Chapter 1

Nation Beyond State in Modern Jewish Political Thought

“What will become of the Jewish people?” Israeli novelist and Zionist provocateur A. B. Yehoshua’s answer to this question stunned a crowd of American Jewish leaders who had gathered at a major conference of the American Jewish Committee in 2006. Yehoshua argued that he saw quite a limited future for Jews in the diaspora. Even more infuriating to his audience, however, was his insistence that he “would not cry” if Jews were to disappear from the diaspora. Although framed in a particularly insensitive fashion, Yehoshua’s comments reflected a logic based on classic principles of Zionist ideology and its understanding of Jewish nationalism. They echoed an ideology of Zionism associated with “statism” that had been popularized by Prime Minister David Ben Gurion after the founding of the state. Ben Gurion believed that only political independence would rescue Jews from their perverse existence as a religious community in exile, ensure their normalization as a modern people, and restore their place as active participants in the world.

Like Ben Gurion, Yehoshua believed that complete membership in the nation of Israel required participation in the various aspects of life as a citizen of the state of Israel. As he put it: “[Being Israeli] is in my skin; it’s not in my jacket.” Without living in a Jewish state, he felt, and sharing the political, economic, and social concerns of life, one cannot live a complete Jewish life. The voluntary, religious bonds created by Jewishness in the diaspora remain inferior to the political ties forged as citizens in the homeland.
Participation in Jewish self-government thus constitutes the realization of Jewish nationalism and the basic criteria for complete expression of national solidarity.

This narrative of Jewish nationalism elevated the state to the highest expression of Jewish national life and the culmination of Jewish history. After thousands of years, the collective group known since biblical times as *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel), named after the patriarch Jacob or Israel, would revive its original political, social, and cultural boundaries of solidarity through territorial sovereignty and self-determination. Or, to put it more succinctly, the historical nation of Israel would return to the Land of Israel and establish the State of Israel. As a result of this transformation, the Jewish people would finally resolve their exceptional status by embodying the doctrine of national sovereignty—the belief that nationhood is equivalent to statehood. Conversely, Jews in the diaspora would concede the possibility of creating national culture and define themselves primarily in relationship to the state.

The most interesting part of Yehoshua’s speech, as historian David Myers has pointed out, however, was not *what* he said—his belief that authentic Jewish national life was only possible in the state was a theme he had harped on for decades.⁴ Far more interesting was the *reaction* to his speech. His statement sparked dozens of angry responses from Jewish leaders within Israel and throughout the United States. The outcry against Yehoshua’s negation of the diaspora language was so ardent that the organizers of the symposium collected the reactions in a publication called *The A.B. Yehoshua Controversy*. The responses indicate that a new generation of American and even Israeli audiences have become increasingly uncomfortable with the underlying hierarchical assumption of the state as the primary address of national solidarity and the center of
Jewish peoplehood (Yehoshua himself acknowledged that he was surprised that his oft-repeated claims garnered such a vociferous outcry). This change in attitude reflects the fact that political and communal leaders have begun to replace the center-periphery model of diaspora-Israel relations with a vision of partnership and mutual engagement.

Nevertheless, the perceived equivalence of the State of Israel with the nation of Israel remains deeply embedded in popular consciousness and Jewish studies. Indeed, the possibility of articulating Jewish nationhood as anything but statehood seems quite puzzling. Moreover, new models of Zionism calibrated to reflect today’s political and social trends—especially the diminishing correlation between nation and state triggered by communication advances, demographic mobility, and the promotion of cultural diversity—have been slow to arise. Zionism, and with it the question of Jewish nationhood, remains stuck between a nation-state paradigm, which valued ethno-national homogeneity, and a future concept of Jewish nationalism which reflects the realities of identity formation in a global era.

What would an alternative to Yehoshua’s vision look like? New interpretations of Zionism would have to address unresolved questions about Jewish collective identity given today’s realities of unprecedented interconnectedness and demographic mobility. What is Zionism and how does it relate to Jewish collective or national identity? Does Zionism have relevance outside the homeland for Jews and Jewish communities, beyond galvanizing political and financial support? How can a Jewish state serve as a center for Jews living in vastly different political, cultural, and social contexts? Can one definition of Israel encompass Jews living both as sovereign citizens committed to preserving a particular ethnonational tradition in the state and as a minority group heavily invested in
diversity and equal rights in the diaspora? What is the role of Judaism within the Jewish state? Does the Jewish experience of solidarity mirror other models of nationality, sovereignty, and difference developing in the twenty-first century? Addressing these underlying issues requires that American Jewish and Israeli leaders reopen questions that they have for decades tacitly agreed to defer.\(^5\)

One untapped resource for addressing these questions anew and expanding conceptual possibilities for Zionism and Jewish peoplehood today can be found in the rich diversity of interwar Zionism. Before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the questions just raised as well as other, far more general questions about the relationship between nation and state, were openly debated within Zionist ideology and Western political thought. This book explores roads not taken in the intellectual history of Zionism that conceptualized nation beyond state as the central teaching of Jewish nationalism and the future organizing principle of international relations and world politics.\(^6\)

Contrary to one Zionist narrative, key Jewish intellectuals asserted Zionism’s mission as modeling an alternative to nation-state nationalism that would reconfigure the relationship between nationality, sovereignty, and international politics. Zionism, they contended, outlined the blueprint for a national identity equally relevant for homeland and diaspora populations, compatible with particular and human allegiances, and distinct from patriotism or political citizenship. As the embodiment of the Jewish political tradition, Zionism testified to the limits of national self-determination on both moral and pragmatic grounds. It also exemplified the universal benefits of cultivating national ties across spatial and political boundaries. For these Zionists, however, the rejection of statehood as the primary criteria of nationhood was not associated with undermining the
importance of a national homeland for Jews in Palestine. The established categories for thinking about twentieth century Jewish nationalism—diaspora autonomy and (statist) Zionism—fail to capture the complex synthesis of diapora and Zionism in the positions they endorsed.

Three individuals shed light on these roads not taken in the intellectual history of Zionism and twentieth-century nationalism more generally—the Hebraist Simon Rawidowicz, the American Jewish thinker Mordecai Kaplan, and the scholar of nationalism Hans Kohn. These thinkers are well-known to specialized audiences in distinct fields and disciplines for specific accomplishments—for example, Rawidowicz’s pathbreaking analysis of modern Jewish intellectual history, Kaplan’s reconstruction of American Judaism, and Kohn’s highly influential studies of the history of nationalism. Yet they have been largely ignored as Jewish political theorists who viewed Zionism as a platform for negotiating the fundamental categories and assumptions of modern political thought.

To capture the divergent approaches to Zionism and its significance for diaspora Jewish life expressed by Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn, I call their Zionisms respectively *global Hebraism*, *national civilization*, and *cultural humanism*. At the same time, juxtaposing their formulations recovers more than the anomalous visions of outlying thinkers. Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn highlight overlapping strategies for theorizing Jewish identity that eschewed the binary choices—such as homeland versus diaspora, political autonomy versus individual assimilation, and ties based on consent versus descent—imposed by the logic of nation-state nationalism and Western liberalism. The patterns evident in their programs are shared, to varying degrees, by a wide range of
thinkers rarely studied as intellectuals grappling with a similar set of Jewish concerns or adapting parallel strategies for contesting modern political thought.

The narrative arc of this book bridges time and space to trace the ways in which Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn joined Jewish and non-Jewish thinkers committed to reimagining the fundamental categories of nationality during the period between World War I and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Placing their thought in its proper historical context indicates that the evolution of the meaning of nationalism did not follow the smooth trajectory from imperial subject to national citizen mapped onto the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, Zionist thinkers actively participated in contesting this course. They negotiated emerging categories of national identity and attempted to reconfigure its relationship to changing concepts of collective solidarity such as race, ethnicity, and religion.

The acceptance of self-determination as the primary right of national movements and the realization of Jewish statehood marginalized these voices. Ultimately, Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn were unable to shape Zionism according to their understanding of Jewish nationalism. During their careers, the three moved from the center of Zionist thought and activism to ideological outliers. Precisely because of their failed efforts to create a lasting counternarrative in Zionist thought, however, Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn provide a unique perspective to critically assess Zionism’s meaning and relevance, past, present, and future.

