

NATIONALISM, ZIONISM AND ETHNIC MOBILIZATION  
OF THE JEWS IN 1900 AND BEYOND

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Nathan Birnbaum—who traversed the Jewish political landscape of his time—is front-and-center at this rally held in Buczacz for the Austrian parliamentary elections of 1907. (Most recently reproduced in *Pinkas hekeliot*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1980), p. 112.

# NATIONALISM, ZIONISM AND ETHNIC MOBILIZATION OF THE JEWS IN 1900 AND BEYOND

EDITED BY

MICHAEL BERKOWITZ



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*For my sister, Edith C. Needleman, and in memory of  
my teacher and friend, Sterling Fishman*

*The Institute of Jewish Studies, privately funded and dedicated to the promotion of the academic study of all aspects of Jewish culture, was founded by Alexander Altmann in Manchester in 1954. Following Altmann's appointment to the Chair of Jewish Philosophy and History of Ideas at Brandeis University in the USA, the Institute was transferred to London, where, while retaining its autonomous status, it was located at the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies of University College London.*

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INTRODUCTION:  
1900 TO 2000 AND BEYOND:  
TAKING NATIONALISM FOR GRANTED?

Michael Berkowitz  
University College London

I would like to reflect on the event that serves as the touchstone for this volume—the Fourth World Zionist Congress, held in London, August 1900—and then address, in rather broad strokes, the explorations of nationalism, Zionism, and ethnic mobilization of modern Jewry that follow.<sup>1</sup> These essays, most of which began as presentations at a conference of the Institute of Jewish Studies at University College London (June 2000), do not simply represent an exercise in appreciation of the London Congress. They are neither justifications of Zionism, nor are they deliberately posed to debunk mythological supports for the movement in its past or current incarnations. Of course, it would be naïve to claim that academics are beyond politics, and that scholarly orientations are immune to political considerations.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the merits of the work of, and debates about, Israel’s “new historians,” these essays are not intended to directly enjoin the controversies over the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem, Zionist political initiatives with Arab and Western governments, the military might of Israel relative to Arab states in the 1940s and beyond, and Zionist population strategies vis-à-vis the Arabs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive and authoritative treatment of the subject is Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and The Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> See Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); among the seminal works are Morris, *The Birth of the Palestine Refugee Problem, 1947–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1991* (New York: Knopf, 1999); Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); cf. Anita Shapira, “The Past is Not Another Country,” in *The New Republic*, November 29, 1999; Ephraim Karsch, *Fabricating Israeli History* (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> See the special issue of *History and Memory* 7, 1 (1995); the essay by Derek Penslar, “Israeli History Revisited” is one of the most judicious treatments of the controversy.

Rather, this volume stems from a common interest in probing, through established academic disciplines, and notably, a collective interdisciplinary endeavor, diverse processes and aspects of Jewish nationalism of which Zionism comprised a prominent alternative beginning in the late nineteenth century. What marks this book is attention to areas that have been undervalued in examining Jews and nationalism—such as art, music, cultural anthropology, mass media, literature, and political symbolism—which often are given short shrift in relation to politics and ideology. Far from ignoring politics and ideology, however, I believe we can gain a more enriched understanding of how such politics and ideologies came to be and how they function.<sup>4</sup>

We shall begin our investigations, however, with a glimpse of the Zionist Congress from a century ago to illustrate some of the problems to be considered. On the Sunday afternoon prior to the official opening, a garden party was held in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Regents Park. An orchestral concert was part of the festivities, featuring Jewish-related selections. Afterwards, it was reported in the *Jewish Chronicle* that “A body of foreign Zionists set up a vocal concert of their own by singing a number of Palestinian songs to weird tunes, and they were honoured by having Dr. Herzl as a listener.”<sup>5</sup> Although the *Jewish Chronicle* correspondent found the improvised concert bizarre, especially juxtaposed to the genteel offering of the event’s sponsors, the singing probably fascinated Theodor Herzl more than the stalwarts of the *Jewish Chronicle* could have imagined. After all, Herzl was willing to undergo great pains in order to sanction an official hymn of the movement, which never materialized—due to the overwhelming popularity of the pre-existing ode, *Hatikvah*.<sup>6</sup> In a word, he and his colleague Max Nordau had hoped to displace *Hatikvah* due to the seediness of its author, Naphtali Herz Imber,

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<sup>4</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Brandeis University Press of the University Press of New England, 1995); David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> “The Fourth Zionist Congress—Enthusiastic Gatherings,” in *Jewish Chronicle*, August 17, 1900, p. ii.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 22–3.

who was not in line with the respectable image the movement aspired to project.<sup>7</sup>

Held in London from August 11 to 16, 1900, the Fourth Zionist Congress was neither the greatest nor the least significant international convocation of Theodor Herzl's movement before the First World War, or prior to the advent of the modern State of Israel. David Vital, an authoritative guide through Zionism's early decades, dismisses the event in less than two pages in his study.<sup>8</sup> It has not merited much attention in other secondary literature, even on the history of Zionism in England. Perhaps it is more important for what it was not, as opposed to what it was: unlike the preceding three Congresses, and most of the rest to follow, it was not in Basel—the Swiss city that would accrue its own Zionist mythology. Of even greater significance for the next two Zionist Congresses were their quarrels, for which they especially would be remembered. In 1901, passions were ignited over the issue of support for the Hebrew-oriented cultural dimension of the movement—which prompted a dramatic walk-out by the “Democratic Faction” of Martin Buber, Chaim Weizmann, Leo Motzkin, E.M. Lilien, and others.<sup>9</sup> The more famous row in 1903 took place over the issue of investigating the British offer of a tract of land in East Africa, known as the Uganda Plan.<sup>10</sup> Nothing of this kind happened in London in 1900. But does the fact that nothing happened mean that it was failure, or insignificant?

Stuart Cohen has written that despite heightened attempts at publicity during the Congress, membership did not rise to more than four and a half percent of Anglo-Jewry in its wake.<sup>11</sup> As opposed to focusing on the number of Zionists, however, it is crucial to recognize that one cannot completely disentangle the kind of public that Zionism was trying to create and nurture, and the means by which

<sup>7</sup> Louis Lipsky, *A Gallery of Zionist Profiles* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956), pp. 133–6.

<sup>8</sup> David Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, pp. 137–8, 218.

<sup>9</sup> Gilya Gerda Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1901* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995); Jehudah Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 62–4; 65–91.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Heymann, ed., *The Uganda Controversy*, I (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1970); II (Jerusalem: Ha-Sifriyah ha-Zionit, 1977); David Vital, *Zionism: The Formative Years*, pp. 267–347.

<sup>11</sup> Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895–1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 33, 56.

it attempted to do so. Zionism had, after all, “generated enormous public interest.”<sup>12</sup> All of this became part of the core mythology of Jewish state-building, and to a greater extent, national self-consciousness on the part of Jewry.

I propose, then, that the London Zionist Congress of 1900 was nevertheless an important gathering—because it was for the most part taken for granted in the life of fin-de-siècle Jewry. Nationalism, Michael Billig has argued, may appear tame or even banal, but this guise does not mean that it is devoid of power.<sup>13</sup> The summer of 1900 was a heady, exciting, and also deeply unsettling time for Jews: the Dreyfus Affair was still simmering, Romanian Jewry seemed to be facing the most dire threat in its already embattled history, and a blood libel trial was ongoing in Polna.<sup>14</sup> British Jewry was obsessed with showing that Jews were doing their part and more in the Boer War, partially in order to deflect the criticism of J.A. Hobson and others that Jews were profiteering from an outmoded assertion of imperialism.<sup>15</sup> But at the same time, London Jews in the heat of anglicization were thrilled by the visit of Morris Rosenfeld, the Yiddish “Ghetto Poet,” and took great pride that a strain of Jewish nationalism was conveyed through the exhibitions of the “Russo-Jewish sculptors at the Paris Exhibition.”<sup>16</sup> The fact that an international meeting of over four hundred nationalist-minded Jews, mostly from abroad, could gather in a world capital, and hold a mass meeting attended by enraptured thousands before its official opening, was remarkable for being unremarkable. It demonstrated, beyond any shadow of a doubt, no matter how paltry the rolls of shekel-paying Zionists in the West that the movement was alive and underway, however plodding. Even before the Congress, one commentator presciently argued that the “presentation of the continuity of the work, this manifestation of already existing common interest will be the mission of the Fourth Congress”—for which the expectations were

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<sup>12</sup> David Cesarani, *The ‘Jewish Chronicle’ and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 87.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> For the visual aspects of these episodes, see Sander Gilman, *Franz Kafka: The Jewish Patient* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> The most recent work on Hobson does not address this; see P.J. Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism and Finance 1887–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, June 29, 1900, pp. 13–14.

generally rather low.<sup>17</sup> It could, in any event, be counted on to attract a core of devotees to pursue their aims, however much they tended not to agree about how precisely this was to be done, and for thousands more to offer a phenomenal display of enthusiasm that would never be replicated in the Jewish world outside the framework of the early Zionist Congresses. The point I wish to stress is that Jewry was well in the throes of nationalization, not only of the Zionist variety, and such processes would continue to evolve to the present day. Whereas before the First Basel Congress of 1897, an attempt to nationalize European and world Jewry was a strange, laughable, or threatening proposition, there was something of a sea-change by 1900. This is not to say that all or most Jews became Zionists or Zionist-friendly—but that they tended to take the nationalization of Jewry as more or less natural. This it was not.

The process of nationalism takes thought—not a great deal, as nationalism as an ideology *per se* is neither challenging nor complex. Part of its impact derives from its near invisibility;<sup>18</sup> founding-myths of national movements usually stress an organic continuity with the past. But the launching and sustaining of nationalism, no matter how simple or superficial, takes effort. Nationalist movements are not natural, they are not born; they are created by men and women and even children. We will look at how nationalism and ethnic mobilization happened, and how it has worked in practice for the Jews—and at times been fiercely criticized and resisted. It is hoped that this discussion will be suggestive for exploring how religious identities become secularized and nationalized, and to interrogate the interplay between identity formation and ethnic politics. The tenor of a wealth of scholarship, after all, has stressed the extent to which modern identities are negotiated between various shades and alternatives, rather than emerging as an all-or-nothing proposition.<sup>19</sup>

It can be argued that Zionism's accomplishments fell well short of its goals, and that even the aspirations of the movement were drastically curtailed while it was in its infancy.<sup>20</sup> Yet the very endeavor of Herzl and his cohort invites us to revisit the scene of Zionism's

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<sup>17</sup> Dr. (?) Werner, *Jewish Chronicle*, August 10, 1900, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Billig.

<sup>19</sup> Leslie Adelson, *Making Bodies, Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> See David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* and *Zionism: The Formative Years*.

emergence, as we seek to explore both the imagination of, and the mass mobilization of Jewry. Despite the fact that Political Zionism would begin, and for decades, remain marginal within the existing Jewish organizational realm, it quickly became a leading example of effective ethnic-national mobilization.

In these respects the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897, and succeeding Congresses represented the apotheosis of Jewish national hope, and the preeminent eclipse of Jewish cynicism and self-doubt in modern times. Aided by its aura of grandeur and premature claims of monumental achievement, it concretized the notion that a Jewish national entity, on par with other modern nations, was in the process of coming into being. Moreover, the architects of the Congress endowed it with something akin to a messianic fervor that was woven into its moderate political temperament. However much it was out of step with the prevailing currents of Jewish life in the fin-de-siècle, the Congress elicited an outpouring of pride in a new “national” Jewishness, and was experienced by its faithful as an unabashedly joyous historical moment.

The chapters that follow seek to shed light on Zionism as well as on efforts at animating Jewry in nationalized modes of other stripes. Aviel Roshwald has written against the grain of mainstream diplomatic and political history by incorporating a keen understanding of underlying cultural issues in political developments.<sup>21</sup> He brings these insights to a novel and necessarily complex discussion of nationalism and modern Jewry in chapter one, seeking to navigate the theoretical terrain as mapped by Ernst Gellner, Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson, and others. He forcefully argues that as opposed to being viewed as exceptional, Jewish nationalism should be fundamentally incorporated into general considerations of nationalism. In the second chapter, Philip Bohlman, an ethnomusicologist whose work has uncovered past and current manifestations of “Jewish music,”<sup>22</sup> ana-

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<sup>21</sup> Aviel Roshwald, *Estranged Bedfellows: Britain and France in the Middle East During the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Roshwald and Richard Stites, *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914–1918* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Philip Bohlman, “*The Land Where Two Streams Flow*”: *Music in the German-Jewish community of Israel* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine, 1936–1940: Jewish Musical Life on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Bloomington: Indiana University

lyzes how Jewish-national folk music came into existence, and the difficulties inherent in creating “Hebrew song.”

Derek Penslar is author of one of the most trenchant analyses of how Zionism functioned on the ground in Palestine in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and more recently, a study of German-Jewish identity through the lens of economic history.<sup>23</sup> Using (as well as criticizing) the mushrooming theoretical literature on media, in the third chapter he delves into a virtually untouched subject in the history of Zionism and Israel—the use of the medium of radio. Incorporating sights, sounds, and memories, Barbara Mann, a scholar of Yiddish and Hebrew literature<sup>24</sup> brings us to a specific location in Palestine and Israel, in analyzing how layers of historical consciousness have operated in a central thoroughfare in Tel Aviv, Rothschild Boulevard.

“The street” about which Nachman Ben Yehudah writes,<sup>25</sup> as a cultural anthropologist examining the clash between ultra-orthodox and secular Jews in Israel of the 1980s and 1990s, is a scene of explicit conflict. Ben Yehudah draws into our discussion a small but notable minority within the Jewish fold—the *Haredim*, who all too often are ignored or obscured in discussions of Jewish nationalism. He is particularly concerned with violence perpetrated in the name of theocracy in Israel, as well as the polemics surrounding such acts. James Renton also offers a thick description of Zionist politics mainly in the realm of diplomacy, in the sixth chapter. He deals with enmity and bitterness in the Zionist fold, showing how it has influenced the writing of Zionism’s history. Here he explores the fervent embrace of “science” as embodied in the Weizmann legend, as well as the aversion to clericalism as manifested in the treatment of Moses Gaster’s critical involvement in the movement. Joshua Shanes, in

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Press, 1988); Bohlman and Katherine Bergeron, eds., *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Bohlman and Bruno Nettl, *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusicology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>23</sup> Derek Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> Barbara Mann, “Modernism and the Zionist Uncanny: Reading the Old Cemetery in Tel Aviv,” *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Nahman Ben Yehudah, *Political Assassinations by Jews: A Rhetorical Device for Justice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Ben Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

chapter seven, also delves into a Jewish world that might be described as hurly-burly. His lively depiction of Jewish-national politics in Galicia, in the wake of the promise in 1905 to support universal manhood suffrage in the Habsburg Empire, captures the street-level passion and intensity that often eludes scholarly treatments of Jewish politics and electoral politics generally.

Michael Löwy is author or editor of some twenty books, covering nationalism, internationalism, and romanticism from Europe to Latin America.<sup>26</sup> Given the increasing attention on Walter Benjamin, Löwy's seminal work on Libertarian Socialism—including Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, Martin Buber, and Gustav Landauer—was in many respects ahead of its time.<sup>27</sup> In chapter eight he focuses on Bernard Lazare, who remains one of the more enigmatic figures associated with Zionism. Lazare is best remembered for his defense of Dreyfus; but Löwy demonstrates that he also had keen—even prophetic—insight into the plight of the Armenian minority in the Ottoman Empire. Lazare was scornful of Herzl's Zionism not only due to its bourgeois orientation, but also because of its apparent willingness to use other ethnic-national groups in an instrumental way in order to attain Zionism's goal of a charter for Jewish settlement in Palestine.<sup>28</sup> John Efron, the leading historian of medicine and the Jews,<sup>29</sup> also focuses on an individual who supported, yet also struggled with Zionism. Efron's treatment of Arnold Zweig in chapter nine shows how the 'medicalization' of Jewry around the turn of the century coincided with Zionist critiques of the physiological and psychological states of the Jew from various medical and political perspectives.

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<sup>26</sup> Most recently, Michael Loewy, *Fatherland or Mother Earth? Essays on the National Question* (London and Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press with the International Institute for Research and Education, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> Michael Loewy, *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe: A Study in Elective Affinity*, trans. Hope Heaney (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

<sup>28</sup> In the wealth of scholarship on Herzl, one of the few to recognize the fact that Herzl used his journalism in order to win over the Sultan of Turkey, by distorting the persecution of Armenians, is Edward Timms; see Timms, "The Literary Editor of the 'Neue Freie Presse,'" in *Theodor Herzl, Visionary of the Jewish State*, eds. Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (Jerusalem: Magnes Press and New York: Herzl Press, 1999), pp. 52–67.

<sup>29</sup> John Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) and Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).



Delphine Bechtel, a Yiddishist and translator,<sup>30</sup> analyzes a group of Russian Jewish intellectuals through the medium of Yiddish polemics and literature in chapter ten. Examination of such cohorts, or “loose fields” in the terms of Pierre Bourdieu,<sup>31</sup> are crucial for understanding how nationalist movements worked among the immigrant masses in America and Britain, as well as East European Jews in Central Europe, and Tsarist and Soviet Russia. She explores the often surprising ways Russian Jewish intellectuals envisioned the reconstruction and nurturing of diapsora culture. In chapter eleven Francois Guesnet, a social and cultural historian of nineteenth century Poland,<sup>32</sup> examines the transformation of Chanukah celebrations in their broad social contexts. Although numerous scholars have mentioned how Zionists such as Martin Buber wished to transform Chanukah from a religious to a national holiday,<sup>33</sup> Guesnet is the first to investigate how it actually worked out in Eastern and Central Europe.

The Bezalel Institute was also responsible for promulgating a Zionist-kind of Chanukah, as *Chanukiot*—known in English as ‘menorahs’—were among its better-recognized trinkets. Inka Bertz, one of the pioneers of research into nationalism, art, and popular culture among Central European Jews,<sup>34</sup> discusses the inception and life of the institution in chapter twelve. She argues that the disagreements over the Bezalel revealed and exacerbated conflicting visions concerning aesthetics and their relationship to state-building in the Yishuv. The Bezalel, Bertz asserts, was a microcosm of the kinds of rifts that were prevalent in a host of Zionist enterprises as the protagonists on each side styled themselves as embodying an ‘essential’ strain of Jewish nationalism that could not be compromised. Richard Freund,

<sup>30</sup> Delphine Bechtel, *Der Nister's Work, 1907–1929* (Berne and New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Intellectual Field and Creative Project,” in *Social Science Information* 8 (1969): 89–119.

<sup>32</sup> Francois Guesnet, *Polnische Juden im 19. Jahrhundert: Lebensbedingungen, Rechtsnormen und Organisation im Wandel* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber's Life and Work: The Early Years 1878–1923* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), pp. 44, 204–5.

<sup>34</sup> See the catalogue “*Eine Neue Kunst für ein altes Volk*”: die jüdische Renaissance in Berlin 1900 bis 1924, Konzeption und Text, Inka Bertz (Berlin: Museumspädagogischer Dienst: Jüdisches Museum [Abteilung des Berlin Museums], 1991) and Bertz, “Jewish Renaissance—Jewish Modernism,” in *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture, 1890–1918*, ed. Emily D. Bilski (Berkeley: University of California Press; New York: Jewish Museum, under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1999), pp. 164–187.

a scholar of both rabbinics and archaeology,<sup>35</sup> illuminates the function of the Star of David and menorah in ancient and modern Judaism in chapter thirteen. The version of the menorah chosen to represent the State of Israel, modeled from the relief in the Arch of Titus, and the ‘Star of David,’ extend far back into Jewish history. Although both seem simple, they have tremendously complicated legacies, for which authoritative interpretations are only now beginning to emerge.

To borrow a phrase from a book of Michael Löwy, who borrowed it from Goethe, these essays may be seen as evincing “elective affinities.”<sup>36</sup> This notion was first used by Goethe in his romance, *Die Wahlverwandschaften* (1808), describing the ‘elective affinities’ of a married couple for two other persons. These *Wahlverwandschaften* are, of course, different from *Blutverwandschaften*—elective as opposed to blood relations. These scholars have decided to appear together in this forum as a range of voices speaking on the nexus between modern Jewry and nationalism. From choices of approaches and sources, and even their very diversity of perspectives and evidence, the contributions cohere and interrelate, in hopes that they spur further scrutiny of the processes of ethnic mobilization.

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Freund, *Understanding Jewish Ethics* (San Francisco: Mellen, 1990); Freund and Rami Arav, eds., *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee*, vol. 1 (Kirksville, Missouri: Thomas Jefferson State University Press, 1997), vol. 2 (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 1999).

<sup>36</sup> Michael Loewy, *Redemption and Utopia*.

## JEWISH IDENTITY AND THE PARADOX OF NATIONALISM

Aviel Roshwald  
Georgetown University

One of the persistent impediments to the development of Jewish Studies as a field is its marginalization by the academic disciplines on whose methodologies and literatures it is itself dependent. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the study of Jewish nationalism. As Mitchell Cohen has pointed out, the great majority of theoretical and comparative studies of nationalism either disregard the topic of Jewish identity altogether or make offhand and frequently misleading references to it as an illustration of some broader point or as an awkward exception to a rule.<sup>1</sup> This in turn makes it difficult for scholars of Jewish identity to make effective use of many of the existing developmental and typological paradigms of national identity. In this introductory chapter, I would like to address this disconnection by suggesting some ways in which the very tension between certain accepted notions about nationalism and the idiosyncratic characteristics of the Jewish case can be turned to productive use.

One of the least questioned assertions of the theoretical literature on nationalism is that nationalism is a strictly modern phenomenon.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Cohen, "A Preface to the Study of Jewish Nationalism," *Jewish Social Studies, The New Series*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (1994), 73–93.

<sup>2</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (rev. ed., London and New York: Verso, 1991; 1983). For other works that explore nationalism as an aspect or function of socio-economic, cultural, and political modernity, see Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication. An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1966); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982). Anthony Smith has explored the pre-modern roots of modern nationalism as well as the role of ethno-

The history of Jewish identity raises serious questions about the validity of narrowly modernist understandings of nationalism. To be sure, Zionism clearly conforms to the pattern of 19th- and 20th-century movements that have utilized modern techniques of mass mobilization and modern conceptions of popular sovereignty in their struggle to nationalize collective identities. There certainly was an element of contrivance, and even artifice, in Zionism's selective adaptation of traditional religious images, symbols, and practices in its creation of a secular, nationalist iconography. Examples of this abound in Michael Berkowitz's work; for instance, the ascription of prophetic qualities to Theodor Herzl's role and persona, or the transformation of the custom of the tzedakah box into the invented tradition of the Keren ha-Kayemet box.<sup>3</sup>

But recognition that Zionism exaggerated its links to the past in order to legitimize its political-modernization project need not lead us to dismiss all claims regarding the antiquity of Jewish national identity as spurious. Certainly ethnicity—in the sense of collective identity based on the notion of common ancestry—is the fundamental basis for the Hebrew Bible's classificatory schema for humanity. The seemingly endless series of “begats” that fill so many pages of Genesis, and that have brought tears to the eyes of so many Sunday School students, serve to lay out a genealogical basis for the division of humanity into multiple peoples, while at the same time underlining the common ancestry that all humans share. The Tower of Babel story associates ethnic divisions with linguistic ones, suggesting the irreversibility of humanity's ethno-cultural divisions even as it ruefully acknowledges that such differences are a cardinal source

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nationalism as a force that both reflects the conflict between, and reconciles, the impersonal and alienating aspects of modernization and defensive, neo-romantic reactions against it. Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); *idem*, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), chapter 7). On nationalism as a backlash against the bureaucratic state, see also Isaiah Berlin, “The Bent Twig: On the Rise of Nationalism,” in *idem*, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (New York: Vintage, 1992), 238–261. For a recent critique of the modernist interpretation of nationalism, see Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Hastings emphasizes the central importance of the Hebrew Bible's depiction of Israelite nationhood as a model that early modern European nationalists very consciously drew upon.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

of human misunderstanding and conflict. Ethnic identity then serves as the framework for Biblical conceptualizations of Israelite territorial and political sovereignty. I would accordingly agree with Steven Grosby's contention that ancient Israelite and Judean identities were recognizably national in character.<sup>4</sup>

A variety of objections can be raised to this interpretation. Modern nationalism is intimately linked to the idea of popular sovereignty, whereas the Bible's ultimate justification of political authority is theocratic. Most of the means and forms of mass mobilization associated with contemporary nationalism were non-existent in ancient times—mass media, universal education, political parties, etc. Indeed, we have no clear idea whether the conceptions of collective identity and political legitimacy articulated in the Bible were widely understood and shared by a broad cross-section of the population or whether they were limited in their impact to narrow priestly elites or eccentric prophetic circles.

Such objections can be challenged, in turn. Judaism's theocratic principle legitimized possession of the Land of Israel by the Children of Israel—not by their kings. While this concept is very different from modern justifications of national self-determination, it can be argued that, functionally and psychologically, it does not belong to such a distant mental universe. Conversely, religious and quasi-religious themes often play an influential role in latter-day nationalism—as in the case of Serbian political mythology, so heavily infused with themes of national martyrdom in the name of religion on the Field of Kosovo and the eschatological faith in the ultimate redemption of the Serbian people.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the molding influence of biblical motifs is clearly apparent in Serbian nationalism's narrative of collective suffering and salvation manifested through loss and regaining of political-territorial sovereignty. The Serbian example happens to have noxious overtones on account of recent events, but the intertwining of religious, eschatological, and nationalist themes is apparent in a broad variety of other political cultures, including that of American

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<sup>4</sup> Steven Grosby, "Kinship, Territory and the Nation in the Historiography of Ancient Israel," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Vol. 105, no. 1 (1993), 1–18; *idem*, "The Chosen People of Ancient Israel: Why Does Nationality Exist and Survive?" *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 5, no. 3 (1999), 357–380.

<sup>5</sup> See Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

civic nationalism, as Conor Cruise O'Brien and Steven Grosby have argued.<sup>6</sup>

If one defines nationalism as the propagation of a homogeneous political identity to a territorially bounded community by means of psychologically and technologically advanced means of indoctrination and communication, then, of course, nationalism must be a strictly modern phenomenon. But there is a tautological element to this reasoning. In Benedict Anderson's formulation, the emergence of print capitalism was a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the genesis of nationalism. According to this criterion, nationalism cannot possibly have informed the composition of the *Hebrew Bible*; rather its origins can be traced to the production and marketing of the *Gutenberg Bible*. But this approach is premised upon the sharp distinction between religious and nationalist sensibilities that I questioned earlier. If the Jewish religious tradition *is* recognized as containing a nationalist element, then could it not be argued that its scripture and liturgy may have served as media for the propagation and shaping of national identity among the masses? Hearing the Torah read in public every Saturday and market day from early Second Temple times on must have created a sense of simultaneity of experience that was more, not less, powerful than the daily ritual of reading the newspaper that Anderson refers to as the hallmark of modern imagined communities.

I do not mean to reduce the rich body of biblical literature to nothing more than a series of sanctified propaganda pamphlets. My point is not that the Torah is a book about nationalism. It is rather that the Jewish scriptures and liturgy both presuppose and reinforce a strong sense of national particularism that is inextricably intertwined with universalist themes of ethics and theology. The priests, scribes, and prophets who struggled to imbue the Israelites and Judeans with faith in this complex synthesis may have constituted a narrow elite or even, initially, a marginalized coterie. But the same was true of many of the intelligentsias and/or social elites that spear-headed nationalist movements in East Central Europe, the Middle

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<sup>6</sup> Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Godland: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); Steven Grosby, "The Nation of the United States and the Vision of Ancient Israel," in R. Michener, ed., *Nationality, Patriotism, and Nationalism* (St. Paul: Paragon, 1993).

East, and elsewhere over the course of the last century or two. By late Second Temple times, when widely held Messianic beliefs were so powerfully political in their implications and repercussions, and when the significance of political authority, territorial sovereignty, and religious belief for the fate of the Jews as a people was so widely and vehemently contested, it seems clear that Jewish nationhood was a social and cultural reality.<sup>7</sup>

Even some of the symbols and images employed in ancient nationalist struggles can strike a familiar chord among a modern audience. Some of the coins minted by the modern state of Israel have borrowed motifs from ancient Judean coins—such as the New Agora coin bearing the image of a seven-branched palm tree, first used on coins dating from the Bar Kochba revolt (132–5 C.E.). This is a stereotypically 20th-century evocation (or “appropriation”) of the ancient past in the construction of a modern national identity. Yet a glance at ancient Jewish coins struck during periods of independence or rebellion between the Hasmonean period and the Bar Kochba revolt (that is, between the 2nd century B.C.E. and the 2nd C.E.) suggest that this very technique may represent a reinvention of the wheel, so to speak. The mottoes on these coins, such as the word “Shim‘on” (for Shim‘on Bar Kochba) on the coin that served as the inspiration for the Israeli New Agora, or the Bar Kochba-coin slogans “For the Freedom of Jerusalem” and “For the Freedom of Israel,” were anachronistically inscribed in First Temple-style letters—a script that had not been in common usage for centuries. Although Phoenician and other Middle Eastern coins were also commonly inscribed in archaic scripts, this stylistic choice could be read as part of a conscious attempt to lend an aura of Davidic-kingdom authenticity to latter-day Jewish regimes and rebel governments.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), chapters 7–12. On the adaptive redefinitions of Jewish identity in response to the encounter with Hellenistic culture, see Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> For possible connections between coinage inscription styles and nationalist themes in Phoenician city-states of the 4th century B.C.E., see John Wilson Betlyon, *The Coinage and Mints of Phoenicia: The Pre-Alexandrine Period* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980; Harvard Semitic Monographs No. 26), esp. 55–56. On the possible nationalist significance of the use of ancient Hebrew script on late-Second Temple-era Jewish coins, see A. Reifenberg, *Israel’s History in Coins: From the Maccabees to the Roman*

Drawing an analogy between Judaism's weekly Torah reading and Benedict Anderson's daily newspaper reading calls to mind one of the fundamental differences between pre-modern and modern conceptions of time and history that Anderson and others have emphasized. Torah reading proceeds in a circle, resuming at Genesis, Chapter 1 immediately following the conclusion of the last chapter of Deuteronomy, without fail every year. Today's newspaper headlines, by contrast, change from day to day and year to year without ever repeating themselves. The premoderns, it is commonly argued, had a cyclical view of time or held to a belief in mystical or theological connections between temporally detached events (such as the destruction of the First and Second Temples on the same day of the year, or—in Christian theology—the crucifixion of Jesus and its prefiguration in the near-sacrifice of Isaac). The moderns, by contrast, are said to have a linear conception of history as a chain of causes and effects continuing endlessly through time—a sense of flux and transience that is compensated for by the belief in the immortality of the nation.<sup>9</sup>

This is a significant and in many ways convincing contradistinction.<sup>10</sup> Yet, once again, I contend that it should not be accepted without serious reservations. It is precisely in the Judeo-Christian tradition that the linear conception of history has its roots. One of the Hebrew Bible's central themes is the Jewish people's movement together through time toward a common destiny, and the fluctuation of their fortunes in accordance with their observance or defiance of their Covenant with God. This theological historicism coexists with ahistorical elements; they are not mutually exclusive. By the same token, modern nationalism is not informed by a purely historicist mentality. Mystical prefigurations and the cyclical reliving of past

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*Conquest* (London: East and West Library, 1953), 9. On use of the Temple's image as a symbol of Jewish freedom in the Bar Kochba rebellion, see Martin Jessop Price and Bluma L. Trell, *Coins and their Cities: Architecture on the Ancient Coins of Greece, Rome, and Palestine* (London: Vecchi and Sons and Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1977), 177–179.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 22–36. See also Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return. Or, Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971; 1954).

<sup>10</sup> For a brilliant application of this approach to the history of Jewish historical sensibility, see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982).



events are indispensable components of nationalist mythology and ritual. The historicism of nationalism often gives way to imagery suggestive of a sudden collapsing of events hundreds of years apart into a single, transcendent moment that unifies the nation's countless generations across time. Annually recurring Independence Day celebrations are an occasion for the reliving—or at least recounting—of a nation's primordial act of self-determination. In many European countries, the anniversary of the armistice ending the First World War is used to commemorate the nation's fallen in all wars, somewhat as Tish'ah be-Av marks the destruction, not just of one, but of both, temples. Israel's close juxtaposition of Holocaust Remembrance Day with Independence Day and the Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers is designed to reinforce certain ideological and quasi-theological beliefs about the connection between suffering and redemption and the contrast between victimization in the Diaspora and self-determination in the ancestral homeland. It does not reflect a strictly historicist approach to Zionist history.<sup>11</sup>

All this is not to suggest that the concept of modernity has no relevance at all for the study of nationalism. Important distinctions can and should be drawn between pre-modern and modern forms of nationalism. That said, an overview of the Jewish case suggests that it may be more productive to explore the impact of modernity on the ongoing evolution of nationalism and on its global diffusion as a political-cultural model, than to treat nationalism as purely and simply coextensive with the modernization process.

The history of Jewish identity points to another theme of broad significance—the role of contradictions and paradoxes as driving forces in the development of nationalist ideologies and institutions. Of course, the notion that nationalism is a Janus-faced phenomenon has become a cliché. But perhaps it is precisely because of this that writers on the topic often do little more than pay lip service to nationalism's paradoxes, rather than analyzing them as formative features. Alternatively, they attempt to impose intellectual clarity on the phenomenon by acknowledging the conflicting manifestations of nationalism and then categorizing particular instances of nationalism

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<sup>11</sup> For a finely nuanced analysis of the adaptive integration of the Jewish religious cycle into Israel's framework of nationalist commemoration, see Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), esp. Conclusion.

as belonging to either one or another of two, mutually exclusive, typologies. Thus, Liah Greenfeld, Rogers Brubaker, and others have distinguished between civic nationalisms (American, British, French) and ethnic nationalisms (German, East European, Balkan).<sup>12</sup> Benedict Anderson notes that nationalist movements can embrace modernity by presenting themselves as radically new and future-oriented, but also seek to anchor national identity in an idealized vision of an immutable past. He duly goes on to resolve this contradiction by associating the former impulse with nationalism's early, revolutionary phase and the latter with "second-generation" nationalism.<sup>13</sup>

I do not wish to suggest that such distinctions are invalid or useless. My point is, rather, that most contemporary nationalisms cannot neatly be compartmentalized as being either civic or ethnic, nostalgic or modernizing. They may have stronger tendencies in one direction or another at various phases of their development, but it is precisely the ongoing tension between such conflicting impulses that animates ideological debate and defines lines of division between rival socio-political constellations within both nationalist movements and established nation-states. In the remaining pages, I would like to point to a few ways in which a comparison of the Jewish case with other national identities highlights the centrality of such paradoxes and illustrates their potential value as analytical frameworks.

One of the most striking manifestations of the nationalist ideological dialectic is the intimate relationship between motifs of volition and violation in the nationalist worldview. The ideal of self-determination—the free exercise of collective will—is so central to any nationalist ideology as to appear virtually synonymous with it. But what often

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<sup>12</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). See also George Schöpflin, "Nationalism, Politics and the European Experience," *Survey*, 28 (4) (Winter 1984), 67–86; *idem*, "Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West," in Charles Kupchan, ed., *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). For early typological and historical distinctions between liberal and illiberal forms of nationalism, see Carlton Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: R.R. Smith, 1931); Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), chapters 6–8; *idem*, *The Age of Nationalism: The First Era of Global History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), Part I; *Nationalism: A Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (London: Frank Cass, 1963; first ed., 1939), chapters 2–4.

<sup>13</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 192–199.

lends this ideal emotional resonance is an archetypal image of original violation. The biblical account of the Israelites' progress into freedom takes as its point of departure their enslavement in Egypt. The myth of the American Revolution begins with the British Crown's flagrant trespassing on the traditional rights of the colonists. Among many ethnically diverse, post-colonial states, the memory of the imperial yoke and the legacy of resistance to European overlords serves as the main foundation upon which the construction of national identity is undertaken. I have already alluded to the central role of their 14th-century "defeat" at Kosovo in the Serbs' nationalist frame of reference. The carefully cultivated collective memory of Montcalm's defeat by Wolfe is the point of departure for Québécois nationalism.

What is there beyond the legacy of violation to lend substance and direction to the exercise of national volition? Sometimes the answer seems to be, "not much." The cult of victimhood is all too common and pervasive a feature of nationalism, as Michael Ignatieff and others have argued.<sup>14</sup> The simplistic contrast between utter subjugation and pure independence in a world where the latter, certainly, is an unattainable goal, can lead to a dangerous predilection for overreaction in the face of the slightest infringement upon the nation's sovereignty or freedom of action. Unscrupulous political elites play on this sensibility to divert attention from their own abuses of power or in order to paper over the socio-economic or ideological cracks dividing their societies. Of course, ethnic minorities often represent the safest targets against which nationalist resentments and frustrations can be directed.

The other side of this coin is the development of a sense of universal mission—itself a paradoxical notion for so avowedly particularistic an ideology as nationalism. The abusive nature of the primordial violation here serves as a negative inspiration for the national project. In the biblical case, liberation from the Pharaonic yoke leads to the Covenant with God in Sinai. The Israelites' original act of self-determination is their voluntary acceptance of divine dominion and their commitment to the ethical and legal system that comes with it. The collective memory of slavery in Egypt is the ever present,

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), *passim*.

constantly reemphasized, standard of deprivation and humiliation against which the value of the Covenant is measured. The idea of chosenness upon which the Covenant is premised can itself serve as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is used to justify the dispossession and slaughter of Canaanites. On the other hand, the Israelites are warned (in Exodus 22:21) not to “. . . wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” In Isaiah’s vision, the notion of chosenness is developed into a sense of universal mission, whose ultimate, eschatological fulfillment will be the acceptance of the Covenant by all humanity; Israel is to become “a light unto the nations” (Isaiah 42:6).

Modern history is replete with examples of nationalist ideologies that incorporate a sense of chosenness. This can always be interpreted as either giving one’s nation the right to impose its will on others or the obligation to meet a special ethical standard as an example for others—or some combination of the two.

In the American case, the biblical triad of Chosen People, Promised Land, and special Covenant was directly adopted by the Puritan colonists and later modified into a foundation stone for the edifice of modern American nationalism. Be it in periods of isolationism or liberal internationalism, the belief in the United States’ exceptionalism has defined the terms of debate about the meaning of American identity and the nature of the country’s relationship with the rest of the world.

In France, it is the legacy of revolution against domestic tyranny that, on and off for two centuries, has set the ideological agenda for the country’s struggles over national identity. The indignities associated with a corporate society formed the stimulus for the inauguration of the Revolution’s project in political egalitarianism, as the Third Estate proclaimed itself to be the nation. The violation of natural rights by the Ancien Régime has continued to serve as the ideological point of departure for defining citizens’ rights under the republics. In the early revolutionary wars of liberation/conquest, as well as in the Third Republic’s later enterprise of overseas imperialism, French political strategies were torn between policies of cultural and political assimilation associated with the universalistic conception of France’s national mission, and policies designed to prevent the distinction between rulers and ruled, Frenchmen and foreigners, from becoming blurred. Contemporary debates about the place of immigrants, and the role of immigrant cultures, in French

society continue to be framed, in part, by this revolutionary legacy and its latent contradictions.<sup>15</sup>

Great imperial powers are not the only ones to be bedevilled by these existential dilemmas. Thomas Masaryk, the founding father of Czechoslovakia, cultivated the image of the 15th-century religious reformist, Jan Hus, as a Czech national martyr, and looked to Hus' teachings as a source of inspiration for the articulation of a broadly humanistic and enlightened Czechoslovak national mission. More immediately, the violation of Czech national rights by the Habsburg monarchy was cultivated as a national myth, the counterpoint to which was the definition of Czechoslovak political identity as Western and liberal-democratic in orientation.

The Czechoslovak example also highlights the complex relationship between civic and ethnic conceptions of nationalism. Masaryk rejected the sort of right-wing nationalism that treated ideological orientations and cultural and ethical choices as though they were simply functions of one's ethnic identity. He vehemently opposed pan-Slavs who asserted that Czech political destiny lay in the embrace of tsarist Russia. In Masaryk's view, cultural and political values, not linguistic or racial kinship, informed national identity, and the Czechs' role as a nation should be firmly planted in the traditions of the European Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment—a tradition to which, he claimed, Jan Hus had made an original and invaluable contribution.

By including Slovakia in his construction of a post-Habsburg nation-state, Masaryk hoped, among other things, to create a political framework that would raise the Czechs above a petty, ethno-national self-absorption by engaging them in a liberal-democratic civilizing mission toward their supposedly more backward Slovak brethren. Yet in his very assumption that Czechs had a special bond with Slovaks based on linguistic affinity, he was, of course, making a characteristically ethno-national assumption. The exclusion of German and Magyar minority identities from the attempt to develop a Czechoslovak national consciousness was a practically unavoidable

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<sup>15</sup> R.R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution, Vol. 2: The Struggle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), chapter 2 and *passim*; Raymond Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890–1914* (New York, 1961); Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), esp. chapters 2, 4–5, 7.

consequence of the ethno-political dynamics of this post-Habsburg successor state. Masaryk's personal discomfort with Jews attempting to assimilate into Czech culture, and his preference for unabashed Zionists, serves as further evidence of how deeply embedded were the ethnic assumptions that informed his conception of a Czechoslovak civic culture.<sup>16</sup>

This ethno-civic synthesis was not simply a function of Czechoslovakia's unique geo-cultural stationing at the crossroads of Western and Eastern Europe. I would argue that an examination of French, British, and even American civic patriotisms would reveal a strong admixture of ethno-national principles, images, and assumptions. Conversely, many non-Western political cultures that we tend to consign unreservedly to the ethno-national category contain elements of civic nationalism.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of modern Israel. In some ways, of course, Israel, as the Jewish state, seems to embody the principle of the ethnic polity, in which non-Jews can never be full participants. Yet no matter how much of a double standard may exist in practice, the fact that non-Jews are citizens of the state who enjoy juridical equality does have important ramifications for the way state institutions function and for the framing of political and cultural debates. Here, too, we have a biblical precedent, this time in the verses from Numbers 15:15–16 commanding that “. . . there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so

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<sup>16</sup> H. Gordon Skilling, *T.G. Masaryk: Against the Current, 1882–1914* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 6–7, 35–37, 101–103, and chapter 3; Robert Pynsent, *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1994), 180–182; Josef Kalvoda, *The Genesis of Czechoslovakia* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1986), 17–32; Roman Szporluk, *The Political Thought of Thomas G. Masaryk* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1981) chapter 4. For a critique of Masaryk's attempt to conflate ethno-cultural and universalist themes, and for an attack on the elitist strain in his thinking, see Eva Schmidt-Hartmann, “The Fallacy of Realism: Some Problems of Masaryk's Approach to Czech National Aspirations,” in Stanley B. Winters, ed., *T.G. Masaryk (1850–1937)*, Vol. 1, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990). On his relations with Jews, see Steven Beller, “The Hilsner Affair: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and the Individual in the Habsburg Monarchy at the Turn of the Century” and Michael A. Riff, “The Ambiguity of Masaryk's Attitudes on the ‘Jewish Question’,” in Robert B. Pynsent, ed., *T.G. Masaryk (1850–1937)*, Vol. 2, *Thinker and Critic* (London: Macmillan, 1989); Skilling, *Masaryk*, 81–86.

shall the sojourner be before the Lord. One law and one ordinance shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you." It is the very fact that civic and ethnic principles exist in tense interaction with one another that fuels much of the public debate about modern Israeli society's political identity and practices, with some elements seeking to push the country in the direction of an American-style separation between uniform national-political identity and multi-ethnic cultural identities, others preferring to resolve the ethno-civic paradox through one form or another of ethnic intolerance, while the moderate majority tries to steer a course between the two extremes.

But I would also argue that the civic-ethnic dialectic plays out, not only in the context of Jewish-Arab relations, but also within the structures of Jewish and Zionist identities themselves. At its very heart, traditional Jewish identity combines a powerful feeling of kinship based on the myth of a common ancestry with an all-embracing sense of juridical and moral community defined by shared commitment to the Covenant. The ethnic aspect of Jewish peoplehood does not close it off entirely to entry by outsiders. Non-Jews can become members of the tribe by undergoing religious conversion—that is, by taking upon themselves the obligations and privileges of the Covenant. Religious conversion also constitutes ethnic conversion: the convert is thenceforth referred to as daughter or son of Abraham and Sarah, to indicate her or his induction into the lineage group.

The idea that national identity is intimately linked to both parentage and Covenantal commitment is not confined to religious Jewry. The State of Israel, long controlled by socialist Zionists, has, after all, consistently recognized religious conversion as an automatic entry ticket to the privileges and duties of Israeli citizenship. The secular authorities' disputes with the Orthodox establishment over "Who is a Jew?" have centered on how to define Jewish parentage and legitimate conversion, not over whether parentage and conversion are, in and of themselves, legitimate criteria for the ascription of national identity.

In many ways, to be sure, the Jewish and Zionist cases appear to be anomalies that do not clearly fit any well-defined typology of nationalism, be it secular or religious, primordial or modernist, modernizing or nostalgic, civic or ethnic. But it is precisely because Jewish identity is so difficult to categorize that it may force students of nationalism to question some of their fundamental assumptions. It

must, further, be stressed that the Jewish case is not a marginal paradox—it is an archetypal one. As Adrian Hastings has argued, it was through the medium of the Hebrew scriptures that early Jewish ideas about identity were communicated to the Western societies that established the paradigm of the modern nation-state.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the presence of Jews as an ethno-religious minority within European nation-states posed an ongoing challenge to cut-and-dried definitions of what constituted nationality, and what the relationship should be between nationality and citizenship.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, while Zionism and other forms of contemporary Jewish nationalism cannot be understood outside the context of broader social, cultural, and political developments in the modern world, the comparative and theoretical analysis of nationalism, in turn, would benefit enormously from a greater understanding on the scholarly community's part of the conceptual significance and historical impact of the Jewish case.

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<sup>17</sup> Hastings, *Construction of Nationalism*, *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism. New Edition* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), Part One, for a compelling argument about the centrality of Jewish emancipation and the resultant backlash of racial anti-Semitism to the development of radical, nationalist, right-wing movements in late-19th and 20th-century Europe. An excellent case study of this phenomenon is Irina Livezeanu's *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, and Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), *passim*.



## BEFORE HEBREW SONG

Philip V. Bohlman  
University of Chicago

### *100 Years Ago*

Before they realized what they had, they felt as if they were in acute danger of losing it. The early Zionists were well acquainted with the power of song. It had accompanied them as they found their way through the university and attempted to make their way into European society. It had signaled the emergence of new traditions as the liturgy of the synagogue had been arranged for four-part men's chorus, and then the synagogue chorus had been mapped onto nineteenth-century nationalism by undergoing a transformation to the Jewish *Männerchor*. The early Zionists realized that song could empower them to lay claim to Romantic nationalism and to give voice to an emerging Jewish nationalism. All this was before Hebrew song.<sup>1</sup>

Zionism embraced song from its beginning. Even before the institutionalization of modern Zionism at the 1897 Basel Congress, song had been there. Proto-Zionist student organizations had edited songbooks. Sources and repertoires had been identified, and editorial procedures were in place. At Basel in 1897, congress organizers had gathered five songs in a booklet, and from the First Congress on,

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<sup>1</sup> Secular Jewish song appeared in the European Jewish historiography only after the mid-nineteenth century, when it quite suddenly seemed to be everywhere. Troupes of Jewish popular and theater musicians were making their way throughout Europe, while nascent Jewish folklore societies, such as the Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde, founded by Max Grunwald in Switzerland and then in Germany, and the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folklore, gathered and then published anthologies of Jewish folk song (see figure 16); see Christoph Daxelmüller, 'Volkskultur und nationales Bewußtsein: Jüdische Volkskunde und ihr Einfluß auf die Gesellschaft der Jahrhundertwende', *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* n.s. 12 (1989): 133–46. The overall effect of the sudden recognition and naming of popular forms of Jewish music-making was a radical shift in the discourse history of Jewish music, away from inchoate notions about Jewish song as 'traditional' toward contentious discussions about Jewish song as 'modern.' See Philip V. Bohlman, *Jüdische Volksmusik<sup>2</sup>—Eine mitteleuropäische Geistesgeschichte* (Vienna and Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, in press).

song would be inseparable from the communal culture and political ideology of Zionism. At the Second Zionist Congress the organizers adopted and distributed a published book, not only for use at the congress itself but for distribution to Diaspora communities afterwards.<sup>2</sup> The songs in the earliest Zionist collections were choral and communal, and they were transformed and arranged so that performances by Jewish social organizations would again embody the collective experience of the movement at the moment of its most palpable performance at the congresses. Song-made-Jewish thus acquired the potential to instantiate a social collective, for example, with songs such as 'Gaudeamus igitur,' which circulated in Hebrew translation in the earliest songbooks.<sup>3</sup>

As crucial as song was to the early Zionists, recognition of its potential for the movement had almost come too late. Song was endangered, and it needed to be salvaged. Other nations and other nationalisms had distinct advantages, for the repertoires they had rescued from Romanticism showed that they knew whereof they were singing.<sup>4</sup> For early Zionism song was proving more slippery. What kind of Jewishness did it or could it signify? The Jewishness implicit in religious community? The disparate Jewishnesses of diaspora? A Jewishness that was synonymous with nationalism? A Jewishness with

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<sup>2</sup> Verein 'Jung Zion,' ed., *Lieder zum Fest-Commers des II. Zionisten Kongresses* (Basel: Verein 'Jung Zion,' 1898). The title 'Fest-Commers' deliberately establishes a link to Central European student organizations, whose standard collection of songs, published since the mid-nineteenth century, bore the title *Deutsches Commersbuch*. Student drinking songs form the core of the six songs in *Lieder zum Fest-Commers* and would have been well known to many, if not most, attending the congress. Together with old favorites, such as 'Alt Heidelberg' and 'O alte Burschenherrlichkeit!' however, were several songs with explicitly Jewish contents, 'Ein Hoch dem ganzen Judentum!' ('A Toast to All Jewry!').

<sup>3</sup> 'Gaudeamus igitur' is perhaps best known as the theme for Johannes Brahms's *Academic Festival Overture*. As in that orchestral work, the usual context for singing 'Gaudeamus igitur' is during the ritual of academic procession and institutional celebration. For a survey of the growing use of song by social organizations of all kinds during the nineteenth century see Heinrich W. Schwab, "Das Vereinslied des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Handbuch des Volksliedes*, ed. by Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, Lutz Röhrich, and Wolfgang Suppan, vol. 1 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973), pp. 863–98.

<sup>4</sup> For two excellent surveys of the emergence of German nationalist song during the nineteenth century see Guido Knopp and Ekkehard Kuhn, *Das Lied der Deutschen: Schicksal einer Hymne* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1988) and Hermann Kurzke, *Hymnen und Lieder der Deutschen* (Mainz: Dietrich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1990). For a sweeping study of the rise of Russian musical nationalism see Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

the power to unleash ethnic mobilization? For the early Zionists who embraced song, the answers to these questions were anything but clear. What was clear was that the time to act was upon them, and that song had an extraordinary power to mobilize Zionism from within and without.

Berthold Feiwel, writing in the 1890s in his 'Foreword' to Morris Rosenfeld's 1902 *Lieder des Ghetto*, perceived a call to action in song:

The poet of the modern ghetto will become the singer of modern Zionism, of the powerful liberation movement of a vital Jewishness, which will lead the Jews out of the new imprisonment [of modernity] into the ancient homeland, into their peace and their freedom.<sup>5</sup>

Taking the great sense of loss as their point of departure, the great Russian song collectors, Shaul Ginsburg und Pesach Marek, turned hopefully, but tentatively, to Zionism for the future of Jewish song. They wrote in the introduction of their 1901 *Evreiskie narodnye pesni v Rossii* ('Jewish Folk Songs in Russia', see figure 11):

As far as the Jewish movement to create a new folk culture is concerned, that which has manifested itself most recently in Zionism, it is simply too early to tell what sort of impact it will have. But this is where the future lies. . . . We greet any attempt to undertake more complete and deeper studies of Jewish folk creativity with joy.<sup>6</sup>

Before Hebrew song, music was one of the most powerful agents for the mobilization of Jewish ethnic identity and for the articulation of a Jewish nation. Paradoxically, the role and function of song in early Zionism remain uncertain, even troubling to many cultural historians, for the real identity of early Zionist song is hard to pin down. By and large, early Zionist song was not Hebrew song. When song appears in the Yishuv and modern Israel, however, cultural historians revel in its use of Hebrew, as if it were created out of the full cloth of the past.

In this essay, however, I approach early Zionist song from an

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<sup>5</sup> Morris Rosenfeld, *Lieder des Ghetto*, 6th ed. (Berlin: Hermann Seemann, 1902). *Lieder des Ghetto* appeared in several languages and in multiple editions.

<sup>6</sup> S.M. Ginsburg and P.S. Marek, *Evreiskie narodnye pesni v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Voskhod, 1901). The Ginsburg-Marek collection has appeared in a modern reprint, with an extensive introduction and annotations by Dov Noy; see S.M. Ginzburg and P.S. Marek, *Yiddish Folksongs in Russia* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991).

entirely different perspective. Following the attention of Michael Berkowitz<sup>7</sup> and Richard Cohen<sup>8</sup> to the visibility of Jewish culture, particularly, in the case of Berkowitz, in the early Zionist era, I attempt to sketch an aural or acoustics of Jewish culture, a soundscape of the modern nation emerging from the polyphonic voices of its past. Song played a powerful role in the shaping of Zionism not because it leveled the differences among the polyphonic voices of a putative past, but rather because the sounding of song in performance reified a moment at which the unity of the nation takes precedence over its differences.

On one hand, this acoustical moment of the nation-through-performance is temporally bounded, if not fleeting. On the other hand, it accrues power and added meaning through its reproducibility. Accordingly, searching for song to give voice to the nation—to mobilize the nation in a moment of what Benedict Anderson calls ‘unisonality’—is of profound significance.<sup>9</sup> In the music history of modern Israel, there was no moment more profoundly significant than that which came before Hebrew song.

### *Music and the Zionist Congresses*

Song was the ideal medium for conveying the message of Jewish solidarity, and the early Zionists knew this. Song possessed all the attributes of specific identity and remained semiotically open-ended, thus capable of signifying whatever one might choose for it.<sup>10</sup> Such qualities of song reflect the themes that permeate the early history of Zionism, thereby transforming nineteenth-century topoi of Romantic nationalism and German idealism into specific subjectivities of twentieth-

<sup>7</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso and New Left Books, 1991), p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> For diverse perspectives on the symbolic power of song to represent the nation and shape nationalism see, e.g., Carl Dahlhaus, “Nationalism in Music,” in *idem, Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trans. by Mary Whittall (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 77–101; Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1997); and Martin Stokes, ed., *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg, 1994).

century Zionism. Song provided a template for *both* ethnic mobilization *and* nationalism, even when—or especially when—these were not isomorphic. Song, in other words, had the power to speak to all Zionists in a common language, becoming the metonym for Jewish identity and political unity they were seeking.

I should even go so far as to suggest that there was Zionist song before the Zionist movement had institutionalized itself. At the very least, there was a proto-Zionist songbook, whose publication in 1894 preceded the first Zionist Congress in Basel by three years. The small volume, *Lieder-Buch für Jüdische Vereine*, edited by the early Zionist and librarian at the University of Berlin, Heinrich Loewe, appeared in a practical chapbook format, clearly recalling the functions of a student songbook for the Jewish university organizations that adopted it (see Appendix figures 1 and 2).<sup>11</sup> On one hand, Loewe's songbook reflected the trend of social and professional organizations of all kinds to gather songs and publish them as a means of stimulating group solidarity.<sup>12</sup> On the other, Loewe undertook a project with the specific Jewish dimensions of time and place. He really did mean that the songbook would serve 'Jewish organizations' in the plural, among them the student group he founded in 1892, 'Jung Juda,' as well as later student organizations, such as the 'Vereinigung für jüdische Studierenden' (also founded by Loewe) and the 'Kartell jüdischer Verbindungen'. Loewe meant his songbook to lay the groundwork for a new social agency for Jewish song, and he asserted in his 'Foreword' that the songbook was breaking radically with existing traditions.<sup>13</sup>

The attempt to edit a songbook for Jewish organizations is such an entirely new undertaking—one without any precedent whatsoever—that it would appear necessary to offer a few words of introduction. . . . This Jewish songbook does not pretend to offer a scientific lesson, rather it can keep only a single task in mind. Indeed, the synagogue is not the only place we learn about ourselves, nor do we learn only from the struggles against our enemies. Instead, it is in our lives, our total existence, and for that we raise our voice in celebration, joy, and

<sup>11</sup> Heinrich Loewe, *Lieder-Buch für Jüdische Vereine* (Berlin: Hugo Schildberger, 1894). For an assessment of Loewe's life as a religious Zionist see Jehuda Louis Weinberg, *Aus der Frühzeit des Zionismus: Heinrich Loewe* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1946).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Schwab, "Das Vereinslied," *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Philip V. Bohlman, "Jüdische Volksmusik," *op. cit.*, chapter 14.

song [*Gesang*]: ‘Juden sind wir, wollen es bleiben, bis in alle Ewigkeit’ [‘We are Jews, and we’ll remain that way forever’]<sup>14</sup>

The songs in Loewe’s songbooks weave ‘Volk’ and ‘Nation’ together, explicitly constructing an image of the nation as the product of an ethnic group that song mobilizes. The interplay of images and metaphors for the nation in figure 2 of the Appendix, ‘Mein Volk’ [‘My People’], is indeed quite remarkable, ranging from nationalist images of the nation as a ‘beloved’ [‘Liebling’], evoking even the arrival of *shechina* in the synagogue on Shabbat in verse one, to the French Revolution in verse three to Israel at war throughout, but especially in verse two.

Loewe was both right and wrong when he claimed that there was no real precedent for the *Lieder-Buch für Jüdische-Vereine*. The book was, in fact, a synthetic product of the editor’s imagination. No single element—text or melody—is new, but virtually every combination thereof is. Song number 17, for example, uses a well-known melody by Friedrich Silcher (1789–1860) to set a text from Heinrich Heine’s novel fragment, *Der Rabbi von Bacharach*. Rather than the Silcher-Heine collaboration, ‘Die Lorelei,’ which anyone singing from the book would know, the melody became the context for one of Heine’s relatively unknown texts, which was, however, Jewish.<sup>15</sup> There are only two songs in Hebrew, and these appear in an appendix. The first was a song for Hanukah, and as such the only song with any overtly religious connotations. The second was the most canonic of all student songs, ‘Gaudeamus igitur,’ translated from Latin into Hebrew, which effectively recanonized it for inclusion in future Zionist songbooks.

Loewe’s *Lieder-Buch für Jüdische Vereine* became the basis for most Jewish songbooks, Zionist or with other ideological leanings, for the next two decades, indeed until the First World War. The organization of its contents—for example, into genres such as *Heimatlieder* [‘songs of the homeland’], whose texts explicitly represented the land of Israel as the homeland—was embraced by virtually every subsequent songbook to appear in the German-speaking Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, it served the early

<sup>14</sup> Loewe, *Lieder-Buch*, *op. cit.*, “Vorwort.”

<sup>15</sup> See Hermann Josef Dahmen, *Friedrich Silcher: Komponist und Demokrat: Eine Biographie* (Stuttgart: Edition Erdmann in Thienemanns Verlag, 1989).

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Max Zirker, ed., *Vereinsliederbuch für Jung-Juda* (Berlin: Jüdischer Buch- und

Zionist leaders, for the Jewishness projected by its texts on the choral traditions of cosmopolitan, *fin-de-siècle* Jews, was embraced at Zionist congresses and in offshoot Zionist songbooks as an embodiment of Jewish nationalism. The songs functioned this way, however, not because they were old, but because they were new. It was their difference that made them so very traditional.

*Paradox and Parody in Jewish Song*

The ideologues and aestheticians searching for Jewish song at the end of the nineteenth century had to confront more than a few paradoxes. Folk song, the tool of Romantic nationalism, was broadly held to be something ancient and transmitted orally, whereas cultural Zionism was progressive and employed a radical vocabulary. Folk song, moreover, connected the present to a distant past, indeed, a timeless past, but—and this was the dilemma for early Zionists—it did so through a history of practice and oral tradition that survived in the present. The paradox was all too obvious: The song of the ancient past was Hebrew song, but the song of the present was not.

The absence of Hebrew texts in vernacular, contemporary song also created another set of paradoxes, several of them quite mundane or even practical. Hebrew texts did not lend themselves easily to text underlay, in other words to setting folk songs in arrangements and to printing them. The music ran in one direction (left to right), the Hebrew text in the opposite. Whereas this might sound like a problem that could easily be solved by an editorial committee with the appropriate authority, it was not. In fact, it vexed those involved with establishing the printing conventions of the Yishuv through the 1920s.<sup>17</sup>

The possibility of determining a pan-Ashkenazic core repertory

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Kunstverlag, 1905?); Ahron Eliasberg, ed., *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1913); and Karl Glaser, ed., *Blau-Weiß Liederbuch*, 1st ed. (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1914), see figure 13. This thematic and generic organization remained more or less standard for the anthologies published through the 1930s, e.g., Joseph Jacobsen and Erwin Jospe, eds., *Hawa Naschira! (Auf! Laßt uns singen!)* (Leipzig and Hamburg: Anton J. Benjamin, 1935); partial reprint: *Das Buch der jüdischen Lieder* (Augsburg: Ölbaum, 1988).

<sup>17</sup> See Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine, 1880–1948: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), *passim* but especially 78–92.

also presented an early paradox. There were song collectors and editors for whom such a core repertory, with German, Yiddish, and a continuum of dialects, would serve as the mother lode of Jewish folk song. For others, such a core repertory could only serve as evidence for the ultimate dissipation and breakdown of Jewish song.<sup>18</sup>

The poison of popularity, in other words popular song, was also a dilemma for the ideologues searching for Jewish song. Jewish popular song thrived in the nineteenth century, ranging from broadsides to stage music, but it thrived because it was formed of hybridity rather than authenticity. It was impure, all the more so because it depended on parodies of traditional Jewish culture and because it traded in stereotypes of Jews and by Jews, such as those used for Jewish cabaret.<sup>19</sup>

Confronted with this paradox, the early Zionist editors and ideologues chose to address it creatively and synthetically. They sought a new calculus for determining what song could be, and in the spirit of their age they did so systematically. That calculus consists of some six different domains and repertoires of Jewish musical activity, represented in figure 1, perhaps a bit fancifully by situating 'song' at the center of a hexagonal star, whose points symbolize the different genres of Jewish song that characterized Diaspora music cultures during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

### *Inventing Jewish Song*

Collecting, identifying, editing, and arranging Jewish songs all preceded the Zionist congresses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the social and organizational gatherings of all kinds that led to the institutionalization of the Zionist movement. These were the steps of fabricating, indeed, of inventing Jewish song. These steps compressed the history of oral transmission, and they transformed the songs from the past into metonyms for the present

<sup>18</sup> A cross-section of the continuum of Jewish songs stretching between Yiddish and German versions appears in Philip V. Bohlman and Otto Holzapfel, *The Folk Songs of Ashkenaz* (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Hans Veigl, ed., *Luftmenschen spielen Theater: Jüdisches Kabarett in Wien 1890–1938* (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 1992). Cf. Philip V. Bohlman, "Die Volksmusik und die Verstärkung der deutsch-jüdischen Gemeinde in den Jahrzehnten vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg," *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* 34 (1989): 25–40.



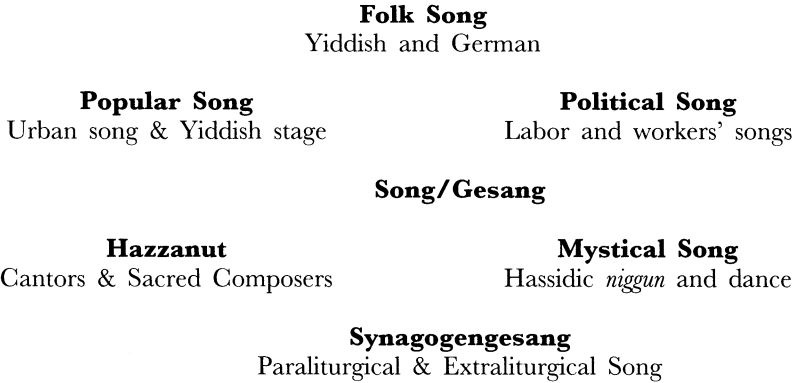


Figure 1. The Calculus of 'Song'

and future. The very process of creating a song, therefore, served as a vivid witness to the agency of early Zionism, in other words, to the mobilization of power early Zionists commanded to script their own history.

The invention of Jewish song required the confluence of several song histories. The tributaries constituting those histories at times moved quickly and at other times stagnated, but ultimately they intersected to form a powerful set of symbols that specified an unequivocal iconicity of Jewishness. The versions and variants of the song, 'Die Jüdin' [lit., 'The Jewish Woman,' but often glossed as 'The Beautiful Jewish Girl'], which appear in Appendix figures 4 through 6, schematically illustrate just how a single song came to be invested with Jewish meaning. Already in the nineteenth century 'Die Jüdin' belonged to a corpus of ballads that contained versions in both German and Yiddish—the most common Yiddish title is 'Hinter Poilen wont a Yid' ['Beyond Poland There Lives a Jew'].<sup>20</sup> 'Die Jüdin' fulfills virtually every criterion required of a Jewish song, particularly the capacity to undergo transformations of all kinds, from text alterations to arrangements for art-song repertoires. The song is found in canonic German collections—notably Arnim and Brentano's 1806 *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (Vol. 1)—and in Ginsburg and Marek's

<sup>20</sup> In both German and Yiddish "Die Jüdin" has the form and content of the narrative genre broadly referred to as ballad. Not only to ballads tell stories by setting different scenes as verses in a strophic form, but they rely on high or literary forms of language, in other words, *Hochdeutsch* and literary Yiddish.

1901 *Evreiskie narodnye pesni v Rossii*.<sup>21</sup> While unequivocally remaining a folk song, ‘Die Jüdin’ crossed the border into art song and choral song during the course of the nineteenth century. Such repertorial border-crossing necessarily enhanced the song’s potential for use as national song. Not only was it placed into the ancient canon of German ballads, where it is inscribed as number 158,<sup>22</sup> but it was arranged by Johannes Brahms (see Appendix figure 5)<sup>23</sup> and by the Jewish folk-song scholar, Max Friedlaender, in a choral version printed in the 1906 *Volksliederbuch für Männerchor* (see Appendix figure 4).<sup>24</sup> In concert and as variants in oral tradition, these versions of ‘Die Jüdin’ wended their way through the sundry Jewish song anthologies of the early twentieth century, for example, Alexander Eliasberg’s 1918 *Ostjüdische Volkslieder*.<sup>25</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s the song survived in oral tradition, such as the version sung in the Deutschkreuz (Zelem), one of the *sheva kehillot* of Burgenland<sup>26</sup> in eastern Austria and in the version transcribed in figure 6 of the Appendix, which I first heard sung by an East German revival band in 1993, though it had circulated orally in the Jewish communities around Lake Constance, especially in Switzerland, even after the Holocaust.

If its durability in the *longue durée* of modern Jewish history was important for the inventors of Jewish song, so too was its narrative, the story to which Zionism might respond. The ‘Jewish woman’ of

<sup>21</sup> Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, vol. 1 (Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer, 1806), and Ginsburg and Marek, *Evreiskie, op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> „Die Jüdin“ appears in the modern analytical collection of German ballads, the *Balladenwerk*, in Jürgen Dittmar and Wiegand Stief, eds., *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Melodien: Balladen*, vol. 9 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Deutsches Volksliedarchiv, 1992). For recent versions sung by non-Jews now living in villages that were largely Jewish before the Holocaust see Harald Dreö and Sepp Gmasz, eds., *Burgenländische Volksballaden* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Johannes Brahms, „Es war eine stolze Jüdin,“ in Fritz Jöde, ed., *Frau Musica* (Berlin: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, 1929), p. 95.

<sup>24</sup> Johannes Bolte, Max Friedlaender, and Rochus Freiherr von Liliencron, eds., *Volkslieder für Männerchor*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Peters).

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Eliasberg, *Ostjüdische Volkslieder* (Munich: G. Müller, 1918).

<sup>26</sup> The *sheva kehillot* [‘Seven Communities’, but often glossed as ‘Seven Holy Cities’] are seven villages (e.g., Lackenbach) and small cities (e.g., Eisenstadt) that constituted the largest concentration of rural Jewish culture in Central Europe prior to the Holocaust. See Philip V. Bohlman, “Musical Life in the Central European Jewish Village,” in Ezra Mendelsohn, ed., *Modern Jews and Their Musical Agendas* (special issue of *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 9), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 17–39.

the title is, in fact, not the main character, nor is the male ‘Yid’ in the Yiddish version, but rather a young woman who is drawn into the gentile and secular world beyond the premodern Jewish ghetto, in other words beyond the ethnic and religious geography marked by the Judengasse. When she leaves the ghetto, she walks along the seashore, and we learn in verse eight that she is evidently searching for her lover, perhaps even husband, the king’s son, who has drowned in the sea.<sup>27</sup> Learning of this from a local fisherman, she throws herself into the sea. ‘Die Jüdin’ is an allegory about Jewish identity, on one hand, the strict limitations of tradition rigorously enforced, on the other, the dilemma implicit in conversion. The song calls for an alternative, in fact the ‘Heimat’ [‘homeland’] in the final version appearing as Appendix figure 6.<sup>28</sup>

As an emblem of diasporic Jewish tradition and as an allegory for modern Jewish history, ‘Die Jüdin’ is extraordinarily complex. In no small measure, its complexity is a factor in its candidacy for a Zionist song. The variants of the song are products of its geographical mobility, and its textual variants embody the narratives of specific historical moments. By singing the song, early Zionist organizations and Jewish choruses allowed themselves to enact those historical moments in the present, in the moment of what Benedict Anderson, in writing about the power of music in nationalism, called ‘unisonality,’ the embodiment of the nation given voice through song.<sup>29</sup>

### *Song and Cultural Translation: Inventing Gesang*

Song was the ideal language for giving voice to Zionism, and it is hardly surprising that the movement’s architects and intellectual leaders seized upon it from the beginning.<sup>30</sup> Song not only arose from

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<sup>27</sup> The gentile figures that appear in the many variants of the song have a wide variety of occupations and social positions, which not only reflect a higher social status, but also mark them clearly as not Jewish, hence as symbols of the world beyond the ghetto.

<sup>28</sup> Dittmar and Stief, *Deutsche Volkslieder*, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–57.

<sup>29</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–38, and Bohlman, “Jüdische Volksmusik,” *op. cit.* Jewish serials that were explicitly Zionist or displayed distinctive Zionist leanings often contained special sections about music, even publishing songs themselves with some regularity; see, e.g., Eleonore Lappin, *Der Jude: Die Geschichte einer Zeitschrift* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

a common culture, but it was malleable enough to lend itself to the molding of a new common culture. The common experience of song, in other words, exposed a shared past and provided the language for a shared future. Language, indeed, was the crucial metaphor, for language not only afforded song pride of place in the aesthetic domains of Zionism, but opened up that domain for every Jew, regardless of previous nationality, degree of religiosity, or socio-economic background, to enter and to share.

It is important to realize that 'song,' as I unravel its meaning here to reflect its ontology in cultural Zionism, acquired new and distinctive meanings. 'Song' with an ontological meaning reflecting Zionist thought would not be best translated into German or Yiddish as '*Lied*' ('*lid*'), but rather as '*Gesang*.'<sup>31</sup> The term, *Gesang*, could be applied across the borders separating genres and languages, and even more important, separating the sacred from the secular. Just as one could refer to folk song as '*Volksgesang*' instead of '*Volkslied*,' so too could one create an umbrella category for song in the synagogue called '*Synagogengesang*.' And this is precisely what the collectors and theoreticians of Zionist songs did. The term *Gesang* emphasized commonality and processes of exchange. *Synagogengesang*, for example, had absorbed elements of style and repertory from the surrounding environment. To sing *Synagogengesang* meant stepping outside the liturgy and embracing as Jewish the non-sacred and the non-Jewish.

Even more important, *Gesang* resulted from creative processes that had taken traditional musical materials and transformed them into something new, if not modern. The commonality and communality of song are also etymologically immanent in the term *Gesang*. In principle, *Gesang* has no singular usage. One does not sing '*einen Gesang*' ['a song']. The singular is a collective category: 'the song of a community,' not 'a song from a repertory.' In its plural form even, *Gesänge*, it represents 'the songs that collectively fulfill certain criteria or functions.' The final three volumes of Abraham Zwi Idelsohn's ten-volume musical monument to all of Jewish song, the *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, therefore bear the titles: *Der Synagogengesang*

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<sup>31</sup> Both *Lied* and *Gesang* are nonetheless translated as 'song'. In German usage there is a very subtle sense that *Lied* is somehow more natural, whereas *Gesang* is the product of artifice and craftsmanship, but even this distinction is blurred by the most common occurrence of *Lied* in its plural, *Lieder*, to refer to art song, a usage that carries over into English.

*der osteuropäischen Juden* [‘The Synagogue Song of the Eastern European Jews’]; *Der Volksgesang der osteuropäischen Juden* [‘The Folk Song of the Eastern European Jews’]; and *Gesänge der Chassidim* [‘Songs of the Chassidim’].<sup>32</sup> It is hardly surprising, then, that it was *Gesang* and *Gesänge* that were the forerunners of *shir* and *shirim*, the modern Hebrew designations for song.

What was the common culture that song came to evoke? It would be possible to answer this question in many different ways, drawing upon different types of evidence. During the early decades of Zionism, however, that common culture was in almost every way unexpected. Above all, it was a common culture with deep fissures in it, and it was precisely for that reason that song had the potential and power to resuture the parts to form a common whole. The common culture of Jewish song cut across the fissures between east and west. It embraced repertoires in Yiddish, German, and Hebrew.<sup>33</sup> It also embraced the dialects and hybrid forms of these languages. The common culture of Jewish song thus did not begin with common language, but it aspired toward it, and music—the melos spanning a continuum from regional folk styles to the modes of the liturgy and beyond to the popular repertoires—music paved the way for reaching the common language.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Tale of Two Songs*

It is one of the tenets of nationalism that one’s nation—our nation if one is laying claim to a nation—is somehow different, indeed, unique in some crucial way. The sound of nationalism in music, so it follows, should reflect that uniqueness, so powerfully, in fact, that

<sup>32</sup> A.Z. Idelsohn, *Der Synagogengesang der osteuropäischen Juden*, vol. 8: *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*; A.Z. Idelsohn, *Der Volksgesang der osteuropäischen Juden*, vol. 9: *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*; and A.Z. Idelsohn, *Gesänge der Chassidim*, vol. 10: *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz*. All three volumes were published by the Leipzig publishing house, Friedrich Hofmeister. The first comparative musicologist to establish the ‘Archives of Oriental Music’ at the Hebrew University, Robert Lachmann, also preferred *Gesänge* to designate Jewish song; see Robert Lachmann, *Gesänge der Juden auf der Insel Djerba* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1976; 1st publ. 1940).

<sup>33</sup> Other languages occur, but with less frequency. By the 1920s English and Hungarian were beginning to play visible roles.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Bohlman and Holzapfel, *The Folk Songs of Ashkenaz*, *op. cit.*

it is recognizable to those who listen to nationalistic music (e.g., a national anthem), either as insiders or outsiders. If this is the case, we might have expected the early Zionists to invest a fair amount of cultural energy in locating, gathering, and encoding musical materials to identify the acoustic signifiers for those traits that were so uniquely Zionist. This they did, and the ways in which they discovered Israeli song have long captured the attention of historians concerned with the iconicity of Zionist and Israeli music.

The privileging of aesthetic distinctiveness to produce the acoustic emblems of nationalism is not, however, universally espoused. Rather than difference, it is similarity that strikes those who listen through the iconic surface of nationalist music. Listening carefully, one witnesses that the markers of differences are not there at all, but instead nationalisms are constructed to reproduce nationalisms, rather than to distinguish themselves in salient ways. In order to illustrate better how song came to signify an acoustics of the Jewish nation, I turn now to some empirical musical evidence, indeed to two songs whose tales narrate two of the most distinctive paths charted by Zionist aesthetics.

I begin with the most iconic of all Zionist songs, ‘Hatikvah’ [‘The Hope’], the Zionist and later Israeli anthem (see Appendix figure 7). My tale will focus on the melody of ‘Hatikvah,’ a melody that was firmly established in the oral tradition of early Zionism by the congresses and virtually every Jewish songbook from the late nineteenth century until the founding of the State of Israel. My focus here will be on the melody, and by choosing this focus I am making an ontological point about song and the nation: Meaning and identity do not lie only in the texts.<sup>35</sup>

Even those possessing only the vaguest familiarity with the melody of ‘Hatikvah’ have a sense of how its sound represented a Jewishness sought by the early Zionist leaders. Above all, it was a ‘folk melody’ in minor mode, and that melody sets a poem published in 1886 by one Naphtali Herz Imber. As a song, ‘Hatikvah’ appeared first in a collection of *Vier Lieder*, arranged by one S.T. Friedland, which appeared in Leipzig in 1895 and claimed to be based on ‘Syrian

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<sup>35</sup> I have discussed the ontological questions pertaining to musical ownership elsewhere; see Philip V. Bohlman, “Ontologies of Music,” in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, eds., *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 17–34.

melodies.’ It is also quite well known, which is to say, generally believed, that the melody is much like that of the ‘Moldau’ movement of Bedrich Smetana’s tone poem, *Ma Vlast*, which, however, emphasizes major rather than minor mode.

‘Hatikvah’s’ melody is even more complicated than such possible sources would suggest. In part because of the Smetana connection, the melody is imagined to be that of a Bohemian folk song, some would say Moravian, others Romanian, or simply Eastern European. ‘Hatikvah’s’ melody, moreover, bears close resemblance to a family of Swedish folk songs, among them a composed ‘national’ song by Anders Fryxell from 1822, ‘Ack, Värmeland, du Sköna.’ The Swedish songs, moreover, seem to have been influenced by a folk melody, a *bergerette*, that appeared in a 1761 collection, whose editor/composer, ‘Monsieur Bouin’, calls it ‘Ah! vous dirai-je, maman’, known to us today as the prototype for ‘Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,’ that is after it was introduced to the popular tradition of European music history by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.<sup>36</sup> Computer-assisted analysis of folk-song melody, such as that undertaken by Wiegand Stief at the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany in the 1980s and 1990s, has yielded a theoretical model for the melodic skeleton most common to all Central European folk songs, and ‘Hatikvah,’ changed to major mode, fits that model perfectly.<sup>37</sup>

What do such peregrinations of ‘Hatikvah’ throughout European song history reveal?<sup>38</sup> First, they make it clear that there is nothing special or even distinctive about ‘Hatikvah’ as a song. Second, the

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<sup>36</sup> See Peter Gradenwitz, *The Music of Israel: Its Rise and Growth through 5000 Years* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949), pp. 302–03, and George List, “The Distribution of a Melodic Formula: Diffusion or Polygenesis?” *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 10 (1978): 46–47.

