

Zohar Maor*

Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7672-306X>

Stateless Zionism: Old traditions, new ideologies

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 has overshadowed important Zionist currents holding that the implementation of Zionism does not necessitate, or even rule out, a Jewish state. Theodor Herzl's vision of a state for the Jewish people, as detailed in his 1896 *Das Judenstaat*, and as formally adopted by the Zionist movement in its 1942 "Biltmore platform", that has finally been realized – maybe against all odds – veiled the lively debate among Zionists on the feasibility, necessity and desirability of a Jewish state.

The various anti-statist national currents were not marginal, and as we shall see below, leading Zionist figures, like young David Ben-Gurion, the architect of the state of Israel, favoured other kinds of political organization¹. Their stance was impacted by variegated anti-statist European ideologies like Volkism and Marxism, but more significantly, by the exceptional Jewish experience of almost two thousand years of exile and dispersion and the unique Jewish political thought. This thought, exemplified in the Bible and formulated by Maimonides, sees the political as merely a means to loftier spiritual – and mainly religious – aims². As Ella Belfer and Paul Mendes-Flohr have stressed, this tradition survived modernity and secularization: for many modern Jewish thinkers, Jewish nationalism must transcend the prevailing modes of nationalism because in Judaism the national "body" is merely the basis for the actualization of its "spirit". Thus, Jewish political aspirations must be subordinated to spiritual and ethical

¹ See: D. Shumsky, *tsioyonut u-medinat ha-leom: ha'archa mechadash*, "Zion", No. 77(2), pp. 223-254. In his essay Shumsky rightly stresses that the establishment of a state was not the sole object of Zionism and that many key Zionist thinkers espoused various models, other than a Jewish nation-state. Nevertheless, Shumsky does not discern between opponents of a Jewish nation-state (that is, binationalists) and opponents of a state as such, a distinction that I will try to maintain. He also overlooks the Jewish backdrop of non-statist Zionism and discusses only the multinational context in post-World War II Central Europe.

² See: A. Funkenstein, *Maimonides: Political Theory and Realistic Messianism*, "Miscellanea Mediaevalia" 1977, No. 11, pp. 81-103; G.J. Blidstein, 'Ideal' and 'Real' in *Classical Jewish Political Theory, from the Talmud to Abrabanel*, "Jewish Political Studies Review" 1990, No. 2(1-2), pp. 43-66.

* Correspondence address: Department of General History, Building 410, room 223, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, 5290002 Israel, e-mail: zohar.maor@gmail.com.

demands³. While many thinkers did not disqualify a Jewish state in the name of spiritualism, but rather highlighted various spiritual ideals that should direct and fashion it⁴, others employed spiritualism to resist Jewish nationalism altogether⁵, and still others – to advocate stateless Zionism.

This essay aims at exploring these currents, their non-statist vision of Zionism and its roots in Jewish conditions and political traditions, as well as in European anti-statist ideologies and national patterns. Firstly, the non-Zionist national currents which opposed the vision of a Jewish state will be succinctly presented; then three main currents of non-statist Zionism will be introduced: Ahad Ha'am's (*nom de plume* for Asher Ginzberg) spiritual Zionism, Marxist anti-state Zionism and the anarchism of Martin Buber and "Brit Shalom"⁶.

Diaspora nationalism

Parallel to the rise of Zionism in the two last decades of the nineteenth century, a host of other, non- or anti-Zionist national movements emerged. For them, Jewish nationalism does not entail disengagement from the states in which the Jews dwell, but rather a Jewish integration as a recognized minority. The Jews have been a dispersed ethnicity for centuries, and their massive uprooting from their native homelands and concentration in a new homeland is unlikely and undesirable. Thus, the feasible national struggle should be for a Jewish autonomy rather than for a Jewish state. Some of the autonomists, like the Eastern European Bund, Chaim Zhitlowsky, and Elyahu Elyashar

³ E. Belfer, *Zehut Kfula: Al ha-metach bein artziyut le-ruchaniut ba-olam ha-yehudi*, Ramat Gan, 2004, pp. 141-147; E. Belfer, *The Jewish People and the Kingdom of Heaven: A Study of Jewish Theocracy*, "Jewish Political Studies Review" 1989, No. 1(1-2), pp. 7-37; P.R. Mendes-Flohr, *Realpolitik or Ethical Nationalism? in Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity*, Detroit 1991, pp. 168-178.

⁴ See for instance: Rabbi A. I. Kook, cited in C. Aldrovandi, *Apocalyptic Movements in Contemporary Politics: Christian and Jewish Zionism*, New York 2014, p. 101; On Isaac Breuer's vision of a Halachic state see: M. Morgenstern, *Isaac Breuer und die 'agudistische' Staatstheorie*, in *Zionismus: Theorien des jüdischen Staates*, Baden-Baden 2015, pp. 187-208.