These forsaken figures offer a cautionary tale about equating contingent historical expressions of Zionism and nationalism with those concepts understood today as normative. Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn saw themselves as navigating a constant
course while the discourse of Zionism radically changed around them. They did not leave Zionism; rather, Zionism left them outside its evolving ideological parameters. In order to reintegrate these roads not taken into the historical narrative of Zionism, this book deliberately stretches contemporary notions of nationalism and Zionism to include expressions no longer considered with the definition of the term. Recovering their struggles to theorize outside the crystallizing nation-state paradigm underscores the knotty issues faced by Jewish intellectuals in the interwar period and chronicle the innovative approaches devised to address them.

This narrative challenges the popular and scholarly assumption that the Jewish experience in general and Zionist thought in particular had little historical role in defying dominant notions of nationalism. One would think that the fascination of more recent scholarship with transnational associations, minority rights, and the moral limits of sovereignty should have sparked increased interest in Jewish conceptions of nationalism. Jewish communities have exemplified the possibility of creating cultural, religious, and legal ties across territorial and geographic borders. In the premodern period, for example, Jews had a rich tradition of self-government, civil autonomy (including taxation and a separate legal system), and political organizations that spanned feudal realms. In the modern period the Jews represented the classic other within European nationalism. This position led Jewish intellectuals and leaders to pioneer strategies for parrying the demands of national integration and for conceptualizing new categories of identity. Since the late 1940s, Jews have grappled with being a global population increasingly split between multiple diaspora centers and a state in the national homeland.
In reality, however, Jews have remained largely invisible in the writings of scholars who have engaged this growing discourse. Jewish political thought has been perceived by many as, paradoxically, too integrationist and too statist to merit serious engagement. On the one hand, the diaspora Jewish community is viewed as a religious group happily integrated into its host societies. Conversations within the field of ethnic studies, for instance, rarely consider the Jewish case because Jews’ “whiteness” combined with their economic success calls into question their status as a minority group. On the other hand, the state of Israel, and its ideology of Zionism, is perceived by both its defenders and its critics as being committed to national sovereignty. As a result of these conflicting assumptions, few scholars have considered the history of Zionism in tracing the evolution of political critiques of national sovereignty or in locating the early and influential expressions of collective solidarity within and across political boundaries.

I conclude that interwar Zionism has tremendous contemporary relevance for those interested in considering the nature of group cohesion today. The themes addressed by interwar Zionists—balancing patriotism and particularism, reconciling liberalism and nationalism, and challenging the analytical distinctions between religion, ethnicity, and race—have shifted to mainstream concerns. Zionism’s roads not taken thus illuminate the breaks and, more important, the surprising continuities between early twentieth century efforts to conceptualize the boundaries of the Jewish nation as distinct from political sovereignty and twenty first century debates about identity in an era increasingly characterized by multiculturalism, transnational solidarity, and minority rights. The same estrangement experienced between the Jew and the nation-state, felt so palpably as the
“Jewish question” at the dawn of the twentieth century, now is felt by a far wider swath of the world population.

The remainder of this chapter prepares the groundwork for rehabilitating these neglected expressions of Zionist thought. I introduce the book’s three main protagonists, their formulations, and the ways in which the historical lens for thinking about nationalism, both Jewish and general, needs to be reconfigured to fully appreciate the scope of pre-state Zionism and its contributions to political thought.

**Three (Exceptional?) Roads Not Taken**

The assumption that Zionism is embedded in the paradigm of the nation-state and its attendant negation of diaspora communities was not the inevitable outcome of Zionist ideology during the first half of the twentieth century. As the discourse of European nationalism and Zionism evolved after World War I, some Jewish intellectuals saw Zionism as an opportunity to redefine national membership, both Jewish and more generally, beyond the concrete borders of homeland and state. Before the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and even during the decade immediately after independence, Zionism was pregnant with possibilities that are now considered far outside its ideological parameters, past and present. As Western political theory and many Zionist intellectuals embraced the principles of self-determination, several forgotten thinkers explored the complicated and ambiguous theoretical terrain left unresolved by the still widely accepted claim that the globe could (and should) be divided into discrete political units with homogenous ethnonational populations.
Against this backdrop, it is far less surprising that Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn considered their formulations of Jewish nationalism within the interwar ideological parameters of Zionism. This book employs a capacious definition of Zionism to capture a more accurate picture of the term in its specific historical context. These three figures were disillusioned to varying degrees during their careers with the Zionist movement. They were even attacked by critics as “anti-Zionist”. Thus I have deliberately maintained the language as it was used by midcentury intellectuals, even though the theories depart from conventional readings. Employing a more expansive definition of Zionism casts light on a set of debates and conversations that have long been overlooked.9

My first goal in assessing Rawidowiz’s, Kaplan’s, and Kohn’s concepts of nationality side by side is to amplify a counternarrative of Zionism that challenged the increasingly dominant paradigm of national sovereignty between World War I and the period immediately following establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Born between 1881 and 1896, Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn lived in suspended animation between the post–World War I moment (when radical reorganization of global political structures seemed possible) and post–World War II (when the nation-state paradigm became dominant). The three protagonists have been forgotten as Zionist political theorists because their ideas deviated from the normative path of nationalism as understood both by Zionists and modern political thought more broadly.

Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn each began their personal and intellectual journeys rooted within the diverse ideological parameters of pre–World War I Zionism. Rawidowicz, born in northeastern Poland, moved to Berlin, where he joined a circle of
leading Hebrew authors and publishers (including Israel’s future national poet, Haim Nahman Bialik). He went on to create the first international association of Hebrew speakers, open a Hebrew publishing house, and publish his articles on Jewish nationalism in the leading Zionist journals, *Ha’Olam*. Born in Prague, Kohn became a disciple of the philosopher and Zionist Martin Buber and his writings on Jewish nationalism as a member of the Bar Kochba circle of young Zionists. Kohn served as an executive in the Zionist Organization, published regular articles in the *yishuv*’s (prestate settlement) leading newspapers, and helped found Brit Shalom, a prominent prestate organization in Palestine that promoted a binational state. One of the first supporters of Zionism at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Kaplan worked with leaders of the Zionist Organization in the United States and hailed Zionism as an integral part of the reconstruction of American Jewish life in his writings.

Although their views on key issues (such as the Arab question, the importance of diaspora communities, and opposition to national sovereignty) differed from others in the Zionist movement, Kaplan, Rawidowicz, and Kohn were not marginal or even exceptional figures. They wrote for mainstream Zionist journals, worked for the movement, dedicated their intellectual energy toward advocating for Zionism and Jewish national renaissance. All three viewed settlement in Palestine as central to their projects. They each temporarily left the diaspora to put their ideologies into practice in the great laboratory of Palestine.

Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn developed their own understandings of Zionism immediately after World War I—a moment in which national normalcy was not necessarily tantamount to national sovereignty. Indeed, the decades after the Versailles
peace conference represented a period of rapid political, economic, and cultural changes
during which concepts of nation and state were debated across a wide spectrum of
revolutionary ideologies. Chapter 2 of this book illustrates the dynamic cross-pollination
of various transatlantic ideological networks that employed Zionism as a theoretical tool
to promote states of nations rather than nation-states as the most stable structure for
international relations. Zionism would shape the postwar reconstruction in conjunction
with programs advocating for internationalism based on multi-national commonwealths
and even a world-state.

The chapter contextualizes Rawidowicz’s, Kaplan’s, and Kohn’s approaches to
Zionism by exploring shared intellectual influences and affinities with their mentors
(specifically the cultural Zionist Ahad Ha’am and the historian Simon Dubnow) as well
as a number of their contemporaries and conversation partners (such as the American
Zionist Horace Kallen, the Jewish Theological Seminary professor Israel Friedlaender,
the Zionist activist Judah Magnes, and the British internationalist Sir Alfred Zimmern). 10

Across diverse ideological and geographic terrain, thinkers associated with
Zionism defined Jewish political thought in opposition to the concept I refer to as the
“sovereign mold.” This idea refers to a loosely defined collection of expectations,
including (1) that territorial boundaries correlate with particular national populations, (2)
that national groups have a right to political independence, and (3) that substatist
loyalties—such as ethnic, religious, racial, or other special interest groups—must remain
secondary to a primary allegiance to the state. Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn inveighed
against the state’s authority to demand ethnonational conformity among its citizenry.
Decoupling the link between nation and state was viewed as a program for strengthening
expressions of nationality and promoting diversity within nation-states on both sides of the Atlantic.

