

## 'Where is My Home?' Orthodox Jews in America During the Twentieth Century

Chaim I. Waxman

This article analyzes the positions of a number of prominent Orthodox rabbis in Eastern Europe and the United States toward Jewish life in America from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the period of mass immigration to the United States – until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Attitudes toward separation of religion and state as well as various manifestations of Americanization are analyzed. American Orthodox social and cultural patterns indicating their degrees of integration into American society and culture during that period are also examined. The article concludes that by the end of the twentieth century, Orthodox Jews in America perceived themselves positively as full members of the society and did not view that as impinging on their Orthodox Jewish identity. They are apparently successful in integration of maintaining authentic Jewish life as they define it with loyalty and attachment to the United States. For them, Eretz Israel may be the Holy Land to which, when the Messiah comes, they may be gathered. Until then, America is home and it's a fine one at that.

## 'We Want to See Our King': Apparitions in Messianic Chabad

Yoram Bilu

The messianic enthusiasm kindled by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh and last leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic movement, has not shattered following his death in 1994. My focus here is on reports of apparitions of the late Rabbi among the radically messianic Hasidim (*mesichistim*) in Israel, who maintain that the Rabbi, the designated Messiah, has not died. Combining notions and tools from cognitive psychology and cultural anthropology, I seek to account for the apparitions by studying the messianic ecology cultivated by the *mesichistim* to make the absent Rabbi

present. I focus on the rich array of iconic and indexical signs of the Rabbi and the mimetic practices in which they are embedded, which constitute the perceptual field where he can be seen. This cultural décor is particularly evident for apparitions in Chabad's epicenter and other ritual arenas, while apparitions in mundane settings are often triggered by acute distress. Finally, I discuss the ambivalence toward apparitions in messianic Chabad and its possible sources, capitalizing on a comparison with visions in Christianity.

## The New Territorialism and its Attitude to the State of Israel

Gur Alroey

The ideologies of Territorialism and Zionism were born at the same time. 'The goal of our present endeavors must be not the Holy Land, but a land of our own,' wrote Pinsker in *Auto-Emancipation*. There were those in Jewish society who adhered to the idea of 'a land of our own' and sought to establish a state, or an autonomous entity, outside the Land of Israel. The article is divided into three parts. The first part reviews in general outlines the essence of the territorial ideology from ITO (1905–1925) to the Frayland League (1934–1956); the second part focuses on the principled position of the Frayland to the State of Israel; and the third part examines the attitude of the Yishuv and Israeli society to the new territorialism.

## Shaul Tchernichovsky's Diasporic Poetry

Yochai Oppenheimer

The various monographs that were dedicated to the Hebrew poet Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875–1943) all focus on the close relationship between the poet's Zionist attitudes (including his negation of diasporic Jewish life) and his poetry. My paper reexamines this interpretation. I suggest that his

poetry was inconsistent with his Zionist and anti-diasporic attitudes. For example, his pastoral epic poetry depicts the Jewish way of life in rural southern Russia in a positive light. Since Tchernichovsky insisted that one's homeland is where one has spent his childhood years, he could not accept the idea that the land of Israel could be experienced as a new homeland. Moreover, his Hebrew was consistently written in Ashkenazi prosody; he never accepted the Sephardic prosody, which was used in the Zionist poetry written in Eretz Israel.

## Diaspora-Homeland: Driving Belts of Transnationalism

Eliezer Ben-Rafael

Israel–Diaspora relations are a focus of an ongoing debate. The Zionist assesses the ultimate importance of Israel as the center of the Jewish world; others advocate an Israeli–American bi-focal model; the diasporist model considers Jewishness as essentially attached to the diaspora; the Canaanite model radicalize the diasporist perspective from the viewpoint of Israelis. All in all, the Jewish world consists of a variety of entities sharing some common symbols, but where each component speaks its own language and exhibits its own national markers. Each of them is crosscut by movements and trends fighting for predominance over Jewishness as a whole. Divergences are numerous, indeed. While for diasporans, for instance, Jewishness is firstly a matter of individual commitment subordinate to different national identities, Jewish Israeliness comprehends the very reality of daily life. Confronted by survival challenges, many Israelis develop realpolitik understandings of their condition, while diasporans often follow Middle-Eastern events through judgmental opinions. Diasporans often aspire for exceptional social mobility, while the exceptionalism of Israelis resides in their keeping more or less to normality despite their overburdening with endless challenges. If we add demographic contrasts, the *moledet* (*homeland*) originally created by diasporans has indeed become very 'different'. Paradoxically, these are the tensions that crosscut boundaries that unveil the Am Ehad (*one nation*). What appears is that this disparate

Jewish world made of multiple diasporas, and the one multicultural homeland does not have a center at all. Allegiances to a same ‘whole’ is mainly grounded in a kind of family belonging that describes Jews in the diaspora and in Israel, not as one nation but still as one people, one world, and above all, one privileged space of interconnectedness.