⁵ For a general survey see: D.N. Myers, *Can there be a Principled Anti-Zionism? On the Nexus between Anti-Historicism and Anti-Zionism in Modern Jewish Thought*, "Journal of Israeli History" 2006, No. 25(1), pp. 33-50; On Hermann Cohen see: R. Schacter, *Hermann Cohen's Secular Messianism and Liberal Cosmopolitanism*, "Jewish Political Studies Review" 2008, No. 20(1-2), pp. 107-123; A. Shear-Yashuv, *Darstellung und kritische Würdigung von Hermann Cohens Stellung zum Zionismus*, "Aschkenas" 2000, No. 10(2), pp. 443-57; On Rosenzweig see: S. Mosès, *Franz Rosenzweigs Einstellungen zum Zionismus*, "Judaica" 1997, No. 53(1-2), pp. 8-14.

⁶ Due to the limited scope of this paper, I will not discuss American non-statist Zionism, advocated by Simon Rawidowicz, Mordecai M. Kaplan, Horace Kallen, Israel Friedlander and others. Their approach was thoroughly examined by Noam Pianko in *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn*, Bloomington 2010. His introduction explores Jewish non-statist nationalism and the early and contemporary scholarly discussion on the relationship of nation and state. Pianko presents Kaplan as one of the pillars of non-statist Zionism, but it is important to note that after the establishment of the State of Israel, Kaplan declared that the establishment of a Jewish state is crucial for the full realization of Jewish civilization. See: M. Kaplan, *A New Zionism*, New York 1955. On the attitude of various Jewish-American stripes to the State of Israel, see: Y. Gorny, *The State of Israel in Jewish Public Thought: The Quest for Collective Identity*, New York 1994.

advocated Jewish autonomy in a multinational empire – be it a reformed Russia, the Habsburg Empire or the Ottoman Empire. They poured new wine into the old vessels of the Jewish religious and legal autonomy in feudal Europe, and advocated a cultural autonomy within a modern but a non-unified empire⁷. As Malachi Hacohen has shown, Jews were among the last champions of empires, even when their non-Jewish contemporaries fought for nation-states in their stead⁸.

Yet other autonomists, like Simon Dubnow and Nathan Birnbaum already at the end of the nineteenth century, and many others, active after the collapse of the great empires in the wake of the First World War, imagined a Jewish autonomy in a multinational state⁹. They believed that the Enlightenment ideals of freedom, equality, tolerance and pluralism should transcend their original individual context, mold the relationships between mixed ethnic groups and thus enable peaceful cooperation in one political framework.

Dubnow, historian of Judaism, essayist and founder of the autonomist movement, is the most profound ideologue of non-statist Jewish nationalism. Autonomism, he avers, suits the unique Jewish diasporic way of life and more generally, is the future political framework¹⁰. Nations – and parallelly, the scholarly understanding of nationalism – develop from an ethnic-natural stage/concept, through the territorial-statist, to the cultural-historical – a stage that the Jewish people forestalls. Therefore, a territorial concentration of the Jews, or attempts to establish a homogenous Jewish – or other – ethnic state, are outmoded¹¹. Considering the multi-ethnic makeup of Eastern and Central Europe,

⁷ On the Bund and other stripes of socialist nationalism in Russia, see: J. Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917*, Cambridge 1981; on the Bund see: H.J. Tobias, *The Jewish Bund in Russia from its Origins to 1905*, Stanford 1972; R. Gechtman, *Conceptualizing National-Cultural Autonomy: From the Austro-Marxists to the Jewish Labor Bund*, “Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts” 2005, No. 4, pp. 31-34; 43-45; on the debate on the political implementation of nationalism, especially in the Jewish case, among Marxists see: R. Gechtman, *The Debates on the National and Jewish Questions in the Second International and the Jewish Labor Bund*, in *Rebels against Zion: Studies on the Jewish Left anti-Zionism*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 11-45. On Zhitlowsky see: D.H. Weinberg, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Haim Zhitlowski, Simon Dubnow, Ahad Ha-Am, and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identity*, New York 1996, pp. 93-109. For Elyashar views and activity, see: P. Gillon, *Israelis and Palestinians, Co-existence or...: The Credo of Elie Eliachar*, London 1978.

⁸ M.H. Hacohen, *From Empire to Cosmopolitanism: The Central European Jewish Intelligentsia, 1867–1968*, “Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts” 2006, No. 5, pp. 117-133.

⁹ On Birnbaum see: R.S. Wistrich, *The Clash of Ideologies in Jewish Vienna (1880-1918): The Strange Odyssey of Nathan Birnbaum*, „Leo Baeck Institute Year Book” 1988, No. 33, pp. 201-30; M. Kühntopf-Gentz, *Nathan Birnbaums Einstellung(en) zum jüdischen Staat bzw zum Staat der Juden: Oder, Welche Farbe hat denn nun eigentlich ein Chamäleon?*, [in:] *Zionismus: Theorien des jüdischen Staates*, edit. S. Salzborn, Baden-Baden 2015, pp. 93-116.