Despite their overlapping criticism of the sovereign mold, Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn did not see themselves as, nor did they represent, a particular school of Zionist thought. My second goal in juxtaposing these particular figures is to explore three distinct and idiosyncratic visions for Zionism as a framework for theorizing nation beyond state. (They did know of one another during their lifetimes—a reflection of their overlapping interests and shared networks around Zionist publications, intellectual circles, and cultural activities. Kaplan and Kohn met at least once in 1931 at a lecture on Zionism. Kaplan indicated his admiration for Rawidowicz’s work in handwritten note that he sent to Rawidowicz along with a signed copy of his magnum opus, Judaism as a Civilization. Rawidowicz included respectful critiques of Kaplan’s essays in his own writings. Kohn reviewed an essay by Rawidowicz in 1929.)

Each thinker developed concepts of Zionism that reflected his engagement with different intellectual traditions, his experiences living in different cities around the world, his interest in writing for different audiences, his personal journeys, and especially his relationship to Jews and Judaism. Their visions of the basis of national solidarity range from language and textual interpretation, to religious folkways, to universal civic ideals. So, too, did they disagree on the ideal level of national preservation in the diaspora—from Rawidowicz’s communitarian emphasis on diverse cultural groups to Kohn’s concept of nationalism as the historical force engendering human integration.

Rawidowicz’s global Hebraism, the subject of chapter 3, introduced the most highly developed twentieth-century expression of deterritorialized and decentralized
Jewish nationalism. Not until recently, however, have scholars assessed Rawidowicz’s significance, beyond his contributions to the Hebrew Renaissance during the 1920s in Weimar Germany and the scholarship he produced as an exiled professor in Great Britain and the United States during the 1940s and 1950s. Global Hebraism rejected the primacy of Palestine and instead envisioned national life flourishing irrespective of locale or political context. According to this model, the Hebrew language and the culture of textual interpretation would generate fluid boundaries, creating a dynamic equilibrium between integration and autonomy far more consistent with centuries of Jewish life than state-framed definitions of Jewish nationality. Despite the classic Hebrew sources and traditional references embedded in his writings, Rawidowicz developed a theory of collective solidarity that anticipated modern theories of language shaping collective boundaries, developed in the context of hermeneutics and poststructuralism.

The theory of national civilization, laid out most extensively in Kaplan’s *Judaism as a Civilization* (1934), defined membership on the grounds of shared social associations, religious practices, cultural engagements, and connection to a homeland. Chapter 4 explores the ways in which Kaplan’s political thought sought to blur the emerging boundaries between religion, nationality, and race by constructing a new political category of nationality, called “civilization,” as a model for Jews in both the United States and Palestine. Kaplan articulated a moral argument that viewed particular attachments as the most effective path toward guaranteeing individual rights and creating harmony between different groups. Thus he turned the meaning of progress on its head by linking civilization with national diversity, not ethnocultural uniformity.
Kaplan’s national civilization not only attempted to reconstruct Judaism, but more important, to reconstruct American democracy to make space for minority national groups. The chapter challenges Kaplan’s legacy as arguably the most influential American Jewish thinker because of his ability to transpose Judaism into an American key.\(^{13}\) This reading overlooks Kaplan’s notion of civilization as contributing to a transatlantic conversation about nationality intended to transform Zionism and American nationalism.

Chapter 5 argues that Kohn, considered one of the “founding fathers of academic studies of nationalism,” transformed key principles of nationalism first outlined in Zionist tracts, such as the German-language *Die Politische Idee des Judentum* (The political idea of Judaism) (1924) and the two-volume Hebrew book, *Perakim letoldot hara’ayon hatzioni* (A history of Zionist thought) (1929) into dozens of influential scholarly books such as his *Idea of Nationalism* (1944) and *American Nationalism* (1957).\(^{14}\) Highlighting continuities between Kohn’s seemingly disconnected careers as a German Zionist and an American scholar complicates the very oppositional dichotomy between civic and ethnic concepts, which he is credited with popularizing. The civic versus ethnic contrast, still referred to as the “Kohn dichotomy,” erases the tension between western liberalism and romantic nationalism in Kohn’s personal experiences and historical analysis. His theory of nationalism is more accurately remembered as cultural humanism—a term that captures his enduring debt to the Zionist ideology that shaped his worldview. In particular, Kohn retained an appreciation for the moral and pragmatic value or preserving groupness, and even national diversity, within the state as the path toward human
integration and universal equality. Exploring his German Zionism suggests the
importance of rereading one of the most important theories of American nationalism.

**Rethinking the Meaning, Function, and Scope of Nationality**

These three expressions forged within the rich ideological firmament of interwar
Zionism—Rawidowicz’s global Hebraism, Kaplan’s national civilization, and Kohn’s
cultural humanism—never reached fruition. Indeed, their failure to influence Zionism
was so great, that it is hard to imagine that thinkers engaged in questions of defining
nationality outside of statehood began their careers as self-defined Zionists. What factors
limit our ability to integrate figures such as Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn into the
historical narrative of Zionism?

The victory of the very conceptual vocabulary of Zionism, and nationalism more
generally, which Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn sought to replace impedes the recovery
of Zionisms opposed to the sovereign mold and an understanding of its relationship to
larger trends in political thought. A singular idea of Zionism, based on a conception of
Jewish normalization through self-government and territorial sovereignty, emerged that
overshadowed the diverse possibilities that had characterized the movement. As a result
of this process, historians and theorists have been largely cut off from Zionism’s
heterogeneity and pioneering engagement with the dilemmas of nationality and
sovereignty.

Considering Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn within the proper historical context
also requires a working definition of nationality that expands the term’s contemporary
meaning, function and geographic scope. Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn’s itinerant
lives—constantly shifting between geographies, ideologies, and intellectual networks—mirror their intellectual dislocation and illuminate the anxieties that accompany eschewing the dominant currents of their times. I thus interpret formulations of nationality as a revealing window that sheds light on personal and theoretical attempts to reconcile solidifying categories of modern Jewish life and the construction of political ideologies. Moreover, considering theories of nationality within their local and global contexts demonstrates that theories of nationality are not complete, consistent, and systematic programs. Rather, they have evolved as an ongoing project that reflects the equivocal conclusions and conflicting pulls felt by individual theorists. The inner contradictions and semantic parameters, best captured through intellectual biography, created an intellectual bricolage that belies a consistent trajectory within each thinker.¹⁵

The working definition of nationality employed throughout this book amplifies three dimensions of Jewish political thought that have been eclipsed by nation-state narratives—the theoretical ambiguity of formulating nationality outside the sovereign mold, the role of Jewish political thinkers as active agents in the development of Western political thought, and the transnational and interdisciplinary conversation that links theorists from disparate geographic and intellectual milieus.

**Including Counterstate Paradigms in the Study of Zionism**

A nation, the historian Hugh Seton-Watson wrote in 1977, is a “community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness.” Seton-Watson explains the term state, in direct contrast, as “a legal and political organization, with the power to require obedience and loyalty from its
These definitions differentiate between collective ties based on historical, cultural, ethnic, or religious bond and connections forged by the political rights of the sovereign power over its citizens. Seton-Watson’s position on the importance of retaining an analytical distinction between nation and state, however, is a minority one among scholars of nationalism. Theories of nationalism that assume a congruence between the two terms overshadow efforts by scholars committed to disarticulating notions of nation and state.

The historian Ernst Gellner has exemplified this tendency with his claim that nationalism “[is] primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.” Although scholarship on nationalism has spawned diverse ways of thinking about the nature of nationality, the literature tends to share Gellner’s basic assumption—namely, that statehood remains an essential component of national identity, either as the spark leading to the construction of national culture or as the reflection of national aspirations. Indeed, his claims reflect a basic assumption of the modernist paradigm in the study of nationalism: nationalists, motivated by various economic, political, and social forces linked to the modern state, “invented” the nation where it did not previously exist. In the words of the historian Anthony Smith, one of the most vocal opponents of this approach, this “became the standard orthodoxy by the 1960s.”

The frequent slippage in terminology between nation and state is implicitly reinforced in such key terms as the United Nations, transnational, international relations, and even with the hyphen in the term nation-state itself. The very language used for discussing these concepts in today’s political vernacular reflects the enduring premise
that homogenous ethnonational populations correspond directly to sovereign territories. Expressions of nationality that contested this dominant trend have been marginalized from the mainstream narrative of political thought. Formulations of nation as distinct from state, when they are addressed, are often viewed as organic, familial, or ethnic—as opposed to rational or civic—and thus as potentially morally problematic because of the emphasis on national partiality over individual rights.

