 2000s. For a useful overview of the field, see Moshe Behar, “Mizrahim, Abstracted: Action, Reflection, and Academization of the Mizrahi Cause,” Journal of Palestine Studies 37:2, 2008.

⁵⁴¹ Ella Shohat. Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation. New York: I. B. Taurus, 2010.

universal Jewish culture regardless of differences in national origin or ethnic identification.

“Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims”

One of the first scholarly works Shohat published in English was her essay “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims,” published in 1988 in Social Text.⁵⁴² The title of this article indicates its conceptual debt and intertextual relationship to the classic work by Edward Said, “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,” which was published in 1979 in the inaugural issue of that journal.⁵⁴³ Although the perspectives detailed in this piece are nearly thirty years old, they represent an indispensable background to the evolution of this discussion.

Shohat presents extensive evidence, especially from older sources in the 1940s through the 1980s, of typical colonialist ideas expressed by Ashkenazi toward Mizrahi Jews, which are basically similar to other European representations of Africans and other colonized peoples—tropes of savagery, primitivism, and backwardness, all of which combine to depict its subjects as living “outside of history.” Even putatively “positive” portrayals evoke the exoticism of “Oriental” folkways, creating a serious misrepresentation of countries in the Maghreb (North Africa) where Jews were overwhelmingly urban and well integrated into their societies. “Everything conspires to

⁵⁴² Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims,” Social Text, No. 19/20, 1988.

⁵⁴³ Edward Said, “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,” Social Text No. 1, 1979.

create the impression,” notes Shohat, “that Sephardi culture was [...] static and passive, and, like the fallow land of Palestine, lying in wait for the impregnating infusion of European dynamism.”⁵⁴⁴ The reinscription of the east-west binary among Jews, in the eyes of Shohat, is thus as much a gendered as a national narrative, in which the ultimate outsiders, European Jews, assume the posture of the masculine, Western force in relation to the Sephardim.

The record of intra-Jewish racism presented here by Shohat is painful to read, yet makes her case convincingly. Key founders of the Israeli state—David Ben Gurion, Abba Eban, Golda Meir—coincided in their depiction of the “savagery” of the Mizrahim, especially as compared to the “modern” spirit of the Ashkenazim, with Ben Gurion even opining that “the Divine Presence has disappeared from the Oriental Jewish ethnic groups.”⁵⁴⁵ As late as the 1980s, the ostensibly liberal Israeli establishment continued to voice such sentiments; Shohat quotes MK Shulamit Aloni, who “in 1983 denounced Sephardi demonstrators as ‘barbaric tribal forces’ that were ‘driven like a flock with tom-toms’ and chanting ‘like a savage tribe.’”⁵⁴⁶ Similarly, a journalist from Ha’aretz at that time lamented policies that “put me in the cage with a hysterical baboon.”⁵⁴⁷ Racism

⁵⁴⁴ Shohat, “Jewish Victims,” op. cit., p. 9.

⁵⁴⁵ Shohat, “Jewish Victims,” op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 6. Shohat is quoting a column by Amnon Dankner in Ha’aretz, 18 Feb. 1983. Dankner was complaining bitterly about the imposition by Israeli cultural authorities of a supposed “brotherhood” between Israel’s more advanced Ashkenazim and the Sephardim, while ignoring the latter’s “cultural deficiencies.”

and Orientalism are thus as much a feature of intra-Jewish relations as of relations between Jews and Palestinians. An obvious conclusion is that the boundaries among nations and ethnic groups are porous, with the same structures that govern relations among Europeans and colonized peoples reproduced among different segments of the Israeli Jewish population.

"The Invention of the Mizrahim"

Just over a decade later, Shohat updated this discussion in "The Invention of the Mizrahim," which remarks on the development of this new identity beginning in the 1990s as an unintended consequence of the Israeli state's amalgamation of Jews from throughout the Arab Middle East. Notes Shohat: "From the early days of Zionism, non-Ashkenazi Jews were seen as a cheap labor force that had to be maneuvered into immigrating to Palestine."⁵⁴⁸ Such policies resulted in the creation of a new hybrid identity, which simultaneously reflected Israel's assimilationist policy for its Mizrahi inhabitants and their resistance to it.

This more theoretically oriented discussion begins with a discussion of how official Zionist ideology portrays "Jewishness" and "Arabness" as "irreconcilable opposites," discounting the "millennial cohabitation" of Jewish communities in the

⁵⁴⁸ Shohat, "Invention," op. cit., p. 9.

Arab-Islamic world as “merely a Diasporic stain to be ‘cleansed’ through assimilation.”⁵⁴⁹ From there Shohat continues with a discussion of the suppression of “Sephardi-Mizrahi cultural memory by marginalizing this history in school curricula” —partly to downplay the historical experience of “Jewish-Islamic symbiosis,” the cohabitation and cultural interchange among Jews and Muslims, and partly to portray the “notion of the unique, common victimization of all Jews everywhere and at all times,” resulting in a “Eurocentric reading of ‘Jewish history’ [...] that hijacks the Jews of Islam from their own geography and subsumes them into the history of the European-Ashkenazi shtetl.”⁵⁵⁰

Shohat stresses that her goal is “not to idealize the situation of the Jews of Islam” but to highlight how the hegemonic Israeli narration of history has undermined the “syncretic culture of actually existing Jews,” in order to sustain “the master narrative of universal Jewish victimization.”⁵⁵¹ In addition to the symbolic violence of its view of Mizrahi Jews, this skewed conceptualization offers essential ideological support for the “claim that the ‘Jewish nation’ faces a common ‘historical enemy’ —the Muslim Arab.”⁵⁵² This move in turn “requires a double-edged amnesia with regard both to Judeo-Islamic

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

history and to the colonial partition of Palestine.”⁵⁵³ In the process, “[f]alse analogies between the Arabs and Nazis, a symptom of a Jewish-European nightmare projected onto the structurally distinct political dynamics of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, have become a staple of Zionist rhetoric.”⁵⁵⁴ Here again, the identification of “the enemy” and the existential threat it poses becomes a key element of how sovereignty plays out in practice. Shohat’s discussion here echoes Carl Schmitt’s assertion that identification of the “enemy” is key to the development of a vigorous national identity.

Shohat argues that the situation of Mizrahi Jews reveals “some of the fundamental contradictions within Zionist discourse itself.”⁵⁵⁵ As Shohat comments, “The paradox of Israel is that it presumed to ‘end a diaspora’ characterized by ritualistic nostalgia for the East, only to found a state ideologically and geopolitically oriented almost exclusively toward the West.”⁵⁵⁶ As a result, “the Euro-Israeli establishment attempted to repress the ‘Middle Easternness’ of Mizrahim as part of an effort to Westernize the Israeli nation and to mark clear borders of identity between Jews as Westerners and Arabs as Easterners.”⁵⁵⁷ Attempts to reinscribe the East-West binary on the Jewish Israeli population, like the binary of Jews and Arabs, thus function as the

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

template for Jewish political thought, regardless of the multiple contradictions and even absurdities that it entails.

Such binaries, of course, are always reductive. They also always turn themselves back on their originators, who have sought to place themselves in a position of power. In what Shohat terms “an ironic victory for Zionism,” some Arab nationalist intellectuals have likewise adopted the view that all Jews are intrinsically Zionist, “regardless of historical origins, cultural affinities, political affiliations, and even professed ideologies.” Arab-Jews have thus been “caught up in the cross-currents of rival essentialist forms of nationalism.”⁵⁵⁸ In Jewish American as well as Jewish Israeli discourse, the attempt to create firm boundaries between Jewish and Arab life cannot be sustained.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, Shohat observes, nationalism offered the most workable answer to colonialism. “Unfortunately, however,” she notes, “formerly colonized people have often fallen into the very same conceptual traps that oppressed them during colonialism.”⁵⁵⁹ For the Arab Muslim world, for example, “liberation from Europe has also marked the end of the overarching Muslim geocultural civilization in which identities and power were defined differently.”⁵⁶⁰ The place of religious minorities in the Islamic world was gradually eroded, first by colonialism and then by nationalism. For Arab-Jews, meanwhile, the story was rendered even more

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

complex by “the gradual rise of another nationalist movement, Zionism, which asserted claims of pan-Jewishness.”⁵⁶¹ Some Arab-Jews greeted the emergence of Zionism and the foundation of the Israeli state with messianic fervor, says Shohat, believing that Jews had achieved a “new religious dispensation,”⁵⁶² while others remained skeptical. Almost no one, she comments, fully understood that immigrating to Israel would mark an irreversible change in the fortunes of their communities, so that return to their former homes would become impossible.

At the same time, says Shohat, “Zionist ideologues,” had always expressed ambivalence toward non-Ashkenazi Jews. At the first Zionist Congress in 1897, she relates, in a clear expression of intra-Jewish racism, “they opposed ‘Levantization,’ the ‘tainting’ of the settlements in Palestine with an infusion of ‘Levantine Jews.’”⁵⁶³ A half-century later in the 1950s, meanwhile, “Zionist officials showed ambivalence about the mass importation of ‘Levantines’ . But once again, demographic and economic necessity forced the Zionist hand,”⁵⁶⁴ given that most European Jews, like their American counterparts, chose not to join the project of establishing a new Jewish nation-state. (As discussed in chapter 4, Louis Brandeis played a key role in establishing an Americanized

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. Shohat’s reference to “pan-Jewishness” denotes the idea that a common Jewish culture existed globally, regardless of cultural differences and ethnic conflict among various Jewish communities.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

Zionism, when he asserted in 1915 that Jews could support the Zionist project without having to emigrate to their new “homeland,” a distinct departure from most strains of European Zionism.⁵⁶⁵

Every national movement, says Shohat, is fraught with contradictions. “But in the case of Zionism,” she avers, “the oppressive and liberatory poles are intermingled with an unusual density of contradiction.”⁵⁶⁶ Meanwhile, “what both Jewish and Arab nationalisms have shared, in discursive terms, is the notion of a single, authentic (Jewish or Arab) nation. They both have assumed that the ‘national’ is produced by eliminating the foreign, the contaminated, the impure, so that the nation can emerge in all its native glory.”⁵⁶⁷ Even today, nationalism continues to present itself as a liberatory ideology. Shohat makes a compelling argument, however, that the “freedom” offered by nationalism comes at a very high price in rejection of cultural and psychological “impurities,” requiring the suppression or even outright elimination of part of the national community. Likewise, “[t]he Zionist idea that Arabness and Jewishness are mutually exclusive gradually came to be shared by Arab nationalist discourse, placing Arab-Jews on the horns of a terrible dilemma.”⁵⁶⁸ Once again, nationalism’s promise of

⁵⁶⁵ Historian Michael Berkowitz has argued, in such works as Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), that most European Jews also showed little interest in emigrating to Palestine; see his conclusion to this book, “A Supplemental Nationality.”