<sup>37</sup> The melodic skeleton emphasizes the melodic articulation of common-practice harmony, notably the rise from the tonic, or first scale degree, at the beginning of the song, to the dominant, or fifth note of the scale, with a descent to the first degree, therefore illustrating an overall arch. The scale degrees of chords used in harmony are melodically marked, thus creating a strong feeling of accompaniment, whether or not accompanying instruments are used. See Wiegand Stief, ed., *Melodientypen des deutschen Volksliedes*, vol. 4: *Register und Variantennachweis* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1983).

<sup>38</sup> It was one of the tenets of comparative musicology, the forerunner of modern ethnomusicology, that songs traveled as if they had a life of their own, moving between oral and written traditions. The classic theory of “wandering melodies” is Wilhelm Tappert, *Wandernde Melodien*, 2nd ed., enlarged (Leipzig: List und Francke, 1890).

histories of melodic distribution and the skeletons produced by computer analysis notwithstanding, ‘Hatikvah’s’ impact on the early Zionist movement was indeed very special and distinctive. Third, it is because the melody is so quintessentially quotidian and unexceptional that it could become such a powerful emblem of nationalism. In essence, ‘Hatikvah’ fitted the six-part ‘Calculus for Song’ in figure 1. Compare that calculus to the modified six-part model that might highlight crucial moments in the history of ‘Hatikvah’s’ wanderings, figure 2 below.

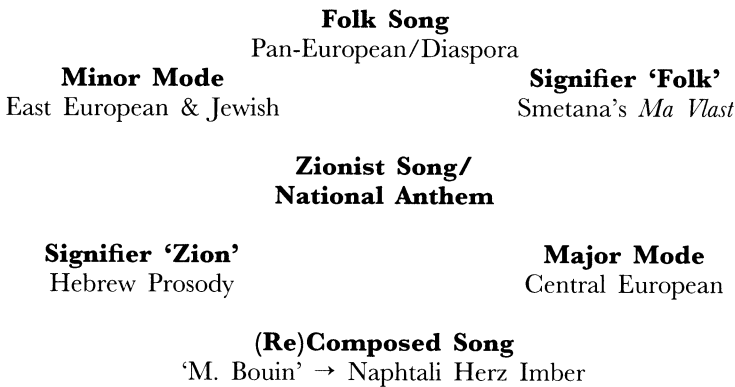


Figure 2. Template for ‘Hatikvah’ as a Zionist Song

If the distribution of ‘Hatikvah’s’ melody seems to tell the tale of a national acoustics that crosses political borders and stylistic boundaries on its own, the travels of ‘Gam Hayom’ [‘Day by Day’] tells the tale of a song whose history was deliberately inscribed to reflect the specific historical path of Zionism. ‘Gam Hayom’ appears on the radar screen of early Zionist history as if it were a folk song circulating in oral tradition on a kibbutz in the Yishuv.<sup>39</sup> It has all the earmarks of folk song, but in fact ‘Gam Hayom’ was composed. Its text is the work of one of the earliest Hebrew poets Levi Ben-Amitai, and its melody was crafted by Shalom Postolsky. It appears as a folk

<sup>39</sup> For a detailed discussion of the use of song by the Keren Kayemet see Natan Shahar, “The Eretz Israeli Song and the Jewish National Fund”, in Mendelsohn, *Modern Jews, op. cit.*, pp. 78–91.



song, not surprisingly, in a songbook published by Jüdischer Verlag (see Appendix figure 8).<sup>40</sup> At the same time, however, it appeared in a different published form, on a postcard printed by the Keren Kayemet and intended for dissemination in the Diaspora (see Appendix figure 9).

It was in its postcard version that it caught the attention of Hans Nathan (1910–1989), a Berlin musicologist who had been managing to lecture and undertake projects in Jewish music for the Jüdischer Kulturbund.<sup>41</sup> Nathan and his Berlin colleagues conceived the stunning idea that the folk-song postcards could be sent further to composers around the world, who might seize the opportunity to compose a national art song for the Yishuv from whole melodic cloth. ‘Gam Hayom’ was sent to Darius Milhaud, the only Sephardic composer in a distinguished stable that included Kurt Weill, Aaron Copland, and Paul Dessau, so that Milhaud could craft a Sephardic inflection for these *shireh chalutzim*, ‘songs of the pioneers.’ That marvelous composition, which did not appear in print until 1994, appears in the Appendix of early Zionist songs that accompanies this essay as figure 10.<sup>42</sup>

It would hardly be possible to imagine a tale more emblematic of the early history of Zionism, a tale that revealed and revealed more in the unique history of a nation-in-formation. The versions of ‘Gam Hayom’ move back and forth between the Yishuv and the Diaspora, but also across the borders separating genres of folk, popular, and art song. Such remarkable variation would seem to make a case for the distinctiveness of Jewishness and the geography of the Jewish nation—at least until we look more closely at the melody. Closer inspection reveals that the melody is familiar, almost startlingly so, for there it is again: the melodic template for ‘Hatikvah.’

‘Gam Hayom’ even offers alternative solutions for the dilemma of major or minor mode. In fact, as a composer with conscious ties to the Sephardic Mediterranean might do,<sup>43</sup> Darius Milhaud transforms

<sup>40</sup> Jacob Schönberg, *Shireh erez yisrael* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1938).

<sup>41</sup> See Akademie der Künste, ed., *Geschlossene Vorstellung: Der jüdische Kulturbund in Deutschland 1933–1941* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1992).

<sup>42</sup> See Hans Nathan, ed., *Israeli Folk Music: Songs of the Early Pioneers* (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, 1994), pp. 4–5.

<sup>43</sup> Darius Milhaud was born into an old Sephardic family in Provence, and he had intensified his interest in Sephardic music during the 1930s; see his “La musique juive au Comtat-Venaissin,” *Musica Hebraica* 1–2 (1938), pp. 18–20.

the postcard version he had in front of him (Appendix figure 9), and he changes it to minor mode, thereby using the alternative variant in the songbook of the Jüdischer Verlag (Appendix figure 8), which he was unlikely to have owned. Suddenly, this marvelous song, this *shir chalutzim*, collapses a history of diaspora and return that reminds us—indeed, resembles in so many details—the same history embedded in ‘Hatikvah.’ And it is at this deep level of similarity that Jewish nationalism makes its presence known. It is not that these songs sound Jewish; it is that they sound the nation.

*Echoes in the Present: Before and After Hebrew Song*

As we encounter the songs of early Zionism from the beginning of the twentieth century, they may at best be echoes of a moment of song history that came before Hebrew song. In recent years, many of these songs have entered a performance practice known as ‘historical performance,’ where they complement other repertoires juxtaposed in postmodern fashion through the revival of klezmer and Yiddish song. History and historicism blur together as the past is remade to fulfill new functions and evoke a new aesthetics of nationalism. In their different ways, the songs discussed in this essay and anthologized in the accompanying appendix provide us with traces that collapse many histories of Jewish song. It is crucial that we recognize that they do this also for musical reasons, for they pose metaphysical questions about Jewish song itself. They pose questions about the many song histories that converged to represent and articulate a specific historical moment. They ask us to consider whether that moment was one of rupture with the past and false starts for the future. They are mere echoes and not fully sounding, living traditions, but they possess the narrative symbolism of echo in *midrash*, the stories that emanate outward from other stories. Even in this way, however, they may well not ring for many years into the future.

One would be hard pressed to pinpoint a single acoustics of nationalism in the modern State of Israel. There have been more than a few attempts to do so, not least among them the claims that Hebrew song was the only possible sonic metonym for a nationalism forged first by Zionism and then fixed in a modernist aesthetics by the founders of the State. As modern as Hebrew song might have been, the modernist aesthetic of an Israeli acoustics was fragile and artificial

in its attempt to sound a single, teleological history of the nation. I do not mean to suggest that what survived was something/somewhat postmodern in its juxtaposition of bits and pieces from multiple pasts. Quite the contrary, it was the remarkable insight of the early Zionist ideologues and aestheticians that they recognized that song provided them with the ideal medium to uncover multiple pasts and to inspire a collective revoicing of those pasts. The song that they recovered could not be fitted to an existing nationalist model, and thus they used it to imagine a nationalism whose resonance filled the acoustic spaces between and within the Diaspora so that it, too, could mobilize Jews as their own nation itself might succeed in doing. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, just as at the beginning of the twentieth century, we can hear the resonance of that nationalism, but to do so, we perforce must listen to history in different ways in order to perceive a nationalism that flourished before Hebrew song.

## APPENDIX

### *Songs Before and After Hebrew Song—An Anthology from Early Zionist Anthologies*

The songs in this appendix are in many ways quite unlike the contents of Zionist songbooks published during the several decades before and after the founding of Israel, in other words, during the period from ca. 1930 until ca. 1960. Yiddish and German predominate in the lyrics of the songs in the appendix, as well as in the collections from which they were taken, whereas Hebrew lyrics are most common in later Zionist songbooks. Genre, too, functions in different ways in the collections from which these songs come. Here we find an abundance of narrative genres, many of which consciously historicize the Jewish experience in the Diaspora. Narrative genre makes occasional appearances in later Zionist songbooks as well, but rather than narrative songs referring to the history of the Diaspora there are work songs and lyrical genres that idealize the future.

Those who gathered the early Zionist songs sought to tap as many different sources as possible, and to use a surfeit of musical sounds and melodic models to signify the nation. On one hand, it was crucial to include folk songs, but on the other it was vitally important that these achieve a measure of popularity. Art song, too, often qualified as proto-Zionist song, especially when it might provide the telos for a trajectory that began with folk song and passed through oral popular traditions. The *Songs Before and After Hebrew Song*, therefore, represent a process of transition, a departure and move away from the canons of European, especially German-language, folk music. In contrast, Zionist anthologies, almost by definition, have come already to represent the canon of the nation.

The songs that follow unfold historically and suggest a certain chronological tendency, not least an increasingly intensive response to growing anti-Semitism, which is coupled with a growing awareness of the culture of the Yishuv. The songs chart several historical paths, and as such they reveal that they were responsive to the numerous debates within modern Zionism itself about the best means to resolve the dilemmas facing modern Jewry during the opening decades of the twentieth century. The intersecting landscapes of the

Diaspora and the Yishuv also take shape along the borders between the different song themes and the multiple styles that collectors and arrangers adapted for the songs. The historical and geographical space between Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and those in Western Europe is thrown into sharp detail. It is hardly surprising, of course, that the musical signification of movement between Europe and Israel takes on particularly trenchant meaning in many of the songs.

If trends emerge, nonetheless, it is not yet possible to claim that they converge, even in the songs of the later collections. Rather than narrowing the field that nationalist culture might occupy, these songs broaden it, demonstrating more often than not an agenda that aims to be inclusive and capacious. When Hebrew song came to dominate the field after 1940, it would signify a shift toward more the pragmatic and arguably a shift from inclusiveness to exclusivity. What came before and what came after Hebrew song were about as different as possible.

*Songs Before & After Hebrew Song*

Philip V. Bohlman

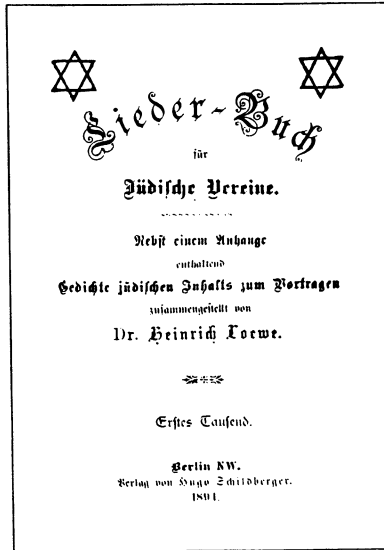


Figure 1. Heinrich Loewe, *Lieder-Buch für jüdische Vereine* (1894)

<p><b>Mein Volk!</b></p>	<p>15. <b>Mein Volk!</b> Von E. Henjuda. Met: Kufe von Taran.</p> <p>1. Mein Volk ist mein Liebling, mein Gut und mein Blut, — Nichts weiter begehre ich mehr, Taß Juda's Nation sei in sicherer Gut Und wir seine wätere Wehr!</p> <p>2. Mit streiten und kämpfen für Jaakob's Nation Und führen Volk Juda im Krieg, Jung Israel wein seinen besseren Lohn, Als Israel führen zum Sieg.</p> <p>3. Mein Leben, es ist meinem Volke geweiht, Mein Volk ist mein Glück und mein Weil, Und Freiheit und Gleichheit und Weidertlichkeit Sei Israel ewig zuteil.</p> <p>4. Ich gehor' meinem Volk, und mein Volk gehört mir, Ich bin ja von ihm nur ein Bild, Mein Volk ist mein Alles, mein Schmach, meine Bier, Mein Heiligtum ist's und mein Glück.</p> <p>5. Ja, Juda's Nation ist in sicherer Gut, Jung Israel ist seine Wehr, Mein Volk ist mein Liebling, mein Gut und mein Blut, Nichts weiter begehre ich mehr!</p>
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Figure 2. 'Mein Volk'—*Lieder-Buch für Jüdische Vereine* (1894)

**Folk Song**  
Yiddish and German

**Popular Song**  
Urban song & Yiddish stage

**Political Song**  
Labor and workers' songs

**Song/Gesang**

**Hazzanut**  
Cantors & Sacred Composers

**Mystical Song**  
Hassidic *niggun* and dance

**Synagogengesang**  
Paraliturgical & Extraliturgical Song

Figure 3. The Calculus of 'Song'

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are in German and are arranged in three stanzas. The first system includes dynamic markings *p* and *cresc.*. The second system includes dynamic markings *p* and *cresc.*. The third system includes dynamic markings *più p* and *più p*.

1. Es war ei-ne stol-ze Jii - din, ein wun - der - schö - nes  
 2. 'Ach Mut - ter, lie - be Mut - ter, mein Kopf tut mir so  
 3. 'Ach Toch - ter, Her - zens - toch - ter, das kann und darfnicht

Weib, die hatt ei - ne schö - ne Toch - ter, ihr Haar war fein ge -  
 weh. Ach lässt mich ei - ne Wei - le spa - zieren auf grü - ner  
 sein. Was sag - ten da die Leu - te, wolltst du auf grü - ner

floch - ten, zum Tanz war sie be - reit, - zum Tanz war sie be - reit.  
 Hel - de, bis dass mir bes - ser wird, - bis dass mir bes - ser wird!  
 Hei - de al - lein spa - zie - ren gehn, - al - lein spa - zie - ren gehn!"

Figure 4. 'Die Jüdin'—arranged by Max Friedländer

1. Es war ei-ne schö-ne Jü-din, einwunder-schö-nes Weib, die hatt ei-ne schö-ne  
Toch-ter, das Haar war ihr ge-floch-ten, zum Tanz war sie be-reit.

Figure 5. 'Die Jüdin'—arranged by Johannes Brahms

❖

Es war a - mol a Jü - din,  
a wun - der - schö - nes Weib,  
die hat - te ei - ne Toch - ter,  
zum Tod war sie be - reit.

Figure 6. 'Es war amol a Jüdin'—'Once There Was a Jewish Woman'



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Es war amol a Jüdin,<br>a wunderschönes Weib,<br>die hatte eine Tochter,<br>zum Tod war sie bereit.  | Once there was a Jewish woman,<br>a wonderful woman,<br>who had a daughter,<br>and she was ready to die.   |
| 2. 'Ach Mutter, liebste Mutter,<br>mir tut der Kopf so weh,<br>laß mich eine kleine Weile<br>spazieren gehn am See.'                          | 'O mother, dearest mother,<br>I have such a headache,<br>let me for a little while<br>go for a walk along the sea.'                              |
| 3. 'Ach Tochter, liebste Tochter,<br>allein darfst du nicht gehn,<br>sags deinem ältern Brüderlein,<br>er wird schon mit dir gehn.'           | 'O daughter, dearest daughter,<br>you may not go alone,<br>tell your older brother,<br>he should go with you.'                                   |
| 4. 'Ach Mutter, liebe Mutter,<br>mein Brüderlein ist zu klein,<br>er schießet alle Vöglein,<br>die in den Lüften sein.'                       | 'O mother, dear mother,<br>my brother is too small,<br>he will shoot all the birds,<br>that are flying in the sky.'                              |
| 5. 'Ach Tochter, liebe Tochter,<br>allein darfst du nicht gehn,<br>sags deinem einzigen Schwesterlein,<br>die wird schon mit dir gehn.'       | 'O daughter, dear daughter,<br>you may not go alone,<br>tell your only sister,<br>she should go with you.'                                       |
| 6. 'Ach Mutter, liebe Mutter,<br>mein Schwesterlein ist zu klein,<br>sie pflückt ja alle Blümelein,<br>die an dem Wege sein.'                 | 'O mother, dear mother,<br>my sister is too small,<br>she will pick all the flowers,<br>that grow along the way.'                                |
| 7. Die Mutter fiel in Schlummer,<br>die Tochter ging allein,<br>sie ging solange spazieren,<br>bis sie zum Fischer kam.                       | The mother fell asleep,<br>the daughter went alone,<br>she went so long on her walk,<br>until she came to the fisherman.                         |
| 8. 'Guten Morgen, lieber Fischer,<br>was fischest du in aller Früh?'<br>'Ich suche des Königs allerjüngsten Sohn,<br>der hier ertrunken ist.' | 'Good morning, dear fisherman,<br>for what are you fishing so early?'<br>'I'm looking for the youngest son<br>of the king,<br>who drowned here.' |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>9. Da gab sie ihm ein Ringlein<br/>aus allerfeinstem Gold,<br/>da gab sie ihm ein Ringlein:<br/>'Das soll dein eigen sein.'</p>        | <p>She gave him a ring<br/>made of the best gold there was,<br/>she gave him a ring:<br/>'This should belong to you.'</p>             |
| <p>10. Dann stieg sie auf die Mauer,<br/>stürzt hinab in den kühlen See:<br/>'Leb wohl du liebe Heimat,<br/>wir sehn uns nimmermehr!'</p> | <p>Then she climbed on the wall,<br/>fell into the cold sea:<br/>'Farewell, you dear home,<br/>we'll never see each other again!'</p> |

**Source for Figure 6:** Sung by Luise and Mina Federspiel in Höchst am Bodensee, Vorarlberg, Austria in 1960; transcribed by Josef Bitsche; in the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv = A 208 485. Published in Jürgen Dittmar and Wiegand Stief, eds., *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Melodien: Balladen*, Vol. 9 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Deutsches Volksliedarchiv, 1992), pp. 56–57.



**Folk Song**  
Pan-European/Diaspora

**Minor Mode**  
East European & Jewish

**Signifier 'Folk'**  
Smetana's *Ma Vlast*

**Zionist Song/  
National Anthem**

**Signifier 'Zion'**  
Hebrew Prosody

**Major Mode**  
Central European

**(Re)Composed Song**  
'M. Bouin' → Naphtali Herz Imber

Figure 7. Template for 'Hatikvah' as a Zionist Song



Figure 8. 'Gam Hayom'—Jacob Schönberg, *Shireh etetz yisrael*, 1st ed. (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1938), 48–50.

**שיר הַיּוֹמִים**

לירי בן אמת

המנגינה: ש. פוסטולסקי

*Moderato*

Gam hay-yom kut-mot shel-shom al ha-dof o' m'dim ba-chu-rim min-yan tso-he-lo sa-

let de she-mesh lo sa-de la-hem l'xim pf-mz yam lo ha-khen o' m'dim hem bam-mot-  
 la-hem v'kin-ya *Al Segno e poi il Coda*

me-ret lach-por po met-te-ho-mot kin-ne-ret chol ve-zif-zif zif zif lab-bin-yan.

*CODA*

u-mu pa-qad har-pi nu lav-va che-dol ho ba-chu-rim od od hay-yom

sa-dol t'ru t'ru chol hav zif-zif hav zif-zif lab-bin-yan *Fine*

גם היום, כְּתָמוּל שְׁלֶשֶׁם,  
 על החוף עומדים בחורים מְגֵנָן.  
 לא שָׁנָה לָהֶם, לא בָּרַח וְקִנְיָן...  
 וְיָמֵי פֶקֶד: הַרְפָּתָה? פִּי מִי צְנָה: תְּדוּל-?  
 הוּ בַחֲרִים! עוֹד הַיּוֹם בְּדוּל -  
 תָּנוּ חוּל! הֵב זִיפּוֹדָף לְבַגְנָן!

גם היום, כְּתָמוּל שְׁלֶשֶׁם,  
 על החוף עומדים בחורים מְגֵנָן.  
 וְהֵלֶךְ שֶׁשֶׁם וְעוֹלָיוֹם פָּגַי גֵּם...  
 וְהָבֵן עוֹמְדִים הֵם בְּמִשְׁמֶרֶת-  
 לְחַפּוֹר פֶּה מִתְחַמֶּמֶת כְּנֶרֶת  
 חוּל וְזִיפּוֹדָף לְבַגְנָן.

Figure 9. 'Gam Hayom'—Keren Kayemeth postcard (1930s)

**2. Gam Hayom (Day After Day)**

Text: Levi Ber-Amitai  
Tune: Shalom Foodday

Darius Milhaud

[Allegro moderato]

-mi pa- baf bar pe? Pi mi tzi va cha-  
Hoy, ha- chu rim!  
Od ha- yom ga- del. Tnu, tnu chof!  
Ha- zif zif zif ba- ha- yan.  
Ha- zif zif zif ba- ha- yan.

Figure 10. Darius Milhaud, 'Gam Hayom'—Hans Nathan, ed., *Israeli Folk Music: Songs of the Early Pioneers* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1994), pp. 4–5.

## № 65

אי ק'וואלס געהאט דעם קאסס אויפזיחט מיט וין גאנצע קליכר , וואלס דאס גאר גיס וין ביי סיד אזוי גרויס גיחה , ווי דו בינקסט ביי סיד גיחה , ס'וין ליכט , ס'וין שוין ! אז איך דער זעט דיר מיין איך—די גאנצע וועלט איז מיין ! שלאף , מיין קינד , שלאף , מיין קינד , נאלקס סיד רוהען אונ זיין געוונד !	As 'ch wollt gehat dem Keissers Eizres mit sain ganze Melyche, Wollt dos gor nit sain bai mir asei greis niche, Wie du binst mir niche main Licht, main Schain! As ich derseh dir, mein ich—die ganze Weltt is main! Schlof, main Kind, schluf main Kind, Sollst mir ruhen un sain gesund!
אלע בריליאנטען און אלע אנטיקען קענען דאך ס'וין באדין אזוי פיל גיס צרקוויקען , ווי פיל דו טוהסט צרקוויקען , ס'וין ליכט , ס'וין שוין , מיט דיר וויל איך ס'יינען , אז די גאנצע וועלט איז מיין ! שלאף , מיין קינד א. ג. וו.	Alle Brilljanten un alle Antiken Kennen doch main Harz asei viel nit erquicken, Wie viel du thust erquicken; main Licht, main Schain, Mit dir will ich meinen, as die ganze Welt is main! Schlof, main Kind etc.
אז דו לינקסט אונ שלאפסט אין דיין ווינעל , שמע'הען נוסע סלאכים און באדעקען דיר מיט וייער פליגעל . דו , מיין קינד , בינקסט מיין ליכט , ס'וין שוין , מיט דיר וויל איך ס'יינען — די גאנצע וועלט איז מיין ! שלאף , מיין קינד א. ג. וו.	As du liegst un schlofst in dain Wiegel, Steihen gute Malochim un badecken dir mit seier Fligel. Du, main Kind, binst main Licht, main Schain, Mit dir will ich meinen—die ganze Welt is main! Schlof, main Kind etc.
דער טאטע האט דאס קינד גיס געלערנט , וואס גאט האט געבאטען , וועט מען איהם אויף יענער וועלט ברענען און ברעאטען ; און דו , מיין ליב קינד , מיט ווייניג צוקות נאלקס זיך ס'ייהן דיין טאטען פון גינהום צרויס צו צייען . שלאף , מיין קינד א. ג. וו.	Der Tate hot dos Kind nit gelernt, wos Gott hot geboten, Wet men ihm auf jener Welt brennen un broten; Un du, main lieb Kind, mit daine Zidkes sollst sich mihen Dain Taten vun Geh'nem arauszuziehen. Schlof, main Kind etc.

Figure 11. 'Schlof, main Kind'—Saul M. Ginsburg and Pesach M. Marek, *Ebreiskie narodnye pesni v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Voskhod, 1901), pp. 62–63.

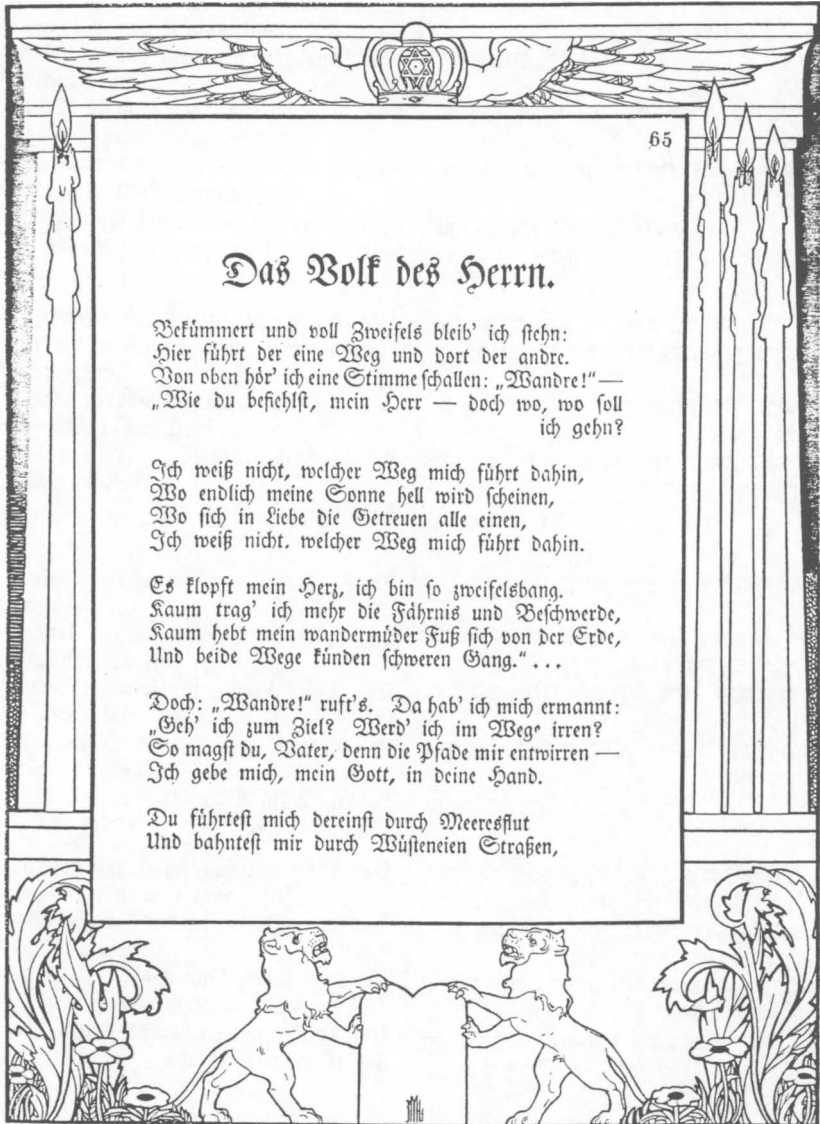


Figure 12. 'Das Volk des Herrn'—Morris Rosenfeld, *Lieder des Ghetto*, illustrations by E.M. Lilien, 6th ed. (Berlin: Benjamin Harz, 1902), p. 65.

JÜDISCHE VOLKSLIEDER

2. Nain Brider seinen mir gewesen, haben mir gehandelt mit Fracht, einer is gestorben, sein gebliben acht. Oi Josel mit dem Fiedel, Tewfeh mit dem Baß, spielt sche mir a Liedel chotsch af dem Mitten Gaß.
3. Acht Brider usw., haben mir gehandelt mit Rieben, einer is gestorben, is geblieben sieben. Oi Josel usw.
4. Sieben Brider usw., haben mir gehandelt mit G'wechs, einer is gestorben, is geblieben sechs. Oi Josel usw.
5. Sechs Brider usw., haben mir gehandelt mit Strimpf, einer is gestorben, is geblieben fünf. Oi Josel usw.
6. Fünf Brider usw., haben mir gehandelt mit Bier, einer is gestorben, is geblieben vier. Oi Josel usw.
7. Vier Brider usw., haben mir gehandelt mit Blei, einer is gestorben, is geblieben drei. Oi Josel usw.
8. Drei Brider usw., haben mir gehandelt mit Hej, einer is gestorben, is geblieben zwei. Oi Josel usw.
9. Zwei Brider usw., haben mir gehandelt mit Bejner, einer is gestorben, is geblieben einer. Oi Josel usw.
10. Ein Bruder bin ich mir geblieben, hob ich mir gehandelt mit Licht; sterben tu ich jeden Tag, weil essen hob ich nicht. Oi Jossel usw.

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JÜDISCHE VOLKSLIEDER

Die Fassung von Melodie und Text stammt von Jacob Bejmel und ist gesezlich geschützt.

1. Zehn Brü-der sei-nen mir ge-we-sen  
ho-ben mir ge-han-deit mit Lain, is  
ei-ner ge-stor-ben, is ge-blie-ben  
*a tempo*  
nein. Oi ———. Jos-sel mit dem  
Fie-del, Tew-jeh mit dem Baß,  
spielt sche mir a Lie-del chotsch  
af dem Mit-ten Gaß.

Figure 13. 'Zehn Brüder seinen mir gewesen'—Blau-Weiß Liederbuch, 1st ed. (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1914), pp. 48-49.

## 8. EIN GESANG DES BERDITSCHEWER REB<sup>n</sup>

Feierlich, aber nicht zu langsam.

lo-mir ûn-hæi-b<sup>n</sup> d<sup>r</sup>-zæi-l<sup>n</sup> di má-l<sup>ß</sup> fin in-s<sup>e</sup>-r<sup>e</sup> ji-d<sup>e</sup>-l<sup>e</sup>ch. di  
ersch-t<sup>e</sup> má-l<sup>e</sup> hú-b<sup>n</sup> sæi: ðim a-ni chði-mû. di zwæit<sup>e</sup> má-l<sup>e</sup> hú-b<sup>n</sup> sæi:  
bú-rû ka-cha-mû. chotsch, chotsch, chotsch: gði - lû w<sup>e</sup>-ßi-rû. fort, fort, fort:  
dom - bú l<sup>e</sup> - bú-mor! dom - bú l<sup>e</sup> - bú-mor! dom - bú l<sup>e</sup> - bú-mor!

lomir ûnhæib<sup>n</sup> d<sup>r</sup>zæil<sup>n</sup>  
di má-l<sup>ß</sup> fin ins<sup>e</sup>-r<sup>e</sup> jid<sup>e</sup>-l<sup>e</sup>ch!  
di ersch<sup>t</sup> má-l<sup>e</sup> húb<sup>n</sup> sæi  
ðim ani chðimû.  
di zwæit<sup>e</sup> má-l<sup>e</sup> húb<sup>n</sup> sæi:  
bûrû kachamû.  
chotsch, chotsch, chotsch:  
gðilû w<sup>e</sup>ßirû.  
fort, fort, fort:  
dombû l<sup>e</sup> búmor.

לאמיר אנהייבען דערצײלען  
די סעלות פֿון אונזערע יודעלעך!  
די צרשטע סעלה האָבען זײ:  
אום אָני וועקה.  
די צווייטע סעלה האָבען זײ:  
בְּרַחֵם פֿאַר אָנוּ.  
כאַמט, כאַמט, כאַמט:  
טלה וסורה.  
פֿאַרמ, פֿאַרמ, פֿאַרמ:  
בְּרַחֵם לְחַיֵּינוּ.

Figure 14. 'Ein Gesang des Berditschewer Reben'—Fritz Mordechai Kaufmann, *Die schönsten Lieder der Ostjuden*, 1st ed. (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1920), pp. 17–18.



110

2. Joime, Joime.

Allegretto scherzando.

Bearbeitet von Arno Nadel.

Joime, Joime, spiel mir a Liedele  
*mf* *dim.*

111

nein, Mamenju, nein! Du konnst mir nit var-stehn, du  
*pp*

1 bis 4. Strophe  
*rall.* weest nit wos ich meen!  
*pp*

letzte Strophe  
*rall.* meen!

2. Joime, Joime, spiel mir a Liedele,  
 Was dos Meedele will—  
 Dos Meedele will a Kleedele hobn,  
 Mus men gehn der Schneiderin sog'n,  
 Nein, Mamenju, nein!  
 Du konnst mir nit varstehn,  
 Du weist nit, wos ich meen!

3. Joime, Joime, spiel mir a Liedele,  
 Was dos Meedele will—  
 Dos Meedele will a Hittelle (*Hirt*) hobn,  
 Mus men gehn der Putzerke sog'n,  
 Nein, Mamenju, nein!  
 u. s. w.

4. Joime, Joime, spiel mir a Liedele,  
 Was dos Meedele will—  
 Dos Meedele will a por Oifinglach (*Ohringer*) hobn,  
 Mus men gehn dem Goldschmied sog'n,  
 Nein, Mamenju, nein!  
 u. s. w.

5. Joime, Joime, spiel mir a Liedele,  
 Was dos Meedele will—  
 Dos Meedele will—a Choss'n'l (*Brautgamm*) hobn,  
 Mus men gehn dem Schaddchen (*Ilfrinsternstrier*) sog'n,  
 Jo, Mamenju, Jo!  
 Du konnst mir scheen varstehn,  
 Du weest scheen, wos ich meen!

wos dos Mee-de-le will—  
 Dos Mee-de-le will a per

Schi-che-tach ho-bn, mus men gehn dem Schus-ter so-gh...

Figure 15. 'Joime, Joime'—Arno Nadel, *Jüdische Liebeslieder* (Berlin: Benjamin Harz, 1923), pp. 110–11.

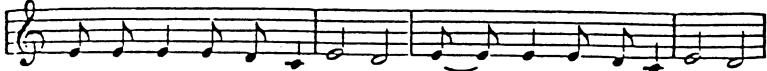
## 140. Ein anderes Wiegenlied.

Aufgezeichnet von demselben.

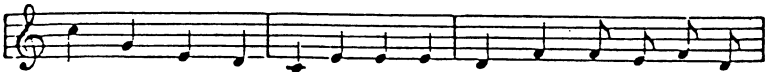
Langsam.



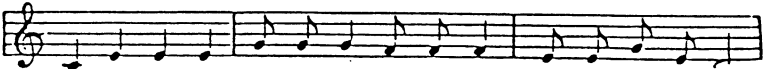
Schlajf Le-me-lebn schlajf, dort in je-nem Hajf



Ste-hen zwa Schä-fe-lach wei-ss'e 'n wil-len mei Jin-ge-le bei-zen.



Kümmt der Hal-ter mit der Gei-gn, tüt de Schä-fe-lach rü-



[sammen-trei-ben, La-fen de Schä-fe-lach 'ns Fel-de-le e rein,



'ntün sach e Rit-ze-le ins Fi-sse-le e-rein.



Schrein de Schä-fe-lach me-e, schrei-en de



Schä-fe-lach bee. Schlajf Jin-ge-le, schlajf, schlajf,



schlajf Jin-ge-le schlajf. Schlajf Jin-ge-le schlajf.

2. Schlajf Lemelebn schlajf u. a. w. bis: stehen zwei Schäfelach schwarze und willen mei Jingele kratzen u. a. w.
3. Schlajf Lemelebn schlajf u. a. w. bis: stehen zwei Schäfelach blaue und willen mei Jingele bauen.



Zum Spielen und Singen für Kinder

שִׁיר לְכַת לְיָלְדִים  
(Wanderlied für Kinder)

Marschtempo A. Z. Idelsohn (Ben-Jehuda)

1. Gad, Ef - ra - jim, Cha - jim, Dan, ha - wa ne - ze  
el ha - gan! Im - du z' ma - dim tur a - ssu, ka - cha - ja -  
lim Y' - chu! A - chat sch'ta - jim, dom! A - chat sch'ta - jim, dom!

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Gad, Efraim, Chaim, Dan,<br/>Auf, wir wollen in den Garten!<br/>Stellt euch auf in Reih' und Glied<br/>Wie Soldaten, vorwärts, marsch!<br/>Eins, zwei, halt! Eins, zwei, halt!</p>          | <p>1. גַּד, אֶפְרַיִם, חַיִּים, דָּן,<br/>תְּבַח, נִצָּא אֶל הַגָּן!<br/>עֲמְדוּ עֲמְדוּ, טוֹר עֲשׂוּ<br/>פְתוּלִים לְכָדוּ!<br/>אֶחָד, שְׁתַּיִם, דֹּם! אֶחָד, שְׁתַּיִם, דֹּם!</p> |
| <p>2. Hand zur Seite, Rücken grade!<br/>Achtet gut auf eure Schritte!<br/>Jeder nur marschiere aufrecht!<br/>Richt' euch, schreitet fest und schnell!<br/>Eins, zwei, halt! Eins, zwei, halt!</p> | <p>2. יָד עַל צֵד, הַיְשִׁירוּ גֵר,<br/>וּלְפָעֲמֵיכֶם שִׁימוּ לֵב<br/>כָּל קוֹמְמִיחַת לֵלֶךְ אִישׁ<br/>יְשִׁרוּ רִגְל, צַעְדוּ חִישׁ!<br/>אֶחָד ...</p>                            |
| <p>3. Sonne brennt wie Ofenglut,<br/>Schweiß von jedem Haupte rinnt;<br/>Aber schweig! Hand auf den Mund!<br/>Wer wird brummen an solchem Tag?<br/>Eins, zwei, halt! Eins, zwei, halt!</p>        | <p>3. שֶׁשֶׁם בּוֹעֵר כְּתִנּוּר אֵשׁ,<br/>תִּזְבַּל זְעָה מִקֵּץ רֹאשׁ,<br/>אֵךְ תְּחַרְרִישׁוּ! יָד לִפְתָּח!<br/>מִי יתְאַוֶּן גְּרוֹם כְּזֶה?<br/>אֶחָד ...</p>                  |

Aus: סֵפֶר הַשִּׁירִים von A. Z. Idelsohn; herausgeg. vom Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden, Berlin 1912

Hawa naschira!

1

Figure 17. 'Wanderlied für Kinder'—Joseph Jacobsen and Erwin Jospe, *Hawa naschira! (Auf! Laßt uns singen!)*, (Leipzig/Hamburg: Anton J. Benjamin, 1935).



RADIO AND THE SHAPING OF MODERN ISRAEL,  
1936–1973

Derek Jonathan Penslar  
University of Toronto

In the early 1980's, studies of national identity-formation (e.g., Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*) emphasized the importance of the printed, vernacular text as a source and manifestation of modern nationalism. A decade later, scholars such as Anne McClintock and Prasenjit Duara took issue with this stress on literacy and looked instead to symbolic rites and icons as the primary agents, throughout much of the world, of national self-consciousness.<sup>1</sup> This article intends to explore a third force behind the modern nation, a force more immediate than the printed linguistic sign and yet more abstract than the ritualized image.

Radio broadcasting, which became widespread during the inter-war period, played a powerful role in many national movements, including the Zionist project. Radio was especially central to Israeli nation-building because television broadcasting only began in 1968, some two decades after its onset in North America and Europe. Thus during the 1950's and 1960's, when inhabitants of the Western world increasingly interpreted world events through the medium of television, Israelis remained glued to the wireless, a World War II-era communications medium that fostered a mobilized and militaristic political culture.

This article offers a brief history of Israeli radio from its inception in 1936 through the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. The bulk of the article focuses on the relationship between communications technology and politics over the period 1948–65, between the creation of

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 352–89; Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

the state and the establishment of the semi-autonomous Israel Broadcast Authority [IBA]. During this seminal period, Israel radio was directly under the control of the Prime Minister's Office, and its function as a vehicle of nation-building was particularly prominent. The article also examines the relationship between radio and television during the latter's introduction during the late 1960's. Through this introduction to the history of the Israeli electronic media, I hope to address two sorts of important questions. The first have to do with the use and effectiveness of the electronic media as instruments of nationalization upon Israel's populace, and by extension, upon the peoples of other states in the mid twentieth century. The second concern the nature and limits of statist hegemony during Israel's first twenty five years.

Studying the history of radio presents unusual methodological challenges. Radio broadcasts, the most ephemeral of the mass media, have been preserved far less often and less securely than television or film, let alone print. Magnetic tape deteriorates after a few decades. Moreover, when recorded sources are available, the sheer quantity of radio transmission overwhelms the individual scholar. All too often, radio history relies on relatively accessible and straightforward, though highly biased, published memoirs, which promote the production of institutional history as opposed to cultural analysis.

In Israel, all these problems have been accentuated by straightened circumstances and cultural constraints. Starved for funds, IBA technicians have periodically erased programs when they had a last-minute need for recording tape. The IBA's sound archive is all but inaccessible to scholars (although, fortunately, hundreds of old Israeli radio and television programmes are available at Harvard University's Widener Library). The positivist and conservative bent of traditional Israeli scholarship has inhibited Israeli historians from writing on the mass media. To be sure, there is a sizeable literature on Israeli broadcasting, but most of it is the work of sociologists and communications specialists, often former broadcasters, who base their findings on personal and professional experience rather than archival research.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Dan Caspi and Yehiel Limor, *The In/Outsiders: Mass Media in Israel* (Creskill, New Jersey, 1999); Amit Schejter, "Media Policy as Social Regulatory Policy: The Role of Broadcasting in Shaping National Culture in Israel," Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1995; Elihu Katz, "Television Comes to the People of the Book," *The Use and Abuse of Social Science*, ed. David Horowitz (New Brunswick, New Jersey:

Oral history, in the form of interviews with broadcasters and politicians, is a valuable source, but one that must be employed cautiously, for informants view past events and their relationship to them from idiosyncratic and ever-changing perspectives. Thus despite the overcrowding of the Israeli historiographical landscape, we are venturing into terrain that is if not unknown, at least poorly mapped. Here I can offer an at best partial clarification.

There is nothing unusual about the Israeli government's strong hand over radio broadcasting during the state's first decades. From its inception in the 1920's, radio was, in most lands, heavily regulated, and even controlled, by state government. To be sure, there was the spectacular exception of the United States, where radio broadcasting was funded and programming determined entirely by private entrepreneurs. The situation was similar in many South American countries and in, of all places, Republican Shanghai, where station-owners grew wealthy from advertising luxury consumer goods while paying lip service to the spartan values of the Guomindang's quasi-fascist New Life Movement.<sup>3</sup> In Germany and Italy, radio broadcasting began within a framework of government concessions to an oligopoly of private companies, but it was nationalized in these lands in 1932 and 1934 respectively.<sup>4</sup> To be sure, these last two examples may provoke disquiet, since radio was exploited as a key

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Transaction, 1971), pp. 249–71; and Tamar Liebes, "Performing a Dream and its Dissolution: A Social History of Broadcasting in Israel," *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, eds. (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 305–23. Many useful sources are in Hebrew: Zvi Gil, "Mi-Kol Yerushalayim' le-Kol Yisra'el" (1950); *Emts'a'i tikshoret hamonim be-Yisra'el*, Dan Caspi and Yehiel Limor, eds. (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 1998), pp. 235–50; idem, *Bet ha-yahalomim: sipur ha-televizyah ha-yisre'elit* (Tel-Aviv: Sifriyat Po'alim, 1986); Raphael Mann and Tsipi Gon-Gross, *Galei Tshahal kol ha-zeman* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1992); Nathan Cohen, *Ha'emdash ha-tsiburit shel ha-shidur be-Yisra'el*, unpublished ms. commissioned by the Israeli Democracy Institute, Jerusalem, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> For the United States, see Douglas B. Craig, *Fireside Politics: Radio and Culture in the United States, 1920–1940* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); for Latin America see Michael Nelson Miller, *Red, White, and Green: The Maturing of Mexicanidad, 1940–46* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1998), pp. 65–85, and Joy Elizabeth Hayes, *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Mexico, 1920–1950* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000); for China see Carlton Benson, "The Manipulation of *Tanci* in Radio Shanghai During the 1930's," *Republican China*, XX, 2 (1995): 116–46.

<sup>4</sup> Franco Monteleone, *La radio italiana nel periodo fascista* (Venice: Marsilio, 1976); Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 31–35, 48–53.

source of nationalist mobilization by the late Weimar regime and Italian fascist governments. Lest one associate government control over radio with fascism, however, bear in mind that the single most important model for Israel radio was the British Broadcasting Corporation, not *Die Deutsche Welle*. From the BBC's founding in 1923, the Postmaster General retained ultimate control over radio. During the General Strike of 1926, the Postmaster instructed the BBC not to broadcast its opinions, or any comment whatsoever on the strike, other than government-supplied news. The government's manipulation of radio strengthened immeasurably during the second World War, when the BBC became a mouthpiece for the Ministry of Information.<sup>5</sup> Thus even in democratic, western countries, radio was yoked to the interests of the state, especially in times of crisis. The conceptual parallels with the young state of Israel are obvious.

The link between the BBC and Israel radio was more than conceptual. Israel radio was the child of two ill-matched parents: the Mandatory regime's Palestine Broadcast Service, founded in 1936, and the underground radio stations of the Haganah and other resistance movements. The former was an essential component of the British Empire's middle eastern propaganda network, whose Arabic Service countered Arab-language broadcasts from the Soviet Union and fascist Italy.<sup>6</sup> The Mandatory regime conceived of radio as an effective instrument of both crowd control and mass education among a largely illiterate populace. (Thus the PBS' technicians were imported from the Punjab, where they had gained experience using radio to pacify the restive population and combat Soviet broadcasts.)<sup>7</sup> Like so many other aspects of the Mandatory infrastructure, however, developments intended primarily to benefit Palestine's Arabs actually were of greater value to the Jews. Hebrew programming was,

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<sup>5</sup> James Woods, *History of International Broadcasting* (Stevenage: Peter Peregrinus in association with the Science Museum, 1992), pp. 31–54; David Cardigg and Paddy Scannell, "Broadcasting and National Unity," *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth Century*, eds. James Curran, Anthony Smith, and Pauline Wingate (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 156–73; Asa Briggs, "British Radio Before 1939: An Approach to its History," *Talk About Radio: Towards a Social History of Radio*, ed. Theo Maesli (Zurich: Chronos, 1999), pp. 49–58.

<sup>6</sup> Wood, *History of International Broadcasting*, pp. 2, 38.

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to Eytan Almog, director of Kol Yisra'el's First Program, for this information, based on his ongoing research on the history of radio in Mandatory Palestine.



from the start, an integral part of the PBS. And during the 1930's, Jews owned three fourths of Palestine's radio receivers.<sup>8</sup>

The other source of Israel radio, the underground radio stations of the Zionist militias, points to the power of radio to subvert as well as solidify state power. Radio is the least sophisticated and expensive, as well as the most portable, of the electronic media. Pirate radio stations, which proliferate in today's Israel, have long been among the most important means by which resistance movements disseminate their message to the world.<sup>9</sup> During the Israeli War of Independence, the Haganah, the largest of the militias, operated a radio station known as *Kol Yisra'el* (as opposed to the Hebrew component of the PBS, *Kol Yerushalayim*), which issued a steady stream of English-language propaganda broadcasts, directed at the British military in Haifa.

*Kol Yisrael* was a technically sophisticated operation, featuring, in addition to a fleet of technicians and broadcasters, a public opinion unit that carried out numerous listeners' surveys, even in the heat of battle. Operating from a ramshackle station in Tel Aviv, *Kol Yisrael* broadcast Israel's Declaration of Independence in May 1948. This broadcast was itself a triumph of the classic Zionist values of resourcefulness, ingenuity, and sang-froid. The PBS' chief transmitter was in Ramallah, which fell into Jordanian hands when the British withdrew in May. Mordechai Avida and other radio technicians had to construct a transmitter by hand, using locally available parts, in Tel Aviv, and it was this frail transmitter that issued the State of Israel's first broadcast.<sup>10</sup> The heroism of the underground broadcasters, the deaths of several of them during the war, and, perhaps most important, the dissemination over the ether of the spoken Hebrew word

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<sup>8</sup> On the Palestine Broadcast Service, see Gil, "Mi-'Kol Yerushalayim' le-'Kol Ysra'el.," Mordechai Avida, "Sheloshet Ha-kolot," in *'Al itona'im ve-'itona'ut: 'arba'im shanah le-agudat ha-'itona'im bi-yerushalayim*, ed. Yitzhak Tishler (Jerusalem: Y. Tal, 1976), pp. 89–103, and Edwin Samuel, *A Lifetime in Jerusalem* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1970), pp. 198–210. For statistics on radio ownership, see Akiva Zimmerman, "Ha-galgal'—'iton ha-radio ha-mandatori," *Kesher* 21 (1997), p. 112.

<sup>9</sup> For the history of underground Jewish radio in Mandatory Palestine, see the sources cited in Note 8. On contemporary pirate radio in Israel, see Yehiel Limor, "Ha-galim ha-so'erim shel ha-radio ha-pirati be-Yisra'el," (1996), in *Emtsa'ei tikhshoret hamonim be-Yisra'el*, eds Caspi and Limor, pp. 251–74.

<sup>10</sup> Mordechai Avida, "Broadcasting in Israel," *Middle Eastern Affairs* (November 1952): 323–24.

led to an exaltation of *ha-shidur ha-ivri*. Hebrew broadcasting combined a celebration of the Hebrew revival and Zionist ingenuity.

The central Zionist political leader of the interwar period, David Ben-Gurion, developed a fascination with radio as early as 1923. Drawn by Lenin's claim that radio would be the newspaper of tomorrow, Ben-Gurion directed the Histadrut to establish a Radio Institute, staffed, appropriately enough, by Jewish technicians from the Soviet Union. In 1932, one of these technicians, Mendel Abramovitch, established Palestine's first Hebrew station, a short-lived commercial venture that broadcast during the Levant Trade Fair of that year. At that time Ben-Gurion gave his first radio address.<sup>11</sup> Once Israel was established, with at least 90,000 radios in a population of 650,000, Ben-Gurion and his acolytes eagerly undertook the exploitation of radio as an instrument of nation-building and the mobilization of the Diaspora.<sup>12</sup>

The significance of the radio to population ratio—at least one to seven—in Israel in 1948 becomes clear when we realize that in that same year, there were only eight radios in the entire Arab village of Umm el Fahum, one of the largest in Israel, and often there was only one radio per village, in the local café.<sup>13</sup> Israeli Jews in 1948 were far ahead in radio ownership of any of its neighbors. (As late as 1975, in Egypt there were only about 130 radios per thousand, and only 49 per thousand in Asia as a whole.)<sup>14</sup> Unlike post-1945 developing countries, where radio was introduced before the spread of mass literacy and education and the development of national infrastructure, in the Israel of 1948 many of these factors were in place. As will be explained towards the end of this article, this state of affairs increased, rather than marginalised, the role of radio as an instrument of nationalization in Israel.

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<sup>11</sup> Etan Almog, "Tahanat radio eretz-yisre'elit le-mishloach: tahanat ha-ivrit harishonah ba-'olam," *Kesher* 20 (1996): 66–81.

<sup>12</sup> For radio ownership in 1948, see the letter from the Broadcast Service of the Israeli Provisional Government to the Performing Rights Society, London, 3 August 1948, in Israel State Archive, Archive of the Israel Broadcast Authority, Section 45g (hereafter, ISA) 499/71/g.

<sup>13</sup> Letter of Shalom Bar-Haim director of Kol Yisra'el's Arabic Service, to Menachem Solieli, director of broadcasting, dated 21 November 1949, in ISA 501/15/g.

<sup>14</sup> Elihu Katz and George Wedell, *Broadcasting in the Third World: Promise and Performance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 59, 61–62, Table A-4 at end.

Under Israel's Provisional Government of 1948–49, radio was under the aegis of the Interior Ministry, but under the state it moved into the Prime Minister's Office, where it remained, having assumed the name of the Haganah's station, Kol Yisrael, until the establishment of the IBA in 1965. (The placement of radio directly within the office of the Prime Minister or ruling council was a common practice in the Middle East during the 1950's, e.g., Egypt, Syria, Iran.)<sup>15</sup> Israel had one central radio station, Reshet Alef. Reshet Bet was devoted solely to immigrant programming until 1960, when a so-called "light program" of entertainment and music was introduced, financed by commercials. Galei Tsahal, the army radio station, was set up in 1950, but its broadcast hours and influence were highly limited until the mid-60's.<sup>16</sup>

Responsibility over radio was entrusted to activists in the ruling party, Mapai, or with Mapai sympathizers, or coalition partners. During the 1950's, Ben-Gurion's personal secretary, Yitzhak Navon, and the director-general of the PMO, Teddy Kollek, intervened directly in broadcasting, particularly of news items. On at least one occasion, Navon transmitted to the director of news, Hanoch Givton, Ben-Gurion's instructions how the political scandal known as the Lavon Affair should be reported on the air. Moshe Sharrett, as both foreign and prime minister, had a similarly proprietary attitude towards state radio: in 1954, he bungled a speech delivered to the Knesset and re-recorded it in the radio studio, which broadcast it as if it had come from the Knesset floor.<sup>17</sup>

Ben Gurion disliked radio news magazines as too expansive and liable to indulge in criticism of government policy. In 1948, news broadcasting was limited to five brief bulletins daily. A decade later, political commentary was limited to two five-minute segments per week, offered by Binyamin Eliav, who led a small right-wing faction that was loyal to Mapai.<sup>18</sup> (Some of the best-known features of today's

<sup>15</sup> See Yahya R. Kamalipour and Hamid Mowlana, eds., *Mass Media in the Middle East: A Comprehensive Handbook* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1994), pp. 65, 80, 101, 264.

<sup>16</sup> Eliezer Shmueli, "Galei Tsahal be-ma'aleh ha-derekh," in *Al 'itonim ve-'itonut*, ed. Tishler (Jerusalem, 1976): 133–34.

<sup>17</sup> Galnoor, *Steering the Polity*, p. 246; Cohen, *Ma'amad ha-shidur ha-tsiburi be-yisra'el*, pp. 307–09; Interview with Haim Yavin, a veteran Israeli radio and television broadcaster, and, since 1968, anchor of Israel Television's nightly news program Mabat, Tel Aviv, 4 June 2001.

<sup>18</sup> "Halukat hashidurim lefi hamatsav beyom 1.12.57," ISA 6862/048(1).

Israel radio, such as frequent news bulletins and lengthy news magazines, were introduced only in the late 1960s and early 1970's, in reaction to the exigencies of war and the competition presented by television.)

By and large, censorship of radio broadcasting was far stronger in the realms of foreign than domestic affairs. Israel radio provided either disinformation (lies), or no news at all, at the time of crucial events such as the Israeli military raid on the West Bank village of Kibya in 1953, the Jewish spy network in Egypt in 1954, collusion with Britain and France prior to the Suez crisis, the massacre of Arab civilians by Israeli soldiers in the village of Kafr Kassem during the 1956 war, or the aforementioned Lavon Affair, which eventually brought down Ben-Gurion.<sup>19</sup> In 1959 Israel Radio broadcast a program marking the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Rhodes cease-fire agreements. Although the Kibya raid is mentioned, as is the controversy it provoked, its allegedly salutary benefits are emphasized, and it is immediately linked with the sacrosanct Israel Defense Force as the first bona fide operation of the post-war army. The 1956 Sinai invasion is described with no reference to Anglo-French involvement; the international dimension is dismissed by a vague comment about "intervention by great powers that didn't understand our position or that wished us ill" that have kept Israel from benefiting from the 1956 action. "Who knows," concludes the program announcer, "what [our enemies] will dare to do tomorrow?"<sup>20</sup>

The glorification of government security policy was the product as much of voluntary self-censorship as state-imposed control, for the independent print media followed a similar line, often accepting government briefings as gospel, and refusing to report on matters deemed by the government to be essential to national security. The conduit between the Israeli government and the media was the Israel Editors' Committee, which during the 1950's and 60's refused to accept representatives from the broadcast media, arguing that they were government employees rather than independent journalists.<sup>21</sup> Ironically, although the Defense Ministry's censorship regulations were so imposing as to virtually throttle any reporting about military or diplomatic

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<sup>19</sup> Galnoor, *Steering the Polity*, pp. 228–230, 237.

<sup>20</sup> Harvard University, Kol Yisrael radio program collection, JCKY 211.

<sup>21</sup> Caspi and Limor, *The In/Outsiders*, pp. 213–22, 226–28.

affairs, Israeli radio—a government agency—frequently overlooked the regulations. The chief reason for the violations was the break-neck nature of radio broadcasting, particularly live feeds, which did not allow time to go up the bureaucratic chain of command for clearance. When criticized by the military censor, the directors of Kol Yisrael responded unapologetically, and, so far as I have been able to determine, no Kol Yisrael employee was sacked or reprimanded for violating the censorship regulations.<sup>22</sup> In some ways, noted Kol Yisrael director Hanoah Givton in 1961, Israel radio was more independent than the print media, for the latter were private entities against which legal threats could be made and sanctions levied, whereas the former was, as an agent of the state, inviolable.<sup>23</sup>

However powerful externally or self-imposed censorship may have been, they did not exclude public discussion of security issues in the press. Far from it: in 1949, the muckraking newspaper *Ha-olam Ha-zeh* publicized the expulsions of Arabs during Israel's War of Independence. During the early 1950s, the issue of infiltration by Arabs across Israel's borders and Israel's appropriate response thereto was hotly debated, and the leftist Israeli press openly criticized Ben-Gurion's harsh retaliatory policies. Ben-Gurion grumbled that the press should be an educational tool, responsible to state authority, and he tried to shut down the communist newspaper *Kol Ha-Am*, but the Israeli Supreme Court overruled him. A fortiori, in domestic affairs such as immigration policy there was no censorship or even self-censorship to speak of. In the early 1950s, even Mapai's own mouthpiece, *Davar*, criticized the government's promotion of mass immigration for bankrupting the state and diluting its Zionist spirit with, to use the term employed at the time, "human dust."<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, the state-operated radio ventured into sensitive terrain. In the early 1960's, the program "*Zot ba'ayatkah*" (It's Your Problem)

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<sup>22</sup> See the military censorship regulations, dated Av 5711 (1951) in ISA 6863/414. There are numerous letters in the file, dated between 1956 and 1959, in which the military censors complain about the broadcasters' violation of the regulations, and the broadcasters defend themselves.

<sup>23</sup> Memorandum from the Broadcast Service directorship to all employees regarding censorship, 23 May 1961, ISA 6863/414.

<sup>24</sup> Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 62, 219, 285–86; Moshe Lissak, "Images of Immigrants: Stereotypes and Stigmata," in *David Ben-Gurion: Politics and Leadership in Israel*, ed. Ron Zweig (London: Frank Cass, 1991), pp. 241, 243.

aired problems about urban poverty, drug use, and prostitution in Israel. Other programs from the same era discussed discrimination against Oriental Jews and Israeli Arabs. To be sure, such programs tended to display at best modest sympathy for social victims and implied that they would best be healed through a massive injection of classic Zionist values. For example, in the program on prostitution, a streetwalker is interrogated, in rather rough language, by a panel of experts, who extract from her a confession that her parents are wealthy, she is an only child who has never done physical labour, and her mother has left the country to seek an easier life abroad.<sup>25</sup> In another program on the rise of Sephardic voting lists in municipal elections, a mostly Ashkenazic board of interviewers hear the complaints of David Hakham, a well-known Iraqi-Jewish activist from Beersheba, who rose to be deputy mayor of the city before being expelled from Mapai. One panelist scolded him, “And now you come, with your friends, and you catch the attention of children and their parents with what is in fact the precise opposite of your declaration of national unity.” Sephardic voting lists, thundered the panelists, are divisive and destructive, although the panelists did not respond to Haim’s observation, based on years of experience with the consonance of ethnic and political fissuring in Beersheva, that the established Zionist political parties are themselves ethnically based—Mapai being Russian, the right-wing Herut party being Polish, and the Progressives German.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the best example of Israel Radio’s discussion of Israeli social problems within a circumscribed ideological sphere was a 1959 program wherein a group of prisoners at Israel’s Tel Mond prison spoke via a live feed with a group of young pioneer-soldiers, *Nahalistim*, at kibbutz Deganiah Bet. The program glorifies kibbutz life, which ostensibly impedes criminality, and it looks forward to the day when the repentant prisoners will re-enter society as productive workers. Still, this is not pure propaganda—there is a sharp exchange between the prisoners and the soldiers, in which the former accuse the latter of condescension and self-righteousness.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> “Ha-yatsanit,” JCKY 516.

<sup>26</sup> JCKY 478. For background on Hakham, see Esther Meir-Glitzenstein, “Class, Immigration, and the Rise of Ethnic Leadership: Beer-Sheva in the Early 1950s,” *Israel Studies* V, 2 (2000): 78–106.

<sup>27</sup> “Nahal ve-asirei Tel Mond,” JCKY 565.

Although the Israeli government tried in the 1950's and 60's to keep troublesome, leftist intellectuals like Yeshiyahu Leibowitz off the air, Leibowitz did appear from time to time, though within the framework of science and philosophy, not politics. Moreover, Mapai did not completely dominate the airwaves. In 1960, Kol Yisrael broadcast an adulatory homage to Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist movement, and three years later Ben-Gurion's nemesis, the Revisionist leader Menachem Begin, was featured in a hagiographic tribute to Shlomoh Ben Yosef, a Revisionist guerilla who had been hanged by the British at Acre prison in 1938 for blowing up an Arab bus.<sup>28</sup>

The most serious case of interference with cultural freedom came from Rachel Yanait Ben Zvi, the celebrated Zionist pioneer and wife of Israeli President Yizhak Ben Zvi. Between 1961 and 1964, she prevented the broadcast of a documentary about Yosef Lishansky, who spied for Britain against the Ottoman Empire during the first World War. Lishansky was the object of an unsuccessful assassination attempt by members of the pro-Ottoman Zionist militia Ha-shomer, to which he had once belonged and of which Ben Zvi was a leader. (Lishansky was later picked up by Beduin, who handed him on to the Turks for hanging in Damascus.) Ironically, the ban was finally overturned under pressure from Israeli army officers (including the late ultra-nationalist Rehavam Ze'evi), who had heard illicit copies of the tape.<sup>29</sup>

From its inception, Israel radio was the object of criticism from politicians and public figures who accused it of partisanship and excessive censorship. On 31 October 1948 the Interior Ministry of the Israeli provisional government convened a meeting of the Public Council for Radio Affairs. This body of 33 notables, which was to guide the infant state's media policy, immediately began to debate the virtues of private versus public radio and the role of government in broadcasting. Yitzhak Gruenebaum, the Interior Minister, claimed that at present radio must be government controlled, but he rejected accusations of Israel radio as, in his words, "totalitarian." Perhaps

<sup>28</sup> "Be-mehitsato shel Jabotinsky," JCKY 663; "Lamut o-likhbosh et ha-har," JCKY 850.

<sup>29</sup> "Mirdaf: tokhnit 'al parashat berihato u-moto shel Yosef Lisensky ish Nili," JCKY 864. On the suppression of the program, see Cohen, *Ma'amad hashidur hatsiburi be-yisra'el*, 318–19.

not, but the words of Menachem Soloveitchik (later Soleli), director of broadcasting, set a strongly statist tone when he proclaimed that “In other lands radio serves the individual primarily. Among us radio needs to serve a) the state; b) the people; c) the individual.” “Above all else,” Soloveitchik added, “radio is the only institution upon which is stamped the seal of the state.”<sup>30</sup>

A common thread running through Soloveitchik’s remarks and subsequent official Kol Yisrael documents throughout the following fifteen years was the divide between Israel radio and its more frivolous West European counterparts. Whereas European state radio could afford the luxury of in-house orchestras and programs devoted largely to light entertainment, financial constraints and the obligations of nation-building molded Israel Radio into an educational tool for immigrants and a source of integration for a highly heterogeneous nation. An intriguing contrast was drawn between the programming requests made by the *edot*, the immigrant communities, and Israel Radio’s primary function of serving the “state” and the “nation.” Along the same lines, a document of 1961 claimed that “[t]he emphasis in the educational-social programs is placed on drawing the new immigrant towards the values of the state and the people.” Thus immigrants—and the reference here is clearly to the Oriental communities—are not yet part of the “people,” and they will only be so once they have completed a process of political and aesthetic education in which radio was to play an essential part.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the 1950’s, about 15% of total broadcast hours was immigrant programming, mostly in Yiddish and easy Hebrew, but also in ten other languages.

From the start, immigrants from Middle Eastern lands complained that the radio favoured Western over Middle Eastern music and that the programs of Middle Eastern Jewish music took the patronizing form of folklore, prepared by Ashkenazic experts. Moreover, much of the so-called “Eastern” music performed on Kol Israel in the 1950s was written by European Jews with a western musical sensibility. Oriental embellishments (and Oriental performers) were grafted onto Western tonal and chord patterns.<sup>32</sup> In time, Israel radio

<sup>30</sup> Protocol dated 31 October 1948, in ISA 19/499/12.

<sup>31</sup> “Kol Israel,” Hebrew typed ms., dated January 1961. ISA 6862/2, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Gila Flam, “Hishtakfut ha-mizrah ba-zemer ha-ivri,” in *Elgar ha-ribonut: yetsirah ve-hagut ba-‘asor ha-rishon la-medinah*, ed. Mordechai Bar-On (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zevi,



responded to these complaints, and in 1965 one of the most popular programs was a weekly anthology of Oriental Jewish popular songs.<sup>33</sup>

Intriguingly, a greater proportion of Kol Yisrael's broadcast hours went to Arabic-language than to multi-lingual immigrant broadcasts. Whereas immigrant programming was a tool of integration, the Arabic Service was designed to maintain the cultural distinctness of Israeli Arabs and to counter anti-Israel propaganda from Arab lands. As early as 1950, the Israeli foreign ministry viewed the Arabic Service as essential and urged Kol Yisrael to expand its hours of Arabic broadcasting. In 1957, 18.5% of total broadcasting was done through the Arabic Service (Reshet Dalet); by 1962, the figure was 25%—and the Arabic Service also consumed one-fourth of Kol Yisrael's budget.<sup>34</sup> The Arabic Service featured a wide variety of propagandistic programs, including a twice-weekly show hosted by a Palestinian refugee from Gaza known as “Abu Nabil,” and who addressed his brethren in refugee camps in Israel's neighbouring countries. The Arabic Service was also the government's ears, listening in on Arab broadcasts from abroad. Geoffrey Wigoder, director of KY's Overseas Service, claimed that the Arabic Service was “the country's greatest radio achievement and . . . a potent factor in the Middle East's War of the Ether.”<sup>35</sup> It was assumed that Arabs listened to the Arabic Service to find out not only what was happening within Israel but also within their own lands, where the media were heavily censored. It is difficult to determine what effects Israeli broadcasts in Arabic exerted upon public opinion, but it is clear that the broadcasts were listened to. Each month, Kol Yisrael received some 7,000 letters from the Arab world, sent via post office boxes in Europe and Cyprus. Radio Cairo considered Abu Nabil to be

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1999), pp. 248–61. See also my article, “Broadcasting Orientalism: Representations of Oriental Jews in Israeli Radio, 1948–1967,” forthcoming in *Orientalism and the Jews*, eds. Ivan Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England).

<sup>33</sup> The program commanded almost a forty percent audience share, according to the 1965 listeners' survey, found in ISA 6858/023/g.

<sup>34</sup> Letter of S. Divon to Menachem Solieli, dated 5 January 1950, ISA 501/15g; “Halukat ha-shidurim lefi ha-matsav be-yom 1.12.57,” ISA 6862/048(1); Geoffrey Wigoder, “Radio in Israel,” *Gazette: International Journal for Mass Communication Studies* [Leiden] VII, 1 (1961): 136.

<sup>35</sup> Wigoder, “Radio in Israel,” p. 133.

enough of a threat that they featured an Abu Nabil of their own, with a similar voice, but with very different political views.<sup>36</sup>

No less than the Arabic Service, the Overseas Service of Kol Yisrael served overtly propagandistic purposes. In 1948, Soloveitchik described it self-importantly as an instrument of salvation for the Diaspora, which would experience vicarious redemption through aural contact with the broadcast Hebrew word.<sup>37</sup> Kol Yisrael documents marveled at the power of the short wave to reach listeners in the southern tropics and the Arctic Circle. This self-image persisted into the 1960's, although in some ways Kol Yisrael's Overseas Service was no different in form or mission from its many foreign counterparts. For example, as part of Israel's development work in Africa, in 1960 the Overseas Service began Swahili-language broadcasts, by and for non-Jews.<sup>38</sup>

Israel radio's sense of national mission, and its ties with the Israeli state, were only somewhat attenuated by the creation of the Israel Broadcast Authority in 1965. The impetus for the shift of radio out of the Prime Ministers' Office came from the resignation of David Ben-Gurion in 1963. Ben-Gurion's successor, Levi Eshkol, favoured the status quo, but a wide coalition of Knesset members saw this as a ripe moment to limit prime ministerial power. The IBA was established as a semi-autonomous agency, supervised by a cabinet minister but administered by an appointed director and managerial board. It still remained subject to government pressure, however, particularly in the touchy area of broadcasting on the sabbath. More important, the IBA clearly retained the earlier state-building agenda of Israeli radio. According to the IBA Law of 1963, its purpose is: "1) to reflect the life of the state, its creations, its accomplishments, and its struggle; 2) to cultivate forms of good citizenship; 3) to instill knowledge of the Jewish heritage and its requirements [*tsorkheihah*]; 4) to extend the listeners' knowledge and education; 5) to reflect the life of the people in Diaspora, its fate, and its struggle."<sup>39</sup> (These guide-

<sup>36</sup> *Radiyo*, 15 December 1960, 5; "Kol Yisra'el," typed ms., dated January 1961, 18, ISA 6862/2; Interview with Yitzhak Navon, 18 July 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Protocol of meeting of 31 October 1948, Page 3, ISA 499/12.

<sup>38</sup> "Kol Yisra'el," (see note 36 above), 17.

<sup>39</sup> "Hok reshut ha-shidur," typed ms. in ISA 20910/8; Caspi and Limor, *The In/Outsiders*, p. 132; Amit Schejter, "Media Policy as Social Regulatory Policy," p. 86.

lines are quite similar to those for other public broadcasters in insecure or unstable states, such as Germany in 1932 or Thailand in the 1970s.)<sup>40</sup>

Even after the establishment of the IBA, public policy regarding the electronic media remained inextricably linked with statecraft and military concerns. Like Israeli radio, television was established within the framework of military confrontation—not the War of Independence, but rather the Six-Day War. Although discussion about introducing television went back to 1952, Ben-Gurion and his finance ministers rejected television on both financial and moral grounds. The state could not afford to set up its infrastructure, nor did Israelis have the means to buy television sets. Moreover, television, they feared, would promote idleness and rampant consumerism. Opposition to television came also from the extremes of the political spectrum: Mapam rejected it, especially during the mid-1960's recession, as a frivolous luxury, while the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael warned that “television and torah contadict each other” and that the former would promote juvenile delinquency and sexual libertinage.<sup>41</sup> But as the crisis between Israel and the Arab states worsened in the spring of 1967, there developed a meeting of minds between Israel Galilee, the Minister of Information, and Israeli academics regarding the need for Israeli television to combat televised propaganda from Arab lands. (With the exception of Jordan, all of Israel's Arab neighbours had introduced television by 1960.) Immediately after the war, Galilee called for the introduction of television into the Territories as a propaganda source. Early plans for what was called “emergency television” proposed three hours of Arabic broadcasting per night with only one hour for Hebrew.<sup>42</sup>

Yet television's domestic *mission civilisatrice* was irresistible. Within Israel proper, according to Galilee, television had the mission of “unifying the people, mixing of the communities, instilling the language, clearing away ignorance, the dissemination of science and

<sup>40</sup> For Germany, see Lacy, *Feminine Frequencies*, p. 51. For Thailand, see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 9–10.

<sup>41</sup> H.L. Gotliffe, “Israeli General Television,” Ph.d. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1981, p. 68; Gil, *Beit ha-yahalomim*, pp. 22–30.

<sup>42</sup> Gil, *Beit ha-yahalomim*, 34–55; Elihu Katz, “Television Comes to the People of the Book,” *The Use and Abuse of Social Science*, ed. David Horowitz (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction, 1971), pp. 249–71.

education, and the enrichment of social life.”<sup>43</sup> Tellingly, leaving aside highly-limited, closed-circuit broadcasts to schools, that were paid for by the Rothschild foundation, the first nation-wide Israeli television broadcast was the Independence Day military parade in Jerusalem in 1968—just as the first use by Israel radio of remote transmitters throughout the country had been attempted during the Independence Day celebrations eight years earlier.

Television did not, however, seek to play the explicitly mobilizing, nationalizing role previously undertaken by radio. The televised military parade of 1968 was Israel’s last. The 1969–70 War of Attrition with Egypt and, all the more so, the October War of 1973 left many Israelis feeling exhausted, betrayed by their government, and disillusioned with classic Zionist ideology. During the 1973 war, radio served an important function by providing round the clock news and by pooling the resources of Kol Yisrael and Galei Tsahal into a single unit. Yet radio was in the process of becoming ancillary to television. The percentage of Israeli households owning televisions skyrocketed from eight in 1968 to seventy-five by 1973. During the war, the government-owned single channel provided three hour-long news programs daily, while pacifying and distracting the public through entertainment such as American action-adventure series and films. After the war, television definitively replaced radio as the primary source of information and entertainment. Heavily politicized reportage on the popular evening news program *Mabat* co-existed with lighthearted, and at times subversive, entertainment programs, such as the satirical revue *Nikui Rosh* (head cleaning), whose name alluded to a sense that decades of government imposed brainwashing now had to be counteracted.<sup>44</sup>

So long as Israeli television broadcast on only one channel (through the early 1990s), television did perform an indirect nationalizing func-

<sup>43</sup> Gil, *Beit ha-yahalomim*, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> Yehiel Limor, “Eikh shilvah ha-milhamah et shidurei yisra’el ve-galei tsahal,” *Sefer ha-shanah shel ha-‘itona’im*, Tel Aviv, 1973/74, 51–58; Tsiyona Peled and Elihu Katz, “Media Functions in Wartime: The Israel Home Front in October 1973,” in *The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research*, eds., Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz (Beverly Hills and Los Angeles, Sage, 1974), pp. 49–69; Gothilfe, “Israeli General Television,” p. 403; Elihu Katz, Hadassah Haas, and Michael Gurevitch, “Twenty Years of Television in Israel: Are there Long-Run Effects on Values, Social Connectedness, and Cultural Practices?” *Journal of Communication* 47, 2 (1997), 3–20; Cohen, *Ma’amad ha-shidur ha-tsiburi be-yisra’el*, p. 323.

tion, as through the weekly screening of the American series *Dallas*, which provided a common forum for conversation and stimulated Israelis to compare their society favorably with the crass and materialistic United States. Moreover, the watching of the nightly television news was a civic ritual, practised by some 3/4 of Israeli viewers, who were given a uniform framework for the perception of events at home and abroad. Already in the 1970's and 80's, however, television's disintegrative potential became apparent: encouraging a retreat from the public to the intimate sphere, promoting the rise of personality-based politics and the decline of issue-oriented discourse, and, given the visual nature of the medium and brevity of programs, displaying problems rather than debating them.<sup>45</sup>

Paradoxically, after 1973 Israelis listened to the radio more than ever before. The popularization of the transistor radio, the hunger by youth for Western rock music on stations such as Abie Nathan's Voice of Peace (f. 1973) and Kol Yisra'el's Third Program (f. 1976), and the transformation of Galei Tsahal into a national icon do much to explain this phenomenon, as do the hourly news broadcasts and round-the-clock service, which had been introduced in war time but made permanent thereafter. Radio continued to reflect shifts in Israeli popular culture and public opinion, but its directors had lost the self-importance and sense of national mission that had characterized the early years of Israel radio's broadcast service, when it was an extension of the Prime Minister's office.

What is the historical significance of the overview we have provided here? Let us return to the two areas of inquiry with which we began: the one concerning Kol Yisrael as a case study in the role of radio in the shaping of a modern national identity, and the other about what governmental media policy reveals about the extent and limits of censorship and conformity in the state of Israel during its early decades.

Did the electronic media ever, in fact, exert the nationalizing effect that their founders envisioned? It is difficult to determine whether and in what ways radio shaped Israeli public opinion, but we can learn much from listeners' surveys carried out in the 1950s and 1960s. First, Israelis did listen to the radio regularly—some 90% as

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<sup>45</sup> Tamar Liebes, "Performing a Dream and its Dissolution".

of 1965 listened at least two hours per week, with an average of 12 hours. In times of crisis, Israelis were glued to the wireless. According to a listeners' survey of 1961, at the time of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, some 60% of the sample listened to at least one of the week's trial sessions, and 1/3 had listened to both.<sup>46</sup> Levi Eshkol's halting radio speech, delivered on the eve of the 1967 war, sent the country into panic (much as, one year later, Charles de Gaulle's ineffective television address in Paris during the May crisis spelled the end of his presidency). The introduction of the transistor radio in the mid-1960's made radio ubiquitous; radios now accompanied soldiers into the field, where they, like their family and friends at home, were rivetted by General Chaim Herzog's daily military commentaries during the Six-Day War.