¹⁰ Dubnow, thus, revisits the notion of the Jew as a harbinger of lofty ethical ideas, as accepted by many Jewish liberal thinkers. See: J. Frankel, *S.M. Dubnov: Historian and Ideologist*, [in:] *The Life and Work of S.M. Dubnov: Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish History*, edit. S. Dubnow-Erlich, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1991, pp. 17-18.

¹¹ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism*, Philadelphia 1958, pp. 76-81, 86-88; see: K.S. Pinson, *Editor's Preface*, [in:] *Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism* edit. K.S. Pinson, Philadelphia 1958, pp. 41-42; R. M. Seltzer, *Simon Dubnow's "New Judaism": Diaspora, Nationalism and the World History of the Jews*, Leiden and Boston 2014, pp. 170-172, 177-179; D.H. Weinberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-190; On the impact of the Slavophile Russian thinkers on Dubnow's concept of cultural and spiritual

Dubnow warned that unless a multinational framework is established, the region will suffer from either incessant civil wars or breakup into tiny and unstable nation-states¹².

Overtly, his account of nationalism is idealistic, voluntary and subjectivist: the core of the nation is a distinct “national personality” and the will of the nation to preserve it. State and territory – and in the Jewish case, the prominence of Jewish law (Halacha), bolstering the national separateness of the Jewish people – are only alternate means in protecting the autonomous existence of the nation¹³. Nevertheless, his argument for a multinational state is grounded in an ethnic concept of nationalism¹⁴. Since national assimilation is impossible, as national identities are ascribed deterministically on the individual by his innate “stock”, a state with a heterogeneous ethnic population can only flourish by nurturing a mutual citizenship of different ethnos. Therefore, Dubnow held that Jewish assimilation would not solve the “Jewish problem”; Jews cannot become true members of their hosting nations. Thus, Western assimilation, fashioned after the model of the French Revolution, guaranteeing the individual Jew free admission to the nation at the price of forgoing his innate collective identity, should be replaced by the “Eastern model” of collective assimilation, in which the Jewish collective will be granted national rights as part of a multinational state¹⁵. Dubnow did not shrink from defining his yearned-for Jewish autonomy as a “state within a state”, resisting the negative connotation of the term by anti-Jewish agitators¹⁶. Ultimately, Dubnow’s national concepts can be classified, using Hans Kohn’s renowned dichotomy of Eastern/Western nationalism¹⁷, as manifestly Eastern, that is, ethnic and not civic. This is clearly demonstrated in his consent with Herder’s distinction between “artificial political bodies and natural, national organisms”¹⁸.

Dubnow’s autonomism is also based on a communitarian and exilic image of Jewish history. Even during the Second Commonwealth, there were important Jewish centers outside the land of Israel; since the destruction of the Second Temple, the Jews did not

nationalism, see: G. Veidlinger, *Simon Dubnow Recontextualized: The Sociological Conception of Jewish History and the Russian Intellectual Legacy*, “Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts” 2004, No. 3, pp. 420-422.

¹² S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 141, 175, 179.

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 82-8. Dubnow mentions Johann G. Fichte, Ernst Renan and Karl Renner as examples for the evolving trend of a cultural-subjective concept of nationalism.

¹⁴ Dubnow scholarship has noticed his duality, see: K. S. Pinson, *Editor’s Preface...*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁵ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 101-103; 107-110; 152-153. For Dubnow’s practical vision of Jewish autonomism in Czarist Russia, as part of the platform of his marginal “Folkspartei”, see: R.M. Seltzer, *Simon Dubnow’s, “New Judaism”: Diaspora, Nationalism and the World History of the Jews*, Leiden and Boston 2014, pp. 157-159; A. Hilbrenner, *Diaspora-Nationalismus: zur Geschichtskonstruktion Simon Dubnows*, Göttingen 2007, pp. 119-121.

¹⁶ S. Dubnow, *Pinkas Hamedina*, Berlin 1925, p. xi. See: I. Bartal, “Tachlif la-memshala, la-medina ve-la-ezrahut’ – Shime’on Dubnov ve-ha-shilton ha-atmi ha-yehudi; Kozak u-bedwi: “Am” ve-Aretz ba-leumiut ha-yehudit, Tel Aviv 2007, pp. 196-205..

¹⁷ H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background*, New York 1944.