⁵⁶⁶ Shohat, “Invention,” op. cit., p. 11.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

safety and freedom is contingent on the suppression of personal or ethnic complexity or hybridity, forcing Mizrahi Jews, like so many others, to choose where to invest their loyalties.

Shohat concludes her discussion by calling for a new discipline of Mizrahi Studies, which in fact has arisen within Jewish Studies (although not necessarily with the same critical edge of Shohat's work).

Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices

Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices, Shohat's 2006 collection, presents a dozen of her essays published since the late 1990s. It reflects many of the themes that have been important in her writing, from critiquing the disciplinary compartmentalization of scholarship, to exploring the contributions of film and other forms of visual culture, to offering a simultaneous critique of the masculinist assumptions of anti-colonial discourse and the "false universals" of certain versions of feminism. Overall, as she explains, her "work is situated across the seam lines of theoretical frameworks," discussing "how the past is translated and reinvented in function of diverse presents."⁵⁶⁹

The title essay, "Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions: Columbus, Palestine, and Arab-Jews," is tour de force that brings together nearly all of these themes. The essay was written in 1992 on the occasion of the quincentennial observances of "the two 1492s": the voyage of Columbus and his accidental "discovery" of the New World, and

⁵⁶⁹ Shohat, "Taboo Memories," op. cit., p. xvi.

the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain at the hands of the Inquisition. Although these two occasions are generally discussed separately (and the expulsion of three million Muslims in the process is seldom even noted in Western commentary), all are profoundly related, and the essay offers Shohat an opportunity to model the type of “relational” analysis she advocates.⁵⁷⁰ In the process, it offers her a powerful framework for bringing the history of Zionism back to the Americas.

The essay begins with an extended discussion of the Cairo Geniza, which originally stored close to a thousand years of manuscripts produced by Egypt’s autochthonous Arab-Jewish community.⁵⁷¹ The “discovery” of this trove of documents by Solomon Schechter in 1896 followed more than thirty years of discussion among antiquarian dealers and Judaica scholars beginning in 1864, in a “cultural-colonial context” in which “the digging of the Suez Canal under imperial orchestration was at its height.”⁵⁷² With the authorization of the British Crown and Evelyn Baring Cromer, the “virtual ruler of Egypt” at the time, the contents of the Geniza were boxed under Schechter’s supervision and sent to Cambridge University, where they were “catalogued

⁵⁷⁰ Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media (New York: Routledge, 2014), co-written by Shohat and Robert Stam of New York University, offers a fuller explanation of theoretical aspects of “relationality,” the politics of representation, the trope of “discovery,” and more. The 2014 edition is an updated version of the influential original published in 1994.

⁵⁷¹ Shohat’s discussion here is largely based on Amitav Ghosh’s In an Antique Land (New York: Knopf, 1993).

⁵⁷² Shohat, “Taboo Memories,” *op. cit.*, p. 203.

as the Taylor-Schechter collection." By World War One, the Geniza was "stripped of all its documents," with many of them "going into private collections."⁵⁷³

Shohat stresses that "such acts were not conceived as theft or dispossession," but were "perceived as applying the principles of universalism and humanism."⁵⁷⁴ The local community, it was assumed, "did not understand or appreciate the value of the treasures around them," giving rise to the impulse to "rescue" such documents along with other expressions of Egyptian material culture.⁵⁷⁵ As a result, "European Jews' closeness to the Western powers permitted the dispossession of Arab-Jews even before the advent of Zionism as a Eurocentric national project."⁵⁷⁶ In the process, the dislocation of the Geniza "made possible the erasure of the very tangible evidence of the Jewish past" from the very "geocultural space" that had created it.⁵⁷⁷ As Shohat notes, the "European 'discovery' and 'rescue' of the Geniza testifies to a dramatic turn" in the relationship between Ashkenazi and Levantine Jews.⁵⁷⁸ After centuries of interchange with Jews from the Islamic world, , "Ashkenazi-Jewish scholars became central to the

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 204.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 206.

representation of Jewish history, including Arab-Jewish history,"⁵⁷⁹ as they adopted norms of scholarship created by the European Enlightenment and found their place within colonialism and, later, Zionism.

From her account of the despoliation of the Geniza, Shohat moves to a consideration of the figure of Columbus. As Shohat suggests, "[t]o examine the relationship between contemporary discourses of the 'two 1492s,'" can "illuminate the role that scholarly and popular narratives of history play in nation-building myths and geopolitical alliances."⁵⁸⁰ Her account begins with the *Reconquista* (reconquest), during which Christian armies from the emergent nation of Spain defeated the Arab Muslims (the reigning power in the Iberian Peninsula for at least five centuries), thus securing the future of the region as part of "Christendom." Notes Shohat: "Triumphant over the Muslims, Spain invested in the project of Columbus, whose voyages were financed partly by wealth taken from the Muslims and confiscated from Jews through the Inquisition."⁵⁸¹ In the fifteenth century, she continues, given Arab domination of the continental route, the only European hope of creating a successful economic foothold in India (the East) was by sailing to the West. Meanwhile, with Spain becoming the first European power to encounter the indigenous peoples of the New World, existing

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 209.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

Christian “discourses about Muslims and Jews [...] crossed the Atlantic” as the Spanish empire expanded.⁵⁸²

Shohat traces some of the connections that could be drawn among these histories that are profoundly related but usually discussed separately, from the forced conversions and slaughter of Jews and Muslims—the the enemies close at hand—to similar treatment meted out to indigenous peoples of the New World—the more distant enemies. Such similarities include the Inquisition’s persecution of *conversos* (“New Christians”) in colonial Latin America, as well as the well-documented persistence of Jewish customs among their descendents, in what are understood today as Chicano or Mexican communities. Observances of the “two 1492s,” however, preserved their separate narratives, with many Mexican observers typically recognizing and honoring their indigenous roots and, like Native American commentators, rejecting or satirizing Columbus’s “discovery” of the New World. Their connections with Sephardi Jewish and Muslim Arab history, however, was characteristically left unremarked. As Shohat comments, the “hybridity of Chicano and Mexican culture [...] does not necessarily facilitate the admission of another complex hybridity, one crossing Jewish-Catholic boundaries.”⁵⁸³ Likewise, public observances of the fifteenth century expulsion of Sephardi Jews, organized by the International Jewish Committee Sepharad ’92, followed the lead of its funders in the United States, Israel, and Spain, recognizing Jewish

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., p. 212.

victimization while ignoring the parallels between the *conversos* and the *moriscos*, the latter being those accused by the Inquisition of being “secret Muslims.” As Shohat observes, the “elision of comparative discussions of the Muslim and Jewish (Sephardi) situations in Christian Spain was largely rooted [...] in present-day Middle Eastern politics.”⁵⁸⁴

Shohat’s essay continues with a complex critique of Zionist historiography, including its effacement of the experience of Arab-Jews and its refusal to accept the existence of their syncretic, hybrid identities. Israeli “assimilation” of these millennial communities “has resulted in practically dismantling the Jewish communities of the Muslim world.”⁵⁸⁵ She also demonstrates the discursive continuity in what she calls the “Euro-Zionist” binarism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with its binary tropes of tradition versus modernity, savagery versus civilization, and East versus West—each of which has been incorporated into the Jewish Israeli mindset, from the days of the “discovery” of the Geniza up through the present. Although many circumstances have changed over the past five centuries, the governing metaphors of Western encounters with the Muslim world retain a remarkable continuity, most of which is reproduced in mainstream Israeli discourse.

Throughout her discussion, Shohat is attentive to the multiple contradictions in Zionist thought, not least its foundational ambivalence between the West, viewed as a

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 213,

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 215.

“place of oppression to be liberated from as well as an object of desire to form a ‘normal’ part of,” and the East, which simultaneously signifies backwardness and underdevelopment but also the “solace” of the Jewish return to their “geographical origins and reunification with biblical history.”⁵⁸⁶ This complex layered image, of course, “coexisted with a simultaneous denial of Palestine”⁵⁸⁷ which she illustrates by discussing the politics of place names and archeology. Since her earliest writings, Shohat has been a consistent critic of Israeli militarism and its devastating effects on the Palestinian population.

The final section of Shohat’s essay, “Parting Worlds, Subversive Return,” brings all of these themes together. “Palestine,” she asserts, “is linked to the Americas in more ways than would at first appear.”⁵⁸⁸ The Columbus master narrative “prepared the ground for an enthusiastic reception of Zionist discourse within Euro-America.”⁵⁸⁹ As discussed in chapter 1 in the section entitled “Perspectives on American Jews and U.S. Nationalism” (see p. 19), Jonathan Sarna’s “The Cult of Synthesis” traces the project of asserting as synthesis between Judaism and Americanism back to the Puritans, who

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 219.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 220.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

“linked their experiences with those of the Israelites of old and helped to define America in terms drawn from the Hebrew Bible.”⁵⁹⁰

Shohat argues that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict touches many “sensitive historical nerves within ‘America’ itself.”⁵⁹¹ Included are the “schizophrenic” myth of American origins, “as a colonial settler state on the one hand and anticolonial republic on the other.”⁵⁹² Similarly, “Zionist discourse contains a liberatory narrative vis-à-vis Europe” that recapitulates the self-image of the Puritans as a “prelapsarian Adam, as a New Man emancipated from history” —suggesting another parallel between the “cultural discourse about the innocent national beginning of America and that of Israel.”⁵⁹³ Likewise, the “gendered metaphor of ‘virgin land,’ present in both Zionist and American pioneer discourses, suggests that the land is implicitly available for defloration and fecundation. Assumed to lack owners, the land therefore becomes the property of its ‘discoverer’ and cultivators, who transform the wilderness into a garden.”⁵⁹⁴ In the end, both American exceptionalism (which argues for the uniquely moral and well-meaning behavior of the United States) and Jewish exceptionalism (the idea that Jews, the eternal victims, are divinely chosen to serve as “a light unto the

⁵⁹⁰ Sarna, “Cult of Synthesis,” *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁵⁹¹ Shohat, “Taboo Memories,” *op. cit.*, p. 221.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

nations”), are related by more than simple resemblance. Both reflect a deep structural similarity, as idea systems that are based in the civilizational mission of the West.