Veteran Israeli broadcasting officials were wont to claim that Kol Yisrael helped forge a standardized Hebrew vernacular. To be sure, Israelis did not adapt the highly contrived Hebrew pronunciation of the radio news any more than inhabitants of the United Kingdom mimic the upper-class inflection of BBC news readers. Still, even if Israelis did not take to speaking affected radio Hebrew, they learned to understand it, and with it the complex rules of biblical pronunciation and literary Hebrew style upon which it is based.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the casual, conversational tone of the Hebrew employed in entertainment and sports programming provided a template for everyday speech. During the late 40s and 50s, Israelis were introduced to, albeit at first stunned by, a host of Hebrew neologisms such as *binum* (internationalization), *hetel inugim* (luxury tax), and *nekhei milhamah* (war wounded).<sup>48</sup> They were assisted by a weekly radio magazine, whose "language corner" offered translations into Yiddish of Hebrew near-homonyms (e.g., *mi'ut*, *me'at*, *me'et*), illustrated by sentences, often with an ideological undertone, easy Hebrew (e.g., "*mi'ut*: *minderhey*t

<sup>46</sup> The 1965 listeners' survey is in ISA 6858/023/g. On the Eichmann trial, see the "Seker ha'azanah le-shidur shetei ha-yeshivot ha-rishonot shel mishpat eichmann," 25 April 1961, in ISA 6863/405.

<sup>47</sup> See the official Kol Yisrael linguistic handbook, the *Madrikh lashon le-radiyo u-le-televiziyah*, eds. Abba Bendavid and Hadassah Shai, Jerusalem: Israel Broadcast Authority, 1974, pp. 9–11. The guidelines discussed on these pages were promulgated in 1966 and were probably based on earlier practices.

<sup>48</sup> See the letter of Baruch Berger, the Broadcast Service's linguistic advisor, to A. Ha'amori, 1 December 1949, ISA 500/1/g.

(minority). The Arab minority in the state of Israel. The Jewish minority in the Arab lands").<sup>49</sup>

Our freedom of conjecture about radio's role in promoting spoken Hebrew or shaping other forms of Israeli cultural identity is limited by the strong correlation between listening to the radio and other forms of cultural literacy such as newspaper reading and attendance at cinemas and theatres. According to the 1950 and 1956 Israel Radio listeners' surveys, more than ethnicity or land of origin, education appears to have been the single most important determining factor behind listening. Jewish immigrants from the Middle East were less likely to own radios than European-born immigrants, and they were less likely to listen even if they did own a receiver. But among the Oriental Jews, whereas only 16% of those with a primary education listened regularly, 56% with a post-primary education did listen regularly. The figures among European-born Jews were 48% and 76% respectively.<sup>50</sup>

This case argues against the attempts by communications theorists, going back to Marshall McLuhan, to separate literacy from aurality and to claim that radio's greatest impact is in pre-literate, tribally-structured societies.<sup>51</sup> Given that, since its founding, Israel has featured both the highest literacy and listening rates in the Middle East, the opposite appears to be the case. This observation can be of use to scholars of Israel because it suggests that the young Israeli polity's striving to imprint cultural unity upon its highly heterogeneous population is best studied within the framework not of developing Asian or African lands but rather of what could be called the developing western nations of the 1950s, such as Italy or Greece. Moreover, students of nationalism in general would be advised to make a conceptual distinction between orality, which is often opposed to literacy as the hallmark of a non-industrialized society, and aurality, which is an indispensable component of a technologically sophisticated society in which informational and educational data must be routinely transmitted from centers of power, in the form of disem-

<sup>49</sup> *Radiyo*: 2 February 1961, 17.

<sup>50</sup> Results of and comparisons between the two surveys are found in a document authored by Yitzhak Levin of the Institute for Practical Social Research, Jerusalem, dated April 1957, in ISA 6858/042/g.

<sup>51</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), pp. 297–307; Katz and Wedell, *Broadcasting in the Third World*.

bodied yet widely recognized and trusted voices, to the population of workers and citizens.

Although Israeli radio's successful shaping of public opinion is difficult to quantify, there is abundant evidence that the radio reflected popular sensibilities. The most popular radio programs were contemporary and nostalgic popular music, quiz shows, and drama. Throughout the 1950's, Kol Yisrael officials, armed with listeners' survey data, championed such programs while the serious-minded intellectuals on the Public Council for Radio Affairs called for greater educational and cultural programming.<sup>52</sup> While news bulletins and magazines were highly popular—in 1965 2/3 of Israelis listened to the evening broadcasts—public affairs programs won only a ten to twenty percent share. Significantly, among the most popular programs in 1965 was the Friday afternoon pre-sabbath anthology of religious and Zionist folk music, with a forty percent share. The weekly bible program had a respectable one-third share, as did the weekly sampling of cantorial music. Both of these programs fared better than sports programs.<sup>53</sup>

The Friday afternoon *kabbalat shabbat* (welcoming the sabbath) and weekly bible programs appealed strongly to all ages, even youth; whereas liturgical music tended to attract listeners over 30, and the weekly talmud lesson appealed to the middle aged and elderly.<sup>54</sup> The quantity and popularity of religiously oriented, cultural programming attest to the strength of the early Israeli state's ties to its Jewish roots as well as the successful replacement of talmud by a nationalistically-represented Hebrew Bible as the foundational Jewish text. No less significant is the sizeable proportion—some 30%—who did not listen to radio on the sabbath for religious reasons.<sup>55</sup> This figure, twice the percentage of the population that voted for Orthodox political parties, also points to the presence of a far larger observant minority than one would gather from studying public political discourse alone.

Finally, what does Israeli radio, under direct government control through the mid 1960's and still under extensive governmental influence thereafter, tell us about the balance of authoritarianism and

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<sup>52</sup> See, for example, the debates at the PCRA meetings of 11 February 1952 and 22 December 1953, ISA 2387/10g and 2387/11g respectively.

<sup>53</sup> 1965 listeners' survey, Front Table.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, 24, 28, 31, 35.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



liberty during Israel's formative decades? The rigorous censorship of Israeli news broadcasting, particularly on security issues, its frequent denial of access to the airwaves by the political opponents of the governing party, Mapai, and its ideological heavy-handedness appear to support to those who would see Ben-Gurion's Israel as a quasi-authoritarian state. Moreover, moving beyond Israel to the relationship between radio and state power throughout the globe, our presentation of government-run Israeli radio is in keeping with a body of literature, dating back to the very beginnings of radio, that associates radio in even allegedly democratic regimes with unidirectional projections of state power and the strangulation of personal freedoms. (This view was enunciated by Berthold Brecht in his essay on "Radio Theory" of 1932 and Max Horkheimer's and Theodor Adorno's classic *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.)<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, the ease and frequency with which censorship restrictions were evaded, along with the openness, not only in the independent press but even in government owned radio, to criticisms of domestic and social policy, suggest that Israel was less an authoritarian state than a mobilized one, featuring high degrees of self-censorship and ideological conformity. As in our earlier discussion of the relationship between listening and literacy, here too Israel falls more into a Western than an Afro-Asian model, one of Gramscian hegemony that is widely diffused and not routinely coerced. The fact that Israeli radio was born out of the underground stations of the Haganah and that, from the 1970s onward, has been inundated by pirate radio stations, both commercial and ideological, reminds us of a counter-theory presenting radio as a decentralizing, pluralistic force. Two years before Brecht offered his dark assessment of radio, Albert Einstein had hailed it as an agent of democratization.<sup>57</sup> The post-1945 era has demonstrated that the electronic media can strengthen regionalism as well as nationalism (e.g., the BBC's Scottish Service); and radio, which is the least expensive electronic medium,

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<sup>56</sup> Bertolt Brecht, *Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), I: 124–127; Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 129.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher Hailey, "Rethinking Sound: Music and Radio in Weimar Germany," in Bryan Gilliam, ed., *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 14.

lends itself particularly well to underground or pirate broadcasting. Radio is the most improvised of the electronic media; underneath the apparent calm and self-assuredness of the broadcaster's voice is an often dilapidated studio, a tangle of wires and circuits, and a constant welter of frantic, last-minute activity. Radio, the improvised medium, catalysed an explosive reaction in Israel, the improvised society *par excellence*.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MEMORY ON TEL AVIV'S ROTHSCHILD BOULEVARD<sup>1</sup>

Barbara Mann  
Princeton University

Every city has at least as many stories as it has residents. Tel Aviv has a particularly strong and problematic relation to storytelling, given that the city was, in a sense, first envisioned in fiction, in Theodore Herzl's *Altneuland*, published before the founding of *Achusat Bayit* (Tel Aviv's first neighborhood) in 1909. Nachum Sokolov's 1902 Hebrew translation of Herzl's utopian futuristic novel was called *Tel Aviv*,<sup>2</sup> and this title was the inspiration behind Sheinken's suggestion for the town's new name in 1910. Writing about Tel Aviv, it seems, has always been haunted by the city's origins as a fictional construct. Nonetheless, Tel Aviv exists quite palpably and in increasingly diverse and noisy fashion; it has, in many ways, left fiction behind.

My own reading of Tel Aviv is an attempt to formulate a descriptive poetics which both respects the presence of the past in the city's physical plane, and pays attention to its contemporary cultural and social landscape. My essay will focus on Rothschild Boulevard and the surrounding neighborhood of *Achusat Bayit*. It is structured as a kind of visual walking tour of sites and episodes in the city's history, as represented in fiction, photography, painting, guidebooks and public art. I first introduce elements of the city's official history. I then offer several examples that I believe counter or correct that history with a more nuanced appreciation, both of Tel Aviv's ambivalence toward its own origins, as well as the enormous variety of cultural expression in the city.

As the "first Hebrew city," writers, painters, photographers and city planners created an image of Tel Aviv as new, clean and modern—everything the crowded neighborhoods of Jaffa were not—a

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<sup>1</sup> An expanded version of this essay has been published as "Tel Aviv's Rothschild: When a Boulevard Becomes a Monument," *Jewish Social Studies* 7:2 (Winter 2001): 1–38.

<sup>2</sup> Published in Warsaw in 1902 by *Ha-tsira*.



Figure 1. Early Photo of Rothschild Boulevard (1913) View East to West (CZA)

city sprung from the sands. Avraham Soskin's famous photograph of the land lottery, where a group of new "shareholders" stands huddled together in the sands, is a carefully staged portrait. The angle and perspective of the photo set the horizon on the dunes. There is no sign of Jaffa to the immediate south, nor of the Jewish neighborhoods of Neve Zedek and Neve Shalom, founded in the 1880s, nor of the Templar settlement Sharona or the extensive Arab agriculture in the form of orchards just to the east. The city is formed—*yesh me-ayin*—despite the protest of the lone figure at the top of the photo who, as legend has it, yelled out "*meshugaim, eyn kahn mayim!*" In one later reproduction of the photo, the figure has been erased, his dissenting presence removed, perhaps by the photographer; he no longer disturbs the unified ring of "pioneers."<sup>3</sup>

At the very moment of its founding, then, Tel Aviv began to construct for itself a coherent narrative describing and explaining the

<sup>3</sup> Anecdotal details about the "convert" from Jaffa from Shlomo Shva, *Ho Ir, Ho Em* (XXX) (Tel Aviv: Keren tel aviv le-sifrut ve-omanut, 1977). The altered photo appears in *The New Palestine in Pictures: Tel Aviv*, ed. Dr. E. Mechner (Tel Aviv: Maon Press, 1937), p. 2.



Figure 2. Soskin's Photo of Lottery in Sands, 11 April 1909 (CZA)

meaning of its origins to its citizens. As time passed, this narrative has gained an explanatory power in and of itself, and has become official history; at the same time, views not according with this official history were effectively erased from the city's narrative of self. This process of integration and elimination is of course typical of the development of any new city or place, which will naturally create for itself a satisfactory and coherent story about its own foundations. However, in Tel Aviv the desire for authoritative roots coincided with the somewhat contradictory desire to emphasize the city's newness, modernity and epistemological distance from the diaspora, a phenomenon which characterized modern Hebrew culture as a whole.

The dilemma of what to remember was a conscious part of Tel Aviv's development as a cultural center. The meaning of this history was inscribed in the physical plane of the city, beginning with the area known as *Achusat Bayit*. Today, the city's pre-urban nucleus organizes a specific historical past for its residents, thus insuring the memory of certain elements, as well as the amnesiac erasure of others. Historical novels set in Tel Aviv regularly mingled real people and

actual streets with fictional circumstance. Though especially prominent in later works, this mix of fiction and biography characterized fiction about Tel Aviv as early as Brenner's *Mekahn u-mekahn* (1911), almost as if from the start authors writing about Tel Aviv did not feel compelled to differentiate between fiction and historical writing,<sup>4</sup> creating a hybrid genre which reached epic proportions in Agnon's *Tmol Shilshom* (1945). In *The Great Aunt Shlomtsion* (1975), Yoram Kaniuk's novel memorialising pre-state Tel Aviv, the narrator describes a meeting between Aunt Shlomtsion, a figure of almost mythical beauty and difficulty, and her husband-to-be, Nehemiah: it happened on Herzl Street, a place which, he says "in the eyes of Tel Aviv's residents [was] something singular in Jewish history, a crossroads where 2,000 years of exile met up with the essence of ancient Israel." It was, he continues, a "meta-historical intersection."<sup>5</sup> Popular versions of the city's past have for the most part treated Herzl Street—its intersection with Rothschild Boulevard, and the *kiosk* at the corner—as do Kaniuk's fictional characters—as a "meta-historical intersection," a symbol of social and cultural achievement, and not as simply a street, along which people strolled and talked, and watched other people strolling and talking.

The meta-historical narrative of *Achuzat Bayit* is canonized in monumental proportions in recent installations and exhibits in honor of the city's 90th anniversary. In Nachum Gutman's "At the Beach" (1934), Tel Aviv is built out of the sands by a pair of children who seem themselves to be part of the land. Behind them the sea is a playful wash of blue, and Jaffa a mere sketch on the horizon. The two actually seem to be fashioning a replica of Jaffa; they are wholly absorbed in their work, blessed by the rising sun, oblivious to the approach of a serene camel at the scene's right edge.

The central location of the mural—in Rabin Square, facing Town Hall—underscores the degree to which Gutman's naive paintings and stories about his Tel Aviv childhood have come to constitute a mythology of the city's origins—so much so that the catalogue accompanying the recent exhibit called "Gutman's Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv's Gutman," matched Gutman's paintings with photographs from the

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<sup>4</sup> For a survey of texts about Tel Aviv by Agnon, Brenner, Barash and others see Ehud Ben-Ezer, "The Beginnings of Tel Aviv as Reflected in Literature," *The Beginnings of Tel Aviv, 1909–1934* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1984), pp. 122–42.

<sup>5</sup> Yoram Kaniuk, *The Story of the Great Aunt Shlomtsion* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Ha-meuchad, 1975), 89.



Figure 3. Rabin Square with Nachum Gutman Installation

period, concluding that the artist's "stories of the beginnings of the neighborhood of *Achuzat Bayit* correspond with the reality and historical events of those days."<sup>6</sup> However, the naive, *Eretzyisraeli* school with which Gutman is associated was, after all, a style, just like the Parisian impressionism and abstraction which followed it. Gutman himself masks the degree to which his drawings have become a virtual substitute for a genuine sense of Tel Aviv's history, in a sketch from his 1959 memoir, *A Little Town with Few People In It*—usually entitled "The Speech I Didn't Give From the Water-Tower (The tower no longer exists and the speech is short)."

Tel Aviv is enamoured of this version of its past, which is over-represented in art and literature, and in popular histories and guide-books, manuals of civic pride for the Tel Aviv resident who wishes to visit that other country called the past. For example, the *midrachon ha-tapuz* or "orange guide" published by the currently non-functioning

<sup>6</sup> Batia Carmiel, "The Beginnings of Tel Aviv in Nachum Gutman's Depiction," *Gutman's Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv's Gutman* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Gutman Museum, 1999), p. 19.

Historical Museum of Tel Aviv-Jaffa leads the visitor on the “path of the orange,” back to “those good old days” (which even it has the good sense to put in quotes). It explains the structures still standing, and substitutes Gutman’s drawings for places like the train station, which no longer exist. This staple approach follows the path of orange groves that *also* no longer exist, back to a circumscribed and by now virtually iconic vision of Tel Aviv’s past. A recent book on Rothschild Boulevard continued this trend, in which nostalgia is propped up by catalogues of dry, structural detail about the neighborhood’s historic buildings.<sup>7</sup>

We cannot overestimate the importance of these guidebooks of internal tourism for the creation of Tel Aviv’s self-image, particularly in an immigrant-dense country like Israel, where many of the city’s residents were at the same time a kind of tourist. Unlike cities such as Paris, where “the ties that bound the city . . . to its history were revealed to the spectator through its architecture,”<sup>8</sup> Tel Avivians needed help in understanding and appreciating the meaning of their own more modest surroundings and monuments of civic pride. The city was thus presented as a kind of artifact to be studied and explored by its residents.

In this near-seamless triumphal narrative of “building and being built”—the motto on the city’s crest—we can find an occasional ripple. One such ripple is *The Book of Tel Aviv Street Names*, published in 1944 as a primer for those who did not know the origins of the names of Tel Aviv’s then approximately 500 streets—“there is almost no major personality in Israel that doesn’t have a street in Tel Aviv named after them; and there’s almost no community which symbolizes something in the life of the Hebrew people that doesn’t have a street named for it.”<sup>9</sup> The book’s epigraph “If I forget thee o golah . . .” (*ibid.*) demonstrates a chilling connection to the past even as the diaspora was ostensibly rejected. The book promotes Tel Aviv’s myth of instantaneous origins, but simultaneously anchors the city in the past, in this case, a specifically Jewish, diasporic past. Written in the

<sup>7</sup> See Ofer Regev and Shula Vidrich, eds. *Boulevard: Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv: Ramot/Tel Aviv University, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 14–15.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Mintz and Eliezer Steinman, eds. *The Book of Tel Aviv Street Names* (Tel Aviv, Ha-ma’avir, 1944), p. 8.



immediate shadow of the war, the book describes Tel Aviv as “the only corner in the world, where a [Jew] person from the nation of Israel can walk in complete security.”<sup>10</sup> An enlarged volume on Tel Aviv street names appearing in 1967 demonstrates the degree to which the grid of the city, with its large survivor population, had indeed become a kind of quotidian memorial—this later book contains the names of twenty new streets beginning with the word “*kehillat*” in memory of Jewish communities in the *golah*.<sup>11</sup>

In his critique of the *Blue Guide* Roland Barthes notes that “to select only monuments suppresses at one stroke the reality of the land, and that of its people, it accounts for nothing of the present, that is, nothing historical.”<sup>12</sup> I would like to inject some aspect of the “historical” into a description of Rothschild Boulevard, a street whose “metahistoric” significance cannot be understated. By “historical” I mean not only a sense of what the street means today, but also a sense of argument, of competing visions of the boulevard as a foundational moment in the city’s history.

From the start, the appearance and utility of public space in Tel Aviv was a fiercely debated issue. Rothschild was designed explicitly as the city’s first “*boulevard*,” indeed the city’s first public space, with trees, benches and a kiosk. The street, and its kiosk at the corner of Herzl Street, is featured in numerous photographs from the period as an example of the city’s modernity and self-consciousness as an evolving urban space. The sandy central passage was the site of Tel Aviv’s first “Hyde Park,” known as the “parliament of Rothschild.” Paintings of the boulevard from the 1930s point powerfully toward the intentions of the Town Committee which designed the street, as well as the painters themselves. Joseph Kossonogi depicted Rothschild in the dull somber tones of a Parisian autumn, accentuating the rows of trees lining both sides, and the respite the boulevard could offer from busy city streets.<sup>13</sup> In retrospect, the street has become not only a transportation nightmare, but an icon of the city’s history, an almost self-conscious symbol of the modern Hebrew city, and a kind

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>11</sup> They are listed in Yitzhak Anavi, *Know Your City: Metropolitan Tel Aviv* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, Uri, n.d. [1967?]).

<sup>12</sup> Roland Barthes, “The Blue Guide,” *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (Vintage, London, 1993 [1957]), p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> Paintings from *Tel Aviv at 80* (Tel Aviv: Rubin Museum, 1989), unpaginated.



Figure 4. Corner of Rothschild Boulevard and Allenby Street, 1999

of virtual monument appearing in innumerable literary and pseudo-historical descriptions. The concepts of the boulevard and the monument provide poles around which I would like to construct a provisional descriptive poetics of the city; for the remainder of this essay I will focus on examples of art in the public realm, and then return briefly to fiction, to suggest a more prosaic antidote to Kaniuk's "metahistorical intersection."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See also S. Yizhar, *Mikdamot* (Tel Aviv: Zmora Beitan, 1992), pp. 107–108.



Figure 5. Ben Nachum Hotel (1920s) (CZA)

The corner of Rothschild and Allenby is today one of the city's busiest intersections, and many pass through it without noticing the surrounding landmarks. However, traces of a minor but revealing historical episode are still observable. In 1922, at number 32 Rothschild, one of the city's first hotels opened—the *Pension Ginosar* or *Malon Ben-Nachum*. The building was designed in the eclectic style by Yehuda Megidovitch, who was at the time the City Engineer, and was considered enough of a Tel Aviv landmark to be included in this series of postcards dating from the early twenties, featuring the photographs

of Avraham Soskin and printed by the German firm *Artsenu*. Its dome is a ubiquitous element of representations of the boulevard throughout Tel Aviv's early years including Yehezkel Streichman's "The Kiosk on Rothschild Boulevard" from 1937, which features the building's floating dome atop blooming poinciana trees and the smaller cap of the kiosk.

The hotel's opening coincided with the unveiling of a large statue over its entrance by the American sculptor Y.D. Gordon. Three figures—a rabbi and two students—are surrounded by figures of animals, including dolphins and an eagle with outstretched wings. The statue provoked an immediate response from Tel Aviv's religious leaders, who called it a "statue in the Greek spirit," attacking it for its violation of the second commandment. The statue was viewed as a potential threat to the development of local Jewish art, and this public letter called on the town committee (the precursor to the municipality) to enact a city-wide prohibition on statues with human forms. It was seen as particularly offensive in light of the fact that Tel Aviv's new synagogue was under construction a short distance away on Allenby Street.<sup>15</sup> We find this alternative reaction in the daily *Doar Ha-Yom*: the paper commended the impulse behind the sculpture—to beautify Tel Aviv's public spaces; however, it did not appreciate the aesthetic value of this particular piece: "I don't know what to call it, but certainly not art."<sup>16</sup> The *rabbinut* also appealed directly to the municipality, which refused to interfere, replying that it was a private matter.<sup>17</sup> The sculpture was eventually removed, after, it seems, some sort of *cherem* was placed on the hotel. Across the street from the *Ben Nachum Hotel*, at number 29 Rothschild, we find another example of art with its face towards the public sphere—the home of Yitzhak Lederberg was built in 1925 by Yosef Berlin, another leading architect of early Tel Aviv.<sup>18</sup> The building's ceramic

<sup>15</sup> Adina Meir-Meril, "The Great Synagogue in Tel Aviv and Alex Barveld's Contribution to its Establishment" [Hebrew], *Katedra* 57 (September 1990): 105–119, here 116.

<sup>16</sup> Shach, "Art in Tel Aviv," *Doar Ha-yom* (19 July 1922).

<sup>17</sup> See *Ha-aretz* 16 July 1922. For opinion of the *Va'ad Ha-poel* see Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality Archives, Protocols of *Va'ad Hapoel*, File 19–01–003, meeting 18, 12th July 1922. See similar case in Ilan Shchori, *The Dream That Became a Metropolis: The Birth and Growth of Tel Aviv, The First Hebrew City* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Avivim, 1990), p. 54.

<sup>18</sup> Regev and Vidrich, *Boulevard*, p. 79.

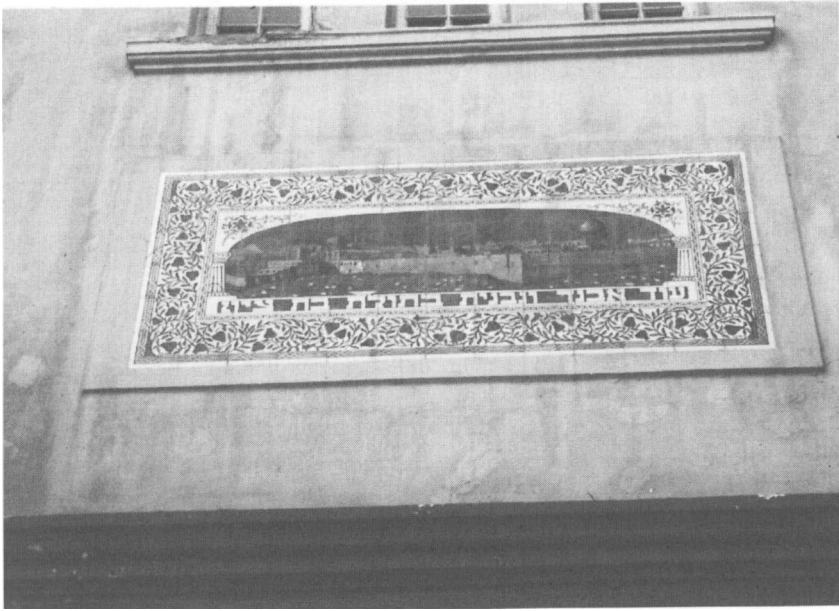


Figure 6. Entryway of Lederberg House

plaques by Ya'akov Eisenberg, from drawings by Ze'ev Raban, were the inspiration of Boris Shatz, the founder of Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy. The ceramics depict scenes of biblical agricultural activities, and are an integral part of the building's architecture, fitting in snugly between porches and windows. The plaque over the entrance bears a larger scene of Jerusalem containing the quote: "Od evnekh ve-nivnet betulat bat tsiyon" (Again I will build you, and you shall be built, virgin daughter of Zion), the motto for Tel Aviv's city emblem.

Both the iconoclastic incident involving Gordon's statue, and the Lederberg ceramics, demonstrate the degree to which the public sphere was expected to reflect elements of a collective identity and heritage. In fact, they are evidence of the competing visions of Tel Aviv. Both Gordon's statue and Shatz's ceramics adorned private homes, yet were perceived as a reflection of cultural identity in the public sphere. They may in a sense be considered Tel Aviv's first public works of art. One raised controversy, the other did not. One was seen as "Greek"—an all-purpose tagword for foreign influence which nonetheless retained a sense of paganism and idol-worship;

the other was praised for its “Hebrew” use of ancient and privileged, local, Jewish tropes. Gordon’s statue was eventually removed, it seems, to satisfy a community which does not usually receive great play in histories of Tel Aviv—its religious leaders. Given the overwhelmingly secular march of modernity that Tel Aviv is meant to embody, it is not surprising that this incident receives minor coverage in histories of the city.<sup>19</sup> The ceramics are still in place and are considered an important part of the city’s architectural identity.<sup>20</sup>

In the middle of the boulevard, between the Ben-Nachum Hotel and Lederberg House, photographs from the 1920s show a third mediating building—a curious structure with Byzantine columns underneath what looks like the minaret of a mosque. It was one of the city’s first electric generators, and was designed by Alex Barveld, whose drawings served as the basis of the Great Synagogue in Tel Aviv, with its enormous dome, and who also designed the Technion in Haifa. The cap reflects a desire to utilize “eastern” or “oriental” elements; it is meant to resemble the top of a sheik’s tomb. Together with Barveld’s mosque-style generator, the corner’s evolution demonstrates how cultural identity is negotiated in the public sphere. It contains a compact rendering of the spectrum of cultural influences and directions at work in a formative decade of the city’s development. Select elements of this decade have been preserved or emphasized; for example, the incident involving Gordon’s statue is perceived as a minor episode in histories of the city.

Within the context of *Achusat Bayit* as a whole, the corner of Rothschild and Allenby provides an interesting site in which to examine the public expression of cultural and religious affinity: what *should* the public sphere reflect? What should public art look like? How was Tel Aviv to compete with the weight of Jerusalem’s historical claims? What is the relation between the public and the private sphere, and what responsibility does the latter bear towards the former in matters of national and cultural identity? Finally, how does a modernist city which prides itself on newness, create a sense of an authoritative cultural tradition?

In recent decades, Rothschild has become the site of numerous

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<sup>19</sup> See Natan Harpaz, “From ‘Dream Houses’ to ‘Boxes’: The Architectural Revolution in the 1930s in Tel Aviv,” *The Beginnings of Tel Aviv, 1909–1934*, pp. 99–101.

<sup>20</sup> See Batia Carmiel, *Bezalet in Tel Aviv Homes* (Tel Aviv, 1996).

aesthetic experiments, including renovation and preservation of the boulevard's historic buildings; Beit Levin from 1924, is another corner building designed by Megidovitch, the architect of the Ben Nachum Hotel. Sculptures were often included as part of the renovation process. Some of these sculptures address their historical surroundings, some are merely whimsical. The more contemporary projects and public art necessarily interact with traces of the original pre-urban grid of *Achusat Bayit*.<sup>21</sup> However, while monuments encourage an appreciation of the past, as the city develops around them they are likely to be observed in isolation, and only tenuously linked to the city as a whole.

The Founders' Monument, in honor of the founders of *Achusat Bayit*, was erected in 1951, a short block east at the corner of Rothschild and Nahalat Binyamin, in the spot where Gutman's water tower had been. It depicts three foundational periods: the "leveling of the sands" among tents and wild animals; "Tel Aviv's beginnings," with the Gymnasia Herzilya and the water tower; and finally, the building of Dizengoff Circle, Bialik House and the National Theater. On the back of the monument are the 60 names of *Achusat Bayit's* original landowners. At the other end of the boulevard, close to the National Theater, we find Micah Ulman's *Yesod* (Foundation) from 1989. Ulman's concern is not the human agents of history ("the Founders"), but the process of history itself. The piece is less interested in assessing or delineating origins, or personalities, than in meditating on the often intangible yet powerful by-products of historical change. Like the Founders' Monument, however, Ulman's *Foundation* addresses the question of roots. Ulman's materials are concrete and soil. The site's play of empty space and filled-in holes is barely visible as you approach it, and does not seem to be noticed by people walking by and over it. According to Ulman, it is either a place in which a home is built, or the remains of one; either "the tip of the iceberg," the edge of some subterranean structure which cannot be seen in its entirety, or the "archaeological remains of a structure which has been destroyed."<sup>22</sup>

Ulman himself says "I'm a man who digs."<sup>23</sup> He has dug holes

<sup>21</sup> Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, p. 187.

<sup>22</sup> "A Hole Which Is a Statue," Interview with Micha Ullman, *Mishkafayim* 31 (1997): 39.

<sup>23</sup> Dalia Karpel, "An Artistic Mole," *Mosaf Ha-aretz* (22 March 1996): 80.

in Arab villages, in Jerusalem and in Berlin, compelling visitors to interact with the work by stepping on or over it. His work engages structural notions of surface and depth, thereby probing the relation between history and memory, between artifact and trace. Ulman's interest in digging and holes grew out of the possibility of whether a hole can be a sculpture. One might also ask what it means to dig in a place like Tel Aviv, which has relatively few layers of earth to dig through. Perhaps the site will serve as an archeological trace for generations to come, who wish to recover and recollect Tel Aviv at the millenium.<sup>24</sup>

Together the two pieces demonstrate the evolution of Rothschild Boulevard as a symbol of the city's history. Both the "Founder's Monument" and Ulman's *Foundation* suggest an archeological model for any future understanding or appreciation of the past. At the same time, they organize for the visitor/viewer different versions of Tel Aviv's past—the Founder's Monument offering a neatly segmented and progressive vision of the city developing organically—almost like the fish and plant life at its base, out of Jonah's Jaffa. Ulman's *Foundation* places Tel Aviv's relatively shallow roots at the center of his project, a notion which is a part of the daily life of Tel Avivians, whether they choose to notice it or not, to walk over it, or pause and reflect.

My description of Rothschild Boulevard also borrows, metaphorically, this archaeological model. By locating artifacts, traces and representations of the past, and placing them both in their respective historical contexts, and in dialogue with one another, I have tried to approximate some idea of the city's "sense of self." This potentially slippery term suggests a problematic erasure of human agency; what creates a city's identity if not the citizens, artists and bureaucrats who inhabit, represent and regulate it? Yet the accumulative effect of these multiple imprints and impressions—the often inchoate whole that is any city—is best served by a model that admits its necessarily limited, subjective scope, offering not a panoramic or comprehensive history of agents and sources, but instead specific spatial and temporal slices of the city, chosen for their seemingly paradigmatic quality, as well as their instability, their tendency to trouble

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<sup>24</sup> One option suggested by the artist, according to Udi Rosenwein, "Outdoor Sculpture on Rothschild Boulevard," *Boulevard*, p. 136.



or question their very exemplariness, and indeed the possibility of any single coherent rendition of the city. With Ulman, I am ultimately less interested in historical agents and sources, than with the palpable effects of history—or its absence—on the plane of the city.

The kind of activity provoked by Ulman's *Foundation* is eerily anticipated in Ya'akov Shabbtai's *Ẓikron Dvarim*, an epic novel of a crumbling, mid-seventies Tel Aviv.<sup>25</sup> The novel depicts an area adjacent to Rothschild Boulevard, the poor and somewhat make-shift neighborhood of Nordia, whose wooden huts authentically denote the rootless condition of its inhabitants' lives. Shabbtai himself claimed to have felt like a refugee in his own hometown.<sup>26</sup> Yet his novel offers us the "boulevard," the city itself, with none of the metahistorical. The repetitive circling of its characters through the city center and beachfront deflates the city's monumental narrative of self, exposing the decay, dirt and debris, the flimsy arbitrariness of architectural forms, as well as the petty randomness that make up the lives of its citizens. It is these ordinary and often bleak, even cruel details that remain, embedded in the memories of the characters, and in the city's topsoil. The novel's achievement is that it makes something enduring, compelling and even beautiful of these details. Rothschild has indeed become a monument. If, however, like Ulman, we dig a bit, we can find competing ideas regarding its character; literary memoirs such as *Ẓikron Dvarim* further unravel the street's symbolic aspect. The boulevard today makes room for expressions of Tel Aviv's official history, as well as its own homegrown ambivalence towards these roots.

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<sup>25</sup> Tamar Berger also links Ulman's work with Shabbtai's novel in her study *Dionysus at Dizengoff Center* (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbutz Ha-meuchad, 1998), pp. 89–99.

<sup>26</sup> Ya'akov Shabbtai, "Interview with Ilana Zuckerman," *Yehdiot Achronot* (2 August 1991), originally broadcast in the summer of 1981, shortly before the writer's death.



## THE WAY TO A HALACHIC STATE: THEOCRATIC POLITICAL EXTREMISM IN ISRAEL<sup>1</sup>

Nachman Ben-Yehuda  
Hebrew University

The state of Israel was established in 1948 as a “Jewish democracy.” The problem created by this political characterization has accompanied the state from its day of inception. On the one hand, “democracy” denotes a political structure associated with options, freedom to make informed choices among competing alternatives and increasingly so with universalistic human rights. On the other hand, one of the central cultural “building blocks” of Judaism is religion, which—by definition—is non-democratic. By not separating state from religion, and declaring itself a “Jewish democracy” an inherent structural and conceptual tension was introduced into the political nature of the state. This structural tension forms the central contextual background of this chapter.

In reality, it is possible to reach compromises that can make the actual existence of a “Jewish democracy” viable. This possibility hinges ultimately on how one defines “democracy” and “religion.” To enable the co-existence of religion and democracy one must define both in fairly spacious and tolerant terms. As we shall see, the main threat for Israeli democracy has become the extreme religious and nationalistic re-definition of “Judaism” which has developed in the country, as well as the subversion of the concept of “democracy.”

Thus, “extremism” in this paper is taken to mean shrinking of range, deflating of variance and limiting the number of options and choices. Extremism lies at the opposite pole of choices, recognition and acceptance of the other/s. It is the difference between multiculturalism and ethnocentrism.

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<sup>1</sup> Funded by a Silbert Foundation grant. The illustrative data presented here are part of a larger project on *Haredi* Deviance 1948–1998.

*The Inherent and Structural Religious Tension in Israel*<sup>2</sup>

As numerous works have pointed out, the tension between conceptualizing Israel as a modern Jewish secular state with the more fundamentalist religious element of its population is anything but a new issue.<sup>3</sup> The establishment of the State of Israel was the result of the efforts of the secular Zionist movement. That movement was most certainly considered by the majority of Jews living in Europe and the USA prior to WWII as a small and deviant movement.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, many orthodox and ultra orthodox Jewish key figures have viewed secular Zionism with distaste, scorn and hostility. Coupled with the Jewish Holocaust during WWII, a very serious moralistic and theological problem was created for the older religious conceptualization.

Thus, from the day the state of Israel was established, the non-Zionist ultra orthodox (or “*Haredi*” as they are referred to in Hebrew) challenge to the secular state of Israel was expressed in a forceful manner. Orthodox and Haredi Jews who embraced a non-Zionist religious ideology had a strong motivation to rationalize their stand and expose the Zionist position (and, in fact, all other Jewish interpretations) as morally inferior, dangerous and theologically wrong.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The analysis presented in this paper focuses on the dominant and hegemonic Jewish majority of Israel. While Israeli Arabs constitute about 16% of the population, their impact on the processes described in this paper have been marginal. However, the processes described in this paper threaten to erode the egalitarian base on which Arabs’ participation in Israeli democracy is conceptualized. Jewish theocrats have absolutely no desire to allow Arabs to share power.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Gideon Aran, *The Land of Israel between Politics and Religion* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for the Study of Israel, 1985) (Hebrew); Menachem Friedman, *Haredi Society* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for the Study of Israel, 1991) (Hebrew) and *idem*, *Society and Religion: The Non-Zionist Orthodox in Eretz-Israel 1918–1936* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi Publications, 1977) (Hebrew), *idem* and Joseph Shilhav, *Growth and segregation—the ultra orthodox community of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for the Study of Israel, 1985) (Hebrew); Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother. Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York: The Free Press, 1999); Moshe Samet, *Religion and State in Israel: Studies in Sociology* (Jerusalem: The Eliezer Kaplan School of Economics and Social Sciences, The Hebrew University, 1979) (Hebrew).

<sup>4</sup> Celia Stopnicka Rosenthal, “Deviation and Social Change in the Jewish Community of a Small Polish Town,” *American Journal of Sociology* 60, 2 (1954): 177–181.

<sup>5</sup> For some basic references regarding the *Haredim* consult Tamar El-Or, *Educated and Ignorant: On Ultra-orthodox Women and their World* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990) (Hebrew); Menachem Friedman, *Society and Religion*, *idem*, *Haredi Society*; Samuel Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), *idem*, “Religious Jewry in the Secular Press,” in Charles S. Liebman, ed., *Religious and Secular: Conflict*

Overall, it is possible to discern five major interpretations of Judaism, each of which constitutes an ideological core around which scores of Jews flock and maintain a different cultural and social system: one, the orthodoxy; two, the ultra orthodoxy; three, conservatives; fourth, reforms and fifth, seculars. Obviously, these camps are not homogeneous and there are further sub-divisions and rivalries within them. So as not to blur the differences, let me point out that some of the variance within these groups is rather impressive. For example, secular Jews range between those who practice a secular lifestyle (probably the majority) and a much smaller minority who has developed a secular consciousness. The ultra-orthodox can be divided along such lines as the recognition in the Zionist idea of the state of Israel as a Jewish state and anti-Zionists, not to mention different (and competing) fractions of *Hasiduyot* (small or large groups of Hassidim weaving networks around one Rabbi or *Admor*). This rich sociological jigsaw puzzle obviously provides a research heaven for any sociologist.

Religious Jews in Israel are not homogeneous. Politically speaking, at least two major camps could be identified amongst them: the national religious (which is a form of the orthodox interpretation of Judaism) and the ultra-orthodox. These camps themselves, one must note, have not been homogeneous. One must further note, however, that the convergence between these two major camps in recent years turns making distinctions between them sometimes a difficult task.

Since from its very first day of inception the secularly founded state of Israel did not separate state from religion,<sup>6</sup> one of the interpretations of Judaism—the orthodox, became the hegemonic and

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*and Accommodation between Jews in Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1990), pp. 45–65, *idem* and Menachem Friedman, “Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Jews: The Case of the *Haredim*,” in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 197–264; Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Bernard D. Cooperman (New York: New York University Press, 1993), *idem*, Jacob Katz, “Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective,” in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. II (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 3–17; David Landau, *Piety and Power: the World of Jewish Fundamentalism* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1993); Amnon Levi, *The Haredim* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1988) (Hebrew); Benjamim Neuberger, *Religion, State and Politics* (Tel Aviv: Open University, 1994) (Hebrew); Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1993) (Hebrew); Moshe Samet, *idem*.

<sup>6</sup> Which, by the way, makes the application of the concept “civil religion” in the Israeli context particularly ridiculous.

dominant in a number of areas, for example, marriage, divorce, burial and Kosher food control. For all practical purposes, and for the overwhelming majority of Jews living in Israel, no marriage, divorce or burial ceremonies can take place outside the orthodox religious interpretation (one must note some tendencies to break this hegemony in recent times). Israelis who do not want to get married in a religious ceremony have to leave the country and get married abroad. Cyprus is a preferred destination because it is close by and involves relatively cheap transportation, but other European, North American, or South American destinations are used as well. Food is another area an orthodox oriented administration basically controls fairly tightly the type and amount of non-kosher food which is either manufactured or brought into the country. Moreover, as time passes, the orthodoxy tends to utilize its power in one area to expand its sphere of coercive influence into another. Kosher food is a good illustration. While Kosher food has to do with the type, and ways, of preparation of food, restaurants, hotels and other places are increasingly threatened that if they do not observe the Sabbath according to the orthodox interpretation, they will be declared as non Kosher places, regardless of how they actually prepare food. Likewise, using laws that have nothing to do with religion, the orthodoxy is attempting to expand its sphere of influence into other areas, for example, trying to shut down commerce which is open for business on Saturday, introduce religious contents into secular schools' curriculum, and forcing El Al—Israel's national airline—not to fly on Saturday.

It is important to note that Israeli Jewish population (about 5 million individuals) is divided, very roughly, to about 20–25% religious and about 80–75% non-religious. The “religious” category is composed mostly of orthodoxy and 7–12% ultra-orthodoxy. One must note that it is difficult to present accurate numbers because of the problems involved in definitions and measurements. Reform and conservative Jews which constitute the overwhelming majority of Jews living outside of Israel in the west, are barely to be found in the Jewish state. In other words, a demographic minority dictates to the majority how some major elements of its cultural life should be.

While some claim that there may be a few inherent common core elements among the major interpretations of Judaism, there certainly are some major, profound and significant differences among these groups regarding various issues concerning their world view, toler-

ance to those who are not like them, attitudes towards human rights, women, politics and the nature of democracy.

Thus, the religious-secular conflict in Israel regarding the nature of the state and its cultural identity is anything but a new issue. Why has it “suddenly” gained such a high prominence in Israeli life?

There are a number of reasons for that but, historically speaking, the assassination of Rabin seems to have been a crucial turning point.

*The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by Yigael Amir*

Yitzhak Rabin, democratically elected prime minister of Israel (June 23, 1992), was assassinated in Tel Aviv on November 4, 1995 by an orthodox Jew—Yigael Amir. The amount of wild, poisonous and dangerous instigation against Rabin and his government reached significant proportions in the summer of 1995.<sup>7</sup> Numerous people from the Israeli right, very many of them with a strong religious orientation (Jewish orthodox, and ultra orthodox) did their best to vilify Rabin. Their most favorable analogies were taken from traitors and collaborators dating to WWII (e.g., Quisling, Pétain, Mussolini). The main cause for the anger and hatred was Rabin’s going along with the Oslo accord, and his willingness to compromise with the Palestinians for some future political and peaceful arrangement for both people.

Murdering Rabin had a strong political-ideological background. His assassination, and this is crucially important, was grounded in a *religious* context. Thus, for very many secular people this assassination forced to the surface a powerful cultural battle that has been waged in the Jewish Israeli culture for many years: the struggle between secular and democratic, and religiously theocratic Jews.

Yigael Amir, Rabin’s assassin, is a religious Jew, who was studying at the only religious (orthodox) university in Israel (Bar Ilan) and identified himself with the Israeli right. That an orthodox religious Jew, identified with the political right, assassinated a secular Jew, viewed as part of the political left, could hardly have escaped attention.

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<sup>7</sup> For a fairly good description of this see Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God* (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1999) (Hebrew).

Moreover, Amir stated explicitly that the main motive for his act was religious. Following the assassination, and instead of a careful self examination, a pattern of evasion and “stuttering” developed by many religious Jews (orthodox and ultra-orthodox) to “account” for the assassination. This pattern could not have been ignored either. A pattern of “newspeak” developed amongst the religious right in a way which was meant to erase the memory of the assassination, and void of meaning the fact that Amir was religious, part of the political right, or that he studied at the religious Bar Ilan University. Moreover, in a live televised discussion on the commemoration day for Rabin in 2000, Aviezer Ravitzky, a fluent and smooth speaker for the theocrats, challenged the description of Amir as “religious.” He argued that a Jew who committed such an act could not possibly be a “religious Jew.”<sup>8</sup> Strange “logic” indeed, if we are willing to apply it to criminals in general. This pattern of evasion, which was quite successful one must add, was aimed to divorce Amir—his act and justifications—from its cultural context and meaning. This led to the description of Amir as a “loose canon” in a cultural and sociological vacuum.

In retrospect, it seems obvious that Rabin’s assassination helped to crystallize the realization of many secular Jewish Israelis that the ultra orthodoxy, and some major portions of the orthodoxy, have declared “war” against them—their values, politics, institutions and life style. In a sense, this raised consciousness helps to explain the success of a new secular party—Shinui (“Change”)—in introducing six new parliament members into the Knesset in the 1999 general elections and fifteen in the 2003 elections. This party explicitly declared it was secular, aiming to separate state from religion.

From the assassin’s point of view, and from that of his supporters, the assassination was a brilliant success. A new government, headed by Binyamin Netanyahu, came into power. It slowed the Oslo process in the most significant way, and gave Israel’s religious parties an enormous importance and share in national politics. So bad was this discrimination that the state controller, supreme court judge Miriam Ben-Porath in her 48th report (released in early May 1998), pointed out that the ultra orthodox religious sector in the country was receiving resources way above and beyond what decency

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<sup>8</sup> First channel, Israeli TV.



and fairness dictated. The assassination of Rabin, which was aimed to achieve a change in the governance of Israel, achieved exactly that.

Sociologists use the term “cultural integration” (or “cultural interlocking”) to denote the close relationship and interdependence among various elements of cultural systems. The term refers to the fact that the major components of cultures tend to support and reaffirm one another. In this way, major social institutions like the family tend to support, and be supported by, other institutions like religion, politics, the economy. This concept explains not only why restaurants in Saudi Arabia do not sell pork products, but suggests that Amir was part of a specific cultural complex. That he was orthodox religious, of the Israeli right, studied at Bar Ilan University and spent a great deal of his time amongst Jewish settlers in the West Bank is no coincidence. These cultural attributes form a specific cultural integrated entity. This entity does not, of course, imply that any or all of these cultural elements were “responsible” for, or even “wanted,” Rabin’s assassination. However, this complex implies that Amir was comfortably immersed in these cultural elements where he found support and nurture for his general ideological theocratic world view. Viewing the assassination of Rabin from this point of view makes it abundantly clear that it was no coincidence, culturally speaking, that his assassin was identified with the political right, that he studied at Bar Ilan University, or that he was an orthodox Jew. It is possible that the most important impact of Rabin’s assassination was that it changed the secular consciousness. The most salient indication for this change was the public and private discourse in Israel. If before Rabin’s assassination most discourse was focused on the peace process and the prospects for a “new Middle East,” the discourse following the assassination focused on the Jewish religious-secular conflict.

The assassination of Rabin by a religious Jew who used Halachic justifications, and was part of a religious national milieu, seemed to have awakened many secular Jews to the fact that they live under a cultural hegemony of the orthodox and ultra-orthodox version of Judaism. One of the potential meanings of this cultural occupation was revealed in the assassination and that was that Halachic rhetoric was used in an anti-democratic act in order to achieve political goals. Thus, while the religion-state tension in Israel is a longstanding one, the assassination of Rabin blew it very powerfully to the surface. It should not really surprise us to find out that ultra orthodox newspapers

(mostly children's newspapers) either ignored or openly ridiculed the memorial events for Rabin's assassination.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that this is the case requires us to look at the assassination of Rabin in a broader context. Therefore, I shall continue this chapter by focusing on the theme that Israel is facing a genuine struggle between the theocrats (a combination of ultra-orthodoxy and many members of the orthodoxy) and the democrats, and that the violence used by the theocrats (including the assassination of Rabin) is calculated, rational, and goal oriented—it is aimed to turn Israel from a democracy into a theocracy. In other words, the theocrats intend to turn Israel into an extremist religious state.

I use the term “theocrats” deliberately because it helps me to create a generalizable concept. The fact is that the hegemonic political position of the orthodox and ultra-orthodox (the theocrats) versions of Judaism in Israel created a situation where these versions' interpretations of reality gain ascendancy. The political representation, leadership, as well as the theological leadership, of these versions have been trying their best to push Israel in the direction of an Halachic state, that is, to reduce the cultural Judaic variance in Israel and bring it closer to a Jewish orthodox state. In this sense, making distinctions within the different factions is almost irrelevant because the overwhelming majority of the important and decisive elites of the theocrats agree on this issue.

The theocratic violence in Israel can be roughly divided into two domains: verbal and direct action.

### *Verbal Violence and Abuse*

Orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel present a basic and self-defined superior moral position. They tend to define themselves as the only real and genuine authentic Jews. The discourse they use tries to dictate such “truths” as those which state that secular, conservative and reformed Jews are culturally inferior, lack spirituality and are in deep and urgent need of an intensive conversion into orthodox or ultra-orthodox Judaism (in Hebrew, become “Ba'alei Teshuva”). In fact, deputy minister of religion Rabbi Aryeh Gamliel

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<sup>9</sup> E.g., see *Ha'aretz*, October 27, 1997, p. 6A.

(an ultra orthodox from Shas party) stated explicitly that the “role of the Ministry of religion is to encourage return to ultra orthodoxy.”<sup>10</sup> This simply means that the funds taken as taxes from the secular majority are to be used to encourage these secular people to experience a religious conversion. Thus, it was disclosed in December 1996 that religious agents wait outside secular schools for the innocent children and flood them with cassettes, requests, demands, threats and temptations, to convert to one of the versions of orthodox or ultra orthodox Judaism. Again, this proselytization activity was financed and made possible with funds taken from secular tax payers’ money.<sup>11</sup> One of the images theocrats like to use is that of the “empty wagon,” meaning that secular Jews are traveling in an empty carriage, symbolizing vacuous and aimless life. One of the interesting slogans used by the National Religious Party (MAFDAL) in the 1996 election was “Judaism with a soul” meaning, of course, that non-religious Jews have no soul. The implications of such rhetoric are obvious—orthodox and ultra orthodox Jews have a world full of spirituality and values that other Jews lack altogether.

As every student of sociology and anthropology will recognize, the above claims represent a nice illustration of good old fashioned ethnocentric propaganda in a cultural war. In fact, secular, conservative, orthodox, reform and ultra orthodox versions of Judaism present different cultures, as defined in the professional literature. That is, all have the classic ingredients of cultures: language, values, norms, and material products which make each one of them distinct and different than the other; for example, music, history, literature, attitudes towards women, democracy, clothing, food, tolerance, etc. Clearly, contempt and scorn among ultra-orthodox (and many orthodox) Jews for other versions of Judaism (and defining them as “non Jews”) is not just a matter for sterile academic discussions. This basic position is expressed in a variety of claim making activities, demands, and assertions. For example, on January 13, 1997 ultra orthodox parliament member Moshe Gafni threatened secular Jews openly that “if the seculars want war—we will fight them.”<sup>12</sup> Let me illustrate some events from recent times:

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<sup>10</sup> *Yediot Aharonot*, January 7, 1997, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ha'aretz*, December 16, 1996, front page.

<sup>12</sup> *Yediot Aharonot*, January 13, 1998, p. 7.

- “One should not buy falafel from a secular Jew” (a Halachic statement from Rabbi Ovadia Yoseph),<sup>13</sup> and secular Jews are not to be allowed to be employed in Israeli wineries because Israeli orthodox rabbis instructed that any employment of a secular Jew there would make the wines non-Kosher and unfit for consumption by Jews.<sup>14</sup>
- Israel’s Television channel 1 told its viewers that Matti Dagan, head of the religious education in the Israeli ministry of education, sent a memo to head administrators in the religious education advising them that “secular teachers and guides are not to be employed in the religious education division” because they can affect badly the religious students.<sup>15</sup> It must be added that next day the general director of the Ministry of Education appeared in the same channel and stated that “secular teachers are not prevented from teaching in religious school.” While no data are available, my guess is that if there are secular teachers in religious schools, their number is negligible and they probably tend to be employed in what are considered as “technical” areas.
- Comparing showing movies on El Al flights to flooding the Gas Chambers (in Nazi death camps) with Zyklon B and demanding that in-flight movies be banned in El Al airplanes.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, under *Haredi* pressure, Egged, Israel’s largest public bus company canceled its plan to show passengers video movies on its long routes. This cancellation was expensive because the *Haredi* pressure was applied after much equipment had already been installed in many of Egged’s double decker buses.<sup>17</sup>
- In November 1997, Jewish officers from the Jerusalem police force were called in the ultra orthodox press “murderers” and “Nazis” and their units referred to as “S.S. units whose hands are soaked with blood.” The “reason” for these attacks was the police activities against ultra orthodox violent and illegal demonstrations on Bar Ilan road in Jerusalem on Saturdays in attempts to shut down transportation on the road on Saturdays.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Ma’ariv*, December 2, 1996, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Ha’aretz*, February 9, 1998, p. 7A.

<sup>15</sup> *Ma’ariv*, December 3, 1996, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> *Ha’aretz*, December 29, 1996, p. 7A.

<sup>17</sup> *Ha’aretz*, February 20, 1995, p. 6A.

<sup>18</sup> *Kol Hair*, November 4, 1997, pp. 26 and 36.

Furthermore, a crucially important cornerstone of the ultra orthodox, and orthodox, claim making activity is based on the doctrine of “mutual responsibility.” This magical doctrine stipulates that the almighty makes ALL the Jews pay for the “sins” of Jews, regardless of their identification (e.g., secular). Let us look at some of the monstrous accusations made in recent years which follow belief in this doctrine:

- Pinhas Horowitz, deputy head of the center of Agudat Israel, an ultra orthodox organization, stated that “If we observe the Sabbath (ultra orthodox style, of course—N.B.Y.), the state will continue to exist, and if not, a new Hitler will rise. Ninety-five per cent of the Jews in Germany were Reform and assimilationist, who were like the Germans, and precisely there arose a Hitler who murdered six million Jews. It is obvious that the responsibility for the Shoah is that of the Reforms. This is a fact. There were no religious Jews there (in Germany—N.B.Y.). This teaches us that when Judaism (ultra orthodox style, of course—N.B.Y.) the Shabbat and the belief in the almighty is ruined, a Hitler rises up.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, this preposterous accusation was amplified in 1997. At that time, it was revealed that a textbook to study geography in the Beit Ya’acov chain of schools (schools for ultra orthodox girls) entitled *The United States* (*Artzot Habrit*) stated that the Conservative and Reform interpretations of Judaism cause the destruction of “the people of Israel” by amplifying intermarriage and uprooting “fundamental Judaism.” One needs to be reminded that this disrespectful, hateful and misleading information is, partially at least, funded by monetary contributions from the United States, and by public funds secured from the state of Israel and used to support the Beit Ya’acov school chain.<sup>20</sup>
- Secular Jews are responsible for the Holocaust because the almighty punished ALL Jews for their “sins,” or worse yet that secular Zionists were “interested” that a Holocaust will occur.<sup>21</sup>
- Another ultra orthodox newspaper, *Yated Ne’eman* (the Shofar of Rabbi Shach) told its readers that the death of Jewish soldiers in

<sup>19</sup> *Ha’aretz*, December 2, 1996, p. 7A.

<sup>20</sup> *Yerushalaim*, January 17, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> *Ha’aretz*, May 2, 1997, p. 2A.

all of Israel's wars can be attributed to the reckless behavior of the secular and national religious Jews. That these Jews do not keep the Halacha as strictly as they should causes the wrath of the almighty to be released on the Jews and thus the dead soldiers.<sup>22</sup>

- The ultra orthodox newspaper *Hamodia* told its readers that the lack of faith and partial Jewish education of the seculars cause the car accident fatalities in Israel.<sup>23</sup>
- On March 20, 1998 during a demonstration of orthodox and ultra orthodox Jews, secular Jews were accused that: "we are all punished from heaven because of you" and "we are tired of financing your drugged sons who sit in prisons, and all the yellow secular Tel Avivians who ran to Jerusalem from the Iraqi Scuds" and, how "the seculars murdered the Jews in the Holocaust."<sup>24</sup> On December 1, 1996, Moshe Ehrenshtein, previous Mayor of Bnei Brak, and deputy chair of the center of Agudat Israel stated that "Many Rabbis state that all the troubles in the country are caused because the Sabbath is not observed."<sup>25</sup>

Another area where we can witness numerous claim making activities is in a series of symbolic demands, some successful in bringing about action, others just making the claim itself.

- Forcing El Al not to fly on Saturday, not because of commercial considerations, but because of a religious interpretation. It is noteworthy that El Al is the only airline in the world which does not fly for a day and a half every week, a feat which cost the company some 50 million US\$ annually.<sup>26</sup>
- Another incident involved, unbelievably, dinosaurs. In August of 1993 "Tara," which manufactures various milk products, tried to market a new milk product and used as a promotion for the product, as well as the graphic representation on the product, images of dinosaurs. Ultra orthodox authorities raged and threatened to boycott "Tara's" products. The reason? The very idea of dinosaurs

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<sup>22</sup> *Ha'aretz*, June 17, 1997, p. 4A.

<sup>23</sup> *Kol Hair*, May 16, 1997, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> *Ha'aretz*, March 22, 1998, p. 5A.

<sup>25</sup> *Ha'aretz*, December 2, 1996, p. 7A.

<sup>26</sup> *Ha'aretz*, May 11, 1997, p. 2G; *Ha'aretz*, July 7, 1998, p. 3C; *Ha'aretz*, July 8, 1998, p. 2C.

represents a severely major blasphemy because it provides a different sequence of dating of life on the planet than the one implied in the Bible, not to mention the implications for that forbidden conception of “evolution.” The result? “Tara” changed its advertising for the product.

- Continuous threats against the Israeli supreme court (the chief justice has 24 hours bodyguards) by theocrats. Rabbi David Yoseph (son of Rabbi Ovadia Yoseph) an important religious figure, and the Rabbi of Har Nof neighborhood in Jerusalem, stated that the court is the “genuine enemy of religious people.”<sup>27</sup> Rabbi Yeshaya Rotter, a Shofar for ultra orthodox rabbi Shach (a very prominent *Haredi* figure) stated that “if we had the power, we would have been obligated to go to war against the secular judges . . . We have no positive attitude towards these judges,” compared the supreme court to Sodom and added that the ability to force all Jews to behave according to the strict Halachic rules (that is, become ultra orthodox) is indeed the test of the Messiah. In February 1998 parliament members from the ultra orthodox Shas party attacked the Israeli supreme court in an unprecedented manner, accusing its judges of being biased against Sephardic Jews, its practices being primitive, dangerous and constituting “foreign work.”<sup>28</sup> To this vicious attack, the legal adviser to the government—Elyakim Rubinstein (himself an orthodox Jew)—responded by stating publicly that this attack is “not far from being suspect of a law violation” but did nothing else.<sup>29</sup>
- Attack from the religious leader of SHAS—Rabbi Ovadia Yoseph—on the actors of the Israeli national theater (“Habima”). He stated that they deserved the “electric chair.” Yuval Carmi, acting on behalf of the actors, filed a complaint with Merchav Yarkon of the Tel Aviv police.<sup>30</sup>
- The worst is a number of illegal theocratic radio stations (“pirate radios” in the local jargon)<sup>31</sup> which, without shame or boundaries, disperse hatred, violent threats and open preaching to convert to orthodoxy, as well as delegitimizing democracy at its base. Science,

<sup>27</sup> *Ha'aretz*, April 25, 1998.

<sup>28</sup> *Ha'aretz*, February 4, 1998, p. 12A.

<sup>29</sup> *Ha'aretz*, February 5, 1998, p. 10A.

<sup>30</sup> *Ha'aretz*, April 3, 1997.

<sup>31</sup> See the chapter by Derek Penslar in this volume.

academia, judges and secular people are continuously stigmatized and vilified in these transmissions. According to recent report, 12 orthodox and ultra orthodox “pirate” radio stations are busy on a daily basis in stigmatizing and vilifying secular Jews, and spreading vile propaganda against democracy.<sup>32</sup> For example, one of the ultra orthodox radio stations (“The Voice of the Soul”) told its listeners to make a holy war against the seculars, particularly a secular radio station in Tel Aviv (Radio Tel Aviv). The result was hundreds of threatening faxes and telephone calls (among which was a threat to burn the station) which flooded Radio Tel Aviv and halted many of its activities. As usual, a complaint to Tel Aviv police was filed.<sup>33</sup>

- On November 21, 1997 the legal adviser to the Israeli government warned the ultra-orthodox weekly *Hashavua* to stop its hateful articles. This weekly branded Rabin as a “Kapo,” Peres and Rabin were referred to as a “Judenraete” the chief Justice Aharon Barak as “the most dangerous enemy of Judaism,” and it told its readers that: “Meridor (a finance minister who quit Netanyahu’s government) shot Netanyahu in his back, spilled his blood, sat near his aortae and sucked and sucked.”<sup>34</sup> In December, the same weekly newspaper accused Barak of having “a superiority mania and delusions of being the Almighty” stating that the Israeli supreme court is controlled by a “leftist Mafia.”<sup>35</sup> Shimon Peres was not spared either as he was described as “a junkie running straight to hell . . . If Netanyahu hears a shot behind his back, he knows 50% that it came from the barrel of Shimon Peres’s gun.”<sup>36</sup>
- Roni Milo, mayor of Tel Aviv in 1997/8, who came out openly a few times with strong statements against religious coercion, was called in the ultra orthodox newspapers an “enemy,” “hoodlum,” “idiot, anti-Semitic and instigator.” This instigation campaign was led by *Hashavua*.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ha’aretz*, April 1, 1998, p. 2B; Yizhar Beer, *Pirate Radio in Israel: Alternative Communication or a Threat to Democracy?* (Jerusalem: Keshev, 1998) (Hebrew).

<sup>33</sup> *Ha’aretz*, December 12, 1997, p. 7A and April 1, 1998 p. 2B.

<sup>34</sup> See *Ha’aretz*, June 27, 1997, p. 2A and November 21, 1997, p. 6A.

<sup>35</sup> *Ha’aretz*, December 15, 1996, p. 8A.

<sup>36</sup> *Ha’aretz*, October 20, 1996, p. 4A.

<sup>37</sup> *Ha’aretz*, March 23, 1997, p. 6A.



*Physical Violence*

As can be expected, violence does not stop at the verbal level. We can easily examine quite a few direct actions:

- Ultra orthodox Jews attacked conservative Jewish women who came to pray at the “Wailing Wall” by throwing heavy physical objects on them and calling them “Nazis.”<sup>38</sup> Almost a year later bags with dirt were thrown on conservative Jews who came to pray at the “Wailing Wall.”<sup>39</sup> Haim Miller, deputy mayor of Jerusalem and an ultra orthodox Jew, told journalists that “conservative Jews are a symbol for the destruction of the Jewish people . . . Conservatives have no place in the country.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, repeated attacks on conservative Jews prompted their demand from Premier Netanyahu that they be given proper defense against the Jews who continually attack them. This demand came following the painting of a swastika on a reform movement synagogue in Jerusalem and vandalism in the conservative synagogue in Kfar Saba.<sup>41</sup>
- Bus stops in Israel are designed in such a way that advertising by using large posters in them is possible. In May and June 1986 (and a small repeat in May 1998) ultra orthodox Jews began a systematic campaign of burning these bus stops so as to force the company who sells the advertising spaces there (“Poster Media”) to censor its posters and use only what they refer to as “modest” posters. Poster Media, obviously, yielded to this violence. Moreover, when international companies target Israel for advertising campaigns for their products, they classify Israel within such countries as Iran and other extreme Moslem states, and design their campaigns accordingly.<sup>42</sup>
- Ultra orthodox Jews burnt a large number of Israeli flags in the 1997 Lag Ba’omer holiday in Jerusalem and possibly in Bnei Brak too.<sup>43</sup> One of the suspects who was arrested after the event in

<sup>38</sup> *Ma’ariv*, November 13, 1996, p. 10; *Ha’aretz*, same date, p. 9A.

<sup>39</sup> *Ha’aretz*, June 12, 1997, p. 2A.

<sup>40</sup> *Ha’aretz*, June 12, 1997.

<sup>41</sup> *Ha’aretz*, October 21, 1997, p. 7A.

<sup>42</sup> *Ha’aretz*, July 6, 1997, p. 3B.

<sup>43</sup> *Ma’ariv* May 25, 1997, front page and May 30, p. 25 in the *Mussaf*; *Ha’aretz* May 27, 1997, p. 5A.

Jerusalem, a 14 years old boy, stated that “this is not my country, so I burnt its flag.”<sup>44</sup>

- Environmental statues were destroyed in Ashdod by ultra orthodox Jews;<sup>45</sup> ultra orthodox Jews spat on Christian priests in the old city of Jerusalem,<sup>46</sup> and others urinated on the Christian embassy in the city.<sup>47</sup>
- Violence against Israeli archaeologists is prevalent among Haredi Jews (e.g., using violence against the excavations of the City of David in 1978).
- Severe violent demonstrations aimed to bring about the shutting down of main roads on Saturday: the Ramot road in Jerusalem in 1978–81 and the Bar Ilan road in 1997.
- Beginning in October 1997, repeated attempts were made, probably by *Haredi* Jews, to burn the apartment of some female Arab students who rented it on the edge of a *Haredi* neighborhood in Jerusalem (between Musrara and Me’a She’arim).<sup>48</sup> The attempts to set the apartment on fire followed verbal threats (“Arabs Out”), paintings of swastikas in the staircase leading to the apartment, writing vilifying and threatening graffiti on the walls of the staircase, knocking on the door of the apartment in the middle of the night, spitting on the girls in the street and throwing stones on them. Eventually, an improvised explosive device (a “pipe charge”) was laid near the door of the apartment as well.<sup>49</sup> There could hardly be a question that the police handling of this case of continued harassments reflects extreme negligence, incompetence and lack of serious law enforcing activity (at least till the middle of 1998).
- Attacking and throwing stones at cars on Saturday are common occurrences. Even unsuspecting and innocent drivers who, by pure mistake, drive into an ultra orthodox neighborhood on Saturday are not warned politely and asked firmly to leave. These innocent drivers are typically attacked, the cars are hit, and beatings take place. For example, in November 1996 five young people from

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<sup>44</sup> *Yediot Ahronot*, May 30, 1997, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ha’aretz*, January 10, 1997, p. 11A.

<sup>46</sup> *Ma’ariv*, February 21, 1997, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Kol Hair*, June 20, 1997.

<sup>48</sup> *Ha’aretz*, December 12, 1998, p. 10A.

<sup>49</sup> *Yerushalayim*, May 5, 1998, pp. 18–19.

the Tel Aviv area, with a ten years old girl, drove by mistake into such a neighborhood in Jerusalem. A *Haredi* mob attacked the car, cursed its passengers and threatened the terrified passengers. A secular man who passed by used his cellular phone to call the police. A force of border patrol police arrived on the scene, which was described later by a senior police officer as “very close to a lynch,” and tried to get the passengers out of the danger zone—to no avail. Only when more police arrived it became possible to yank the frightened secular passengers out to safety.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, the ultra orthodox has a private police force called the “modesty guard” which acts violently against anyone they feel has violated their conduct norms. This force operates completely outside any control of the state.

We should not drift into the common mistake that all the deviance and violence is only amongst ultra orthodox (“*Haredi*”) Jews. Threats on the life of judges, politicians and others are not traced to them only. Orthodox, politically to the right, Jews are equally to be blamed. The assassin of Rabin was not a *Haredi*, but an orthodox Jew. The “Jewish Underground” which existed in the late 1970s early 1980s, and attacked Palestinians as well as planning to blow up the Mosques on the Temple Mount, was not *Haredi* Orthodox<sup>51</sup> but had many orthodox members; violence of Jewish settlers in the West Bank towards the Arabs comes typically from the orthodox religious right (e.g., the massacre committed by Dr. Baruch Goldstein in Hebron against innocent Palestinians).<sup>52</sup>

The orthodox and ultra-orthodox religious pressure manifests itself in everyday life too. Let us examine a few illustrations:

<sup>50</sup> *Ha'aretz*, Nov. 10, 1996, p. 5A; *Ma'ariv*, Nov. 10, 1996, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> For a short description see Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Political assassinations by Jews. A Rhetorical Device for Justice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 293–297.

<sup>52</sup> On February 25, 1994, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, an orthodox Jewish physician from the Jewish settlement in Hebron, entered the mosque of “The Cave of the Patriarchs” in Hebron in the middle of a Moslem prayer. He carried an automatic rifle and opened fire indiscriminately on the praying Arabs. Twenty-nine Arabs were thus killed and up to 200 (accurate numbers are difficult to establish) were wounded. Dr. Goldstein was killed by surviving Arabs.

- People on the streets of Jerusalem, and in front of secular schools, are stopped by ultra orthodox Jews and asked to “Lehaniach Tefilin,” that is, to make one of orthodoxy’s Mitzvos, hinting of course that this is the way to live. No secular Jew would dare stand in an ultra orthodox neighborhood suggesting to passing by Jews to read modern Israeli poetry, literature, or share any of the delightful cultural fruits of secular Judaism.
- Orthodox and ultra orthodox Jews tend to use “religious discourse” which forces non-religious people to share a religious universe of contents. For example, adding on letterhead lines the Hebrew words: “BESAD” (a short form of writing meaning, “With the help of the Almighty”), or interjecting to normal conversations in an almost endless way the term “BARUCH HASHEM” (meaning “Blessed be the Lord”). Many housing projects advertise, publicly, that they are meant only for either religious or ultra orthodox Jews. If secular Jews advertised that their housing is restricted to non-religious Jews only, the cry of “Anti Semitism” would surely follow. In Jerusalem, to pass through many neighborhoods females are forced to dress according to the orthodox and ultra orthodox code of dressing. Many of my secular female students tell me that when they walk in downtown Jerusalem, religious women approach them and, with all seriousness, warn them that the way they dress endangers the fate of the Jewish people, not to mention themselves, and follow this dire warning with a “suggestion” to dress differently. Major public hospitals in Jerusalem (e.g., “Sha’arei Tzedek” and “Bikur Cholim”) disconnect public phones on Saturdays, and pressure patients to behave on Saturdays according to Halachic rules (e.g., using Walkmans is discouraged). Security personnel for other hospitals (again, “Sha’arei Tzedek” in Jerusalem and “Carmel” in Haifa) search visitors’ possessions during Passover for non-Kosher food that these visitors may carry into the hospitals.<sup>53</sup> Different products in supermarket chains carry the notification that they were manufactured in a factory which “observes the Shabbat.” Moreover, neighbors in building complexes find themselves bickering about the use and operation of elevators on Saturdays, and other similar issues.

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<sup>53</sup> *Ha’aretz*, April 27, 1998 p. 6A and *Kol Ha’ir*, April 25, 1998, p. 12.

Studies and surveys done in Jerusalem and Israel indicate that these acts of religious violence and cultural coercion have some serious consequences. One study examined the satisfaction expressed by *Haredi* and secular Jews in Jerusalem about the possibility of living together. While *Haredi* Jews stated that they saw no problems and were satisfied, secular Jews not only expressed extreme dissatisfaction, but are leaving Jerusalem to the secular periphery by the thousands.<sup>54</sup> The fact is, very few secular Jews are able to live amongst *Haredi* Jews. A study in 1987 revealed that *Haredi* Jews display systematically high levels of violence against non-*Haredi* Jews who dwell on the borders of their neighborhoods in Jerusalem.<sup>55</sup> That violence is particularly pronounced against women. Another survey by the Tami Steinmetz center in Tel Aviv University asked subjects to respond to the possibility of separating state from religion in Israel. The overwhelming majority of religious subjects expressed feelings of being comfortable and satisfied that religion is not separated from state in Israel. Secular subjects expressed their explicit wish that such a separation should take place.<sup>56</sup> These results seem to be typical for a situation of cultural hegemony. Members of the hegemonic cultural group (in this case of hegemony in the religious sphere, orthodox and ultra orthodox) feel comfortable and satisfied with their hegemonic position. Those being exposed to the hegemony (typically secular Jews) express dissatisfaction, stress and discontent.

Violence, verbal and non-verbal, as well as using religious power in the parliament to prevent separation of state and religion and enforce religious lifestyle in Israel in a number of areas, has a direction and a purpose. It is not—to the contrary—random, crazy, illogical or irrational.

What we are witnessing here is a group of theocrats (some of whom, but not all, are Jewish fundamentalists), with a more or less monochromatic world view which delegitimizes—in a calculated, logical and systematic fashion—all interpretations of Judaism except

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<sup>54</sup> Shlomo Hasson and Amiram Gonen, *The Cultural Tension within Jerusalem's Jewish Population* (Jerusalem: The Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 1997) (Hebrew).

<sup>55</sup> Abraham Farber, *Patterns of Haredi attacks on non-Haredi inhabitants in north-west Jerusalem as part of the struggle for the area*, M.A. Thesis, Institute of Criminology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1987) (Hebrew).

<sup>56</sup> Tamar Herman and Ephraim Yaar-Yuchtman, *The Peace Process and the Secular-Religious Cleavage* (Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv University, January 1998) (Hebrew).

their own, and who use the power of the state to enforce that trend. This line of activity gives legitimacy to continuous incitement,<sup>57</sup> verbal and physical abuse and violence and to direct action. For example, a previous minister of education and culture in Israel (the second largest ministry after the ministry of security), Rabbi Levi, stated in an interview that he will not *push* Israel into becoming a theocracy, but if others do it—he will not object. One needs to read this statement carefully to realize its monstrosity. What exactly was Rabbi minister Levi “inviting” here? What message does he transmit? But, one need not hide behind such evasive and concealing rhetoric. What Levi did not state explicitly—others do. Indeed, in a recent survey, 70% of the *Haredi* Jews expressed attitudes supporting the use of violence and violation of the law to achieve political goals (as compared to 40% of the secular Jews, and 45% of the orthodox Jews).<sup>58</sup>

The various forms of the theocratic violence is anything but a new phenomenon. Some of it began already before the establishment of the State of Israel, and in a slow and gradual process intensified over the 50 years in which Israel has existed. This violence is designed to challenge and alter the moral secular democratic basis of the state, and attempts to destroy, from the foundation, the value system underlying this democracy. It aims to modify the political institutions and decision-making processes, and to erode the national secular symbols, towards a theocracy. Thus, using violence *per se* is not the goal, or the outlet, of the theocrats. It is a calculated means to force Israel to march towards an Halachic state. Contrary to Sprinzak’s thesis that *Haredi* violence is self-limited,<sup>59</sup> my conclusion is that the patterns of theocratic violence over the last 50 years reveal that to the extent that theocratic violence is limited—it is so because it does not have enough power to go further. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, if anything, indicates that this violence does not limit itself. Likewise, the “Jewish Underground,” or the theocratic underground group “Brit Hakanaim” (“alliance of the zealots”) from the 1950s (which aimed then to create a Halachic State) further illustrate this. Perhaps the most salient recent exam-

<sup>57</sup> *Ha'aretz*, October 24, 1996, p. 5A.

<sup>58</sup> *Ha'aretz*, April 27, 1998, p. 2B.

<sup>59</sup> Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother. Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Atalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), see especially chapter four.

ple is the *Haredi* violent underground group: “Keshet.”<sup>60</sup> The theocrats will not hesitate to use brute and lethal force (as they have done in the past) if and when they feel that they stand a fairly good chance of winning more popular support and moving more swiftly towards a Halachic state. The prospect of initiating a fully developed civil war in Israel at this stage (rather than a low level and continuous conflict) simply does not appeal to them because it will probably fail to achieve their goals.

Therefore, we need to interpret theocratic violence in Israel in instrumental terms, and as goal oriented: to replace a democracy with an extreme and fundamental theocracy.

### *Theocratic Counter Propaganda*

Theocratic propaganda can be quite successful. Following the assassination of Rabin, for example, theocrats did all they could to disassociate and absolve themselves from any possible connection to the assassination. In this process, a rather successful attempt was made to negate the cultural interdependence theory. Amir (the assassin) was presented as a “wild growth,” somebody who is a “nut,” not connected to anything. Attempts are constantly made to confuse innocent and unsuspecting audiences that either democracy is bad, or if this does not work, that there is no contradiction between Judaism and democracy. For example, Rabbi Deri from ultra orthodox Shas declared that Judaism (his version of it, of course) is democracy. Many theocrats do everything and anything in their power to dissolve the concept and perception of democracy in such a way that it becomes something entirely different. This is, perhaps, the place to remind ourselves that until not so long ago the former totalitarian East Germany felt it was important to refer to itself formally as a “democracy.”

Moreover, many theocrats tend to present their version of culture in utopian terms. To achieve success in such a presentation, one

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<sup>60</sup> An ultra orthodox violent group that was responsible for a number of violent attacks against what they saw as “anti-*Haredi*” targets. Most activities occurred between August 1988 and February 1989. For example, members of this illegal organization destroyed a kiosk which sold secular newspapers in Bnei Brak.

certainly needs to deceive one's audience. Thus, ultra orthodox media (printed and electronic) emphasizes that contrary to the secular opinion, it is their people's "right not to know." Using this value all information about deviance, violence, or other problematic behavior amongst them, is censored heavily and denied. For example, Sheri Makover, a radio reporter on the ultra orthodoxy working in an Israeli radio station (Tel'ad radio) refused to transmit any damaging or discrediting information about the ultra orthodoxy. She thus refused to report on such issues as sexual deviance in a *Haredi* family (a case involving a *Haredi* who raped two of his family female members) or lack of *Haredi* respect during memorial day. Following these refusals, Makover stated that she was only willing to discuss topics favorable to the *Haredi* community and will not talk about negative topics. Following this rather strange journalistic policy, she was fired.<sup>61</sup>

When the secular media reports on problematic behavior among *Haredi* Jews (e.g., suicide, violence, wife beatings, etc.) this media typically receives unsavory compliments such as "the hostile media" or "secular violence." Worse yet, seculars are continuously accused of being involved in "wild incitement" against the ultra orthodoxy. The typical technique is to cite extreme and rare illustrations.