¹⁸ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, p. 103; see: A. Hilbrenner, *Diaspora-Nationalismus...*, pp. 122-123.

aspire to restore their sovereign state, but to maintain cultural autonomy¹⁹. According to Dubnow, Jewish history is shaped by the changing centers of Jewish creativity which nurture and revitalize national spirit; the Land of Israel is but one of these centers²⁰. Diasporic Jewish life was marked by total isolation from the non-Jewish surrounding, stemming from the Jewish desire to preserve its uniqueness, and the anti-Jewishness of a dominantly Christian society. Eighteenth-century assimilation was an uneven antithesis to Jewish seclusion; many Jews forsook their own national identity and enthusiastically adopted their hosts' national identity. Nineteenth-century anti-Semitism demonstrates the futility of this move. Autonomism, Dubnow argued, is the needed synthesis of isolation and assimilation as it will safeguard Jewish integration in the world without forgoing national distinctiveness²¹.

Dubnow vehemently opposed the Zionist negation of exile. If the existing Jews are not a nation yet (that is, if the Jewish masses lack national consciousness), without sovereignty and territory – how can they raise national demands, and how can they expect mass immigration to Palestine? Dubnow opposed the revolutionary narrative of many Zionists, ignoring, if not degrading, the traditional foundations of Jewish national consciousness – which are exilic and religious. He thus rejects the prevailing chasm between the pre-modern Jewish religious identity and the modern, secularized national identity. “If we wish to preserve Judaism as a cultural-historical type of nation, we must realize that the religion of Judaism is one of the integral foundations of national culture”²². As Anke Hilbrenner notes, Dubnow ventured to find a synthesis between traditional Jewish separatism and modern assimilation, and saw religious communal life as the stratum for a modern Jewish autonomy²³. Nonetheless, Dubnow admits modern secularization, disengaging “the social” and “the religious”, thus requiring the secularization of the traditional Jewish community, the foundation of Jewish autonomy, which then renders it into a national community²⁴. Furthermore, over time, Dubnow espouses a more secular worldview, and downgrades the significance of the religious aspect of Jewish past and present life. For him, spiritual nationalism was the core of Judaism and religion its shell, and not vice versa²⁵.

¹⁹ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, p. 338.

²⁰ S. Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, trans. M. Spiegel, South Brunswick, 1967-1973; A. Hilbrenner, *Diaspora-Nationalismus...*, pp. 134-147.

²¹ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 131-135.

²² S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, p. 91, see also: pp. 118-120; 334-335; see also: K.S. Pinson, *Editor's Preface...*, pp. 45-47; G. Veidlinger, *Simon Dubnow Recontextualized...*, pp. 426-427; and Dubnow's Diary entry, comparing his intellectual urge with his grandfather's religious devotion, cited by Pinson (*Editor's Preface...*, p. 20). On the place of religion and secularism in his world, see: R.M. Seltzer, *Simon Dubnow's "New Judaism"...*, especially pp. 225-6; A. Weinberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-159.

²³ A. Hilbrenner, *Diaspora-Nationalismus...*, pp. 36-121.

²⁴ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 136-139.

²⁵ See the 1925 introduction to the German edition of his *chef d'oeuvre*: S. Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, [in:] *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 336.345, esp. 344; I. Bartal, *Dubnow's Image of Medieval*

The context of Dubnow's autonomism is manifold. Firstly, as Dan Diner has argued, it stemmed from an Eastern European notion and experience, that the polity is composed of collective bodies, rather than individuals²⁶. This "Eastern European" paradigm also impacted Zionist scholars, like Fritz (Isaak) Baer, Ben-Zion Dinburg (Dinur) and other members of the "Jerusalem school", who highlighted the autonomy of the "Kehilah" in exile as a proto-nationalist manifestation of Jewish nationalism²⁷. For Dubnow, conversely, this autonomy is not merely a gateway to a "full-fledged" national life in a Jewish state in the land of Israel, but rather the highest form of nationalism.

Secondly, Dubnow's stateless concept of Jewish nationalism responds to the widespread account of the Jews as a defective and/or degenerate nation, lacking the "objective" national characteristics of territory and national language, and therefore unworthy of national minority status²⁸. While Zionists reacted to this account and its political outcome in venturing to acquire the missing national features, Dubnow resisted these objective criteria of nationalism, and fought, along with other Jewish Diaspora nationalists, to replace them with subjective criteria.

Thirdly, Dubnow reacts to a host of initiatives, mostly from the multinational Habsburg Empire, of autonomous solutions to the tension between neighbouring nations, such as the "personal autonomism" of the Austrians Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, and the compromises in Moravia (1905) and Bukowina (1910)²⁹. After the catastrophe of World War I, national minority rights became part and parcel of the constitutional structure of the new nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe, and the Bolshevik regime in Russia declared its willingness to grant national autonomy to the myriad of small nationalities. Dubnow saw these developments as implementing his vision of a future, post-statist nationalism³⁰.

Though Dubnow held that the state is inessential to national life, he admitted that practically, a Jewish state can guarantee optimum Jewish autonomous development³¹.

Autonomy, [in:] *A Missionary for History: Essays in Honor of Simon Dubnov*, ed. K. Grobergand, A. Greenbaum, Minneapolis 1998, pp. 11-18.