Shohat’s portrait of Israeli culture begins with a sociohistorical account of Arab-Jews, and then continues from there to expose and challenge many of the deeper structures of nationalism in both the Israeli and U.S. nation-states. Echoing Carl Schmitt, she charts the reliance of both countries on the identification of an enemy and the existential threat posed to the very existence of either “Promised Land” —as well as their need to forget the violence of their response when faced with the previous inhabitants of the territories they chose for settlement, which were, of course, far from empty.

Gil Anidjar: The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy

Alcalay and Shohat offer a rich and evocative commentary on multiple aspects of both Jewish and Israeli history, suggesting some of the possibilities of refocusing historical, literary, and political attention on the Levant as a civilizational space, in no small part as a way of countering the Eurocentrism implicit in Ashkenazi hegemony over the narrative of Jewish history. Their contributions are extended and complicated by the writing of Gil Anidjar, a professor of Religion and Middle Eastern Studies at Columbia University, who approaches many of the same issues from the vantage point of religious history and continental philosophy. The final section of this chapter explores Anidjar’s discussion of how and why Jews and Arabs have come to be seen as opposites, a complex account that reaches back centuries into European history—including the implications of the inclusions and exclusions of how the idea of “Europe” was invented.

Anidjar's work may seem less overtly politicized than that of Alcalay and Shohat. In fact, however, his writing, though more heavily philosophical and theoretical, reaches similarly ground-breaking conclusions, with important implications for thinking more effectively about peace and coexistence.

The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy grapples with one of the most difficult conceptual problems in philosophy: the question of how to study an absence. At the outset of his discussion, Anidjar suggests that the very concept of the enemy is "structured by the Arab and the Jew, that is to say, by the relation of Europe to *both* Arab and Jew."⁵⁹⁵ In his introduction, "Moments of the Theologico-Political," he describes the book as "less a history [...] than a preliminary account of why that history has not been written."⁵⁹⁶ His search for an explanation of this conundrum leads him to explore "how the enemy becomes the enemy, the history of the enemy that is inscribed within and between the polarized identity of Jew and Arab."⁵⁹⁷ These questions, as we shall see, lead him, too, into an engagement with the ideas Carl Schmitt, whose understanding of political theology is rooted in his understanding of how Germany (much like other European nation-states) has defined its "enemy." As Anidjar argues throughout this book, it is precisely the Muslim or Arab that is key in establishing the boundaries of

⁵⁹⁵ Anidjar, op. cit., p. xi.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., p. xii.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

Europe and the “West” —coupled with the figure of the Jew, who is always figured in relation to its shadow self, the Arab.

“What purposes are served,” Anidjar continues, “by the naturalization of this distance, [...] of the enmity between Arab and Jew?”⁵⁹⁸ To date, he says, most analyses have focused either on the “Jewish Question” —or on “another history, the history of the opposition between ‘Islam and the West.’” Such accounts “take for granted distinct states of enmity (between Jews and Arabs, between Europe and the Arabs, between Europe and the Jews” while “failing to engage the three ‘elements’ at once (Europe, the Jew, the Arab).”⁵⁹⁹ As Anidjar argues throughout this volume, the binary opposition between the the Jew and the Arab, in the context of the role of Europe and the West (which largely remains tacit), plays a critical definitional role in modern philosophical and political thinking. His ambition is to expose this logic as a crucial, yet largely hidden, aspect of the self-understanding of “Western civilization,” making it possible to bring it to the surface of our understanding.

As Anidjar explains, it is the idea of Europe itself that has taken shape in this way. In what Anidjar terms “a striking book,” Hypothèses sur l’Europe (Hypotheses on Europe), French philosopher Denis Guénoun argues that identity —here, the identity of “Europe” —is structured by a “logic of separation and distance.”⁶⁰⁰ Reading Guénoun

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., p. xiii.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., p. xvii.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., p. xix.

through Jacques Derrida and other philosophers, Anidjar continues by noting that the idea of Europe is defined in terms of “the distinction and indeed the opposition between the theological and the political.”⁶⁰¹ At the same time, says Anidjar, “the political [...] is constituted out of religious division,” linking “the history of political change in Europe” to what Guénoun calls “the theologico-political difference.”⁶⁰²

Although secularization, the “detheologization of politics” initiated by the French Revolution, began as an attempt to sever that link, instead, in Guénoun’s eyes, “the nation comes to occupy a [...] singular place in the theologico-political apparatus” leading Guénoun to conclude that the nation itself is “a theological idea,”⁶⁰³ echoing several of the most basic assertions of Carl Schmitt in the 1920s.

For Europe, meanwhile, “Islam is historically constituted as exteriority”⁶⁰⁴—that which is excluded by being defined as outside the boundaries of Europe and the “European.” “If the name of this exclusion is ‘Islam,’ then in naming itself as what faces Islam, ‘Europe’ hides itself from itself by claiming to have a name and a face independent of Islam. This self-constitution is not only related to the question of ‘religion.’ [...] It carries with it in unavoidable ways the division between Judaism and

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., p. xx.

⁶⁰² Ibid., p. xxi

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

Islam, the distinction of Jew from Arab.”⁶⁰⁵ The self-understanding of Europe (and European-ness) thus depends on being defined as “not Islam” — with Judaism remaining as its paradigmatic “internal enemy.”⁶⁰⁶ What Anidjar is arguing here is that our very understanding of identity itself—in this case, the identity of Europe and the West—depends on this understanding of Arabs and Jews (or Islam and Judaism), an understanding that remains submerged in virtually every contemporary discussion of Jews and Arabs, as well as how we understand the conflict among them.

In the final pages of his introduction, Anidjar describes the difficulties he encountered in locating any clear definition or sustained discussion of the concept of the enemy, in classical philosophy, political philosophy, or psychology—a lack that, he says, “remains dictated, perhaps even governed, by a vanishing, the insistence of a [...] drawing away of the enemy from any privileged discursive sphere.”⁶⁰⁷ The absence of any such discussion, implies Anidjar, functions to blunt any inquiry into how the “enemy” is defined—and why such a definition continues to govern our thinking, below our conscious awareness.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., p. xxii.

⁶⁰⁶ Kathleen Biddick’s forthcoming *Make and Let Die* (see footnote 17 above) offers a particularly useful account of how Muslims were defined as the “enemy” of Western Christendom, while Jews were understood as “slaves” to the sovereign, subject to a “state of exception”; see her introduction, “Untimely Sovereignties,” p. 9ff, and her chapter 4, “Dead Neighbor Archives,” p. 81ff. Throughout this volume, she is attentive to how histories of sovereign violence are too often masked by the exclusions of contemporary theorists.

⁶⁰⁷ Anidjar, op. cit., p. xv.

In his first chapter, “The Theological Enemy,” Anidjar considers how “theological” and “political” enemies have been distinguished. Although the term “political theology” asserts the interpenetration of the two realms, Anidjar makes a strong case that European thought has relied on separating the political from the theological—an area in U.S. thinkers have followed the European template. Much as in Kathleen Davis’s discussion of the modern/medieval divide, the separation of the political and the theological allows us to pass over their relationship, a point that will be illustrated in the discussions below of Carl Schmitt and “Abrahamic” religion.

Beginning with Paul’s Letter to the Romans and its interpretation over the centuries, Anidjar outlines his understanding of how the ideas of war and enemies evolved. An important juncture in this process is signaled by Slovenian political theorist Tomaz Mastnak in his book *Crusading Peace*.⁶⁰⁸ “Between the eleventh century and the thirteenth, ‘fresh ground was broken’” with the “momentous” change that Muslims were constructed “as the normative enemies of Christianity and Christendom,” a change that was accompanied by “parallel developments in Christian anti-Jewish polemics.”⁶⁰⁹ Despite the bloody anti-Jewish violence that accompanied what we now think of as the “First Crusade,” Anidjar notes the emergence of significant differences in the eleventh-century understanding of these different categories of enemy. He quotes a

⁶⁰⁸ Tomaz Mastnak. *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

⁶⁰⁹ Mastnak, p. 31.

1063 statement by Pope Alexander II as typical: “although they are both ‘enemies of the church [...] surely the case of the Jews and that of the Saracens are different.’”⁶¹⁰

“Enemies both, the Jew and the Arab receive distinct determinations, one military and political, the other theological.”⁶¹¹ In later centuries, this understanding of Jews as “internal” enemies and of Muslims as “external” enemies was consolidated as a key aspect of European philosophical and political thought.

Throughout The Jew, the Arab, Anidjar returns frequently to the writings of Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), who was one of his teachers; Anidjar edited, translated, and wrote an introduction to Derrida’s 2001 volume, Acts of Religion. Although The Jew, the Arab comments on the writings of numerous historians and theorists, Derrida occupies a privileged place: Anidjar returns to him throughout this volume, and his own writing reflects a strong identification with Derrida’s work. Anidjar’s second chapter, “Derrida, the Jew, the Arab,” draws out some of the latter’s contributions to the discussion of sovereignty and the theologico-political relation that stands at the heart of political theology. The discussion below, after a brief comment on Derrida’s discussion of his own background, will focus on two issues: Derrida’s reading of the work of Carl

⁶¹⁰ Anidjar, op. cit., p. 33. As Anidjar notes in his introduction, “Saracen,” “Moor,” and “Turk” were all used interchangeably as synonyms for “Muslim.” It is only since the twentieth century that identifiers like “Arab” and “Muslim” have been distinguished, as these older terms have fallen out of use.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., p. 35.