Orthodox and ultra orthodox Jews tend to complain whenever they can about what they refer to as the "hostility" of the media, that there is widespread incitement—not to mention conspiracy—against them, and that—in short—they are the victims. Moreover, any disclosure of disrepute, deviance or negative aspects of *Haredi* Jews is responded to immediately by a series of denials, counter accusations, claims of invalidity of the news item, denials and sometimes even curses. Typical counter accusations tend to utilize a large number of images from the Nazi lexicon.<sup>62</sup>

As journalist Adam Baruch has pointed out, the term "Newspeak" was coined long before in George Orwell's novel "1984". It meant "inverted speak," a form of speech which conceals or deliberately deceives. One major characteristic of this newspeak is to switch between "reason," "cause" and "result." Take, for example, the Bat Sheva affair. On Israel's 50th birthday celebration (April 30, 1998) at Hebrew University's Givat Ram stadium, Bat Sheva Dance Group

<sup>61</sup> *Yerushalayim*, June 20, 1997, p. 33.

<sup>62</sup> E.g., see *Ha'aretz*, April 14, 1998, p. 2B.



had to cancel its presentation of a part of a dance called “Anafasa” because of religious objections. The dancers partly undressed, and used language taken from the scriptures. The turmoil which resulted was attributed by most religious people to Bat Sheva. They, to some extent, became the target for accusations of national disunity, ruining the 50th anniversary celebrations (attended by USA vice president Al Gore and his wife). The real or potential role of religious censorship that helped cause the turmoil was ignored.

*Democracy vs. Theocracy—Shrinking the Variance*

Pure theocracies or democracies are creatures of pure imagination. In reality, the actual question is, to what degree does a particular regime resemble one or the other, and in which areas. To a very large extent, the type of violence described in this chapter is contextualized squarely within this issue. This violence is best understood as part of a struggle between extreme theocrats and democrats. There have been regimes very close, on a large number of issues, to a theocracy: the Ayatollahs’ control of Iran, the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Church’s hegemony over much of Europe during the middle ages, Sudan and Saudi Arabia these days. Naturally, a political regime of a strong religious color has a very powerful flavor of totalitarianism in it as well. The above illustrations of the essentially religiously hegemonized political regimes shows how religious interpretations of everyday conduct could prevail. There is no reason to assume that a Jewish theocracy (Halachic State) will look any different, or that “Jewish Ayatollahs” (that is, Jewish Rabbis and Admors) will act any differently than religious leaders elsewhere in the past or the present. Thus, a Halachic State will, by nature, resemble a totalitarian regime.

Moreover, Seffi Rachlevsky’s important book indicates that the theology of many theocrats stipulates that secular people only serve as a vehicle (“donkeys” in the terminology he uses) to expedite the arrival of the Messiah. Theocrats can, and will, get rid of the secular “donkeys” once a messianic theocracy is created.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Seffi Rachlevsky, *Messiah’s Donkey* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronot, 1998) (Hebrew); see also Tzvia Greenfield, *Cosmic Fear: The Rise of the Religious Right in Israel* (Tel Aviv: Miskal-Yediot Ahronot Books, 2001) (Hebrew), although from a different angle.

Although quite a number of Israelis try to state that a “Jewish Democracy” is possible and thus harmonize between extreme oppressive religion and free democracy, in essence this contradiction cannot be resolved. The tension between these two blueprints for country and culture is ever present. The only solution for this contradiction is to turn thinking about “democracy” and “Judaism” from discrete, black/white, variables into continuous variables. In this manner, it is not too difficult to realize, very quickly actually, that the orthodox and ultra-orthodox versions of Judaism are, in essence, diametrically opposed to most forms of democracy, while the conservative, reform, and certainly secular, forms of Judaism are much more conducive to more forms of democracy. At both ends, of course, we will find that ultra orthodoxy and democracy simply constitute a contradiction, while in the secular-democracy combination this contradiction is attenuated quite significantly. The theocratic violence described in this chapter is planned, and geared towards, coloring Israeli society and culture in much stronger religious hues.

*Trends Towards a Halachic State in Israel*

The prestigious and ambitious project of the University of Chicago’s Press in publishing a series of volumes on fundamentalism in the 1990s (sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences) included a few monographs about Jewish religious fundamentalism. Without exception, these monographs focused on either ultra-orthodox or orthodox versions of Judaism as cases of Jewish fundamentalism. The most relevant monograph for us is the intriguing chapter by Soloveitchik.<sup>64</sup> In it, he argues persuasively that in the second half of the 20th century ultra-orthodoxy has deserted its more traditional custom in favor of focusing on texts as strict codes for actual action. This transformation helped to shrink the older, larger and more flexible variance of religious interpretation toward a much more extreme, monochromatic and fundamentalist interpretation. Thus,

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<sup>64</sup> Hyam Soloveitchik, “Migration, Acculturation, and the New Role of Texts in the Haredi World,” in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Accounting for Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, Volume 4 in The Fundamentalism Project (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 197–235.

ultra-orthodoxy became more and more fundamental. Moreover, older modes of coping with the context within which ultra-orthodoxy was embedded which consisted mostly of quietism, pragmatism and adaptation, stand a very good chance of changing into new aggressive and influential forms of action. While Soloveitchik tends to think that these old forms will persist, my feeling is that they are indeed changing into the new form. Soloveitchik's main point is that the ultra-orthodoxy which he observed "have no blueprint for running a society" and thus will only constitute a pressure/interest group.<sup>65</sup> He went on to point out that: "Significantly, no group has ever advocated the full application of Jewish law in the State of Israel, having it replace the 'Gentile' law currently in effect." The fact is that beginning with the religious underground in the 1950s demanding a Halachic state ("Brit Hakanaim"),<sup>66</sup> to present day protests, threats and demonstrations against the Israeli secular legal system (especially the supreme court) we have substantial corroboration which testifies to the opposite of Soloveitchik's naive statement. There is no reason to suppose that as ultra-orthodoxy becomes more and more extreme and fundamentalist, its demands for a state that is more "religious" will not be intensified—as has happened. The "blueprint" may not be presented as a fully matured utopian design, but is expressed in each and every pressure and law that is aimed to paint Israel in more religious terms. Indeed, as Soloveitchik points out, "Enforcement of religious norms in a modern secular society means the use of violence, as large segments of the population, possibly even its majority, must be cowed into obedience."<sup>67</sup> And, indeed, the violence documented in this chapter testifies to this, as well as the growing hatred and animosity between ultra-orthodox Jews and such other interpretations of Judaism as secular, reformed or conservative.

Continuing this line, we need to note that there are a few strong and interesting trends prevalent in Israeli Jewish culture now which are pushing Israel in the direction of an extreme Halachic State. The theocratic violence on which this chapter focused must be understood within these trends.

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>66</sup> Sprinzak, pp. 61–66.

<sup>67</sup> Soloveitchik, p. 221.

First, the number of visible, and publicly identifiable, religious members in the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset. In 1998 there were 23 such parliamentary members. This constitutes about 19.1% of the Knesset which was elected in the May 1996 general elections. In comparison, the proportion in the 1984 general elections was only 9.8%. A large number of these politicians state explicitly and publicly that, as a minimum, they will not object to, or stand in the way of, turning Israel into a totalitarian Halachic State. The presence of such a large number of politicians in the parliament means that a strong affinity exists in the Knesset towards laws that are favorable to religious issues. This large number is effective, among other things, in preventing the separation of state from religion in Israel, in passing a large number of religiously favorable laws, in stalling the creation of a constitution for the country and in repeated (and sometimes quite vicious, as we saw above), attacks on the Israeli supreme court and its judges. The fact is that the political structure in Israel (split votes and traditional coalition governments) enables rather small parties to exert disproportionate power and influence.

This is, perhaps, the place to note that a large majority is not required to turn a democracy into a totalitarian regime. A determined minority of 30–40 percent in a parliament can indeed take over. Once done, more changes can follow, the consolidation of their rule amongst the first.

Second, despite the democratic regime in Israel (democratic in some basic parameters, but a restricted one and characterized by Sammy Smoocha, a sociologist from Haifa University, as a “low quality democracy”), there are large sections in the population who are willing to state openly and explicitly that they want democracy abolished and a Halachic State instituted instead. Surveys done on this particular issue give powerful indications for this trend. These surveys indicate that 64% of the *Haredi* feel that Israel should become an Halachic state and 90% of them express anti-democratic stands. Anti-democratic stands seem to characterize more *Haredi* women than men. Tolerance is an extremely important index for democracies. However, 70% of *Haredi* Jews expressed non-tolerant positions (66% of secular Jews presented tolerant positions). In comparison, 73% of secular Jews prefer a democracy, and 61% of Orthodox Jews prefer a dictatorial regime to whose views they would agree (this could be a religious state). It is thus obvious that *Haredi* Jews are first in

the country to oppose democracy, followed by orthodox Jews.<sup>68</sup> This large number of citizens who enjoy the benefits of a democratic regime but want to replace it with a totalitarian theocracy should be a genuine cause for concern.

Third, and this chapter focused on this issue, the existence of different groups and individuals in Israeli society who are willing not only to state in public that they want a Halachic State, but are more than willing to use means of “direct action” (including violence), verbal and non-verbal, to achieve this goal. *Haredi* violence, the “Jewish Underground”, threats on supreme court judges, as well as the assassination of Rabin, illustrate this vividly. But not only that, another alarming example is, to the delight of quite a number of tourists and journalists, that there are groups and institutions in Israel now who re-create the tools of the Jewish temple(s), and its structures, and are engaged in searching and training special Jews (“Kohanim”) to serve in such a temple.<sup>69</sup> One must be reminded that one of the plans of the “Jewish Underground” in the 1970s was to blow up the mosques on the Temple Mount. Clearly, no Jewish temple could be re-built without causing the two major mosques which exist now on the Temple Mount (Al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock) to somehow vanish into thin air. Thus, creating and supporting expectations for the rebuilding of a new Jewish temple is introducing extra high explosives into a delicate and complex situation. Moreover, one must be reminded that we do not present a loaded a gun in the first act if we do not expect it to fire in the second or third.

Fourth, there is a political and ideological process of convergence within the divergent *Haredi* community,<sup>70</sup> and between ultra orthodox and orthodox Jews, on issues relating to the Halacha and a Halachic State. That is, while some differences still exist between these groups, on the issue of theocracy they converge.

Moreover, the convergence between these groups is significantly reinforced by the fact that an almost perfect identity exists in Israel between being orthodox and ultra orthodox and taking political

<sup>68</sup> See review in *Ha'aretz*, June 2, 1998, p. 2B.

<sup>69</sup> E.g., see *Yediot Ahronot*, June 23, 1997, p. 7; *Kol Hair*, April 16, 1998, p. 23; *Yerushalayim* (Bonus Supplement), April 29, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Yediot Ahronot*, June 10, 1997, p. 5.

positions on the right (and extreme right) side of the Israeli political map.<sup>71</sup>

Fifth, orthodox Jews, as well as the ultra orthodox Jews, have separate educational systems. While the resources for financing these systems are being pumped from the democratic state, these educational systems emphasize religious values and produce strong pressures to remain religious as the morally superior way of life. There can hardly be a doubt regarding the role of these state funded educational systems in helping to shape anti-democratic opinions amongst those who are exposed to them.

Sixth, the state of Israel provided economic incentives to high birth rates, via a number of direct payments, and indirect tax breaks (some incentives were reduced in 2003 due to severe economic conditions). Both orthodox but certainly (and much more significantly) ultra orthodox Jews have higher birth rates. This demographic trend means that there is a significantly higher birth rate amongst segments of the Jewish population who explicitly and systematically favour a theocracy. This problem is so acute that a publicist in 1998 in a major article stated that the secular sand clock in Israel is ticking slowly against secular democracy.<sup>72</sup>

Seventh, Israel's political structure requires a coalition government because traditionally no one party has been able to win the elections outright. This situation gives small parties (e.g., ultra orthodox, or orthodox) disproportional powers.

Eighth, the Knesset is always being presented with suggestions for laws which are religious in nature and aimed to limit citizen's rights in a theocratic direction. For example, one of the laws which is being considered now is a prohibition against mentioning in public any form of negative behavior by ultra orthodox Jews (e.g., no public discussion or talk on *Haredi* deviance). This suggested prohibition, one must notice, does not originate from genuine concern for human rights, but is aimed to deceive the public in presenting the ultra orthodox community as deviance free and utopian.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Ha'aretz*, December 1, 1997 p. 3A and March 11, 1998, p. 2B; see also Greenfield, *op. cit.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ha'aretz*, May 8, 1998, p. 2B.

<sup>73</sup> E.g., see Ben-Yehuda, "The right and obligation to know: On shutting people's mouths, false presentations and deception," *The Third Eye*, vol. 10 (August, 1997): 34–35 (Hebrew).

*Summary*

The assassination of democratically elected premier Yitzhak Rabin, a clear act of political violence by an orthodox theocratic Jew, focused and sharpened Israeli secular consciousness on state/religion relationships. This was no coincidence. Jewish theocratic violence in Israel is political in nature and is nurtured by strong cultural trends to replace democracy with a totalitarian theocracy. This violence is planned and geared to achieve a clear goal—transforming Israel's tense and stressed democracy into a theocratic Halachic State. This goal is the rationale behind the theocratic violence which is calculated, continuous and will not cease. Both manifestations of this violence: verbal and physical, are intended to introduce into Israel an atmosphere and daily conduct which are religious, and thus slowly choke and eventually destroy democracy. This activity assumes that democracy is not a value, or end, in itself but rather a means to be used in order to achieve a totalitarian theocracy.

In fact it is interesting to read in this context the personal report by Racheli Handelman about one of her conversations with Shai Agnon, an orthodox Jew himself and Israel's winner of the Nobel Prize for literature. Racheli recalls that prior to 1967 Agnon told her that: "The greatest disaster for Israel in the future can be expected from the religious zealots, that they are full of hatred." In response to Racheli's question, "how do you know?" Agnon replied that he visited their synagogues and thus knows them.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Racheli Handelman, "A little bit on the association between me and Shai Agnon," *Ha'aretz* (Literary Supplement) May 22, 1998, p. 2A.





## RECONSIDERING CHAIM WEIZMANN AND MOSES GASTER IN THE FOUNDING-MYTHOLOGY OF ZIONISM

James Renton  
University College London

Following the work of modernist and postmodernist students of nationalism,<sup>1</sup> a number of scholars have recently given sharp focus to the nature and power effects of the Zionist construction and narration of the Jewish past.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this chapter, as a contribution to the wider analysis of how historical narratives are constructed and used as vessels of Zionist discourse, is to examine the relationship between narrative form and content in the shaping of Zionist history. It will be argued that the form of Romantic drama, of fall and

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I would like to thank Ilan Pappé for reading an earlier draft of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> For the modernist school of thought, of particular influence has been, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For the postmodern approach, see Homi Bhaba, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). Although disagreeing with the concept that a nation's history is simply invented, 'perennialist' scholars such as Anthony D. Smith have also highlighted the critical importance of how history is re-shaped to serve the needs of the nation, and that history lies at the centre of the nationalist project. See, for example, Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 170–208.

<sup>2</sup> Uri Ram, "Zionist Historiography and the Invention of Modern Jewish Nationhood: The Case of Ben Zion Dinur," *History and Memory*, Vol. 7 (1995): 91–124; David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) pp. 13–36; Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile in the Midst of Sovereignty: A Critique of 'Shelilat HaGalut' in Israeli Culture" (Hebrew) *Theory and Criticism* 4 (Fall, 1993): 23–55; *idem*, "Exile in the Midst of Sovereignty: A Critique of 'Shelilat HaGalut' in Israeli Culture II" (Hebrew) *Theory and Criticism* 5 (Fall, 1994): 113–132; *idem*, "Historical Consciousness and Historical Responsibility" (in Hebrew) in Y. Weitz, ed., *Between Vision and Revision: A Hundred Years of Historiography of Zionism* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Centre, 1997): 97–134; Ilan Pappé, "Critique and Agenda: The Post-Zionism Scholars in Israel," *History and Memory*, Vol. 7 (1995): 79–85.

redemption, centered upon the subject of the national hero or icon, can be seen as a dominant mode of Zionist history which determines and shapes the narration of the key sagas of the Return of the nation in both collective memory and historical writing. Specifically, we will map the way in which this narrative form was used to construct the history of the Balfour Declaration as a redemptive drama that was structured around the subject of the heroic icon Chaim Weizmann. And we will examine how this marginalized and distorted our understanding of the historical role of other figures from this period of Zionist history, with the example of Haham Moses Gaster, the Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic Community of the British Empire. This deconstruction will be approached through an analysis of the Weizmann-centric narrative, its development, function and influence, and a re-examination of the role of Gaster in the complex and multi-layered history that resulted in the decision of the British Government to issue what became known as the Balfour Declaration.

As Anthony Smith has observed, the history of the nation is reconstructed to be both didactic and dramatic. Within this mythopoetic process, the national icon plays a critical role.<sup>3</sup> It is through the lionized hero that the perceived genius and redemption of the nation is realized, embodied and worshipped.<sup>4</sup> The drama of national rebirth is constructed through a series of heroic events that provide the national collective memory with a canon of clear and inspirational legends, sanctifying and romanticizing its path to redemption. Through the hero subject these narratives function as mirrors and projections of the desired self-images of the nation and its cause, which in turn immortalize the edifice of the national icon, the two being an inseparable whole.

In understanding this process, in which the convoluted complexities of past occurrences are shaped into an ordered and comprehensible narrative plot, Hayden White has argued that the content of narrative history is emplotted by the adoption of a specific literary form.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, it can be said that the Romantic form, the cli-

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<sup>3</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup> Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 7–9 and *Idem*, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 44.

mactic drama of heroic fall and redemption, is the dominant form that was used to shape much of the Zionist construction and narration of the past.<sup>6</sup> Significantly, this emplotment is structured around a given national hero, whether it be an individual icon or group.<sup>7</sup> With regard to the focus of this chapter, the narration of the history of the Balfour Declaration, this literary emplotment is particularly apparent. In both traditional historical writing and the dominant collective memory of this constructed event, the narrative is centered around the dramatic and heroic journey of Chaim Weizmann toward, presupposing a clear narrative linearity, the winning of the Declaration. Its climactic flow is encoded through its narrative structure, an emplotted whole, through which the redemptive ending is traced from its beginnings, the fulfilled vision of the hero subject. Its climax is perceived as a redemptive moment of both the nation and the icon, the consummation of historical forces that propelled them toward this momentous turning point in the path to national restoration.

Hence, within the dominant narrative of this mythical turning point in Zionist history the following plot can be identified: At the beginning of the First World War, if not from Weizmann's decision to move to England in 1904 or even his childhood, he realized that the destiny of the Zionist movement lay with Great Britain. Surrounded by a stagnant, ineffectual and miserably mediocre leadership in both the global and British context, Weizmann intuitively envisioned the critical importance of winning the support of this imperial power which he predicted would occupy Palestine, achieve a decisive victory in the war as a whole and dismember the Ottoman Empire. Armed with this prophetic vision and his genius for statesmanship and leadership Weizmann proceeded to persuade the British Government and Establishment during the years 1914–1917 to support the aims of the Zionist movement, which led to the publication of the Balfour Declaration. Single-handedly he changed the future of the nation and brought it to the crest of what was constructed as the beginning of its redemption and rebirth.

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<sup>6</sup> On the Romantic narrative form see White, *Metahistory*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>7</sup> On the integral role performed by icons in the dynamics of Zionist culture and collective memory, see Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); *idem*, *The Jewish Self-Image: American and British Perspectives, 1881–1939* (London: Reaktion, 2000), Zerubavel, *op. cit.*

This classic exposition of the heroic, Romantic narrative form became for a number of reasons the dominant representation of the history of the Balfour Declaration as expressed in Zionist public thought and collective memory. In turn, the deeply entrenched image of the Balfour Declaration as being intrinsically linked with the edifice of Weizmann and this mythical narrative was such that its determining influence can be identified in much of the historical scholarship on the subject. It is rather difficult to see a sharp distinction between the modes and form of narration and resulting analyses of Weizmann's role as expressed in the Zionist public sphere from those that are used in historical writing on the period. Despite the detailing of the complexities and minutiae of this history and the activities of many individuals other than Weizmann, the general conclusion and narrative form essentially remains the same.<sup>8</sup> He continues to be perceived as the central heroic figure of a Romantic drama. The explanations for his success may vary, his personal magnetism<sup>9</sup> and genius for statesmanship,<sup>10</sup> his scientific method and achievements,<sup>11</sup> his ability to re-enforce British perceptions of Jewish influence and Zionist strength,<sup>12</sup> and so on, but the centrality of his role is generally

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<sup>8</sup> See Devorah Barzilay-Yegar, "Crisis as Turning Point: Chaim Weizmann in World War I," *Studies in Zionism*, No. 6 (Autumn 1982): 241–254; Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (Jerusalem and London: The Magnes Press and The Jewish Chronicle, 1961); Jehuda Reinharz, "The Balfour Declaration and Its Maker: A Reassessment," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 64 (September 1992): 455–499; *idem*, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Isaiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine: British-Jewish-Arab Relations: 1914–1918* (New Jersey: Transaction, 2nd ed., 1992); Ronald Sanders, *The High Walls of Jerusalem: A History of the Balfour Declaration and the Birth of the Palestine Mandate* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p. 207; Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 283–284; Barzilay-Yegar, *op. cit.*; Norman Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography* (New York, 1986); Barnett Litvinoff, *Chaim Weizmann: Last of the Patriarchs* (New York: 1976), p. 108; Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman*, p. 408.

<sup>11</sup> See, in particular, Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman*, pp. 69–72.

<sup>12</sup> Sharman Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp. 156–157; Mark Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf 1914–1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) Ch. 6, p. 308; *idem*, "The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity," *English Historical Review* (January 1992): pp. 72–74; Tom Segev, *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), pp. 39–49.

unquestioned. The historical puzzle, as conceived by scholars, continues to be widely seen and approached from within this delimited form of the dominant Zionist narrative. How did Weizmann achieve his goal, from where did his vision and genius emanate, what were his tactics?

Counter-narratives did emerge in both Zionist public thought and the work of certain scholars. Zionist figures such as Max Nordau and Samuel Landman and historians such as Oskar Rabinowicz and Josef Fraenkel all attempted to question the historical role of Weizmann in the making of the Declaration.<sup>13</sup> However, what stands out, if anything, from these protests was a marked sense of frustration in their attempt to become an audible critical voice in the face of what had become such a deeply entrenched myth, a very part of the Zionist fabric. Even if we look today at responses to, or seek to find the effects of, the more recent critical work of historians such as Mayir Vereté and David Vital,<sup>14</sup> we find that they too continue to be seen by many as unsubstantiated and unwarranted extremes,<sup>15</sup> and for the most part have failed to have a discernible impact on the collective understanding of this part of the nation's history and tradition. Without a cultural space that is prepared or interested in staging and listening to dissenting voices that will deconstruct and strip away the assumptions of a field of knowledge, this is to be expected. Just as a myth is a response to the cultural and ideological needs of a particular time and place, its effective deconstruction

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<sup>13</sup> Israel Kolatt, "Chaim Weizmann's Rise to Leadership," in Isaiah Berlin and Israel Kolatt, *Chaim Weizmann as Leader* (Jerusalem: The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University, 1970), p. 46; draft letter from Landman to Stein, n.d., letter from Landman to Halabian, 6 July 1963 and Landman to Dr Oskar Rabinowicz, 10 December 1962, A226/85/1, Papers of Samuel Landman, Central Zionist Archives (hereafter CZA); Oskar Rabinowicz, *Fifty Years of Zionism: A Historical Analysis of Dr Weizmann's 'Trial and Error'* (London: Robert Anscombe, 2nd ed. 1952), and letters to the Editor from Josef Fraenkel, *The Jewish Chronicle*, 12 November and 24 December 1976.

<sup>14</sup> Mayir Vereté, "The Balfour Declaration and its Makers," in Norman Rose, ed., *From Palmerston to Balfour: Collected Essays of Mayir Vereté* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp. 1–38 and *idem*, "Further Reflections on the Makers of the Balfour Declaration," in *ibid.*, pp. 204–226; David Vital, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 90, 223–224, 235–236.

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah Friedman, "Zionist History Reconsidered," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, VI (1990): 309–314; Evyatar Friesel, "David Vital's Work on Zionism," *Studies in Zionism*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Autumn 1988): 219–225, and Reinharz, "The Balfour Declaration and its Maker," p. 493.

and impact upon the collective memory is equally so. Consequently, in a post-Zionist milieu which emerged out of a certain political, intellectual and cultural context, the deconstruction of the myths of the foundation of the State of Israel and the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem lay at the center of recent historical debate.<sup>16</sup> Whereas the myths of a more distant and less politically relevant past remain on the periphery of academic scholarship or scrutiny and firmly outside of public discourse. Consequently, even within a contemporary climate in which the excavating, mapping and criticism of the myths of Zionist history are perceived to have shifted toward the center of academic debate it is still possible and acceptable to read that, “Three decades of scholarship . . . has established Weizmann’s crucial role in winning support for . . . [the Balfour Declaration] among British policy-makers and Zionist activists alike.”<sup>17</sup> The reverberations, if not arresting influence, of the heroic Romantic narrative construct of Weizmann and the story of the Balfour Declaration still remain and in large part retain a determining hold over the imagination of this period of Zionist history. Its assumptions continue to provide the starting point from which this aspect of the past is approached, the form with which its complex and disjointed fragments are rationalized and ordered into a comprehensible and composite whole.

The origins and emergence of the Weizmann myth can be identified from the immediate wake of the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. In his driven attempt to pursue power within the Zionist organization and its leadership, Weizmann realized the importance of accentuating and publicizing his central role in the fruition of Britain’s pro-Zionist statement. It would seem to be no coincidence that he had pressed for the organization of the London Zionist Bureau’s archives and the writing of the history of the negotiations with the British Government as early as August 1917.<sup>18</sup> That being said, in the early years after the Declaration the Weizmann-

<sup>16</sup> Pappé, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–73.

<sup>17</sup> Derek Penslar, “The Foundations of the Twentieth Century: Herzlean Zionism in Yoram Hazony’s *The Jewish State*,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 2001): 124–125. For an example of one of the ‘New Historians’ who has perpetuated the Weizmann myth in his own work, see Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall—Israel and the Arab World* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), pp. 5–7.

<sup>18</sup> Diary of Shmuel Tolkowsky, 28 August 1917, Tolkowsky Papers, A248/2, CZA; letter from Weizmann to Simon Marks, 8 September 1917, Simon Marks Papers, A247/18, CZA.

centric narrative co-existed with those that highlighted the role of other activists in England and abroad. In particular, acclaim for Weizmann's role was placed alongside that of Nahum Sokolow, his senior in both experience and stature as the sole representative of the Zionist Executive in England.<sup>19</sup> But by 1919, as part of Weizmann's attempt to dispose of his *de facto* joint leadership with Sokolow, there had emerged behind closed doors "a great gulf" between their versions of the history of the negotiations.<sup>20</sup> However, the tendency to avoid open disputes within the Organization meant that these sharp disagreements remained confined to the private meetings of the leadership.<sup>21</sup> Once Weizmann became the official leader of the World Zionist Organization in 1920, the Weizmann-centric narrative came to be largely accepted and, more to the point, served to endorse his leadership.<sup>22</sup> Following his appointment as the President of the WZO he gradually emerged for many Zionists as a national icon, a heroic vessel of the forces of the nation and a mirror of their desired self-images. The narrative of the Declaration came to function as the bedrock of his image as the heroic and genius statesman in the Zionist collective memory;<sup>23</sup> the symbol of the nation's re-entrance into the community of nations, a leader on a par with the greatest in modern history. Although he suffered significant criticism for his continued support of Great Britain in the late 1920s and the 1930s, his edifice as a quintessential symbol of the Zionist project in the eyes of his supporters and his mythical role as the sole winner of the Declaration remained intact. Indeed, once he became the first President of the State of Israel in 1948, his key role in the march

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, *The American Jewish Chronicle*, 23 November, 1917 and *The American Hebrew*, 25 January 1918.

<sup>20</sup> "Report by Dr Stephen Wise for the National Executive Committee of the Zionist Organization of America, 9 February 1919," Weizmann Archives, Rehovot (hereafter WA) Also see, Kolatt, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–33.

<sup>21</sup> "Report by Dr Stephen Wise for the National Executive Committee of the Zionist Organization of America, 9 February 1919." Also see Michael Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project from 1914–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> On Weizmann's wresting of the leadership of the movement after the First World War see Kolatt, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–47, and Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 311–312, 365–366. For an alternative and more traditional interpretation that emphasizes the importance of Weizmann's role in the making of the Declaration, rather than his efforts to manipulate the history of the Declaration as a political tool in his rise to the leadership, see Reinhartz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman*, pp. 407–408.

<sup>23</sup> On this point, also see Vereté, "The Makers of the Balfour Declaration", p. 2.

toward the foundation of the state was brought into even sharper focus, historicizing his appointment as the culmination of his achievements during the First World War. As one biographer of Weizmann, Barnett Litvinoff, tellingly remarked in response to the criticism that the historical role of Nahum Sokolow in the making of the Declaration had been obscured, due to the overt focus on Weizmann, “Weizmann became President of the State of Israel. Isn’t it natural that history will give more attention to the latter than to the former?”<sup>24</sup>

In his immensely popular autobiography, *Trial and Error*, published in 1949, Weizmann confirmed and canonized<sup>25</sup> the Romantic narrative of his providential and heroic role in the winning of the Declaration.<sup>26</sup> Overall, this myth was at once the root of his iconic status but was at the same time reinforced by his symbolic stature within Zionist politics and identity. In the immediate aftermath of his death in November 1952, which had a profound impact at the time,<sup>27</sup> the myths that had surrounded him and underpinned his public image during his lifetime necessarily shaped his memorialization and commemoration after his death.

In particular, his commemoration was undertaken by a cadre of influential admirers and members of the Zionist and Israeli Establishment under the auspices of his national memorial, Yad Weizmann, which was founded by the Jewish Agency and the State of Israel. In the decades that followed, under the Chairmanship of Meyer Weisgel, Weizmann’s loyal lieutenant in his final years, Yad Weizmann and those who were associated with it proceeded to commission a

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<sup>24</sup> Letter to the editor from Barnett Litvinoff, Yad Weizmann, Rehovot, *The Jewish Chronicle*, 10 December 1976.

<sup>25</sup> *Trial and Error* was a great publishing success and was widely lauded. Barnett Litvinoff and Aaron Klieman in collaboration with Nehama A. Chalom (eds), *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol. XXIII, Series A, August 1947–June 1952* (New Brunswick and Jerusalem: Transaction and Israel Universities Press, 1980), p. xvii.

<sup>26</sup> Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949). At one stage of the publication process it was suggested that the portion of the manuscript dealing with the Balfour Declaration should be published as a volume in its own right. However, this proposal was rejected by the publishers. Letter from H. Cass Canfield to Meyer Weisgel, 19 February 1946, *Trial and Error Papers*, 28 June 1939–24 December 1948, WA.

<sup>27</sup> Within three days of his death it was thought that a quarter of a million people had visited his grave in Rehovot. “Jewry Mourns Dr Weizmann,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, 14 November 1952. Ceremonies were held by Jewish communities all over the world, from the USA to Turkey.



number of texts and commemorative events to accentuate and perpetuate his memory and significance in Zionist history.<sup>28</sup> With specific regard to the Romantic narrative of the history of the Declaration, a number of works were published by individuals such as Isaiah Berlin, who framed him as the archetypal hero of history,<sup>29</sup> and those who were either associated with Yad Weizmann or published under its auspices.<sup>30</sup> The sum result of these efforts was such that one observer in the 1970s referred to what he saw as the “Weizmann personality cult.”<sup>31</sup> As with any national icon, the marked interest and fascination with his personality, mythical achievements and historical impact resulted in a certain historiographic density, that overshadowed and marginalized the historical significance or at least function of individuals whose contemporary relevance long since passed.

In understanding how the Romantic heroic narrative form has obscured our understanding of the histories, individuals, discourses and contexts that led to the decision to issue the Balfour Declaration it is essential that we acknowledge their disjointed, multi-layered, and fragmentary nature. Clearly, this presents a frustrating challenge to the historian’s will to locate, empiricize, understand and expound a clear flow, a uniform argument and clear set of rational conclusions, or as Vereté simply put it, “to get to the core of the matter.”<sup>32</sup> In

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<sup>28</sup> The Weizmann Archives, “Report of Activities for the Period of January 1958–April 1962 presented to the Second Meeting of the Editorial Board on April 15, 1962 at Rehovoth,” Box 1, Weizmann Papers Project, WA.

<sup>29</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *Chaim Weizmann* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1958), pp. 2, 60.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Charles Webster, *The Founder of the National Home—Chaim Weizmann Memorial Lecture* (Rehovot: Yad Chaim Weizmann, 1955); Leonard Stein, *Weizmann and the Balfour Declaration—The Sixth Chaim Weizmann Memorial Lecture in the Humanities* (Rehovoth, Israel: Yad Chaim Weizmann, 1961); Meyer Weisgel and Joel Carmichael, *Chaim Weizmann—A Biography by Several Hands* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), and H.M. Blumberg, *Weizmann: His Life and Times* (New York and London: St Martin’s Press and Robson Books, published for Yad Weizmann, 1975). The most significant project that was undertaken by Yad Weizmann was the twenty-three volume publication of Weizmann’s letters and papers. On the expected outcome of this endeavor in terms of perpetuating the memory of Weizmann, see “Report of Activities for the Period of January 1958–April 1962 presented to the Second Meeting of the Editorial Board on April 15, 1962 at Rehovoth,” Box 1, Weizmann Papers Project, WA.

<sup>31</sup> Letter to the Editor from Josef Fraenkel, *The Jewish Chronicle*, 24 December 1976.

<sup>32</sup> Vereté, “The Balfour Declaration and its Makers,” p. 3. Also see Friesel, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

part, this need helps to explain why the model of the Weizmann narrative has sustained its appeal for the scholar. But if we can attempt to step outside of this narrative form, if we shed the assumptions of narrative linearity and tendency toward teleology, of a focus on one central character around which our conception of causality is based, and construct a wider analytical lens that is not necessarily a part of a systematic whole, then it may be possible to go beyond the layers of myth that were interwoven with the public imagination and historicization of the Declaration from its inception.

For the purposes of this chapter, this will be attempted through an examination of the contribution to the British decision to issue the Balfour Declaration by a Zionist leader in England during the First World War other than Weizmann and how his image and memory was marginalized and discredited as a result of the icon-centric Romantic narrative. We will attempt to pierce through the *ex post facto* construction of Moses Gaster and his role that emerged after Weizmann's ascendancy and recover both the contemporaneous stature of Gaster in the Zionist movement at the time of the First World War and the nature of his influence on British policy.

Moses Gaster was up until the First World War recognized as a Zionist and scholar of international reputation,<sup>33</sup> and had been considered by Weizmann, his personal friend and avid supporter, as the future leader of the Zionist Organization.<sup>34</sup> Gaster had been one of the initial followers of Herzl in England, was a founding member of the English Zionist Federation and had been a dominant figure in pre-war English Zionism.<sup>35</sup> In the year before the war, he had rivaled Yehiel Tschlenow for the Presidency of the Zionist Congress in Vienna and had been actively supported by two of the four members of the Zionist Executive in Berlin, Victor Jacobson and Arthur

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<sup>33</sup> Gaster wrote on an impressive array of subjects, including Rumanian Literature, comparative Jewish Folklore, Samaritan History and Literature. The respect that was afforded him by his academic peers is apparent from, for example, a collection of essays that was published to commemorate his work in 1936. Bruno Schindler and A. Marmorstein, eds., *Occident and Orient* (London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1936).

<sup>34</sup> Josef Fraenkel, "Chaim Weizmann and Haham Moses Gaster," in Raphael Patai, ed., *Herzl Year Book—Essays in Zionist History and Thought*, Vol. VI (New York: Herzl Press, 1964–1965), pp. 185, 216.

<sup>35</sup> See Stuart A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895–1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 27, 110, 121–122; Fraenkel, *op. cit.*, pp. 183–237.

Hantke, to lead the organization in England.<sup>36</sup> Within the international Zionist movement, Gaster had been seen as an important figure since the time of the second Zionist Congress of 1898, especially with regard to the advancement of cultural work as a priority within the movement. Indeed, his stature was such that he “was the choice of a number of Zionists to succeed Herzl when the leader died in 1904.”<sup>37</sup> In 1916 the American Zionist Stephen Wise believed that in persuading American Jewry of the importance of supporting the Allies in the war, Gaster was a sufficiently weighty personality who had the ability to be both “acceptable to the Yiddish masses and at the same time be able to talk straight to Wall St.”<sup>38</sup> The degree of admiration that was felt amongst those who heralded him as a great exponent of the Zionist ideal can be gleaned from a statement of support that was written following his retirement from the position of Chief Rabbi in 1918, which had resulted from the increasing tensions between him and the Sephardi congregation in London. It lauded his scholarly achievements and resulting “worldwide fame,” hailed his “statesmanlike conception of Jewish problems” and placed him at the epicenter of Zionist events in England during the War.<sup>39</sup>

In 1918 then, Gaster was described as an “international figure” of high regard.<sup>40</sup> Even in the history of Zionism published in 1919 by Nahum Sokolow, with whom by this time Gaster did not have good relations,<sup>41</sup> he was said to be “one of the most distinguished representatives of the Zionist idea in [England] . . . who from his early youth occupied a respected and influential position, in the time of *Chovevi Zion* as well as in Zionism.”<sup>42</sup> In what was later to become a particularly striking exception, Leonard Stein wrote,

there could be . . . [no] doubt of Gaster’s eminence both as an outstanding figure in the Zionist Movement and as a personality in his own right . . .

<sup>36</sup> Fraenkel, *op. cit.*, pp. 220–221.

<sup>37</sup> Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War*, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from Stephen Wise to Horace Kallen, 18 January 1916, Box 31, Folder 21, Horace Kallen Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati.

<sup>39</sup> “Dr. Gaster’s Retirement,” *The American Jewish Chronicle*, 12 July 1918; also see Editorial, *The Jewish Advocate*, 18 July 1918.

<sup>40</sup> *American Jewish Chronicle*, 13 September 1918.

<sup>41</sup> See letter from Gaster to Sokolow, 7 December 1917, Moses Gaster Papers, A203/132, CZA.

<sup>42</sup> Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600–1918, Volume II* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1919), p. 45.

Long before the [First World] War his powerful personality, his imposing presence and his gifts of oratory, combined with an ocular manner suggesting that he had access to mysteries hidden from others, had made him an important figure . . .<sup>43</sup>

However, similar to other words of praise that would rarely be offered after the First World War concerning Gaster's work for the Zionist movement, Stein's assessment of him was qualified with the observation that he was "kept out of the mainstream by an autocratic temperament which made him a difficult colleague."<sup>44</sup> Indeed, in the advent of Weizmann's emergence as the leader of the WZO and the heroic narrative of the Declaration, the Zionist history of the period of the First World War was soon to present Gaster as nothing more than an irritating and marginal figure.<sup>45</sup> If he was given praise for his scholarly achievements and oratory skills, it was accompanied by criticisms of his political abilities with a tendency to focus on his difficult personality.<sup>46</sup> That such a tendency emerged in tandem with the rise of the Weizmann narrative is not surprising. After all, a key part of the narrative structure of the history of the Declaration was the depiction of a lone Weizmann emerging with a clarity of vision and inspired genius out of a landscape of miserable mediocrity. Without the marginalization of his colleagues, the climactic and heroic narrative form in itself begins to dissipate. Its unitary, inspirational and dramatic mode collapses upon itself in the face of a sprawling and complex history, if not histories, that defy simple explanation and narration.

To be sure, Gaster was a difficult man. It is not our intention to gloss over his shortcomings, to present him as an uncontested figure or in any way replace one heroic narrative with another. But it is important that our understanding of his personality should not solely

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<sup>43</sup> Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, pp. 286–287. Gaster's son Vivian remarked that Stein had "put the old man's efforts and works in a somewhat better perspective than has hitherto been given." Letter from Vivian Gaster to Jack Gaster, 21 February 1962, Papers of Vivian Gaster, A203/358, CZA.

<sup>44</sup> Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, p. 287.

<sup>45</sup> The tendency to either ignore or denigrate Gaster's work for the Zionist movement was such that his sons had become distrustful of any scholars who wished to use his papers and felt that they could not rely upon historians in Israel to discuss him in an unbiased manner. Letter from Vivian Gaster to Leonard Stein, 14 February 1962, Papers of Vivian Gaster, A203/358, CZA.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Harry Sacher, *Zionist Portraits and Other Essays* (London: Anthony Blond, 1959), pp. 72–75.

determine our assessment of his role in the development of the British Government's desire to publicly declare its support for Zionist ideals or his contemporaneous image in the eyes of the Zionist movement. If personal faults such as these would discount an individual of having any political worth or historical significance, then a great number of Zionist leaders, including Weizmann,<sup>47</sup> would have to be discounted out of hand. It is therefore necessary to go beyond these personal criticisms if we are to begin to re-evaluate Gaster's contribution to the decision of the British Government to issue the Balfour Declaration.

In a speech given as part of a mass meeting to celebrate the Declaration at the London Opera House on 2 December 1917, Sir Mark Sykes declared,

I should like to say, before I say one other word, that the reason I am interested in this movement is that I met one some two years ago who is now upon this platform, and who opened my eyes as to what this movement meant . . . his name is known to most in the records of Zionism: I mean Dr Gaster.<sup>48</sup>

In the assessments of most scholars of this period of Zionist history this remains a confusing, if not totally misplaced, accolade. Within the British Government, Sir Mark Sykes was seen as the pre-eminent expert on the Middle East and is widely recognized as being the most consistent driving force behind a British pro-Zionist policy.<sup>49</sup> Although it is acknowledged by a number of scholars that Gaster was the first Zionist with whom he held discussions from 2 May 1916, the nature and importance of these early *pourparlers* are judged to be of very little consequence. In line with the narrative in *Trial and Error*,<sup>50</sup> Gaster is depicted as either an irritant who

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<sup>47</sup> Weizmann's difficult and tempestuous personality was quite apparent from his intolerance of criticism, desire for complete control of affairs, frequent lapses into depression and his habit of threatening to resign if his authority or policies were questioned. See, for example, 4 September and 1 November 1917, Diary of Shmuel Tolkowsky, Tolkowsky Papers; Harry Sacher to Leon and Nelly Simon, 21 August 1917; Sokolow to Weizmann, 17 August 1917, Weizmann Papers, WA; Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, pp. 494–495; Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground 1886–1948* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), pp. 522–33, 531, 535, 826.

<sup>48</sup> *The Jewish Chronicle*, 7 December 1917.

<sup>49</sup> See Vereté, "The Balfour Declaration and its Makers," p. 25; Sanders, *op. cit.*; Stein, *Balfour Declaration*; Vital, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

<sup>50</sup> In *Trial and Error* Weizmann portrayed his former friend and mentor as nothing more than a churlish, self-centered character and an ineffectual Zionist. Weizmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 117, 124, 156, 229–230. Weizmann's own lawyers considered that his

“complicated Weizmann’s tactical problems in 1915 and 1916”<sup>51</sup> or as an ineffectual and politically incompetent precursor to the latter’s inevitable contacts with Sykes in early 1917.<sup>52</sup> In part, this analysis derives from the form that places Weizmann at the center of events from the beginning of the war, working steadily toward the attainment of the Declaration in clear linear progression. In fact, during much of 1915 and 1916 Weizmann was pre-occupied with his scientific work for the Ministry of Munitions, which despite the belief that this contributed in some way toward influencing the Government to support the Zionist movement, had no bearing on their opinions on the subject.<sup>53</sup> That Sokolow and Weizmann came to lead the negotiations in 1917 should not affect our analysis of the development of Sykes’ conceptions of Zionism in 1916.<sup>54</sup>

In order to understand Sykes’ decision to seek the support of the

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intimation that Gaster had been pro-German during the First World War was libelous. Letter from Greenbaum, Wolff and Ernst, New York to Harper and Brothers, New York, 2 September 1948, *Trial and Error Papers*, WA. In a meeting with Gaster’s son Francis in 1950, Weizmann pledged that certain alterations would be made in the next edition but his ensuing illness prevented this from being possible. Letter from Vivian Gaster to Jack Gaster, 21 February 1962, Vivian Gaster Papers, A203/358, CZA.

<sup>51</sup> Ben Halpern, *Clash of Heroes: Brandeis, Weizmann, and American Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 133–134.

<sup>52</sup> Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman*, p. 109. Also see Sanders, *op. cit.*, pp. 368–369 and Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 122. Moreover, Friedman contends that in 1916 it was Aaron Aaronsohn who had “the decisive influence in Sykes’ conversion to Zionism.” *Ibid.*, p. 122. However, there is no documentation to endorse this argument.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Sokolow to Copenhagen Office, 14 December 1915, Papers of the Copenhagen Office, L6/527, CZA. There is no evidence to suggest that Weizmann’s contacts with Lloyd George concerning his work in the Ministry of Munitions had any impact on his stature within the British Government or that it affected his position as a negotiator with Sykes in 1917. In the communications between C.P. Scott, on behalf of Weizmann, and Lloyd George in the period 1915–1916, one can see that Weizmann’s scientific work and its problems was the main subject under discussion. For example, see letter from C.P. Scott to Lloyd George, June 1915, 27 October 1915, D/18/15/2, Diary of C.P. Scott, 8 and 22 May, 26 July 1916, C.P. Scott Papers, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. Moreover, Lloyd George himself stated that his interest in Zionism during the war was stirred by an article by the Zionist Albert Hyamson in the *New Statesman* and a “heart to heart” conversation with Herbert Samuel. Diary of C.P. Scott, 27 November 1914, C.P. Scott Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Vereté has argued the point that the British decision to begin negotiations with Zionist leaders in 1917 was not related in any way to the few previous discussions between Weizmann and British politicians such as Lord Robert Cecil. Vereté, “Further Reflections on the Makers of the Balfour Declaration,” pp. 204–226.

Zionist movement, an individual of particular significance is Herbert Samuel, the first Jewish member of the Cabinet and President of the Local Government Board at the outbreak of war. Following the decision of the Ottoman Empire to join the Central Powers at the end of October 1914, Samuel had with uncharacteristic alacrity taken it upon himself to agitate for the support of Zionist aims in Palestine from November 1914 and put before the Cabinet a memorandum on the subject in March 1915.<sup>55</sup> Despite expressions of sympathy for the idea, the absence of any military campaign in the area, the uncertainty surrounding British postwar policy toward the Ottoman Empire and the competing interests of the Allies in Palestine meant that there was no practical result. But when Samuel discovered that the post-war future of the Ottoman Empire was being discussed by British and French representatives, following the British decision to come to an agreement with Arab nationalists, he again placed his memorandum before the Cabinet.<sup>56</sup> Crucially for our understanding of Sykes' interest in Zionism, Samuel had sought him out as the British representative in these negotiations and had given him a copy of his memorandum in February 1916, prior to the former's departure for Russia.<sup>57</sup> It clearly had an impact upon Sykes who, after hearing of a proposed pro-Zionist Allied statement on the future of Palestine,<sup>58</sup> discussed the subject with Georges Picot, the French Representative and S.D. Sazanov, the Russian Foreign Minister.<sup>59</sup> When Sykes returned to London he asked Samuel to put him in touch with a Zionist leader with whom he could hold discussions. The individual recommended by Samuel was Moses Gaster, whom he had known for many years.<sup>60</sup> Samuel's admiration for Gaster as an impressive spokesman for the Zionist ideal and a man with adroit political sensibilities is clear. When drafting his memorandum for the Cabinet, he had met with Gaster who, among others, provided him

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<sup>55</sup> See Wasserstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–211.

<sup>56</sup> Memorandum and Note for the Cabinet, 16 March 1916, Herbert Samuel Papers, House of Lords Record Office, London.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Sykes to Samuel, 26 February 1916, Herbert Samuel Papers.

<sup>58</sup> See Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 182–206.

<sup>59</sup> Telegram from Sykes to Foreign Office, 15 March 1916, FO 371/2767/49669, PRO.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, letter from Samuel to Gaster, 14 December 1905, A203/2, Gaster Papers, CZA. Samuel's wife had been bridesmaid at his wedding twenty-five years earlier. Gaster to Moser, 25 January, 1915, A203/214, Gaster Papers, CZA.

with articles and essays on Zionism.<sup>61</sup> By 1916, when Gaster was recommended to Sykes, he had already introduced Yehiel Tschlenow and Nahum Sokolow to Samuel, who by this time had also met Weizmann.<sup>62</sup> But despite the unsubstantiated claim that Samuel's meeting with Weizmann had been a revelation, given that "Gaster had little political sense",<sup>63</sup> a year later it was Gaster who Samuel decided would be most suitable and appropriate at this crucial juncture to meet with Sykes, the British representative in negotiations on the future of the Middle East.<sup>64</sup> It was Gaster alone who Samuel felt could be trusted to deal with this matter which had to "be kept absolutely confidential."<sup>65</sup>

Samuel informed Gaster toward the end of April 1916 that Sir Mark Sykes wished to meet with him. In the talks that followed we can see both Sykes' key motive for wishing to talk with the Zionists and the way in which Gaster grasped the crux of the matter. Despite Samuel's discussions of the benefits of a British protectorate over Palestine after the war, this was not of concern to Sykes at this point.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, as with the deliberations of the Foreign Office at this time on the subject of Zionism,<sup>67</sup> his key interest was gaining the support of world Jewry, particularly in the United States. Sykes' perception of the importance of Zionism for the Allied cause was based upon the mistaken belief that Jewry constituted a collective and innately Zionist entity which wielded influence within the majority cultures in which they resided.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Letter from Gaster to Samuel, 12 January 1915, A203/214, Gaster Papers, CZA.

<sup>62</sup> Diary of C.P. Scott, 27 November 1914, Scott Papers; "Report submitted to the members of the Executive of the International Zionist Organisation," 7 January 1915, No. 95, Leonard Stein (ed.) *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Vol. VII Series A, August 1914–November 1917* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1975), p. 122 and Gaster to Weizmann, 20 December 1914, Gaster Papers, A203/214, CZA.

<sup>63</sup> Wasserstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 206–207.

<sup>64</sup> Letter from Gaster to Samuel, 27 April 1916, Gaster Papers, A203/220, CZA.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Samuel to Gaster, 20 April 1916, Gaster Papers, A203/227, CZA.

<sup>66</sup> See letter from Sykes to Samuel, 26 February 1916, Samuel Papers; telegram from Sykes to the Foreign Office, 14 March 1916, FO 371/2767/49669, PRO.

<sup>67</sup> See Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 182–191.

<sup>68</sup> Levene, "The Balfour Declaration," pp. 62–63, 66–67, 70; *idem*, *War, Jews and the New Europe*, pp. 95–96, 98; James Renton, *Nationalism, Discourse and Imagination: British Policy towards the Zionist Movement during the First World War* (PhD Thesis, University of London, 2003), pp. 95–97, 103, 107–108, 112.



But if Sykes had already been persuaded of the need to gain the support of Jewry through Zionism, what was the use of meeting Gaster, or indeed any other Zionist? Firstly, due to Sykes' belief in Zionist influence, it was necessary for them to be carefully sounded out and kept in hope of a sympathetic decision in their favor, as it was "in their power" to overthrow the project.<sup>69</sup> Secondly, in order to persuade the French and the Allies in general they would need to "give some demonstration of their power".<sup>70</sup> Overall, and most crucially, Sykes needed to see a Zionist movement that mirrored his own preconceptions, to discuss the issue with a Zionist who grasped and echoed the nub of the matter as he saw it. After all, it would have been very easy for a Zionist to present to Sykes the fluid and divided reality of world Jewry, a collection of fragmented communities that if anything at all negated any conception of Jewish influence or power. Indeed, if we look at some of Gaster's writings on the state of world Jewry we see a distinct appreciation that unity was "the rarest thing in Jewish history."<sup>71</sup>

Significantly, however, Samuel seems to have been quite aware of the importance of playing on such perceptions of Jewish influence and the need to demonstrate Jewry's united embrace of Zionism.<sup>72</sup> And in December 1915 he had emphasized to Gaster and Weizmann the necessity of showing the British Government that any proposal had emanated from and was backed by "international Jewry."<sup>73</sup> Moreover, since 1914 Gaster himself had already been aware of the keen British desire to use propaganda to win over Jewish opinion. At the recommendation of Israel Zangwill, he had been commissioned by Wellington House, the British department responsible for literary propaganda, to write articles for Rumanian Jewry to this end.<sup>74</sup> As such, in his discussions in May 1916 with Sykes and later

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<sup>69</sup> Telegram from Sykes to Foreign Office, 16 March 1916, FO 371/2767/49669, PRO.

<sup>70</sup> Telegram from Sykes to Foreign Office, 14 March 1916, *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Gaster to Jacob DeHaas, 14 May 1916, Gaster Papers, A203/220, CZA. Also see Moses Gaster, "The Evolution of the Modern Jew—The Dawn of Jewish Emancipation in the West," *The American Jewish Chronicle*, 5 October 1917; *idem*, "The Situation of our People," *The American Jewish Chronicle*, 29 March 1917.

<sup>72</sup> See Herbert Samuel, "Palestine", March 1915, CAB 37/126/I, PRO.

<sup>73</sup> Report submitted to the members of the Executive of the International Zionist Organisation, 7 January 1915, No. 95, Stein, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, p. 116.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Claude Schuster to Zangwill, 14 October 1914, Israel Zangwill Papers, A120/514, CZA.

with Picot it is clear that Gaster had fundamentally grasped their key interest. He had ascertained what they wished to hear about the power of Jewry and Zionism, particularly in the United States, and the degree of importance to which they had begun to attach to gaining the support of the Zionist movement. After his first meeting with Sykes, in which he advised that Jewish opinion could be won by a *fait accompli*, British soldiers occupying Jerusalem, he phoned Sokolow and noted in his diary the need to “prove our assertions & to work on America.”<sup>75</sup> In his talks with Picot, Gaster continued to emphasize the importance of bargaining for Zionism and world Jewish opinion and stated, “Against positive assurances [regarding Palestine] we would do our best for creating public opinion favourable to France.”<sup>76</sup> In these talks the assumption that Jewry was a collective, nationalist entity that could influence world opinion was not only unquestioned by Gaster, but was consciously used and emphasized by him to push both the French and British representatives to support Zionist *desiderata*.<sup>77</sup> Combined with such efforts, Gaster continued to focus Sykes’ vision of Jewry through the lens of Zionist discourse.<sup>78</sup>

In a critical sense, therefore, Gaster appreciated the essence of what lay at the root of Sykes’ interest in Zionism. Although the tactic of portraying Jewry as a unified, nationalist force that could greatly aid the cause of Great Britain came to be the central and decisive element in the discussions between Weizmann and other Zionists with Sykes and members of the British Government in 1917, this was not the case in any of Weizmann’s famed talks with certain individuals up until the end of 1916.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the very few occa-

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<sup>75</sup> Diary of Moses Gaster, 2 May 1916, Gaster Papers, University College London. Gaster wrote to Jacob DeHaas, one of the key members of the Provisional Executive for Zionist Affairs in the USA, and informed him that developments had taken a remarkable turn and that American Zionists should be ready with a definite program and must work for Jewish unity. Gaster to DeHaas, 14 May 1916, Gaster Papers, A203/220, CZA.

<sup>76</sup> Diary of Moses Gaster, 10 May and 7 July, 1916, quoted in Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, n. 10 and 11, p. 288; Georges Picot, “*Les Origines de la Déclaration Balfour*,” *La Question D’Israel, Année 17* (1939).

<sup>77</sup> Also see letter from Gaster to Sykes, 24 May 1916, Copies of the Sledmere Papers, WA.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, *ibid.* and letter from Sykes to Gaster, 5 July 1916, Gaster Papers, A203/228, CZA.

<sup>79</sup> Levene, “The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity,” pp. 72–74; Renton, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–26. Mark Levene has argued that Lucien Wolf, the representative of the Conjoint Foreign Committee of the Anglo-Jewish Association and

sions on which he did speak with politicians such as Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil had no bearing whatsoever on Sykes' decision to pursue the support of Zionism in 1916 or at the beginning of 1917.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, neither Balfour nor Cecil had taken an interest in actively supporting a pro-Zionist policy as a result of discussions with Weizmann during this period.<sup>81</sup> Conversely, Gaster had impressed Sykes, so much so that he had been entrusted with highly confidential and delicate matters and had been introduced by Sykes to his French counterpart, Picot, whom the former had originally had great difficulty in persuading of the importance of Zionism. Gaster had understood and played upon the key issue that could be used to advance the Zionist cause with these influential personalities. He had endorsed and consolidated their conception of what was at stake, Jewish influence, and how it could be tied to the Allied cause, Zionism.

One may well ask, therefore, why was it that Gaster did not remain a favored conduit for negotiations in 1917, after the planned occupation of Palestine under the new Lloyd George Government had again placed Zionism on the agenda?<sup>82</sup> Firstly, it is important to note that Gaster's astute understanding of international politics was such that he always sought to place what he saw as Jewish

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Board of Deputies, also consciously played upon misconceptions of Jewish power in his negotiations with members of the British Foreign Office concerning Palestine in 1916. Levene, *War, Jews and the New Europe*, Ch. 6, pp. 307–308.

<sup>80</sup> For the argument that Sykes had heard of and was influenced by Weizmann's earlier political activities, see Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman*, p. 110 and Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

<sup>81</sup> Both Cecil and Balfour came to be primarily interested in Zionism as a means of winning Jewish opinion to the British cause, which Weizmann had failed to appreciate. Neither were particularly concerned with Britain having future control over Palestine, which Weizmann had mentioned in his meetings with them in 1914 and 1915. As such, even once the Foreign Office began to take an interest in Zionism in 1916, Cecil made no effort to meet with Weizmann. Minute by Lord Robert Cecil, 18 August 1915, FO 800/95, PRO; letter from Balfour to Achad Ha'am, 14–15 December, 1914, no. 68; Stein, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, p. 82; Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 190, 217–222, 251–252, Renton, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 108–110.

<sup>82</sup> Gaster's contacts with Sykes cooled after July 1916 until later that year. This was in line with the wider decision of the Foreign Office to step back from its discussions over Zionism in the context of French opposition to a suggested pro-Zionist statement regarding the future of Palestine, and the key fact that it was simply not worth discussing while there was no apparent prospect of a military campaign in the region. The hoped for disintegration or at least destabilization of the Ottoman Empire that was to follow the Arab Revolt simply failed to materialize. See Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: the McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations, 1914–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 133–137, and Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 203–205.

concerns first, desperately trying to avoid Jewry becoming a mere pawn in the game of Great Power diplomacy. He was extremely anxious that if Zionists did not play upon what he understood to be the Allies' desperate desire to win over world Jewry, then Zionism could easily be manipulated and would lose any chance to gain in any concrete sense.<sup>83</sup> For this reason he saw the eventual result, the Balfour Declaration, as a deliberately vague and tenuous document that was issued to justify British occupation of Palestine and gain the support of Jewry in the war, but did not constitute any tangible achievement of the goals of the Zionist Organisation and the realization of the Basle program.<sup>84</sup> He observed with bitter irony that "it was [now] the time for the Jews to crawl upon their bellies and to express unbounded gratitude . . . [for] a mere platonic non-committal declaration." He lamented that for the Great Powers, "We are only food enough, as food for the trenches, or as pawns in their own political game." But he maintained, "The Brit. Govt. wants us and would have paid a proper price for our support if we had known how to act and how to name it." In the end, however, Gaster was correct in the sense that perhaps for Picot, at least, he had been too extreme in 1916 for a pawn in a political game. In 1917 the representatives of the imperial powers wanted Jews who would be willing to submit limited requests, not demands, which were subservient to and constrained by imperial interests. Weizmann and Sokolow filled that space.

In addition, Gaster's fall from grace was as much the result of the efforts of his old adversaries and those Zionists who wished to take their seat at the helm in his place. Within the context of his wider considerations of the future of the Near East and the prospect of a British campaign in Palestine, Sykes had in late January 1917 discussed with the Armenian leader James Malcolm the issue of an alliance between Zionists and Armenian nationalists.<sup>85</sup> As a result of these considerations, Malcolm took the opportunity to probe into the wider machinations of the Zionist movement and it was through

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<sup>83</sup> See, for example, letter from Gaster to Dr Victor Jacobson, Copenhagen, 15 March 1916, Gaster Papers, A203/219, and letter from Gaster to Weizmann, 20 December 1914, Gaster Papers, A203/214, CZA.

<sup>84</sup> "Report of conversation between Gaster and Yehiel Tschlenow," Diary of Gaster, 4 November 1917, copy, Gaster Papers, A203/175, CZA.

<sup>85</sup> Diary of C.P. Scott, 27-30 January 1917, Scott Papers.

Malcolms's friend, and Gaster's long time and bitter opponent, Leopold Greenberg, that Weizmann and then Sokolow were strongly recommended.<sup>86</sup> However, on 30 January Gaster was still trusted by Sykes and had confided in him as to what urgent action would need to be taken with the immediate prospect of British occupation of Palestine.<sup>87</sup> But once Greenberg, Weizmann and others such as James de Rothschild had the ear of Malcolm and Sykes, Weizmann was misleadingly identified as the "Chairman" of British Zionists and Gaster, who they wished to replace, was strongly criticized as dictatorial, peripheral to the Zionist leadership in England and abroad and as having kept his negotiations with Sykes secret<sup>88</sup> (something which Weizmann and Sokolow themselves were to be accused of later in the year).<sup>89</sup>

Although Sokolow's position as a member of the Executive of the Zionist Organisation made him a logical choice to head negotiations at this point, it did not necessitate Gaster being discredited with Sykes or his ostracization and it certainly does not negate his status or achievements prior to these events. One thing of which we can be certain, Gaster's removal, which he referred to as a *coup d'état*,<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, pp. 363–367; letters from Malcolm to Sykes, 3 and 5 February 1917, Copies of the Sledmere Papers, W.A. When James de Rothschild and Weizmann originally met Sykes at the end of January 1917 they were referred by him to Gaster. Diary of Gaster, 28 and 30 January 1917, cited in Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, p. 367.

<sup>87</sup> Diary of Gaster, 30 January 1917, quoted in Stein, *Balfour Declaration*, p. 367; Gaster to Jacob DeHaas, 31 January 1917, A203/268, Gaster Papers, CZA; Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, p. 368; Gaster to Sykes, 1 February 1917, A203/279, Gaster Papers, CZA. The only evidence that Sykes had decided to seek out alternatives to Gaster is a record of a conversation between Sykes and Aaron Aaronsohn in April 1917. 27 April 1917, Diary of Aaron Aaronsohn, quoted in Anthony Verrier, ed., *Agents of Empire: Anglo-Zionist Intelligence Operations 1915–1919: Brigadier Walter Gribbon, Aaron Aaronsohn and the NLI Ring* (London and Washington: Brassey's Ltd, 1995) p. 260. However, this was long after Sykes and Malcolm had been persuaded by Weizmann, Sokolow, Greenberg and Rothschild that he had been talking with the wrong man, and would seem to have been an attempt to show that he had not been duped by Gaster. In fact, it is quite apparent that even after he had met with Weizmann and Sokolow, Sykes trusted Gaster and initially planned with him alone what actions would need to be taken in preparation for the British occupation of Palestine.

<sup>88</sup> Malcolm to Sykes, 3 and 5 February 1917, Copies of the Sledmere Papers, WA.

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, comments by Ahad Ha'am and Shmuel Tolkowsky, Diary of Shmuel Tolkowsky, 23 November 1917, Tolkowsky Papers, CZA.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from Gaster to Sokolow, 7 December 1917, Gaster Papers, A203/132, CZA. The mantle was officially passed to Sokolow at the end of a pivotal meeting

was in no way the natural result of Weizmann's linear path from the beginning of the war toward the attainment of the Declaration. Rather, it was a product of a complex set of circumstances that emerged in January and February 1917 which were not centered or focused upon Weizmann, his personality, achievements, or powers of persuasion.

What emerges from this re-examination of the activities of Moses Gaster and his influence upon Sir Mark Sykes during the First World War is a glimpse of the complexities that contributed to the decision of the British Government to support the Zionist movement. There were many individuals involved other than Gaster and Sykes, as there were discourses and resulting perceptions, fluctuating political and military circumstances and so on, that in one way or another contributed to the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. Once we shed the ordering prism of the Romantic narrative form and forget the assumption of the central heroic subject there exists beneath a bewildering and unsettling complexity, with numbers of individual and not necessarily connected stories that may not function within a homogenous narrative time or space, that do not move forward in a uniform manner toward a single redemptive point. For this reason, it is understandable why the Declaration as national historical myth, a focal point of unity, order and cultural certainty, was shaped and perceived through Romantic narrative form. This form, of the heroic figure transcending the forces of oppression, uncertainty and confusion wrought by the fall of both Exile and modernity, represents the wider dilemmas with which the nation was meant to answer. Nevertheless, as much as the narrative form of the heroic figure moving toward the redemptive goal of which he is destined, performed a certain internal function for the nation, it has obscured our understanding of many other figures, groups and narrative perspectives. With our case in point, Moses Gaster was transformed from a widely respected, influential and politically aware Zionist leader into a petty and peripheral individual. Such is the determining influence of both narrative form and collective memory. As Weizmann came increasingly toward the center of the Zionist move-

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between Sykes and Zionist leaders at Gaster's house in February 1917. Memorandum by Nahum Sokolow on the meeting of 7 February 1917, A226/30/1, Sokolow Papers, CZA.

ment, its gaze and imagination, so did his place within the history of the nation. Correspondingly, as Gaster disappeared from view, he sank into the shadows of a forgotten history, one in which he was only remembered in order to serve as a small reminder of what his one time follower was said to have redeemed.





*FORT MIT DEN HAUSJUDEN!* JEWISH NATIONALISTS  
ENGAGE MASS POLITICS

Joshua Shanes  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Galician Zionism began as a movement oriented towards “normal” nationalist goals: the encouragement of a Jewish national identity among Galician Jewry through cultural and educational projects, together with an engagement with domestic politics to protect and improve the Jews’ economic and material position.<sup>1</sup> In the brief intoxication following Theodor Herzl’s ascendancy to leadership, political Zionism’s nearly exclusive focus on achieving a Jewish state enjoyed a temporary dominance over the Jewish nationalist movement also in Galicia. By 1903, however, this had begun to wane, and in the following years Galician Zionism increasingly returned to its “Jewish nationalist” roots.

By the first years of the twentieth century, the movement had achieved a solid foothold among the secular intelligentsia, with scores of associations and over 4,000 members throughout the province. Nevertheless, the movement had still largely failed to penetrate into the traditional Jewish masses, most of whom remained politically disinterested and unconvinced by Zionist arguments that Jews constituted one of the constituent nationalities of the Habsburg Empire, and thus deserved the same national rights that most other nationalities enjoyed.

The 1905 decision of the emperor to support universal manhood suffrage, however, transformed the stakes of Zionist outreach. Not only did every male Jew become a potential and equally important voter, but the general atmosphere of mass mobilization throughout the province (voter rallies, the growth of mass-circulation newspapers, etc.) provided an unprecedented opportunity for Zionists to penetrate into the traditional and still largely politically uninvolved

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<sup>1</sup> See J. Shanes, “Neither Germans nor Poles: Jewish Nationalism in Galicia Before Herzl 1883–1897,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 34 (2003): 191–214.

Jewish masses. To this end, the period saw a sharp rise in the number of Zionist papers published in Yiddish, such as *Der Jud*, *Die Yiddische Volks Politik* and, above all, the Lemberg *Togblat*, the province's first Yiddish daily. These papers were designed not simply to provide news to the Yiddish-reading public, but rather to politicize Galician Jewry in favor of the Jewish nationalist position.<sup>2</sup>

The electoral reform transformed the stakes of Zionist outreach in another way as well. Electoral districts were designed as national mandates, nationally homogeneous districts, although the Polish Club succeeded in adding a second Representative to rural East Galician districts in order to protect the Polish minority there.<sup>3</sup> The national mandate system, particularly with its extra protection of national minorities in East Galicia, merely exacerbated the desperate situation of Austrian Jews who were still not considered a nationality, or *Volksstamm*, in their own right. With so many potential urban electoral districts in Galicia comprised of Jewish majorities or pluralities, the stakes of such recognition rose considerably. If in the past the recognition of Yiddish as an official language, or *Umgangssprache*, would have guaranteed state support of Yiddish schools and recognition of Yiddish contracts, now it could mean a guaranteed Jewish presence in the Austrian parliament, and a considerable one at that. With the possibility of Jewish national representatives in Parliament, the Zionist vision of Jewish integration into Austrian society as one of the empire's recognized nationalities seemed more promising than ever. No better opportunity could have presented itself for Jewish nationalists to take their message to the people.

### *A Prelude to the Coming Battle*

Although elections were not to be held until mid-1907, Zionist agitation already began by January of 1906 in their crusade to win

<sup>2</sup> Similar papers had already appeared in the 1890s, but those were more fleeting operations and were not published directly by the Zionist organization itself. See J. Shanes, "Papers for the Jewish Folk: Jewish Nationalism and the Birth of the Yiddish Press in Galicia," *Polin* 16 (2003): 167–187.

<sup>3</sup> William Jenks, *The Austrian Electoral Reforms of 1907* (New York, 1950), p. 118ff. On the 1907 electoral system in Galicia, see Harald Binder, "Die Wahlreform von 1907 und der polnisch-ruthenische Konflikt in Ostgalizien," *Österreichischen Ostheften* 38 (1996): 293–321.

Jewish mandates, electoral districts deliberately constructed around Jewish majorities. Numerous rallies brought in hundreds and even thousands of participants, and the campaign culminated in the Zionists' successful organization of over 400 mass rallies on a single day, January 7.<sup>4</sup> The rallies did not merely raise support for their immediate campaign, but helped to position the Zionists as the natural choice for Jewish national leadership. The Zionist Yiddish weekly *Der Jud*, for example, noted that while the leader of the pro-Polish Liberal camp, Emil Byk, could only muster two dozen participants at his lone anti-Zionist "conventicle," Galician Zionists attracted tens of thousands of Jews on January 7 alone. "And to whom did the hundreds of Jewish people's rallies express their thanks, their trust and their respect?—Not to Dr. Byk! Oh, vengeance is sweet!"<sup>5</sup>

Later in 1906, Zionists had another opportunity to jumpstart their upcoming campaign when Emil Byk died, opening up a seat in the heavily Jewish Brody-Zloczow district. Byk, who died on June 24, had been a loyal member of the Polish Club since he first won election in 1891, and capturing his seat had tremendous symbolic meaning for Galician Zionists. The Zionists nominated their president, Adolf Stand (1870–1919), to replace Byk and serve the final year of his term. Stand energetically declared that if elected he would not join the Polish Club, but would serve instead as an independent Jewish nationalist candidate, possibly even establishing a Jewish Club in Parliament.

Although the results would ultimately be decided under the old restricted suffrage system (Byk sat as the representative of the third, or Chamber of Commerce curia), the campaign clearly anticipated the "mass politics" of the following year's elections. Jewish nationalists staged numerous mass rallies, for example, which served not

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<sup>4</sup> *Die Welt*, December 29, 1905, pp. 5–7; January 5, 1906, pp. 12–13; January 12, 1906, p. 11. The January 7 rallies were organized by the Zionists' Lemberg-district Action Committee in response to a "conventicle" of Jewish parliamentary, diet and *Kahal* representatives convened by Emil Byk, a leading Jewish member of the Polish Club and a long-time Zionist opponent. That conference declared itself resoundingly against Jewish national autonomy or the formation of a Jewish national curia, arguing it would serve to undermine Jewish civil equality.

<sup>5</sup> *Der Jud*, May 3, 1906. Byk was an adamant opponent of Zionism with a history of enlisting the Polish authorities to aid in his crusade against the movement. Still, Zionists conveniently overlooked Byk's significant contributions towards defending Jewish rights, particularly his campaign against the Sunday-rest law. Such activities point to the complexity of the so-called "assimilationists," who continued to defend Jewish collective interests despite their anti-nationalist rhetoric.

only to raise support for Stand, but also helped generally to raise the national consciousness of Galician Jewry. Unencumbered by other races throughout the province, as they would be a year later, Galician Zionists could invest all of their energy and best speakers in this single district. "Election fever," wrote *Der Jud*, was growing hotter every day, and not only among the voters. Daily rallies were held in both cities, including four over the weekend before the election.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, a correspondent from Brody wrote to the Viennese *Neue Zeitung*, "The prospects of Adolf Stand rise from hour to hour," above all due to the great voter rallies. Zipper, Malz, Waldmann, Taubes, among the best Zionist orators in Galicia, all made tremendous impressions, he wrote, but the Sunday rally, at which Stand himself spoke, was "totally spectacular." "His statement that he will not join the Polish Club but rather will work to found a Jewish Club in parliament was received with storming applause."<sup>7</sup>

Zionists emphasized how Stand would serve as a true Jewish representative and not sit as a stooge for the Poles. Stand portrayed himself as the candidate of the Jewish masses against their oppressors, of democracy against oligarchy, and of youth against anachronism. Most importantly, for the first time, the Zionists completely severed their ideological commitment to building a Jewish homeland in Palestine from their domestic political agenda. They made it clear that although Stand was proud to be a Zionist, he was running not as a representative of the Zionist party, but rather as a representative of all Jews. Zionists, in a brilliant departure from their normal propaganda, candidly admitted that most Jews did not agree with their ideology, and hoped thereby to convince them that voting for Stand did not necessarily imply support for Zionism.<sup>8</sup>

To a large extent, the strategy worked. In the final weeks before the election, Stand picked up a number of important endorsements, most significantly from the fiercely anti-Zionist *Machzike Hadas*, organ of the ultra-Orthodox political party of the same name. The paper carried an endorsement of Stand on its front page just a week before the election.

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<sup>6</sup> *Der Jud*, August 30, 1906.

<sup>7</sup> *Neue Zeitung*, September 14, 1906.

<sup>8</sup> *Togblat*, August 28, 1906, p. 1.

Despite all of our opposition to Zionism, nevertheless we recognize that this candidate is the most desirable [compared] to the other opportunists [*koftzim*] whom the assimilationists nominated with the strength of the anti-Semites' fist. While their candidature is strengthened by heretics to their people and by those who are ashamed to utter the Jewish name on their lips, Stand proclaims his Jewishness up front and shows pride in it before all other nations.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the fact that the paper respected those who, unable to vote for a Zionist, planned on staying home election day, Stand could not have asked for a better endorsement.

Despite high hopes, Stand did not win election to Parliament in 1906. The seat went instead to the pro-Polish candidate Joseph Gold, who won with 855 votes to Stand's 454, in part due to brazen cases of electoral abuse, a phenomenon known throughout the empire as "Galician Elections." The fact that 454 Jews bravely voted for him despite the pressures against it, concluded one paper, proved the victory of the Jewish national spirit. "The national candidate Adolf Stand fell but the national idea was victorious."<sup>10</sup>

Despite the obviously propagandistic nature of that paper's conclusion, it was not far from the truth. This election itself certainly had little practical significance. Byk's replacement would fill his predecessor's post for just one year, with practically the only business of Parliament being the passage of the reform bill, already past its first reading, and the timing of new elections. With the new electoral system essentially delegitimizing the entire curial arrangement, it is hard to imagine a more lame-duck session than this one.

The campaign's larger significance was its role as a prelude to the coming elections one year later. It was, first of all, an early opportunity to begin the 1907 campaign for the general election of Jewish national candidates throughout Galicia. The daily rallies and extensive newspaper coverage, which reached throughout the province (not to mention Vienna) certainly made an impact on many previously disinterested Jews. In addition, Jewish nationalists also learned an important lesson about the critical role of Ruthenian support, which Stand failed to secure despite the repeated pleas by veteran Zionists such as Nathan Birnbaum to build an anti-Polish alliance.<sup>11</sup> This too would have important consequences in the upcoming elections.

<sup>9</sup> *Machsike Hadas*, September 7, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Der Jud*, September 19, 1906.

<sup>11</sup> See Birnbaum's lead editorials in his *Neue Zeitung*, September 7, 1906 and

*The Jewish National Party of Austria*

Galician Zionists continuously struggled with their Viennese counterparts over the question of *Landespolitik*. Galician Zionists generally wanted to work towards alleviating the physical misery of Galician Jewry and at the same time hoped that an active engagement with political campaigns would raise Galician Jewry's "political maturity." Nevertheless, before the announcement of universal suffrage, even in Galicia support for *Landespolitik* did not entail running candidates in national elections, but merely supporting those candidates who pledged to defend Jewish rights and, heeding Herzl's call, to "conquer the *kehilla*."

By December 1905, of course, the situation had changed dramatically. Electrified by news of imminent suffrage reform, Austrian Zionists, both in Galicia and in Vienna, began a vigorous agitation campaign demanding recognition of the Jews as an official nationality and the assignment of Jewish electoral mandates in proportion to their percentage of the population. Rather than nominating parliamentary candidates directly, in July 1906 Zionists formed an independent party called the "Jewish National Party of Austria" to run candidates in the national elections. Its platform demanded state recognition of the Jewish nation and called for measures to strengthen Jewish national feeling and improve day-to-day life. Leadership of the party was to be held only by members of the Zionist party, although non-Zionists would be allowed to join if they accepted the party's platform. (A Viennese Zionist who opposed *Landespolitik* insisted that the resolution note that the Zionist party itself did not constitute a political organization, a compromise accepted by the conference.) Although chaired by Isidor Schalit (1871–1954), head of the Austrian Zionist organization after Herzl's death, the new party was heavily saturated with Galician Zionist leadership; Galicians accounted for 92 of the 135 delegates who constituted the party in Cracow on July 2, 1906, as well as three out of the five board members.<sup>12</sup>

The establishment of an independent Jewish nationalist party not only avoided awkward questions about the nature of the Zionist orga-

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September 14, 1906. The Ruthenians ultimately nominated their own candidate instead.

<sup>12</sup> For a transcript of the conference deliberations, see *Die Welt*, No. 28, 1906, pp. 7–10.

nization; it also facilitated the integration of non-Zionist nationalists into the movement, both as voters and as candidates. On the one side, traditional Jews sympathetic to calls for Jewish national rights in Galicia but opposed to Zionism for religious reasons could now support the Jewish national candidate more safely, without compromising their opposition to the Zionist organization. (Recall Standis similar positioning just a few months earlier in Brody.) At the same time, the separation of the new party from the Zionist organization also facilitated the support of the socialist-Zionist party Poale Zion, founded just two years earlier in 1904. Poale Zion had broken from the general Zionist organization in 1906, but in 1907 the group endorsed the candidates of the Jewish National Party (although they refused to join that party outright).