An enduring bias in theories of Western liberalism and modernization nourishes this presumed clash. In the late nineteenth century the philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill argued that “boundaries of government should coincide in the main with those of nationalities.” As far as Mill was concerned, only a homogenous national culture would ensure the equal treatment of all citizens and create the shared sense of collective membership necessary to establish a successful state. The inclination toward applying a nation-state paradigm as a lens to explain the historical development and to define the guidelines of nationalism also has deep roots in a perceived opposition between individual rights and ethnonational diversity. National membership based on political ties to the state are more inclined to preserve individual rights, human values, voluntary associations, and toleration of ethnocultural differences. Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, remains associated with tribal attachments rooted in descent, coercion, or territory. As a result, liberal scholars remain suspicious of affirmations of national solidarity outside of statehood.

The close association of nation and state in scholarship on both nationalism and liberalism makes it difficult to imagine a liberal nationalism compatible with particular solidarity across territorial and political boundaries—precisely the theoretical space
within which Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn placed their conceptions of Zionism. Fortunately, increasing numbers of scholars have begun to question the practical or moral efficacy of limiting concepts of nationalism to the congruence criteria outlined by Gellner and reinforced by recent scholarship. Signaling out the yearning for political self-determination, as the primary historical or normative criteria for defining nationality, fails to capture the historical diversity, psychological reality, and social networks that characterize national ties.

Approaching the study of nationalism from multiple disciplines and perspectives, such commentators as the philosopher Charles Taylor, the legal theorist Haim Gans, the political theorist Aviel Roshwald, and the multicultural advocate Will Kymlicka have dramatically expanded the definition of nationality to include nonstatist expressions. The overlapping interest in expanding the analytical tools for thinking about nationality reflects a greater appreciation for the failure of the nation-state model to explain the perseverance of national bonds in the face of contemporary developments. These interventions provide a methodological framework for my own more inclusive definition of national identity. In particular, subsequent chapters adapt the terms suggested by the historian Rogers Brubaker. Brubaker delineates between “state-framed” and “counterstate” typologies. While the first category includes national movements primarily focused on achieving territorial sovereignty, he explains the latter as formulations that are “distinct from or in opposition to an existing state.”

Integrating counterstate models into the study of Zionism points the way toward rethinking historical approaches to Jewish political thought. Jewish studies has lagged behind other fields in considering the diverse scope and functions of twentieth-century...
conceptions of nationality. This does not mean that Jewish studies scholars have been insensitive to modern Jewish political thought as a variegated phenomenon. Rather, the ideological and practical expressions of Jewish nationality have been largely interpreted within categories derived primarily from state-seeking, rather than counterstate, expressions. As a result, the master narrative of modern Jewish political thought tends to be recast through the prism of two avenues for normalizing Jewish identity in the modern world—the nationalists committed to achieving national sovereignty in the homeland and the integrationists dedicated to affirming Jews’ patriotic attachment to their country of citizenship. Yet these opposing narratives trace their genealogy to the same process of translating the ambiguous contours of the people of Israel into the either/or categories compatible with the world’s political organization into discrete political, territorial units with homogenous national populations. Either demand statehood as the rightful expression of nationality or reject the vocabulary of nationality and instead claim more acceptable categories for minority identity, such as religious creed or ethnicity.

This binary rubric accurately outlines the broad map of twentieth-century mainstream political movements and explains the ultimate shift toward two distinct modes of Jewish life as a nationality in Israel and a religious community in America today. It also enables scholars to organize the tremendous diversity of modern Jewish politics, trace the schools that galvanized mass movements during the twentieth century, and document the increasing ideological polarization of a revolutionary era. However, a teleological reading of the evolution of modern Jewish politics as leading inevitably toward the establishment of the state of Israel and the dominance of American Jewry
following the Holocaust obscures the fluid possibilities and elastic contours of interwar political ideologies that characterized the first half of the twentieth century.

Expanding the construct of Zionism to include counterstate expressions provides a more inclusive approach that integrates formulations excluded from studies of Zionism particularly and discussions of nationalism more generally. State-framed assumptions anachronistically assume that there was widespread consensus in the interwar period that a sovereign state was the fundamental criteria of Zionism. Yet it was not until the 1940s that statehood became the official policy of the Zionist movement. Nevertheless, the central dichotomies that shape the categorization of Zionism versus diaspora nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century assume a great deal of clarity around the issue of Zionism’s interwar objectives, specifically around the goal of creating a Jewish state and the role of the diaspora.

Analytical distinctions between political ideologies based on advocating for autonomy versus integration, here versus there, and nationality versus religion fail to capture fully the ambiguities that characterize global Hebraism, national civilization, and cultural humanism. Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn fiercely resisted the urge to be swept up in either of the two competing political theories that had solidified by the mid-twentieth century: (1) Zionism’s definition of Jewish national identity as equivalent to citizenship in the homeland, and (2) a diasporist approach that emphasized social and cultural integration for a religious minority. Instead, they positioned their theories of Jewish nationalism opposed to both the homogenizing demands of nation-state nationalism for ethnoreligious conformity and the Zionists’ vision of implementing precisely such a vision in Palestine.
Taken together, Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn shed light on a gray area in prestate ideologies that blur boundaries between Zionism and diaspora nationalism. Although there were certainly vocal figures who defined the ideological poles, there was also a continuum of positions that regularly crossed what would now be viewed as ideologically incompatible positions. These formulations of Jewish nationalism did not necessarily seek the systematic synthesis or theoretical consistency expected by subsequent scholars.

Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn illustrate this phenomenon by incorporating positions and allegiances in their personal lives and theoretical ruminations that are now perceived as oppositional, even oxymoronic. Applying a counterstate category to interwar Jewish nationalism exposes a shared set of historical predicaments, strategic solutions, and intellectual networks far more difficult to recover when such thinkers as Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn are placed in clear ideological camps. Focusing the lens of historical scholarship on figures perceived as exceptional for muddled positions that clash with the clarity of a state-seeking typology documents the conflicting yearnings, irresolvable dilemmas, and opposing objectives that characterized a wide swath of interwar Jewish politics.

There is another somewhat misleading distinction in categorizing streams of Zionist thought that can be avoided by adapting the terminology of counterstate nationalism. Here I speak of the distinction between political versus cultural or spiritual Zionism. Political Zionists sought political autonomy in Palestine and believed that Zionism needed to convince the vast majority of Jews to leave the diaspora for the homeland. Only by settling in Palestine could Zionism succeed in protecting Jews from
their precarious situation in the diaspora. Cultural nationalism, most notably associated with Ahad Ha’am and Martin Buber, focused on the problem of Jewish national culture. These nationalists conceived of Palestine as the center for the renewal of Jewish life. From the homeland center, Jewish national culture would radiate to the majority of Jews who would remain in the diaspora. The Zionist protagonists in this book adapted many of Ahad Ha-am’s (and in the case of Kohn, Martin Buber’s as well) conceptions of cultural Zionism. They could thus be (and Kaplan has been, in fact) characterized as cultural Zionists.

Yet there is a potential problem with referring to them as cultural, as opposed to political, Zionists: the misconception that they are not political thinkers. The association of national politics with the apparatus of the state and its government presumes that concepts of Zionism that prioritized cultural, spiritual, or religious revival had little relevance for political questions. But this is not the way in which Ahad Ha’am’s disciples understood his theory of nationalism. As I discuss further in chapter 2, Kohn was not alone when he commented on Ahad Ha’am’s influence on his thought: “Under the influence of Ahad Ha’am, we were cultural rather than political Zionists. This corresponded to my general attitude, which made me doubt the wisdom of augmenting the number of nation-states and proud sovereignties, and to my distrust of reliance on numbers and power.”

Although Kohn himself used the category of cultural Zionism, he understood the term as a direct challenge to the state-seeking paradigm. Whether or not Ahad Ha’am himself supported the ultimate creation of a Jewish state, many of his disciples saw him as introducing the theoretical foundation for Zionism’s challenge to state-seeking
nationalism. Cultural Zionism thus had a far wider significance: first, in its direct influence on Zionist thinkers who understood their mentor as a political theorist advocating for undermining the relationship between nation and state; and second, in its largely unmapped dissemination into scholarly theories of nationalism through the work of academics inspired by Ahad Ha’am (Sir Alfred Zimmern, Horace Kallen, and Hans Kohn represent prime examples of this phenomenon).