Schmitt, and his comments on “Abrahamic” religions, a term that has become a commonplace of contemporary interfaith discussions.

Derrida has described himself as an “uprooted African,” emphasizing the postcolonial nature of his experience, adding that he was “born in Algiers, in an environment about which it will always be difficult to say whether it was colonizing or colonized.”⁶¹² Here and throughout this chapter, Anidjar is quick to explain that none of Derrida’s statements should be seen as an uncomplicated identitarian statement: “the operative gesture is one that speaks the African as Other, rather than as a measure of identity.”⁶¹³ Likewise, Derrida’s various autobiographical statements should be parsed, says Anidjar, as representing “the trace of a number of so-called identities (African, Algerian, Arab Jew, Hispano-Moor, and [...] Franco-Maghrebian).”⁶¹⁴ Like Derrida himself, Anidjar is mainly interested in the implications of Derrida’s choices of language, rather than a deceptively simple act of labeling. Both of them, meanwhile, identify mainly with the tradition of French philosophical discourse. As with many French intellectuals, including Guénoun, examination of the details of their biography reveals that their own heritage emerged from the Jewish communities of Algeria and other parts of North Africa.⁶¹⁵ This is an important and seldom recognized difference

⁶¹² Ibid., p. 43.

⁶¹³ Ibid., p. 44.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Jewish residents of Algeria were declared to be French citizens in 1870, a status revoked during the Nazi occupation of France and then reinstated in 1954 during Algeria’s War of

with U.S.-American intellectual discourse, where ethnoreligious and racial identifiers are most commonly understood as an essential element of individual identity, while nationality most often remains implicit.

Anidjar then turns to the figure of Carl Schmitt, who he considers through Derrida's writing in The Politics of Friendship⁶¹⁶ and its discussion of Schmitt. Although Schmitt's signal contribution, observes Anidjar, was to question "the fundamental distinction, the cut, between theology and politics," this very distinction is now "affirmed and reproduced" in Schmitt's Concepts of the Political.⁶¹⁷ In his understanding of the Christian Gospels (and its injunction to "love your enemies"), Schmitt discounts any relationship "between the theological reading of the Gospels and the political example that follows."⁶¹⁸ The "political enemy" Schmitt identifies here is Islam, as exemplified by what he terms the "thousand-year struggle between Christians and Moslems."⁶¹⁹ Schmitt explicitly denies, however, that this reading follows from the theology of the Gospels. "Derrida lingers on this moment," comments Anidjar, "and remarks that 'Christ's teaching would thus be moral or psychological, even

Independence. As scholar Todd Shephard has argued, the 1954 decision that Algerian Jews were "wholly French" helped fix "a new boundary for the nation, which now excluded Algerian 'Muslims'"; see Shephard's The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁶¹⁶ Jacques Derrida. *The Politics of Friendship*. Translated by George Collins. London & New York: Verso, 1997. This volume was reissued in paperback in 2006.

⁶¹⁷ Anidjar, op. cit., p. 45.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., p. 48.

metaphysical, but not political,”⁶²⁰ maintaining the separation between the theological and the political, which is supposedly overcome through political theology. According to Derrida, says Anidjar, Schmitt sees the commitment to waging war “‘against a determinate enemy’” as “‘the condition of possibility of politics.’”⁶²¹ This, says Anidjar, is “what Derrida means when he explains that “without this enemy par excellence that is Islam, Europe [...] would no longer exist.”⁶²² This would demonstrate, finally, “that Islam is not only the source of ‘our’ history, but also that it is one of the ‘conditions’” of the history that Anidjar is “trying to read” in The Jew, the Arab.⁶²³

Continuing with Derrida’s reading of Schmitt, Anidjar notes that what occurs next is a movement to “another nonpolitical other.”⁶²⁴ “What would [...] the identity of such an enemy be?” he asks. “What would be [...] the identity of what is, strictly speaking, neither friend nor enemy, but that, beyond the political, becomes [...] an enemy of the political (emphasis added)?” According to Schmitt, says Anidjar, “such a group of people would not maintain itself [...] and, deserving no political existence, such a [...] people would, perhaps, not deserve existence at all.”⁶²⁵ In Schmitt’s view,

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Ibid., p. 49.

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

since engagement with the political constitutes the very essence of national vitality, such a “nonpolitical” existence, by contrast, constitutes an inherent weakness. Without a “will to maintain itself in the sphere of politics,” Schmitt continues in The Concept of the Political, such “a weak people will disappear.”⁶²⁶ Although Schmitt is never explicit about who he is talking about here, his “example of such a nonpolitical enemy, [...] a people without land and without a state,” observes Anidjar, contains “features that nonetheless recall the Jewish people.”⁶²⁷ Schmitt’s reticence on this point, suggests Anidjar, is “a prefiguration of what was going to happen to entire communities, religious and nonreligious, of European Jews” in the Nazi era.⁶²⁸

Schmitt, a thinker who is best known for his insistence on the importance of the theologico-political, persists in both “inscribing and denying at once the passage and the absence of passage between theological and political, between Islam and the Jewish people.”⁶²⁹ Rather than reading this as an inconsistency in Schmitt’s thinking, however, Anidjar—still following Derrida—argues that the refusal to make the link between the theological and political in Christian (and perhaps Western) thought “goes back at least until Augustine” and continues “until and even after Franz Rosenzweig.”⁶³⁰ This entire

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

tradition of interpretation is reflected, in Rosenzweig's succinct formulation, in the belief that the Jewish people remains "absent from history and from the political sphere"⁶³¹ an idea that later became one of the hallmarks of political Zionism, which sought to remedy what it saw as a lack.

This long tradition in both political theory and historical interpretation, says Anidjar, "coheres with itself only to the extent that it anxiously maintains the distance between Arab and Jew," refusing to reflect "on the links and on the ruptures that are at work between Judaism and Islam."⁶³² By the same token, "[o]ne still awaits [...] a study that would engage *together*, and in comparative perspective, the image of Jews and Muslims in Europe," which would constitute "the history, therefore, of Europe."⁶³³ Once again, Anidjar is arguing that maintaining the presumed opposition between Arab and Jew, however many logical and historical contradictions it entails, is foundational to Western political thought.

Anidjar concludes this chapter by reflecting on the notion of "the Abrahamic," a term that plays an important role in Derrida's discussion in The Politics of Friendship. Often advanced today in interfaith discussion as a way of suggesting a hoped-for unity among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Derrida's reading is far more challenging, focusing on "the proximity and distance" that are implied by "'the fraternal figure of the

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Ibid., p. 53.

⁶³³ Ibid.

[...] brother enemy,” which Derrida sees as the “‘‘conflicted and conflicting figure, the divided brother.’’”⁶³⁴ Through this discussion of the “Abrahamic,” both Derrida and Anidjar, as well as many of their contemporary interlocutors, are questioning the modern trope of the binary opposition between Jew and Arab, by counterposing it to the actual textual and historical relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, from the Hebrew Bible to their modern historical and political encounters.

To further illuminate the concept of the “divided brother,” Anidjar quotes another writer, psychoanalyst Fethi Benslama (another French intellectual of North African descent), who considers that “the being-together of these brothers is always already ‘untenable,’” given that they are “‘‘belligerent brothers, Jews, Christians, Muslims’ who ‘do not even know what their unconscious gives them.’”⁶³⁵ This untenable relationship, says Anidjar, which is “illegible in that it never appears as such, still operates as the condition of the theologico-political.”⁶³⁶ This failed fraternal relationship, which is never specified yet cannot work, remains as the secret at the heart of political theology.

Close attention to the text of the book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible, finally, reveals that the story of the Abrahamic is in part “a term of war and a term at war,”⁶³⁷

⁶³⁴ Ibid., p. 54.

⁶³⁵ Ibid,

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

rendering the popular use of the term Abrahamic in interfaith coalitions disingenuous at best. For Derrida, says Anidjar, speaking of “the Abrahamic” both “worries and unsettles the hyphen of the Judeo-Christian,” as well as “the being-Christian and the being-political of Europe.”⁶³⁸ In other words, the term “Judeo-Christian” denotes an uncomplicated identity between Jews and Christians, from which all the conflictual elements have been sanitized. By the same token, “being-Christian” asserts an uncomplicated religious identity for the continent of Europe, while “being-political” is an indirect reminder that opposition to Islam defines Europe’s “political” reality. In each case, “the Abrahamic” functions as a way of insisting on both the longevity and the complexity of the relationships among these “divided brothers.”

The remainder of this section will briefly discuss two more discussions that illustrate the points I have made so far on the relationship between political and theological concerns—and its relation to the notions of the Arab and the Jew: first, a discussion of Shakespeare’s political theology, which appears in Anidjar’s chapter 4, “The Enemy’s Two Bodies,” and second, the evolution of the figure of the Muslim in European thought, concluding with a striking example of cultural images of the Muslim in Hitler’s concentration camps. The latter is discussed in Anidjar’s chapter 5, “Muslims (Hegel, Freud, Auschwitz).”

Anidjar’s Chapter 4 begins by recalling the discussion by Ernst Kantorowicz in his 1957 classic, The King’s Two Bodies. Kantorowicz, says Anidjar, focuses on

⁶³⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

Shakespeare's tragedy of Richard II as a vehicle for discussing the "unity of the 'body natural' with the 'body politic,'" ⁶³⁹ with the former term indicating the king's biological body, while the latter figures the sovereign as the embodiment of the nation. In Anidjar's explanation, the two terms together denote "a unity of the sovereign with the transcendent source of his authority, a unity of the community with its sovereign." ⁶⁴⁰ Anidjar, by contrast, pursues the "coming together and falling apart of another community, that of Arab and Jew." ⁶⁴¹ For this purpose he explores the "two Venetian bodies," strangers and enemies, "the Moor and the Jew," ⁶⁴² as depicted in two of Shakespeare's plays, The Merchant of Venice and Othello (which, as Anidjar points out, was formerly known as The Moor of Venice).

Anidjar's argument here is complex, once again resting on the absence, or perhaps the dissociation, of critical studies of the relationship between these plays. This lack—

could hardly be considered arbitrary, for the divide between the two plays [extends] from comedy versus tragedy, religion versus race, and theology versus politics, all the way to law versus love, [...] Jew versus Moor, and more. In the context of political theology [...] it is striking that the Merchant of Venice presents itself with multiple examples of successfully negotiated friendships and love affairs, whereas The Moor of Venice is filled with betrayal and the falling apart of social relations. ⁶⁴³

⁶³⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., p. 103.