Despite their extensive organizational infrastructure, Zionists clearly suffered from a distinct disadvantage in their late (re)commitment to *Landespolitik*. Just as Zionists themselves ridiculed pro-German assimilationists like Emil Byk in the 1880s for suddenly switching to the Polish camp, so too their own opponents now attempted to expose them as hypocrites for contradicting their own ideological rejection of Jewish national life in the Diaspora. The Jewish Social Democratic Party of Galicia, for example, whose party organ had displayed a front-page banner calling for direct, universal suffrage since its founding in October, 1905, fiercely mocked the Zionists for their “sudden discovery” of the importance of *Landespolitik* for Galician Jewry after so many years of insisting that only in Palestine could the Jews develop an independent cultural and economic life. They have no program at all, claimed the paper,

So that one doesn't yet know today exactly what they want, one only hears their crying. In their press and also in their meetings they discuss national autonomy, which they have perpetually combated, [as well as] national curias and proportional suffrage. It is thus no wonder they alone don't know what they want.<sup>13</sup>

Obviously, this is a gross oversimplification of the Zionist movement, which was far more complex. Zionists had never “combated” national autonomy. Indeed, Galician Zionists in particular had always committed themselves to cultivating Jewish national life in the Diaspora.

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<sup>13</sup> *Der Sozial-Demokrat*, January 12, 1906, p. 1.

Clearly, however, Zionists were popularly associated with a nationalist vision that broadly called for Jews to leave Europe and settle in Palestine, and Zionist opponents could and did capitalize on this apparent inconsistency.

Zionist leaders, in fact, were themselves painfully aware of the need to reeducate Jews about their Jewish national vision. The people do not yet know, complained a Zionist as late as November, 1906, that Zionists are even engaged in *Landespolitik*, or that they formed a new political party to run candidates in parliamentary elections. The new elections required much greater organization, he wrote, if Zionists were to spread throughout the province.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, only in the final months before the election did the Jewish National Party finally begin to campaign seriously for election.

### *The 1907 Campaign*

When the suffrage reform bill was signed into law on January 26, 1907, Jewish mandates were not apportioned according to their population. Under pressure from Galician Jewry, however, the Poles did allow for the formation of six urban electoral districts with Jewish majorities.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted, however, that Jews constituted over 11% of the Galician population and thus theoretically deserved eleven or twelve of Galicia's 106 districts. Moreover, it was unlikely that urban electoral districts could have been constructed at all without some falling to Jewish majorities, and Galician Zionists complained that the mandates formed were specifically chosen because they were the home bases of known "Polish lackeys." Nevertheless, the battle lines for Jewish Nationalist candidates had been drawn.

In Galicia, the 1907 campaign represented the most important struggle yet of Jewish nationalists against the "assimilationist" establishment. "Away with the house Jews!" cried S.R. Landau in an election-year propaganda book subtitled, "Foundations of a Jewish People's Politics."

<sup>14</sup> *Der Jud*, November 29, 1906.

<sup>15</sup> These were (1) Lemberg, (2) Cracow, (3) Stanislaw, (4) Kolomea, (5) Brody-Zloczow-Jezina, and (6) Drohobycz-Turka-Bolechow-Skole. According to the Polish Club spokesman, in seven other districts Jews constituted a plurality of the population, and in a few others they cast the deciding vote between the Polish and Ruthenian majorities. *Die Welt*, No. 32, 1906, pp. 7-8.



After decades of domination, now finally the People will themselves have the word. The teacher's aids, movers and water carriers, coachmen, *tallis* weavers, match factory workers and other thousands of the proletariat who lead a miserable, joyless life in the ghetto, will soon become parliamentary electors. . . . And when these masses step into the voting booth, then they will raise the battle cry from the Weichsel until the Prut: *Away with the vampires of the Jewish People, away with the house Jews of the Polish Club!*<sup>16</sup>

Frustrated with Galician Zionists during the Herzlian period, whom he felt had strayed from their program of Diaspora-nationalism in favor of Palestine-work, Landau now praised the "wise political" decision of the Zionist District Committee of Galicia to put off the "purely Zionist questions" and energetically engage domestic politics.<sup>17</sup>

Just as with Stand's campaign the previous year, it was the mass rallies, which by May had become daily events in large and small communities throughout Galicia, that formed the backbone of the Zionist campaigns, as it did for those of the other parties. Each day the *Togblat*, the official organ of the Galician Zionist organization as of the first of January, announced upcoming rallies as well as their featured speakers in a large-print advertisement on its first page. In light of the election, the party announced on February 22 that all rallies through Election Day would be free of charge. By late February, they had begun holding rallies in the major Jewish centers (especially Lemberg) although as late as early April—just a month before the elections—correspondents in many smaller Jewish communities complained that Jews in their area still remained indifferent to electoral politics.

Zionist rallies typically attracted anywhere from a few hundred to two thousand participants, although it was generally closer to the 2,000 mark and several exceptional rallies brought in up to 5,000 Jewish voters. Zionist speakers raced throughout the province to promote their Jewish national vision and endorse their party's candidate, often speaking for two to three hours about the necessity for "genuine" Jewish representatives who would not sacrifice their own People's interest as the "assimilationist" oligarchy had (allegedly) done until then. Typically, each rally ended with a unanimous resolution to support the Jewish national candidate of that district.

<sup>16</sup> Landau, *Fort mit den Hausjuden!* (Vienna, 1907), p. 19. Italics in original.

<sup>17</sup> Landau, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Zionist papers often compared their own rallies to those of their “assimilationist” opponents, which they often noted failed to attract more than a few score attendees.<sup>18</sup> (Socialist rallies, which could not be so easily dismissed as elitist and anti-democratic, are mentioned far less frequently.) Zionists often tried to infiltrate into the “assimilationist” rallies, but most were usually kept out, a fact which the Zionist press happily contrasted to their own party’s open “*volks*” rallies. A rally in Bolechow, for example, for the pro-Polish Jewish candidate Nathan Loewenstein admitted just 50 people, while a Zionist rally organized at a *kloiz* in the city attracted over 1,000 Jews who voted “unanimously” to support the Jewish national candidate, Gershon Zipper.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, when Kolomea’s pro-Polish candidate Heinrich Kolischer came to the city for a rally, barely 300 of the town’s 6,000 voters allegedly showed up, including just 50 Jews. By contrast, the Jewish national candidate (Yehoshua Thon) spoke to a cheering crowd of thousands on Tuesday night and then again on Wednesday night. Friday night (Sabbath) he spoke at the study house, and Saturday (Sabbath-day) at two separate synagogues, both packed. Thousands attended rallies held on Saturday afternoon and Saturday night, each pledging to support his candidacy.<sup>20</sup>

An important sign of the growing influence of the Jewish nationalists was their now frequent use of synagogues and study houses for rallies, as well as for more informal lectures. Obviously, this allowed them to gain access to a much larger number of Jews than would have been possible were all meetings held in Zionist locations. Often synagogues and study houses constituted the only large meeting hall in a city. Even in larger Jewish communities that did boast community halls, however, Zionists were often denied their use by anti-Zionist forces in the *kahal*. Jewish nationalists used the smaller study houses and synagogues as a means of circumventing their opponents in the community hierarchy, including at times the town rabbi himself.

Such a story occurred in Sniatyn, whose Jewish-national election committee organized the city’s first rally on Sunday, March 24. The

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<sup>18</sup> Of course, descriptions of rallies (and the choice of which rallies to describe) varied wildly from one newspaper to the next. Coverage of the rallies by the Zionist press should be read with a certain degree of awareness of those papers’ agenda.

<sup>19</sup> *Togblat*, April 21, 1907, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Togblat*, May 16, 1907.

president of the *kehilla*, intending to block the rally, cynically responded to the Zionists' request for permission to use the main synagogue by insisting that they ask the rabbi whether or not it was permissible to use a synagogue for political purposes. According to the correspondent, the president knew full well that the rabbi would never give his permission, not because Jewish law forbade such a gathering, but because the rabbi was a strong supporter of the Polish candidate. When the Zionists received permission from the caretakers of a smaller study house to hold the rally there, the *kehilla* president managed to have the authorities declare the gathering illegal (allegedly because it biased the study house in favor of one party) and garrison forces were stationed to block the hall's entrance on the Sunday afternoon in question. Enraged, the Zionists issued a thinly veiled threat that such actions would lead to violent unrest by the town's Jews, and in the end the president agreed to open the main synagogue for the rally.<sup>21</sup>

Pro-Polish Jews often recruited the Polish authorities to block Zionist rallies. In Zborow, for example, about a week before the election, the Polish county prefect forbade the use of the town synagogue for a political rally by a known Zionist speaker on the grounds that the "Mosaic religion" forbids the use of a prayer house for political speeches. Violators were threatened with a 200 K. fine and fourteen days arrest.<sup>22</sup>

On Passover, just over a month before the election, Zionist speakers flooded the synagogues and study houses of Galicia, which were generally packed with worshipers during the holiday. In Lemberg, for example, twenty speakers went to different study houses throughout the city on the first night of Passover alone in order to speak about Zionist goals for the elections.<sup>23</sup> In Buczacz, Zionists held no less than ten voter rallies in the study houses and synagogues during the eight-day holiday.<sup>24</sup> Against Liberal opponents who cynically charged Zionists with violating the sanctity of synagogues (a well-established practice in Galicia, in which the Liberals themselves engaged), Zionists confidently asserted that the political rallies in fact constituted a holy activity perfectly fitting for a synagogue.

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<sup>21</sup> *Togblat*, April 2, 1907, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 23, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Togblat*, April 2, 1907.

<sup>24</sup> *Togblat*, April 16, 1907, p. 2.

It is noteworthy that despite the pamphlets of the community-clique [*kahalniks*] which argued that it is a desecration of G-d's name to speak out about politics in the synagogue, the people unanimously cried out that Stand should speak not on the *almaner* but specifically next to the Holy Ark, next to the Holy Torah. And with right! Because they consider the matter to be a truly Jewish, holy thing that belongs precisely in the synagogue and especially next to the Holy Ark.<sup>25</sup>

Even *Der Sozial-Demokrat*, in its surprisingly congenial report of Zionist outreach on Passover, expressed disgust at the Jewish oligarchs who tried to prevent the use of synagogues by Zionist agitators. According to the report, presumably reliable considering the Jewish socialists' anti-Zionist position, the "kahalniks" hung placards with a warning that the synagogues should not allow any Zionist to speak because this would only bring pogroms. The placards were signed "the government-true Jews."<sup>26</sup>

The Zionist appropriation of synagogue space, hardly an innovation to be sure, was strengthened by the party's decision to include three pulpit rabbis among its nominations (Mordechai Braude, Yehoshua Thon, and Gedalia Schmelkes), whose posts obviously offered a distinct advantage in that they provided the candidates with a captive audience every week.<sup>27</sup> Braude and Thon had argued for years that the role of a preacher and his synagogue included the encouragement of political activism among the congregants.<sup>28</sup> Such rhetoric now assumed an even greater importance. On the last day of Passover, for example, Braude gave a sermon at the Stanislaw [reform] Temple to thousands of Jews which highlighted Hosea's teaching that a preacher must teach Jews to struggle, and thus that politics do indeed belong in the synagogue.<sup>29</sup>

Braude, raised in a strict religious environment, hardly limited himself to progressive Jews in preaching political activism. At a

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<sup>25</sup> *Togblat*, April 11, 1907, p. 1. 800 Jews reportedly attended the rally, Bolechow's first. In fact, synagogues had been used for political gatherings for decades.

<sup>26</sup> *Der Sozial-Demokrat*, April 4, 1907, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Braude, however, was dismissed from his post as rabbi of the progressive Stanislaw Temple on account of his nationalist activities. Braude, *Zikhron Mordechai Ze'ev Braude* (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 197–215. Thon, who had avoided openly Zionist activity since assuming his post at the Cracow Temple, barely held on to his job in the face of opposition to his candidacy. See Nella Rost Hollander, *Jehoshua Thon: Preacher, Thinker, Politician* (Montevideo, Uruguay, 1966), p. 28.

<sup>28</sup> Nella Rost Hollander, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> *Togblat*, April 17, 1907.

Sabbath-afternoon rally in Lemberg, for example, Braude spoke to over 1,000 Jewish voters (over 200 were sent away for lack of space), “the majority in *shtraimels* [fur hats worn by *Hasidim* on Sabbaths and holidays] and gray beards.” There was reportedly great applause when Braude entered, despite the fact that most of those present were still unacquainted with the Zionists or their program.<sup>30</sup>

Zionist rallies did not only raise support for specific nationalist candidates, but served to politicize Galician Jewry more generally, and in particular to convince Jews that they constituted a nationality to which national minority rights were due. The vast majority of rally speeches focused nearly exclusively on the nature of Jewish suffering in Galicia, on the corruption of the current community leadership, and on the program of the Jewish National Party. Only in conclusion would the speaker mention the local candidate and his particular qualifications. Since most candidates ran in districts in which they did not even live, the party program in any case constituted a far more influential and interesting message to local Jews than the local candidate, of whom they had probably never heard. For many, it was the first time they had ever been exposed to such political rhetoric. Laibel Taubes (1863–1933), one of the party’s most important and prolific speakers, describes his impact when he spoke at a small hamlet in northeast Galicia.

I recognized that with this crowd one would have to begin from the political abc’s, that the poor, oppressed Jews had no understanding of the most primitive political concepts—but I also recognized that this was an audience thirsting for enlightenment. And when I spoke I saw how the audience really came to life and listened eagerly and tensely to every word. Every word was for them a revelation, a sort of prophecy. . . . After I finished my lecture around midnight, an old Jew came to me and said, ‘Herr Taubes! Admittedly, what you have told us is, truly, very interesting and completely correct. I want to ask you one question, however. Why are we hearing this now for the first time?’<sup>31</sup>

Taubes was also a candidate of the Jewish National Party, nominated during the Zionists’ eleventh-hour spree of nominations in late April and early May. The scion of generations of rabbis on both sides of his family, Taubes was a critical figure for Galician Zionism

<sup>30</sup> *Togblat*, May 7, 1907, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Taubes, *Zichrones fun Laibel Taubes* (Vienna, 1920), pp. 20–21.

because he helped it to overcome its image of being a movement of disillusioned secular intellectuals, an image made only worse by the rise of Herzl. Zionist propaganda emphasized Taubes' religious upbringing and populist credentials in order to highlight his connection to the common Jew. Taubes is no disillusioned integrationist, writes the *Togblat* in its announcement of his candidature, but rather is one of the people.

He was and remains a child of the People, one of the great Jewish masses. His parents left him no great inheritance, he made no *fachstudium* [i.e. university study] in order to acquire a privileged "higher" status in society, and when Laibel Taubes became a Zionist, he did not "go down" to the people, but rather came up from the people. He did not come from a different world; he was not pushed to Zionism through rejection, through anti-Semitism, but only from inside [himself], from his soul of the people [*volks-neshama*] he generated his enthusiasm for Zionism and for everything that is Jewish. Laibel Taubes thus became a Zionist not like many of our intellectuals, through his head, but through his heart.<sup>32</sup>

Taubes himself cultivated this image very deliberately. Henoah Halpern, who grew up in Gline, later recalled that although Taubes generally dressed "Deutsch," when he came to Gline for a Sabbath he entered the synagogue wearing a caftan with a *gartel* and *shtreimel*, "exactly like all the Jews in the *shtetl*," in order that his Western clothes should not undermine his influence before he even had a chance to speak. When he did finally speak, recalled Halpern, Taubes' striking dark hair, European manners, and beautiful, soft Yiddish won over the town.<sup>33</sup>

Aside from the actual content of the speeches, the rallies also served as a critical agent in forging a common sense of national community among Galician Jews. Rallies attracted Jews from all classes, men and women, young and old, religious and secular. All stood together and often intermixed (by all of those criteria) as they listened to speeches calling for Jewish solidarity and national struggle. The photograph (see frontispiece) of a mass rally in Buczacz for the Jewish national candidate Nathan Birnbaum, for example, shows men and women of clearly middle-class dress, women with uncovered hair

<sup>32</sup> *Togblat*, April 28, 1907, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Henoah Halpern, "Megilat Gline" (New York, 1950), p. 142.

and shaved men with Western hats, standing and sitting together with Jews of an obviously much lower social class, many of whom covered their hair or wore long beards. The rallies thus created a new public space, in the case of this outdoor rally quite literally, in which all Jews could safely participate. (Birnbaum is standing in the center of the front row; S.Y. Agnon appears as well.)

Towards the end of the campaign, by which time rallies rarely attracted less than a thousand participants, organizers facing inadequate hall space occasionally limited attendance to voters alone, meaning that women and children were not admitted. In response, several districts organized rallies specifically for women, although men were also allowed to attend. Speakers at these rallies especially applauded the importance of Jewish women in the campaign. One speaker, for example, discussed how all of the anti-Jewish laws impacted first and foremost women, who feel their families' hunger most pressingly. She emphasized the power that women can wield by using their influence over their husbands. Although women could themselves not vote, she admitted,

We must at least exert all of our influence on our husbands that they should not let themselves be frightened by the terror of the enemies of Israel, because this is a matter of our very existence. We must do everything [to ensure] that our husbands should vote as one man for Dr. Gershon Zipper.<sup>34</sup>

*Zionist Opposition: Socialist, Orthodox and "Assimilationist"*

Although they eventually nominated nearly two dozen candidates, Zionists did not constitute the entire Jewish opposition to the conservative Polish Club. On the contrary, Jewish nationalism by this time had refigured the entire spectrum of Jewish politics, from the socialists on the Left to the Polish nationalist Jews on the Right. Certainly much of the credit for this fact was due to the Zionists themselves, whose many years of agitation had begun to bear fruit. Competition in the marketplace simply forced Zionist opponents to adopt some sort of national program, just as socialist pressure forced Zionists, for example, to establish Zionist workers' associations and

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<sup>34</sup> *Togblat*, May 16, 1907, p. 2.

to include various progressive social and economic programs in their platform. The hyper-nationalist atmosphere then dominant in Galicia obviously played a role in the transformation of Jewish political discourse as well. In short, by 1907 no party could hope to mobilize Jewish voters without some sort of program demanding Jewish collective representation.

The Zionists' best-organized competitors for the anti-Polish Club vote were the socialists. In fact, Zionists actually faced two separate opponents in the social democratic movement. On one side stood the Polish Social Democratic Party (PPSD), an opponent of the Polish Club but a staunch advocate of Jewish assimilation nonetheless. Hermann Diamand (1860–1931), the one-time Zionist who now served as one of the PPSD's highest-ranking leaders, was one of the Polish party's most vocal spokesmen for Jewish assimilation. This is how he explained his party's position vis-à-vis the Jewish question:

There are no special Jewish traits worth conserving. All retention of Jewish uniqueness is deleterious. We have to assume new forms and not flinch at the difficulties encountered in Polish society. We must bend every effort to eliminate all manifestations of uniqueness.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, such rhetoric stood outside the pale of Jewish political discourse by 1907. The main spokesmen for the Social Democrats among Jews in 1907 did not come from the PPSD, however, but from the Jewish Social Democratic Party of Galicia (JSDP), which had split from the PPSD in 1905.<sup>36</sup> The group, from its inception, had committed itself to the advancement of Jewish national rights in Galicia, as well as to the campaign for universal suffrage. Both of these positions certainly lent the group a certain attractiveness and authority by 1907, not to mention the general appeal of socialism to many Jewish workers.

The JSDP did not enter any candidates in 1907, agreeing instead in the name of socialist solidarity to endorse the candidates of the PPSD (despite that group's sharp denouncement of the new Jewish

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<sup>35</sup> Jacob Hertz, "The Bund's Nationality Program and Its Critics in the Russian, Polish and Austrian Socialist Movements," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science XIV* (1969), p. 63.

<sup>36</sup> See Rick Kuhn, "Organizing Yiddish speaking workers in pre-World War One Galicia: The Jewish Social Democratic Party," in *Yiddish Language and Culture Then & Now*, ed. Leonard Jay Greenspoon (Omaha, 1996).



party). Nevertheless, the JSDP took a very active role in the 1907 campaigns, organizing voter rallies throughout the province, many attracting thousands of participants. Like the Zionists, the Jewish socialists hoped not only to promote their individual candidates (in this case, the candidates of the PPSD), but wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to penetrate into the Jewish masses and to educate them about their party's program. While such rallies certainly constituted an important source of competition for the Jewish National Party, which inevitably received the sharpest criticism from the Jewish socialists, they also made an important contribution to the broader Zionist project of politicizing traditional Jews and strengthening their sense of themselves as constituting a national community.

Zionists did not only face stiff opposition from the Left. The ultra-Orthodox *Machzike Hadas*, which had uncharacteristically supported the Zionists in Brody-Zloczow the past year, now withdrew their support and energetically entered the campaign in favor of the ruling Poles, their traditional allies. Beginning in February 1907, the party printed repeated warnings against opposing the government, a charge they leveled at Zionists for refusing to support the ruling Polish Club.<sup>37</sup> The party strongly urged the nomination of suitable Orthodox candidates in all districts with Jewish majorities or pluralities. When one was forced to choose between Zionists and assimilationists, however, they advised readers to choose "the lesser of two evils" and vote for the latter, "friends of the Poles and lovers of the government," and not for the Zionists.<sup>38</sup> The paper expressed deep fear about antagonizing the dominant Poles, and mocked the Zionists' goal of establishing a Jewish Club in Parliament.

What will a Jewish Club of six Representatives be able to accomplish in the next parliament? On the other hand, what will Jewish Representatives be able to accomplish within the Polish Club? . . . Our splitting from the Poles will not hurt them in any case; even if the Polish Club loses some Representatives, their place in the coming parliament will be strong and it will be one of the pillars of the next government. But

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<sup>37</sup> *Kol Machsike Hadas*, February 11, 1907. The paper called on Jews to support the Poles and not anti-government assimilationists, a category that included Zionists in ultra-orthodox rhetoric.

<sup>38</sup> *Kol Machsike Hadas*, March 28, 1907; *Machsike Hadas*, April 12, 1907; *Kol Machsike Hadas*, April 19, 1907; *Machsike Hadas*, April 26, 1907; *Kol Machsike Hadas*, May 3, 1907.

this split will hurt only us, for we will have no brother in the government during troubled times . . .<sup>39</sup>

The Poles constitute the Jews' only hope for an ally, wrote the paper a week later. After all, the Poles promised six of "their" mandates for the Jews, while the Ruthenians did not offer a single one of their 28 mandates.<sup>40</sup> This was, of course, a gross distortion of the political situation. The 28 Ruthenian mandates to which the paper refers were comprised nearly exclusively of Ruthenian constituencies, while the six mandates which the Poles "offered" were in any case comprised of clear Jewish majorities. As we have seen, the Poles, who opposed the formation of Jewish mandates, claimed all non-Ruthenian mandates as their own.

Despite their fierce denouncement of the Zionists, *Machzike Hadas* also actively contributed to the Zionist goal of Jewish political mobilization. The Orthodox party was mobilizing Jews in favor of the Polish Club and their Jewish allies, to be sure, but not because they opposed Jewish national rights, rather because they supported them. Indeed, the paper once stated as obvious the need for Jews to win equal national rights alongside their neighbors.<sup>41</sup> Thus even here, Zionist assumptions about the need for Jewish national representation were being confirmed; merely the tactics were in question.

In fact, the so-called "assimilationists" themselves, as we have seen many times before, also shared a vision of Jewish collective leadership, albeit in a form very different from that which the Zionists had in mind. On January 6, 1907, leading members of the Jewish intelligentsia met in Cracow in order to establish their own Galician-Jewish political organization. The conference was led by Samuel Ritter von Horowitz, president of the Lemberg Chamber of Commerce, long-time advocate of Jewish-Polish integration, and staunch ally of the Polish Club.

In his keynote speech, Nathan Loewenstein, candidate of the Polish Club in Drohobycz, declared to the assembly that as the leaders of Galician Jewry it was their obligation to establish a strong organization charged with defending the interests of the Jews. A resolution calling for the establishment of an organization to defend the

<sup>39</sup> *Machzike Hadas*, April 26, 1907.

<sup>40</sup> *Kol Machzike Hadas*, May 3, 1907.

<sup>41</sup> *Kol Machzike Hadas*, February 11, 1907.

political and economic interests of Galician Jewry was soon passed with the provision, however, that the general and national-Polish interests were also served. (In case the point was missed, a series of speakers proceeded to denounce the Zionists' anti-Polish politics.) The assembly elected an executive committee (headed by Horowitz) with local representatives throughout the province and charged it with preparing a program that would articulate the demands of the Jews in political and economic regards and, "begin the necessary steps by which these demands will find consideration."<sup>42</sup>

The Jewish Electoral Organization, which set up branches in several towns, constituted the core of an independent Polish-Jewish organization that clearly belied Zionist claims that these leaders were simply Polish stooges. To be sure, its proponents always repeated at their meetings that they supported Polish solidarity, and Loewenstein, the group's leading figure, was also a member of the Polish Electoral Committee. Still, in at least one case a branch of the organization opposed the candidate of the Polish committee, and the group's paper, *Jedność*, demanded more than the six Jewish mandates granted by the Polish Club. The Polish National Democrats in particular attacked the Jewish organization for its alleged "separatism," to which *Jedność* replied that such separatism was justified because of specific Jewish collective interests.<sup>43</sup>

### *Poles, Ruthenians, and Jews*

The key to Zionist success in most Galician districts, in which the Jews constituted only a strong minority and not a majority, would clearly be the support of the Ruthenians. In seven East Galician rural districts, Jewish nationalists competed with Poles for the second mandate, awarded to the candidate with at least 25% of the votes. In the likely event that neither minority candidate could muster a quarter of the votes, the winner would be decided in a run-off election, thus effectively decided by whichever candidate the Ruthenian majority supported.

<sup>42</sup> See police report of meeting in *OSA/AVA*, Innenministerium, Präsidiale, 22/Galizien 1907, Karton 2111.

<sup>43</sup> My thanks to Harald Binder for this information, which is due to appear in his forthcoming book, *Galizien in Wien. Parteien, Wahlen Fraktionen und Abgeordnete 1897-1914*.

Whether or not Jews could expect this support was not entirely clear. On the one hand, Ruthenian nationalists had long supported Jewish national rights in Galicia as a means of weakening the Polish position, which was artificially strengthened by the census's registering of Galician Jews as "Polish."<sup>44</sup> In fact, the first speaker in Parliament to demand recognition of the Jews as an official *Volksstamm* was not a Jew but a Ruthenian, Iulian Romanczuk, a leader of the Ruthenian faction.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, during the critical months before the election, Ruthenian and Zionist leaders often attended each others' rallies and published in each other's papers.

The content of these articles and speeches, however, often indicate the limits, rather than the heights, of Ruthenian-Jewish cooperation. Jewish nationalists writing in Ruthenian papers emphasized their common struggle against the Polish conservatives. David Malz, for example, a candidate in the Zydaczow-Bóbrka urban district and a leading member of the Jewish National Party, wrote an editorial in the national-democratic Ruthenian daily *Dilo* that emphasized principally how the Zionists had abandoned the Jews' traditional alliance with the Poles and sought, together with the Ruthenians, to end the Polish conservatives' oligarchic rule.<sup>46</sup>

Ruthenian contributions to the Jewish press were far more skeptical and reserved. Just a month before the election, for example, the *Neue National Zeitung* published a general appeal to Zionists from Romanczuk for an alliance between the two national camps, without any specific details about the coming election. Romanczuk explained at length how the Poles demanded total Jewish assimila-

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<sup>44</sup> If in 1869 Jews were still generally recorded as German, with the Polonization of the state bureaucracy, Galicia's "German" population steadily declined in favor of the Polish: 60.4% of Galician Jews were "Polish" by 1880, 74.6% in 1890, 76.5% in 1900, and by 1910 over 92% were registered as Poles. Max Rosenfeld, *Die Polnische Judenfrage* (Vienna, 1918), p. 147.

<sup>45</sup> For a transcript of Romanczuk's speech, held on December 1, 1905, see *Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhaus Session 17*, p. 3509. Romanczuk's speech seems to have been a carefully planned maneuver between himself and the Jewish nationalists, for the very next speaker scheduled on the agenda was the independent Representative from Czernowitz, Benno Straucher (1852-1940), a well-known Zionist leader. The Zionists obviously assumed that the motion would carry more weight if first raised by a Christian and then seconded by their own man. As Straucher was absent when his name was called, it was not until the next parliamentary meeting on December 4 that he could emphatically reiterate the call to designate Jews as a *Volksstamm*.

<sup>46</sup> Reprinted in *Selbstwehr*, May 10, 1907.

tion, while the Ruthenians called only for Jewish neutrality. There was a high degree of anti-Jewish feeling among the Ruthenian people, Romanczuk admitted, but this was only because the Ruthenians were astounded to see Jews continuing to support Polish candidates. "The nationalist, Zionist, as well as social democratic Jews take an entirely different position," he acknowledged, "but they constitute only a small minority [of Galician Jews]."<sup>47</sup>

Romanczuk's conciliatory tone was unusual; most Ruthenians expressed frustration bordering on exasperation at the lack of support from Jewish nationalist circles. A follow-up piece to Romanczuk's article, for example, sent by an unnamed Ruthenian nationalist, sharply attacked Jewish nationalists for failing to instruct the Jewish masses to support the Ruthenian national candidates in the rural districts where they had committed themselves to do so. The author pointed out that Jewish nationalists hardly formed the entire opposition to the conservative Polish Club (the Social Democrats nominated their own candidates in most Galician districts) and that the Jews could not expect to receive one-sided support from the Ruthenians.<sup>48</sup>

To be fair, the strains on the relationship were not so one-sided. Although Straucher repeatedly appealed for the formation of Jewish national mandates in Parliament, Romanczuk did not ever again raise the issue. He might have been constrained by his own camp. The Ruthenian nationalist leadership may have supported the Jewish national cause, but anti-Semitism remained extremely widespread among the Ruthenian people and Romanczuk might have undercut his own support by pressing the Jewish issue too strongly. Still, this was hardly the full support one might expect from an electoral partner.

Moreover, during the campaign itself, Jewish nationalist leaders did make clear calls to support the Ruthenian candidates in the rural electoral districts of East Galicia. Landau's election booklet cited above, for example, called on Jews "to do right" by the Ruthenians and support their candidates in East Galicia. To those Jews still fearful of opposing the Poles, Landau insisted that such support should not at all be construed as anti-Polish because these were designated as Ruthenian seats with the agreement of the Polish Club.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Neue National Zeitung*, April 12, 1907.

<sup>48</sup> *Neue National Zeitung*, No. 20, 1907.

<sup>49</sup> Landau, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Ultimately, Zionists did manage to forge an electoral agreement with the Ruthenian national leadership. It had essentially two points.

1. In districts where populations were ethnically mixed, the Ruthenians were to vote for the Jewish nationalist candidate in final runoff elections (the elections were two-tiered) between a Polish and a Zionist candidate.
2. In predominantly Ruthenian districts the Jewish nationalist candidates were entered to attract Jewish votes away from the Polish opposition so that in the second voting the same voters could support the Ruthenian candidate who, with their help, had entered the second round.<sup>50</sup>

It was not at all clear how well either side would honor the pact. Nevertheless, the agreement itself certainly highlights the great strides that the Zionists had taken in just one year.

### *The Results*

By the time of the elections, the Jewish National Party had nominated candidates in twenty Galician districts, fourteen urban and six rural, as well as two candidates in Bukowina, and one in Vienna.<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, their victory would not be so grand. When the dust settled, four candidates of the Jewish National Party had won seats in Parliament: Benno Straucher, Adolf Stand, Arthur Mahler, and Heinrich Gabel. Straucher won a solid reelection in Czernowitz, while Stand managed in Brody to edge out the Polish “assimilationist” Wollerner by 300 votes (2,585 to 2,228) when the third-place social democrats supported him in the run-off.<sup>52</sup> Mahler and Gabel both won minority mandates in rural east Galician districts with the

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<sup>50</sup> Leila Everett, “The Rise of Jewish National Politics in Galicia, 1905–1907” in (Andrei S. Markovits/Frank E. Sysyn) *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), p. 173.

<sup>51</sup> Two other independent Jewish national candidates ran in Galicia without the official support of the party, neither of whom won. Sigmund Weissglass collected over 1,000 votes in rural district Peczenizyn, and Joseph Bloch ran as an independent “national-Jewish and democratic” candidate in the urban district based in Zółkiew. For a list of Zionist results by district, see *Summarische Ergebnisse der Statistik der Reichsratswahlen von 1907* (Brünn, 1907), pp. 44–49. Note that some candidates (including Braude and Stand) ran in multiple districts.

<sup>52</sup> *Jüdische Zeitung*, June 5, 1907, p. 2 and *Summarische Ergebnisse, op. cit.*, pp. 44–45. The JSDP endorsed Stand on May 31, writing that while the party viewed both candidates as reactionary, it preferred Stand because as a member of a party with

help of the Ruthenians in run-off elections as part of an agreement mandating support for the socialist candidate in the Tarnow run-off.<sup>53</sup> As promised, on June 18 the four constituted themselves as the first Jewish Club in Austrian parliamentary history.<sup>54</sup>

It is difficult to overestimate the enormous charge that the elections gave to the Jewish nationalist movement. The Jewish National Party officially garnered over 30,000 votes on the first ballot at a time when the Zionist organization did not yet have 5,000 members in Galicia.<sup>55</sup> While Stand narrowly won his seat in Brody, other Jewish nationalists lost theirs by equally narrow margins of hundreds, and even tens of votes.

Moreover, they clearly would have won several more seats but for the outrageous corruption of the Galician elections. In Kolomea, for example, where the Zionist Yehoshua Thon lost to the "assimilationist" Heinrich Kolischer 814 to 1,970 votes, thousands of Jews were simply unable to vote. Voter registration in this overwhelmingly Orthodox city had been held on a Saturday, and Orthodox Jews who refused to violate the Sabbath by signing their names were simply not registered. Moreover, many election cards came with Kolischer's name already filled in, and ballots on which his name was crossed out and another written over it were disqualified. For this reason, 174 votes for Thon were invalidated. Besides all of this, "hooligans" were allegedly placed near all voting stations to rip the election cards out of the hands of known opponents to Kolischer, apparently under the eyes of the garrison forces stationed to prevent such abuse.<sup>56</sup>

The corruption involved in the defeat of Mordechai (Markus) Braude and Nathan Birnbaum was equally egregious. Braude, whose best chances of victory lay in the Jewish mandate of Stanislau, lost in the run-off by just 18 votes. Apparently, 156 votes for the Zionist

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just 4–5 seats he would have less power to cause damage than Wollerner, the candidate of the Polish Club. *Der Sozial-Demokrat*, May 31, 1907, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Mahler initially received just 2,564 of the district's 30,000 votes, but beat the Polish national candidate in the run-off with 12,990 votes to his 8,612. (The Polish candidate had initially received 5,730 votes.) Gabel initially received just 2,146 of the districts nearly 35,000 votes, but beat the Polish national candidate with 14,537 votes to his 9,212. (The Polish candidate had initially received 7,196.) *Summarische Ergebnisse*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–49.

<sup>54</sup> Seven other Jewish representatives were elected in Galicia: one independent (Gross), two social democrats and four Jews committed to joining the Polish Club.

<sup>55</sup> *Summarische Ergebnisse*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–49. They probably received many more votes. See below.

<sup>56</sup> *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 25, 1907, p. 5.

were disqualified because voters spelled his name “Marcus” with a “c”, rather than with a “k” as he spelled it.<sup>57</sup> Birnbaum faced similar abuses. In Buczacz-Zaleszczyki, the Polish national candidate (Moysa) initially received just over 3,000 votes, while Birnbaum and the Ruthenian received just over 4,000 (combined). Although Birnbaum, a long-time advocate of Ruthenian-Jewish cooperation, certainly received the full support of the local Ruthenians in the run-off election, he only got 2,434 votes (less than he had received in the first round), while Moysa raked in 3,797.<sup>58</sup> As elsewhere, Zionist supporters were denied suffrage on false grounds, false votes were registered for Moysa, and (in the run-off) garrison and municipal forces were used simply to keep Jews and Ruthenians out of the voting booths.<sup>59</sup>

To be sure, Zionists also seemed to have engaged in “terror tactics.” Although Zionist papers certainly concealed or denied such activities as much as possible, the police files from that period do include a series of complaints of Zionist intimidation against Jewish supporters of the Polish candidate. “Following the failing candidature of Dr. Braude, Zionists rioting violently, attack peaceful citizens, threaten their lives,” submitted a group of Jews in Stanislaw. “We request immediate help and protection.” The Polish electoral committee in Stanislaw complained similarly: “Zionist excesses disturb citizens who hold differing opinions. Attacks on the street, forcible threats against supporters of the representative Stwiertnia calls for immediate intervention by the authorities. We request full protection, otherwise risk danger on life, property and honor.” Apparently the violence did not even stop with the election, but continued for some time afterwards. “In revenge for us voting for Maysa (*sic*),” submitted three Jews in Tlumacz, “we were attacked by Zionists, pelted with stones and injured. We request assistance.”<sup>60</sup> Such testimonies certainly offer a more balanced picture of Election Day events, although the evidence clearly suggests that the abuses of the conservative Polish candidates were far more extensive.

Finally, Zionist success may be measured even beyond the votes

<sup>57</sup> *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 25, 1907, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 27, 1907, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Neue Zeitung*, June 28, 1907, pp. 5–8.

<sup>60</sup> See police reports in *OSA/AVA*, Innenministerium, Präsidiale, 22/Galizien 1907, Karton 2111.



they themselves received. Zionists demonstrated political power even in districts in which their own candidate did not win. In Lemberg, for example, the Zionist candidate (Braude) earned just 853 votes, while his uncle and candidate for the Polish Club, Samuel Horowitz, managed 1,675. This roughly tied with Hermann Diamand, the Social Democrat and one-time Zionist, who received 1,667 votes.<sup>61</sup> Zionists would decide the election in the run-off. Despite Diamand's strong record of opposition to Jewish nationalism, Horowitz's reputation for corruption and "shameless" exploitation of his position on the *kahal* apparently decided his fate. "The Jewish nationalists in Lemberg," related a local correspondent, "mobilized much greater forces for the election of Diamand [in the run-off], or rather, for the defeat of Horowitz, than they had for the election of Braude [in the first place]." After Braude's first-round Lemberg defeat, the Jewish Nationalists forged an agreement with the PPSD for both parties to support Diamand in Lemberg, but Braude and Stand in Stanislaw and Tarnopol, respectively. In the event, Zionists respected the agreement and Diamand won with their support.<sup>62</sup>

Importantly, although the Ruthenians did rally behind Mahler, Gabel and probably Birnbaum as they pledged in their agreement, elsewhere they did not. The veteran Zionist Abraham Salz was soundly defeated in the run-off election when the Ruthenians universally backed the Polish socialist candidate against him. Salz received 2,481 votes to Moraczewski's 3,500 in a district which contained roughly 2,800 Jewish voters versus 3,600 Christian.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, in Tarnopol, where Stand (with 1,056 votes) came in third place during the first round, supporters of the Jewish nationalist candidate failed to rally behind the Ruthenian candidate (Gromnicki) in the run-off, despite a directive to do so by the Jewish National Party. In fact, they not only did not rally behind the Ruthenian, but a majority of them actually voted for the Jewish candidate of the Polish Club, Rudolf Gall, who had trailed behind his Ruthenian opponent in the first round 1,377 votes to Gromnicki's 1,545.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 24, 1907, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 25, 1907, p. 5. The correspondent proudly boasts that the Lemberg Zionists, including the Orthodox *Mizrachi* (who would have opposed socialist anti-clericalism), "like a disciplined army" all voted for Diamand in the run-off. The Zionists lost both of the other races.

<sup>63</sup> *Neue National-Zeitung*, No. 26, 1907, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> *Jüdische Zeitung*, June 5, 1907, p. 2.

It would be a mistake to call the agreement a failure, however. On the one hand, Leila Everett is correct in pointing out the cautiousness of the Zionist leadership in endorsing their Ruthenian allies.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, in light of Zionist fears of Polish reprisals, the Zionists' need to reach out to Polonized Jews, and especially their need to counter charges by *Machzike Hadas* that they threatened the Jewish community by opposing the Poles, Zionist declarations of political neutrality ought to be read as a pro-Ruthenian position and not as a rebuff of the Ruthenians. Ultimately, even Everett admits, most Jews did heed Zionist directives to vote for the Ruthenians, while most Ruthenians supported Zionist bids where they were obliged to do so. Moreover, the evidence does not suggest a sense of mutual recriminations in the aftermath of the elections, but rather that both sides recognized the efficacy of their alliance. They continued to support each other's resolutions in parliament, for example, particularly vis-à-vis electoral corruption, and they continued to work together at popular rallies.

Despite the historic achievement of a Jewish nationalist party in a European parliament, the election's broader significance was its role in the sudden politicization of the Jewish masses. As Braude wrote many years later, the principle purpose of the Jewish nationalists' decision to engage in parliamentary politics never was to win seats.<sup>66</sup> If this had been their goal, they would not have wasted their scarce resources running candidates in over a dozen districts in which they had no chance of success and knew it. Rather, their purpose was to engage Galician Jews in the political process as much as possible, to educate them about the program of the Jewish nationalists and to foster among them a sense of national community. And, to a great extent, they did achieve this goal. The cumulative effect of three months of nearly daily rallies meant that tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews who had never attended such rallies before, now did so. 85% of Galician Jewish men voted on Election Day, and of those that voted for Jews, close to half of them went for the Jewish nationalists. As Leila Everett put it, "In Galicia, the Jewish mass vote became a political reality."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Everett, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–77.

<sup>66</sup> Braude, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>67</sup> Everett, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

## JEWISH NATIONALISM AND LIBERTARIAN SOCIALISM IN THE WRITINGS OF BERNARD LAZARE

Michael Löwy  
Sorbonne

Bernard Lazare is a paradoxical figure: Jewish nationalist and libertarian internationalist, pro-Zionist and anti-Theodor Herzl, an anarchist opponent of the bourgeois Republic and a defender of captain Dreyfus, a ferocious critic of the Catholic Church whose greatest admirer was the Catholic socialist Charles Péguy. He is what is called in French “inclassable,” an outsider who does not fit into any of the established forms of politics or culture. By virtue of his romantic, subversive, iconoclastic and libertarian spirit, he is a unique and isolated figure in French Jewry. This is perhaps the reason why he was forgotten, and his life and writings remained ignored in France until recently, that is, up to the last ten or fifteen years.<sup>1</sup>

Bernard Lazare was born in the south of France (Nîmes), in 1865 into an assimilated Jewish family which had been settled in the country for several generations. Moving to Paris, he became known as a Symbolist writer and literary critic and published *Entretiens politiques et littéraire* (1891–93), an avant-garde magazine which served as a cultural cross-roads between Symbolist poets and libertarian authors such as Viellé-Griffin, Paul Adam, Henri de Régnier, Jean Grave, and Elisée Réclus. In both roles, as a Symbolist and anarchist, he evinced a passionate, romantic rejection of the modern industrial/bourgeois civilization, and idealized certain moral, cultural or social values of the past. Lazare often emphasized these secret affinities between Symbolism—even when conservative—and anarchism, as in this surprising eulogy of Sar Peladan, the mystical Symbolist, founder of the new Rosicrucian Order. In spite of the intransigence of his Catholicism, Peladan “shares the same hatred of the bourgeoisie as

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<sup>1</sup> For example—from my personal experience: when I asked for consultation in 1985, at the Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne, Bernard Lazare’s pamphlet on the Romanian Jews from 1902, the pages in the copy I received had never been cut.

the Communists,” and “the same horror of militarism, justice, patriotism and democratic power as the Anarchists”: in his book “there can easily be found a hundred pages or so which are far more violent” than any revolutionary leaflet, “and which very actively contribute to destructive propaganda.”<sup>2</sup>

Among the Symbolist writers Lazare was one of the most active in the anarchist movement. Not only did he defend anarchist doctrines in his literary magazine, but he also was a regular contributor to the libertarian press, notably *La Révolte*, the “anarchist-communist” weekly published by Jean Grave (and banned by the police in 1894). In July 1894, following the assassination of President Carnot by the young anarchist Caserio, the French Parliament passed a law against all forms of “anarchist propaganda.” Lazare had to take refuge in Belgium for several weeks to escape imminent arrest.

How might his variety of “libertarian communism” be characterized? As his biographer Nelly Wilson observed with great insight, the anarchism of Bernard Lazare and his friends—Elysée Réclus, Jean Grave, Georges Sorel—was prophetic but not “progressist” in the Republican or Socialist sense: they respected the past, such as medieval artisan guilds and rural communities, but disdained everything modern.<sup>3</sup> Lazare’s revolutionary ideas were rooted in Romanticism, that is, the cultural protest against modern bourgeois/industrial civilization, in the name of pre-capitalist communitarian values. He was radically anti-authoritarian, an enemy of the state in all its past, present and future forms, and a libertarian romantic whom Charles Péguy could hail with near-religious reverence:

There was a man, I have said with great exactness a prophet, for whom the whole apparatus of powers, reasons of state, temporary powers, political powers, authorities of every level, political, intellectual, even mental, did not weigh an ounce compared to a revolt, compared to a prompting of conscience.<sup>4</sup>

While he always remained a libertarian socialist, Lazare’s attitude towards Judaism changed radically during his life. Proud of his iden-

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lazare, review of J. Peladan, “Tiphonia,” in *Entretiens politiques et littéraires*, vol. VI, n° 34, January 1893, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Nelly Wilson, *Bernard Lazare and the problem of Jewish Identity in Late Nineteenth-century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Péguy, “A Portrait of Bernard Lazare,” in Bernard Lazare, *Job’s Dungheap. Essays in Jewish Nationalism and Social Revolution*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 29.

tity as an assimilated “French israelite,” he initially spurned any solidarity with the Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who arrived in France to escape pogroms and persecutions. His articles from 1890 are an astonishing example of this—almost anti-semitic—attitude:

What do Russian usurers . . . Polish horse traders, Prague middlemen matter to me, an Israelite of France . . . By virtue of which supposed fraternity shall I concern myself over measures taken by the Tsar against subjects who seem to him to be doing harmful things? . . . If they are suffering, I feel for them the pity naturally owed to everyone who suffers, irrespective of whom they are . . . Thanks to those hordes who are confused with us, people forget that we have been living in France for nearly two thousand years.<sup>5</sup>

This is precisely the sort of argument that he would, a few years later, denounce as typical of the Jewish “parvenu.”

As the antisemitic campaign intensified in France, notably thanks to Eduard Drumont’s books, Lazare began to become aware of the danger. From 1891 to 1893 he wrote *Antisemitism, its History and Causes* (1894), a strange and to some extent contradictory book. While the first part, of a historical nature, still holds the Jews “in part at least” responsible for their ills because of their “unsociable” character, the latter section, dealing with contemporary issues, is much more hostile to the antisemitic dogmas.

The new dimension, which perhaps explains the change, is his discovery of the ubiquitous presence of the Jewish revolutionary in modern societies: “Opposed to the Jewish money baron . . . stands the Jewish revolutionist, the child of biblical and prophetic tradition . . .” The chapter, “The Revolutionary Spirit in Judaism,” (written in 1893) emphasizes the importance of libertarian and egalitarian values in Biblical texts. As a consequence of this tradition

the Jews . . . not only believed that justice, liberty and equality could be sovereigns of the world, but they thought themselves especially entrusted with the mission of working for this reign. All the desires, all the hopes these three ideals gave birth to ended up crystallizing around one central idea: that of the Messianic times, of the coming of Messiah.

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lazare, “La solidarité juive,” (1890) in *Juifs et Antisémites*, Edition établie par Philippe Oriol (Paris: Editions Allia, 1992), pp. 17–18.

No wonder the Jews were involved in every modern revolutionary movement, from Jacob Pereira, a follower of Hébert, guillotined during the Year II, to Leo Frankel, the communard of 1871, by way of Heinrich Heine, Moses Hess, Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx, this “descendant of a long line of rabbis and teachers . . . inspired by that ancient Hebraic materialism.”<sup>6</sup>

This book illustrates the path that led Bernard Lazare to regain his Jewish roots: by discovering the prophetic sources of the modern revolutionary spirit and the Jewish figures of socialism, he succeeded in reconciling his Jewish identity and the libertarian utopia in his mind. But the essay from 1894 was only the first step in his long journey to seek his lost identity: to some extent it was still immersed in the illusory world of the “French israelite.” This is obvious in the book’s astonishing conclusion: the distinction between Jews and Christians is gradually disappearing, and antisemitism is only a vestige of the past, “one of the last, through most long-lived manifestations of that old spirit of reaction and narrow conservatism which is vainly attempting to arrest the onward movement of the Revolution.”<sup>7</sup>

This unfounded optimism was soon to shatter when—barely a year after these lines were published—the arrest of Captain Dreyfus triggered the greatest wave of antisemitism in the history of France since the Middle Ages. As is well known, Lazare played a major role in “The Affair,” pioneering the campaign to defend the Captain and, in 1896, publishing the first piece against the official version of the facts: *A Legal Error. The Truth about the Dreyfus Affair*. He also was the first—and for a quite long time, the only one—to denounce the antisemitic nature of the measures taken against the Captain: Dreyfus had been arrested because he was a Jew; he had been sentenced because he was a Jew; the voices of justice and truth could not be heard in his favour, because he was a Jew (“Deuxième Mémoire,” 1897). Showered with insults and accusations, barred from the newspapers to which he had been a regular contributor, Lazare suddenly found himself in a state of total isolation: he became a sort of pariah.

Bernard Lazare’s boldness in the Dreyfus battle was not unconnected to his anarchist ideas: the libertarian hostility towards the

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard Lazare, *Antisemitism. Its History and Causes* (New York: The International Library, 1903), pp. 285–294, 310–317.

<sup>7</sup> Lazare, *Antisemitism*, pp. 370–75.

State, the courts and military hierarchy was probably a powerful motivation for his involvement, even if his pamphlets argued solely on the ground of the defence of human rights. It was not by chance either that Sébastien Faure's *Le Libéraire* was among the first newspapers to support the Dreyfusard cause, and that in February 1898, Charles Péguy could write: "Antisemitic rage has become the master of our streets . . . only the anarchists have done their duty . . . they were the only ones who dared to pit violence for justice against the violence for injustice of the antisemitic gang."<sup>8</sup>

If the Dreyfus Affair confirmed Lazare in his anarchist convictions, the mass antisemitic hysteria against the "Jewish traitor" led to a turning-point in his ideas on the Jewish condition: his ambivalent attitude to antisemitism was gone once and for all, as well as his optimistic illusions about the "French Israelites"! From that moment he regarded Dreyfus as the symbol of the Jewish people, victimized by antisemitic hatred throughout the world, and in particular of the East European Jews whom he had previously treated with so much contempt: "Dreyfus embodied not only the age-old suffering of the nation of martyrs, but also the present grief. Through him, I saw the Jews thrown in Russian hard-labour prisons . . . the Romanian Jews whose human rights had been denied, the Galician Jewish proletarians starved by financial trusts."<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, because of the Affair Lazare discovered, like other Jewish intellectuals of the time—such as Theodor Herzl himself—Judaism as a nationality, and became a Zionist—without, however, renouncing his libertarian and revolutionary beliefs. Romanticism, as a cultural rebellion against capitalist modernity, fuelled nostalgia for past communitarian forms and provided the common ground for his anarchist utopia and for his heterodox Jewish nationalism. He was closer to the cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha-am than to Herzl's *Realpolitik* of compromise with the great powers. And like Martin Buber a few years later—but the Jewish-German writer apparently ignored Lazare<sup>10</sup>—he blended an anti-authoritarian socialism with

<sup>8</sup> Péguy, "L'Épreuve," *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, n° 7, February 1898.

<sup>9</sup> Article in *L'Aurore*, June 7, 1899, quoted in N. Wilson, *op. cit.* ch. 8.

<sup>10</sup> However, Hans Kohn, a young follower and later biographer of Martin Buber, wrote in his teacher's journal, *Der Jude*, a moving homage to Bernard Lazare as a man in whom "the old spirit of the prophets has awakened once more," an "anarchist similar to Gustav Landauer" and a messenger of "the anarchism of the Kingdom

his national aspirations. In one of his first Zionist texts, "The Jewish proletariat confronted with antisemitism" (February 1897) he declared: "We must live once again as a people, which means as a free collectivity, but on the condition that the collectivity not be modelled after the capitalistic and the oppressor states in which we live."<sup>11</sup>

Rather than the issue of territory, it was the spiritual rebirth of the Jewish nation, a return to historical roots, that aroused his interest: "We are still the old stiff-necked people, an intractable and rebellious nation; we want to be ourselves, what our ancestors, our history, our traditions, our culture and our memories have made of us."<sup>12</sup> In a lecture in March 1897 to the Association of Russian Jewish Students (in Paris), Lazare explicitly distinguished nationality from territory: "The Jew who says today, I am a nationalist, will not say in any special, specific or clear way that he is a man who wants to reconstruct a Jewish State in Palestine and dreams of conquering Jerusalem. He will say: I want to be a completely free man, I want to enjoy the sun, I want to have the right to human dignity . . . At certain times in history, nationalism, for groups of human beings, is the manifestation of the spirit of freedom."<sup>13</sup>

However, Lazare is not ready to give up his internationalist faith, which he tries to reconcile with the national Jewish option through an original reflection on the dialectics between universalism and particularism—which has no equivalent in French socialism:<sup>14</sup>

Am I in contradiction with the internationalist ideas? Not at all . . . When the socialists fight against nationalism, they fight in reality against national protectionism and exclusivism; they fight against this chauvinistic, narrow and absurd patriotism, which leads the nations to oppose each other as rivals or enemies . . . What is behind internationalism? It obviously acknowledges the existence of nations. What does it mean to be an internationalist? It means to establish, between the nations, links not of diplomatic friendship but of human fraternity . . . To

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of God"; see Hans Kohn, "Bernard Lazare und die Dreyfus-Affaire," *Der Jude* (1924), p. 291).

<sup>11</sup> Lazare, *Juifs et antisémites*, p. 140. On the debate among French anarchists on Lazare's views, see Sylvain Boulouque, "1899: un débat sur le sionisme dans le mouvement anarchiste," in Philippe Oriol, ed., *Bernard Lazare, anarchiste et nationaliste juif* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999), pp. 173–180.

<sup>12</sup> Lazare, "Necessité d'être soi-même," *Zion*, 1897, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Lazare, "Le nationalisme juif," *Juifs et antisémites*, pp. 155–156.

<sup>14</sup> The nearest equivalent would be Charles Péguy, if his thought had not been tainted, after 1910, by rabid anti-Germanism.



suppress the borders does not mean to make a unique blend of all the inhabitants of the globe. Is not one of the usual conceptions of international socialism, and even of revolutionary anarchism, the federative conception? . . . In order for internationalism to establish itself, it is necessary for humans groups to have already conquered their autonomy; they must be able to express themselves freely, they must be conscious of what they are.

The universal, humanist dream of international socialism does not require homogeneity, the imposition of a single cannon: "Human richness is made of its diversity. Each human group is necessary and useful to humanity: by contributing to bring beauty to the world, it is a source of forms, thoughts, images."<sup>15</sup>

During these years, 1897 to 1898, Lazare corresponded with Theodor Herzl and took an active part in the initiatives of the Zionist movement, sharing its aspiration of a return to Palestine. At the Second Zionist Congress held in Basle in August 1898—the first and last he would attend—he was acclaimed as a hero of the Jewish people and elected to the Presiding Council and the Action Committee. But the euphoria did not last long, and he soon clashed with Herzl and the leading bodies of the movement. The break took place when Herzl, who was negotiating with the Sultan of Turkey—Palestine still was part of the Ottoman Empire—refused to take a stand on the massacre of the Armenians. In his letter of resignation from the Zionist Action Committee in February 1899, Lazare wrote to the founder of the movement:

I have held, for a long time, opinions, ideas, thoughts, and tendencies which are radically opposed to those which guide you, my dear friend, and which guide the Actions Committee. Your thoughts are bourgeois, your feelings are bourgeois, your ideas are bourgeois, and your social views are bourgeois. And yet you want to lead a nation, our nation, the nation of the poor, the oppressed, the proletarians.<sup>16</sup>

One month later, he wrote again to Herzl, announcing solemnly his decision to leave the leadership of the Zionist movement:

I ask you to accept my resignation from membership in the Zionist Actions Committee, and to inform your colleagues of my decision . . .

<sup>15</sup> Lazare, "Le nationalisme juif," pp. 156–159.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Jean-Denis Bredin, *Bernard Lazare. De l'anarchiste au prophète* (Paris: Editions de Fallois, 1992), p. 316.

Tomorrow, without doubt, the Actions Committee will possess the most fearful instrument of oppression and demoralisation: the colonial Bank. Your government will from then on be represented by a money-coffer. I'm not of this government. This is not what the Prophets and the humble people who wrote the Psalms once dreamt. But if I separate myself from you, I do not separate myself from the Jewish people, of my people of proletarians and paupers, and it is for its liberation that I will continue to work, even if by ways which are not yours.<sup>17</sup>

Although the nascent Zionist movement had known many crises, Lazare's resignation and the sort of radical arguments he presented had no precedent: once more, he appears as a singular and unique figure.

Despite his resignation, he remained linked to the movement, but from an increasingly critical perspective, inspired by his socialist faith and by a libertarian rejection of authoritarian politics.<sup>18</sup> When Chaim Weizmann, himself a more moderate opponent to Herzl, invited him to speak at a counter-congress of young Zionists, Lazare declined the invitation but sent him a letter (May 1901) explaining his unorthodox views: "I understood that Herzl's Zionism would not give Jews their basic freedoms. Leading a herd of slaves into Palestine is not a solution to the problem." The important thing, in his view, was to organize the people in the Jewish centers in Galicia and Russia, and to develop Jewish culture—but not in the sense of a "narrow nationalistic sentiment":

Cosmopolitan Israel has always suffered from exclusivism, protectionism and nationalism. It should avoid them and help, if possible, the world to get rid of this plague. Jewish culture does not mean a culture which develops or exacerbates chauvinist feelings—on the contrary, it means a culture that is able to develop the Jewish tendencies that are human tendencies in the highest sense of the word."

Such a task could only be achieved by "organizing the Jewish proletariat as an autonomous proletariat . . . and breaking with the political-diplomatic and bourgeois Zionism that is currently on stage."<sup>19</sup> One cannot but acknowledge the striking similarity between Lazare's

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> In 1900 he still considered himself sufficiently involved in the Zionist movement to write a proposal for reforming the Zionist Congress, in view of its meeting in London. See "Projet de réforme du Congrès sioniste" (Londres, 1900), in *Juifs et antisémites*, pp. 220–222.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Bredin, pp. 317–318.

ideas in this document and those of the Jewish *Bund* which had just organised itself (1897) in the Tzarist Russian Empire—even if the French thinker never mentions this Jewish socialist organization—which he apparently ignored.

Lazare was not aware of the existence of a national Palestinian-Arab entity, but he rejected a colonial policy that sacrificed other peoples to the interests of Zionist diplomacy. He was particularly disgusted by the refusal of Herzl and the Zionist Congress of 1901 to denounce the massacre of the Armenians. In an article published in the journal *Pro-Armenia* of January 1902, under the title “The Zionist Congress and the Sultan” he gave free rein to his disappointment:

The Zionist Congress, meeting in Basel, has just given a public homage to Abd-ul-Hamid. The representatives—or those who claim to be such—of the oldest among the prosecuted nations, those whose history can only be written with blood, send their greetings to the worst of murderers. . . . This people, covered with the blood of its own wounds, is thrown at the feet of a Sultan covered with the blood of others, and in this Assembly no protest was heard.<sup>20</sup>

During these years, 1901–1904, Lazare seems to distance himself from the Zionist solution, by arguing for the participation of the Jews in the movements for social liberation of their countries.<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to compare his attitude just before his first visit to Romania, in 1900, with the conclusions of the pamphlet on the Jews in Romania that he published in 1902 in Péguy’s *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. In March 1900 he wrote a letter to a group of Zionist students in Romania accepting an honorary membership of their organization:

I believe that Judaism cannot liberate itself from slavery only by emancipating itself as a nation and not by looking for a political emancipation in the countries where the Jews live . . . Judaism must organize itself everywhere as a National Proletarian party. The Jewish people must, in conquering its freedom, proclaim the freedom of its proletariat and create the foundations of a social republic.<sup>22</sup>

A very different standpoint is developed in the pamphlet from 1902, written after his first visit to the country. This document, which

<sup>20</sup> In Lazare, *Juifs et antisémites*, p. 217.

<sup>21</sup> This is also the conclusion of Nelly Wilson in her biography; see p. 337.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Wilson, p. 427.

publicly denounced the grim condition of the Jewish minority in this country, victim of official antisemitic discriminations, was translated into German, Romanian and English, and had a great international echo, particularly in the United States. Soon afterwards Lazare made his second visit to the country and was received by the Jewish community as a hero and a savior, while the government tried to mobilize antisemitic students against the embarrassing foreign visitor. His main argument in the pamphlet was far from any Zionist doctrine: if the fiercely antisemitic bourgeoisie of the Romanian landowners and officials

drives the Jew to desperation and pushes him to his limits, the Jew, in spite of his passivity, in spite of the counsel given him by the fearful rich of his own people, will join the worker in the fields and help him shake off the yoke. But even if he does not join with him, it is the rebellious Romanian peasant who, directly or indirectly, will one day resolve the present Jewish question in Romania, by freeing himself and by freeing the Jews.<sup>23</sup>

His strong Jewish national feelings and his ambivalence towards Zionism are also present in his last work, written in 1902–1903 (he died in September 1903, at the age of 38): *Job's Dungheap*. As a pariah conscious of his exclusion, Lazare declared in this cultural-nationalist and libertarian-socialist testament his pride in being Jewish, his revolt against Christian antisemitism, and his scorn for the rich, assimilated and parvenu Jews. *Job's Dungheap* did not have much resonance among French Jewry, but it was discovered by Hannah Arendt and made into a central piece of her analysis of the modern Jewish condition, grounded on the duality between “conscious pariah” and “parvenu.” She also took the initiative of editing the book in English, in 1948, and of writing a preface for it.<sup>24</sup>

The heretical and explosive nature of the aphorisms explains perhaps why they were published only 25 years after his death, and even then, in a substantially expurgated version. Only recently, in 1998, was the entire document published, thanks to a French researcher,

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<sup>23</sup> B. Lazare, *L'oppression des Juifs dans l'Europe orientale. Les Juifs en Roumanie* (Paris: Editions des Cahiers, 1902), p. 103.

<sup>24</sup> See the collection of Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, ed. Ron Feldman (New York: Grove Press, 1978), and Arendt, ed., *Job's Dungheap. Essays in Jewish and Social Revolution* by Bernard Lazare (New York: Schocken, 1948).

Phillipe Oriol: almost a century after it was written by Bernard Lazare! What was so shocking in the censored passages? Several of them violently criticized the bourgeois variant of Zionism:

Is there any difference between going to Zion in order to be exploited by the rich Jew, and our current situation? This is what you are proposing to us: the patriotic joy of no longer being oppressed except by those of our own race; we want nothing to do with it.

Another aphorism, bearing the title “Against the Nationalism of the Soil,” seems to criticize the very principle of Zionism:

You want to send us to Zion? We do not want to go . . . We do not want to go there to vegetate like a dormant little tribe. Our action and our spirit lies in the wider world; it is where we want to stay, without abdicating or losing anything.<sup>25</sup>

However, Lazare does not seem to have come to a definite conclusion in relation to the Zionist aims. In some of the aphorisms, references can still be found that advocate a return to the ancestral country. There is also a dialogue between a “patriotic” (Zionist) and a “cosmopolitan” (Internationalist) Jew, where the exact stance of the author is not disclosed. And there is a note with the title “Zionism” which seems rather sceptical: this movement, it explains, is a reaction against the old antisemitic grievance that “Jews have no homeland.” In response they tried “to show that they wanted to create, on rocks and in sand, a small, wretched State that would become their homeland—one that the best of Jews used to scorn, and which they gave up well before it was destroyed by Roman authorities.”<sup>26</sup>

It seems that in his last years Lazare was moving away from the heretical form of socialist and cultural Zionism which he advocated from 1897 to 1900, toward a sort of socialist and cultural diasporanationalism, not unlike Buber’s friend Gustav Landauer, the anarchist thinker and leader of the—ephemeral—Bavarian Republic of Councils (1919), or the East European proletarian *Bund*. Lazare’s idea of Jewish nationalism was “to participate in the human enterprise

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<sup>25</sup> Lazare, *Le Fumier de Job*, ed. Philippe Oriol (Paris, Editions Honoré Champion, 1998). I had come upon Lazare’s original manuscript some years ago and quoted these and other aphorisms in my book *Redemption and Utopia. Libertarian Judaism in Central Europe* (London: Athlone Press, 1992).

<sup>26</sup> Bernard Lazare Papers, MS 522, Box 4, Note 61, Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris.

while remaining oneself.”<sup>27</sup> His was a messianic nationalism, in which dispersion was a part of Israel’s mission.<sup>28</sup> In the name of that universal task, he categorically rejected assimilation: “If the Jew becomes Christian, there is a ferment of revolution and emancipation for the world that disappears; by becoming Christian the Jew hallows and legitimates the slavery that he has endured.”<sup>29</sup>

Like Gustav Landauer, Lazare believed in the universal revolutionary mission of the Jewish people. In an article from 1898 on “The Jewish proletariat and antisemitism” he summarizes his conception of Judaism as a moral and political imperative: “The bourgeois and clerical antisemites blame the Jews for being revolutionaries. Let us work to deserve this blame. Let us be among the first that demand human liberties, among the first that call for the kingdom of justice and equality.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Lazare, *Le fumier de Job*, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, p. 268.

<sup>29</sup> Lazare, *Le fumier de Job*, pp. 166–7.

<sup>30</sup> Lazare, *Juifs et antisémistes*, p. 139.

## THE ZIONIST WORLD OF ARNOLD ZWEIG

John M. Efron  
University of California, Berkeley

Arnold Zweig's long life bore witness to the most important events in the history of Zionism, and indeed the Jewish people in modern times. When he was born in Gross-Glogau in Silesia in 1887, the first stirrings of Zionist aspirations were already being heard. At the time of his death in East Germany in 1968, Israel was still reveling in its stunning, recent victory in 1967's Six Day War. Not merely a passive observer of these developments, Zweig, a celebrated novelist and playwright—he succeeded Heinrich Mann as president of the East German Academy of Arts in 1950 and was awarded the International Lenin Prize in 1958—was also a participant in many of them, and as such, his life's journey is illustrative of larger trends within modern German Jewry, especially its creative responses to some of the more acute pressures of modernity: assimilation, antisemitism, Zionism, German nationalism and militarism, and Communist internationalism, and imperialism.

In this essay I seek to give meaning to Zweig's Zionism by locating him in the context of the Zionism of his German contemporaries, setting forth the Jewish intellectual and political background to his own activities. Beyond that, this essay specifically attempts to establish that the *fin-de-siècle* psychiatric discourse about Jews influenced much of Zweig's own view of the world, and in particular, informed his strikingly dichotomous evaluation of Eastern and Western European Jewry. Such an approach not only permits us to understand Zweig, *per se*, but also facilitates a broader discussion of the Zionist world he inherited and inhabited.

German Zionism came about as a result of three interrelated developments: Jewish access to higher education, Russian Jewish emigration to Germany, and the rise of organized antisemitism toward the end of the nineteenth century. In the wake of the unification of 1871, German Jewry was emancipated and thereafter underwent

a process of massive economic, social, and cultural transformation.<sup>1</sup> With political freedom won and economic advancement achieved, becoming German in the fullest cultural sense was the goal of all German Jews. But the way Jews went about this had unintended consequences. The acquisition of *Bildung*, a process of self-cultivation that rejected instinctual and emotional forces in favor of the application of reason was central to the cultural and historical development of German Jewry following emancipation. While *Bildung* was not to be achieved merely through formal education, education was nevertheless at the heart of the Germanizing project of German Jewry. In 1906 while only 8 percent of Prussian children received an elementary education, the figure for Jewish children was 59 percent. The percentages for those attending secondary school are almost identical. Likewise, Jewish attendance at universities conformed to general patterns. To take the academic year of 1911–1912 as an example, we see that for every 10,000 males attending Prussian universities there were 13.19 Protestants, 9.19 Catholics, and 66.22 Jews.<sup>2</sup> Thus the drive by Jews to acquire *Bildung* and thus integrate, while apparently successful, ironically led to further Jewish isolation. For the more the Jews acculturated and “became German” the less they actually looked like the majority of Germans, in a sociological and indeed cultural sense. As George Mosse has written: “The Jews, unlike the masses, reached for *Bildung* in order to integrate themselves into German society. The Jews and the German masses entered German social and political life at roughly the same time, but the Jews were apt to reject the world of myth and symbol, the world of feeling rather than reason. Through the very process of their emancipation, they were alienated from the German masses.”<sup>3</sup>

As noted above, two other features affected the emergence of German Zionism—the emigration of Jews out of Russia beginning in the 1880s, and the contemporaneous rise of organized antisemitism. By 1910, Russian Jews formed 13 percent of Germany’s 600,000

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<sup>1</sup> The best survey of this period is Michael A. Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> David Preston, “Science, Society, and the German Jews: 1870–1933” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1971), 105; and Monika Richarz, “Demographic Developments” in Michael A. Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 8.



Jews. Many of these immigrants attended universities and their impact on German Jewish students was considerable. In fact, by 1912, Russian Jews were 56 percent of all Jewish university students in Germany.<sup>4</sup> They were made highly visible because nearly three-quarters of them were to be found at only 5 institutions: Berlin, Leipzig, Breslau, Königsberg, and Munich.<sup>5</sup> Their easy identifiability was further enhanced by the fact that they tended to concentrate in one faculty: medicine. The intense Jewish engagement with medicine had a crucial impact on the development of German Zionism, of which more will be said below.

Access to education facilitated the rise of a successful Jewish middle class. In response, antisemitic political parties emerged in Germany and Austria that set themselves the goal of rolling back the gains made by Jews after emancipation.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, antisemitism became an important feature in German cultural and social life as a vast array of *völkisch* and professional organizations preached the gospel of hate.<sup>7</sup> The disproportionate number of Jews attending universities also saw those institutions become hotbeds of antisemitism. Excluded by German nationalist fraternities, German Jewish students responded by forming their own fraternities and associations.<sup>8</sup> Such organizations, however, did not have a separatist agenda. Like the rest of

<sup>4</sup> Jack L. Wertheimer, "The 'Ausländerfrage' at Institutions of Higher Learning. A Controversy over Russian Jewish Students in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 27 (1982), pp. 187–215 and *Idem*, "Between Tsar and Kaiser—The Radicalisation of Russian Jewish University Students in Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 28 (1983), 329–349.

<sup>5</sup> Monika Richarz, "Soziale Voraussetzungen des Medizinstudiums von Juden im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert" in Albrecht Scholz and Caris-Petra Heidel, eds., *Medizinische Bildung und Judentum* (Dresden: DDP Goldenbogen, 1998), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Peter G.J. Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (New York: John Wiley, 1964); Richard S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975; Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollack, and Gerhard Botz, eds., *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987); Werner Jochmann, *Gesellschaftskrise und Judenfeindschaft in Deutschland, 1870–1945* (Hamburg: Hans Christians, 1988), 30–98; and the comparative study by Albert Lichtbau, *Antisemitismus und soziale Spannung in Berlin und Wien 1867–1914* (Berlin: Metropol, 1994). For Jewish responses see Ismar Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964).

<sup>8</sup> Keith H. Pickus, *Constructing Modern Identities: Jewish University Students in Germany, 1815–1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999).

the Jewish community, members of these fraternities longed for Jewish integration and acculturation into the life of the German nation. Nevertheless, a small faction of Jewish university students was dissatisfied with this. Unlike many recently emancipated German Jews, they were not ashamed of their Russian Jewish coreligionists, indeed were proud to show solidarity with them, and rejecting the assimilationist path of their fathers, they responded to antisemitism and assimilation by creating the Zionist movement.

German Zionism was thus the creative reaction of a small group of Jewish university students to emancipation, political and racial antisemitism, and mass emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe. These early Zionists came from the Jewish lower middle-classes and formed what Hagit Lavsky called an “academic and commercial proletariat.” They were mostly doctors, lawyers, and small businessmen—precisely the background of Arnold Zweig, whose father was first a saddler and later a shipping agent and grain dealer.<sup>9</sup> Exposed to antisemitism at the universities, and vulnerable to the impact of German boom and bust economic cycles, these young radicals adopted a highly critical view of German society. One might say a pessimistic and cynical view.<sup>10</sup>

Initially, German Zionists were motivated, to a great extent, by the fate and welfare of Russian Jewry. Organizationally, German Jewry began working to resettle Eastern Jews in Palestine coterminous with the beginnings of mass migration out of Russia.<sup>11</sup> The Lovers of Zion (*Hovevei Tsiyon*) movement in Russia saw German chapters established in the 1880s, soon followed by similar organizations such as *Esra*, an association that promoted Jewish agricultural settlement in Palestine. The goals of the first generation were best summed up in the title of a pamphlet by one of the founding fathers of German Zionism, Max Bodenheimer. In 1891, Bodenheimer, a lawyer and the son of a well-to-do Stuttgart family, published *Wohin mit den russischen Juden?* [*Whither Russian Jews?*]<sup>12</sup> Indeed, early German

<sup>9</sup> Arnold Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit 1933* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1934), pp. 138–139.

<sup>10</sup> Hagit Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe: The Distinctive Path of German Zionism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Derek J. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 41–59.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen M. Poppel, *Zionism in Germany, 1897–1933: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977), pp. 1–23; Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Schocken, 1976), 82.

Zionism was not meant to be a panacea for German Jews, most of whom enjoyed the comforts of middle class life. Rather, it was intended to be a solution to the Jewish question in Russia.

Yet this situation would soon change. Despairing of German anti-semitism, and inspired by their encounter with Russian Jews at the universities, a small but vocal number of German Jews rejected the philanthropic Zionism of their fathers, and demanded a more personal and practical expression of Zionist experience, one that would see the Jews leave Germany for Palestine. Consequently, at the annual Zionist conference held in Posen in 1912, German Zionism underwent a radical change. Under the leadership of an emerging second generation that sought to eradicate the uprootedness that was held to be characteristic of diaspora existence, the conference declared that it was now the duty of every German Jew to incorporate emigration to Palestine as part of his "*Lebensprogramme*."<sup>13</sup> As a result, the arm-chair, Russocentric Zionism of the early generation was cast aside and replaced by a more activist agenda.

German Zionism was always the cultural and political expression of a tiny minority. However, it was a politically powerful minority and enjoyed a role as a central player in the World Zionist Organization. It was a force to be reckoned with, not because of its numbers—it didn't have many—but through its enormous reserves of talent. Nearly all the leading German Zionists were university educated, white-collar professionals. This group, which was born in the 1880s and 1890s, expressed radical Zionist ideas. Largely estranged from Jewish tradition and deeply skeptical about a Jewish future in Germany, Zionism was a means for them to achieve Jewish self-respect and foster ties to their people. Paradoxically, their Zionism, to a great extent born of German antisemitism and the apparent failure of assimilation, was inspired by German *völkisch* ideology, which provided them with a way to conceive of Jewish identity and *Volksgemeinschaft*.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the demand that Jews seriously consider emigration to Palestine (aliyah), the rhetoric of Zionist ideology also underwent

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<sup>13</sup> Poppel, *Zionism in Germany*, pp. 50–63.

<sup>14</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995), pp. 39–40; and George L. Mosse, *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left and the Search for a Third Force in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), pp. 77–115.

transformation prior to World War One. This was the direct result of the professional backgrounds of the movement's youthful leadership. While many of the early and most important German Zionists such as Max Bodenheimer, Theodor Herzl, and Arthur Ruppin were lawyers, physicians too made up a significant percentage of the leadership cohort. Just prior to the Great War, and thereafter, physicians left their particular discursive mark on German Zionism. Doctors made up 25% of the early leadership, and their Zionist medical polemics were extremely influential in contributing to the widespread belief that all Jews, not just those from Eastern Europe, were a sickly, enervated group at medical risk. They were also instrumental in fostering the belief that the only cure for the ills that beset individual Jews and their communities was the creation of a healthy environment in the Land of Israel. There, in Palestine, both Diaspora disease and mentality would undergo radical change for the better.<sup>15</sup>

Because physicians were part of the scientific class in Wilhelmine Germany, they were esteemed and thus highly influential, a consequence of Germany's scientific preeminence and the exalted place occupied in that society by the academic mandarin class. Moreover, physicians were especially honored in Jewish society. As the Zionist physician, Felix Theilhaber, put it: "To the Jews, the bodily welfare of man here and now seems to be of supreme importance . . . The Jewish physician is an instrument for the promotion of such welfare; his existence and his activities, are necessary to Jewish society. The Jewish world prizes the doctor."<sup>16</sup> Thus when they spoke, they were at the very least guaranteed an audience, even if that audience did not fully share the commitment to the Zionist cause, as most German Jews did not. But by being listened to, these young physicians were able to contribute to the formation of Zionist and even non-Zionist culture and ideology, providing both with a rich array of metaphors and long-lived images about Jews and their political, social, and physical condition.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Max Mandelstamm, "Rede Dr. Max Mandelstamms," *Die Welt* 4, 35 (1900): 1-7; and Siegmund Kornfeld, "Die jüdischen Aerzte und der Zionismus," *Die Welt* 5, 16 (1901): 1-3; Siegfried J. Plaschkes, "Die Ärzte in der Zionistischen Bewegung" in *Sefer Yoav likhvod N.M. Gelber* (Tel Aviv: Olmano, 1963), pp. xxi-xxxiv.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit*, pp. 205.