²⁶ D. Diner, *Gedächtniszeiten: über jüdische und andere Geschichten*, München 2003, pp. 126-131; A. Hilbrenner, *Diaspora-Nationalismus...*, pp. 11-7, 167-225.

²⁷ See: D.N. Myers, *Between Diaspora and Zion: History, Memory, and the Jerusalem Scholars*, [in:] *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, edit. D.N. Myers, D. B. Ruderman, New Haven 1998, pp. 88-103.

²⁸ See the discussion of R.M. Seltzer, *Simon Dubnow's "New Judaism"...*, pp. 200-210.

²⁹ See: K. Renner [Synopticus], *Staat und Nation*, Wien 1899; O. Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, Wien 1907; G. Stourzh, *From Vienna to Chicago and Back: Essays on Intellectual History and Political Thought in Europe and America*, Chicago 2007, chap. 7; B. Kuzmany, *Habsburg Austria: Experiments in Non-Territorial Autonomy*, "Ethnopolitics" 2016, No. 15(1), pp. 43-65; P.M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, Cambridge and London 2016, pp. 315-316; 373-379. On Dubnow and Renner see: S. Dubnow-Erlich, *The Life and Work of S.M. Dubnov...*, pp. 117-118; 138-9; A. Hilbrenner, *Diaspora-Nationalismus...*, pp. 124-126.

³⁰ See his diary, cited in J. Frankel, *S.M. Dubnov...*, p. 22.

³¹ Even Renner, sharply differentiating between "nation" and "state", held that a homogenous national state is the optimal political framework; Renner's concept of autonomism refers to the multinational reality in Central Europe. See: R. Gechtman, *Conceptualizing National-Cultural Autonomy...*, pp. 23-24.

His attitude toward the Zionist vision of a Jewish state varies in his ideological and historical writings³². In the former, the Diasporism is pragmatic. He shares with Zionism the “subjective” (that is, moral) negation of exile, but nevertheless holds that mass migration of Jews to Palestine is improbable. He blames Zionism for secularizing Jewish religious messianism and predicts that the Zionist vision is doomed to fail. His worldview was characterized by exilic pessimism; he did not believe that his suggested struggle for Jewish civic and national rights in Eastern Europe would secure the future of Judaism as various conservative elements would continue to propagate anti-Jewish hatred. Therefore, he advocated immigration as a way to spread risks³³. In the historical writings, however, he lauds exile as the only way to lead a purely spiritual and moral national life. Dubnow crowns the Jewish people “Am-olam”, a universal and perennial people with a genuine belief in a universal God; the exile and dispersion suits its universal character and enables an ongoing spiritual influence on all the nations³⁴. Moreover, in the historical narrative, Diasporism is not presented as an unescapable destiny, but rather as a messianic vision: Dubnow believes in the coming of an epoch marked by humanism and rationalism, in which the universal character of the Jewish people can shine forth³⁵.

Ahad Ha'am and spiritual Zionism

The earliest opponent of state-nationalism was Ahad Ha'am, founder of spiritual Zionism, and an intimate friend and interlocutor of Dubnow. He deemed that the most acute (and only solvable) problem of the Jewish people was its spiritual disintegration and assimilation, rather than economic distress and the rise of antisemitism, and advocated for the establishment of a “spiritual center” in the land of Israel. Conversely, a Jewish state seemed to him superfluous and unrealizable³⁶.

Ahad Ha'am's dispute with Dubnow's autonomism illustrates why the former viewed a spiritual center in the land of Israel, and not a net of diasporic autonomous centers as the potential hotbed for spiritual revival:

Even justice and honesty, on their behalf the weak [nation] claims its rights from the stronger one, will not obligate the latter to forgo its rights when they are at odds with the former and are mutually exclusive. And there are no opposing and contradicting rights as national rights of two people leaving together, not **side by side**, as in Switzerland, but **one inside another**, as in parts

³² Thus, Nathan Rotenstreich's argument that Dubnow's concept of history closely corresponds with his ideology of autonomism is overstated. See: N. Rotenstreich, *History, Sociology and Ideology*, [in:] *Simon Dubnow: The Man and His Work*, edit. A. Steinberg, Paris 1963, pp. 47-56.

³³ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 155-164; 186; 233-41; S. Dubnov-Erich, *The Life and Work of S.M. Dubnov...*, p. 203.

³⁴ See his introduction to the German edition in S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 260-265, 280; 336.

³⁵ S. Dubnow, *Nationalism and History...*, pp. 323-324.

³⁶ A. Ha'am, *Jewish State and Jewish Problem*, [in:] *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic: Basic writings of Ahad Ha'am*, edit. H. Kohn, New York 1962, pp. 66-89; A. Ha'am, *A Spiritual Center*, [in:] *Essays, Letters, Memoirs*, edit. and trans. L. Simon, Oxford 1946, pp. 201-208, and his letters brought there, pp. 282-288.

of Austria. In all the crucial aspects of life in the state – education, law, customs, language, etc. – it is impossible that different nations rule simultaneously... and their diverse tendencies will be implemented together. In all these aspects, the spirit of the majority should be rightly followed, and the minority must follow suit without any protest³⁷.