Likewise, the staging of Othello depends on inculcating the audience's anxiety, while with The Merchant of Venice "'the audience's pleasure depends on a sympathetic engagement with the characters' situation.'" ⁶⁴⁴ Here, as with previous examples discussed in this chapter, Shakespeare's depiction of the Jew, Shylock, revolves around theological, even metaphysical, themes of justice and mercy, while the character of Othello "has a negative connection to political power." ^{645,646} For Anidjar, the "incommensurability" of the two plays is thus put forward as yet another indication that the disjuncture between theology and politics, illustrated here in the person of the Jew and the Arab (Moor), is foundational to "Western" civilization.

Both Schmitt and Kantorowicz, according to Anidjar, are exploring different aspects of the nature of secularization and, ultimately, political theology, with the Schmitt arguing, in one of his most famous statements, that the "modern theory of the state" represents a transfer of theological concepts to political life, while Kantorowicz focuses on the "king's two bodies" to explain "the relation between the king and the body politic." ⁶⁴⁷ As Kantorowicz emphasizes, love and matrimony (in the person of Desdemona, in this case) are part of how the body politic enacts its connection to the

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ More recent literary scholarship has argued against any political reading of Othello, since, in the words of one critic, "'the Moor never represented a sovereign subject to begin with'" (p. 103). Most contemporary criticism thus sees Othello as more domestic than political.

⁶⁴⁷ Anidjar, op. cit., p. 106.

“body natural.”⁶⁴⁸ For Schmitt, “law and jurisprudence” are identified as the “privileged space of political thought”⁶⁴⁹; Kantorowicz, by contrast, focuses on the relationship of law and love.

What is at stake for a contemporary reader in revisiting these different theories of secularization, one from the 1920s and one from the 1950s? Anidjar, like many contemporary theorists, believes that Schmitt identified crucial truths about both sovereignty and secularization—truths that became too risky to remember in the era of the Cold War. The Allied victory in World War II became a morality tale that was unquestioned for many decades. Today, however, critical scholars like Anidjar are revisiting the core concepts of political theology, in search of more powerful ways to come to terms with “the war against terror” and similar contemporary problems of international life.

“There is no doubt,” argues Anidjar, that Kantorowicz was “well aware” of Schmitt’s writings, although Kantorowicz had developed as “more discreet political agenda” by the 1950s, a difference that Anidjar believes accounts for the difference in emphasis between the two.⁶⁵⁰ In the process, Kantorowicz and those who followed in his footsteps “occluded more than their relationship to Schmitt”; they also “ignored that

⁶⁴⁸ Anidjar’s description of Kantorowicz here echoes Gregory Kaplan’s discussion of how Buber relates matrimony and sovereignty; see “Jewish Thought and Political Theology” above.

⁶⁴⁹ Anidjar, *op. cit.*, p. 106

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Schmitt had underscored the importance of friendship” in identifying the critical political nature of the distinction “between friend and enemy.”⁶⁵¹

Nonetheless, what remains obscure in the accounts of both theorists is an explanation of dissociation, about “the ‘undoing’ of the unity of the king’s two bodies” and the separation “of theological from political under the figure of the enemy.”⁶⁵² If Kantorowicz is reluctant to think about the role of dissociation in the panorama he outlines, Schmitt is no less unwilling to discuss the separation of theology from politics. Anidjar, meanwhile, identifies Shakespeare as occupying a critical moment in the “emerging dissociation of theology from politics.”⁶⁵³

Anidjar begins his fifth chapter, “Muslims (Hegel, Freud, Aushwitz),” by discussing how the image of Islam and Muslims have become part of the imaginary of Israeli culture, beginning with Nahman Blumenthal’s essay in the first issue of Yad Vashem Studies in 1957. Blumenthal is writing about the importance of studying “the language of the Nazis,” with particular attention to how their language had entered into common usage among Israeli Jews. As evidence, Anidjar quotes Blumenthal’s observation that “[t]hese words have already settled in Hebrew and Yiddish literature and have become part of our cultural history.”⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., p. 197.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 114.

Anidjar begins with the 1948 story “The Prisoner,” by the Israeli author S. Yizhar, which, as he notes, served as “a founding moment of Israeli literature.”⁶⁵⁵ This story offers an account of “military power and absolute subjection,”⁶⁵⁶ told through the story of a Jewish detachment in the Israeli state’s founding war of 1948 and their encounter with an Arab shepherd they had taken prisoner. Rather than recount a story of war as an occasion for the celebration of heroism, “The Prisoner” relates a tale of the dehumanizing violence that characterizes the relationship between the conquerors and their captive.⁶⁵⁷ In “The Prisoner,” the soldiers ultimately commit “horrific acts of violence,”⁶⁵⁸ (117), while their prisoner (who is barely distinguished from the landscape in Yizhar’s depiction) is presented as a figure of “terror, stupefaction, muteness, and despair,” an “image of absolute subjection.”⁶⁵⁹

From this beginning, Anidjar explores the image of the Muslim in the European imaginary as the figure of resignation, passivity, and helplessness. Emending Blumenthal’s injunction to understand how the extreme language of the Nazis had “settled” into the Western lexicon, not least through its appropriation by European Jews,

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 115.

⁶⁵⁷ An account which, as Anidjar points out, was published several years before the image of supposedly cultivated Germans “following orders” entered into the Western literary canon through a 1951 story by German author Heinrich Böll; see Anidjar’s fnnt 9, p. 218 for details.

⁶⁵⁸ Anidjar, op. cit., p. 117.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 118.

Anidjar reviews how the image of the Muslim has served as a fixture of the Western cultural vocabulary for centuries. Anidjar's examples in this chapter focus on key figures of European philosophy and political thought, before concluding with its appearance in the vernacular of the Nazi concentration camps.

The figure who begins Anidjar's discussion of modern philosophy (and who is generally understood as its founder) is Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In his "Analytic of the Sublime" (§28ff of the Critique of Judgement), Kant "includes," in Anidjar's reading, "rudiments of a theory of subjection, a vocabulary of power, violence, and resistance, of freedom and submission."⁶⁶⁰ Kant's discussion frequently evokes images of Judaism or the Jewish people—and of Muslims (or, as Kant says, "Mohammedans"). Judaism and Islam are not well differentiated in the writings of Kant; both serve as counter-examples for the rationality and aesthetic judgment evinced by normative (Christian) Europeans.

From there Anidjar moves backwards in time to comment on "the Western invention of despotism" as a style of government—which, he says, "is linked to another no less potent [...] invention: the 'apathy' and the 'faithful' resignation of the despot's subjects."⁶⁶¹ The word "despot," which originally referred simply to a "householder," was resignified and given a politicized meaning by sixteenth-century French philosopher Jean Bodin (who, according to Kathleen Davis, played a crucial role in early discussions of sovereignty).

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 121.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., p. 125.

The next example Anidjar cites is drawn from The Spirit of the Law by Montesquieu (1689-1755), in which the French political philosopher identifies the basis of law in reason, which he distinguishes from the “blind subjection to fate” that is understood to be characteristic of Muslims.⁶⁶² Likewise, the “paradigm of absolute subjection,” like the definition of despotism as a form of government, is identified with Islam.⁶⁶³ This “‘faithful resignation,’” however, is identified as a religious disposition, like that of “the Jews, who are said to be ‘blind,’” separating both Islam and Judaism from reason, which provides the basis of Western (that is, Latin Christian) law.

From there Anidjar passes to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), beginning with his identification of the “‘thoroughgoing passivity’ of worship” of the Jews.⁶⁶⁴ Later Hegel clarifies that “‘the Oriental threat,’” posed by Judaism and Islam is “‘apparently contradictory’ but nonetheless ‘intimately linked’ in the ‘Oriental character,’” in which “‘domination, power, and violence is the essence of social relations.’”⁶⁶⁵ Although today the term “Orientalism” is most often applied to European images of the Arab world, following Edward Said’s canonical 1978 work, which introduced the term to Western letters, Hegel’s usage here, much like the earlier examples from the writings of Kant and Montesquieu, blurs the distinction between

⁶⁶² Ibid., p. 126.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., p. 127.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 128.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 129.

Arab and Jew. As Anidjar comments, if Kant and Montesquieu began the “paving and partaking” of the way, after them “it is no less undoubtedly Hegel who invented the Muslims.”⁶⁶⁶ Anidjar’s argument, of course, is far more complex than my summary here. At the very least, however, he has made a compelling case that the cultural image of both the Jew and the Arab have been dramatically understudied in their enduring role as the boundary markers or limit case to Western notions of law, rationality, and freedom (or its opposite, subjugation).

Next Anidjar turns to Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), commenting on his Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1904), a classic study of the deeper meanings that lie beneath apparently inconsequential experiences of forgetfulness. Most interpretations of this work focus on how Freud unearthed suppressed images of sexuality and death by examining his own travels and encounters. Anidjar begins there but continues on to Freud’s deployment of the figure of “the Turk,” along with other evidence that Freud’s text is “haunt[ed] of and by religion.”⁶⁶⁷ After considering a multiplicity of examples, Anidjar’s arrives at his central argument in this section, which he believes that other readers have “[o]verlooked, [...] thus reproducing the (failed) forgetting that constitutes it in Freud’s account.”⁶⁶⁸ In Anidjar’s estimation, “the no less spectral and unreadable shape of Psychopathology pivots on the Abrahamic,” the unacknowledged relationship

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 133.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 134.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

that stands “at the center of Europe.”⁶⁶⁹ The tale of Freud’s half-understood encounters as revealed through Psychopathology thus circles back to the image that Anidjar began this volume with, the disappearing figure of the enemy. Given what Alcalay, Asad, and many others have argued about the deliberate forgetting of the integral role of “the Jew, the Arab” as the elemental omission that created the boundaries of Europe as the space of “Christendom,” it seems plausible that Freud’s exhaustive (and exhausting) journey toward self-awareness might well have been leading him, as Anidjar asserts, toward the Abrahamic.