## Diaspora or State in Jewish National Historiography

Yitzhak Conforti

This article examines the relationship between the Diaspora and Jewish authority in the Land of Israel in the view of modern Jewish historiography. The article analyzes historiography in the broad sense, which also relates to the formation of consciousness of the past by academic historians, thinkers, and leaders. In the period of the foundation of Jewish national historiography, in the work of Shimon Dubnov and those who followed him, we witness a coherent, unified narrative of Jewish history. The argument between the Zionist school and Diaspora nationalism related to the question of whether the national Jewish center could only be in the Land of Israel, or whether a national center could exist in the Diaspora as well. The Zionist historians described Jewish history as a process leading to the center of government in Palestine. In contrast, Jewish historians in the Diaspora preferred the elliptical model, which recognized two centers – ‘Babylon and Jerusalem’. In the reality that developed in the 1980s and ‘90s, the definition of the term ‘diaspora’ became vaguer, since many other ethnic and economic groups world-wide used this term to define themselves. Thus in this period, the borders of consciousness that defined the Diaspora versus the Jewish state were blurred. The global nature of Jewish studies also demonstrates that we no longer stand between two poles – Israel as opposed to the Diaspora. Today, the question of whether historiography can supply a model of a shared future for Israel and the Diaspora remains open, but is vital for the future of Jewish historiography as well as Jewish identity.

## The Life and Death of the Arab-Jew: Eretz Israel-Palestine and Beyond

Hillel Cohen

The Arab-Jewish identity as a political (rather than linguistic or cultural) identity was a product of the modern era. It emerged in tandem with the first, vague ideas of inter-religious equality, which were introduced during the Ottoman reforms (Tanzimat) of the mid-nineteenth century. The inclination of the early Arab national movement towards separation of religion and state, strengthened processes of Jewish integration in the political and cultural lives of their environments, hence creating the ‘Arab Jew’ as an integral part of the general society.

However, this identity, being dependent on the acceptance of the idea of equality, proved to be short-lived. In Palestine, the egalitarian idea was replaced by the idea of a Jewish nation state, promoted by the Zionist movement, and supported (not necessarily actively) by the ‘Arab Jews’, thus bringing about the demise of this identity during the 1920s. In the neighboring countries, it was the combination of rejection of the principle of equality by nationalistic and Islamic circles, and the increasing notion – advocated by both Zionist and Arab national circles – that Jews are by definition Zionists. Under these circumstances, towards 1948 the identity ‘Arab-Jew’ became politically irrelevant elsewhere.

## ‘Dual Destinies’: America and Zion in the Eyes of Stephen S. Wise and Hayim Greenberg

Mark A. Raider

Since the colonial period in American history, American Jews have sustained an ongoing effort to integrate their ethnic-religious identity with their Americanism. This pattern, which historian Jonathan D. Sarna terms ‘the cult of synthesis’, is critical to understanding the self-perception of Jews in American society and their intercourse with American society at large. The

present study seeks to build on Sarna's thesis and contribute in a modest way to the discourse on American exceptionalism by examining the conflation of the American and Jewish themes of election in the worldviews of Stephen S. Wise (1874–1949) and Hayim Greenberg (1889–1953). Wise and Greenberg, two central figures in American Jewish life and culture in the first half of the twentieth century, were key Zionist leaders who played significant roles in the campaign for Jewish statehood. Over the course of their lengthy public careers, both men spoke and wrote about the promise of America and Zion, the ideas of Jewish 'chosenness' and American 'exceptionalism', and the synthesis of these themes in modern Jewish experience. In wrestling with the centuries-old encounter between the Jews and America, they sought to both explain and shape American Jewry's relation to *clal yisrael* ('all of Israel') in the turbulent decades marked by World War II, the Holocaust, and the establishment of Israel.