<sup>17</sup> John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

Inspired by such language, Zionists of all backgrounds, and this included Arnold Zweig, recognized that their task involved the regeneration of the Jews and the revivification of a Jewish society that they regarded as having undergone stultification during the long course of exile. By representing the exilic state of the Jews as one that promoted ill-health, Zionist polemicists established antipodal diagnostic categories of “normal” and “abnormal” to compare Jewish and Christian society. Consequently, the languages of medicine and the natural sciences, perhaps as much as any other borrowed discourses came to shape and define the political language of German Zionism. The linguistic and visual semiotics of the Zionist enterprise were informed by contemporary notions of health, disease, strength, weakness, masculinity, and femininity—categories themselves embedded in the discourse of modern medicine.<sup>18</sup>

What made for the impact of Jewish doctors on German Zionism was that while Jews were only 1 percent of the total population in 1900, they were 11 percent of all German physicians. More importantly, they were, by 1933, a staggering 50 percent of the doctors in Berlin and 60 percent in Vienna.<sup>19</sup> Arnold Zweig himself recognized the importance of Jewish doctors to the social and cultural physiognomy of German Jewry, not to mention Germany itself. In 1933 he wrote, in recognition of the ubiquitousness of Jewish doctors in Germany, “Probably every reader of this book [*Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit*] will have had personal acquaintance with some Jewish member of the [medical] profession, will have become aware of his imaginative insight into individual cases of disease, of his care and thoroughness in examination, of his friendliness towards panel patients, and of the way in which he adapts his fees to the means of those whom he has to treat.”<sup>20</sup>

The discursive influence of medicine on German Jewish culture

<sup>18</sup> See Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 99–118.

<sup>19</sup> Jacob Lestschinsky, *Das wirtschaftliche Schicksal des deutschen Judentums: Aufstieg, Wandlung, Krise, Ausblick* (Berlin: Energiadruck, 1932), p. 100; Werner F. Kümmel, “Vom ‘unnütz verlogten Volk’ zum ‘volksfremden Denken’: Polemik gegen jüdische Ärzte im Wandel der Geschichte” in Herbert Bareuther et al., *Medizin und Antisemitismus: Historische Aspekte des Antisemitismus in der Ärzteschaft* (Münster: LIT, 1998), pp. 37–38; and Avraham Barkai, “Population Decline and Economic Stagnation” in Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* vol. 4, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 33 and 37.

<sup>20</sup> Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit*, pp. 201–202.

was so strong that it also had an impact on the most estranged and deracinated of Jews. It is ironic that even assimilationists held positions that were identical to the Zionists in that they also diagnosed the Jewish condition similarly. Of course they offered radically different prescriptions for cure. Still, in terms of content and sentiment there is hardly any difference between Max Nordau's call of 1902 for a "*Muskeljudentum*", for Jews to "once again become deep-chested, taught-limbed, steely-eyed men" and the following remarks by the assimilated industrialist, Walter Rathenau. In an 1897 essay entitled "Höre Israel!" that appeared in Maximilian Harden's journal, *Zukunft*, Rathenau exhorted Jews to "look at yourselves in the mirror! This is the first step toward self-criticism . . . As soon as you have recognized your unathletic build, your narrow shoulders, your clumsy feet, your sloppy roundish shape, you will resolve to dedicate a few generations to the renewal of your outer appearance."<sup>21</sup> Through having Jews participate in sporting activities, both Zionists and assimilationists hoped to fashion a "muscular Jewry." The subsequent establishment in Central Europe of Jewish sports associations around the turn of the twentieth century that sought to masculinize and invigorate the Jews, was a direct response to the prevailing negative image of them as effeminate and weak.<sup>22</sup>

The fin-de-siècle's medical representations of Jews, whether implicit or explicit, established firm links between ethnicity and disease, between varieties of Judaism and various pathological states. As a literary figure, Arnold Zweig helped create an important trope in Zionist discourse by tapping into these medical depictions of Jews. In particular, he borrowed from the psychological discourse on Jews. At university, Zweig was an avid student of psychology, having taken

<sup>21</sup> Max Nordau "Muskeljudentum" in *Zionistische Schriften* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1909), pp. 379–381; while Rathenau's remarks are reprinted in Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *Jew in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 267–268.

<sup>22</sup> Max Nordau "Muskeljudentum" in *Zionistische Schriften* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1909), pp. 379–381; Ludwig Werner, "Die jüdische Turnerschaft," *Die Welt* 8, 41 (1904): 5–7; George Eisen, "Zionism, Nationalism and the Emergence of the jüdische Turnerschaft," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 28 (1983): 247–262; David Biale, "Zionism as an Erotic Revolution" in Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, ed., *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 283–307; and Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, pp. 105–109; and John Efron *Medicine and the German Jews: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 105–150.

classes with Germany's greatest academic practitioners. He was also an unabashed disciple and later, correspondent of Freud. Waxing rhapsodical, he observed that, "There is no domain of human activity, including those of religion and the arts, which has not been illuminated and fertilized [*durchleuchtet und befruchtet*] by psychoanalysis. Mythology and ethnography have likewise been advanced, just as have pedagogy and social hygiene . . . When, in Berlin and elsewhere, the books of Sigmund Freud were burned along with my own, we received the greatest honour which modern barbarians can confer. For in due time it will be recognized that this Jew, Sigmund Freud, has been a man of perennial importance, ranking with such as Plato."<sup>23</sup>

Of all the Jewish physicians, psychiatrists were the most successful at promoting ideas—very often negative ones—about the Jewish body. Attentive to such literature, Zweig incorporated many of these into his own analyses of the Jewish problem. Psychiatrists helped push the widespread belief that the Jews possessed definable psychological traits that were peculiar to them as Jews, and that they displayed a higher incidence of insanity than non-Jews. Gentile psychiatrists, using a racial paradigm of analysis said this of all Jews, while Jewish practitioners, beholden to theories of environmental determinism, tended to delineate between Eastern European and Western European Jews, stressing distinctions between what they perceived were the different psychopathologies of the two groups.<sup>24</sup> Such a distinction would prove paradigmatic in Zweig's classic homage to Eastern European Jewry, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz* (1920). As a point of passing interest, but one that reinforces Zweig's debt to psychology, it should be noted that he used psychoanalytic categories to understand not only Jews, but their enemies as well. Referring to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Zweig wrote that "if [the book] is to be really understood, [it] must be read in the same spirit as that with which one would approach the *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* by Dr. Daniel Schreber."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit*, pp. 236–237.

<sup>24</sup> For some of what follows see my, "The 'Kaftanjude' and the 'Kaffeehausjude': Two Models of Jewish Insanity. A Discussion of Causes and Cures among German-Jewish Psychiatrists," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 37 (1992): 169–188.

<sup>25</sup> Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit*, 101–102. On Schreber see Eric L. Santner, *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Beginning during the Berlin *haskalah* of the eighteenth century and extending well beyond it, Jewish doctors saw German Jews as paragons of good mental health, while asserting that Eastern European Jews possessed myriad mental (and physical) disorders. But by the *fin-de-siècle* of the nineteenth century and into the Weimar period, a significant paradigm shift took place in this construct. No longer was the German Jew regarded as mentally fit. Rather, it was now the Ostjude who best represented a model of Jewish sanity. This shift in professional medical opinion came into sharp focus with the advent of Zionist psychiatry. In fact, it is my contention that the medical discourse prefigures and imparts a particular character to what would become the cult of the Eastern Jews after World War One, a project with which Arnold Zweig was intimately concerned because the cult energized and animated so many young German Jewish Zionists longing for a return to their roots through a celebration of Jewish "authenticity." What follows is an attempt to identify some of the psychiatric sources of Zweig's own evaluation of Eastern versus Western Jewry.

The Jewish psychiatrists of the older generation (many with close familial and cultural links to the East) recoiled at Eastern European Jewry, displaying an antipathy towards that group that resonated in their professional and personal lives. Unlike the younger generation of psychiatrists and other Jewish intellectuals in Germany who came of age between 1900 and 1918, they did not participate, as Zweig and others did, in the cult of the Eastern European Jew. Rather, they steadfastly clung to the belief that it was Western European Jewry, with its secular *Deutschtum*, that was the ideal symbol of modern Jewry, an ideal to which *all* Jews should aspire. They identified the integrated and educated Western European Jews as being mentally healthy, while they represented Eastern European Jewry as afflicted with all forms of psychoses and neuroses, largely a result of their religious orthodoxy.

Characteristic of the older view was that expressed in 1908 by the distinguished Berlin neurologist, Hermann Oppenheim, who noted that "approximately three quarters of all Russian-Jewish patients are neuropaths and hypochondriacs." According to Oppenheim, the high frequency of mental illness among Russian-Jews was a direct consequence of their environment. He listed four principle causes: the pogroms; the mental and physical strain of every day life; the poor hygienic conditions which resulted from poverty; and finally, the



Eastern European Jewish obsession with study (“even after a full day’s work”) in enclosed, unventilated rooms.<sup>26</sup>

Ironically, although he was no Zionist, Oppenheim echoed the views of first generation Zionists like the aforementioned Max Bodenheimer, for he too agreed that for Jews, Russia was a land of persecution and misery, a breeding ground for mental disorders. Oppenheim held that exactly the opposite was the case in Germany. There, reason, science, advanced medicine, a high living standard, and tolerance toward Jews were the hallmarks of a more civilized society. No longer subject to stigma and alienation, or so the scenario went, Jews had been allowed to integrate, to become German and had, as a consequence, become paragons of mental health.

Another distinguished neurologist, Moritz Benedikt, in Vienna, expressed himself similarly. For Benedikt, the Jews “are a very intellectual and neurotic nation,” but having lost contact with nature, hard work, sport, and the arts, Jews became different from other nations who, having their own territory, “could find an outlet for their passions and emotions in outward action.”<sup>27</sup> The Jews, on the other hand, developed inwardly. And here he was speaking about Orthodox Jews, not acculturated, secular Jews such as himself.

For Benedikt, the inner-directed nature of Orthodox or Eastern European Jewish life meant that the Jews focused excessively on the family. This, however, had detrimental mental consequences, for “the Jews became more and more neurotic.”<sup>28</sup> Benedikt was convinced that the unique sociology of Jewish family life in the East contributed to the high incidence of mental disorders among them. Cut off from the outside world, the Jews turned inward, developing a family life that “often resulted in excessive sexual intercourse, *inter matrimonium*.”<sup>29</sup> According to Benedikt, what was required to cure these Jews was for them to be removed from the East and placed in the more morally edifying and healthy conditions of the West.

At the same time that Oppenheim, Benedikt and other like-minded psychiatrists were issuing such opinions, younger, dissenting voices

<sup>26</sup> Hermann Oppenheim, “Zur Psychopathologie und Nosologie der russisch-jüdischen Bevölkerung,” *Journal für Psychologie und Neurologie* 13 (1908): 2–3.

<sup>27</sup> Moritz Benedikt, “The Insane Jew: An Open Letter to Dr. C.F. Beadles,” *The Journal of Mental Science* 47, 198 (1901): 506

<sup>28</sup> Benedikt, “The Insane Jew,” p. 506.

<sup>29</sup> Benedikt, “The Insane Jew,” p. 506.

among Jewish psychiatrists began to be heard. Indeed, these were the diagnoses of Zionist psychiatrists, physicians whose political leanings directly intersected with and indeed shaped their medical philosophies. With their emergence, a paradigm shift in the discussions of the etiology of mental illness among Jews began to take root. In 1902, a Jewish physician in Vienna named Martin Engländer delivered a public lecture at the Zionist fraternal lodge, Zion. His address was published as a book, entitled *Die auffallend häufigen Krankheitserscheinungen der jüdischen Rasse* (*The Most Noticeably Conspicuous Appearances of Illness Among the Jewish Race*). As a Zionist, Engländer drew a distinction between Eastern European and Western European Jews that was very different from that drawn by Oppenheim and Benedikt. Although he called attention to what he thought was the physical inferiority of Eastern European Jews, a consequence of their poverty, Engländer nevertheless claimed they enjoyed superior mental health to German Jews. This was because their Jewish ethnic and religious identities were intact. Conversely, the economic prosperity of German Jews had negative repercussions for their psychological state. Namely, as a consequence of their exertions to become bourgeois, they displayed what he called “an over-fatigue (*Übermüdung*) of the brain.”<sup>30</sup>

Engländer criticized the most prominent features of Jewish life in the West: urban living, disproportionate participation in intellectual or business professions, sedentary habits, extreme emotionality, timidity, and helplessness. Many Zionist physicians who diagnosed the Jewish condition around World War One echoed Engländer’s critique. Others built on it. In 1918 a young Russian Jewish doctor working at Zurich’s Bürghölzli clinic made the most forceful claim yet that it was not the Eastern European Jew who represented the psycho- and socio-pathic model, but, rather, it was the deracinated, culturally bankrupt Western European Jew. That psychiatrist’s name was Rafael Becker (b. 1891), unquestionably the most prolific and influential of all the Zionist psychiatrists.

Becker analyzed the social and psychological constitution of German Jews within the dissenting paradigm of neurosis developed by the one-time disciple of Freud, Alfred Adler (1870–1937). Having read Adler’s *Über den nervösen Charakter* (1912) (*The Neurotic Constitution*), and

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Engländer, *Die auffallend häufigen Krankheitserscheinungen der jüdischen Rasse* (Vienna: J.L. Pollack, 1902), pp. 12–13.

accepted its claim that “every neurosis can be understood as an attempt to free oneself from a feeling of inferiority in order to gain a feeling of superiority,” Becker was convinced this was the soundest explanation for why so many Jews suffered from mental illness.<sup>31</sup> Beyond this, Becker reserved his most critical remarks for those Jews who refused to accept Zionism (the majority of Western Jews). In fact, Becker believed that their recalcitrance was itself a sign of mental illness, its cause being a raging inferiority complex. They contracted this disease as a result of internalizing the negative evaluation of them by antisemites.<sup>32</sup>

In their attempt to overcome these feelings of inferiority, German Jews tried even harder to assimilate, which in the end only led to an increase in insanity. For Becker, emancipation and the subsequent entrance of Jews into the German middle classes led to the adoption of Christian mores and habits. It also manifested itself in the increase among Jews of heretofore “Christian” diseases—syphilis, paralysis, and feeble-mindedness. In sum, the insanity of German Jewry was a direct result of its assimilation.

In contrast to this, the ghetto, and the inbreeding (*Inzucht*) that had taken place there for centuries, was “the best security for the great psychical and physical productiveness of a people”<sup>33</sup> For Becker, central to the mental well-being of the Eastern Jews was their religious faith. As such, and contrary to the Enlightenment sensibility that informed his world view Becker, inspired by *völkisch* ideology, glorified Jewish life in the Middle Ages, celebrating what he saw as its social and religious cohesion as the source Jewish vitality and national spirit. The Jewish Middle-Ages were not a “*Leidensepoche*,” a period of suffering but, rather, a time of spiritual achievement, contentment and, therefore, psychological well-being.<sup>34</sup>

To Becker, it was the contemporary period that bore witness to the most intense Jewish suffering. According to him, the modern

<sup>31</sup> Franz G. Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry: An Evaluation of Psychiatric Thought and Practice from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 232.

<sup>32</sup> See Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

<sup>33</sup> “Die beste Bürgschaft für die große Produktivität eines Volkes wie auf psychischem, so auch auf physischem Gebiet,” Rafael Becker, *Die jüdische Nervosität* (Zürich: Spiedel and Wurzel, 1918), pp. 14–15.

<sup>34</sup> Becker, *Die jüdische Nervosität*, pp. 16–17.

Western European Jew had abandoned his faith in his drive to assimilate. In this respect, Becker parted company with Freud, arguing instead for the psychological efficacy of religious observance, which Becker saw as a bulwark against the psychologically disintegrating effects of secular modernity. In Germany the abandonment of pious worship meant an increase in insanity.

Overall, World War One had a profound impact on German Zionism, strengthening social and discursive trends that were already in place, while creating some new ones as well. In particular, the encounter of German Jewish soldiers on the Eastern Front with their Jewish brethren, and the spread of antisemitism in the ranks, culminating in the infamous *Judenählung* of 1916 (the attempt to statistically prove the patently false claim that Jews shirked military service at the front), all helped unleash deep feelings of ethnic pride among many young Jews—a sentiment many had not previously known.<sup>35</sup> Many were like Ernst Simon, a Jewish soldier on the Eastern Front, who described himself as a person entirely devoid of Jewishness who suddenly became a Zionist without any personal desire to be one and without even being aware of it. As for Zweig, he wrote to Martin Buber after the *Judenählung* that “I now regard myself as a captured civilian and a stateless foreigner.”<sup>36</sup> Later, Zweig wrote “For one who is to be a citizen, this necessarily means an independent existence upon Jewish soil. The more fiercely he is attacked in Germany because he is a Jew, the more obvious will it become to him that he must turn away from Germany. . . .”<sup>37</sup> Here Zweig was not alone. Increasing numbers of German Zionists concluded that the only solution to the Jewish Question was the demise of Jewish life in the Diaspora and its reemergence in Palestine. Anti-semitism, they argued, should not and could be combated, for it was a permanent characteristic of European culture.

Connected to this sentiment was another feature of German Jewish pre-war culture that was strengthened by the War. The power of

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Pulzer, “The First World War”, in Michael A. Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* vol. 3, 360–384; and Paul Mendes-Flohr, “In the Shadow of War”, in Michael A. Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* vol. 4, pp. 7–29.

<sup>36</sup> Noah Isenberg, *Between Redemption and Doom: The Strains of German-Jewish Modernism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 59.

<sup>37</sup> Zweig, *Bilanz der deutschen Judenheit*, pp. 303–304.

Zionist medical language was now harnessed to the promotion of the postwar cult of the East European Jew. I want to suggest that this familiar theme can be further illuminated when read in light of the contemporary medical discourse, something that hitherto has not been done. The cult of the *Ostjuden* was replete with language and opinions that are readily similar to and often derived from the assessments of Zionist physicians, some referred to above. Take, for example, the wartime writing of Benjamin Segel in the journal, *Ost und West*. In *Am Tage des Gerichts*, a serialized novella, Segel has a Polish Jew, Simon Berg, embezzle money from a Polish antisemite, Stefan Gemba. The story revolves around Berg's stricken conscience and his final decision on Yom Kippur to act in a manly and honorable fashion (contra to wartime antisemitic claims about Jewish men), and return the money to Gemba. He does so and asks Gemba for forgiveness. In response, the Pole lashes out in a drunken rage. Berg forcefully grabbed Gemba by the wrists, overpowered him and asserts his physical, moral, and ethical superiority. It is Gemba who now begs the Eastern Jew, Berg, for mercy. According to David Brenner, ethical and physical power are, in this story, presented as the hallmarks of the *Ostjude*, and are designed to inspire German Jewish men, recently humiliated by the charges of cowardice that culminated in the *Judenzählung*.<sup>38</sup>

By the time the Nazis rose to power, Zweig had come to recognize that Jewish heroes like Simon Berg need not necessarily be fictional. Thanks to secular Zionism and its emphasis on physical regeneration, young Jews had now become healthier than their forebears. Zweig remarked how:

We are struck, first of all by the bodily transformation of the Jewish youth, by the liberation of Jewish athletic capacities from the bonds which, since the sixteenth century, Jewish tradition and Jewish poverty Jewish town life and Jewish intellectualism, had imposed. We know the part played in this wonderful renovation by the Jewish-national renaissance, the Jewish gymnastic clubs, and the wanderings of the members of the Jewish hikers' leagues . . . The new Jewry of Palestine, an elite of land-workers and townsmen, would not be conceivable had it not been that before Zionism became actual the young Jews throughout Europe had already undergone a change. Only in circles where

<sup>38</sup> David A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost und West* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), pp. 151–158.

strict religion is traditional do we still find, in Cracow as in Jerusalem, those young Jews whose race is instantly betrayed by their weedy physique and their over-intellectualism. The rest, the great majority, are improving year by year in bodily type.<sup>39</sup>

Despite these unflattering claims about the Orthodox, Zweig lauded Eastern European Jews, especially in relation to those from the West, celebrating their *völkisch* authenticity and spiritual vitality, values he prized above those of physical prowess. In Zweig's proof-text of this genre, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz*, he makes a claim that could have written by the psychiatrist, Rafael Becker, charging that "Der Jude des Westens war auf dem Wege zu einer erstarrenden Konfession, einer ohnmächtig verzweifelten Frömmigkeit. . . ."<sup>40</sup> Compare this, for example, to his elegy of unconditional adoration of Eastern Jews:

Der greise Jude des Ostens aber wahrte sein Gesicht. Es sieht uns aus den Erzählungen Mendeles an, dies Gesicht: treuherzig und verträumt und von einer reinheit, die sich nur erkaufte mit Verzicht auf die breiten Tätigkeiten und das Glück der breiten Tätigkeit. Einen Kleinhandel einzurichten, Brot und Hering zu essen, Kinder zu zeugen und zu erziehen, die gebete der Tages- und mahlzeiten zu sprechen und viele Seiten Gemara zu lernen; von dem Wenigen ein Weniges den Armen zu geben, Bräuten auszustatten, Kranke zu besuchen, Tote zu begraben und die Trauernden zu trösten—das ist das Schema seiner Pflichtenkette, und wie leicht trägt er an ihr. (14)

Here there is no mental illness, no insecurity, no inferiority complex. There is beauty, certainty, authenticity, and moral healthiness. Living in a vital *Volksgemeinschaft*, Zweig's Eastern Jews became, according to Steven Aschheim, "the great counter-symbol, emblem of spirituality in a materialistic world."<sup>41</sup> Echoing Martin Engländer, Felix Theilhaber, and other anti-capitalist Zionist physicians, Zweig presents Eastern Jews as healthy, psychologically intact foils to the derailed, materialistic, German Jews.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Arnold Zweig, *Insulted and Exiled: The Truth About the German Jews* (London: John Miles, 1937), pp. 141–142.

<sup>40</sup> Arnold Zweig, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz* (Wiesbaden: Fourier, 1988), p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 199.

<sup>42</sup> See Felix Theilhaber, *Der Untergang der deutschen Juden: Eine volkswirtschaftliche Studie* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1921); and Hans Dieter Hellige, "Generationskonflikt, Selbsthaß und die Entstehung anti-kapitalistischer Positionen im Judentum. Der

While he was a far more critical observer and certainly no Zionist, the German Jewish novelist, and later convert to Christianity, Alfred Döblin, also believed that “real” Jews were not from Germany, but, rather, from Poland. In 1924, Döblin took leave from his medical practice to travel east, in search of them. He was, however, inspired in part by his own deracinated Jewish identity, German postwar anti-semitism, and Zionism. After pogroms broke out in the eastern part of Berlin in the 1920s, Döblin reported that:

Representatives of Berlin Zionism invited a number of men of Jewish origin to meetings to talk about these events, their background, and also the aims of Zionism. In connection with these discussions, a man came to my apartment and tried to talk me into going to Palestine, which I had no intention of doing. His influence had a different effect on me. I did not agree to visit Palestine, but I felt I had to get my bearings about the Jews. I realized I didn't know any Jews. I had friends who called themselves Jews, but I could not call them Jews. They were not Jewish by faith or by language; they were possibly remnants of an extinct nation that had long since integrated itself into a new milieu. So I asked myself and I asked others: “Where do Jews exist?” I was told: Poland. And so I went to Poland.<sup>43</sup>

While his comments and later descriptions of Polish Jews lack the romanticized and idealized quality of Zweig's evocations, Döblin expressed a similar, preconceived notion of Jewish authenticity, and what he considered a “healthy” Jewish identity. As he reported matter of factly: “Three hundred and fifty thousand Jews live in Warsaw, half as many as in all Germany. They are a nation. People who know only Western Europe fail to realize this. The Jews have their own costumes, their own language, religion, manners, and mores, their ancient national feeling and national consciousness.”<sup>44</sup>

For Sammy Gronemann, Yiddish translator for the German army and together with Arnold Zweig, a member of the administrative unit, Bezirk Oberost in Lithuanian Kovno, the simple piety of Jewish religious life was a further sign of the healthy mentality of Eastern Jews. Likewise reminiscent of Becker, but in stark contrast to Moritz Benedikt, who decried the Orthodox Jews he observed in Vienna,

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Einfluß des Antisemitismus auf das Sozialverhalten jüdischer Kaufmanns- und Unternehmersöhne im Deutschen Kaiserreich und in der K. und K. Monarchie,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 5 (1979): 476–518.

<sup>43</sup> Alfred Döblin, *Journey to Poland* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1991), p. xii.

<sup>44</sup> Döblin, *Journey to Poland*, p. 50.

Gronemann declared in his *Hawdoloḥ und Zapfenstreich*, “Seit ich die Synagoge des Ostens kennengelernt habe, ist mir der Tempel des Westens mit seinem Gottesdienst einigermaßen verleidet.” Irrespective of what kind of synagogue service it was, if it was German, Gronemann revealed he was uncomfortable with the “militärisch geregelten Art des gottesdienstlichen Betriebes.”<sup>45</sup> To describe religious worship as militaristic in the midst of the greatest slaughter the world had seen was a devastating critique. The orderly precision of German services stood in marked contrast to the authentic, spontaneous, and therefore well adjusted religious culture of Eastern Europe. Their Zionism, their longing for community, and their frustration at the failure of assimilation into German society inspired both Gronemann’s and Zweig’s critiques. By seeing the world according to the diagnostic categories established by psychoanalysis, Zweig and other young Zionists were able to construct a scenario of Jewish renewal and rebirth based on notions of salutariness that were drawn from medical discourse.

Finally, the war and Germany’s humiliating defeat had yet another decisive impact upon German Zionism in the 1920s. Whereas the defeat led to the emergence of ultra nationalism in Germany, German Zionism sought to distance itself from the German variety of radical nationalism. Instead, young Zionists represented Zionism as being an enlightened form of nationalism, seeking to liberate the oppressed and rekindle the dignity and honor of the Jewish people through universal values, equality, and respect for basic human rights. The war thus ignited a commitment to a synthesis of Zionism and socialism, something clearly articulated in the political vision of Arnold Zweig. Another feature that distinguished German Zionism from German nationalism was that it was steeped in the values of liberal democracy, a stamp that German Zionists left on Israel after emigrating there. In sum, German Zionism emerged from the war Palestino-centric, with a nationalist-humanist-socialist-democratic vision for an ideal society.<sup>46</sup>

During the Weimar Republic, when Arnold Zweig produced many

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<sup>45</sup> Sammy Gronemann, *Hawdoloḥ und Zapfenstreich* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1984), p. 60.

<sup>46</sup> Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*, pp. 42–45. Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 166–235; Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).



of his Jewish works, and was for a brief time editor of the Zionist newspaper, *Jüdische Rundschau*, Zionists mostly busied themselves with internal politics, educational programmes, ideological debates, and preparing for the future.<sup>47</sup> Despite the fact that the Weimar Republic offered Jews unprecedented opportunities, Zionist radicals such as Kurt Blumenfeld (1885–1863), warned that this was all a chimera.<sup>48</sup> Antisemitism, they claimed, was alive and well in post-war Germany and showed no signs of abating. Therefore, between 1919 and 1933, the building up of Palestine and the real practical work of forming a state occupied first place on the Zionist agenda.<sup>49</sup>

Even though the Zionists remained a noisy minority in the Weimar years—the Zionist Federation of Germany claimed about 20,000 members at the end of the 1920s—the rise in extremist antisemitism and assimilation, as well as the international legitimacy bestowed upon Zionism thanks to the Balfour declaration meant that the Zionists had to be taken seriously. Besides, the well of talent that made up German Zionism was so deep that just by virtue of the fact that they were doctors, lawyers, professors and commercial leaders, their occupations instantaneously accorded them respect and honor in the class and hierarchy-conscious society of pre-Nazi Germany.

Fleeing to Palestine soon after the Nazi takeover of power, Arnold Zweig quickly became disillusioned with the fact that Zionism now seemed to display those features that he most abhorred in nationalist movements: parochialism, tribalism, intolerance, aggressiveness, and romantic-mysticism. He supported Brit Shalom, a German Jewish-led society founded in Jerusalem in 1925 to foster amicable Jewish-Arab relations and to seek a joint solution for the future of Palestine through the creation of a bi-national state.<sup>50</sup> But Brit Shalom's

<sup>47</sup> For other forms of Jewish politics see Michael Brenner, "The Jüdische Volkspartei—National-Jewish Communal Politics during the Weimar Republic," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 37 (1990): 219–243.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in the Weimar Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 210.

<sup>49</sup> Other Zionist leaders focused on *Gegenwartsarbeit*, determined to "conquer the communities," as Theodor Herzl had put it. On Zionism in the Weimar Republic see Avraham Barkai, "The Organized Jewish Community" in Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* vol. 4, pp. 90–95.

<sup>50</sup> Susan Lee Hattis, *The Bi-national Idea in Palestine during Mandatory Times* (Haifa: Shikmona, 1970); Hagit Lavsky, "The Puzzle of Brit Shalom's Impact on the Zionist Polemic during its Time and Thereafter," *Ha-Tsionut* 19 (1995): 167–181 (Hebrew); *idem*, "German Zionists and the Emergence of Brit Shalom" in Jehuda Reinhartz

membership was always confined to a small circle of liberal intellectuals and political leaders. Zionism, through its own internal dynamic and as a result of the increasing threat to Jews from outside forces, was moving in a direction that Zweig could not tolerate. Though he did not give up on the need for a Jewish state, Zweig summed up his feelings in a letter to Freud in 1934 when he wrote, "I don't care any more about the 'land of my fathers.' I haven't got anymore Zionist illusions either. I view the necessity of living here among the Jews without enthusiasm."<sup>51</sup>

This was not an unusual position. Just as Zweig's earlier Zionism and the language it was expressed in was typical of the medicalized German Jewish culture of the day, his disaffection with Zionism was expressed by many other German Jewish refugees who had made their way to Palestine after the Nazis rose to power. As a group, they had difficulty adjusting to the difficult material conditions, the foreign cultural atmosphere of the Middle East, and especially the Hebrew language. Disillusioned, many German Jews left Israel after 1948 and into the 1950s, returning to a Europe they felt more at home in.<sup>52</sup>

But for a very few, Arnold Zweig among them, the yearning for a better, freer, world remained as strong as ever, with a small number leaving their new homes for the Eastern Bloc. Some of them had originally followed the dictum of the Posen Zionist conference to make emigration to Palestine part of their "*Lebensprogramme*." But the reality of life in Israel was jarring. Longing to find a place where *Kultur* rather than *Zivilization* flourished, as Ferdinand Tönnies, Leo Baeck, and others had hoped it would, they were sorely disappointed. Perhaps ironically still under the sway of their intense Zionist experiences, utopian dreams still filled their thoughts. But where once they were animated by the goal of building a healthy Jewish par-

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and Anita Shapira, eds., *Essential Papers on Zionism* (New York: New York University Press, 1966); and Aharon Kedar, "Brit Shalom—The Early Period, 1925–1928", in Yehuda Bauer, et al. eds., *Studies in the History of Zionism: Presented to Israel Goldstein on his Eightieth Birthday by The Institute of Contemporary Jewry* (Jerusalem: ha-Sifriyah ha-Tsiyonit, 1976), pp. 224–285 (Hebrew).

<sup>51</sup> Ernst L. Freud, ed., *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), p. 57.

<sup>52</sup> Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), pp. 36–40 on Zweig, and more generally on the difficult integration of German-Jewish refugees in Palestine, pp. 46–64.

adise removed from a spiritually corrosive, antisemitic Germany, they were now filled with the desire to create a humanitarian, socialist *Volksgemeinschaft*, one that they hoped would be an antidote to a materialistic, corrupting, and sick West. Tragically, that proved to be as much an illusion as German Zionism's previous romance with the *ostjüdische Antlitz*.



## THE RUSSIAN JEWISH INTELLIGENTSIA AND MODERN YIDDISH CULTURE\*

Delphine Bechtel  
Université Paris IV

At the end of the nineteenth century, the emergence of a secular, politically active and culturally-aware Jewish intelligentsia in Tsarist Russia is a phenomenon that has been addressed mainly in respect to the history of the Bund (the General Jewish Workers' Union) and Zionism. Little is known about a wide array of political parties and thinkers beyond these two blocks, notably, the multi-faceted Yiddish political-cultural realm—as only fragments of it have been accorded scholarly attention. However, Russian Jewish intellectuals debated intensely about Jewish identity and politics, trying to define and to envision a future Jewish diaspora culture. Their theoretical discussions concerning the possibility of the emergence of a modern, secular, democratic culture centered on three major issues: first, the role of language in their conception of a Jewish national future; second, the opposition between religion and secular culture; and third, the project of Jewish autonomy and the modernization of the Jewish community (kehillah).

*Research into the past: establishing the “yikhes” of a nation  
and its language*

The first question Jewish diaspora nationalists had to face in respect to Jewish culture in Russia was that of its language, namely Yiddish. The Czech historian Miroslav Hroch divides the national revival of smaller nations in Eastern Europe into three successive stages: a) the awakening of a scientific interest in the culture among intellectuals and scholars; b) a patriotic wave of agitation calling for the recognition

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of the nation; and c) the transformation of the national movement into a mass movement.<sup>1</sup>

In this respect, the linguistic renaissance of Yiddish and the political awakening of the Jewish nation in Eastern Europe closely follows the developments among the surrounding Slavic nations.<sup>2</sup> The ideas of Herder about language as the expression of the “soul of a people” exerted a major influence on Central and Eastern European nationalists such as the Serbian lexicographer Vuk Karadzic (1787–1864),<sup>3</sup> the Czech linguists Josef Jungmann and Josef Dobrovsky (1753–1829), and the Slovak Jan Kollar.

In the world of Yiddish culture, the phenomenon of linguistic revival starts with the emergence of modern literature based on the ideas of the Haskalah—as exemplified by works of Ettinger, Dik, Mendele Moykher Seforim, then the Yiddish classics, Sholem Aleykhem and Y.L. Peretz. But towards the end of the nineteenth century, and in spite of its impressive literary revival, Yiddish still showed tremendous deficiencies in its aspiration as a “High language,” that is, to be used in educational, scientific and political discourse, and gain acceptance by the governmental powers.<sup>4</sup>

The sociolinguist Joshua Fishman has distinguished two aspects in language revivals which he respectively calls “corpus planning” (working on the history, morphology, grammar of the language) and “status planning” (achieving its internal and external recognition, both by society and State).<sup>5</sup> The first falls within linguistics, the second, politics. But in the Jewish sphere both emerged at the same time and were conducted by mainly the same people.

According to the 1897 census, 97% of the Jews in the Russian

<sup>1</sup> Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, trans. Ben Fowkes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 23ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Alexander M. Schenker and Edward Stankiewicz, eds., *The Slavic Literary Languages: Formation and Development* (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1980).

<sup>3</sup> Vuk Karadzic assembled a dictionary of the Serbian language, collected folk songs, and called for the use of the vernacular language in phonetic spelling, as against the old literary Slaveno-Serbian language base on Old Church Slavonic.

<sup>4</sup> About the distinction between High and Low Language (H and L), see Joshua A. Fishman, *The Sociology of Language: An Interdisciplinary Social Science Approach to Language in Society* (Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House, 1972), p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Joshua A. Fishman, “Attracting a Following to High-Culture Functions for a Language of Everyday Life: The Role of the Tshernovits Language Conference in the Rise of Yiddish,” in *Never Say Die! A Thousand Years of Yiddish in Jewish Life and Letters* (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), pp. 369–394.

Empire indicated Yiddish as a mother tongue. Because of the spread of Yiddish as a vernacular of the masses (as opposed to Hebrew or Russian which only a small elite could master), Yiddish was first acknowledged as a means of political propaganda by the socialist movement, in particular the Bund.

As early as 1893, the Russian Jewish Socialist Arkady Kremer (1865–1935) favored the switch to Yiddish in propaganda directed at the Jewish masses. “Zhargonishe komitetn” were established in Vilna starting 1895 in order to publish and spread socialist thought, literature and popular science in Yiddish.<sup>6</sup> Russian Jewish intellectuals themselves had to go through a double process of “re-ethnification” combined with a “re-linguification”.<sup>7</sup> Numerous Russian Jewish intellectuals, who had been members of an assimilated Russified elite, went back to the cause—and concomitantly, the language, of the Jewish people. Among them the most famous examples are the Bundist leaders Vladimir Medem and Isaac Hurvitsh, the Socialist Revolutionaries An-Sky and Zhitlovski, and the Poalei-Zionist Ber Borokhov.

The Bund was not the only Jewish political party committed to the defense of the Jewish masses, from a national and a social point of view. The *Vozrozhdeniye* (Renaissance) group, from which emerged the Socialist Zionist Workers Party in 1905 (or S.S. or Territorialists), the Jewish Socialist Workers Party (or SERP, or Sejmists) created in 1906, and the Jewish Social-Democratic Workers Party Poalei Tsiyon founded in 1906, all supported Jewish culture and Jewish autonomy (albeit with ideological divergences).<sup>8</sup>

As the Yiddishist and Socialist Revolutionary theoretician Khayim

<sup>6</sup> See Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers' Movement in Tsarist Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 117–118. On the “Jargon Committees” see A. Litvak, *Vos geven* (Wilno/Warsaw: Kletskin, 1925). Ezra Mendelsohn's study shows very well how the Russian language discussion circles (*kruzhok*) where the workers' intelligentsia was educated in the 1870s is replaced in the 1890s by specialized unions led by political activists, who increasingly made use of the Yiddish language in order to galvanize the Jewish masses.

<sup>7</sup> These terms are borrowed from Joshua A. Fishman, *Language and Nationalism* (Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House, 1972); reprint in Joshua A. Fishman, *Language and Ethnicity in Minority Sociolinguistic Perspective* (Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> About these parties issuing from the *Vozrozhdeniye* movement, see Moyshe Zilberfarb, “Di grupe Vozrozhdenye,” *Royter Pinkes*, vol. 1, Warsaw, 1921, pp. 113–130, as well as the unpublished doctoral thesis of Bernard Suchecky, *Sionistes-Socialistes, Sejmistes et Poalei Tsiyon en Russie: Les premières années 1900–1907*, 2 vol., Paris: EHESS, 1986.

Zhitlovski pointed out, the fate of Jewish nationalism and the fate of its language, Yiddish, were closely linked:

Beyde, dos yidishe folk un di yidishe shprakh, hobn kimat dem zelibikn goyrl. Koydem kol fodert men fun beyde, zey zoln bavayzn az zey zeynen *emese*: az dos yidishe folk iz beemes a folk un az di yidishe shprakh iz beemes a shprakh.

Both, the Jewish people and the Jewish language, share almost the same fate. Before all, they are being asked to show that they are real: that the Jewish people is *really* a people and that the Jewish language is *really* a language.<sup>9</sup>

The recognition of the legitimacy of Yiddish was therefore strongly dependent upon the work of linguists. The German-language *Wissenschaft des Judentums* had made hostility and condescension toward the Yiddish language a prerequisite of its investigations on this subject. At the turn of the century, isolated German-Jewish medievalists and dialectologists had defended a few dissertations on the phonology of the German component of Yiddish, trying to establish its descent from Middle-High-German.<sup>10</sup> The distinctive character of the language as integrating different components (Germanic, Hebrew, Slavic) into an organic whole was still being ignored.<sup>11</sup>

Only in the East could a positive attitude toward the language and truly dispassionate research acknowledging the intrinsic features of the language crystallize. This was launched by the famous Czernowitz Conference in 1908, which caused a great stir in the Jewish world and constituted the inauguration of scholarly enquiry.

The voluntarist, normative approach of the participants in the Conference confirm that national languages, far from being given

<sup>9</sup> "Dos yidishe folk un di yidishe shprakh," first published in the St. Petersburg *Der Fraynt* in 1904, quoted here from Khayim Zhitlovski, *Geklibene verk* (New York: Kultur-kongres, 1955), p. 112.

<sup>10</sup> This refers to the works of Lazar Sainean, Alfred Landau, and Jakob Gerzon. For details see Dovid Katz, "On Yiddish, In Yiddish and For Yiddish: 500 Years of Yiddish Scholarship" in *Identity and Ethos: Festschrift for Sol Liptzin*, ed. Mark Gelber (New York: Peter Lang, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> Significantly, the first dissertation on the Hebrew component of Yiddish was written by the young Solomon Birnbaum, born in Vienna but raised in Czernowitz, the son of the Yiddishist Nathan Birnbaum: *Das hebräische und aramäische Element in der jiddischen Sprache. Inaug. Diss. unter der Philosophischen Fakultät der bayer. Julius-Maximilian-Universität Würzburg* (Kirchhain: Zahn und Baendel, 1922). Reprint with an afterword by Walter Röhl, Hamburg: Buske, 1986. See also Salomo Birnbaum, *Praktische Grammatik der jiddischen Sprache*, (Vienna/Leipzig: A. Harleben, Die Kunst der Polyglottie 128, 1918; reprint Hamburg: Buske, 1966).



facts that constitute a culture, as Herder would have said, are in reality social constructions. The final address of the Congress, summarizing what had to be done (establishing a modern school and publishing system, writing grammars and dictionaries), illustrates very well John Austin's concept of "saying is doing" (the idea of "performative speech").<sup>12</sup> Or as Eric Hobsbawm puts it,

National languages are almost always semi-artificial constructs and occasionally, like modern Hebrew, virtually invented. They are the opposite of what nationalist mythology supposes them to be, namely the primordial foundations of national culture and the matrices of the national mind.<sup>13</sup>

But to establish the legitimacy of the language, intellectuals and scholars had to embark on academic research investigating and proving its ancestry, coherence, and history. They had to establish a historical *Wissenschaft* that could put it on a par with other European languages. In 1913, the linguist and theoretician of the Poalei Tsiyon party Ber Borokhov called for the constitution of a Yiddish philology in a programmatic article entitled "The tasks of the Yiddish philologist":

Fun ale visnshaftn shpilt di filologye di greste rol in der natsyonaler oyflebung fun di untergedrikte felker. Filologye iz mer vi lingvistik, zi iz nit keyn hoyle teorye far lomdim, far 'yoyshev oyhel', not take a praktisher vegfirer farn folk. [ . . . ]

Kol zman der folk blaybt analfabetish in zayn eygener shprakh kon men nokh nit redn vegn a natsyonaler kultur."

Of all sciences, philology plays the largest part in the national revival of oppressed people. Philology is more than linguistics; it is not an empty theory for scholars, for people cloistered in a sanctuary, but on the contrary a practical guide for the people . . . As long as a people remains illiterate in its own language, it is impossible to talk about a national culture.<sup>14</sup>

In this excerpt Borokhov contrasts linguistics, a descriptive and elite subject, and philology, which is of concern to the people as a whole, because it seeks to establish a norm for the present. At the same

<sup>12</sup> See John Langshaw Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> Ber Borochoy, "Di oyfgabn fun der yidisher filologye," in *Der Pinkes: Yorbukh far der geschichte fun der yidisher literatur un shprakh, far folklor, kritik un bibliografie*, ed. Shmuel Niger (Vilna: Kletskin, 1913), p. 2.

time, Borokhov's article aims at founding a genealogy, a vertical legitimation for the field of Yiddish philology, by supplying a bibliography of 500 titles retracing four centuries of research on the Yiddish language, the oldest item dating back to 1514.<sup>15</sup> The core of his historical approach is the intention to demonstrate the ancestry and the authenticity of the Yiddish language, and to generally approach the study of the language through universally-recognized methods.

Another decisive scholar of the language, Max Weinreich, politically closer to the Bund, followed in Borokhov's footsteps, deepening the genealogical and archeological methods, unearthing treasures of past interest for Yiddish. He defended his Ph.D. at the University of Marburg on *The History of Yiddish Philology*. But unlike his fellow students who typically would publish their doctoral thesis in German, he never published it in German, but turned it into a book in Yiddish (*Shtaplen*, Berlin 1923), before returning to Polish Lithuania and accepting a teaching position at the Wilno Teachers' College (*lerer seminar*). Borokhov, Weinreich, and others such as Rubashov, Shtif, Schipper, all devoted themselves to the history of Yiddish language and literature out of commitment to Jewish Diaspora nationalism, seeking in scholarship an ally to politics.<sup>16</sup>

*What becomes of religion in a secular culture:  
Reinterpretation, rejection, cohabitation*

Russian Jewish intellectuals had to face another important problem—of trying to establish a modern secular culture. While other nations could successfully fight for the separation of Church and State without losing an intrinsic component of their national culture, Jews had to deal with the fact that even popular culture was so deeply tinged with religious life that they were almost impossible to separate. Also, socialism was an ideology that precluded the belief in God, or at

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<sup>15</sup> Ber Borokhov, "Di biblioteyk funem yidishn filolog: Firhundert yor yidishe shprakh-forshung," in *Der Pinkes*, 1913, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–67.

<sup>16</sup> See Delphine Bechtel, "Les chercheurs en linguistique et histoire littéraire yiddish: une génération d'intellectuels engagés dans la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle," in Delphine Bechtel, Evelyne Patlagean, Jean-Charles Szurek and Paul Zawadzki, eds., *Écriture de l'histoire et identité juive: Europe ashkénaze XIX<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003), pp. 253–278.

best relinquished it to the private realm. So what were they to do with religion after secularization? Facing this dilemma, three thinkers, Zhitlovski, Latski-Bertholdi, and Steinberg, presented options which I will refer to as reinterpretation, rejection, and cohabitation, that testify to the wide array of the alternatives discussed at the time.

Khayim Zhitlovski offers a first solution in his seminal article "The National-Poetic Renaissance of the Jewish Religion," (1908).<sup>17</sup> Here he attempts a synthesis between his pledge for Jewish culture and his wish to see Jews enter into a secularized modernity.

Zhitlovski starts with the affirmation of his radical atheism, his inability to believe in antiquated superstitions. In the face of the assimilation that is threatening the *apikorsim* such as himself (and perhaps in the face of a general sense of "disenchantment" of the world), he suggests a kind of creative reinterpretation, of reappropriation of religion. Any individual could, if he so wishes, retrieve different elements of the Jewish religion and transform them into national symbols, endowing them with a poetic and aesthetic value.

Zhitlovski begins with a lengthy enumeration of items that could be kept and reinterpreted, starting with God himself (God seen as a character of the Biblical legends), accompanied by the *Shekhinah* and the Messiah (as literary characters of the *midrashic* and Kabbalistic literature), up to all Biblical heroes such as King David, King Solomon, the Prophets etc. Turning to the Jewish holidays, Zhitlovski proposes to keep all those which can be invested with a national character, such as Passover and Hanukah, which he sees as historical testimony to the Jews' struggle for freedom. Even the fasts of Tisha be-Av and the 17th of Tamuz, commemorating the destruction of the Temple, must therefore remain. Shavuot, celebrating the gift of the Torah on Mount Sinai, must equally be celebrated, because the Torah has brought social justice and a higher level of humanity, and thus can be considered the apex of civilization of its time. Similarly, Shabbat, the "sacred social holiday" which has brought weekly rest for all workers, should be observed by all as "first manifestation of the modern socialist ideal."

It becomes manifest, by the end of the article, that Zhitlovski has

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<sup>17</sup> "Di natsyonal-poetische vidergeburt fun der yidisher religye" (1908), reprint in Khayim Zhitlovski, *Geklibene verk* (New York: Congress for Jewish Culture, 1955), pp. 219–255.

little by little reinstated the entire Jewish practice, reinterpreted in a secular and national way. Interestingly, his vision of the future is quite close to the national celebration of Jewish holidays in the present day State of Israel. The only two holidays he advises to strike are Yom Kipur (the account of one's sins being a purely individual matter, each Jew should be free to address this matter for himself on whatever day he wishes), and Purim. In this case, Zhitlovski surprisingly considers Purim not really a Jewish holiday, because it derives from Persian legends and was never taken seriously by the Jews themselves.

Zhitlovski undertakes, first, a secularization of Judaism, and second, a national sacralization of that same secularized Jewish culture. He also claims for a secular Jewish future the age-old attachment to the sacred language, Hebrew, to the Holy Land, which must be redeemed from foreign dominion, and to the future national resurrection according to the call of the Prophets. That would actually make him quite close to a Zionist, although he claims to be a Yiddishist and a territorialist, working closely with the S.R. and the Sejmist parties on Jewish autonomy. And his project of national reinterpretation of the Jewish religion is closely akin to what had been recently been called "civil religion" in Israel.<sup>18</sup>

Another answer to the question of the contradiction between religion and secularism was proposed by Zev/Wolf/Wilhelm Latski-Bertholdi (1881–1940). Latski makes no secret of his admiration for the German *Aufklärung*, from which he took his borrowed names, Wilhelm (the first name of the Prussian Emperor, and Bertholdi, a literary pseudonym he chose out of reverence for Moses and Felix Mendelssohn (Bartholdi)). He participated in the meetings of *Vozrozhdeniye*, then became a Socialist Zionist (S.S.). At the International Socialist Congress held at Stuttgart in 1907, he defended the cause of "proletarian territorialism."

In 1914 he expressed his position on the opposition between religion and secular culture in an article called "Judaism or the Jews."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See Eliezer Don-Yehiya and Charles Liebman, *Civil Religion in Israel, Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (University of California Press, 1983), where the authors show that in Israel, symbols and practices of Judaism pervade everyday life, and were co-opted by the atheist political elite in order to promote nationalism and social integration. Later, in the 1970s, the rising Likud made a strong use of the appeal of ethnic traditionalism and championed a new civil religion.

<sup>19</sup> "Yidishkeyt oder yidn oder vegn yidisher apikorses," in the Yiddish journal *Di yidische velt*, vol. I no. 2, February 1914, pp. 228–246.

This is, according to him, the alternative. Latski juxtaposes Judaism (meaning the dogmatic religion set up by the Rabbis) and the living Jewish people. In an impressive panorama of Jewish history throughout the ages, he intends to show "how the Rabbis have put Jewish thought and freedom in chains." Pitting "freethinking" against the hegemony of "rabbinism," Latski explains that exile and the lack of a territory have forced the Rabbis to erect, through Jewish Law, a spiritual homeland for diaspora Jewry that ended up in becoming a prison. He takes sides for *apikorses* each time it manifested itself in Jewish history, in such historical figures such as Uriel Accosta, Spinoza and even Sabbatai Zevi. But without a territory, it is not possible to give up the unifying cement of coercive religion. Exile thus becomes for him a cultural tragedy, in which the individual had to submit to the community and its desire for survival. Freethinkers such as Barukh Spinoza or Salomon Maimon were banned because the community could not accept contradiction within its midst. Unlike Zhitlovski, Latski wished to emancipate the Jews from the yoke of the Jewish Law and tradition entirely. But he took notice that modern Jewish nationalists (whether Zionists or diasporists) could not do away with religion and were compelled to reinterpret it (as Zhitlovski does) at least on a symbolic level. In exile, he said, any form of national identity was doomed to become a resurgence of the old "yeshivah of Yavne" Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakai wrested from the Romans. Scorning the political program of the Sejmists, he claimed that "Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakai was the actual founder of the Jewish cultural autonomy." For him, all Jewish nationalists continue to rely on "the ideology of Shabbat and the holidays" and on neo-hasidic aesthetics that pervade even literature, as exemplified by Peretz' neo-hasidic literary tales.

Latski found a model in the heretical figure of Sabbatai Zevi, who proposed to the Jewish masses a truly revolutionary thought. For Sabbatai Zevi, the *Olam hatikun*, the redeemed world, was supposed to start immediately, since he advocated giving up the observance of the commandments right away (and more, transgressing them as much as possible).

Latski condemned the Zionist ideology, which in his eyes only amounted to an adaptation of Jewish "rabbinism" to the ideals of Haskalah. He claimed, on the contrary, to draw from the tradition of *apikorses*, of militant atheism, of complete renunciation of traditional Judaism. But this can be done only if the Jews have a territory. Only then can they become a truly secular Jewish nation.

Latski's vision, that of a radical atheism combined with the vision of a nation freed from the burden of rabbinical and oligarchical power, could be a model up to today for secular Israelis who wish to dissociate State and Synagogue and establish a civil Israeli identity.

A third option, which combines strict adherence to the *mitzvot* and radical Jewish socialism, is represented in the unique figure of the left Socialist Revolutionary Isaac Nahman Steinberg (Itskhok Nakhmen Shteynberg, 1888–1957). Never betraying his faith and his religious practice, Steinberg was appointed People's Commissar for Justice in the Soviet government formed by coalition between the Bolsheviks and the Left S.R. from December 1917 to March 1918. It is said that he used to lay *tefilin* in his office in the Kremlin every morning, and would interrupt the People's Commissars' meetings every day in the afternoon, for the sake of saying the *minha* prayer. He represents an interesting attempt to conjugate a fidelity to both Jewish and secular Law, in which he saw no contradiction.

An interesting testimony to this dual allegiance is his doctoral dissertation, defended at the Law School of the University of Heidelberg in 1910, on the subject of *The Talmudic Doctrine of Crime*.<sup>20</sup> Having been expelled from the University of Moscow because of his membership of the S.R. party, Steinberg and his brother Aaron had been sent to Heidelberg under the guidance of their Rabbi, so that they would not neglect the study of the Talmud abroad. Indeed they did not—but they succeeded in converting their Rabbi to the Socialist Revolutionary credo. Steinberg was religious out of family tradition, and a Revolutionary out of his personal ideal of justice. His Ph.D. subject on crime in the Talmud perfectly blends his Talmudic knowledge, his political choices, and his study of Law.

However, one may ask: why study criminality? Why look into the Talmud to find subtle distinctions between voluntary and involuntary homicide, intended and unintended injuries? Why attempt to define the precise circumstances for self-defense, legitimate and illegitimate use of violence, such as against a person who does not recognize the Law? At the time, the S.R. party was implementing its political struggle against Tsarist autocracy through acts of terrorism. It thus seems that young Steinberg was simply seeking, in the Talmudic

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<sup>20</sup> Isaak Steinberg, *Die Lehre vom Verbrechen im Talmud*, Sonderdruck der *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, vol. XXV (Stuttgart: Union deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1910).

corpus, and under the aegis of the German academic institution, a legal justification for political terrorism.

However, Steinberg ultimately developed into a strong opponent to Bolshevik use of terror. Although he was by all means the most religious of all three historical figures under scrutiny here, he did not attempt, in his theoretical writings, a reconciliation of religion and socialism. Religion was for him a matter of personal choice, a way of life and of being a Jew that he never questioned. In fact, all witnesses confirm that when Steinberg was People's Commissar for Justice, he was involved in a daily struggle against the Tcheka, the political police at the hands of Lenin. He was the mainly responsible for abolishing the death penalty in Russia, leaving only three legal ways to punish an individual: prison, boycott or banishment.<sup>21</sup> When he was dismissed in 1918, he spent his last hours in his office signing orders to set free dozens of people who had been jailed, among whom many were his political enemies. Aware of what was looming when the Bolsheviks would be the sole party in power, he wanted to shield them from the arbitrariness of Bolshevik dictates. After the Left S.R. were dismissed from government and started to be persecuted, Steinberg departed for Berlin.

In a later work published during his Berlin exile, *Violence and Terror in the Revolution: October Revolution or Bolshevism*, Steinberg attempted to establish an ethical foundation for politics. He now adamantly condemned all revolutionary violence, which he deemed incompatible with socialist ethics.<sup>22</sup> He aimed to resolve three antitheses: first, social revolution and individual fulfilment; second, class struggle and universal human solidarity; and third, the aspiration to individual freedom and the need for an organized society. Steinberg takes care to preserve the individual personality from social coercion and mass movements, and grants individuals the possibility to express themselves through three rights: the "right to solitude," the "right to self-defense," and the "right to rebel," which clearly run against the collective construction of a society.

Steinberg is an interesting example of harmony between Jewish religious faith and a humanistic democratic form of socialism. His

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<sup>21</sup> He nevertheless believed that there were justifiable means of repressing a collective, for example, the anti-revolutionary bourgeoisie, with the withdrawal of political rights.

<sup>22</sup> I. Steinberg, *Gewalt und Terror in der Revolution: Oktoberrevolution oder Bolschewismus* (Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt, 1931), pp. 290ff.

ideal is based on a solid sense of ethics and of the defense of the individual against the coercion any collective project is intrinsically bound to imply.

*Jewish self-administration: problems in the secularization of the kehilah*

The third problem Russian Jewish diaspora nationalists had to confront was the form of Jewish autonomy. While the Bund inscribed in its program the demand of national *cultural* autonomy on a personal basis, with the freedom to establish cultural institutions such as schools, publishing houses etc., the various groups stemming from the *Vozrozhdeniye* movement introduced a much wider claim. For them, a nation's life is not reduced to its cultural needs (even if these are of foremost importance). A nation also develops a social, economic and political life of its own, and these aspects of national life call for particular institutions.

To fill this gap, the autonomists suggested the secularization and modernization of the existing form of self-administration, that is the *kehilah*. The idea of national *political* autonomy was put forward by Moyshe Zilberfarb (1876–1934) in 1905.<sup>23</sup> For Zilberfarb, the individual is caught up and entangled in a multiplicity of social links: he is part of a community, a religion, a profession, a class, a State, a nationality etc. Therefore, individuals naturally join associations that defend their groups' interests. While this is widely accepted concerning trade unions, social antagonisms or political parties, it is usually expected that the individual emancipation of all citizens of a multinational state should sufficiently warrant the national development of any given ethnic minority. But this is not the case. Zilberfarb here quotes the Austrian Marxist Karl Renner who advocates recognizing nationalities as "legal entities" and endowing them with precise rights and prerogatives within the State. It is thus necessary that the law delimit what falls within the domain of the national group and what is within the scope of the state. Zilberfarb therefore demands that the interests of each nationality be dealt with by an elected Parliament or

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<sup>23</sup> "The principle of national-political autonomy" (in Russian), 3rd chapter of the collective volume *Vozrozhdeniye*, 1905, reprinted in Yiddish as "Der printsip fun der natsyonal-politisher oytonomye," in Moyshe Zilberfarb, *Gezamlte shriftn*, vol. 1 (Warsaw/Paris: Farlag Zilberfarb Fond, 1935).



Sejm, which will have a corresponding Ministry in the executive branch, while general (federal) affairs will remain in the realm of State institutions.

But this form of self-administration at the highest institutional level should, according to the autonomists, also be extended to the local level. It is of foremost importance to the Sejmists that power be decentralized and that simple citizens have direct access to power—which can be achieved by the secularization of the existing local forms of Jewish administration, meaning the *kehillah*. This is why, just a few years after composing his essay on national-political autonomy, Zilberfarb embarked on a Ph.D. at the University of Berne (Switzerland) on exactly that topic, *The Administration of the Jewish Communities in Russia*.<sup>24</sup> This is another example of how academic historical research was used as a means to support a political and national struggle.

Zilberfarb's colleague in the Sejmist Party Avrom Rozin (Ben-Adir, 1878–1942) addressed the issue of the modernization of the *kehillah* in a booklet entitled *Community Questions*, published in 1917 on behalf of the *Fareynikte*, the “Unified,” a party in which both Socialist Zionists and Sejmists had merged during the Russian Revolution.<sup>25</sup> Ben-Adir first replies to the objections of his opponents, that is, the orthodox and the nationalists. Confronting the orthodox, he maintains that the *kehillah* must become a secular institution although the majority of the Jews still support the religious *kehillah*. As a justification, he explains that in this case the religious majority wants to impose its way of life to the minority, which runs against the democratic ideal, and has mismanaged the *kehillah* according to its own antidemocratic interests in the past. Only common concerns should be within the remit of the *kehillah*, which should be a neutral, non-religious institution.

To the “bourgeois nationalists” who see in “past sociocultural forms the quintessence of the national genius” (and therefore want to maintain the *kehillah* as it is, meaning only a religious institution), Ben-Adir replies that there are no eternal national forms. Religion is only a time-bound product of the nation's creativity, but is destined to

<sup>24</sup> The thesis was published in German: *Die Verwaltung der jüdischen Gemeinden in Russland*, Petersburg, 1911.

<sup>25</sup> Ben-Adir (A. Rozin), *Kehile-fragn di kehile als organ fun natsyonaler oytonomye* (Kiev: Tsentral-komitet fun di fareynikte, and Warsaw: Bikher-farlag Tsukunft, Yidisher Sotsyalistischer val-komitet S.S., 1918).

be replaced by the secularism that now prevails in all nations. The dynamic process of a nation's development is crucial, and this is what the *kehillah* should embody.

About the question of the domain of the *kehillah*, Ben-Adir adamantly opposes the restrictive conception of the Bund and its idea of a *cultural* autonomy. After the Revolution of 1917, the Bund even demanded that all Jewish institutions other than educational and cultural that used to depend on the *kehillah* be surrendered to the municipal Duma, thus scuppering the network of existing Jewish autonomous institutions. For Ben-Adir, the question of the duties of the *kehillah* amounts to the question of the definition of the Jewish people. If the Bundists are right, then the Jewish people is reduced to a "cultural entity" or a "spiritual nation." But Ben-Adir sees the Jews as a "national community" (*kibets*), which thrives equally through its cultural, social, economical and political products. The Jewish community should thus be managed according to the democratic principle of decentralized autonomy. Only direct participation of the masses, that were up to now alienated from political life, will educate men to exert their social power as Jews. Ben-Adir sees in the *kehillah* and the initiatives emanating from it a set of grass-root organizations that will initiate Jews into political involvement and commitment to democracy.

This overview offers only a sketch of the different options for building a modern and secular Jewish culture that were elaborated by various political parties emanating from Russia, ranging from the Bund to Poalei Zionism. Except for a short time in Russia after the Revolution, and in the Ukraine in 1918, such models were never implemented. The Bolshevik assumption of power did not allow them to blossom. They nevertheless testify to the vitality of Jewish political culture and to the struggle for national, individual and universal freedom in a modern, democratic society. The ideas in these discussions could often serve as a reference for negotiating contemporary Jewish identities and managing Jewish communities around the world, or eventually, for re-thinking a modern Israeli civic nationalism.

CHANUKAH AND ITS FUNCTION IN THE INVENTION  
OF A JEWISH-HEROIC TRADITION IN  
EARLY ZIONISM, 1880–1900

François Guesnet  
Simon-Dubnow-Institute, Leipzig

Doch wenn dereinst dem Grab entschwebt,  
Zum Staunen aller Welt;  
Zum Siegeszuge sich erhebt  
*Ein Makkabäerheld*

Dann tönt auf Palästina's Au'n  
Von neuem Heldenstreit,  
Und Juda's Männer werden schau'n  
Verjüngte Herrlichkeit.

Heinrich Löwe, „Makkabäerlied“ in *Jüdische Volkszeitung* Vol. 7 N° 1  
(2.1.1894)

The significance of symbols and icons, as well as their integration into collective consciousness through holiday festivities, monument-building, and other practices is a well-documented element in the creation of nationally and ethnically defined collectives. This is a central element in the rise of modern nations and nationalisms.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will analyze the modifications of Chanukah celebrations throughout the last two decades of the 19th and the beginning 20th centuries among Jews in Galicia, Congress Poland, and the Pale of Settlement, as well as the Russian metropolises (Moscow, St. Petersburg). These changes, it will be argued, were less an expression of widespread ethnic mobilisation but rather an instrument chosen by representatives of the early Zionist movement to politically educate two specific segments of the Jewish population: members of a more or less secularized bourgeoisie on the one hand, and children in edu-

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<sup>1</sup> Among the most significant contributions in this field is Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983).

cational and philanthropic institutions of several kinds. In close relation to the *Zeitgeist* of the age of imperialism, the military dimension of the Chanukah legend became the key element in reshaping the holiday by the pioneer Zionists. The following analysis will proceed from descriptions of Chanukah celebrations, published in Galician, Congress-Polish and Russian weeklies. These contain a rich documentation of *mises en scène* of these celebrations, revealing a considerable regularity throughout the 1880s and 1890s. These reveal that the early Zionist movement developing in Central and Eastern Central Europe relied heavily on the ‘invention of a tradition’ as a political instrument. This can be demonstrated equally in the discursive strategy of early Zionists in Congress Poland—mostly among immigrants from Western Russia—concerning the integration of the legendary figure of Moses Montefiore in their initial propaganda efforts.

*The tradition of Chanukah in Eastern Europe*

The Chanukah festival commemorates the re-dedication of the Second Temple by Judah the Maccabee on 25 Kislev 165 B.C.E. after a period of desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The tradition of this celebration combines the memory of the military victory of the Hasmoneans with the legend of the oil found in the Temple, which, though sufficient for one day only, miraculously burned for eight days.<sup>2</sup> The kindling of the menorah on Chanukah symbolizes this miracle. As a post-biblical legend, the story of the Maccabees, of the re-dedication and of the miracle of Lights, is ordained by the writings of the rabbis.<sup>3</sup> Except for the time the candles of the Menora are burning during the festival, work is permitted. In Eastern Europe, Chanukah developed into a celebration with special emphasis on benefits for children within the family as well as on the communal level. Children were given *hanuka gelt*, small sums of money collected from the adult members of the family, as well as gifts. The holiday offered the opportunity for games among adults and children.<sup>4</sup> As

<sup>2</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, eds. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder (New York and Oxford, 1997), pp. 52, 300, 307.

<sup>3</sup> *The Jewish Political Tradition, Vol. I, Authority*, ed. Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum et al. (New Haven and London, 2000), pp. 274, 279, 283.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Das Schtetl. Die untergegangene Welt der*

part of the community *tsedaka* or philanthropy, the community elders organized the collection of gifts to be distributed among the children of the destitute, as well as the collection of funds prior to the holiday in synagogues and prayer houses. These charitable funds were far less important than, say, those before Pessach. For instance, in Bialystok in 1869–70, before Pessach, 11,461 Silver rubles (Sr.) were collected, before Sukkot 389 Sr., before Chanukah 148 Sr.<sup>5</sup> The heads of the local *hevrat talmud tora* (an association taking care of the communal school for children of poor families) or the *hevrat malbish arumim* (collecting and distributing clothing and shoes for the needy) also felt responsible to collect and distribute gifts for these children. There exist numerous reports in the press on this type of charity on Chanukah in the Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup> These features of the traditional customs of Chanukah charity persisted throughout the period under consideration, notwithstanding the changes occurring in the celebration of this holiday in specific segments of the Jewish society to be highlighted here. Contemporaries were well aware of these changes, as can be concluded from an announcement of the administration of the Markus-Silberstein-Orphanage in Lodz declaring in 1898 that it intended to arrange for a “traditional ceremony” for the children of the institution on the occasion of Chanukah.<sup>7</sup>

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*osteuropäischen Juden* (Munich, 1991); (originally published as *Life is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl* [New York 1952]), p. 318.

<sup>5</sup> As an example the protocol of the Minsk kahal may be cited with the decision dating from November 1797 that the hazen of the bet hamidrash should be helped by collecting gifts on the occasion of Chanukah; Jacob Brafmann, *Das Buch vom Kahal*, (Leipzig 1928), p. 81. The collection of funds in Bialystok following *Izraelita* N° 28 (1870), *Wiadomości z kraju i zagranicy*, p. 227.

<sup>6</sup> As examples see the report on the distribution of gifts in the Talmud-Torah in Warsaw (with more than 600 children receiving Chanukah gifts) in *Izraelita* N° 48 (1880), *Z tydonia*, 396; M. Deroz, *Korrespondencja* 25.12.1889 from Kovno, in *Voschod* N° 51/52 (1889), 31.12.1886, cols. 1307–08; on the same page there is a report from Polock reporting the respective activities of several ‘gaboim’ on behalf of the poor children in the Talmud Torah; the same occurred in Cześćochowa N° 1 (1896), *Z prowincji*, p. 6, and many other cities.

<sup>7</sup> *Izraelita*, N° 49 (1898), *Korrespondencja*, p. 519. The Silberstein family was one of the most active in community *tsedaka* in Lodz in the last two decades of the 19th century. The orphanage offering approximately 70 places was opened in 1891, *Izraelita* N° 7 (1891), *Kronika*, p. 67.

*The new celebration*

The reshaping of Chanukah into a holiday with a strong accent on its national and military dimension is closely linked to the early Zionist movement. In the words of the late Jean-Marie Delmaire, ‘The Galician [Hibbat Zion] societies developed a fanaticism for parties and birthdays . . . Chanukah, Purim and Pessach received a strong nationalist coloration.’<sup>8</sup> However, there can be no doubt that of these celebrations serving the cause of Jewish nationalism Chanukah became the most prominent. As early as 1883, we find the Galician and Russian-Jewish students’ association *Kadima* with Nathan Birnbaum and Smolenskin at its head organizing Chanukah celebrations in Vienna.<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that already this *première* had an immediate international echo: it was duly reported in the St. Peterburg-based periodical *Voschod* and the assimilationist *Izraelita* from Warsaw. The first reported that this event “on the occasion of Chanukah, the ‘holiday of the Maccabeans’ [sic] attracted numerous students, where speeches of Jewish-patriotic character were held.”<sup>10</sup> The Warsaw weekly described the participants as “progressive Jews in respect of their garments, their language and their way of life,” who switched to the “extreme orthodoxy” politically, as both camps yearned for “an eternal and clearly national separation from their coreligionists.”<sup>11</sup>

The prominent position of Chanukah in the political imagery of these pioneers of Hibat Zion stands out in a letter by Nathan Birnbaum to Isaac Rülff dating from December 1884.<sup>12</sup> The association *Kadimah* was not very active, Birnbaum writes, but succeeded, at least, “to organize a Maccabeans celebration, which ought to be

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Marie Delmaire, *De Hibbat-Zion au sionisme politique*, 2 vols. (Lille, 1990); vol. 1, pp. 140–42.

<sup>9</sup> On the founding of the *Kadimah* see Adolf Böhm, *Die zionistische Bewegung* (Berlin, 1935) (2nd edition), vol. 1, p. 135 and Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 347–80, especially 362–63 on the first “Maccabean commemoration.”

<sup>10</sup> *Zametki literaturnyja, khudožestvennyja i dr.*, in *Voschod*, vol. 2 (1883), No 51/52, col. 1464. It is noteworthy that the editor erroneously placed the event in Munich.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Cwi Peltyn, *Ktorędy?* in *Izraelita* N° 3 (1884), p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Natan Birnbaum and Kopelowitz, Vienna, 7.12.1884 to Isaak Rülff, Memel; CZA, A 1 IV 17. In an additional note on the back of the request, Birnbaum asks Rülff to cooperate in a “Jewish-national periodical” the association does not dare to publish.

even more spectacular than the one last year," which had been the first one. The letter goes on to request of Rülff, who published his remarkable vision of a Jewish state in Palestine the year before,<sup>13</sup> to "be so kind to send some comforting words about the situation of the Jewish-national movement."<sup>14</sup> Rülff was at that time one of the most prominent and popular proto-nationalist intellectuals. By inviting him to assist them in organizing a Chanukah or Maccabean evening, the authors sanctioned Chanukah as their movement's holiday. Its solemn character is underscored by the fact that the other invited guests were asked to come in *Soirée-Toilette* for the *IV. Makkabäer-Feier verbunden mit einem Tanzkränzchen* ("IV. Maccabean Celebration in connection with a dancing").<sup>15</sup>

It is difficult to establish if this celebration was in fact the first, or only among the first, of the newly arranged Chanukah celebrations. Suffice it to say that it constitutes a prototype of which we find numerous equivalents in the following decades. In comparison to the traditional pattern of observing this holiday, a new milieu with completely different intentions organized such celebrations, trying to enhance national feelings with no connection to children's charity at all. The setting of these celebrations was almost identical to festive social events of the surrounding bourgeois culture.

### *Chanukah for adults*

The legend of the Maccabees was evoked above all as a military campaign and a military victory. It prompted the composition of new Hebrew poetry and nationalist songs—especially *Dort, wo die Zeder* ("There where the cedar [grows]"), written in the early 1880s by Isaac Feld of Galicia.<sup>16</sup> Similar to non-Jewish elites' group practices

<sup>13</sup> Isaac Rülff, *Aruchas Bas-Ammi. Ein ernstes Wort an Glaubens- und Nichtglaubensgenossen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1883).

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 12. Birnbaum deleted the words "Jewish national thought," which he then replaced by "Jewish-national movement." Wistrich (see footnote 9) calls Rülff a "Lithuanian Rabbi of Remel" (p. 359) which is misleading, as Rülff originated from a small village near Frankfurt am Main and fulfilled his rabbinical duties in Memel in the Prussian province Ostpreussen on the border to the Russian Empire.

<sup>15</sup> Akademischer Verein Kadimah in Wien, 21. Kislev 5647 (18.12.1886) to Isaak Rülff, Memel, CZA, A 1 IV 17.

<sup>16</sup> Natan M. Gelber, *Toldot hatnu'a hazionit b'galicia 1875-1918* (Jerusalem, 1958),

in the spheres of music, art and literature, these served as new points of orientation for an acculturated stratum of Jews, first in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later in other regions of Eastern Europe. This new perspective is closely linked to the frustration caused by the limits of success in their effort to integrate themselves in non-Jewish society, confronted as they were with informal exclusion and a growing antisemitic movement.<sup>17</sup>

On December 5th, 1894, Jewish nationalists organized a Chanukah celebration in Lemberg (or Lwów or Lvov or Lviv), which took place—remarkably—in the *Dom narodny*, a house administered by the Polish national movement.<sup>18</sup> The large audience was made up, above all, from the local (Jewish) intelligentsia. The highlight of the evening was a speech by a Dr. Salz, a Zionist activist from Tarnopol and former representative of the Polish-Jewish assimilationist camp.<sup>19</sup> Salz began his speech by demonstrating how similar the situation of today's Jewry was to the situation in the times of the Maccabeans' struggle, but that until the inception of the Jewish national movement, "no one had dared to follow the Maccabeans to liberate the Jewish people from humiliation." He contrasted the multiple factions and European Jewish infighting with the merits of Jews involved in non-Jewish political and human endeavors, and their devotion for the causes of the poor and the repressed: "We stand in the ranks of those fighting for right and freedom . . . We increased the number of those fighting for the well-being of the poor and disinherited by giving them Marx and Lassale as leaders. But for our brethren, who are disinherited not only materially but also morally and politically, you don't find among us those speaking up and defending them."

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vol. 1, pp. 97, 135. Text and music comp. Aharon Vinkovetzky, *Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs*, vol. 4, pp. 208ff.

<sup>17</sup> Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Die Juden Wiens 1867–1914. Assimilation und Identität* (Vienna, 1989), pp. 12–14, 173–76.

<sup>18</sup> The following descriptions and citations are from *Jüdische Volkszeitung*, Berlin (formerly *Selbst-Emancipation*), N° 1 (2.1.1894), 4 (ed. Nathan Birnbaum). On the relationship of the Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish national movements see Martin Pollack, "Rusini—Polacy—Żydzi—Niemcy. Stosunki narodowosciowe w Galicji Wschodniej na przykładzie Iwana Franki" in *Ze soba—obok siebie—przeciwko sobie. Polacy Żydzi, Austriacy I Niemcy w XIX wieku I na początku XX wieku*, pp. 55–69, and John-Paul Himka, "Dimensions of a Triangle: Polish-Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Austrian Galicia," in *Polin* 12 (1999), pp. 25–48, esp. 38. Generally, the inception of a Jewish-Ukrainian, anti-Polish alliance is dated much later. See also the contributions of Rachel Manekin and Yaroslav Hrytsak in the same volume.

<sup>19</sup> On Dr. Salz see Böhm, *Zionistische Bewegung*, vol. 1, pp. 141, 231.



But, Dr. Salz continued, through Zion the Jews are offered a miracle, which means the renaissance of Jewry through the creation of a Jewish peasants' estate ("Bauernstand") and the revitalisation of the Hebrew language. Dr. Salz ended his speech with his view of Maccabean heroism and its meaning for his contemporaries:

[Those who are] able to understand Zionism won't refuse its consequences. One has to become its fervent partisan, ready to sacrifice everything for its immediate realization. Let's raise the banner of the Maccabeans, let's march onwards on this chosen path, let's be indefatigable in this fight for the well-being of our brethren, removing all obstacles on the way to the renaissance of our people, our just cause will triumph. Forward!! Through the Jewish people to a brighter future.

The audience "repeatedly interrupted the speech by enthusiastic expressions of approval." The evident military terminology and imagery of this speech may be noted, departing from the Maccabean legend yet referring repeatedly to it. This iconographical background stands in stark contrast to the further course of the evening: "The public applauded the speech enthusiastically for several minutes, and after this brilliant introduction Miss Rosa Finkelstein appeared on the scene. With her enchanting voice, ardent feeling and deep understanding, she sang arias from *Hochzeit des Figaro*, the *Freischütz* and, last but not least, the song *Dort wo die Zeder*, leading to repeated and long lasting cheers. The public applauded frenetically the lovely Hebrew declamations by Miss Mensch and took extraordinary musical pleasure in the arrangement of a zither sextet by Mister Schacht."

Although the military terminology of Dr Salz' speech and Mozart's or Karl Maria von Weber's arias do not seem to cohere, they form an *aesthetic unity*. Both are presented to an laudatory public and are part of stagecraft where the cultural requirements and pleasure of the *Bildungsbürger* is amalgamated with a rhetoric of militarily invigorated, victorious Judaism. We may, however, find precedents of Chanukah celebrations recalling its military dimension. Heinrich Heine, for example, describes his visit in the Rothschild's House in 1827: "How happily the small lights were blinking, which she [Gitle Rothschild] lighted with her own hands, to celebrate that day of victory when Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, fighting courageously and as heroes, liberated their fatherland, like Friedrich Wilhelm, Alexander und Franz II in our days."<sup>20</sup> What seems to be new in

<sup>20</sup> *Gesammelte Werke* Bd.4 (Berlin, 1893).

the early Zionist movement is the combination of military rhetoric and imagery with the present Jewish political and social condition. Instead of reflecting, as Heine did, on ruling gentile kings and emperors who are comparable to the Maccabeans, the audience is called upon to “march onwards under the banner of the Maccabeans,” as Dr. Salz put it. In this new rhetoric, the combination of ideology and pleasure, of Maccabeans and music is not contingent, but a necessary element of secular bourgeois aesthetics and politics of the outgoing 19th century. As the evenings of the *Kadima* in Vienna combined “comforting words on the Jewish-national movement” with a *Tanzkränzchen*, the Lemberg evening combines the “raised banner of the Maccabeans” with a “zither sextext.” Like almost every report on these Chanukah celebrations, they describe forms of cultural bourgeois self-affirmation. Another Chanukah celebration took place in Lemberg the very same evening in the “Ukrainian national home.”<sup>21</sup> Though it is not clear what differentiated these events, the similarities in the set-up are striking: After a first speech,

Miss Czaczkes entertained the public with her wonderful voice and Mister Finkelstein impressed it with his truly artistic piano playing. Then the main speaker Gerson Zipper compared the conditions during the time of the Maccabeans with the contemporary situation and called upon the public to act, to act in a way worthy of the Maccabeans, to act on behalf of the liberation of the Jewish people. This speech made a deep impression on the audience. Then, Miss Dubsky played piano and Mrs Aschkenase recited two poems. The guests left in an upbeat mood.”