In the final section of his chapter on the cultural image of Islam and Muslims, Anidjar turns to Auschwitz. His discussion here follows many of the points made by philosopher Giorgio Agamben in his 1999 volume, Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive.⁶⁷⁰ Agamben, for his part, expresses his hope that, fifty years after the end of the Holocaust, it might be timely to reconsider the critical moral and ethical lessons of the Nazi period. While Agamben’s work has been criticized by some Holocaust scholars—both for some of his readings of Primo Levi’s The Drowned and the Saved and for subordinating the historical specificity of the Nazi genocide to his own theory of witnessing⁶⁷¹—Anidjar’s reading of Agamben is very specific: he is continuing

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 135.

⁶⁷⁰ Giorgio Agamben. Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 1999.

⁶⁷¹ See, for example, Thomas Tresize’s Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

his exploration of Western images of Islam and Muslims as they occur in the context of theological-political discourse.

Anidjar's discussion in this section begins with the "artificial language" that "made up an essential part of the Nazi machinery,"⁶⁷² functioning as a key aspect of the dehumanization of camp life for both victims and guards. This language "continues to be used by survivors," comments Anidjar, "yet often requires translation even for German speakers."⁶⁷³ Its dehumanizing character has been extensively decried, as regards the reliance on euphemisms (like *figuren* [dolls]) as the preferred term for corpses, or even the "Final Solution," which, of course, has become incorporated into our own language. There are, however, aspects of this language, says Anidjar, "that mark the disturbing porosity [...] between victim and perpetrator, between Nazi and Jew, but also between camp life and 'normal' life."⁶⁷⁴

Though many aspects of this politicized language were specific to the Nazi era, one such word, "Muselmann" (at that time the German term for Muslim; in the plural, "Musselmänner" or Muslims) "governed an entire discourse long before World War II and continues to do so [...] to this very day."⁶⁷⁵ Anidjar's efforts to investigate this term over the centuries have provided a "theologico-political history of absolute

⁶⁷² Anidjar, op. cit., p. 138.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 139.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 140.

subjection.”⁶⁷⁶ Much like Kathleen Davis, Anidjar identifies the sixteenth century as a critical moment in the development of the modern discourse of sovereignty. His appreciation of the theologico-political context of this discourse, with its interplay of freedom and subjection and its relationship to the Abrahamic, is, however, unique.

As Anidjar reiterates, the usage of the term “Musulmann” was widespread among numerous concentration camps and is amply attested by many of the early accounts of camp life. To characterize the usage of this term, Anidjar, following Agamben, cites early accounts of camp life, such as Primo Levi’s 1961 work Survival in Auschwitz: “The Musselmänner, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass [...] of non-men, who march and labor in silence, the divine spark dead in them.”⁶⁷⁷ Anidjar traces the history of his term in discussions of the Holocaust, ending with a much more recent work of Holocaust scholarship by Australian anthropologist Inga Clendinnen, Reading the Holocaust.⁶⁷⁸ Many prisoners in the camps, she reports, “‘were reduced to staring, listless creatures [...] who for a few days or weeks existed, barely — and who then collapsed and were sent to the gas.’”⁶⁷⁹ The term *Musselmänner*, she says, “‘refers to the docile acceptance of one’s destiny popularly ascribed to Islam and ‘the East.’”⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Inga Clendinnen, Reading the Holocaust. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

⁶⁷⁹ Anidjar, op.. cit., p. 140.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

Unlike many other elements of camp jargon, observes Anidjar, the term “Musselmänner” has often remained untranslated and undiscussed. As he has demonstrated painstakingly throughout the Jew, the Arab, however, the figure of the Muslim as an image of absolute subjection has a history far longer than that of the Third Reich. “The Muslims,” he concludes, “are everywhere. At the center and at the margins of Europe and its literature, visible and invisible, they figure a disappearing non-act.”⁶⁸¹ Even when Muslims are depicted today as terrifyingly violent, they are seen as irrational and subjected to the lead of others, leaving agency and rationality secure as a Christian (or perhaps Judeo-Christian) trait. Islam, even when depicted as eminently political, is nonetheless understood as a religious disposition.

What, finally, is the meaning of the silent figure of the “Musulmann” —in the life of the concentration camps and in the disappearing figure of the enemy? Does it simply serve as a foil to the identity of Europe and the Europeans—including, most chillingly, the Jews—or do that silence and disappearance play an even deeper role in the cultural identity of the “West”?

Conclusions

The three main sections of this chapter—“Sovereignty and Secularism,” “Jewish Thought and Political Theology,” and “Arabs and Jews”—have explored the idea of

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., p. 141.

sovereignty from multiple vantage points, illustrating how “Western” thought has both shaped and interacted with the global Jewish experience.

The first section focuses on the work of Kathleen Davis, who argues that the modern idea of sovereignty traces its history back to the sixteenth century, when European conquest ushered in the age of colonialism and the Atlantic slave trade. Davis offers a penetrating revisionist account of modernity, showing how the divide between the “medieval” and the “modern” was developed after the fact, in order to legitimate the emergent relationship between Europe and its subject populations. Davis’s approach to periodization explains how temporal difference was mobilized to explain geographic and political differences, with superstition, slavery, and subjugation safely cloistered in the European past, while seen as the present reality of the colonized world. The contrast offered with the rationality, political freedom, and secularization, understood as characteristic of the European present, made it obvious that the European powers were much better equipped to rule the world. Davis offers a compelling account of how the modern concept of sovereignty has been shaped through this process of periodization.

The ideas of German legal philosopher Carl Schmitt, who revived the term “political theology” in the 1920s, have become a touchstone for contemporary considerations of sovereignty, and his contributions are considered throughout the chapter. His theories of sovereignty received scant attention throughout the twentieth century, in no small part because he was discredited by his affiliation with the Nazi Party, which he joined when it came to power in 1933, an affiliation which he never

really disavowed. In the twenty-first century, however, his ideas have received renewed attention, particularly because of his critique of liberalism. Many theorists have found value in his rejection of the vaunted neutrality of the liberal nation-state—and his insistence that secular theories of the state recapitulate premodern theological structures.

The response to Schmitt and his ideas in Jewish thought is the focus of the second section of the chapter, “Jewish Thought and Political Theology.” The introduction to the anthology Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology, by editors Randi Rashkover and Martin Kavka, ably chronicles the increased attention to Carl Schmitt and his theories that has emerged in recent years in Jewish Studies. I offer a close reading of just one of the essays in this volume, Gregory Kaplan’s “Power and Israel in Martin Buber’s Critique of Carl Schmitt’s Political Theology.” Buber, a contemporary of Carl Schmitt, was one of his most important interlocutors, offering a valuable critique of his ideas. Unfortunately, as I have stated above—

Far from following Buber’s example, [...] both the Israeli government and the American Jewish community have been more closely aligned with the vision of sovereignty proposed by Schmitt, both in the importance they place on identifying the enemy and in their penchant for declaring the necessity of states of exception—a suspension of juridical order—as a response to what they deem to be existential threats.

The third section, “Arab and Jew,” considers the work of three writers, each of whom critiques, in different ways, the supposed binary opposition of Arab and Jew. In the process, each of them rethinks the role of Europe and the “West” as an invisible third party mediating the relationship of the other two. The first these writers, Ammiel Alcalay, questions the idea of Europe as a civilizational space, revisiting the idea of the

Levant and recalling the submerged role of Levantine Jews in the life of Israeli culture. Next, Ella Shohat, an Israeli emigré, discusses the unrecognized ethnic fractures in Israeli society as a way of setting the stage for the emergence of Mizrahi Jews as a new ethnic identity among Jewish Israelis who trace their origins to the Middle East and North Africa. By asserting her own identity as an Arab-Jew, Shohat demonstrates the contradictory nature of this and other binaries that have become foundational aspects of Western culture—East versus West, Arab versus Jew, and primitive versus modern. Both Shohat and the third writer, Gil Anidjar, explore the role of U.S. and European nationalism in the formation of national as well as geocultural identities. Concluding the chapter, Anidjar makes a strong case that Jews and Arabs form the indispensable boundary markers of “Western civilization,” which can exist only through the foil they provide.

Together, these three sections trouble the idea of sovereignty, first by illustrating its historical relationship to the emergence of colonialism and then by showing the continuing pertinence of Carl Schmitt’s analysis of “sovereignty” as a recapitulation of Christian theology. Next, modern Jewish political thought, however much it asserts its own unique origins and values, differs little from the Western/Christian norm—a characteristic that it shares with most currents of postcolonial nationalist thought. In the third section, the conventional differentiation of Arabs and Jews is shown to be riddled with contradictions. Ultimately, the role of Europe as the invisible third party mediating

the relationship between the other two provides the strongest support for the critiques offered by Ammiel Alcalay, Ella Shohat, and Gil Anidjar.

In the end, Zionism, like most other forms of modern nationalism, encodes the secularized Christian notions of the enemy, the nation, and the state of exception, each of which has been naturalized and thus rendered invisible over a period of centuries. Sovereignty and self-determination continue to present themselves as the very figures of autonomy and independence, but they remain well within the structures of the secularized—that is to say, naturalized—themes of Christian theology. Of the different theorists discussed in these pages, the late Martin Buber comes the closest to offering a way out of this straitjacket. As Gregory Kaplan has shown, however, Buber's ideas are mainly honored by being ignored.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this project, I've sought to chart the evolution of contemporary scholarly conversations about Israel and Zionism in the scholarship of Jewish Studies, with an eye toward understanding what types of new spaces and new possibilities we can open in the quest for a just and lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

To pursue this exploration, I've made a deliberate choice to speak from my own social location, following the foundational call from the late Adrienne Rich to begin with our own corporeal, national, geographic, and historical location as we build on what we think we know. As Rich suggests, the truest act of solidarity is to begin from one's own history and identity, in order to understand one's stake in movements for peace, equality, and democracy. Rather than adopting the vicarious perspective of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation, or of Jewish Israelis watching their own country descend into a nightmare of racism and violence, I've shifted the discussion to the American Jewish experience.

I began this project by asking how and why so many of us have come to avow our loyalty to an Americanized form of Zionism. As the consensus around this conviction begins to crumble, what resources from Jewish history and Jewish thought, I wonder, can help us envision a different future?