Brubaker’s discussion of his own motivations for thinking about nationalism through state-seeking versus counterstate paradigms adds another dimension to the historiographical value of adapting his counterstate terminology. Reorienting the study of nationality around two legitimate paths—one state-framed and one counterstate—neutralizes the moral hierarchy implied by the civic-ethnic distinction. Brubaker argues that the division negates the binary distinction between civic nationalism’s voluntary, liberal, and cosmopolitan principles versus ethnic nationalism’s coercive, ascriptive, and intolerant tendencies.

The interwar theories of Zionism analyzed throughout this book anticipated efforts by Brubaker to construct alternate conceptual paradigms of nationality as a way of contesting the false dichotomies encoded within the division between civic and ethnic typologies. For the Zionists whom we explore here, neither civic nor ethnic typologies, the two emerging possibilities for defining national identity, constituted a viable basis for Jewish collective solidarity. Their understanding of nationalism was too oriented toward particular solidarity to meet the criteria of a civic nationalism and too concerned with individual rights to fit into the ethnic, or cultural, criteria. Neither assuaged their anxiety about the plight of Jews after World War I nor their personal sensitivity to the exclusive
nature of both types of nationalism. Jews, their sensibilities warned them, had little place in the dominant typologies of nationalism. As result, Jewish intellectuals had a vested interest in contesting, even while deeply rooted within, state-seeking models of national identity.

The Strategic Function of Zionism

Considering counterstate streams of Zionist ideology sheds light on a process difficult to record from within a historical framework shaped by the doctrine of national sovereignty: the efforts of Jewish intellectuals to reformulate general conceptual definitions of nationality and sovereignty at a moment when these terms were very much still open for debate. Cognizant of a range of theoretical possibilities—including both ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism, multinational imperialism, and socialist internationalism—Jewish thinkers creatively read and misread the dominant theories of nationalism, internationalism, and liberalism to negotiate the discourse of citizenship and sovereignty. Moreover, when juxtaposed, a thematic thread emerges through the work of these intellectuals. They attempted to create a trajectory of modernity that valued difference as the step beyond unity. Their shared interest in recasting the telos of progress can be seen in the promulgation of such key terms as ethical, civilization, and progress throughout these theories. Jewish nationality therefore served as a corrective not only to the sovereign mold, but also to the basic philosophical orientation of modernity.

In recognition of this fundamental dimension of the theories of Zionism discussed throughout the book, the working definition of nationality includes the term’s mediating function at the crossroads of conflicting intellectual and political forces. Studying
Jewish political thought primarily as an internal consideration of the ties that bind Jews to one another, or the imitation of externally imposed categories, disregards a counterintuitive dimension of this discourse: the construction of Jewish nationality as a prescription for non-Jewish theorists calibrated to negotiate and contest the terms of Jewish social and political integration into the state and the international order.

By adopting the very categories of identity they sought to undermine, Jewish intellectuals engaged in a subtle dialogue with their surroundings in a struggle to integrate those aspects of nationalist discourse beneficial to their objectives and to transform connotations that they felt undermined the continuity of Jews and Judaism. The discourse of Jewish nationalism served as a rhetorical tool to neutralize states’ claims to cultural uniformity by proposing theories of citizenship that eschewed ethnonational assimilation and tolerated, even promoted, the social and cultural autonomy of minority groups. Considering Jewish nationality as an important site of political engagement, negotiation, and resistance in the contest for the meaning of national identity significantly expands the ways in which this term was deployed. Jewish nationality not only emulated but also subverted dominant paradigms of Western political thought.

Reading theories of nationality as the record of grappling with Jewish concerns and external political realities captures pioneering efforts to address an enduring problem in modern politics. I am referring to the challenge of articulating a conceptual language for preserving the status of stateless nations. The antipathy toward recognizing otherness in modern politics and philosophy remained rooted in the bedrock of foundational assumptions connecting unity and uniformity. Only by highlighting the particular claims concealed by the cosmopolitan rhetoric of the Enlightenment, and inverting their
conclusions by inserting diversity as the sine qua non of universal harmony, could Jewish nationalists justify their demands for collective recognition. Whether consciously or unconsciously, these thinkers recognized the zero-sum game of identity construction.

This dilemma put Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn into a fascinating bind. On the one hand, they could not address their concerns by passively adapting the conceptual vocabulary of Western political thought. Existing models of liberalism and nationalism lacked the conceptual framework for integrating the other and separating nationalism from patriotism. Justifying greater degrees of collective recognition as minority groups thus required redefining existing categories or creating alternative categories of otherness. On the other hand, however, nationalists committed to challenging the sovereign mold consciously recognized the need to frame their revisions within the existing categories of identity (this despite claims that their vision of Jewish political theory emerged from Jewish sources, not the various streams of Western political thought clearly shaping their notions of nationality). They intended their arguments about Jewish collective cohesion—with its distinct confluence of religion, race, history, and homelessness—to serve as a universal model for a broad audience of Jews and non-Jews. Only by tweaking non-Jewish assumptions would new categories of Jewish identity gain currency. To sum up this aspect of the function of nationalism more succinctly: Jewish nationalists were “ethnopolitical entrepreneurs” who viewed Zionism as an effective avenue for contesting the forces of nationalism that threatened individual and collective rights in the homeland and the diaspora.

Although modern national groups all had to invent national boundaries from heterogeneous populations, the Jewish case offered unique challenges. Demographically,
Jewish communities spread across multiple geographical areas. The proposed homeland had a small fraction of the total world Jewish population, and the vast majority of the Jewish nation was far more interested in moving to the United States than to the ancient homeland. Furthermore, the Jews’ connection to Palestine was based on a two-millennia-old historical attachment, rather than an enduring tie to actually living on the land. Finally, the ambiguous position of Judaism as a religious and ethnic community confounded the pattern of other secular nationalist movements that did not have to rely on religious sources to construct a national narrative.

One Zionist response to the Jewish question was to erase these abnormalities, by shaping Judaism in the mold of national sovereignty. Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn had a fundamentally different approach toward Jewish normalization than that generally attributed to Zionist solutions to the Jewish question. This approach transposed the particular challenges of constructing definitions of Jewish nationalism into a universal model for other national groups to emulate. They strove to normalize Jews by “Judaizing” Western political thought. Zionism, they optimistically believed, could catalyze a transformation to make stateless people the norm by exemplifying the ethical and pragmatic attributes of Jewish national cohesion.

Global and Interdisciplinary Perspective

One of the questions raised is how did Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn translate the concepts of European Zionism into models of American democracy and Jewish communal life. For historians ever more interested in tracing the global intellectual and social networks that linked people and ideas outside the boundaries of the nation-state,
these case studies provide fruitful models for consideration. The émigré journeys of the
protagonists and the transatlantic nature of their conversations provide intellectual
biographies that span diverse geographical and ideological milieus. Indeed, global
Hebraism, national civilization, and cultural humanism demonstrate a variety of ways in
which Zionism served as a conduit between European political thought and ideas of what
it means to be an American.

Moreover, their interest in reconceptualizing Jewish nationality outside of
territorial and political boundaries led these Jewish thinkers to imagine notions of
collective identity that crossed nation-state lines. As a result, their theoretical
formulations, and historical interpretations, were sensitive to the relevance of
transnational bonds in shaping historical forces and processes. Yet Jewish political
history, especially within the context of the United States, like the study of political
thought more generally, is often related within the framework of discrete geographical
units. This regional approach diminishes the role of the immigrant experience, ethnic
concerns, and transnational ties in the construction of political thought, both Jewish and
American. Scholars have tended to assume that Jews have little political history within
the United States. In the words of Naomi Cohen, a leading chronicler of American
Zionism, “The Americans rejected the European-held philosophy of diaspora
nationalism, or the idea that the Jews constituted a political group in countries outside
Palestine.” Based on this understanding, American Jewish intellectuals and leaders are
interpreted as charting a different path: the construction of a religio-ethnic identity that
would culminate in a harmonious American Jewish synthesis. This synthesis rejected
nationalist claims (even American Zionists downplayed Jewish nationalism as much
more than American patriotism) and instead embraced an identity based on religious confession and the state’s recognition of Jews as individual citizens.

This narrative reflects important distinctions between Jewish experiences on both sides of the Atlantic. The political contexts of Jews in the United States and in Europe diverged significantly during the second half of the twentieth century. The European political environment, particularly in Eastern Europe, where many Jews were never granted citizenship, was radically different from the American context. As a result, the revolutionary politics of both the nationalist and the socialist variety that characterized this period fizzled rapidly in the United States. Mass movements and nationalist political parties did not develop in the United States as they had emerged during the same period throughout Central and Eastern Europe. National minority rights clashed with the view of America as a place of integration that eschewed nationalist claims. Furthermore, Jews in the United States did not face the same levels of persecution that had galvanized the demand for collective protection elsewhere. The United States promised unprecedented political, social, and religious opportunities based on liberal individualism.