It took some years before the new style of Chanukah celebrations found followers in other regions of Eastern Europe. But towards the end of the 1880s, besides reflections on Chanukah as commemorating the miracle of the Lights,<sup>22</sup> the *Voschod* published a growing number of allusions to the military dimension of the legend and its transposition to the contemporary situation of the Jews. One observer of a Jewish philanthropic event in 1887 noted with an acute expression of frustration, that no Jewish music was played, though

the evening took place on the Maccabean’s eve. The Maccabees! How this word resounds! . . . The crazy thought crossed my mind that I was

<sup>21</sup> This and the following citations from *Jüdische Volkszeitung*, Berlin (formerly *Selbst-Emancipation*), N° 1 (2.1.1894), 3 (see footnote 17).

<sup>22</sup> G.L. Atlas [note without title]. In *Voschod* N° 50 (1886), col. 1336.

in fact looking at the offspring of these Maccabeans . . . But no one, even if gifted with the strongest imagination, would have been able to find the slightest trace of these national heroes.<sup>23</sup>

Two years later a report on a similar occasion echoes these sentiments, time and again speaking of the Maccabeans as “splendid heroes,” the “national heroes.”<sup>24</sup> The next issue recounted the Maccabeans legend in the words of the protagonist in a short story, a grandfather with his granddaughter, who implores him to tell her the story:

- ‘I will so happily listen to you, because a long time ago you made me so curious about the fate of our nation’ [. . .]
- The Greeks energetically undertook the assimilation of the Jews with themselves . . . But, dear child, the Jewish people earned the reputation of hardheartedness from the prophets with good reason. During the fight, this trait of character, enhanced by the flame of faith and nationality, appeared with extraordinary vigour.<sup>25</sup>

With these words, the author formulated his view on the central issue of the Russian Jewish community of the 1880s, to directly confront anti-Jewish legislation, political antisemitism and the specter of assimilation: as a “hardhearted fight.” Thus, Chanukah served as context for contemporary political struggles and as an argument for a militant attitude against giving up “faith and nationality.”

The next year, 1890, “on the last evening of Chanukah a reunion of the members of the Hovevei Zion in St. Peterburg took place in the synagogue of this association. The public took part in the evening. Mr. Brumberg<sup>26</sup> spoke about the epoch of the Maccabeans. Afterwards, Dr. Členov<sup>27</sup> lectured on the acquisition of territory in Palestine on

<sup>23</sup> Eksprompt: Mimoschodom. Reči bezsviaznyja. In *Ibid.*, N° 50 (1887), col. 1267–69. In a similar vein, Sholem Alekhem derides the acculturated Jewish society in a short satire on Chanukah. Two protagonists bet on whether there is a guest at a reception on the occasion of Chanukah who knows what is the meaning of the holiday. Not only is it the case that very few guests wish to be interrupted while playing cards, but the most precise information the protagonists get is that it’s a mitsve to play cards on that day; Sholem Alekhem, “Vos iz hanuka” in *Ale Verk* (Moskow, 1944), pp. 187–208. I am grateful to Delphine Bechtel, Paris, for informing me of this satire.

<sup>24</sup> Slučajny feletonist: Mimoschodom. Svetoci Makkaveev. In: *Ibid.* N° 48 (1889), cols. 1233–36.

<sup>25</sup> Löw, Mimoschodom. Vospominanija proslago (1 vecer Khanuki). In *Ibid.* N° 49 (1889), cols. 1261–62.

<sup>26</sup> Brumberg was a Galician Zionist, cf. Delmaire, *De Hibbat-Zion* (cf. footnote 8), pp. 143, 626.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

a cooperative basis. Then some pleasant texts and poems were recited.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, before the inception of Herzlian Zionism Galician agitators came to Russia to promote their vision of a nationalist ideology combined with bourgeois aesthetics, as reported in this article. At the core of this concept, we find a clear emphasis on a supposed heroic national tradition as embodied in the Maccabeans’ deeds.

### *Chanukah for the children*

In a closely related and parallel development, adherents of the early Jewish national movement systematically introduced new elements to the celebration of Chanukah in pedagogical institutions, combining traditional patterns with a stronger emphasis on the national and military dimension of the holiday’s legend.

Unlike the Galician communities confronted with competing tendencies of acculturation and a growing antisemitism, and unlike the relatively young Jewish communities in the Russian metropolises, Congress Polish Jews were less attracted by this early Zionist invention of tradition. Until the middle of the 1890s, the Hovevei Zion did not succeed in organizing well-publicized Chanukah celebrations. Nahum Sokolow, editor of the assimilationist weekly ‘*Izraelita*’ in Warsaw, exclaimed desperately in 1896: “Why don’t we have any Chanukah celebrations here as they have everywhere in the West? We have reports from Berlin, Paris and London about services, about sermons for *children* and celebrations in religious schools, in all Hebrew orphanages.”<sup>29</sup> One of the first Chanukah celebrations which can be seen as secularized and politicized—with an interesting military dimension—was reported from Lodz in 1895. Its description leads to the second type of reshaped Chanukah celebration, which was intended to teach Jewish children national feelings. The Lodz celebration “in honor of the Maccabees”<sup>30</sup> took place in a Russian private school on the initiative of Dr. Israel Jelski, the German-born preacher of a reform-orientated private synagogue, who later became one of the

<sup>28</sup> Peterburgskaja letopis, in *Voschod* N° 49 (1890), col. 1253.

<sup>29</sup> Nahum Sokolow, “Pogadanki,” in *Izraelita* (Warsaw) N° 48 (1896), p. 419.

<sup>30</sup> Beta, “Kronika,” in *Izraelita* N° 2 (1895), p. 14.

outstanding figures of Congress Polish Zionism,<sup>31</sup> gave “a rather long speech” at the celebration. The pupils demonstrated their linguistic skills and “sang the song of the Maccabees.” Finally, the best student, whose family originated from Carycin, was awarded a medal. “In addition, Colonel K.W. Cerpeckij, commander of the local infantry, sent a Russian ornamented book to be offered as an award to the most alert student.” As has been argued elsewhere, the inception of the two central political movements among the Jews in Congress Poland, Zionism and the Workers’ movement, is closely linked to the immigration of Russian Jews.<sup>32</sup> The details of the Lodz celebration demonstrate this close link of loyalty of parts of these immigrant Jewish families with the local Russian establishment.

The nationalistic dimension in Chanukah celebrations consisted mostly in a combination of history lessons, which replaced telling the Chanukah as a religious legend, with musical entertainment, games, and eventually the traditional distribution of gifts. The numerous celebrations in schools—preferably in a *cheder metukan* or a similar institution—were regularly described as having a strong pedagogical tendency. They often were administered with the *demier dri* of pedagogy. Thus, we learn of a Chanukah celebration in a school supported by the *Society for the Spreading of Enlightenment* in 1898 where a *laterna magica* served to illustrate the story of the Maccabees.<sup>33</sup> A similar proceeding is reported from Lublin in 1903. Here, the Russian-Jewish teacher in a *cheder metukan* “elucidated the most important moments in Jewish history in general and the historical meaning of Chanukah in particular with the help of moving pictures.”<sup>34</sup> The religious legend was transformed into history—Chanukah was secularized and

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Goldstein, “The Beginnings of the Zionist Movement in Congress Poland: The Victory of the Hasidim over the Zionists?” in *Polin* 5 (1990), pp. 117–25.

<sup>32</sup> François Guesnet, “‘Wir müssen Warschau unbedingt russisch machen’ Die Mythologisierung der russisch-jüdischen Zuwanderung ins Königreich Polen zu Beginn unseres Jahrhunderts am Beispiel eines polnischen Trivialromans,” in *Geschichtliche Mythen in den Literaturen Ostmittel- und Südosteuropas*, ed. Eva Behring et al., (Stuttgart, 1999) (Steiner), pp. 99–116; François Guesnet, “Migration et stéréotype. Le cas des Juifs russes au Royaume de Pologne à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 41 (2000) 4, pp. 505–518; François Guesnet, “Khevres and Akhdes: the Change in Jewish Self-organization in the Kingdom of Poland before 1900 and the Bund,” in *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe. The Bund at 100*, ed. Jack Jacobs (London, 2001), pp. 3–12.

<sup>33</sup> Peterburskaja letopis, *Voschod* N° 49 (1898), col. 1800.

<sup>34</sup> Albert Lederer, Korrespondencja, in *Izraelita* 3 (1903), p. 31.

instrumentalized. The hopes of those organizing these new celebrations appear in a description from Moscow in the year 1886:

In a private house, a Maccabean morning for school girls was organized yesterday. In addition to the girls, who formed a group of 40, many distinguished guests took part . . . The school girls read a colorful story of the ‘Maccabeans.’ After the guests had been served a meal, dances and children’s games amused them . . . Thus, the children were happy the whole day. One can hope that this morning party made an unforgettable impression on the children, and may God give that this first good seed, sown with all the best intentions in the children’s hearts, will bring a rich harvest.<sup>35</sup>

### *Reflecting the invention*

Most Jewish encyclopedias do not refer to the holiday’s reshaping,<sup>36</sup> with one significant exception. In the first volume of the *Jüdisches Lexikon*, published in 1927, Max Joseph, a rabbi in Pomerania, wrote at the end of the article on Chanukah:

These last decades, the re-awakening of the Jewish self-consciousness and, even more important, the national-Jewish idea, lead to a greater significance of this holiday and to all kinds of celebrations in Jewish associations, which are meant to promote the holiday.<sup>37</sup>

The rabbi made a clear distinction between ideological versus traditional celebrations, although he was not necessarily an advocate of the former. He nevertheless stated what few others had noticed: the re-design of the Jewish holiday’s hierarchy. One of the protagonists of this redefinition of Jewish holidays, Haim Zhitlovskij, defined this goal explicitly in a 1908 article referring to the Czernowitz Conference.<sup>38</sup> It deals with the complex relation between religious traditions and modernity. Zhitlovskij stated that “the eight days of Chanukah have

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Kasin, Korrespondencja (Moskva), 15.12.1886, in *Voschod* N° 50/51 (1886), 21.12.1886, col. 1375.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York and London, 1901ff.); *Evrejskaja Enciklopedija* (St. Peterburg, 1908–1914); *Jüdisches Lexikon* (Berlin, 1927–30); *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Berlin, 1928–34); *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1939–43); *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971–72).

<sup>37</sup> *Jüdisches Lexikon* (Berlin, 1927–30), cols. 1326–28, citation 1328.

<sup>38</sup> Haim Zhitlovskij, “Di natsional-poetise vidergeburt fun der iidiser religie,” in *Geklibene verk* (New York, 1955), pp. 219–56. This article was brought to my attention again through my dear colleague Delphine Bechtel.

to be lifted almost to the same height and sanctity as Pessach, because the content of Chanukah is almost identical with Pessach—the victorious fight of the people for its freedom and independence.”<sup>39</sup> Considering the centrality of Pessach, the task is not a small one, and the author concedes this by saying that Chanukah is to be elevated *almost* to the same sanctity as Pessach. The precondition for this rapprochement was to divest both holidays, almost completely, of their religious substance and to choose a secularized focus on the notion of people and nation, freedom and independence—as opposed to one of man and God, Jews and the covenant. The intention of the Zionist pioneers like Birnbaum, Zhitlovski and many others is obvious: to offer a redefined, constitutive political myth or *mythomoteur*, to use the term of Anthony Smith. Not Pessach, or at least not Pessach alone is thus viewed as the focus of Jewish tradition—but Chanukah with its weapons, heroes and victories, too. It was not to be conceived as a holiday to distribute shoes to poor school children, but an occasion to confront the glorious past with the needs of the contemporary national re-awakening. Dr. Salz spoke in Lemberg of Jewry’s “atomization in small and antagonistic factions” as the “inner enemy” of Jewry. Similarly, Smith interprets “ethnicism as fundamentally defensive. It is a response to outside threats and divisions within.”<sup>40</sup>

The comparison of the situation in Vienna or Lemberg with developments in Russian Poland indicates that different cultural and political settings can lead to alternative strategies within the same ethnicity.

In Russian Poland, the early Zionist movement subsists for a long time as a small and single milieu movement<sup>41</sup>—that of the Russian-Jewish immigrants. They streamed into this economically-booming part of the Russian Empire from the crushed Polish uprising in 1863 onwards. The lack of understanding and animosity which the early Zionists encountered in their attempts to agitate among Polish Jews are well documented.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 57ff.

<sup>41</sup> Goldstein, “The Beginnings of the Zionist Movement . . .,” pp. 114–30.

<sup>42</sup> Szacki, *Geschichte*, vol. 3, p. 385; Goldstein, “Beginnings,” p. 119; Gershon Bacon, “La société juive dans le royaume de la Pologne du Congrès (1860–1914),” in *La société juive à travers l’histoire*, vol. 1, ed. Shmuel Trigano (Paris, 1993), pp. 623–64 (here 632).

This mutual dislike and distrust may be illustrated by a recollection of Tsvi Hirsh Masljanski, agitating in Lithuania and Poland for the Hovevei Zion after its legalization in the beginning of 1890. Coming to Warsaw to promote Hibat Zion, he speaks in the *Ohel Moshe*, a synagogue founded in 1884 by Russian Jews. "I could speak neither in front of 'Jewish Poles' nor of 'Polish hasidim,' because the first regard nationalism and Hibat Zion as treachery against their Polish patriotism, and the latter, as epicurism. So I had to stay with the third faction, my brethren the poor Litvaken."<sup>43</sup> In a significant anecdote from his work as an agitator, Masljanski relates how he comes to Lodz, the capital of capitalism, not to buy or to sell wool or cotton, but as a commis-voyageur in kol-israel-goods, "kol-israel-shore." In January 1893 he is invited to speak in a synagogue, but due to an orthodox, probably hasidic, denunciation, he is arrested as a revolutionary and nihilist. Only after the intervention of Chief Rabbi Majsele and of a prominent Russian Jewish entrepreneur, "ayner fun di moskver aroysgetribene," as Masljanski puts it, is he set free.<sup>44</sup> This episode illustrates the intensity with which Congress-Polish orthodoxy fought the new secular ideology of Jewish nationalism.

With no hope of gaining influence through schools, as was the case in Galicia as well as in Russia, the Zionist pioneers staged their first successful campaign in 1884. The occasion was the 100th birthday of Moses Montefiore, especially popular among Polish and Russian Jews thanks to his intercession with the emperor's court (which proved to have little success) and his well-known close connection to the Holy Land.<sup>45</sup> It should be noted that the haluka-money of Polish origin was collected in Warsaw and then transferred to Montefiore in London, who took care for its transfer to Palestine. Itzhak Grünbaum, the most prominent Polish Zionist, recounts:

In this search, the Hovevei Zion hit upon Moses Montefiore, who at this time had just completed his hundredth year and around whom numerous legends circulated. The people saw in him the Redeemer

<sup>43</sup> Zvi Hirsch Maslyanski, *Maslyanskis zichronot. firzig jahr leben un kempfn* (New York, 1924), pp. 75ff.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81–85.

<sup>45</sup> See *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore*, ed. Louis Löwe, (London, 1890) (facsimile edition London 1983), pp. 325–352; Szacki, *Geschichte*, Vol. 2, 85–89; Israel Bartal, "Moshe Montefiore v'erez israel," in *Katedra* 33 (1984): 149–60; Chimen Abramsky, "The Visits to Russia," in *The Century of Moses Montefiore*, ed. Sonia and V.D. Lipman (London, 1985), pp. 255–65.



and Savior, who personified the idea of Erez Israel and the work for its benefit. Shefer, i.e. Shaul Pinhas Rabinowich suggested making the festivities surrounding Montefiore's hundredth birthday into a large demonstration for the cause of Hibat Zion and the colonization of Palestine. The suggestion had two aims: One was to rouse the people, to direct their attention to the settlement work in Erez Israel and by this means to expand the financial basis of the movement.<sup>46</sup>

First the Hovevei Zion had Montefiore's portrait printed and sold. Many tens of thousands of copies of this picture must have been sold, for the proceeds for the movement amounted to 30,000 silver rubles. On the occasion of Montefiore's birthday and around Chanukah, the members of the movement founded their own prayer house, which was accordingly named "Ohel Moshe," seen by the local press as a club of Russian Jewish merchants.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the members of the movement in Praga, who also were members of the city's Hevra kadisha [burial society], wrote a letter of congratulation to Montefiore.<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that the Litvakim had at that time no right to burial in the new Warsaw cemetery (near Powazki), but had to content themselves with the poor people's cemetery in Praga.<sup>49</sup> Obviously, this is the reason for the close connection between the autochthonous yishuv of Praga, the nucleus of the Warsaw community, with the immigrants. This relationship goes back to the late 1850s, when the first Russian Jews immigrated and became members of the Hevra kadisha.<sup>50</sup> In this letter, sixty-one "burghers of Praga near Warsaw," of which 35 identify themselves as members of the Hovevei Zion, thank Montefiore for his life-long interventions "in the land of Egypt, Syria, Babylon, Damaskus and Morocca." They remind him of the visit in 1846, during which he had consented to become the honorary president of Praga's Hevra kadisha, which has been attested to and sealed by the society in its record book.<sup>51</sup> The protocols of

<sup>46</sup> Icchak Grünbaum, *Zarys historii sjonizmu* (Kraków, 1930), p. 125.

<sup>47</sup> *Izraelita* (Warsaw) 1 (1885), *Światła i cienie*, 4.

<sup>48</sup> This was one of thousands of letters and telegrams received by Moses Montefiore on the occasion; see Marilyn Lehrer and Peter Salinger, "The Testimonials and the Legend," in *The Century of Moses Montefiore*, pp. 349–61.

<sup>49</sup> Maslyanski, *Maslyanskis zichronot*, p. 75.

<sup>50</sup> The first Russian Jew to be prominent member of the Hevra was Zalman Jakob ben Lejb Halevi Jawitz, a tobacco manufacturer of Lithuanian origin. His first official function within the fraternity dates back to 1859; *Pinkas hahevra kadisha dpraga*, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, PL 4, 210.

<sup>51</sup> This letter is housed in the Mocatta Library, London, and has been brought

the Hevra kadisha of Praga, which are preserved in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem, in the form of a transliteration dating from 1911, records three honorary presidents: Shmuel Zbitkower, the founder of the Praga cemetery, Szaja Muskat, for a long period Hasidic Rabbi of Praga, and Józef Epstein, a maskilic banker and founder of the enlarged Warsaw Jewish hospital. There is, however, no mention of Moses Montefiore or a Moses ben Yosef.

Eric Hobsbawm writes that traditions may be invented when “old institutions with established functions” are adapted for new purposes. Thus, a “largely factitious continuity” is created.<sup>52</sup> To appoint Montefiore retrospectively as honorary president of the burial society of Praga created a link between his popularity (deriving in Congress Poland especially from his support for the yishuv) and the national orientation of those honoring him. Such a rather convoluted procedure was necessitated by the strongly hostile environment of the Jewish national movement within a hasidic-dominated Jewish community.

The historical repositioning of Chanukah took place in the early decades of the 20th century and reached far beyond Eastern Europe. In a polemic between a Zionist and an observer about ‘Jewish education,’ published by Elias Auerbach in Martin Buber’s Zionist periodical *Der Jude*, the focal events of Jewish history are the victory of the Maccabees, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exodus: “Why should we not impress the soul of the child by telling about the Maccabeans, about the destruction of Jerusalem, about the Exodus from Egypt and thus directly lead him to what is essential?”<sup>53</sup> Thus, Zhitlowski’s proposal of a *rapprochement* of Pessach and Chanukah was realized by German Jews during World War One. This timing of the elevation of Chanukah comes as no surprise, as the war led to an unparalleled cooperation among the different political factions of German Jewry, “which aimed both at assisting East European Jews suffering the miseries of war and at furthering specific German war

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to my knowledge through Marilyn Lehrer, whom I wish to thank for her kind assistance.

<sup>52</sup> Hobsbawm, *Invention*, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Elias Auerbach, “Traditionelles und nationales Judentum. Ein Gespräch über jüdische Erziehung,” in *Der Jude* 1 (1916/1917), pp. 244–49 (citation on p. 247).

<sup>54</sup> Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven and London, 1996), p. 34.

interests in the East."<sup>54</sup> Attention to German war interests necessitated full support for the armed conflict as such, leading to the linkage of Chanukah and Pessach in the German Jewish public sphere. Thus, Martin Buber published in his Jüdischer Verlag one year later, and second after *Had gadia*, a book devoted to Pessach, the book *Moaus Zur. Ein Chanukkahbuch*, integrating the religious and national dimension of the holiday.<sup>55</sup> In a similar vein, Alexander Eliasberg, an important translator and publisher for Hebrew and Yiddish literature, published in the *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*<sup>56</sup> his translation of a short story by I.L. Peretz.<sup>57</sup> Peretz describes an officer of the Tsarist army, a baptised Jew, who tries to remember the cycle of Jewish holidays. This effort leads him to think of Chanukah, and of his own heroic conduct during the Crimean war. Thus, Peretz skillfully suggests the heroic potential not only of Jews but of the Jewish tradition itself. The translation and publication by Eliasberg during World War One can be understood as enhancement of Jewish consent with the ongoing war.<sup>58</sup> It is therefore not surprising that under Nazi rule in Germany, Chanukah was again re-interpreted by German Jews. As the former Berlin rabbi, Joachim Prinz, remembers from this dark period, Chanukah was a holiday of crucial meaning:

But the climax of all, probably, was Chanukah. The German Jews had adjusted Chanukah to Christmas [...] it looked very much like a Christmas celebration [...] but now under Hitler, and quite naturally, it was the Chanukah story which interested us most: The battle of a handful of Jews called the Maccabees against overwhelming majorities. Jews are not cowards, we said. Here is the story of the Maccabees, and it is proof of Jewish courage and stamina, and above all, of their ability to be victorious.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Berlin 1918.

<sup>56</sup> Comp. *ibid.*, 33–35.

<sup>57</sup> J.L. Perez, "Chanukkah," trans. Alexander Eliasberg, in *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte* 2 (10.12.1917) 5, pp. 119–121.

<sup>58</sup> Concerning the intentions of various German Jewish political factions during World War I see Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 1969), chapters 17–23, and also Saul Friedländer, "Die politischen Veränderungen der Kriegszeit und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Judenfrage," in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923*, ed. Werner Mosse (Tübingen, 1971), pp. 27–65, here 30–37. For an in-depth analysis of the complex attitudes of German Jews during WW I see David A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in 'Ost and West'* (Detroit, 1998), chapter five.

<sup>59</sup> Joachim Prinz, "A Rabbi under the Hitler Regime," in *Gegenwart im Rückblick. Festgabe für die Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin 25 Jahre nach dem Neubeginn*, eds. Herbert A. Strauss, Kurt R. Grossmann (Heidelberg, 1970), pp. 231–238 (citation 236).

The belligerent 20th century knew numerous occasions to emphasise the military dimension of the Chanukah legend and to connect Jewry with military undertakings. Thus, Ofer Shif established the specific meaning of Chanukah for Reform Judaism in the United States during World War II. This served as a largely secular, idealized interpretation to appeal to Jewish-American as citizens contributing to the struggle for freedom.<sup>60</sup> It was the military dimension of the holiday which made it useable in the first years of Israeli statehood for the promotion of national unity and pride, as has been shown by Eliezer Don Yehiah and Shmuel Dotan.<sup>61</sup>

There was no ethnic mobilization among the largest parts of Central and Eastern European Jewries toward the end of the 19th century. What we can observe, however, is an appropriation of discourses emanating from Jewish religious traditions in an attempt to legitimize a new secular worldview and a bourgeois-based political movement through specific strategies—both aesthetic and political. The potential of this movement depended first and foremost on the cohesiveness of socio-religious traditions. Both in Austria and Russia, for sharply different reasons, this coherence was seriously eroding in the period under consideration. In contrast, Jewish Congress Poland featured a resurgent orthodoxy showing no sign of “dissolution of the social and authority ties.” This constitutes a prerequisite not only for the invention of traditions but for the rise of nationalism as well, as has been shown by Miroslav Hroch in his studies concerning nationalism among the “small nations” in eastern central Europe.<sup>62</sup> In central regions of Poland, Jewish nationalism failed as a political strategy well into World War One. The Jews then became an impor-

<sup>60</sup> Ofer Shif, “tekse hahanuka kderekh hmoddut shel hayahadut hareformit-amerikanit im hashoa,” in *Mhkare hag* (1997), pp. 186–193.

<sup>61</sup> These more recent examples of how Chanukah was instrumentalized deserve deeper analysis than the current treatment. See Don-Yehiya, “Hanukka and the Myth of the Maccabees in Zionist Ideology and in Israeli Society,” in *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 34 (1992), pp. 1, 5–23; Shmuel Dotan, “M’hag hahanuka l’hag hahashmona im—tsmichata shel ‘hag le’umi’ tsioni,” in *Mhkare hag* (1998) 29–53. In a national-religious perspective (Haim?) Sitbon emphasizes, with reference to the Rav Kook, the complementary character of both elements, the religious on the one side and the national and military dimension, stating that there is no contradiction between these three components; H.M. Sitbon, “Chanukah—hag dati o hag le’umi?,” in *Esh’a Jamenu* 53 (5758), 124–131.

<sup>62</sup> Comp. e.g. Miroslav Hroch, “De l’ethnicité à la nation. Un chemin oublié vers la modernité,” in *Anthropologie et sociétés* 19 (1995) 3, 71–86.

tant factor in the political strategies of the German and Austrian occupier.<sup>63</sup> On the one hand, Zionists, non-Zionist Jewish nationalists as well as orthodox and socialist Jewish groups and parties developed considerable political activities under the relatively liberal occupation administration.<sup>64</sup> Though this is not the place to develop this hypothesis in detail, it seems appropriate to speak of Jewish ethnic mobilization as not specifically linked to the Zionist movement for this period of political turmoil, reflecting the ethnic dimension of political conflict in the region during this period in general.<sup>65</sup> When the German military administration declared Polish independence as one of its political objectives, the Polish-Jewish relationship became one of national and ethnic conflict, and generated a hitherto unknown dynamic.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> One may cite as examples the influential concepts of German Zionists, prepared for the military administration in occupied Poland, concerning the pacification of Eastern Central Europe with the help of Eastern European Jewry. These were regarded as necessary allies in securing German political and cultural hegemony and economic control in these regions; see Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik*, p. 196.

<sup>64</sup> Matthias Morgenstern, *Von Frankfurt nach Jerusalem. Isaac Breuer und die Geschichte des 'Austrittsstreits' in der deutsch-jüdischen Orthodoxie* (Tübingen, 1995), pp. 39–81; Gershon Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition. Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916–1939* (Jerusalem, 1996), pp. 34–44. A fascinating testimony of the politics of the orthodox German “rabbanim-doktorim” (Mordehai Breuer) has been published by Alexander Carlebach, “A German Rabbi Goes East,” in *Leo-Baeck-Institute Year Book VI* (1961), pp. 60–121.

<sup>65</sup> Dan Diner, *Das Jahrhundert verstehen. Eine universalhistorische Deutung* (Munich, 1999), chapter I.

<sup>66</sup> Zechlin, *Deutsche Politik*, pp. 199–205. See also Paul Roth, *Die politische Entwicklung in Kongreßpolen während der deutschen Okkupation* (Leipzig, 1919); Werner Conze, *Polnische Nation und deutsche Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Cologne and Graz, 1958).



TROUBLE AT THE BEZALEL:  
CONFLICTING VISIONS OF ZIONISM AND ART

Inka Bertz  
Jewish Museum, Berlin

The founding of the Bezalel Arts and Crafts School in Jerusalem in 1906 was one of Zionism's most ambitious projects in the field of culture. However, the early years of the school's existence were overshadowed by constant conflict over whether the school should train artists or craftsmen, over the creation of a new Jewish style for the Bezalel's products and over issues of administration between the institute's founder and director, the sculptor Boris Schatz on the one side, and the Bezalel Association's Board in Berlin, headed by Otto Warburg, on the other.

The history of Bezalel has been described in the Israel Museum's exhibition catalogue of 1983, Ilona Oltuski's Frankfurt doctoral thesis of 1988, and by Margaret Olin.<sup>1</sup> The conflict to be analyzed here has mostly been described as a confrontation between an idealistic artist and cultural Zionist on the one side and the Berlin technocrats without understanding for artistic issues on the other.<sup>2</sup> A re-reading of the source-material preserved in the Central Zionist Archives (CZA) and the Municipal Archives in Jerusalem (MAJ) will lead to a new interpretation and present us in a nutshell with reflections of larger issues.

On the surface, the tedious exchange of letters between Jerusalem and Berlin reads like the deterioration of contradicting conceptions of the nature and the goals of the new institution, issues that seem not to have been clarified sufficiently beforehand. But on a deeper

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<sup>1</sup> Gideon Ofrat-Friedlander, "The Periods of Bezalel," in *Bezalel 1906-1929*, ed. Nurit Shilo-Cohen (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1983); Ilona Oltuski, *Kunst und Ideologie des Bezalel in Jerusalem. Ein Versuch zur jüdischen Identitätsfindung* (Frankfurt/Main: Kunstgeschichtliches Inst. d. Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Univ. [diss.], 1988); Margaret Olin, *The Nation without Art. Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), pp. 35-54.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Ruppin, *Briefe, Tagebücher, Erinnerungen* (Königstein/Ts.: Juedischer Verlag-Athenaeum, 1985), pp. 231-232, indicates an opposite bias.

level, it can be understood as a document of a “clash of cultures” within the project of establishing a new culture. These antagonisms were based on different visions of the new Jewish society, of Jewish art, of the national character of art in general, and of the position of the artist in society. They reflected preconceptions that were introduced into the project by its key players and their very different cultural backgrounds. And yet they had never been openly addressed because they seemed to be covered by the Zionist vision shared by everyone involved.

### *Boris Schatz*

The initiator of the Bezalel was the sculptor Boris Schatz.<sup>3</sup> Born in Vorna near Kovno in Lithuania in 1867,<sup>4</sup> he went to a Yeshiva in Vilna, but soon left it for the local art school. There he met his future teacher, the famous Russian-Jewish sculptor Mark Antokolski.<sup>5</sup> After a short stay at the Warsaw arts and crafts school, he followed him to Paris to be his pupil and assistant from 1890 until 1896. While in Paris Schatz also studied with the sculptor Alexandre Falguière<sup>6</sup> and the painter Fernand Cormon.<sup>7</sup> Both artists became

<sup>3</sup> Boris Schatz, *Boris Schatz. His Life and Work* part I, ed. Joseph Klausner (Jerusalem: 1925); Marcus Ehrenpreis, “Boris Schatz,” in *Ost und West* 3,5 (1903), pp. 305–318; Yigal Zalmona, “Professor Boris Schatz,” in *Bezalel* (1983): 125–158; Oltuski (1988), pp. 14–23; Olin (2001), pp. 37–53.

<sup>4</sup> 1867 is given as the date of birth in *Encyclopedia Judaica*; Thieme Becker, Winninger and Schatz’s autobiography in Klausner (1925), p. 3; Zalmona (1983), p. 127 and *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* give 1866. Schatz died on a fundraising trip to Denver, Colorado, in 1932.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Antokolski (Wilna 1842–1902 Bad Homburg), sculptor, became famous with his renderings of historic and patriotic subjects, and he also depicted Jewish subjects. He was one of the most important Russian sculptors of his generation. M. Rajner, “The Awakening of Jewish National Art in Russia,” *Jewish Art* 16/17 (1990/91): 98–121.

<sup>6</sup> Alexandre Falguière (Toulouse 1831–1900 Paris), sculptor, created several public monuments of historical personalities, but became famous for his numerous nudes in exalted poses — “*un poète du déshabillé*” — with a strong sense of naturalism, for movement, but less so for monumentality.

<sup>7</sup> Fernand Cormon (Paris 1845–1924 Paris), painter, is known for his conservative attitude, but also for being the teacher of artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Vincent van Gogh and Émile Bernard. Destremau, F. “L’atelier Cormon (1882–1887),” *Archives de l’art français. Bulletin de la société de l’histoire de l’art français* 51 (1996): 172–184.



famous for their renderings of historic and genre scenes in a naturalistic manner, and received numerous commissions for public monuments and decorations of public buildings. Schatz could hardly have chosen more conservative teachers. At a time when the arts war between modernists and conservatives was hardly over, this choice implied a conscious decision. Schatz probably followed the advice of his master Mark Antokolski, who regarded the aesthetic positions of these artists as in line with his own.

Mark Antokolski, famous in Russia for his depiction of Ivan the Terrible and other patriotic gestures, still belonged to the generation of the *Peredvishniki*, the “Wanderers.” In their concept, art had to be national art, expressing “the spirit of the people”, and at the same time being comprehensible to “the people”, since its task was to educate “the people.” Therefore, true national art demanded a realistic style and popular subject matter. Schatz, as well, grew up with these ideas. While still a student in Vilna, as he recalled in his autobiography, he became familiar with the writings of Nikolai Chernishevski and Nikolai Dobroludov,<sup>8</sup> the theoretical heads of the “Wanderers.” For the development of his aesthetic and social ideas, the influence of 19th century Russian art and Antokolski in particular were crucial.<sup>9</sup> There even is an indication that it was Antokolski himself who gave him the idea for what later became the Bezalel.<sup>10</sup> And it is here that the foundations of Boris Schatz’s fiercely anti-modernist position were laid.<sup>11</sup>

In 1895 Schatz was invited to Sofia by Ferdinand of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha-Koháry, who had been elected Prince — later Tsar — of Bulgaria in 1887. There he participated in establishing the young nation’s art academy, which was to educate drawing teachers for schools, but also painters and sculptors.<sup>12</sup> In Bulgaria, as in other movements of national artistic revival, the documents of the art of

<sup>8</sup> Klausner (1925), p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Oltuski (1988), p. 17, pointed out the importance of Russian 19th century art theory for Schatz.

<sup>10</sup> Olin (2001), p. 37, referring to the Yiddish author Leo König.

<sup>11</sup> Zalmona (1983), p. 147, notes 22, 23; Schatz, quoted in Oltuski (1988), p. 15, note 8; Grigori J. Sternin, *Das Kunstleben Rußlands an der Wende vom neunzehnten zum zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (Dresden: Verl. d. Kunst, 1976), pp. 26–36.

<sup>12</sup> Olin (2001), p. 40; Bogdan Filov, *Geschichte der bulgarischen Kunst unter der türkischen Herrschaft und in der neueren Zeit* (Berlin/Leipzig: 1933) (= *Grundriß der slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte*, ed. R. Trautmann and M. Vasmer, Vol. 12), pp. 56–80. Founded in 1896, the school was transformed into an arts-and-crafts school in 1908.



Boris Schatz (left) with administrators in the Bezael office in Ethiopia Street, 1908

Photograph, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem

the past were studied: icons and folk art. Schatz worked for the revival of a national Bulgarian art, creating public monuments and developing a “Neo-Bulgarian” decorative style combining elements of traditional ornamentation with those of *art nouveau*-efforts that were rewarded with gold medals at the world fairs in Paris in 1900 and in St. Louis in 1904.

After completing several commissions for public monuments and an album presented to the Russian Tsar, Schatz turned to Jewish subjects. By 1903 he had created a series of “Golus-types,” reliefs of types of Shtetl life, similar to those works of his teacher Antokolski.<sup>13</sup> They made him known in Jewish circles while simultaneously the Bezael-project was in its incubation period. The first mention of the Bezael project we know of is a letter from Boris Schatz to Herzl, written in 1902,<sup>14</sup> shortly after the Fifth Zionist Congress, where

<sup>13</sup> Ehrenpreis (1903).

<sup>14</sup> Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, ed. Alex Bein et al., Vol. 6 (Frankfurt/M.: Propylaeen, 1993), pp. 417–418; Kokesch and Herzl to Schatz, 29 January 1902.

Martin Buber had given his speech about Jewish art. The letter was followed by a meeting early in 1903,<sup>15</sup> but it was not until fall 1905 that the founding of the Bezalel was underway. In December Schatz moved to Jerusalem, and in March 1906 the Bezalel started working, devoting all the years to come to this — his — project.

*Otto Warburg*

It was not before the general shift of power within the Zionist Organization towards the “practical” Zionists that the project of the Bezalel could be realized. In contrast to Herzl, whose goal was to obtain a charter from the Turkish Sultan to put Jewish settlement in Palestine on a basis of international law, the practical Zionists favored immediate settlement activities. Otto Warburg was a key figure in the development of these activities,<sup>16</sup> along with Chaim Weizmann, Arthur Ruppin and most Berlin Zionists.

Otto Warburg<sup>17</sup> was born in 1859 into a well-to-do Hamburg family of silk merchants, distantly related to the famous Warburg Bank and the cultural historian Aby Warburg. He received an exclusively secular education and became a botanist, specializing in tropical plants, especially in the development of plants and their economic use. By the 1890s he had acquired an international reputation in this field and became involved with the German Colonial Society, an independent advisory body to the Colonial Department, as well as editor of the periodical *Der Tropenpflanzer*. In 1892 he was appointed professor at the University of Berlin, and in 1908 published his influential *Kulturpflanzen der Weltwirtschaft*.

<sup>15</sup> Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, Vol. 7, p. 68, Herzl to Ehrenpreis, 27 February 1903. The meeting between Schatz and Herzl was obviously mediated by Marcus Ehrenpreis, Chief Rabbi of Sofia.

<sup>16</sup> Jehuda Reinharz, ed., *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus 1882–1933* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1981); Yehuda Eloni, *Zionismus in Deutschland. Von den Anfängen bis 1914* (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1987); Derek Penlar, *Zionism and Technocracy. The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine 1870–1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Adolf Böhm, *Die Zionistische Bewegung bis zum Ende des Weltkrieges* (Tel Aviv: Hozaah Ivrit, 1935).

<sup>17</sup> Yaacov Thon, *Sefer Warburg* (Jerusalem: 1948); Penlar (1991), 60–79. No recent biography exists. Warburg’s publications include: *Die aus den deutschen Kolonien exportierten Produkte und deren Verwertung in der Industrie* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1896); *Syrien als Wirtschafts und Kolonisationsgebiet* (Berlin: H. Paetel, 1907); *Die Zukunft Palästinas und unsere Aufgaben daselbst* (Wien: Juedischer Kolonisationsverein, 1906).

Warburg became a Zionist in the early years of the movement through the influence of his father-in-law Gustav Cohen,<sup>18</sup> who was a leading member of the *Kolonisationsverein Esra*, a philanthropic organization with close ties to the international Hovevei Zion. Cohen and Warburg were both among Herzl's earliest supporters in Germany and became personal friends of his. Warburg, for example, provided Herzl with material for his novel *Altneuland*. Unlike Herzl, Warburg had always been in favor of practical settlement projects. He developed schemes to settle Rumanian Jews along the newly built Anatolian Railway, as well as in Cyprus and Mesopotamia. To finance these projects he often drew from his personal funds or formed alliances with non-Zionist associations, such as the Jewish Colonization Association and *Esra*.

It was only after his visit to Palestine and the sixth Zionist Congress that he became more active in the Zionist Organization. He was elected chairman of the *Zionistische Kommission zur Erforschung Palästinas* (Palestine Commission) and established the periodical *Altneuland*, later named *Palästina*. Already at that time he initiated the purchase of land by the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Colonial Association, and encouraged private investments in settlement projects. He founded numerous institutions and bodies that were involved in the development of the country, such as the Olive-Tree-Fund of the Jewish National Fund (1904), the experimental agricultural station in Atlit (1911), the Palestine Land Development Company (1908) and the *Palästina-Industrie-Syndicat* (1907).

In 1911 Warburg replaced David Wolffsohn as the head of the World Zionist Organization and remained in office until 1920. After the First World War he dedicated himself to scientific work as head of the botany department and the Institute of Natural History of Palestine at the Hebrew University. Also, he continued his efforts to create an economic basis for the new Jewish settlements, for example by establishing the Palestine Grapefruit Orange Company.

Especially in his early projects Warburg applied models adopted from the German Colonial Office to promote nation-building ends in Palestine. He tried to attract international capital, and "stroved to

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<sup>18</sup> Gustav Cohen (Hamburg 1830–1906 Hamburg) had written a brochure about *Die Judenfrage und die Zukunft* in 1881, published in 1891. His son-in-law Otto Warburg joined the Berlin committee of *Esra* in 1894.



Otto Warburg (left) and Heinrich Löwe (right), standing in front of the entrance door to the Berlin University Library, 10 October, 1907  
Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem

develop a well-balanced, productive and profitable economy.”<sup>19</sup> Socialist ideas were of no great concern to him. However, when it came to nominating the head of the newly created Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization in 1909, he voted for Arthur Ruppin, whose social concepts were influenced by the Social Democratic reformism of his day.<sup>20</sup>

Within the Zionist Organization Warburg was in constant conflict with the faction of “political” Zionists such as David Wolffsohn and those safeguarding the funds from risky project-making, namely Jacobus Kann and Zalman David Levontin. But on the other hand, Warburg did not share the Zionist social and cultural aspirations

<sup>19</sup> Penslar (1991), p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Penslar (1991), p. 92.

of the Cultural Zionists of the *Poale Zion*. He was known, in contrast, for his lack of interest in ideological questions.<sup>21</sup> Wolffsohn's statement that "Warburg was not a Zionist in the usual sense of the word"<sup>22</sup> points out the cultural difference between many of the functionaries from Eastern Europe who often read Warburg's gentleman-like behavior and mild manners as a lack of emotion and "Jewish soul."<sup>23</sup>

### *Founding and organization of the Bezalel*

Two years after Schatz's meeting with Herzl, the pogroms in Russia and the Uganda-Proposal brought the immediate settlement activities back onto the agenda of the Zionist Organization.<sup>24</sup> It was the core group of "practical" Zionists around Warburg that became active in realizing Schatz's plan. Warburg formed a coalition of all major Jewish philanthropic associations. A founding committee was set up in January 1905.<sup>25</sup> It included Otto Warburg, Franz Oppenheimer<sup>26</sup> and Selig Soskin<sup>27</sup> as members of the *Zionistischen Kommission zur Erforschung Palästinas*, and Hirsch Hildesheimer<sup>28</sup> as representative of the *Kolonisationsverein Esra*. It was accompanied by an artistic committee consisting of Schatz himself, Ephraim Mose Lilien<sup>29</sup> and Hermann

<sup>21</sup> Eloni (1987), pp. 239, 260 points out that the alleged lack of "Jewishness" of Warburg was held up against him in the internal conflicts of the Zionist Organization.

<sup>22</sup> Penslar (1991), p. 78.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Weltsch "Trauer um Otto Warburg," *Jüdische Rundschau* 36, 4 (1938), p. 3 also mentions this.

<sup>24</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), pp. 33–37. The article of Ehrenpreis (1903), published in May 1903, did not mention the project.

<sup>25</sup> Names as given in "'Bezalel' Gesellschaft zur Begründung jüdischer Hausindustrien und Kunstgewerbe in Palästina Projekt," *Altneuland* 1,1 (1905): 11–18.

<sup>26</sup> Franz Oppenheimer (Berlin 1864–1943 Los Angeles), economist and sociologist, formulated a theory of "liberal Socialism"; he was co-editor of the periodical *Altneuland*. Alex Bein, "Franz Oppenheimer als Mensch und Zionist," *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 7 (1964): 1–20; *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Franz Oppenheimer und die Grundlagen der sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, ed. Elke-Vera Kotowski (Berlin: Philo-Verlag, 1999); Franz Oppenheimer, *Mein wissenschaftlicher Weg* (Leipzig: Meiner, 1929); Oppenheimer, *Der Staat*, (Frankfurt am Main: Ruetten & Loening, 1907) (= *Die Gesellschaft, Sammlung sozial-psychologischer Monographien*, ed. Buber, M. Vols. 14/15).

<sup>27</sup> Selig Soskin (Crimean 1873–1959 Nahariya) agronomist, plantation and irrigation expert who had worked for the Hovevei Zion, served as an advisor to the German Colonial Office, and was co-editor of the periodical *Altneuland*.

<sup>28</sup> Hirsch Hildesheimer (Eisenstadt 1855–1910 Berlin) scholar, son of Esriel Hildesheimer, was teacher at the orthodox *Rabbinerseminar* in Berlin and publisher of *Die Jüdische Presse*.

<sup>29</sup> Ephraim Mose Lilien (1874–1925) graphic artist, was a member of Democratic

Struck.<sup>30</sup> On October 8th, 1905 the official constitution of the Bezalel Committee took place.<sup>31</sup> During the following months, several articles were published to make the project known.<sup>32</sup> An appeal for funds followed shortly afterwards, showing an impressive list of supporters, including well-known benefactors, scholars and businessmen.<sup>33</sup> At the seventh Zionist Congress Warburg asked for support from the Zionist Organization, which was approved after a short discussion.

In its beginning, the Bezalel was not a mainly Zionist project. The first year's budget was provided by *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* (3,000 marks),<sup>34</sup> the Zionist Organization (2,000 francs), and the *Kolonisationsverein Esra* (2,000 marks) as well as the *Großloge des Bne Brith* (500 marks), the *Baronin von Cohn-Oppenheim-Stiftung* in Dessau<sup>35</sup> (300 marks), the Odessa Committee (600 francs for a Hebrew teacher) and smaller contributions by numerous private persons.<sup>36</sup>

The Board was formed by representatives of these organizations;<sup>37</sup>

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fraction and co-founder of *Jüdischer Verlag*; his *art-nouveau* designs were very popular in Zionist circles.

<sup>30</sup> Hermann Struck (Berlin 1876–1944 Haifa) graphic artist, was a leading member of *Mizrachi*, popular in Jewish circles through his etched portraits of Eastern Jews.

<sup>31</sup> Warburg to Hantke, 8 October 1905, CZA A 11/32/5, invitation to the meeting of the board. It was only one year later, in October 1906, that the Bezalel gave itself the legal form of a *Verein*. Warburg to Schatz, 15 October 1906, CZA L 42/56; Ofrat-Friedlander (1983) 35; "1. Bericht des Bezalel", *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 307–325.

<sup>32</sup> Bezalel (1905); Franz Oppenheimer, "Das zionistische Ansiedlungswerk und der Bezalel," *Die Welt* 9, 15 (1905): 7; J. Thon, "Bezalel," in *Ost und West* 5, 11 (1905): 623–642.

<sup>33</sup> "Die Einführung von Hausindustrien und die Entwicklung eines palästinensischen Kunsthandwerkes," newspaper clipping, probably from *Jüdische Rundschau*, fall 1905, CZA L 42/287. The list of supporters included names mainly from Berlin, Hamburg and Breslau. Along with Zionists like David Wolffsohn, it includes members from *Esra*, *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* and *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, along with several scholars, artists and bankers.

<sup>34</sup> During this period 1 pound sterling = 20 German marks = 20 French francs = 5 US\$.

<sup>35</sup> When in 1903, Julie von Cohn-Oppenheim, daughter of the banker Moritz von Cohn, died, she left an estate of ca. 5 million marks that were dedicated for philanthropic purposes, mainly for the support of the Jewish communities of Dessau and Sachsen-Anhalt.

<sup>36</sup> Figures according to "1. Bericht des Bezalel," *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 307–325; detailed lists of contributions and budgets are given in: *Bericht des Bezalel. Verein zur Verbreitung von Kunstgewerbe und Hausindustrie in Palästina und den Nachbarländern* 1 (1906)—8 (1914/18). One may assume that much of the *Esra's* contribution came from Warburg's private pocket.

Otto Warburg as chairman and representative of the Zionist Organization, Paul Nathan<sup>38</sup> as secretary and representative of the *Hilfsverein*, Berthold Israel<sup>39</sup> as treasurer and representative of the *Esra*. Apart from that, an Artistic Advisory Committee was established which consisted of Josef Israels, Max Liebermann, Hermann Struck, Ephraim Mose Lilien, Julius Bodenstern<sup>40</sup> and Paul Levy,<sup>41</sup> the director of the Gladenbeck bronze foundry in Berlin.

Meanwhile the opening of the school was being prepared: an advertisement was published to find a teacher.<sup>42</sup> The selection committee consisted of Lilien, Schatz, Struck and Ivan Mrkvicka,<sup>43</sup> the director of the Sofia Art Academy. Out of eight candidates, they chose Julius Rothschild,<sup>44</sup> a student of Ludwig von Hofmann in Weimar.<sup>45</sup> In December 1905, Schatz, Rothschild, and Lilien traveled to Jerusalem via Sofia and arrived there in mid January. Two months later, the Bezael started operating.<sup>46</sup>

However, neither teacher stayed for long: Ephraim Mose Lilien had only intended to stay until the school was established. Although successful as a teacher, he did not supply the school with the urgently

<sup>37</sup> Names as given in "1. Bericht des Bezael", *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 307–322.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Nathan (Berlin 1857–1927 Berlin), social politician, publisher, co-founder and member of the Board of Hilfsverein, of Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, published brochures countering anti-semitism.

<sup>39</sup> Berthold Israel (Berlin 1868–1935 Berlin), businessman, owner of a Berlin department store, member of the Board of the Berlin Jewish community and of *Esra*, treasurer of the Society of Friends of the Hebrew University.

<sup>40</sup> Julius Bodenstern (Berlin 1847–1931 Berlin) painter of landscapes and genres, influenced by Max Liebermann, painted the interior decorations of the Berlin synagogues Fasanenstrasse and Rykestrasse.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Levy (?–?), later named Loening. After his own bronze foundry had merged with Gladenbeck in 1899, he opened the conservative Gladenbeck Company for modern art and luxury goods. Ursel Berger "Die Bronzegießerei Gladenbeck in Berlin" *Die Weltkunst* 58 (1988), 3662–3666, here: 3663.

<sup>42</sup> In September 1905, Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> Ivan Vazlav Mrkvicka (or Markowitzka) (Vidim/Bohemia 1856–1938 Prague), painter of religious, historical and genre scenes. Born in Bohemia, he became the father of Bulgarian national painting.

<sup>44</sup> Julius Rothschild (?–?), a drawing of his is in *Bezael 1906–1929* (1983), p. 38.

<sup>45</sup> Ludwig von Hofmann (Darmstadt 1861–1945 Pillnitz) *art nouveau* painter and designer who created numerous decorative wall paintings. Together with the architect and designer Henry van de Velde, he made Weimar one of the leading art schools of the modern movement.

<sup>46</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 37, for a discussion of the precise date of arrival and resuming of work. A detailed account of the journey is in *E.M. Lilien. Briefe an seine Frau*, ed. Otto M. Lilien and Eve Strauss (Königstein/Ts.: Juedischer Verlag-Athaenaeum, 1985), pp. 75f.



needed carpet designs and fell out with Schatz.<sup>47</sup> Julius Rothschild was rejected by the pupils for alleged incompetence. Already by August 1906, Schatz had made plans to replace him.<sup>48</sup> The nomination of teachers would remain one of the main points of conflict between the Berlin-based Bezalel Association and Boris Schatz in Jerusalem.

In spite of all the trouble we hear of, the institution grew rapidly during the following years — maybe even too rapidly. Just two years later, in May 1908, the school and workshops moved from their first premises in Ethiopia Street to two large mansions on present day Bezalel Street. They were let out to the Bezalel by the Jewish National Fund which had acquired them from Effendi Abu Shakir. The variety of crafts taught at the school may serve as an indication of its rapid growth: as usual in art academies of the time, drawing and sculpture, taught before live models, was the core of the artistic education. Apart from that, Hebrew classes and a special evening-school for craftsmen were established. The first workshop to be opened was the one for carpet-weaving. Others soon followed, such as silver filigree, repoussé, wood carving, stone-cutting, cane furniture, chiseling, lithography, lacework and even more crafts, as well as the failed experiment of a Moshav in Ben Shemen, where Yemenite silversmiths were settled to combine agriculture and handicrafts.

The number of workers rose from 100 in 1908 to 457 in 1911; value of the goods produced from 20,000 francs in 1908 to 250,000 in 1912. For comparison: the export of Christian *objets de piété* was valued at 535,000 francs in 1908 and 550,500 in 1912 after recovery from a sharp drop caused by the Balkan wars.<sup>49</sup>

There were various ways to sell the Bezalel products. The most advanced marketing strategy was certainly the special pavilion erected near Jaffa gate, a miniature version of the Migdal David aiming at the ever-growing number of tourists in the city. However, the most

<sup>47</sup> Schatz to Warburg, 14 August 1906, CZA L42/10 (copy book 1906, p. 167f.). In later letters the rift became deeper; see Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 37.

<sup>48</sup> Struck to Schatz, 7 August 1906, MAJ Box 99/file 1 (Boris Schatz).

<sup>49</sup> Figures according to *Bericht des Bezalel* (1906–1914/18) and J. Syrkin [sic!] [Nahman], “Das Kunstgewerbe Palästinas,” *Volk und Land* 1, 3 (1919), 71–80; 1, 4 (1919) 112–116; see p. 76. About the Jerusalem souvenir industry see Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, Vol. 2: *Emergence of the New City* (Jerusalem/New York: St. Martin’s, 1986), pp. 401, 412–417.

common means of distribution was through exhibitions. During the years before the First World War, sales exhibitions took place in almost all major Jewish communities all over Central Europe and beyond, especially around Hanuka. Bezelel products were presented at all Zionist Congresses. Apart from that, the Bezelel participated in large general exhibitions such as the *Ausstellung jüdischer Künstler* in Berlin in 1907, the *Tenoonstelling van Palestina* in Rotterdam, Amsterdam and the Hague in 1910, which was similar to that in Kopenhagen in 1908, the Industry Fair in Odessa in 1911 and the Palestine Exhibition and Bazar in London in 1912. In 1913 the Bezelel held its first major exhibition in the US in Cincinnati. Many of these large exhibitions were followed by smaller ones throughout the country, organized by local committees for the support of the Bezelel that had been founded in Hamburg, Prague, Warsaw and even in Buenos Aires between 1908 and 1912.

The economic success of the Bezelel products varied: usually they sold better in Russia or in the centers of Eastern Jewish immigration in England and the United States, whereas they seemed to be more difficult to sell in Western Europe, especially in Germany. From there, the complaints about design and craftsmanship were put forward that became the next point of dispute between Berlin and Jerusalem.

The general funding of the Bezelel was organized through the Berlin association. Its purpose was to collect money, to buy part of the raw material, to ship it to Jerusalem, and to organize the marketing of the products. But parallel to this, the Jerusalem school and workshops started to buy raw material and sell finished products independently. Not surprisingly, the budget was soon out of control. This issue was the next constant hot spot in the relationship between Jerusalem and Berlin. In fact, a proper accounting department was never established. From 1908 on, the Palestine Office in Jaffa tried to mediate and to check the books on a regular basis — without much success. During the years prior to the First World War, the financial situation worsened. From the outset, the Bezelel had suffered from a lack of initial capital as well as from bad management and too fast expansion. Great losses were caused by the failed experiment in Ben Shemen. On top of that, the *Hilfsverein*, still the largest contributor of funds, pulled out of the project in 1910. Apart from lack of patience with the troubled project, this move also reflected

the deterioration of the relations between Zionists and liberals in Germany.<sup>50</sup>

During the years prior to the First World War, several attempts were made to reorganize the Bezalel. In 1913, Leo Estermann<sup>51</sup> was sent as an administrator to Jerusalem. His diagnosis was "overproduction." He closed many departments, laying off workers from about 400 in 1913 to only 80 in March 1914. He planned to separate the school from the workshops, which would be organized as a commercial company (*GmbH*), whereas the school would be put under the administration of the Palestine Jewish Board of Education, the future *Misrad Hamorim*.

During the first years of the War the Bezalel continued working, until 1917 when its premises were used as a military hospital. Boris Schatz was arrested and exiled to Damascus. From March 1918 on, work was gradually resumed. Schatz reorganized the Bezalel, introducing many of the reforms that the Berlin Board had demanded in the past.<sup>52</sup> He put more emphasis on the production of arts and crafts than on the education of artists, and separated the commercial activities from the school.

After the war and the German defeat, the headquarters of the Zionist Organization moved from Berlin to London. Under its new president Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist Organization formed closer ties with Britain and the United States. The Bezalel followed this move, also because the economic situation of German, Russian and Polish Jewry was now such that financial support could hardly be expected from there.

Apart from the scarce contributions from the *Misrad Hamorim*, the Bezalel still depended largely on private funding. Thus, the workshops put large efforts into spectacular objects for fundraising exhibitions, such as the Tora shrine, today in the Spertus Museum in Chicago, or the Eliahu-chair, today in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

<sup>50</sup> The controversy is described in Eloni (1987), pp. 250ff.

<sup>51</sup> Leo (Arje) Estermann (Lithuania 1875–1944 Tel Aviv) chemist, came from Lithuania to Berlin and joined the student association *Jung Israel* and was part of the more radical faction within German Zionism, favoring immediate immigration to Palestine. See Reinharz (1981), p. 42; Eloni (1987), pp. 272–273.

<sup>52</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), pp. 99–123; Boris Schatz "How to Encourage and Promote Home Crafts in Jerusalem and in Eretz Israel in General," in *Bezalel* (1983), pp. 161–196.

These works, as well as the doors of the old Bezalel Museum and of the Bikur Holim hospital, both installed in the late 1920s, designed by Zeev Raban and Meir Gur-Arie and still on site, shaped the image of the Bezalel until today. Economically, however, the 1920s were less successful. In 1927 the school had to be closed, and after a short re-opening, the “old” Bezalel came to an end in 1929.

Meanwhile, criticism of the artistic and social ideas of Bezalel was raised from outside the country.<sup>53</sup> But within Palestine, too, a new generation of artists had begun to adopt international modernism and started to move from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. It was under the influx of the Fifth Aliya that the “New Bezalel” was opened in 1935. Its founding years saw almost the repetition of the old cultural and ideological conflicts between Eastern European romanticism and Western modernism.<sup>54</sup> Today, the New Bezalel still exists as the leading art school in Israel.

### *Common goals?*

During the year 1905, in preparation for the school’s founding, several articles were published in the Jewish press. These statements — by the recently assembled Board of the Bezalel, Franz Oppenheimer, and by Jacob Thon, the assistant of Warburg and later of Arthur Ruppin, the head of the Palestine Office in Jaffa — may provide us with an insight into the intentions of the founding committee and the call for public support of the project.<sup>55</sup>

The authors advocated the combination of economic, social and cultural goals that was typical of political discourse in Germany at the time, where political and economic imperialism often went hand in hand with concepts of *Sozial-* and *Kulturpolitik*.<sup>56</sup> Since the early

<sup>53</sup> For example Syrkin (1919) and Arnold Zweig, *Das neue Kanaan* (Berlin: Horodisch & Marx, 1924), p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Gideon Ofrat, *Bezalel he-Hadash 1935–1955* (Jerusalem: 1987).

<sup>55</sup> Oppenheimer (1905); Thon (1905); Bezalel (1905); “Bezalel: The Palestine Polytechnic, Interview for the Jewish Chronicle with Professor Otto Warburg of Berlin,” 1906, newspaper clipping in CZA L 42/81.

<sup>56</sup> *Das wilhelminische Bildungsbürgertum. Zur Sozialgeschichte seiner Ideen*, ed. Klaus Vondung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976); M.J. Mommsen, *Bürgerliche Kultur und künstlerische Avantgarde. Kultur und Politik im deutschen Kaiserreich 1870–1918* (Frankfurt am Main: 1994).

days of the movement, German Zionists especially had been dreaming of the Middle East as an economically flourishing region: The Anatolian, Bagdad and Hejaz railways would create the basic infrastructure.<sup>57</sup> This in place, trade, industry and also tourism would become a major factor of economic growth “as meanwhile not only poor Russian peasants are travelling to the Holy Land but also wealthy Englishmen and pilgrims from southern Germany. Unlimited possibilities for export” were expected for liturgical objects for all western religions, for synagogues, churches and for private use “made in Jerusalem.” “The historical significance of Palestine creates an emotional value for the objects originating from there.”<sup>58</sup>

Apart from this, the Bezalel should follow the example of the carpet industries of Smyrna (Izmir) and Rumania to create a source of economic development and national income. To reach a clientele beyond the Jewish community, it would be necessary to adopt the common designs of oriental carpets.<sup>59</sup>

In line with the economic ideas of the time,<sup>60</sup> the Bezalel products should gain a strong market position by careful crafting and good design: “We were living in a time when the sense for artistic form is being revived everywhere. While factory technique is about to crush handicraft, it has revived arts and crafts. Thoughtful education of the persons involved will increase the value of the products and will make them able to compete on the world market.”<sup>61</sup>

Likewise in their other settlement projects in Palestine, Warburg and Oppenheimer regarded the economic success of the products on the general market and the attraction of international investment as the basis for the economic development of the country.<sup>62</sup> In spite of differences in nuance, Oppenheimer, Thon and Warburg saw the Bezalel as part of an economic and social, rather than an artistic

<sup>57</sup> Eloni (1987), pp. 184ff.

<sup>58</sup> Bezalel (1905), pp. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Thon (1905) with reference to the carpet industry of Bulgaria and Smyrna as examples for the Bezalel.

<sup>60</sup> Heinrich Waentig, *Wirtschaft und Kunst. Eine Untersuchung über Geschichte und Theorie der modernen Kunstgewerbebewegung* (Jena: Fischer, 1909); *Packeis und Pressglas. Von der Kunstgewerbebewegung zum Deutschen Werkbund. Eine wissenschaftliche Illustrierte*, eds. Angelika Thiekötter and E. Siepmann (Gießen: Anabas-Verl., 1987), pp. 255–262.

<sup>61</sup> Bezalel (1905), p. 12.

<sup>62</sup> Penslar (1991), p. 77; Otto Warburg “Zionistische Wirtschaftspolitik,” *Die Welt* 9, 13 (1905) 3ff.

and cultural, utopia. Cultural change would be the effect of economic change, not its basis.

Thus, it was more than just lip service to the largest contributor in the project, the *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden*, if all public statements emphasized the social and economic function of the Bezael as its most important objective, which was to give work to the population of Jerusalem and to make them independent of the traditional Haluka-charity. Similar programs under the slogan “work instead of charity” were carried out by the *Hilfsverein* in Galicia and other regions.<sup>63</sup> The *Hilfsverein* also played a major role in the founding of the Haifa Technion.<sup>64</sup> The hopes for the Bezael were high-flying: “According to the estimate of experts, the almost unlimited market for carpets will create — if established in the right way — income for thousands of families in the carpet-industry.”<sup>65</sup>

The main target group of the economic and cultural change to be influenced by the Bezael was the old Yishuv. With the same patronizing attitude we find in other statements of bourgeois Western Jews towards traditional Eastern Jewish ways of life, the Haluka system was to be replaced by “productive labor.” Positive cultural effects were expected to result from it, forming the basis for a broader development towards *bürgerliche Verbesserung* (bourgeois improvement). The Bezael was expected to be “an institution under whose auspices within a short time hopefully thousands of useless beggars will rise to the status of free citizens, elevated in their moral sense by labor.”<sup>66</sup> “The practice of arts and crafts will form their aesthetic sensibility.” This way, “among the population decayed in dirt, individuals will be educated, for whom cleanliness, order and outward beauty will become a necessity of life.”<sup>67</sup>

In the midst of this mixture of economics with *Sozial-* and *Kulturpolitik*, aesthetic issues were addressed only in vague terms. As far as the Berlin Board held ideas about the creation of a distinct style at all,

<sup>63</sup> Derek Penslar, “Philanthropy, the ‘Social Question’ and Jewish Identity in Imperial Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 38 (1993): 51–73.

<sup>64</sup> Zeev W. Sadmon, *Die Gründung des Technions in Haifa im Lichte deutscher Politik 1907–1920* (München: Saur, 1994) (= *Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin*, Vol. 78).

<sup>65</sup> “Bezael”, *Die Welt* 19, 44 (1906), p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> “Die Einführung von Hausindustrien und die Entwicklung eines palästinensischen Kunsthandwerkes”, newspaper clipping 1905, CZA L 42/287.

<sup>67</sup> Thon (1905), p. 641.

they rather spoke of a general "Palestinian" style, drawing on sources from all three religions in the country: "On the other hand, it will not be too hard to develop an artistic style appropriate to the country and its history. In the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, as well as in the wonderful motif that were discovered in recent excavations of synagogues, churches and mosques, we find inspiration and models in abundance that are only waiting to be researched and adopted to be used in arts and crafts."<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, even the most sober economists apparently got carried away by Boris Schatz's utopian vision. In his article, Jacob Thon envisioned the Bezalel almost as the "Third Temple": "Maybe the school will succeed in laying the foundations for the sanctuary of our art where once stood the sanctuary of our cult."<sup>69</sup> In contrast to this, the name of the new institution read more prosaically: "*Bezalel*". *Verein zur Verbreitung von Kunstgewerbe und Hausindustrie in Palästina und den Nachbarländern*. The bylaws defined the purpose of the association: "Improvement of the material and cultural situation of the poor Jewish population in Palestine and the neighboring countries by introducing arts and crafts and home industry."<sup>70</sup> The founders of the Bezalel probably thought they had more in common than they actually did.

#### *Dissent over the Bezalel's purpose*

Soon after the opening of the school enthusiastic reports were published.<sup>71</sup> Surely, at this early stage neither Warburg nor Schatz had

<sup>68</sup> Bezalel (1905), p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> Thon (1905), p. 642.

<sup>70</sup> The bylaws were published in *Altneuland* 3, 10 (1906), pp. 323–325. The Bezalel was constituted as an "e.V." (*eingetragener Verein*) according to German law. As such, it had to serve a charitable or cultural purpose to gain exemption from tax. Donations could be deducted. No profits could be made. All surplus had to be re-invested. The mentioning of the "neighbouring countries" in addition to Palestine may have been a concession to the political sensitivities of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>71</sup> J.K. (= Jacob Klausner) "Von der Kunstgewerbeschule Bezalel in Jerusalem," *Die Welt* 10, 33 (1906) 9; J.K. (= Josef Klausner) "Vom Bezalel," *Die Welt* 10, 43 (1906), p. 7; Dr. Grünhut, "Der 'Bezalel' in der hl. Stadt," *Altneuland* 3, 6 (1906), pp. 184–185; Boris Schatz, "Bezalel", *Jüdische Rundschau* 11 (1906) (letter dated 2 June 1906) (newspaper clippings in CZA L 42/287); "Bericht der Palästina-Kommission. Erstattet bei der zionistischen Jahreskonferenz am 30. 8. 1906 in Köln a. Rh. v. Prof. Otto Warburg," *Altneuland* 3 (1906), pp. 227–228; Boris Schatz; "*Bezalel*".

an interest in jeopardizing the young project by letting their emerging conflicts become public. As early as August 1906 it was clear that Julius Rothschild had not been a sound choice.<sup>72</sup> Schatz complained about him and suggested Samuel Hirszenberg<sup>73</sup> as successor.<sup>74</sup> The appointment of teachers became a first point of dissent, when Schatz, without consulting the Board, closed a contract with Leopold Gottlieb, brother of the famous Polish-Jewish painter Maurycy Gottlieb. The Board had other priorities and feared that the students “will never be good teachers of carpet weaving, particularly not if they are introduced by Mr. Gottlieb into the mysteries of the most recent decadent Polish painting.”<sup>75</sup>

Behind the intrigues and the atmosphere of mistrust developing between Berlin and Jerusalem, a basic dissent over the school’s purpose came to the surface: whether it should be an art academy or a school for arts and crafts.<sup>76</sup> “The Board is doubtful,” Warburg wrote to Schatz, “whether a great artist in particular would be the right person; much more important would be a good teacher for crafts, even if he were secondary as an artist. For it must be strictly observed, that the school serves the promotion of arts and crafts, not the education of artists. It would be a great mistake if the school were now to take the character of an art academy. . . . Those who support the Bezalel, organizations and individuals, can only be won permanently, if the Bezalel really becomes instrumental in fighting the poverty of the Jewish population in Palestine. They do not have any interest whatsoever in particular varieties of artistic endeavors.”<sup>77</sup>

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*Programm und Zweck (Den Mitgliedern des Aktionskomites gewidmet)* (Jerusalem: August 1906) also published in *Die Welt* 10, 33 (1906), pp. 9–11; “Bezalel,” *Die Welt* 10, 44 (1906), pp. 13.

<sup>72</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 40, quotes negative comments about him from the memoirs of Shmuel Ben David, who came from Sofia with the first group of pupils.

<sup>73</sup> Samuel Hirszenberg (1865–1908) was a painter of historic and genre scenes which were very popular in Jewish circles.

<sup>74</sup> Struck to Boris Schatz, 7 August 1906, MAJ, Box 99/file 1 (Boris Schatz); Struck to Schatz 19 May 1907, CZA L 42/102; Struck to Schatz 23 May 1907, CZA L 42/102. Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 63, writes that Hirszenberg had been installed by the Berlin Board to replace Schatz—for which these letters give no indication.

<sup>75</sup> Warburg to Schatz, 27 February 1907, CZA L 42/102.

<sup>76</sup> The sign over the door read *Kunstgewerbe-Schule* and the associations founded in Prague and Hamburg were named *Kunstgewerbevereine*, *Bezalel 1906–1929* (1983), p. 316.

<sup>77</sup> Warburg to Schatz, 15 October 1906, CZA L 42/56.



For Schatz however, these endeavors were central. A few months after these letters were written, he published an open letter in *Jüdische Rundschau*: “We will also, if we have the means, establish a free art academy [“freie Kunstakademie”, emphasized in print, I. B.] in ‘Bezalel’ where our young talents will receive a European art education and at the same time will absorb a modern Jewish spirit, so that they will be Jewish artists in the full sense of the word.”<sup>78</sup>

The Berlin Board however only saw the growing artists’ proletariat and had no intention to contribute to it.<sup>79</sup> Felix Feuchtwanger, the Munich Judaica collector, shared this concern when he pointed out: “There is no use in educating people in Jerusalem for good money to be craftsmen, but to do that in such a way that arts and crafts will soon seem inferior to them so that they turn to art — a field where often much stronger talents do not succeed.”<sup>80</sup>

To Schatz these concerns must have seemed faint-hearted and small-minded. He envisioned a cultural center in the sense of *Ahad Ha’am*. From his perspective, full-fledged nation-building would include a national art academy and a national museum. Art for him was not a stage in the education of designers, but a purpose in itself. His notion of national art was based on the traditional hierarchy of arts in which painting and sculpture was considered superior to design and crafts. The Board’s insistence on the Bezalel being a *Kunstgewerbeschule* devalued his project as well as his own status as artist and *Professor*.<sup>81</sup>

Schatz apparently did not share the critical attitude that had developed in Western Europe towards the notion of national art, the art academy and the museum of national art. International modernism had questioned these institutions. The Secessions in Vienna, Munich and Berlin were not only directed against academic painting itself, but also against the system in which it was taught. The traditional

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<sup>78</sup> Boris Schatz, “Bezalel”, *Jüdische Rundschau* 12, 18 (1907), p. 179. However, not only Schatz but also most of the students shared this idea, and came to Palestine in the hope of becoming “real” artists. In 1913 a conflict broke out when art classes were closed and students were forced to concentrate on design. Ofra-Friedlander (1983), p. 86.

<sup>79</sup> Thon to Schatz, 9 September 1906, CZA L 42/56.

<sup>80</sup> Feuchtwanger to Bezalel Association, 26 December 1910, CZA L 42/18.

<sup>81</sup> For social status in the artistic professions see Wolfgang Ruppert, *Der moderne Künstler. Zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte der kreativen Individualität in der kulturellen Moderne im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998).

art academies were criticized for hanging on to educational principles and to concepts of art that would only enlarge the artists' proletariat of historical painters, while at the same time there was an increasing need for good designers and craftsmen.<sup>82</sup> Its echo of these issues could be heard in the Berlin Board's negative remarks about artists.<sup>83</sup> In the eyes of his Berlin counterparts, Schatz hung on to an institution that had become aesthetically outlived and could only be economically harmful.

This was the background for the continuing disputes about the appointment of teachers during the years to come.<sup>84</sup> After the death of Samuel Hirszenberg in September 1908, who had come to teach painting at the Bezalel only the year before, the Board made a new move in order to get better arguments and a better understanding of the Bezalel's aesthetic direction. They turned to Justus Brinckmann, the director of the Hamburg *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe*, supporter of *Kunstgewerbe-Reform* and leading member of the *Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler*, for an estimate of the carpets and silver work produced at the Bezalel.<sup>85</sup> Presumably on his recommendation, the Berlin Board started to negotiate with Albert Reimann to come to the Bezalel. With Reimann, for the first time, an arts and crafts specialist was considered, who shared the ideas of the arts and crafts movement that had emerged in Germany.<sup>86</sup> The negotiations did not move quickly<sup>87</sup> but were serious. In April 1910,

<sup>82</sup> See Nicholas Pevsner, *Academies of Art. Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946); G. Möller, "Die preußischen Kunstgewerbeschulen," in *Kunstpolitik und Kunstförderung im Kaiserreich. Kunst im Wandel der Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, ed. Ekkehard Mai et al. (Berlin: Mann, 1982), pp. 113–130.

<sup>83</sup> Leonardo Benevolo, *Geschichte der Architektur des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Vol. 2: *Die moderne Bewegung* (München: Callwey, 1964), p. 370, quotes Alfred Lichtwark: "Die Zukunft unserer Industrie wird mit davon abhängen, ob wir entschlossen und im Stande sind, der nächsten Generation eine sorgfältige künstlerische Erziehung des Auges und der Empfindungen angedeihen zu lassen. Bisher haben wir nur für die Ausbildung von Künstlern gesorgt."

<sup>84</sup> Correspondence 1907–1909 in CZA L 42/102, L 42/19, L 2/86/I; MAJ Box 99/file 1; Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), pp. 63–82. There seems to have been pressure from the *Hilfsverein* to replace Schatz as director.

<sup>85</sup> Brinckmann to Bezalel Association, 31 December 1908, CZA L 42/19.

<sup>86</sup> Albert Reimann (Gnesen 1874–1975 London), designer, had founded an arts and crafts school in 1902, which was the first one to embrace the modernist trends. H. W. Klünner, "Die Schule Reimann in Berlin", in *Kunstschulreform 1900–1933*, ed. Hans Maria Wingler (Berlin: Mann, 1977), pp. 246–248; *25 Jahre Schule Reimann 1902–1927* (Berlin: 1927) (= *Farbe und Form*, special issue).

<sup>87</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 78. Probably also because Schatz meanwhile had hired the Polish painter Lazar Krestin without informing the Berlin Board.

Reimann visited the Bezalel.<sup>88</sup> In the end, however, he did not succeed in selling his own arts and crafts school and stayed in Berlin.<sup>89</sup>

After this disappointment the Berlin Board turned back to the previously rejected candidates Erich and Richard Goldberg.<sup>90</sup> Both had received a preparatory education at Reimann's school and at the Gladenbeck bronze foundry.<sup>91</sup> In March 1911, against Schatz's opposition,<sup>92</sup> they started working at the Bezalel.<sup>93</sup> The relationship with Richard Goldberg, who taught painting and directed the workshops, soon deteriorated.<sup>94</sup> Erich Goldberg taught painting and headed the repoussé department, leaving a distinct artistic mark on the silver and ivory works of the Bezalel. Both stayed until the outbreak of the First World War.

*Dissent over the Aesthetics of the Bezalel's Products*

In the first outlines of the Bezalel of 1905 the aim to create a distinct design style was mentioned. It was recommended that artists draw on the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions of the region, especially the motifs discovered in recent excavations.<sup>95</sup> But in Berlin, the euphoria over this method of "applied archeology" soon cooled and gave way to growing scepticism towards "the introduction of a Palestinian Style."<sup>96</sup> Those voices grew stronger when, by the end of the year 1908, Bertrand Hamburg,<sup>97</sup> a Berlin businessman, started

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<sup>88</sup> Reimann to Schatz, 17 April 1910, CZA L 42/108; Hamburg to Schatz, 18 April 1910, CZA L 42/17; Palestine Office (Thon) to Schatz, 19 April 1910 MAJ 100/III/9.

<sup>89</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 17 August 1910, CZA L 42/18; 23 September 1910, L 42/19; Reimann to Schatz, 26 September 1910, L 42/109; Schatz to Hamburg, 1 Maiy 1911, L 42/16 (copybook 1910–11, 592ff); Hamburg to Schatz, 21 December 1910, L 42/18.

<sup>90</sup> Erich Goldberg (?-?); Richard Goldberg(-Leobschütz) (Leobschütz 1869-?)

<sup>91</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 17 October 1910, CZA L 42/17; Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 83.

<sup>92</sup> Struck to Schatz, 3 February 1911, CZA L 42/79.

<sup>93</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 21 January 1911, CZA L 42/18.

<sup>94</sup> Schatz to Hamburg, 27 April 1911, CZA L 42/16 (copybook 1910–11, 888); Ofrat-Friedlander (1983) 83.

<sup>95</sup> Bezalel (1905), p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Warburg to Schatz, 15 October 1906, CZA L 42/56.

<sup>97</sup> Bertrand Hamburg (?-?).

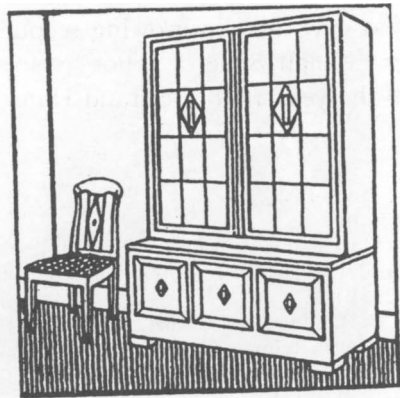
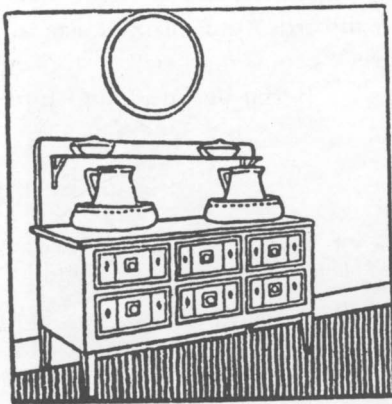


Biskuitdose, dekoriert.