In my introduction to this study (chapter 1), I argue that American Jewish identity is best understood in its relation to U.S. nationalism. To make this case, I begin

with the work of other scholars of Jewish history, starting with historian Jonathan Sarna in his classic 1998 essay on “The Cult of Synthesis,” which argues that American Jews, as a crucial aspect of their acculturation to the American mainstream, have come to believe that “Judaism and Americanism reinforce one another.”⁶⁸² Sarna’s observations are complemented by the work of historian Eric Goldstein, who charts how American Jews framed their identity during the Progressive Era in terms of the idea of “whiteness,” in his 2001 article “The Unstable Other: Locating the Jew in Progressive Era American Racial Discourse.”⁶⁸³ I’ve chosen literary scholar Hilton Obenzinger, finally, to round out the story. In his 2008 essay “Naturalizing Cultural Pluralism, Americanizing Zionism: The Settler Colonial Basis to Early-Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought,” Obenzinger discusses how Zionism has become part of the U.S. national narrative. As he observes, the commitment of American Jews to Zionism as it interpenetrated U.S. nationalism dates back to the emergence of the United States as a world power in the early twentieth century.

These three essays contextualize my argument about the relationship between U.S. nationalism and an Americanized form of Zionism. I have inquired how they have shaped one another to become a foundational, but seldom examined, aspect of American Jewish identity. Each of these scholars, moreover, points us back to the early years of the twentieth century as a crucial moment in the emergence of Americanized Zionism. My

⁶⁸² Sarna, op. cit., p. 52.

⁶⁸³ This article was later republished as a chapter of Goldstein’s influential 2006 volume, The Price of Whiteness.

work builds on diverse elements of these works, placing them in conversation with one other and with critical historical sources.⁶⁸⁴

In Chapter 2, “American Jews and the Changing History of Zionism,” I have grounded my argument in the scholarship and historiography of Jewish Studies. In this chapter, I offer a historiographical interpretation of how the narration of Jewish history has undergone profound changes in the closing decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Echoing changes in the global political panorama,⁶⁸⁵ leading scholars of American Jewish Studies have gradually begun to integrate their understanding of Jewish collective memory with Palestinian collective memory. In the process, they have come to recognize the displacement and dislocation of Palestinian society caused by the Nakba (“catastrophe” in Arabic) in 1948 and its enduring impact on the worldwide Palestinian diaspora, as well as Palestinians living inside the Green Line⁶⁸⁶ or under Israeli military occupation. As a result of these tectonic shifts in awareness in Israel, the United States, and around the world, the scholarship of

⁶⁸⁴ It should be noted that my work addresses Jewish rather more general versions of American Zionism—a related topic that I hope to address in the future.

⁶⁸⁵ The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 set off shock waves in Israeli society, leading to an unprecedented growth of the Israeli peace movement. As this peace movement waned, it nonetheless provided the institutional framework for many Israeli organizations, as well as their U.S. counterparts, who have endured as for a liberal stratum of Israeli society committed to peace and human rights. In the mid-1980s, as earlier historical records were declassified, the “new Israeli historians” began to question established heroic narratives of the founding of the Israeli state. In 1987, the first Palestinian intifada brought the voices of Palestinians to global prominence. All of these developments have been echoed in the evolution of the scholarship of Jewish Studies.

⁶⁸⁶ The internationally recognized borders of the State of Israel.

American Jewish Studies began for the first time to recognize Palestinians as historical actors. During this period, dissent from the mainstream Zionist consensus, which has always existed, has become more visible, as contemporary scholars have sifted through the archive of Jewish history. As the twenty-first century began, important works of American Jewish history began to lift up “counter-state” narratives of the Jewish past.

The evolution I have charted in the scholarship of Jewish Studies echoes changes in public awareness. It also provides a firmer foundation for critical dissent from the mainstream Zionist consensus. As I have noted in my foreword, I certainly do not consider Jews to be the privileged arbiters of historical memory. At this writing, however, as critical perspectives on Zionism from other sources have proliferated, particularly among younger generations of American Jews, it has felt particularly important to me to show how such perspectives can also be grounded in Jewish history and Jewish thought, as powerfully as in the experiences and aspirations of other communities—not because I believe that American Jews need to fashion a uniquely “Jewish” way of understanding the world, but because, as stated in my discussion of critical Jewish cultural studies in chapter 1, I believe that we are all implicated in one another’s stories.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I focus on the emergence of Americanized Zionism in the American Jewish community in the early twentieth century, with its multiple links to the ideology of Progressivism. Such origins, as I argue, have had an enduring impact among American Jews on the image the state of Israel (as well as of pre-state Zionist settlements

in historic Palestine). Chapter 3, “Zionism as Progressivism,” documents how key leaders of the American Zionist movement, including Horace Kallen, Henrietta Szold, and Justice Louis Brandeis, brought the ideas of the Progressive movement into their efforts to settle Palestine as a “Jewish commonwealth.” In Chapter 4, “Brandeis on the ‘Jewish Problem,’” I discuss the crucial role of Louis Brandeis in making Zionism acceptable and even fashionable among American Jews. As Jonathan Sarna observes in “The Cult of Synthesis,” Brandeis is venerated to this day by American Jews as the apotheosis of the synthesis ideal.⁶⁸⁷

While recognizing the enduring allure of such images, however, both chapters delve into less salutary aspects of the past. Americanized Zionism drew much of its power from the heroic mythos of the frontier in both the United States and the “state in the making” of the *Yishuv*. One of its principal attractions was its ability to offer the possibility of Jewish “normalization,” through a combination of “manliness” and nation-building—in the process yielding a kind of racial normalization as “white,” that is, as part of “Western civilization.” This conjunction solidified as one of many points of commonality between Jews in the United States and the *Yishuv*. In those early days, the propaganda of Americanized Zionism presented unself-conscious images of Jewish “pioneers” facing the threat of depredation from local Arabs, who, not surprisingly, were cast as the “Indians” in this replay of American national myths. Within a couple of decades, meanwhile, the utopia confidently predicted by Brandeis in “The Jewish

⁶⁸⁷ Sarna, op. cit., p. 59.

Question and How to Solve It” echoed the pattern of most, if not all, movements for national self-determination, with early assertions of peaceful intentions quickly devolving into military conflict and the quest for state sovereignty.

Chapter 5, “Zionism and Critical Theory,” steps back to take a much longer and more theoretical look, in order to grapple with the underlying assumptions that have made Zionism so resistant to effective critiques. In this chapter, I explore the idea of sovereignty, the growing interest in political theology, and the binary opposition of “Arabs” and “Jews” in Euro-American thought. Among American Jews, I observe, the principle of Jewish sovereignty, viewed particularly through the existence of the state of Israel, is widely understood as an essential guarantor of Jewish safety. Political theology, meanwhile, with its integration of political theory, religion, and moral philosophy, calls us to a reckoning with the broader issues of power.

I begin the chapter with a genealogical analysis of the concept sovereignty. To do this I mobilize the ground-breaking analysis of Kathleen Davis in Periodization and Sovereignty, as she destabilizes the assumption that sovereignty is a given of modern life. Davis makes a compelling argument that the concept of sovereignty was developed in no small part as a rationale for colonialism. Her revisionist history challenges many of the binary oppositions that structure our understanding, including medieval vs. modern, religion vs. secularism, and rationality vs. superstition. Much of our world view, she argues, relies on “origin myths” that have structured western society since the 1600s, revolving around the interlinked ideas of sovereignty, secularism, and modernity.

In the process, the brutality of slavery and subjugation has been retrojected onto an imagined medieval past, in order to bolster a triumphalist vision of Euro-American power in the modern world. The Euro-American present, as Davis argues, is celebrated for its rising freedoms, seen as the gift of secularization. The post-colonial third world, by contrast, is marked by the subjugation and superstition that have been safely quarantined in the European past. Global political differences, in this scheme, are thus obscured through temporal distance. My utilization of Davis's work in this chapter is the only time I do not rely on Jewish scholarship as I develop my own argument about sovereignty. Davis offers, I consider, an essential context for my efforts to reframe the taken-for-granted understanding of sovereignty in the modern world.

Next, I return to Jewish sources in my discussion of political theology.

Contemporary discussions of political theology, as I explain, derive from the work of German jurist and legal philosopher Carl Schmitt, particularly his 1922 book, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty. Schmitt's work is problematic for many people, especially scholars of Jewish Studies, given his affiliation with the Nazi Party after it came to power in 1933. In the post-9/11 era, however his work has become the starting point for any serious discussion of political theology, including by those who are critical of his ideas.

The contemporary prominence of political theology extends far beyond the Jewish discussion, of course. I focus my discussion here on how the scholarship of Jewish philosophy and Jewish thought has developed its own encounter with political

theology. For this purpose I rely on the 2013 anthology edited by Randi Rashkover and Martin Kavka, Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology. As Rashkover and Kavka explain in their introduction to this text, they were impelled to undertake this project partly as a response to seeing growing “cracks in the marriage between Judaism and liberalism.”⁶⁸⁸ The “engagement between political theology and Jewish thought,” they continue, “presses Jewish thought to present more rigorous and reflective analyses of Judaism’s political relationship to the modern liberal nation-state.”⁶⁸⁹

Most important for my own project, I consider, is Schmitt’s critique of the alleged neutrality of the liberal state, as well as his definition of sovereignty as the ability to declare a “state of exception” from established juridical systems. Similarly important, I believe, is in Schmitt’s emphasis on defining “friends” and “enemies” as the elemental purpose of any political system. With respect to this anthology, I devote particular attention to just one of its dozen essays, “Power and Israel in Martin Buber’s Critique of Carl Schmitt’s Political Theology” by Gregory Kaplan. By focusing on the later work of Martin Buber, following his involuntary emigration from Germany after 1938, Kaplan excavates a surprisingly contemporary vein in Buber’s thinking, I argue, as he critiques Jewish nationalism and its exercise of state power. Far from taking Buber’s cautions to heart, I note, both the Israeli government and the American Jewish community have been more closely aligned with the vision of sovereignty proposed by Carl Schmitt, both

⁶⁸⁸ Rashkover and Kavka, op. cit., p. 1.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

in the importance they place on identifying the enemy and in their penchant for declaring the necessity of states of exception—a suspension of juridical order—as a response to supposed existential threats.