Yet the chasm separating these two political contexts implied by the mainstream narrative of American exceptionality was far less clear to intellectuals in their own lifetimes than it has become to historians chronicling their experiences. Despite important sociopolitical differences, the historical record indicates that Jewish intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic saw the United States as a potential promised land for implementing theories of nationality, redefining sovereignty, and nurturing Jewish collective consciousness. Theories of Zionism as models for diaspora life extended to the United States as well. The two lands—Europe and America—shared
political realities and criticisms of nationalism that transcended the Atlantic barrier that has often been projected onto chronicles of early-twentieth-century intellectual history.\(^{41}\)

Although Jewish nationalism has been used in the past to underscore regional differences, this book analyzes the discourse of nationality and Zionism as an integral part of twentieth-century Jewish Atlantic history.

Studying figures committed to Zionism in the diaspora as a language for transforming America into a nation of nationalities complicates the notion that American Zionism was completely stripped of its European anti-integrationist position. It raises questions about whether or not American Jewish historians have largely ignored this possibility. Perhaps in order to narrate a history of integration and harmonious synthesis between Americanism and Judaism, American Jewish historians rejected the notion that they could be part of a nation or that Zionism could mean something distinct from national sovereignty or a strategy for U.S. acculturation. Underscoring transatlantic continuities replaces a trajectory of progressively increasing rootedness, with one that highlights dislocation by characterizing Jewish immigrants as unrooted wanderers grappling with multiple national, intellectual, and social allegiances.\(^{42}\)

This approach is particularly crucial in studying émigré intellectuals, whose intellectual biographies are too often bifurcated between their European and American stages. Further compounding the problem, disciplinary boundaries cause scholars to differentiate the contributions of Jewish thinkers from key public intellectuals who happen to be Jewish. The distinct legacies of Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn formulated conventionally as diaspora Hebraist, religious thinker, and scholar of nationalism reflect this artificial categorization of Jewish thinkers along geographic lines (Europe versus
America), disciplinary boundaries (history, religious thought, and political theory),
choices in modern Jewish politics (diasporist and Zionist), and academic fields (Jewish
studies and general thought). That their work transcended these arbitrary boundaries
demonstrates the importance of considering Jewish history, in general, and conversations
about Jewish political thought among exiled and highly mobile intellectual wanderers, in
particular, as inherently global and interdisciplinary in nature.

My adoption of a this lens is not meant to diminish the recognition that political
thought develops within specific spatial and temporal coordinates.\textsuperscript{43} Rather, mapping
theories of nationality across geographical regions reveals disjuncture and variations that
reflect a particular mix of intellectual, social, and political forces.\textsuperscript{44} Conscious of the
importance of tracing the evolution of each theory of nationality within historical
circumstances, I have organized this book around individual biographies. The chapters
exploit the tools of intellectual history to gain a more nuanced appreciation for the
interpenetration that took place between Jewish thinkers and their specific milieu. I have
attempted to synthesize intellectual history’s attention to space and time with modern
Jewish thought’s appreciation for considering general philosophical dilemmas and close
textual analysis.

**Zionism’s Lessons for a Global Era**

Now, well into the twenty-first century, it is a particularly important time to
rehabilitate and revive these dissenting streams of Zionist thought that offer models of
Jewish nationality as distinct from, and even defined in opposition to, the nation-state
model. That this rich, yet overlooked, history merits consideration today may not be
immediately obvious, however. Alternative theories of Zionism failed to challenge the
dominant course of twentieth-century Jewish thought or history. The division between
two typologies of Jewish life they eschewed—religion in the diaspora and nationality in
the homeland—has only solidified since 1948. The vast majority of the world’s Jewish
populations now live as citizens in the State of Israel or as a religio-ethnic minority group
in the United States. The thinkers’ visions of Arab-Jewish coexistence in Palestine,
cultural and linguistic bonds uniting Jewish populations in the diaspora, and visions of a
stateless national group as the model for a new international order were impractical in
their own lifetimes and even less feasible decades later. It is thus easy to dismiss the
formulators of grand theories of interwar nationality as naive dreamers and insignificant
historical actors.

Chapter 6 considers the relevance of these historical formulations for Jewish
thought and political thought more generally. As the quotation at the start of the chapter
demonstrated, Yehoshua contends that one can only live an authentically Jewish life as a
Hebrew-speaking citizen and resident of the state of Israel. I argue that rebutting
Yehoshua should focus not on his negation of the diaspora, but instead on a far more
complex project—identifying the ways in which Zionist logic continues to limit
possibilities for Jewish peoplehood, reopening conversations long ago frozen as taboo
topics, and debating foundations of Jewish peoplehood that escape the logic of the
sovereign mold. Rehabilitating the tradition of Zionists committed to breaking the
sovereign mold thus provides a roadmap for redefining Israel in the twenty-first century.

In particular, the theories of Zionism unearthed through this book provide a
foundation for addressing what has unfortunately become a highly charged space in
public discussions of Jewish politics between activists denouncing Zionism and Jewish statehood as “anachronistic” and the persisting unwillingness among Israel advocates to question the centrality of the state in defining Jewish nationalism today. Evaluating the meaning and relevance of Zionism through an Israel versus anti-Israel lens only diverts attention from far more pressing problems—namely, addressing the attenuated sense of collective consciousness among Jews in the United States and articulating a compelling definition of Jewish peoplehood with two divergent demographic centers. The path toward building a stronger sense of collective solidarity and closer ties between diaspora and homeland communities demands reconsidering the centrality of the Jewish state and reengaging the rich political tradition of nation beyond state in Zionist thought.

Recovering the diversity of interwar Zionist thought also has broader appeal beyond debates about the state of Israel and the morality of Zionism. The forces of globalization and political shifts engendered by the end of the Cold War have rendered the sovereign mold far less effective as an analytical tool for explaining the growing realities of collective attachment and transnational loyalties. Contrary to theories of modernization, however, globalization has actually fueled the preservation of particular allegiances within and across state boundaries. Large diaspora communities thrive and cultivate enduring bonds to their homelands and other populations dispersed around the world. From Muslim immigrants in Europe to Latino populations in the United States to Kurdish citizens of northern Iraq, global diaspora communities maintain a sense of shared solidarity. Such communities often demand increasing levels of collective recognition and group rights despite state-building efforts to assimilate them into the dominant national culture. These opposing tendencies—the process of universal integration and
the rise of particular global networks—expose fissures in the correlation between nationhood and statehood. The failure of the sovereign mold’s vision of the world divided into units of overlapping ethnonational and political identities to match emerging patterns of solidarity has fueled scholarly and popular interest in reconsidering fundamental assumptions reinforced by the sovereign mold.

Recognizing the urgency of these questions, a variety of political philosophers, social scientists, and cultural theorists have sought a number of alternative approaches, including redefining the discourse of nationality by adding conceptual qualifiers (“liberal nationalism” and “long-distance nationalism”), introducing new philosophical and political vocabulary (“multicultural citizenship” and “rooted cosmopolitism”), and even forging novel fields of study (diaspora and transnational studies). Although these approaches differ significantly from one another, they share a renewed interest in understanding the ties that bind individuals in an increasingly transnational era and expand the expectations of citizenship to promote particular allegiances within the nation-state.

The paradigms of interwar Zionism developed by Rawidowicz, Kaplan, and Kohn anticipated the contemporary tension between the forces of unity and diversity and the stubborn refusal of religious and national groups to conform. Concepts of diaspora, liberal nationalism, and multicultural citizenship are conceptually grounded in, and owe a significant debt to, the theorists of these conceptions of Zionism. Indeed, their work addresses key questions that have remerged around the world today as correlation between nation and state diminishes: How should liberal theories of nationalism balance a commitment to individual equality with demands by minority groups for collective
rights? What does nationalism mean when disconnected from political membership in a state? What are possibilities of collective identification beyond racial dichotomies and class categorizations? What psychological bonds exist and motivate national membership, despite the constructed, fluid, and nonessential nature of national identity? What role does religion play in national solidarity? How do homeland and diaspora communities interact with one another? Zionism’s roads not taken are uniquely suited to consider these questions and to contribute to the expanding literature grappling with these issues today.