Ahad Ha'am's resistance to a Jewish state, then, is not grounded in disengaging, à la Dubnow, state and national culture. Conversely, he stresses the importance of a national state for realizing this culture. His (reluctant) anti-statism has four other foundations.

Firstly, Ahad Ha'am, an acolyte of English positivism and French rationalists (as well as an heir of the Jewish rationalist tradition)³⁸, resisted Jewish nationalism founded on political messianism and unrealism³⁹. On the one hand, he therefore opposed Dubnow's vision of Jewish autonomy in multinational states or empires, and on the other, disapprove of the counter vision of the Herzlian state based on international consent and mass Jewish emigration. From his sober and skeptical perspective, both visions seemed at odds with the prevailing political conventions and unmindful of the current crisis of Judaism. He concurred with Dubnow that in the foreseeable future, most of the Jewish people would retain its diasporic character, yet he derived from this forecast the essentiality of establishing a spiritual center to serve as the pulsing heart of the people and assist in its revitalization⁴⁰. In this sense, Ahad Ha'am's antagonism towards the vision of a Jewish state was not principal, as the 1919 letter to the Zionist leader Shmaryahu Levin indicates; there he posits that a Jewish state could be a reasonable goal, but only when the Jews form a majority in Palestine, which will take many years⁴¹.

Secondly, and contrariwise, Ahad Ha'am adopted the Jewish tradition of a lofty political vision, degrading "pedestrian" political designs. He critiqued the aspiration for a state not only in arguing for a more realistic "minimum", but also in suggesting a vision of a "messianic" maximum. Right after the first Zionist congress in Basel – in an essay intended to disqualify the false messianism that dominated it – he stressed that the international constellation renders the establishment of an independent state unattractive.

[...] It is doubtful that if a contemporary Jewish state were established, in the current world-situation, even in the most perfect form imaginable, we could say that our "question" was fully resolved and our national ideal achieved [...]. After thousands of years of misery and unfathomable woes, it is impossible that the people of Israel will be satisfied to acquire, finally, the feat of a small and lowly people, whose state is a playing-ball in the hands of its mighty neighbors and

³⁷ A. Ha'am, *shalosh madregot*, [in:] *Al parashat drachim*, Berlin 1921, p. II, 64. All the translations in this essay, unless otherwise indicated, are mine. On the relationship between the two, see: S.J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism*, Berkeley 1993, pp. 72-76.

³⁸ See: A. Weinberg, *op cit.*, p. 258; Y. Shavit, *Ahad Ha'am and Hebrew National Culture: Realist or Utopianist?*, "Jewish History" 1990, No. 4(2), pp. 71-87.

³⁹ See his essay A. Ha'am, *bei'kvot Meshiha*, [in:] *Al parashat drachim IV*, pp. 87-90; letter to Joseph Klausner, October 16, 1905, A. Ha'am, *Essays, Letters, Memoirs*, p. 288.

⁴⁰ A. Ha'am, *shalosh madregot...*, pp. 57-65; see also the adaptation of this and later essay of Ahad Ha'am on Diaspora Nationalism in A. Ha'am, *Essays, Letters, Memoirs*, pp. 212-221.

⁴¹ Letter from May 22, 1919, A. Ha'am, *Igrot Ahad Ha'am*, VI, edit. A. Simon, J. Pograbski, Tel Aviv 1960, p. 136.

can only be sustained by diplomacy swindles and the everlasting surrender to the changingsuper-powers. An ancient people, who were the light unto the nations, cannot settle, as reward for all its travails, for such a scarcity, that many other peoples, deprived of glory and culture, had acclaimed in a short time, without suffering even the least of its miseries.

The great universalist vision of the prophets of the messianic rule of justice, Ahad Ha'am asserts, originated in their national consciousness, in the realization that the peaceful development of their state, trapped between the greatest ancient empires, depends upon the replacement of might by right worldwide. Even today, he concludes, a parallel constellation (Palestine is still at the heart of contesting powers) dictates that only when "the world-justice will rule" can a flourishing and safe state be established. Till that messianic time, Zionist aspirations must be directed towards national regeneration, rather than towards a pitiful nation-state⁴². In this text, then, Ahad Ha'am's minimalism is grounded, paradoxically, in his maximalism.

Thirdly, and more principally, Ahad Ha'am is wary that Herzlian statism will betray the Jewish tradition of the predominance of the spiritual over the material:

[The Jewish people] seeks to return to its historic center, to live a life of natural development there, to bring its powers into play in every department of human culture, to develop and perfect those natural possessions acquired until now, and thus contribute to the common stock of humanity [...] a great national culture, the fruit of the unhampered activity of a people living according to its own spirit. To this purpose Judaism needs but little at present. It does not need an independent state, but only the creation in its native land of conditions favorable to its development [...]⁴³.