The final section of chapter 5, “Arabs and Jews,” discusses three critical scholars who have challenged the binary opposition of these two groups, as well as their supposed enmity. All of the scholars discussed in this section—Ammiel Alcalay, Ella Shohat, and Gil Anidjar—challenge the notion of “Europe” as a geocultural space, whose construction required the erasure of Muslim contributions to the creation of “western” culture. All three of these scholars, not coincidentally, challenge Ashkenazi hegemony in Jewish life, by focusing their attention (albeit in very different ways) on Jewish communities rooted in North Africa and the Middle East, as well as the millennial cohabitation of Jewish and Islamic civilization. In his more theoretically informed work, Anidjar, for his part, suggests that the very concept of the enemy is “structured by the Arab and the Jew, that is to say, by the relation of Europe to *both* Arab and Jew.”⁶⁹⁰ In consequence, the supposed opposition of Arab and Jew is mediated by Europe as an invisible third party. “In naming itself as what faces Islam,” says Anidjar, “‘Europe’ hides itself from itself by claiming to have a name and a face independent of Islam.”⁶⁹¹ Carl Schmitt’s theoretical perspectives on “the enemy” come alive as they are related so vividly to the assumed opposition of “Arab” and “Jew.”

⁶⁹⁰ Anidjar, op. cit., p. xi.

⁶⁹¹ Anidjar, op. cit., p. xxii.

Following the logic of each of these chapters, I believe, offers us a way of reconsidering the history and the staying power of Zionism for American Jews. Activists who begin with the discourse of Palestinian solidarity tend to dismiss Zionism as a colonial project, which has placed an insuperable obstacle in the path of Palestinian sovereignty and self-determination. Likewise, for many observers a commitment to peace and social justice leads most directly to its roots in the discourse of Christian universalism, which may be difficult to recognize in its guise of modern secular thought. While neither of these standpoints merits dismissal out of hand, they leave us without a clear perspective based in our historical experience as American Jews.

In considering contemporary debates from this perspective, it is difficult to know how to parse the meaning of “assimilation” and its alternatives. To my mind, the quest for Jewish sovereignty, as asserted by Zionism, is actually another form of assimilation, because, as I have made clear in the pages of this dissertation, it mimics the logic of Euro-American nationalism. American Jews may have begun our encounter with U.S. culture centuries ago as a minority immigrant community longing for social approval and validation. Today, though, it is long past time to take to heart Martin Buber’s warnings about the responsibilities of social and political power, in the United States as well as Israel—warnings that he voiced, significantly, in the face of the Nazi takeover of German life and culture.

In writing this dissertation, I have explored numerous texts, philosophical, theoretical, and historical, to test my own intimation that, as I said at the outset of this

project, I believe we are having the wrong conversation in the American Jewish community. My goal throughout has been to argue that the search for a just and lasting peace in Israel/Palestine can be grounded in a new understanding of American Jewish history and Jewish thought, just as much as it can derive from other standpoints, religious, ethnic, or historical.

By the same token, I believe that troubling our understanding of sovereignty and nationalism makes vivid how narrow current discussions continue to be in these matters. Once again, I believe that we do not need to adopt the vicarious perspective of either Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation, or of Israeli Jews building new kinds of peace organizations. We should, of course, wholeheartedly affirm the importance of such perspectives. True solidarity, however, as Adrienne Rich reminds us, requires that we begin with our own social location and historical memory, and that it what I have attempted to do in this dissertation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agamben, Giorgio. Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 1999.
- Alcalay, Ammiel. After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- _____. Memories of Our Future. San Francisco: City Light Books, 1999.
- Anidjar, Gil. The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Asad, Talal. Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Arendt, Hannah, "The Enlightenment and the Jewish Question" (pp. 3-18), in Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, eds., The Jewish Writings. New York: Schocken Books, 2007.
- Bederman, Gail. Manliness and Civilization. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Behar, Moshe, "Mizrahim, Abstracted: Action, Reflection, and Academization of the Mizrahi Cause," Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2008.
- Bennis, Phyllis. "How does the US support Israel?," in Understanding the Palestinian Israeli Conflict: A Primer. Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing, 2007.
- Bergman, Werner and Ulrich Wyrwa, "The Making of Anti-Semitism as a Political Movement," Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History, July 2012.
- Berkowitz, Michael. Western Jewry and the Zionist Project. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- _____. Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

- Bhabha, Homi, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," October, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1984.
- Biddick, Kathleen. Make and Let Die: Untimely Sovereignities. Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2015.
- Boyarin, Daniel. Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Boyarin, Daniel, and Jonathan Boyarin, eds. Jews and Other Differences. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- _____, "Toward a Dialogue with Edward Said," Critical Inquiry Vol. 15, No.3, Spring 1989.
- Boyarin, Jonathan. Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Brandeis, Louis D. "The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It." Brandeis School of Law, Louisville University, Louisville, KY.
- Clendinnen, Inga. Reading the Holocaust. New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Cohen, Morris R, "Zionism: Tribalism or Liberalism?," The New Republic, 8 March 1919.
- Davis, Kathleen. Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Diner, Hasia. The Jews of the United States. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004.
- Derrida, Jacques. The Politics of Friendship. Translated by George Collins. London & New York: Verso, 2006 (2d. ed.).
- Gal, Allon, ed. Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996 and Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996.

_____, "Isaiah's Flame: Brandeis's Social Liberal and Zionist Tradition," Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2012.

Goldstein, Eric L. The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Halprin, Liora. Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920-1948. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Herzberg, Arthur. The Zionist Idea. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997.

Ignatieff, Michael. "We're So Exceptional," New York Review of Books, 5 April 2012.

Imhoff, Sara, "Manly Missions: Jews, Christians, and American Religious Masculinity, 1900-1920," American Jewish History, Vol. 97, No. 2, April 2013.

Itzkovitz, Daniel, "Passing Like Me," South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol. 98, No. 1/2, 1999.

Khalidi, Rashid. Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness. New York: Columbia University Press, 2d ed., 2009.

Kolsky, Thomas. Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.

Levy, Lital. Poetic Trespass: Writing Between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Levy, Lital and Allison Schachter, "Jewish Literature / World Literature: Between the Local and the Transnational," PMLA, Vol. 130, No. 1, 2015.

Magid, Shaul. "Butler Trouble: Zionism, Excommunication, and the Reception of Judith Butler's Work on Israel/Palestine," Studies in American Jewish Literature, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2014.

Mason, A. T. Brandeis: A Free Man's Life. New York: Viking, 1946.

Mastnak, Tomaz. Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

- Michels, Tony. "Is America Different? A Critique of American Jewish Exceptionalism," American Jewish History, Vol. 96, No. 3, Sept. 2010.
- Morris, Benny. The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-49. London: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Mufti, Aamir. Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Myers, David N. Between Jew and Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2009.
- _____. "Rethinking Sovereignty and Autonomy: New Currents in the History of Jewish Nationalism," Transversal: Journal of Jewish Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1, June 2015.
- Obenzinger, Hilton, "Naturalizing Cultural Pluralism, Americanizing Zionism: The Settler Colonial Basis to Early-Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought," South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol. 107, No. 4, 2008.
- Penkower, Monty Noam, "The Kishinev Pogrom of 1903: A Turning Point in Jewish History," Modern Judaism, Vol. 24, No. 3, 2004.
- Pianko, Noam, "'The True Liberalism of Zionism': Horace Kallen, Jewish Nationalism, and the Limits of American Pluralism," American Jewish History, Vol. 94, No. 4, Dec. 2008.
- _____. Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010.
- Raider, Mark A. The Emergence of American Zionism. New York: NYU Press, 1998.
- Rashkover, Randi and Martin Kavka, eds. Judaism, Liberalism, and Political Theology. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013.
- Roberts, Jo. Contested Land, Contested Memory: Israel's Jews and Arabs and the Ghosts of Catastrophe. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2013.
- Rothberg, Michael. Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Sarna, Jonathan D., "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture," Jewish Social Studies, Vol. 5, Nos. 1 & 2, 1998.

Said, Edward W., "An Ideology of Difference," Critical Inquiry, Vol. 12, No. 1, Fall 1985.

_____, "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," Social Text No. 1, 1979.

Segev, Tom. 1949: The First Israelis. New York: Free Press and London: Collier Macmillan, 1986.

Schmidt, Sarah, "The Zionist Conversion of Louis D. Brandeis," Jewish Social Studies, Vol. 37, No. 1, Jan. 1975.

_____. Horace Kallen: Prophet of American Zionism. New York: Carlson Publishing, 1995.

Schmitt, Carl. Translated by George Schwab. Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985.

Shapira, Anita, "Hirbet Hiz'ah: Between Remembrance and Forgetting," Jewish Social Studies 7, No. 1, 2000.

Shargel, Baila Round, "American Jewish Women in Palestine: Bessie Gotsfeld, Henrietta Szold, and the Zionist Enterprise," American Jewish History, Vol. 90, No. 2, June 2002.

Shenhav, Yehouda. The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Shephard, Todd. The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Shohat, Ella, "Invention of the Mizrahim," Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 29. No. 1, 1999.

_____. Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation. New York: I. B. Taurus, 2010 (2d ed.).

_____. Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

_____, "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims," Social Text, No. 19/20, 1988.

Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Silberstein, Laurence J. Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture. New York: Routledge, 1999.

_____, ed. Postzionism: A Reader. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

Silver, Matthew, "Louis Marshall and the Democratization of Jewish Identity," American Jewish History, Vol. 94, Nos. 1-2, 2008.

Thiem, Annika, "Schmittean Shadows and Contemporary Theological-Political Constellations," Social Research, Vol. 60, No. 1, Spring 2013.

Tresize, Thomas. Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.

Urofsky, Melvin I. Brandeis: A Life. New York: Pantheon, 2009.

Weinfeld, David. "What Difference Does Difference Make? Horace Kallen, Alain Locke, and the Birth of Cultural Pluralism," in Philosophic Values and World Citizenship, J. A. Carter and L. Harris, eds. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010.