## 'Homeland' and 'Diaspora' in American Jewish Textbooks, 1928-1948

Jonathan B. Krasner

This article traces the way in which the New Yishuv and its underlying ideology were depicted in American Jewish schoolbooks between 1920 and 1948. Zionist ideology and the upbuilding of Palestine posed a potential challenge to American Jews' perceptions of Self and Other. At a time when American Jewish educators were emphasizing Jewish unity, Zionist ideologues and politicians were drawing value-laden distinctions between Diaspora Jews and members of the New Yishuv, particularly the *halutzim*. American Jews adamantly rejected any ideology that placed in question the viability of the American Jewish community or American Jews' loyalty to the United States government. As such, while Zionism and Jewish state building were accorded enthusiastic treatment, they were portrayed primarily as a solution to Jewish problems in Europe. Authors adamantly rejected the notion that American Jews were in physical danger and in need of a Jewish homeland.

Textbook authors drew upon American imagery and myths in portraying Palestine. Moreover, given the perceived affinities between the Yishuv and

the American frontier, American Zionist textbooks were able to serve as agents of acculturation even as they stressed Jewish nationalism and bolstered ethnic cohesion. They also contributed to a widening chasm between the real Israel and the Israel of the American Jewish imagination.

## Exile, Diaspora, and Homeland: Past and Future During the Waning of the Emancipation Era in Germany and Hungary

Guy Miron

The article deals with the interpretations and conceptualizations of the terms ‘Exile’, ‘Diaspora’, and Homeland in the European Jewish public discourse during the waning of the emancipation era. The first part is devoted to the German Jewish press during 1933–1938 when there was still a relatively free internal Jewish public sphere in Nazi Germany. The second part deals with the interpretations of these terms in the Hungarian Jewish press during 1938–1943. German and Hungarian Jews reevaluated their key concepts as part of their coming to terms with the experience of the decline of their emancipation. Pre-emancipation concepts and archetypes such as ‘Ghetto’ and ‘the eternal Jew’ were also exposed in this discourse. In both countries most of these discussions were conducted by liberal Jewish spokespeople, but certain Zionist writers helped to sharpen it.

## The Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress and the Jewish Diaspora after the Holocaust

Zohar Segev

The dramatic triangle formed by the Holocaust, its survivors, and the State of Israel, formed a framework not only for the processes of establishing the state. It was also the arena in which the strengthening of Diaspora Jews’ ethnic identity took place as they integrated into the world as it changed after

the Second World War. Special attention should be given to the role of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) after the Holocaust. Consequently, in order to integrate the Jews into the new world structures that were emerging after the war, the heads of the WJC worked within the international arena to establish a research operation that would provide data pertaining to world Jewry for various organizations.

The research was conducted by the Institute of Jewish Affairs, a research center founded by Dr. Jacob Robinson in 1941 in New York. The Institute of Jewish Affairs was important not only because of its status as a symbol of Jewish nationality in the Diaspora, but also because of its activity, and because the data it collected added tangible content to the abstract notion of Jewish nationality in the Diaspora.

## Jewish Latino-American or Latino-American Jews? New Approaches to Research on Ethnicity and Diaspora Concept

Raanan Rein and Jeffrey Lesser

Scholarly interest in Jews as a subject of Latin American Studies has grown markedly in recent years. However, too much attention has been given to Jewish trans-national ties and on their Diasporic condition.

The emphasis on Jewish particularity suggests that ethnicity is a non-national phenomenon and that ethnic group members are either separate from, or victims of, national culture. This tendency is not exclusive to scholarship on Jews. Research on Latin Americans of Japanese, Chinese, and Lebanese descent, for example, usually presented the group first and foremost in their Diasporic condition.

In this context, we propose the use of the term ‘Jewish-Latin Americans’, rather than ‘Latin American Jewry’, in order to shift the dominant paradigm about ethnicity in Latin America by returning the ‘nation’ to a prominent position at a moment when the ‘trans-nation’, or perhaps no nation at all, is often an unquestioned assumption. The article advances a series of propositions that might be useful to all students of ethnicity in the region, particularly to scholars working on minorities whose



ancestors were characterized religiously as non-Catholic.

From Chicago to the Yishuv  
in Meyer Levin's *In Search: An Autobiography*

Michael Kotzin

*In Search: An Autobiography* by Meyer Levin, published in 1950, renders the details of a period of time when matters of great consequence were unfolding for the Jewish people. Proceeding with the attentiveness of an astute reporter, the language of a novelist, and the thoughtfulness of a person who knows he is in the middle of historic events, Levin wrote from the point of view of a Jew acutely aware of his Diaspora condition who recognized that the new reality of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel would have a profound impact on Jewish identity, starting with his own.