This spiritual center could develop, "on a favorable opportunity" into "a state which will be a **Jewish** state, and not merely a state of Jews" – as Herzl envisions. Ahad Ha'am, then, only opposes the state as a primary goal, but approves it as a possible outcome of the goal he advocates – a spiritual center⁴⁴. The un-Jewish character of Herzl's aspired-for state, as highlighted in Ahad Ha'am polemics with the utopist *Altneuland*⁴⁵, originates in neglect of the moral and spiritual essence of Judaism.

And so political Zionism cannot satisfy those Jews who care for Judaism: Its growth seems to them fraught with danger to the object of their own aspiration.

The secret of our people's persistence is [...] that the prophets taught to respect only spiritual power, and not to worship material power [...]. But a political ideal **which does not rest on the national culture** is apt to seduce us from our loyalty to spiritual greatness, and beget a tendency to find the pass of glory in the attainment of material power and political dominion, thus breaking the thread that unites us with the past, and undermining our historical basis⁴⁶.

⁴² A. Ha'am, *Hakongres hatsioni ha-rishon*, [in:] *Al parashat drachim*, III, pp. 52-56.

⁴³ A. Ha'am, *Jewish State...*, p. 78, [translation altered].

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 79. On this vision see: S.J. Zipperstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-83. See also his letter to Y. Eisenstadt, September 19, 1905: A. Ha'am, *Igrot Ahad Ha'am*, III..., p. 352. Referring to "Chibat Zion", he writes: "I want to recall again those good days, when we still had faith in our hearts, in the power of our deeds and hoped to see with our very own eyes – not a Jewish **State**, indeed, but – the Jewish **people**".

⁴⁵ A. Ha'am, *Altneuland*, [in:] *Al parashat drachim*, III, pp. 143-159.

⁴⁶ A. Ha'am, *Jewish State...*, pp. 79-80 [translation altered]. Like Dubnow, then, Ahad Ha'am's concept

In a 1922 public letter to the newspaper *Ha'aertz*, reacting to the bloody retaliation of Jews against an innocent Arab boy after being attacked, Ahad Ha'am highlights that the absolute morality of the prophets is at odds with the violent nature of the prevailing state-life, and the former should be preferred over the latter.

Is this the dream of the return to Zion which our people dreamt for thousands of years – that we come to Zion and pollute its soil with the spilling of innocent blood? [I was once] confident that the people would not give up its prophets as the price for the state... But there is a growing tendency today to sacrifice its prophets on the altar of its “revival”[...]⁴⁷.

In another essay, Ahad Ha'am stresses that Judaism does not negate the material aspects of life, but rather aspires to place them under the rule of the spiritual⁴⁸. His “spiritual Zionism” is intended to preserve what he deemed “Jewish supremacy” of the spiritual and moral over the material.

Fourthly, Ahad Ha'am was concerned that a Jewish state might cause constant friction between Jews and Arabs in Palestine and thus interfere with his vision of a spiritual center, representing the unique Jewish moral obligation. He was among the first to warn the Jewish settlers not to overlook the vast and growing Arab population and their potential resistance to Jewish emigration and colonization⁴⁹. After the Balfour Declaration, which aroused national fervor that “the end of Galut (exile) had indeed come, and in a short time Palestine would be a ‘Jewish State’”, Ahad Ha'am hastened to dampen this enthusiasm by highlighting Britain's circumscribed approval of Zionism and the ethical constraints on its realization in Palestine.

The British Government, as stated expressly in the Declaration itself, was not willing to promise anything which would harm the present inhabitants of Palestine and therefore changed the Zionist formulation and gave it a more restricted form [...]. [W]hen a people has only the moral force of its claim to build its national home in a land currently inhabited by others [...] [it] can only have what its right allows in truth and justice, and not what conquering peoples take for themselves by armed force, under the cover of various “rights” created for the occasion. [...] But this historic right does not over-ride the right of the other inhabitants, which is a tangible right based on generation after generation of life and work in the country. The country is at present their national home too, and they too have the right to develop their national potentialities as much as they can. This position, then, makes Palestine common ground for different peoples, who each try to establish its national home there; and in this position, it is impossible for the national home of either to be complete and to embrace all that is involved in the conception of a “national home”. [...] [N]ational homes of different peoples in the same country can demand only national freedom for each one in its internal affairs, and the country's affairs which are common to

of Judaism's unique national character is grounded in moral-religious concepts. See: D.H. Weinberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-268.

⁴⁷ Cited in H. Kohn, *Introduction*, [in:] *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic...*, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁸ A. Ha'am, *Flesh and Spirit*, [in:] *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic...*, pp. 188-205, see also H. Kohn, *Introduction...*, pp. 18; 22-3.