1 From A. B. Yehoshua’s speech given on May 1, 2006, at the American Jewish Committee’s centennial annual meeting in Washington, D.C. A full transcript of Yehoshua’s comments, as well as articles written by more than a dozen leading American and Israeli scholars and other leaders who have been moved to respond to Yehoshua’s claims, are in “The A. B. Yehoshua Controversy: An Israel-Diaspora Dialogue on Jewishness, Israeliness, and Identity,” available online at http://www.ajc.org.


4 See David N. Myers, “‘Beyond Statism’: A Call to Rethink Jewish Collectivity,” lecture delivered at the University of Washington, October 10, 2006.

5 One important scholarly exception is a recent collection of essays edited by Deborah Dash Moore and Ilan Troen, Divergent Jewish Cultures.

6 My own interest in expanding the historical record of early-twentieth-century Jewish nationalism and Zionism builds on several recent studies. Steven E. Aschheim, in his Beyond the Border, has highlighted Zionists, such as Hannah Arendt and Hans Kohn, who challenged statehood as the primary goal of Zionism. For a more general discussion of the diversity of early-twentieth-century views on Zionism and Jewish nationalism, see
Myers, "Can There Be a Principled Anti-Zionism?" Michael Stanislawski, in his Zionism and the Fin De Siècle, has focused on the surprising relationship between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the works of several leading Zionists.

For example, see cultural theorist Stuart Hall’s equation of Jews with Zionism and his conclusion that therefore Jews have no place in the discourse of diaspora. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, edited by J. Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 235.

The historian Steven Aschheim has argued that it was only in the 1940s that “political statehood became the official goal of the Zionist movement.” See Aschheim, Beyond the Border, 9.

See Myers, Between Jew and Arab, 23 and 249n5.

This does not constitute an exhaustive list of thinkers within the broad orbit of Zionist intellectuals in the early half of the twentieth century who were dedicated to conceptualizing nationality outside of statehood. Other thinkers include the pioneering Jewish educator Samson Benderly, the rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, the philanthropist Jacob Schiff, the communal leader Louis B. Marshall, and the World Jewish Congress executive Nachum Goldman.

Kohn mentions a correspondence with “Dr. Rawidowicz” in a May 6, 1929, letter to Martin Buber; see AR 6908 2/1, Hans Kohn–Robert Welsch Correspondence, Welsch Collection, Leo Baeck Archive, New York City. Kaplan reports meeting Kohn at a lecture in his December 21, 1931, diary entry; see Kaplan, Communings of the Spirit, 464. Folded up and paper-clipped to the inside cover of Rawidowicz’s personal copy of Kaplan’s landmark work, Judaism as a Civilization, still rests a handwritten note in Hebrew from 1936: “I realized that in a number of ways our outlooks are similar,” Kaplan wrote. See chapter 3 for more information. In Babylon and Jerusalem, Rawidowicz praised aspects of Kaplan’s book, New Zionism (see p. 672).

Historian David Myers’s work has been influential in sparking interest in Rawidowicz. In addition, Professor Benjamin Ravid of Brandeis University, has contributed important biographical essays and edited and translated collections of his father’s writings. See Myers, "Simon Rawidowicz, 'Hashpaitis,' and the Perils of Influence"; Myers, Between Jew and Arab; Rawidowicz, Iyunim Be-mah’shevet Yisrael (Studies in Jewish thought); and Simon Rawidowicz, State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity: Essays on the "Ever-Dying People," edited by Benjamin Ravid (London: Brandeis University Press, 1986).


Kohn, Idea of Nationalism; and Kohn, American Nationalism.

Here I follow historian Michael Stanislawski’s caution against a “teleological retrojection that effaces the complexity of human thought and development” (see Stanislawski, Zionism and the Fin De Siècle, xx).

Seton-Watson, Nations and States, 1.

Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, 1. Within the field of nationalism studies, there are a few exceptions to the tendency to conflate nationhood with statehood. One of the first scholars to underscore the limitation of the doctrine of national sovereignty as a
description of nationality was the historian Walker Connor. Connor claimed that this phenomenon distorts the realities of national attachments, which in his thinking has little to do with political independence or geographic borders. Instead, Connor suggested a category of ethnonationalism that acknowledges the nonpolitical ties that bind national groups outside of political and territorial borders. One problem with the terminology Connor uses, however, is that his conception of ethnic ties pays insufficient attention to the relationship between nation and state. See Conner, *Ethnonationalism*. On the importance of separating the cultural and political aspects of nationality, see also Hutchinson, *Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*.

18 Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*. The scholars Elie Kedourie, Anthony Giddens, and John Breuilly have also contributed to make the modernist paradigm the dominant approach to nationalism since the 1970s. See Kedourie, *Nationalism*; Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985); Jon Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). See also Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; and Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*. Political theorist David Miller’s *On Nationality* expands the constitutive core of nationality to include several additional elements, such as common beliefs and historical experiences. Yet even his conclusion favors “national self-determination” as the most effective structure for preserving national identity (see p. 98).


20 Scholars of nationalism, such as Anthony Smith, who views the nation as “perennial,” are more sensitive to theorizing the nation as a cultural community with ethnic, or historical, roots in the premodern period. See, for example, Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*.

21 Hans Kohn, the subject of chapter 5, popularized the scholarly distinction between Western “civic” and Eastern “ethnic” strains of nationalism. See Kohn, *Idea of Nationalism*. Kohn envisioned the “ethnic” path as a strain that diverged from the Western trajectory oriented toward increasing levels of integration and shared universal principles. The enduring influence of these two categories, as well as the biases linked to each typology, can still be found in the work of such scholars as Anthony Smith. The influential theorist adopts, with a few important caveats, Kohn’s distinction between “rational” and “organic” versions of nationalist ideology. See Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity: Ethnonationalism in Comparative Perspective* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 81. Popular accounts of nationality also reflect the notion that these two paths lead to “good” and “bad” nationalisms. See Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*.


23 Taylor has questioned the “state focus definitional for modern nationalism.” He concludes “we gain nothing by excluding this phenomenon from our purview by definitional fiat” (see Taylor, "Nationalism and Modernity," 35). Kymlicka is another example of a theorist sensitive to national identity at the substatist level, but only for communities rooted in territorial attachment who were displaced by settlers. Yet both
Taylor and Kymlicka (who are Canadian scholars) focus on language and land (characteristics of the Québécois) as alternate criteria for national cohesion. See chapter 6 for a further discussion of why this is a definition that does not apply well to the Jewish case, characterized by a population divided by geography and language. Two scholars with close ties to Israel, Gans and Roshwald, advocate attributes that transcend land and language by focusing on nonstatist nationality grounded in culture, history, and the psychology of collectivity. See Gans, *Limits of Nationalism*; and Roshwald, *Endurance of Nationalism*.


25 Jewish historian Ezra Mendelsohn’s concise overview of modern Jewish politics, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, provides an excellent example of this rubric. The historiographical distinction between nationalist and integrationist paths can be found in historian Jonathan Frankel’s classic study of Eastern European nationalism as a postliberal phenomenon (see Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*). In attempting to blur the distinction between national particularism and liberal integration, my investigation resembles historian Ben Nathans’s study of Russian liberal jurists who advocated for Jewish minority rights during the early decades of the twentieth century. See Benjamin Nathans, "The Other Modern Jewish Politics: Integration and Modernity in Fin de Siècle Russia," in Gitelman, *Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics*. Social historians, particularly those focused on the immigrant experience, have also demonstrated the limitations of the integrationist versus nationalist binary by exploring Jewish “subcultures” and social networks that enabled Jews to mitigate the pace of acculturation. Jewish intellectuals were not “uprooted” from their social and intellectual contexts, but instead, they relocated and created a dialogue between European theories and their American environment. See Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History*; and David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

26 See Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 6–36. Mendelsohn does acknowledge that some “Diaspora Zionist leaders” did not clearly fit into the mainstream rubrics. He briefly mentions such figures and calls them “centrists” and “moderates.” My book attempts to expand on the characteristically brief mention of such thinkers whose positions do not clearly match the ideological poles. See ibid., 35.

27 For a concise overview of major themes in Zionist historiography, see Penslar, “Narratives of Nation Building.” Diaspora nationalism has a variety of expressions in addition to Simon Dubnow’s autonomism, such as territorialists, who advocate for a Jewish political autonomy, but not necessarily in Palestine; diaspora nationalists; and Bundists, socialists who considered national Jewish organization as the first step toward international proletariat revolution.

28 The historian David Myers has described Rawidowicz as “continually traversing the border between Zionism and diasporism.” This description applies to a far greater group of interwar Jewish nationalists that includes Kohn and Kaplan. See Myers, *Between Jew and Arab*, 55.