Levin began to search for that identity during his years growing up in Chicago, and his search took a leap forward on the occasion of his first visit to Palestine in 1925. He was to return to the Yishuv several times in the coming years, and he then reported on the closing months of World War II in Europe and bore personal witness to the horrors of the death camps. He went on to create a film about the regeneration of the survivors who came to Palestine as 'illegals', and at that time of nascent sovereignty, he saw the conditions for national and personal rebirth. With the founding of the State he said: 'I had told all I could find to tell, shown all there was to show. Now, like every Jew, I needed to come to a new understanding of myself in relation to Israel.'

With its three sections – covering Jewish life in America, the ravages of the Shoah in Europe, and the establishment of the State of Israel – *In Search* revolves around the modes of Diaspora, Exile, and Sovereignty in a dramatic and personal fashion.

## Jews' Political Experience in the Post-Statist Configuration: The Case of Raymond Aron and Hannah Arendt

Danny Trom

This article explores the relationship between emancipated Jews in Europe who are citizens of their nation-state with the Jewish state, defined as the solution to the so-called Jewish problem in Europe. I argue that the political semantics at hand are not adjusted to grasp this relationship and propose to adopt a sociological perspective on political experience. Aron and Arendt's vivid emotional reaction to the Six-Day War is taken as a typical experience of the Jews in the post-statist configuration. Their political philosophy, their link to Zionism, as well as their personal biography are very different, but their common fear of the potential trauma of 1967 is quite similar. This emotional reaction, which they both avoid explaining, is embedded in the Jewish historical experience of emancipation in France and Germany. The State of Israel, once founded, appears as a kind of ersatz of the protective entity Jews always needed and sought, but which the modern state in Europe, after WW II, is unable to fulfill. This is why the State of Israel only emerges, for them, even when they are indifferent or hostile to Zionism, as a consistent political actor in the moment of its potential destruction.

## Return to Zion Beyond the Dialectic of Exile

Shmuel Trigano

The Israeli experience shattered the symbolic economy of exile (*Galut*). From now on, exile is questioned in the light of the return (*shivat Zion*) that contemporary Israel embodies. This upheaval generates various attitudes facing Jewish existence, from Zionist to ultra-orthodox. The author puts the new configuration back in a historical viewpoint. He enumerates five 'economies' of exile (and return). In order to deepen the challenges coming from such a development, he revisits the notion of *galut*, which is not related

to an uprooting or a violent expulsion but rather refers to a permanent datum of the Hebraic anthropology in its relationship to the world. The two foundational narratives for the Jews refer to exile (from Ur and Egypt); that is to say they come before the settling in Eretz Israel, so that exile precedes the settling in a land that 'is' not Canaan but Eretz Israel. Concerning the return, according to the spirit of the exile doctrine, it is not supposed to be a return to a point of departure but to the origin, the '*reshit*', which precedes it and stands beyond any temporality or at the source of temporality. From this viewpoint, if the *Gola* (*diaspora*) (which, according to the author, has a strictly political meaning) finishes is gone, the *Galut* as such does not end. It is related to the idea that the divine presence is not representable so that it is absent in the real world, this absence being the means of the relationship between naturality and supernaturality (transcendence). This is the profound meaning of exile, in its metaphysical and symbolical dimension.

## Zion and the Diaspora in the Thought of Mordecai Kaplan and Eliezer Schweid

Yossi Turner

This paper discusses the relation to Zion and the Diaspora in the thought of the Jewish-American Mordecai Kaplan and the Israeli-Jewish Eliezer Schweid. It is shown that the relation to Zion and the Diaspora in the thought of both serves as a focus for consideration of social, cultural, religious, and ethical issues in the context of a broader philosophy of Jewish existence. The sharpest difference between them is exhibited through Kaplan's refusal to use the term 'exile' in reference to the American Jewish Diaspora, while Schweid sees his thought as one that 'negates' even the American Jewish Diaspora as a continuation of exile. And yet, Schweid admits to the unique and positive aspects of life in the American Jewish Diaspora, while Kaplan admits to the centrality of the Land of Israel for Jewish life in general. Moreover, both understand Zionism as a movement whose goal is the reconstruction of Jewish life through the building of new social and cultural structures both in the Land of Israel as well as in the Diaspora, even as the distinct civilizational realities of each require different forms of reconstruction in order to rejuvenate Jewish life.