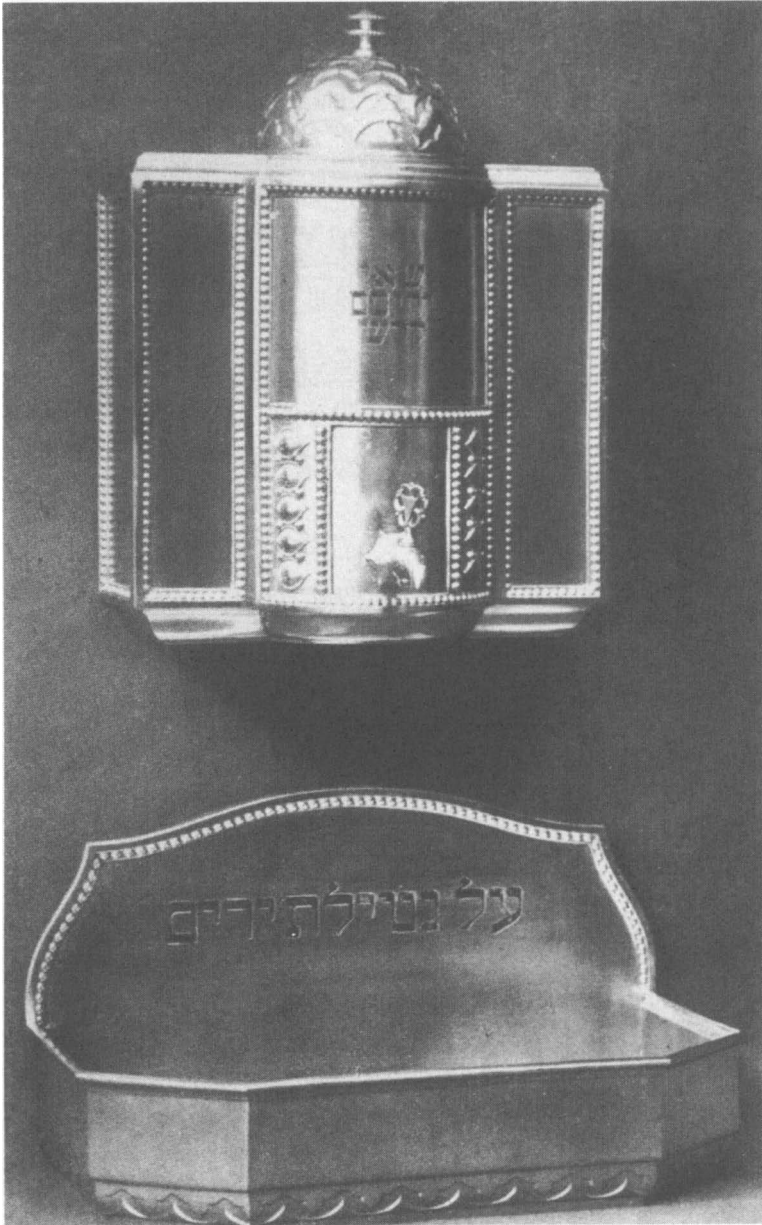
Butterdose, versilbert, mit Messer,  
reich dekoriert.

Dekoration statt Sachlichkeit und gediegener Form!  
Käuferregel: Wer diesen Plunder auf seine Geschmacklosigkeit nicht  
erkennt, gehört nicht zu den Gebildeten!

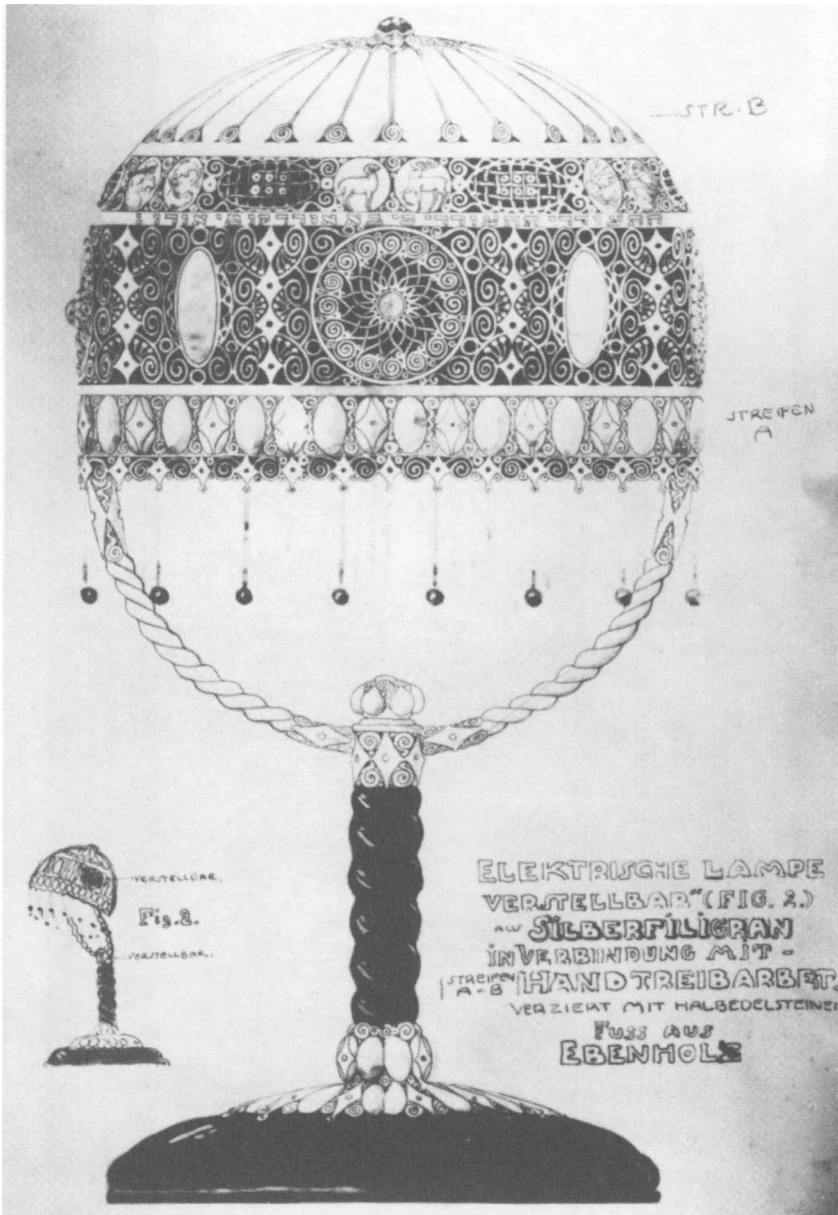


Waschtisch, Bücherschrank nach Zeichnungen von Bruno Paul. Beispiele  
von einfachen schönen Lösungen, die eine gute Tradition verkörpern.

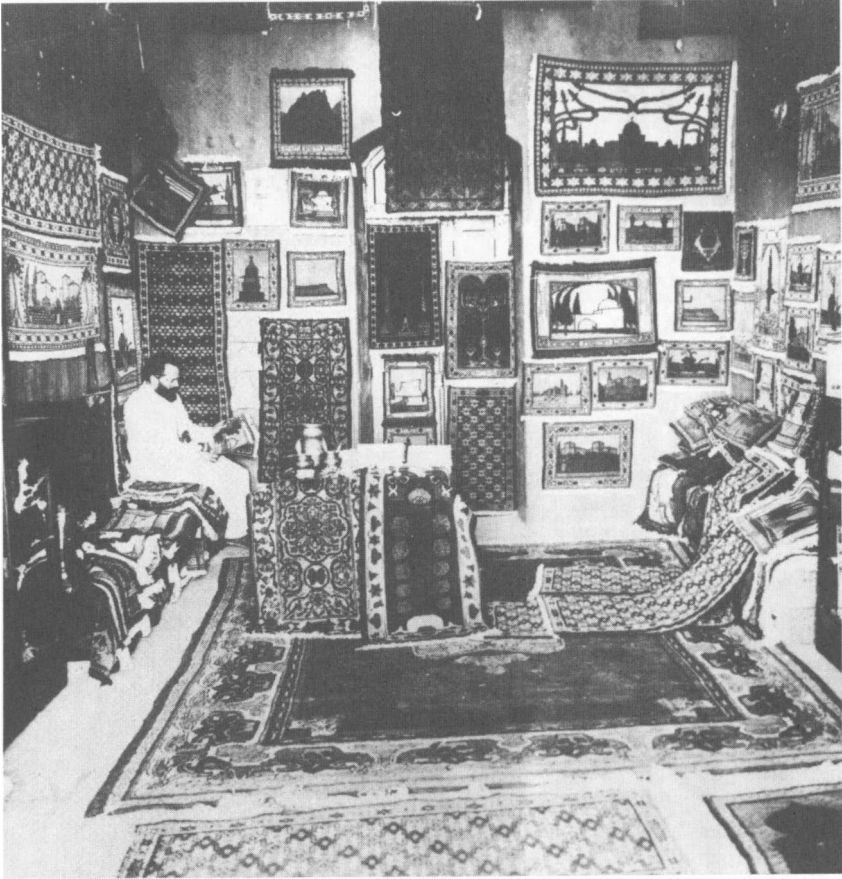
Aesthetic education  
from: Joseph August Lux *Geschmack im Alltag. Ein Lebensbuch zur Pflege des  
Schönen* (Dresden: 1910)



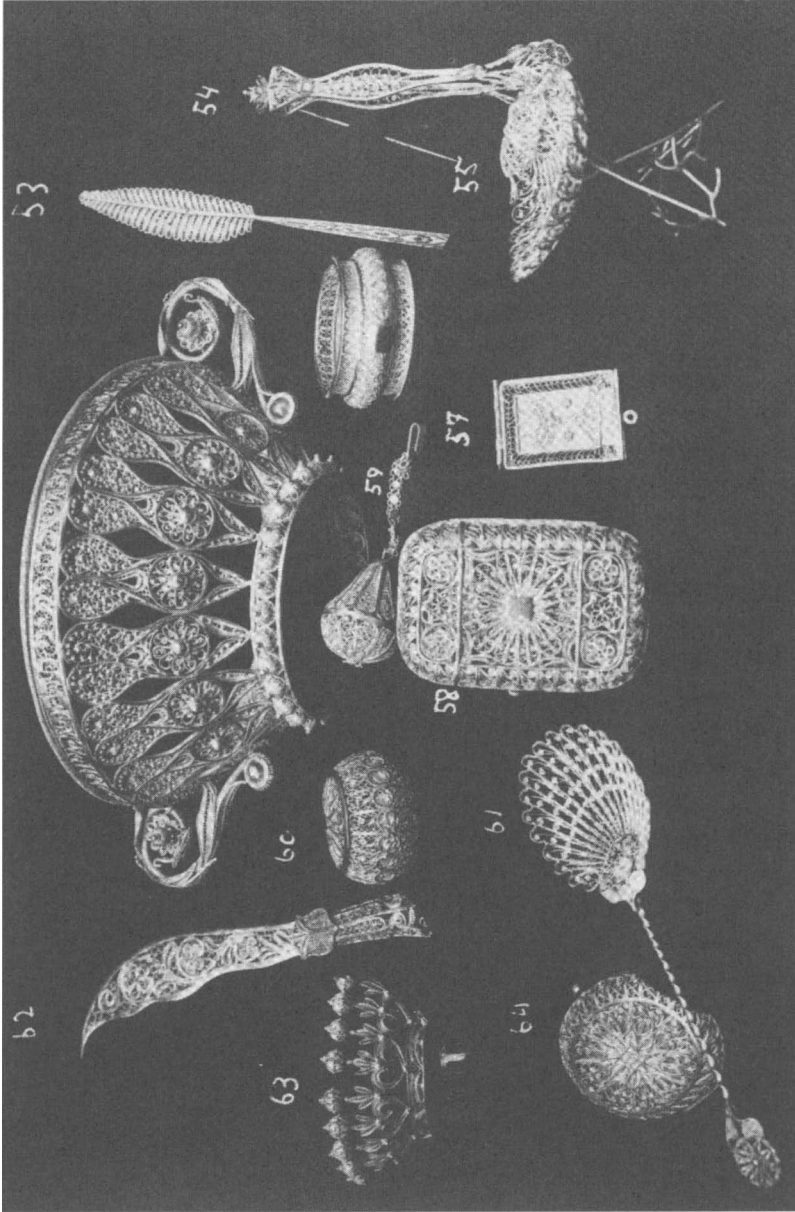
Friedrich Adler: Fountain and Basin for ritual handwashing, Regensburg,  
Eugen Wiedamann factory, 1914 Pewter  
Exhibited at the *Werkbund* exhibition in Cologne, 1914  
Photograph, Wiedamann Catalogue, 1915



Erich Goldberg: Design for lamp, 1911-1914  
Sketch, Mishkan Le'Omanut, Museum of Art, Ein Harod, Israel



Boris Schatz among Bezael rugs at a sales exhibition, ca. 1912  
Photograph, Israel Museum Collection source: Bezael (1983) 160



Silver Filigree works probably done at Ben Shemen 1911-1914  
Photograph, Israel Museum Collection, source: Bezalel (1983) 163



working in the office of the Berlin association.<sup>98</sup> In his correspondence with Boris Schatz, complaints about design, color and quality of the Bezalel's products became the main subject: "Again we have to raise the friendly as well as urgent demand to abandon the imitation of *art-nouveau* once and for all and to produce carpets in the well-established oriental taste. All experts who examined the samples here, among them Hermann Struck, Lesser Ury and other authorities, are perfectly in agreement with us."<sup>99</sup> In varying tone, similar criticism was put forward against other products, the wood and filigree objects in particular.<sup>100</sup> They were considered flimsy and tasteless.<sup>101</sup> Instead, Berlin demanded solid quality, functional and well-established design — no fuss, no experiments — and referred to a general change of taste: "It has to be taken into consideration that the fashion for oriental metalwork is definitively over, as today taste is totally different and modern arts and crafts would design objects such that they are apt for practical use."<sup>102</sup> Especially the taste for color was different in Berlin. Repeatedly, replacement of the bright with muted colors was demanded.<sup>103</sup> Also, the "screaming Zionist compositions," Jewish symbols and Hebrew letters were not appreciated.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, they were considered dysfunctional, since "no religious Jew would step with his feet on Hebrew letters",<sup>105</sup> whereas "the oriental fashion, where carpets were hung on the walls, was past. The only appropriate place for a carpet was the floor."<sup>106</sup> Often, the Bezalel's products seem to have clashed with those of the machine-age: the little wooden frames did not match the standardized sizes of postcards and photographs,

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<sup>98</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), pp. 73–74, regards the fact that the correspondence now took place between Hamburg and Schatz as an indication of the deterioration of the relationship between Schatz and Warburg. Although it certainly had not improved over the past conflicts, it was not unusual to have the daily routine business delegated to an assistant.

<sup>99</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 16 February 1909, CZA L 42/19.

<sup>100</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 4 September 1909, 13 September 1909, CZA L 42/17.

<sup>101</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 4 June 1911, CZA L 42/19.

<sup>102</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 21 December 1910, CZA L 42/18.

<sup>103</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 21 October 1909, CZA L 42/18; Warburg to Ruppin, 21 December 1909, CZA L 2/86/I, Hamburg to Schatz, 4 April 1911, CZA L 42/19.

<sup>104</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 30 June 1909, CZA L 42/17.

<sup>105</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 21 October 1909, CZA L 42/18 and 6 November 1909, CZA L 42/17.

<sup>106</sup> Brinckmann to *Verein Bezalel*, 31 December 1908, CZA L 42/19.

the pencil-cases were too short for modern, mass-produced pencils.<sup>107</sup>

The Berlin line of argument was first of all economic: the products should address the general market not only the Zionist public: “The number of Jews who would buy carpets for the support of the Bezalel will only be small, and even those would much rather buy designs that suit their taste, than those which do not. On the large general market however, only the well-established oriental designs can be sold.”<sup>108</sup> From the perspective of the Berlin Board, this criticism was justified also because it was regarded as their part in a division of labor planned from the beginning: “The producers are not concerned with the market. This will be done by the commercial department. It will look for new and favorable marketing possibilities. It must research the market situation and direct the production accordingly.”<sup>109</sup>

Schatz, however, must have felt this a strong invasion of his field of competence, and did not even reply to Hamburg’s remarks. He insisted on “Jewish” designs because they were a matter of essence to him and the Bezalel project. From his perspective it must have been a completely unjustified demand that he, who was working in Erez Israel, creating a center of all Jewish culture, should submit his art to the taste of the Diaspora, and moreover, not only to the taste of Jewish customers — but even of non-Jewish ones.

We can find here the same dissent over the preference for ‘economy’ over ‘culture’ in the development of the new Jewish society in Palestine which we found in the basis of the conflicts over the appointment of teachers. But the dissent over the new national aesthetics leads us beyond different visions of Zionism into the contemporary discourses about the national character of art. There, ornament was a key issue. In fact, the positions of Schatz and of the Berlin Board can be associated with the aesthetic approaches prevalent in their respective home countries: roughly speaking, the “German school” of the *Werkbund* which tried to develop a national style without ornament, and the “Russian school” where national style was based on ornament.

It was often mentioned that Schatz drew on the artistic and social

<sup>107</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 27 September 1910, CZA L 42/18.

<sup>108</sup> Warburg to Schatz, 15 October 1906, CZA L 42/56.

<sup>109</sup> Thon (1905), p. 637.

concepts of William Morris and John Ruskin.<sup>110</sup> However, it would be difficult to draw a direct line of influence. By the 1900s, this movement was common knowledge all over Europe. Meanwhile, it had inspired arts and crafts movements on the Continent that had taken very distinct characters in the different countries, not only in their aesthetics but also in their approach towards the issue of national art and in their vision of art in society.<sup>111</sup> As with Morris and Ruskin, social utopian ideas, a sort of romantic anti-capitalism, was prevalent in almost all of the different national varieties of the arts and crafts movement.<sup>112</sup>

Boris Schatz's artistic and social concepts were shaped mainly by those formulated in Russia during the second half of the 19th century.<sup>113</sup> To the *Peredvishniki*, national art had to show a connection to "the people," it could only be created by going back to the roots of what was regarded as the creative spirit of the people. In the circle of Abramcevo and at the Moscow Crafts School, a strong interest in the traditional rural crafts developed. Their ornamental features were combined with *art-nouveau* elements in silverwork, furniture, pottery and other arts and crafts objects. Often, religious icons or "patriotic style painting" was decorated with elaborate ornamental frames.<sup>114</sup> This approach to national art can be found in many Bezalel objects and in the combination of Schatz's paintings or reliefs in ornate Bezalel frames. Also in Sofia he applied this eclectic and mainly ornamental approach to create a new Romanian national art.

By the time of the opening of the Bezalel, this seemed to have been a generally accepted approach. The ornaments of Ephraim Mose Lilien also followed this artistic method. But it was exactly during the founding years of the Bezalel that notions of ornament and national art had become the subject of public debate in Germany and new approaches were formulated. A rift between

<sup>110</sup> Olin (2001), p. 44, Zalmona (1983), pp. 146–7; Oltuski (1988), pp. 117–119.

<sup>111</sup> H. Waentig, „Kunstgewerbe“, in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, ed. L. Elster et al., Vol. 6 (Jena: 1923–1929), pp. 288–297.

<sup>112</sup> The sources for Schatz's "socialist" ideas can be found in Eastern European sources rather than with Morris or Ruskin as in Olin (2001), p. 40, or Zalmona (1983), pp. 146–149; B. Schatz „Poale Bezalel“ *Die Welt* 10, 48 (1906), pp. 7–9.

<sup>113</sup> Oltuski (1988), pp. 14–22, 116–129; Zalmona (1983), pp. 232–242.

<sup>114</sup> Sternin (1976) 26–44; Evgenia Kirichenko, *The Russian Style* (London: L. King, 1991); Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863–1922* (rev. ed.) (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), pp. 9–21.

modernists — who included many members of the liberal oriented Jewish bourgeoisie — and conservatives — who mainly came from the field of the old noble, administrative and military elite — had developed alongside the issue of national art. After the *Munch-Affäre*, the *Tschudi-Affäre*, the *Böcklin-Streit*, the *Protest deutscher Künstler* and others, the notion of a national art had become questionable for liberals and modernists.<sup>115</sup> While these debates took place in the field of painting, similar developments took place in the field of arts and crafts.

In Germany, a specific version of French *art-nouveau* and the English arts and crafts movement had developed since the mid 1890s under the name *Jugendstil*. By the 1900s it had become widely influential since numerous *Jugendstil* artists had been nominated as teachers to the *Kunstgewerbeschulen* that had been founded several decades ago to educate designers and craftsmen. This *Kunstgewerbe-Reform* was part of a larger social and cultural *Reformbewegung* in Germany at the time.<sup>116</sup> Similar to the English arts and crafts movement it saw itself as a cultural reform of capitalism through art, searching for a “third path” between capitalism and socialism.

But apart from such aesthetic and social utopian ideas, the importance of modern design for the national economy was recognized from the outset. It was the Prussian Ministry of Trade that sent the architect Hermann Muthesius on an information trip to England in 1896. A chair for modern design was established for him at the Berlin *Handelshochschule* (School of Economics). Hermann Muthesius was to become a key figure in the foundation of the *Deutscher Werkbund*.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>115</sup> *Manet bis van Gogh. Hugo von Tschudi und der Kampf um die Moderne*, eds. Johan Georg, Prinz von Hohenzollern and Peter Klaus Schuster (München: Prestel, 1996); *Berlin Metropolis. Jews and the New Culture 1890–1918*, ed. Emily Bilski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Peter Paret, *The Berlin Secession. Modernism and its enemies in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980).

<sup>116</sup> Corona Hepp, *Avantgarde. Moderne Kunst, Kulturkritik und Reformbewegungen nach der Jahrhundertwende* (München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl., 1996); *Arts and Crafts. Von Morris bis Mackintosh-Reformbewegung zwischen Kunstgewerbe und Sozialutopie*, ed. Gerda Breuer (Darmstadt: Institut Mathildenhöhe, 1994); Angelika Thiekötter, “Kunstgewerbebewegung,” in *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880–1933*, ed. Diethart Kerbs and Juergen Reulecke (Wuppertal: P. Hammer, 1998), 465–479.

<sup>117</sup> Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund. The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Frederic Schwartz, *The Werkbund. Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Kurt Junghanns, *Der Deutsche Werkbund. Sein erstes Jahrzehnt* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1982).

Founded in 1907, it was an association of economists, industrialists, artists and architects. The *Werkbund* differed from many of the previous institutions of the German arts and crafts movement and from its English counterpart in its positive approach towards industrial production. From the outset, the *Werkbund* faced the challenges of market economy, since one of its objectives was to strengthen the position of German goods on the world market. The *Werkbund* aimed at a symbiosis of arts and crafts with economic issues, the large industries, new technologies and mass production.

The efforts of the *Werkbund* were connected also with a change in the aesthetic approach, a transition from the ornate, floral, French-style *art nouveau* to a predecessor of the later “new sobriety.” Still, the national character of the new design was an important issue to the *Werkbund*, as it tried to formulate a modern, yet specifically German, aesthetic. As opposed to the case in Russia, the national message was conveyed by an “aesthetics of reduction.” Functionalism, good craftsmanship, solid quality, “decency” and “honesty of form” represented values that were considered specifically German. In the *Werkbund*’s aesthetics, the national character of the products was not expressed by ornament based on national historic sources but by quality of design and craftsmanship, not in forms but in values.<sup>118</sup>

Companies associated with the *Werkbund* used this as their marketing strategy. Bertrand Hamburg implicitly followed the policy of certain German companies for whom their association with the *Werkbund* was established as a special marketing factor that stood for quality craftsmanship and good design, when he sought to establish the Bezelel as a “brand.”<sup>119</sup>

As the *Werkbund* program gained widespread public attention, it can be presumed that those involved in the Bezelel were familiar with these ideas: to Paul Levy from the Gladenbeck foundry, as part of the modern arts and crafts business, to Otto Warburg through his close ties to ministry officials, to Franz Oppenheimer as a theorist of social reform. Walter Riezler, one of the *Werkbund*’s founding members was the brother of Max Liebermann’s son-in-law.<sup>120</sup> And

<sup>118</sup> Hepp (1987), p. 161.

<sup>119</sup> Hamburg to Schatz, 4 September 1909, CZA L 42/17.

<sup>120</sup> Junghanns (1982), pp. 176–177; Schwartz (1996); Campbell (1978). Kurt Riezler, his brother, was one of the most important theoreticians of an offensive *auswärtige Kulturpolitik* of the German Empire. Ties between the Riezler brothers and Liebermann

Albert Reimann's arts and crafts school *Höhere Schule für Dekorationskunst* was founded under the auspices and in the spirit of the *Werkbund*. Two of its key figures, Hermann Muthesius and Peter Behrens,<sup>121</sup> were members of the school's artistic committee.

Richard Goldberg, in an article published in 1919, explicitly called for an introduction of the *Werkbund*-ideas in Palestine, criticizing the adoption of historic forms: "Where, for external reasons, foreign forms were adopted, the result were those sick creations, the so-called home atrocities which the *Werkbund* had set out to extinguish. [. . .] Consistent with this idea we have to speak about the danger of transplanting foreign elements of style. Nobody would buy from Palestine goods of European design, he would only be willing to pay an appropriate price for 'Palestinian' or at least 'Oriental' quality work of clean design."<sup>122</sup>

By the first decade of the century, the *Reformbewegung* in Germany and its efforts in aesthetic education had created a widespread change in tastes. Rich ornamentation and bright colors were considered tasteless. *Schlichtheit* became an important factor of social and cultural distinction, especially among the educated bourgeoisie.<sup>123</sup> This was the social background which most of the members of the Berlin Board came from. Similar to the process of aesthetic education they themselves had been subjected to, they were now striving both to impose their standards of taste on the new Jewish society and to make the Zionist project acceptable to the bourgeois public by an aesthetically acceptable appearance.<sup>124</sup>

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were close. Personal correspondence of Margreet E. Nouwen, Liebermann Archive, Berlin.

<sup>121</sup> Klünner (1977), pp. 246–248. Peter Behrens was chief designer of the electrical company AEG.

<sup>122</sup> R. Goldberg, „Das Kunstgewerbe Palästinas. (Ein Kapitel zur Industrialisierung Palästinas)“, *Jüdische Rundschau* 24, 21 (1919), p. 156.

<sup>123</sup> Thiekötter (1998); *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, eds. Kai Buchholz et al. (Darmstadt: Haeusser, 2001).

<sup>124</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and Western European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Hugo Schachtel to Bezael Association, 7 April 1911, CZA L 2/86/I, stating that Bezael products are a discredit to the Zionist movement as a whole.

*Dissent over Management Structure of the Bezalel*

Conflicting ideas about the management structure of the Bezalel marked another field of dispute between Boris Schatz and the Berlin Board. It was not just about different styles of management, but about hierarchy and responsibility. Issues such as consultation of the Board, budget control or the presentation of results were the main points of quarrel. Often, the Board's internal politics, designed to create a consensus among its members, and their demand to stick to certain procedures, were regarded by Schatz as an attempt to undermine his authority. From today's perspective, it is hard to judge whether, or at which point, this had been attempted by the Board. Certainly, it did not take long until an atmosphere of mutual mistrust had developed.

In autumn 1906, just a few months after the opening of the school, Schatz nominated a successor for Julius Rothschild. Warburg then tried to clarify the role of the Board and the Artistic Advisory Committee: he pointed out that it was part of Schatz's contract "that actually the committee would nominate the teachers. Of course, I would be glad if you would propose someone whom you consider appropriate, but we would always have to consult our Artistic Advisory Committee, since this is their task."<sup>125</sup>

Any compromise, any demand for procedure, or facing the realities of budget and market, were regarded as an invasion into his spheres of independence. Schatz successfully prevented the installation of a financial and commercial expert. He tried to circumvent the Board wherever possible, asked supporters to send the money directly to Jerusalem, not via Berlin and launched his own fundraising campaigns.<sup>126</sup> He did not send financial accounts and created huge expenses without consulting with the Berlin Board. One might agree with Gideon Ofrat's interpretation that "what Warburg failed to perceive at this time was Schatz's intentional monetary policy. He did not regard the Board as a partner but rather as an employer to be exploited to the maximum. Thus, he instructed his staff not to pass on expenditure accounts from one year to the next. He thought that the Board would find the means to cover the losses."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Warburg to Schatz, 12 November 1906, CZA L 42/102.

<sup>126</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983) 51–53.

<sup>127</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983) 73; Warburg to Schatz 24 December 1906, CZA L 42/102.

On the other hand, he demanded unconditional support while at the same time refusing any demand for visible results: "The Bezalel is like a child, to whom one has to give and from whom one must not demand very much, with whom one has to be careful and if one cannot or does not want to give, at least one should not touch it with rough hands and extinguish the flame of his life with ardent critique, for he might — God forbid — die!"<sup>128</sup> One may wonder whether it was just lack of diplomacy that led him to make contemptuous remarks about his benefactors. The "famous Bezalel committee," he wrote, "consisting of millionaires, connoisseurs and businessmen, only cares for economy and pennies, but not for time and people."<sup>129</sup> From that moment on, some of the millionaires might have looked more carefully where their money went.

In a letter to Warburg he complains about the mistrust directed towards him and compares it with the trust that the King of Bulgaria had put in him, in spite of the fact that he was a foreigner and a Jew.<sup>130</sup> Such a comparison points to Schatz's understanding of his role towards the Board: he expected them to provide him with the funding he needed to enable him to work freely according to his own artistic ideas. He did not realize, however, that the Board was not acting on its own power as the Tsar of Bulgaria did, but as a body representing those who had donated their money to the project. As previously noted, non-Zionist associations, such as *Esra* and the *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden*, contributed even larger sums than the Zionist Organization. Apart from that, the project was under constant scrutiny from the rival factions within the Zionist Organization itself, especially those objecting to Warburg's settlement projects either for political reasons, like David Wolffsohn, or out of economic considerations, such as Zalman David Levontin and Jacobus Kann. Thus, Warburg was not in the position to govern by decree, he had to find ways to create a consensus for every new move of the Bezalel.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Speech of Boris Schatz quoted in J. Benmosche, "Lag-Baomer im Bezalel", in *Palästina. Monatsschrift für die wirtschaftliche Erschließung Palästinas. Zentralorgan der jüdischen Kolonisationsbewegung im Orient*. 5, 8/9 (1908), p. 154 (Bezalel-Sondernummer), p. 154.

<sup>129</sup> B. Schatz, "Bezalel", in *Jüdische Rundschau* 12, 10 (1907), p. 100.

<sup>130</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 51.

<sup>131</sup> The internal rivalries of the Zionist Organisation are not to be underestimated. Estermann's mission could have been part of Jacobus Kann's campaign against Arthur Ruppin and Warburg. Penslar (1991), pp. 92, 133. Estermann



Schatz's idea of his own role was almost that of the court artist, enjoying total freedom thanks to unequivocal backing by his noble benefactor.<sup>132</sup> In Russia, where artists were either associated with the Tsar or a wealthy magnate such as Marmontov in Abramcevo, this was the common position of artists in society. The artists Schatz had studied with in France were also mainly working on the basis of public commissions. And in Bulgaria, Schatz worked as Professor of the Art Academy of the young nation-state in great freedom and with full salary, enjoying full support in his role of creating a "Center" for the new national art. In those projects, national art was conceived and created remote from social realities. Idealizing "the people" or adopting folk ornament, even training young peasants in traditional crafts as in Abramcevo, did not alter the essentially elitist setting. Their products did not have to prove their viability against economic reality. The world of profit-making economy and the world of nation-building through art constituted two separate spheres.

In Western Europe, however, the social situation of the artist had changed dramatically with the establishment of bourgeois society and the art market.<sup>133</sup> Artists were forced to present their work to committees, to strive for the audience's attention and to act within a network of dealers, critics, curators and collectors. Only a few of them enjoyed the economic freedom of a regular salary or of family means. The vast majority had to live by selling their artworks and to accept the realities of the market.

In the case of the Bezalel, this constellation of conflict was exacerbated by another factor — the role of the individual artist within national art. Richard Goldberg, in his article, hinted at that when he called for restraint of artistic individualism: "The main issue is, in the intensive search for our own characteristics, to find gradually the 'Palestinian-Jewish' element and not to make the attempt to create a so-called Jewish style head-over-heels. To take a foreign style and to introduce Jewish script and emblems into it does not make a Jewish style. Individuality, single-mindedness and cultural

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exchanged confidential letters with Kann. In 1914 (!) they jointly explored possibilities to merge the Bezalel with the crafts school of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. See Estermann's exchange of letters with Kann in CZA A 121/173.

<sup>132</sup> Martin Warnke, *Hofkünstler. Zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Künstlers* (Köln: DuMont, 1985).

<sup>133</sup> Oskar Bätschmann, *Ausstellungskünstler. Kult und Karriere im modernen Kunstsystem* (Köln: DuMont, 1997).

preference has to take a step back in order to create a new individuality, a truly distinct Jewish culture."<sup>134</sup>

What was "European" to Goldberg — the *art-nouveau* elements in the carpet designs — was the new "Jewish-Palestinian" style for Schatz, and what Schatz considered European taste — Persian carpet design — was genuinely oriental in the eyes of his opposites. For Schatz, genuine Jewish art was created by the artist who lives in the homeland and among Jews. "Only the artist who lives among his people can be an artist of the people, and will be able to render its spirit and life correctly in color."<sup>135</sup> His personal motto was: "*ani l'ami w'ami li*" — "I am one of the people and the people is for me."<sup>136</sup> He saw the individual artist as the *creator spiritus* of a new culture, to whom the people around him served as inspiration, a role model that was close to that of the *Peredvishniki*.

Goldberg however regarded national art as the outcome of a quasi "natural" process based on the "creative spirit" of a whole society — a gradual, collective process, rather than an individual decision. We can hear in this the echoes of Alois Riegl's concept of *Kunstwollen*,<sup>137</sup> and Goldberg certainly found himself in tune with his Berlin colleagues at the time. For them, the project of creating a new culture in Palestine could not be put into the hands of a single individual but had to involve Jewry as a whole — the Yishuv as well as the Diaspora.

In the context of the history of the Zionist Movement we can see this conflict as one of many that were about the relation of the Yishuv towards the Diaspora. In Warburg's mind the Yishuv had to become economically viable and self-sustaining. It had to confront the same realities of international markets as any country exporting carpets or silver objects. For Schatz in turn, living and working in Palestine and building the new Jewish society there, was of special — if not superior — value and entitled him to unconditional and perpetual support from the Diaspora.<sup>138</sup>

This constellation of conflict was rather typical during the early

<sup>134</sup> Goldberg (1919), p. 156.

<sup>135</sup> Schatz as quoted in Benmosche (1908), p. 152.

<sup>136</sup> Olin (2001), p. 45, fig. 13.

<sup>137</sup> For Riegl and his influence on concepts of Jewish Art, see Olin (2001), pp. 24–31, 116–117.

<sup>138</sup> Penslar (1991), p. 151, describes this attitude as widespread among the Yishuv, especially after 1910.

decades of Jewish settlement in Palestine. It was part of the process of growing independence of the Yishuv from the Diaspora — and part of its contradictions: to realize their ideas of a new society the young workers in Palestine were still depending on the old society and saw themselves entitled to unconditional and perpetual support. To live in the Jewish homeland and because of that to be “more Jewish” than their benefactors in Berlin, London or New York, became their strongest claim.

### *Contemporary Interpretations*

At the time, attempts were made to interpret the situation. However, this hardly contributed to its resolution. On the contrary, it even deepened the rift. To gain insight into Otto Warburg’s perspective, we can refer to his dispute with Menahem Ussishkin over the organization of settlement projects that experienced conflicts similar to those of the Bezalel. Warburg interpreted the Odessa Committee’s refusal to integrate into the institutions and procedures of the Zionist Organization, to submit themselves to the demands for economic efficiency, as a result of their historic experience in Russia:

“I do think,” he wrote to Ussishkin, “that the deeper reason for the difference in our opinions lies in the different cultural contexts in which we both find ourselves. Russia is presently undergoing the change from a despotic regime to a society based on individualism. In Germany, where individualism had been the dominating force for many years, we are in a process of change towards the social. What most Russians strive for Germany has lived through *ad nauseam* and what is being developed now in Germany, has hardly reached the general consciousness in Russia — except in the blunt slogans and half-understood phrases of the Socialists. I am convinced, however, that through the close cooperation created between Eastern and Western European Jews by the Zionist Movement, the development of Eastern European Jews towards the modern ideas of Western Europe will be accelerated.”<sup>139</sup>

Those paternalistic visions of cultural education and feelings of cultural superiority based on modernization were not uncommon in the

<sup>139</sup> “Briefwechsel zwischen dem Odessaer Palästina-Komitee und Herrn Prof. Dr. Warburg”, *Die Welt* 12, 21 (1908): 3–5.

relationship of Western towards Eastern Jewry.<sup>140</sup> Boris Schatz countered them with concepts of cultural superiority based on “Jewishness”—an attitude not uncommon in the relationship of Eastern towards Western Jewry. He claimed his project to be more genuinely Jewish than the art of his colleagues on the Artistic Committee of the Bezalel. Josef Israels and Max Liebermann, he stated, were Jewish only insofar as they are introduced “*bivrito shel avraham avinu*. They are strange to us, they are distanced from us, because with their strong strokes they did not show to the world the soul of our people.”<sup>141</sup> A few years later, the socialist papers wrote similar assertions about Richard Goldberg: “But Mr. Goldberg — who is Mr. Goldberg? A second-rate Ashkenazi painter who does not know a single Hebrew letter; a Jew only by birth and due to his position at Bezalel. A total stranger to the Jewish way of life.”<sup>142</sup>

Indeed, a cultural conflict did exist at the Bezalel. What the key players held in common — their dream to let the Jewish people live and flourish in Palestine — could not compensate for the fact that they were speaking different languages shaped by their respective cultural backgrounds. In the end, the two sides were bitterly entrenched and confirmed in their prejudices. What prevented a constructive mode of solving this conflict was the essentialist interpretation given to the conflict, based on irrational notions and leading to mutually exclusive claims of cultural superiority. The pattern of conflict at the Bezalel was not foreign or new to the Zionist movement. The *Altneuland* debate, the Uganda debate and the ‘language war’ at the Technion followed similar lines. In all of this, dissent about the future character of the Jewish homeland took the pattern of “essentialists versus technocrats.” One side favored what they considered factual necessities, the other, what they considered the essence of Judaism. This, however, seems to be a pattern of conflict not only familiar to Zionism but one that is embedded in the very basis of modern Jewish existence as a continuous challenge.

<sup>140</sup> Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

<sup>141</sup> Schatz as quoted in Benmosche (1908), pp. 151–152.

<sup>142</sup> Ofrat-Friedlander (1983), p. 83, quoted from *He'ahdut*.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE MENORAH AND THE STAR

Richard A. Freund  
University of Hartford

### I. *The Modern Jewish Use of the Menorah and Star*

The five and six pointed star and the menorah are important symbols for modern Jews despite the fact that so little is known about their origins in ancient Judaism. In fact, the sparse information about the earliest history of the menorah and five and six pointed star makes the modern use of these symbols difficult to account for.<sup>1</sup> Whether by accident or by plan, these ancient and medieval Jewish symbols emerged as specific and modern emblems for Judaism and the State of Israel. In the modern period they function as symbols of hope and restoration, of particularity and uniqueness—despite the

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<sup>1</sup> For general bibliography and illustrations see Rachel Hachlili, *The Menorah, the Ancient Seven-Armed Candelabrum: Origin, Form, and Significance* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2001), Dan Barag, "The Menorah in the Roman and Byzantine Periods," *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* (1985/86), pp. 44–47; Steven Fine and Bruce Zuckerman, "The Menorah as Symbol of Jewish Minority Status," *Fusion in the Hellenistic East* (ed. S. Fine), Los Angeles, 1985), pp. 24–31; E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vol. IV (New York, 1954), pp. 71–98; Victor A. Klagsbald, "The Menorah as Symbol: Its Meaning and Origin in Early Jewish Art," *Jewish Art*, 12–13, 1986/87, pp. 126ff.; L. Yarden, *The Tree of Life* (London, 1971), figures 1–3, 26, 61–106, 119–212; four pre-70 C.E.: Grafitto on the wall of Jason's Tomb in Jerusalem, L.J. Rahmani, "Qever Yason," *Atiqot*, 4 (1964), p. 11, fig. 7, pl. XII, 1,2; Yarden, *The Tree of Life* (London, 1971), 107–108; The Grafitto on the plastered wall in a house excavated by Nahman Avigad, "Excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, 1969–1970," *Israel Exploration Journal* 20, 1–2, (1970), 1–8, Yarden, fig. 19; A stone relief on the reverse of a sundial excavated by Benjamin Mazar near the Herodian Western Wall. B. Mazar, G. Kornfeld, D.N. Freedman, *The Mountain of the Lord* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 147; The Matthias Antigonos, coin (40–37 B.C.E.), Yarden, *The Tree of Life* (London, 1971), figs. 20–21. See also Avraham Negev, "The History of the Seven Branched Candelabrum, *Eretz Yisrael* 8 (1967), pp. 193–210 (Hebrew); H. Strauss, *Eretz Yisrael* 6 (1960), pp. 122–129; M. Kon, "The Menorah of the Arch of Titus" *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, (1950) pp. 25ff.; J.H. Herzog, "The Menorah on the Arch of Titus," *Essays in Memory of S.M. Mayer*, (Jerusalem, 1956), pp. 95–98; Daniel Sperber, "The Menorah," Vol. 16.3–4, (1965) *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, pp. 135ff.

fact that in their original, and even their medieval use and formulations, they were symbols of a very different nature. Most people experience these symbols today through the various symbols of the modern State of Israel and Judaism, in flags, money, stamps, literature, clothes, art, architecture, etc. in Israel and around the world. One sees these symbols in the architecture and furnishings of most synagogues and Jewish community centers, sports teams and book jackets for Jewish authors as well as Jewish organizations and causes. But in the 20th century and late 19th century they emerged through an irregular process of integration into the collective sensibilities of the Jewish people. I would like to underscore the modern irregularities before discussing the ancient antecedents and meanings which these symbols had through the Middle Ages.

The most prominent symbols of Judaism throughout the early Middle Ages was the Torah Shrine. While the Menorah often appeared together with it, the Ten Commandments on tablets, the hands of the Kohanim giving the priestly blessing and even the Temple were more significant than the Star of David and the Menorah. But clearly at the end of the 19th century with the birth of a new, more secular definition of Judaism and as a Jewish nation emerged, symbols were sought which would be easily identifiable, did not have excessive religious connotations (although some was necessary) and which could hearken back to political/national settings without a religious emphasis. The Menorah, which had been a symbol of the Maccabean revolt (the Maccabees were a favorite of the early Zionists and nationalists although the symbol was clearly associated with the Temple), was chosen, and the rather abstract and ignoble "Star of David" whose checkered past was known to only a few scholars but whose international and universal themes had already emerged as significant among late 19th and early 20th century thinkers.

## II. *The Star of David in the Modern Period*

In the 19th century, the main meaning of the Magen David, the Shield or Star of David was still fluid—a five or six pointed star (they were used almost indiscriminantly by Jewish sources) and was linked as a symbol in Mysticism and general European philosophical thinking. The fact that the symbol had been used earlier by the ill-fated Shabbatei Tzvi and his movement, and Jewish and non-

Jewish amulet makers (both east and west) did not seem to matter. The Star of David was not a major symbol in the Reform and Positive Historical Jewish movements of the 19th century but oddly enough the Rothschild family coat of arms chose to use it when they were ennobled in Austria. Heinrich Heine uses it perhaps as a mixed metaphor (of universalism and particularism) in 1840 but it was not until the end of the century that the symbol became of singular importance. The first issue (June 4, 1897) of Herzl's *Die Welt* uses it on the masthead in a clear attempt at creating a national "symbol." One wonders if Herzl and the nascent Zionist movement understood the irony of their choice of a primarily mystical symbol in their secular nationalist movement. The Star of David, which has both mystical and nationalistic significance by the end of the century, passes into use by Zionists also because it was easily reproducible in late 19th and early 20th century printed materials and precisely because it did not have the same overt religious meanings associated with Temple facades, Ten Commandment tablets or the Torah Shrine. Professor Gershom Scholem, the leading scholar of Jewish mysticism in the 20th century, gives an unusual pronouncement regarding its use by the Zionist movement. After reviewing hundreds of examples of the "star symbol" in Jewish mysticism over the past 1,000 years in his seminal article "The Star of David: History of a Symbol," he concluded that it was chosen by the Zionists at the end of the 19th century because it was well known but "lacked any clear connection with religious conceptions and associations" (pp. 280–281):

When the Zionists chose it as their insignia at the Basle congress, it possessed two qualities which had to recommend it to men in search of a new symbol. In the first place, it was known to everyone because of its general dissemination through the centuries, its appearance on every new synagogue, on the seals of the communities, the philanthropic societies, and the like. Secondly, in contemporary consciousness it lacked any clear connection with religious conceptions and associations.<sup>2</sup>

It will be argued here that the symbol never lost its mystical character of salvation/redemption and that this may have been precisely one of the reasons why it was selected as a symbol of the new movement. The mystical element of national salvation formulated by

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<sup>2</sup> This article was reprinted in his book *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971), pp. 257ff.

Zionism's earliest secular thinkers may not have been religiously inspired, although there obviously were religious Zionists who understood the total depth of the religious symbol. Nevertheless, it must have represented a wonderful opportunity for cross-over interest both from traditional factions within Judaism and even from non-Jews who would have recognized the symbol as being powerful even in their own consciousness.

By the 20th century Franz Rosenzweig, the premier Jewish philosopher with Martin Buber in Germany, had decided to combine the two aspects into a major philosophical concept in his book *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1921). In this work he calls the geometric pattern of the six pointed star—made up of two triangles—the symbol of Jewish Redemption. Although Rosenzweig is not a political Zionist, his view was that the Jewish people were in need of self-initiated extrication from the exile and alienation of Jewish life in Europe. The six points of the star were two triangles of man, the universe and God, interacting/overlain with the three elements of interaction: creation, revelation and redemption. When superimposed upon one another the independent elements become one and provide the Jew with the “Star of Redemption.” Though based in Hegelian and Kantian distinctions, the use of the six pointed star as a mystical and quasi-nationalist symbol in such modern philosophical terms is a major turn in the fortunes of the Magen David as modern Jewish symbol. A footnote to this and perhaps a direct descendent of Rosenzweig's use appears in the Yaacov Agam art work of the 1960's to the present. Agam, whose kinetic art uses the geometric, not representative, art as a part of his mystical understanding of the second commandment:

Agam has interpreted David's shield in many ways. In it he sees first the star of love, then an infinite variety of cosmic forms that are projected on to his universe or reflected from the polished surface of the sphere by a game of and triangulation in which over here the shadows play upon the wall and over there the lights, caught by the steel shadow of lights of Israel upon the world that surrounds us with its milky galaxies accessible to the Talmudists only or on the globe, shield of the people, points-arrow or sex organ-crossed, interchangeable, tangled, disjointed, reunited . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Homage to Yaacov Agam, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Exhibition 1980 (New York: Amiel, 1980), p. 149.



### III. *The Menorah in the Ancient Period*

The Menorah has had the longest and most uninterrupted run as a symbol of the Jewish people. In the early 20th century its destiny was often intertwined with the Magen David. Zionist publications such as *Ost und West* (1904), use both, the Bezalel Art Institute used the Menorah in many of its early exhibition posters, the Anglo-Palestine Company with its bank certificates use the Menorah motif. Zev Jabotinsky chose it for the symbol of Beitar primarily because of the association with the Maccabee story and it seems to have been held up as a symbol of courage by Jabotinsky and Beitar.<sup>4</sup> The Jewish Brigade, World War I soldiers who fought against the Turks on the side of the British, used the symbol as well in 1917. Despite some equivocation on whether it should be depicted as a seven, eight or nine branched symbol based upon religious considerations, the Menorah has been seen on the vast majority of Jewish institutions and markings as an indicator of Jewishness. In the 20th century, artist Benno Elkan created several bronze menorot, one in Westminster Abbey and the other in front of the Knesset in Israel which have become the second most well-known symbol of Israel and the Jewish people.

On July 15, 1948, some two months after the declaration of the State of Israel, the provisional government issued a statement on the "Symbol of the State of Israel" which was later published in the bulletin of February 11, 1949. This symbol was finally settled upon after 450 suggestions from 164 participants were considered.<sup>5</sup> The original design of the Menorah was an adapted version of the Menorah from the Arch of Titus, stripped of all of the Greco-Roman symbols found on the original. The final version has all of the Greco-Roman symbols (albeit obscured—as they are on the original) and therein lies some of the irony of the choice. The Menorah of the Arch of Titus became the symbol of the State of Israel in the 1950s despite its rather problematic history. Ironically, the symbol of the Arch of Titus, which was representative of the degradation of the Jewish people, became the symbol of its rebirth. So we have symbols

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<sup>4</sup> Rachel Arbel, "Between the Menorah and the Magen David" in *L'Or HaMenorah* (Hebrew: Jerusalem, Israel Museum, 1998), pp. 187ff.

<sup>5</sup> Alek Mishori, "The Menorah and the Olive Branches" in *L'Or HaMenorah* (Hebrew: Jerusalem, Israel Museum, 1998), pp. 17ff.

of mysticism and degradation, irrational zeal for restoration and mystical redemption—irony of ironies which have become the main symbols for the rationalist and nationalist modern Jewish people and the State of Israel.

#### IV. *The Menorah: Symbol of Redemption?*

The use of the Menorah as the symbol of the power of the State of Israel—as it is depicted on money and at the Israeli Knesset—indicates that it was seen as the embodiment of the ancient State of Israel and its sovereignty, in the guise of the Temple of Jerusalem, and the modern State of Israel and its sovereignty in the guise of the Knesset in Jerusalem. The symbol which was erected at the Knesset in 1955 raised a tremendous amount of controversy. The only contemporary version of the Menorah of the Temple which was the basis for the Knesset's model is from the infamous Arch of Titus. The choice of the Arch of Titus Menorah and not any of the hundreds of other ancient versions discovered in and around Israel is an attempt at artistic, historical and political irony. The very symbol of the degradation of the ancient Jews, the Arch of Titus, was now a symbol of the new Jewish nation. For centuries, Roman Jews would not pass under the Arch, but went around it, often at great cost or trouble. Now, although the ancient Romans no longer existed, the State of Israel would use the symbol of the plight of the Jews as the symbol of their redemption.

Unfortunately, great symbolic actions of political, social and artistic import are not always well-documented in history. In point of fact, the "Arch of Titus" is not the original Arch of Titus. The original was built at the curved end of the Circus Maximus in Rome after the victories of Vespasian and Titus but no longer exists. Another arch, the one which is presently called the "Arch of Titus" (and toward which much Jewish consternation is directed) is found at the end of the Via Sacra, between the *Forum Romanum* and the Colosseum, and was completed in the period of Domitian, Vespasian's second son. It is a first century rendering, however, built in the mid-80s of the common era either as a tribute to Domitian's father's victory in Jerusalem or in memory of his brother (and perhaps to deflect circulating criticism in Rome that he had poisoned his brother!). The so-called "Arch of Titus" is built of Pentelic marble around a con-

crete core and has the familiar panels showing Titus carrying away the treasures of the Temple of Jerusalem. Built of imported white marble, it was one of the earliest public monuments to use the Composite capital.<sup>6</sup> The actual artifacts shown on the Arch were probably kept in the *Temenos Eirenes* of the *Templum Pacis*, better known as the Forum of Vespasian, built to identify the new dynasty with the blessings of peace after the period of strife both within the western and eastern empires. This is confirmed by the statements of Josephus in the Jewish Wars, 7.5.5-7. In June 455 King Gaiseric, king of the Vandals sacked Rome and took the treasures of the Temple, presumably including the Menorah. Belisarius, the general of Emperor Justinian overthrew the Vandal capital in Africa and brought the treasures from there to Constantinople and ultimately to Jerusalem where they remained until the Persian or Islamic conquests in the 7th century. Its whereabouts from the 7th century onward is unknown.<sup>7</sup> The Seven branched menorah was not only a major symbol of Judaism but also became a Christian symbol in the Middle Ages and the branches were interpreted as the seven characteristics of the "Holy Spirit" and as a symbol of Mary, the mother of Jesus.<sup>8</sup> The vision of the Holy Menorah is found in Hebrews and in Revelations and therefore continued to have apocalyptic and christological meanings.

The quintessential Jewish symbol, the seven-branched menorah described in the Bible, was actually forbidden for use by the Rabbis following the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. and its appearance in synagogue iconography is itself problematic.<sup>9</sup> In order to accommodate this rabbinic injunction small changes were sometimes made to menorah so that it was slightly different from the one which was in the Temple. This point is important to our investigation of the incense shovel in synagogue iconography. The Synagogue was

<sup>6</sup> J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> From Procopius, *History of the Wars* (London: Loeb, 1916), vol. II, pp. 280-81, cited in H. Strauss, "The Fate and Form of the Menorah of the Maccabees" in *Eretz Israel*, Vol. 6 (Israel Exploration Society, 1960), p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> *Chronicum Cluniacense*, *Ibid.*, Strauss, p. 129, footnote #39.

<sup>9</sup> BT Avodah Zarah 43a. "A person may not make . . . a menorah after the design of the [Temple's] menorah. One may, however, make one with five, six or eight branches, but with seven he may not make it even though it be made of other metals [than those used in the Temple's menorah]."

not intended to be a replacement for the Temple.<sup>10</sup> The symbols of the synagogue were intended *to remind* the worshippers of the Temple, not be an exact copy of the items in the Temple. This is especially true in regards to the use of the incense shovel in synagogue iconography. More importantly, all of the other symbols continued not only to represent past Temple rituals, but be active reminders of Rabbinic practices. A oil Menorah was lit not only on Hanukkah but was used in regular daily service, the Shofar symbolized Rosh HaShanah and the central practice of blowing of the Shofar during the service, the Lulav and Etrog symbolized the central practice of the waving of the Lulav and Etrog during the service, and the incense shovel may have presumably symbolized either the daily incense service of the Temple or the Leviticus 16 incense service of the Day of Atonement. In either case, the symmetry of daily-High Holyday-Sukkot-daily or daily-High Holyday-Sukkot, of the Rabbinic liturgy and practice is suggested by the appearance of the incense shovel on the synagogue mosaics. The meanings of the Menorah (or perhaps especially during the Roman period were apparently manifold) can be said to comprise the spiritually salvific and messianic, the political and national, and the practical and utilitarian.

The symbol of the Menorah (and especially the holiday of Hanukkah) in the story of the Maccabean revolt in the second century B.C.E. brings these meanings together and plays an important part in the modern Zionist musings on the new nation of Israel. First, the original Menorah was destroyed and another was rebuilt much the same way that the new nation was to be resurrected and rebuilt. Second, the Maccabees were a very small group and were able to defeat a much larger force of Greeks by their cunning and zeal. Finally, the Menorah was made not like the original of gold, but different.

#### V. *The Three Scenarios of the One Menorah of the Hanukkah Story*

There are three scenarios for the one menorah which we generally conceptualize from the Hanukkah story, and none of them fit neatly into a single Menorah account from antiquity through the Maccabean

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed study of the question see S.J.D. Cohen, "The Temple and the Synagogue," in *The Temple in Antiquity*, ed. T. Madsen (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1984), pp. 151-174.

revolt in 167 B.C.E. Clearly, only one Menorah was described by the Pentateuch as being in the Tabernacle in the desert with the Israelites in Exodus 25:31–40. It was located on the south side of the Tabernacle, opposite the Table of Loaves (Ex. 26:35) and it unmistakably was an oil lamp (Ex. 35:14) with seven oil burning (presumably pottery) lamps in/or the gold base. In the First Temple of Solomon, however, we find that there is a tradition in I Kings 7:47–49 that there were 10 menorot in addition to the one. The II Chronicles 4:18–20 version of this same I Kings account does not have the exact positions of the menorot but, is the same tradition expressed in a shorter fashion. In II Chronicles 13 there was one golden Menorah which was treated differently than the other 10, but still 11 menorot. Scholars like R.E. Friedman conjecture that the Tabernacle was set up in the First Temple area in a mini-diorama format in the Holy of Holies and therefore within this smaller sanctuary there was only one, the original, ancient gold Menorah, and in the greater, more public hall there were the other 10, which might explain why it is not mentioned in I Kings.<sup>11</sup> The problem is that after the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.E., we are unsure about whether all eleven or just one of the menorot were destroyed by the Babylonians. We are told in Rabbinic texts that the one, most important Menorah was returned from its hiding place (after the return in the period of Cyrus the Great) and this is apparently the famous Menorah of the Hanukkah story. It was the one which was destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes IV and finally rebuilt by Judah Maccabee, and it is this Menorah which is recorded in Antiquities 12.7.6:

And when he had carefully purified it, he brought in new vessels, such as a menorah, table and altar, which were made of gold . . . he also pulled down the altar and built a new one of various stones which had not been hewn with iron . . . they kindled the lights on the menorah<sup>12</sup> and burned incense on the altar.

Earlier, however, Josephus, had stated in Antiquities 12.5.4 that Antiochus carried off “. . . the vessels of God, the golden lucina (lampstands) and the golden altar and table . . .” The main meno-

<sup>11</sup> Richard E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> “Lights” was the name of the holiday.

rah seems to have been distinct from the golden lampstands (and a different word is used) although they could just be the recreation of the 11 menorot that Josephus knew had been there in biblical times. More importantly, the new Menorah (or menorot) made (or remade) by the Maccabees was in fact different from the old Menorah; the Roman influences of Herod the Great in the early first century C.E. during his restoration of the Temple may have caused this menorah to be remade in a totally different image as well.

#### VI. *The Menorah of the Arch of Titus as “The’ Menorah”*

The upper part of the Menorah on the Arch of Titus is assumed to be the Menorah of the Hasmoneans by most scholars. It fits artistic renderings found in both post and pre-destruction contexts but the mythological figures have provided a problem. The Menorah was, according to the Talmud, remade in Hasmonean times of iron overlaid with tin (or wood overlaid with iron). “When they grew richer they made it out of silver, and when they grew richer, they made it out of gold” (Rosh Hashanah 24b; Avodah Zarah 43b). Although the books of Maccabees do not state that the Hasmoneans remade all the Holy Vessels including the Menorah, I Maccabees 4.49 asserts: “They also made new sacred vessels, and they brought the Menorah and the altar of incense and the Table into the nave.” The Maccabees tradition may allude to only some new vessels while the Menorah, Incense Altar and Table were brought back or recaptured from Antiochus. In addition, the idea is that they may have made their Menorah from the collected metal spears of the warriors. This is alluded to both in the Hellenistic and Rabbinic sources. The only archaeological evidence of this is provided by the Menorah with the cross-bar at the top which is found in a variety of contexts.<sup>13</sup> Talmudic tradition assumes that only in Herodian times were the Temple vessels restored to their original glory. Josephus, however, states that when it was remade by the Hasmoneans, it was made of gold from the beginning (Antiquities 12.5.4). He says that Antiochus

<sup>13</sup> Kokhav HaYarden, Alexandria, Gaza, etc., *op. cit.*, J.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon, 1958), Vol. III, figs. 583, 896, and 1034; Yarden, fig. 129, p. 27 *op. cit.*, Hachlili, 2001 holds that the Menorah on the Arch of Titus is Jewish; the base is not Jewish, p. 51. D. Sperber, *L'or Ha Menorah*, 1998, pp. 50ff. holds that the Menorah and base were updated by Herod.

carried off “. . . the vessels of God, the golden lampstands and the golden altar and table . . .” and that it was necessary to remake the Holy Vessels. When Pompey and his men saw the gold menorah when they visited in the mid-first century B.C.E. it was gold and not in the intermediate stage of development (Antiquities 14:7).

The two-tiered octagonal base with decorated plates adorning the outside of the base is assumed by many scholars to be later than the Menorah and non-Jewish. One of the main reasons why the base of the Menorah depicted on the Arch of Titus is thought to be either a Roman addition placed there by Roman artisans/engineers was to either stabilize it for travel from Jerusalem to Rome, or to prepare it to adorn Vespasian's Peace Park in Rome. Hence these were not, supposedly, Jewish-sanctioned images. The plates feature mythological images such as eagles, sea goats, fish, mermaids, sea creatures and the like. While these are not generally held to be Jewish images (and clearly a symbol of Rome), eagles are found throughout the Herodian-Roman periods in Rabbinically sanctioned contexts.<sup>14</sup> Rabbinic burials in Beth Shearim as well as Hellenized Jews throughout Israel used the eagle despite the obvious connection to astral and immortal symbolic connotations in the Near East, and despite its association with Greek myths.<sup>15</sup> Dolphins<sup>16</sup> and sea-creatures<sup>17</sup> also appear in synagogue and other Jewish ornamentation. Their appearance on the Arch of Titus is therefore not as unusual as was once suspected.

In addition, the source of the Menorah and its base may be clarified from our understanding of how some of the artifacts in the Temple came to be there. While most of the vessels were crafted by Jewish artisans, some of the artifacts apparently in use in the Temple were also donations from non-Jews. In one sequence in *Wars*, Josephus recounts that some of the Temple vessels were once seized by the anti-Roman Zealots. Among the vessels some had been donated by the emperor Augustus and his wife (in the first century C.E.), and by other “foreigners” at different periods. In the last days of the first Jewish revolt, John of Gishala melted down “many of the temple-offerings and many of the vessels required for public worship,

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<sup>14</sup> R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 81, 187, 189, 206–208, 329–330, 332–335, 365–366, 376–377, 393–394.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 318, 330–332, 377, 387.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

bowls and salvers (*Pinakas* in Greek)<sup>18</sup> and tables; “. . . nor did he abstain from the vessels for pure wine sent by Augustus and his consort.” It appears that Roman leaders had from time to time made donations of certain vessels to the Temples and they had been deemed acceptable for use in certain rituals. Only very extreme Zealots did not accept these donations “. . . remarking to his companions that they should not scruple to employ divine things on the Divinity’s behalf, and that those who fought for the Temple should be supported by it.”<sup>19</sup>

John of Gishala and the rebels obviously wished to redeem the Temple from impure vessels which they saw being employed in the daily service. One of these items which had been donated may have been the base for the Menorah. In addition, the PT Megillah 24a reports that Antoninus (Caracalla) apparently donated a Menorah to a synagogue in Sepphoris during the period of his great friendship with Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi in the third century C.E., apparently indicating that the tradition of accepting gifts for ritual Jewish use continued beyond the period of the Temple.

In short, it appears that the Menorah which became the symbol of the Modern State of Israel—the one which was used by the early Zionists and artists—was certainly the Menorah of the Arch of Titus. The Arch of Titus was up until the 20th century a symbol of Jewish degradation and powerlessness but it also preserved an artistic rendering of a highly stylized Menorah with Greek and Roman symbols on its base. Although the images have been stylized in most renderings of the State of Israel—so the Greek and Roman symbols are not very obvious—this still did not satisfy those uncomfortable with allegedly non-Jewish motifs on the preeminent artifact of the nation.

Explanations to make it more palatable to an Israeli public in a post-Holocaust world created whole theories to explain why this Menorah (and its base) were not one. Rabbi Isaac Herzog, the then Chief Rabbi of Israel, explained that the original base was probably broken upon taking it out of the Temple and was replaced and stabilized by a Roman artist who decided to embellish it with the decorations.<sup>20</sup> Another view states that this Menorah on the Arch of

<sup>18</sup> This is most probably the Pinkha in Hebrew (פִּינְכָה) that means small bowl.

<sup>19</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, V. 562–564.

<sup>20</sup> J.H. Herzog, “The Menorah on the Arch of Titus,” *Essays in Memory of S.M. Mayer* (Jerusalem, 1956), pp. 95–98. Rabbi Herzog also wrote that the choice was not a good one because it was done by the Romans!



Titus and used by the State of Israel was not the real Menorah at all. The "real" Menorah, according to this version, had been hidden away and the Romans were given a copy which was available in the Temple storehouses. It was also rumored this was another version of the Menorah which was similar to the one given by Herod to Rome (*Wars* 6:388) but not "the" Menorah from the Temple.

### VII. *From Rosettes to Stars*

Unlike the genesis and development of the symbol of the Menorah in ancient Judaism as a unique part of the Temple cult and later as a part of the historic memory of the people, the Star of David seems to have emerged as a product of the Ancient Near East iconography and only later found its unique expression in Jewish life. Geometric symbols are popular because of the ease of their production and because they were seen in both the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian<sup>21</sup> and Greek systems as containing a divine element. This was not so much due to their simplicity but in the elements of exactitude and precision they represented. A presentation of the rosette as a pointed ornamented version of the star in its different manifestations of six and eight petals provided another aspect, oftentimes presented with wavy lines suggesting a form of kinetic motion or "whirling" wheel effect. The rosettes were often symbols of Ishtar or Haddad<sup>22</sup> in Mesopotamia and their continued use in the Hellenistic and Roman period raises the question of whether their original meaning survived as well, or whether they were purely decorative by the Hellenistic and Roman period. As we shall see, this question impacts upon our understanding of the star symbol, both pentagram and hexagram, as they appear to be geometric renderings or alternative versions of the rosette both in the Bronze and Iron Age as well as the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It is clear that the petalled rosette, which had been a symbol of the sun, and the whirling wheel (multi-branched, wavy lined), which had been a symbol of the moon in

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<sup>21</sup> The Mesopotamian and Egyptian rosette symbol can be found in J.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vol. 7 (New York: Pantheon, 1958), pp. 180ff. and 183ff.

<sup>22</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, *Art in Ancient Palestine* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), p. 105, notes 3 and 4.

earlier Mesopotamian circles, survived in a similar capacity into Roman times in the Middle East.<sup>23</sup>

### VIII. *The Star of David?*

While there is no greater symbol of later Medieval Judaism<sup>24</sup> than the hexagram and/or pentagram (the so-called Star of David/Solomon), its origins are shrouded in mystery. It appears with six (hexagram), five (pentagram) but also appears in variations of a ten points<sup>25</sup> and a triple intertwined "figure of eight" points in Israel on synagogues and in Trans-Jordan as well.<sup>26</sup> The hexagram became the better known of the two stars in the Middle Ages, while the pentagram appears to be the more prevalent in the Hellenistic and early Roman period. In the Bronze and Iron Ages the symbol appears both in the Middle East<sup>27</sup> and in Israel.

The pentagram on Hebrew seals is found at two sites in Israel,<sup>28</sup> and at Megiddo it is inscribed on an ashlar of the southeast corner of a large house in the so-called Stratum IV,<sup>29</sup> and on pottery and a seal from an earlier period.<sup>30</sup> The pentagram pottery marking

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105, notes 10 and 11.

<sup>24</sup> On the entire question see, Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), article on "Magen David," pp. 362ff. From the 13th century onward it is found in illuminated Hebrew Bible manuscripts from Germany to Spain. While most of the use of the hexagram and pentagram is limited to amulets and versions of mezuzot they are clearly well-known as a Jewish symbol from the 12th century onward. Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (New York: Behrman, 1939), pp. 140–142, 150–151.

<sup>25</sup> J.R. Goodenough, Vol. 7, p. 198.

<sup>26</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, *Art in Ancient Palestine* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), p. 112. He lists sites at Capernaum and Esthemoa and on sixth century mosaics of Mukhmas and lintels at Aqraba, a screen from Jerash.

<sup>27</sup> B.L. Goff, *Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), figures 316, 339, 464; Ernest Mackay, *A Sumerian Palace and the "A" Cemetery at Kish Mesopotamia*, part II, (Chicago: The Field Museum, 1929), Plate LX, #54, on a pendant; Arthur J. Tobler, *Excavations at Tepe Gawra*, Vol. II, Levels IX–XX, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1950), Plate CLV, #25, on a terra cotta spindle whorl.

<sup>28</sup> Flinders Petrie, *Ancient Gaza*, Vol. IV, Pl. XVII cited in M. Avi-Yonah, *Art in Ancient Palestine* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), p. 108.

<sup>29</sup> Iron Age I of the period. P.L.O. Guy, *New Light from Armageddon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 37, Fig. 25.

<sup>30</sup> The pentagram is painted on a large jar from Megiddo; it is a burial jar from Stratum XIII which is dated (1800–1750 [B.C.E.]); also in the same volume is a limestone stamp seal, found with a pentagram from Stratum XIV (see below).

painted on the side of a burial jar is particularly prominent from the Middle Bronze Age.<sup>31</sup> Burial jars in this period have minimal decoration and the pentagram prominently placed on the side of a large and rather distinctive jar indicates that it was to distinguish it from other vessels found there. A limestone button seal found at almost the same Stratum at Megiddo indicates that it was a well-known symbol in the Middle Bronze Age in this early period.<sup>32</sup>

The pentagram continued to be an important symbol during the Israelite period but is found among Jews both within and outside the historical boundaries of the Land of Israel. It is found on a Hebrew seal from the 7th century from Sidon,<sup>33</sup> and although only one example can be cited from the period between the 7th and 4th century, it appears to have been reinvigorated during the Hellenistic period. The one example from the 6th–5th century B.C.E. is from Gerar and is also on a pottery piece.<sup>34</sup> By the 3rd century B.C.E., the Greek influence may have re-introduced this known symbol into Judea, but with a new or possibly similar meaning. Lucian states that the pentagram was used by the Pythagoreans as a symbol for “health” and perhaps via Pythagoreanism it was reinstated as a symbol with curative or salvific powers. The clearest example of its use by Jews is from the over fifty Hellenistic jar handles found in the vicinity of Jerusalem/Judah. These have become known because they have a pentagram with the letters of Jerusalem spelled out in paleo-Hebrew script between the star’s points.<sup>35</sup> One textual reference may

<sup>31</sup> G. Loud, Field Director, *Megiddo II, Seasons of 1935–1939* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), Plate 18:7 and Plate 118:12.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Plate 162:1.

<sup>33</sup> N. Avigad, *Corpus of W. Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy, 1997), p. 106, #184.

<sup>34</sup> Flinders Petrie, *Gerar* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1928), p. 19 and plate 43:10.

<sup>35</sup> One of the first major reports of these stamped handles comes from the excavations at Ramat Rahel where excavator Y. Aharoni found examples in stratum IVB dump pits together with other pottery and attributed the pottery, and the handles to the late Persian and early Hellenistic period (fourth century B.C.E.); see Y. Aharoni, *Excavations at Ramat Rahel 1961–62* (Rome: Centro di Studi Semitici, 1964), p. 43. Even E. Stern in his *The Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973), pp. 200–207, continued to use the dating as Persian. N. Avigad, “Judean Post-Exilic Stamps,” *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 24, Number 1, (1974), pp. 52–58 however established the date as clearly Hellenistic (2nd century B.C.E.). Although found primarily on jug handles, H.N. Richardson in 1968 at Tel Yarmut, *BASOR*, no. 192, p. 13 (Dec. 1968) found a cooking pot handle with a Jerusalem pentagram. Avigad, p. 55 note #25.

actually confirm its use in Hellenistic Judaism. The Testament of Solomon 1:5–7 states:

When I, Solomon heard these things, I went into the Temple of God and praising him day and night begged with all my soul that the demon might be delivered into my hands and that I might have authority over him. Then it happened that while I was praying to the God of Heaven and Earth, there was given me from the Lord Sabaoth through the archangel Michael a ring which had a seal engraved with a five pointed star . . .<sup>36</sup>

Because of the proximity of the stamped jugs to Jerusalem, originating from the oppressive Seleucid regime of the second century B.C.E., the pentagram figure was interpreted by some to have “messianic” significance and continued to be used in this regard into the first century C.E. In what is apparently a final message and hope for Divine intervention the pentagram is etched alongside an incantation in a First Revolt Dead Sea Cave.<sup>37</sup> In the eastern forum excavations north of the Temple Mount, the Lithostrotos pavement from the second century C.E. has a number of incised designs including a hexagram.<sup>38</sup> A third century C.E. grafitto of a hexagram on a catacomb of Beth Shearim together with a full-masted boat suggests that the sign may have continued to have the sense of salvation and/or after-life power in its presentation there.<sup>39</sup> These second and third century C.E. pentagram and hexagram examples indicate that the general Jewish use of the symbol continued into the middle Roman period in Palestine.

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<sup>36</sup> Pentalpha (five Alphas interlaced), a thirty-one letter word written in the second and third of a series of concentric circles, or an engraving with “O Lord our God”, etc. in a variety of manuscript readings. See J.H. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 962 from “Testament of Solomon Text, Translation and Introduction” by D.C. Duling. This treatment is found originally in McCown, C.C., *The Testament of Solomon edited from Manuscripts at Mount Athos, Bologna, Holkham Hall, Jerusalem, London, Milan, Paris, and Vienna* (Leipzig, 1922), Goodenough, *Symbols*, Vol. II, pp. 42–61.

<sup>37</sup> Y. Patrich, “Hideouts in the Judean Wilderness,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Sept./Oct. 1989, p. 40. A star is found on the wall of the Nahal Mikhmas cave along with an incantation and is dated by Patrich to the First Revolt.

<sup>38</sup> E. Stern, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Vol. II (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1993), p. 765.

<sup>39</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, *Art in Ancient Palestine* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), Plate 8:4.

IX. *Christian and Moslem Stars*

While the pentagram and hexagram clearly exist in the Hellenistic and early Roman period as Jewish symbols, the hexagram does appear to have an ongoing life as a symbol on tripartite lintels on Byzantine structures (synagogues/churches?).<sup>40</sup> The lintel from the synagogue of Capernaum, for example, which is now understood as an example of a Christian relic Church together with the Ark of the Covenant lintel, demonstrates the Christian usage of formerly exclusive Jewish symbols. It is preserved on an early fifth century Church in Tiberias and on medieval European Churches as well.<sup>41</sup> Coptic Christianity also picked up the symbol and used it on stamps with a cross in the center, a rosette in the center, and with a series of triangles in and around the points of the hexagram. The attempt to show that it had been totally co-opted by Christianity in the Byzantine period cannot be fully proven. In Tortosa, Spain, for example, two pentagrams from the 6th century C.E. appear on a woman's tomb together with a menorah with a Hebrew inscription<sup>42</sup> while in Tarente, Italy, a hexagram is found on a tomb of a man.<sup>43</sup>

Hexagrams and pentagrams were also appropriated by Muslims in the early Islamic period.<sup>44</sup> Scholem suggests that it is from Islam that it was reintroduced to medieval Jewry, especially in Spanish Kabbalism as a powerful magic symbol. If so, it would mean that the pentagram had three separate lives and rebirths in the history of Israel and Judaism. At its inception it was a symbol of the sun/moon gods and goddesses of Mesopotamia and Egypt and was used by the Israelites, especially in the north of the country until the Assyrian dispersion of the 8th century. It disappeared during the Babylonian Exile and Persian return to Israel, only to re-emerge in the Greco-Roman period as a symbol of the curative and salvific powers perhaps

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, M. Avi-Yonah, p. 101, figure 15, and p. 102, fig. 17.

<sup>41</sup> Scholem, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>42</sup> P.J.-B. Frey, *Corpus of Jewish Inscriptions*, Vol. I (New York: Ktav, 1975 reprint), p. 474, #661.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 444, #621.

<sup>44</sup> R. Schick, "Palestine in the Early Islamic Period," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Vol. 61, no. 2 (June, 1998), p. 87, where a pentagram/hexagram (missing part) is found together with an eight pointed star with the inscription "In the name of God" on a pottery sherd.

under the influence of the Pythagoreans. Its use was curtailed but not totally diminished during the late Roman and Byzantine periods. It disappeared again until it was reintroduced into medieval Judaism as the Moslems' eclectic search for symbols yielded a more powerful "Seal of Solomon" as geometric ornamentation, which took hold in the 9th–11th century Golden Age of Spain.

By the 9th and 10th century it is known to Judah Hadassi, the Karaite, as a "Shield of David."<sup>45</sup> Spanish-Jewish Kabbalists enlisted the symbol both as a connection to what they may have known to be an ancient Jewish symbol and to a new mystical tradition based upon the best of medieval science and mathematics brought by the Moslems. As it reemerged into Judaism in the 13th and 14th century, it became a way for Jewish European mystics simultaneously to be modern and tap into the powers inherent in this symbol for all ages.

#### X. *The Theory in Practice: Three Periods of Use*

Certainly a choice of a national, religious symbol for modern Jewry was not entirely obvious. The lack of regular, symbolic renderings for Judaism and the Jewish people may have been stirred more by outside forces (Christianity and Islam's symbols) than by the imagination the Jewish people. When the search for "new-old" Jewish symbols began in the modern period, the most obvious choices were those closely connected to religion (the Torah Shrine, Torah scroll, Lulav and Etrog, Temple in Jerusalem, etc.) and were not emphasized. The symbols associated with religious life but whose symbolic meaning could be transferred to greater, more transcendent issues such as redemption (the "lights" of the Menorah) and eternal, aesthetic and geometric patterns and principles (the two triangles of the star) made these two (Menorah and star) more palatable than other symbols. It certainly did not hurt the acceptance of these symbols that the Church continued to use the Menorah in the pantheon of Christian iconography, and that both Islam and Christianity utilized a five and six pointed star in their religious iconography. It is per-

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<sup>45</sup> Eshkol HaKofer, 92c, #242. This is the earliest reference to it as a reaction to its use in Rabbinic Judaism.

haps a greater irony that the very symbol of Jewish messianism, mystical speculation and superstitious amulets (the star) and the symbol of Jewish servitude under the Romans (the Menorah of Titus)<sup>46</sup> became the national symbols of the redemption of the Jewish people in the 20th century.

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<sup>46</sup> For centuries, Jews refused to walk underneath the Arch of Titus in protest to the original procession of Jewish slaves brought back to Rome with the temple treasures and marched “through”/“under” the Arch.





## NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

MICHAEL BERKOWITZ is Reader in modern Jewish history at University College London.

AVIEL ROSHWALD is Professor of History at Georgetown University.

PHILIP BOHLMAN is Professor of Music at the University of Chicago.

DEREK PENSLAR is Samuel J. Zacks Professor of Jewish history at the University of Toronto.

BARBARA MANN is Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University.

NACHMAN BEN-YEHUDA is Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Professor of Sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

JAMES RENTON is a recent PhD of the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University College London.

JOSHUA SHANES, a recent PhD of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, teaches at Northwestern University.

MICHAEL LÖWY, is Research Director in Sociology at the *CNRS* (National Center for Scientific Research) and is Guest Lecturer at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, both in Paris.

JOHN M. EFRON holds the Koret Chair in Jewish history at the University of California, Berkeley.

DELPHINE BECHTEL is Maître de conférences and Associate Professor for German and Yiddish Literature at Université Paris IV Sorbonne.

FRANCOIS GUESNET teaches in the Simon-Dubnow-Institute, Leipzig.

INKA BERTZ is Head of Collections at the Jewish Museum Berlin.

RICHARD FREUND is Greenberg Professor and Director of Judaic Studies at the University of Hartford (Connecticut).



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