29 I provide an in-depth example of this phenomenon in chapter 2, by exploring the affinities between the diaspora nationalist Simon Dubnov and several early-twentieth-century Zionist thinkers.
On Ahad Ha’am see Zipperstein, *Illusive Prophet*; for more information on Ahad Ha’am’s influence in American Jewish thought, see Zipperstein, “On Reading Ahad Ha’am”; Evyatar Friesel, "Influence of American Zionism on the American Jewish Community.”

Indeed, this is precisely how the American Jewish historian Arthur Goren has defined Kaplan, whom he considers a “cultural Zionist.” Goren is correct to designate Kaplan as a Jewish thinker deeply involved in cultural Zionism. However, this stance diverts attention from an analysis of Kaplan’s political challenges to American nationalism by underscoring Kaplan’s Zionism as focused on cultural or religious innovations. See Goren, *Politics and Public Culture of American Jews*, 148. Zionist historian Friesel’s distinction between “inward” and “outward” Zionism creates an even deeper, and more misleading, gap between political and cultural Zionists. According to this dichotomy, American Zionists could be divided into two camps: those who focused their efforts on preparing Zionism for its presentation to a non-Jewish audience and those who dedicated their energies toward injecting elements of cultural Zionism into the American Jewish community. Such figures as Brandeis and Kallen fit into the first category, while Jewish communal activists like Kaplan and Friedlaender constitute the “inward” group. This false bifurcation suggests that those Zionists interested in transforming Judaism operated within the narrow confines of the Jewish community and made no effort to influence the American community. I challenge this claim, particularly in the case of Kaplan, in chapter 4. See Friesel, "Influence of American Zionism on the American Jewish Community,” 143.

Here I disagree with Hagit Lavsky, who views Kohn’s reading of Ahad Ha’am as sui generis. See Lavsky, "Hans Kohn: Nationalism between Theory and Practice." As the subsequent chapters in this book argue, especially the discussion of Zimmern and Kallen in chapter 2, a number of leading Zionists viewed Ahad Ha-am as an influential figure in their efforts to disengage nation from state. The quotation is from Kohn, *Living in a World Revolution*, 55.

The historian Samuel Moyn has captured this approach to interpreting theories of Jewish nationalism. He writes: “Collective identity is partly invented from within, partly imposed from without, and is best considered as a field of conflicting forces” (see Samuel Moyn, "German Jewry and the Question of Identity Historiography and Theory," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* [1996]: 291-308).

Jewish historian Amos Funkenstein’s concept of the “dialectics of assimilation” guides this reading of theories of nationality as a dialectical process between assimilation and self-assertion. In particular, Funkenstein has pointed out that even language explicitly oriented toward asserting the difference between Jewish and non-Jewish traditions is generally deeply rooted in the language of the particular intellectual context. See Funkenstein, "Dialectics of Assimilation." More recently, David Myers has written about the importance of organizing historical research around the “criteria of interaction and exchange” within a specific milieu. See David Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 166. My goal is to extend this historiographical approach to modern Jewish political thought in general and to theories of nationality in particular.
Such postcolonial theorists as Partha Chatterjee have pioneered a shift in the study of nationality away from focusing on political movements. Instead, Chatterjee has argued that expressions of nationality served as a rhetorical instrument for disenfranchised intellectuals attempting to mitigate coercive political or cultural demands. See Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments.* The development of Jewish nationalism is not fully analogous to anticolonial varieties; European, and even Russian Jews, were not subject to the levels of enslavement, violence, and land confiscations that European imperial powers inflicted on the indigenous populations of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. However, it is still fruitful to explore the applicability of postcolonial theory on the Jewish experience. One of the most interesting explorations of the Zionist-colonial comparison can be found in chapter 5 of Derek Penslar’s book *Israel in History.*

Theories of both liberalism and nationalism implicitly undermined efforts to preserve corporate identity and at their logical extremes defined difference as antithetical to their fundamental projects. That the universalist claims of liberalism cover up a compassionate theory of elimination for particular groups is a theme touched on by scholars from a variety of fields. See, among other works, Smith, *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity*; Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*; and Jeff Spinner-Halev, *The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the Liberal State* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). The threat posed by völkisch or ethnic strains of nationalism are more readily apparent. Explicitly prioritizing the state’s primary role as preserving a particular national tradition diminished the validity of individual freedom to all citizens. See chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of the challenges posed by liberalism and nationalism.

The historian Malachi Hacohen has argued that historical narratives tracing the evolution of modern political theory are too often constrained by “nationalist claims to an authentic closed tradition.” See his, “The Limits of the National Paradigm in the Study of Political Thought: The Case of Karl Popper and Central European Cosmopolitanism,” in *The History of Political Thought in National Context,* edited by Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 247.


Immigrant Jews, social historians have shown, navigated paths of integration that allowed them to balance between Americanizing and preserving a distinct identity. Historians of Jewish political thought, however, have been far less interested in applying the same principle to document the ways in which Jewish thought took a stand against the state and its expectations of citizenship.

As a number of scholars have pointed out, at the turn of the twentieth century, the Atlantic was very permeable indeed. Examples include Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*; and Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Matthew Frye Jacobson has described this general phenomena quite well. He writes: “Part of the gravitational pull into this essentially nationalist orbit, as I have said, is accounted for by the citizenly concerns of many of the scholars involved, and the extent to which scholarship on immigration—like that in African American Studies or
Ethnic Studies—invariably represents an engagement in a civic politics and a discourse of diversity, inclusion, exclusion, social equity, and the like, which itself is inflected or even fully bound by the logic of the nation-form” (see Jacobson, "More ‘Trans-,’ Less ‘National,'" 79).

Mendelsohn has urged historians of modern Jewish politics to “make the connection between politics and geography” (see Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics, 37). Key distinctions that emerge between locations are the rather striking disjunctures when it comes to the influence of nationality. Scholars of American Jewish history, Eastern European Jewish history, and Zionism agree that theories of Jewish nationality gained little traction in the United States. See Cohen, American Jews and the Zionist Idea, xvi; and Shimoni, Zionist Ideology, 395. Gideon Shimoni does not include any American thinkers in his book, however, and mentions only two theorists who did not move to Palestine: Moses Hess and Jacob Klatzkin. Hans Kohn appears in Shimoni’s book, but only for his later work as a theoretician of nationalism. The fact that Kohn was also an active member of the Zionist intellectual circles is overlooked. On the contrary, Arnold Eisen’s Galut deals extensively with Kaplan and briefly considers Rawidowicz. See also Gitelman, Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics, 183. Another example of evaluating American Zionism on the criteria of aliyah and the negation of the exile is Evyatar Friesel’s claim that American Zionism’s inability to galvanize aliyah to Israel represents a “failure” of the Zionist movement (see Friesel, "Influence of American Zionism on the American Jewish Community,” 130–48).

This shift toward emphasizing transatlantic continuities has emerged in a number of recent works by American Jewish historians and American historians. See Michels, A Fire in Their Hearts; Desmond S. King, The Liberty of Strangers: Making the American Nation (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Kobrin, "When a Jew Was a 'Landsman.'"

Several scholars across multiple disciplines have discussed this phenomenon. For example, see Appadurai, Modernity at Large.

One of the most vocal prognosticators for a “postnational” political order is the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, who has argued that media and migration have shifted the centers of cultural production from the homeland to various diaspora centers (see ibid.).

In addressing the relationship between the sovereign state and minority populations, such political theorists as Yael Tamir, Chaim Gans, David Miller, Will Kymlicka, and Charles Taylor have introduced definitions of sovereignty that differentiate between “nation” and “state.” Theories like “multicultural citizenship,” “liberal nationalism,” and “peoplehood” have pushed for varying degrees of recognition for minority groups, from a set of legal protections for minority groups to more substantial systems of autonomy, including self-government. These theorists debate the limits of ethnonational diversity, the role of the state in preserving a shared national culture, and the criteria that delineate minority national groups from other allegiances. See Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship; Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Eugene Fouron, Georges Woke up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2001); Hollinger, Postethnic America; Appiah, Ethics of Identity; Tamir, Liberal Nationalism; McKim and McMahan,
Morality of Nationalism; and Gans, Limits of Nationalism. Such scholars as Paul Gilroy have strongly advocated for considering diaspora communities, with their dynamic interaction with disparate cultural contexts, as a paradigm for understanding modernity (see Gilroy, Black Atlantic, 29).