⁴⁹ Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs 1882-1948*, trans. Ch. Galai, Oxford 1987; see A. Dowty, *Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha'am's 'Truth from Eretz Yisrael,' Zionism, and the Arabs*, “Israel Studies” 2000, No. 5(2), pp. 154-181, especially 174-175. See also S.J. Zipperstein, *op. cit.*, p. 61; 201.

all of them are administered by all the “householders” jointly if the relations between them and their degree of development qualify them for the task, or, if that condition is not yet fulfilled, by an outside guardian [...] ⁵⁰.

Ahad Ha'am, thus, can be rightly considered the founding father of binational Zionism ⁵¹, to be discussed below. He did not limit the scope of the Jewish national home in Palestine territorially (though he stressed that Jews should not settle where Arabs already dwell) but mainly politically. His advised formula is Jewish autonomy in internal issues and Jewish-Arab cooperation on all other issues.

Ber Borochov and Marxist non-statist Zionism

Many twentieth-century Marxists resisted the nation-state as a disguised power-mechanism, enabling the pseudo-democratic rule of the bourgeoisie. Their vision was not to overrule the bourgeoisie, but rather to abolish the state altogether, as proclaimed by Friedrich Engels.

The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine [...]. *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production in the first instance into state property.* But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state, that is, of an organization of the particular class, which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labor). When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. [...] State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished”. *It dies out* ⁵².

This anarchist vision expresses the early political thought of Marx; his mature attitude to the state was much more complicated and ambivalent ⁵³. Furthermore, the fact that the feasible alternative to private property and free market was nationalization and a state-controlled market, rendered Marxists champions of the strong and centralized state. Nevertheless, socialist anarchism had a tremendous impact on Marx's followers,

⁵⁰ Ahad Ha'am, *After the Balfour Declaration*, [in:] *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic...*, pp. 159-160 [translation altered]. On his pessimism here see: S.J. Zipperstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-310. In a meeting of Zionists in London before the declaration, Ahad Ha'am warned against demanding a Jewish state from the British government when only a tiny fraction of the Jewish people dwells in Palestine. See Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*, p. 99.

⁵¹ See: H. Kohn, *Introduction...*, pp. 28-29.

⁵² F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring: Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, trans. E. Burns, Moscow 1954, pp. 386-387.

⁵³ See: S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, London 1969; R. Miliband, *Marxism and Politics*, Oxford 1977; R.W. Miller, *Social and Political Theory: Class, State, Revolution*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Marx*, edit. T. Carver, Cambridge 1991, pp. 65-69.

including Marxist-inspired Zionists, incorporated mainly in the “Poalei Zion” (workers of Zion) faction, founded in 1901 in Minsk. Its intellectual guide was the Russian-born Ber Borochov (1881-1917). Although Marx and his followers opposed nationalism, let alone Zionism (most of them, including Jews, denied that Jews were a distinct nation), Borochov held that coherent materialist reasoning could not ignore subjective and objective (that is: economic) differences between different national groups. A unified humanity is a distant utopia, while in the present, national differences and struggles are key factors in the battle against capitalism. As for the Jews, their dispersion, discrimination against them and unique traditions rule out any endeavor to integrate them into the general class struggle. Their redemption is conditioned on gaining a national territory (a national revolution), where “normal” capitalistic processes could take place and only then, would the socialist revolution unavoidably transpire. Zionism is not to be realized by international negotiations, as Herzl and his followers advocated, but rather by the spontaneous emigration of the persecuted Eastern Jewry, heading to Palestine. Borochov believed that no other destination for Jewish mass-emigration lacks native bourgeois and proletariat (that necessarily oppose emigration), on the one hand, and prospects for future flourishing and international interest, on the other⁵⁴.

Borochov's concept of nationalism was anarchistic; furthermore, he adopted the socialist notion that the modern state was an oppressive power-mechanism. In 1907 he argued:

Certainly, state-rule is one of the mightiest forms of organizing social will; indeed, in it [...] stands out as the antagonist and stichic aspect of the social relationship. The state, towering above the social structure, represents the disharmony of this structure. [...] Only the bourgeoisie, infused in commodity-fetishism, have also made the state into a fetish⁵⁵.

In 1915 he wrote: “I am an anarchist kind of socialist. I regard the politics of the state and organized coercion as a means of protecting private property which will be perforce be abolished by a collective organization of labor. I am a Marxist without the *Zukunftstaat*”⁵⁶. In the Zionist context, Borochov held that the vision of a Jewish state is

⁵⁴ See: B. Borochov, *Eretz Israel in Our Program and Tactics*, [in:] *Class Struggle and the Jewish Nation: Selected Essays in Marxist Zionism*, edit. M. Cohen, New Brunswick, NJ and London 1984, pp. 201-203; S. Steinberg, *The Origins of Nationalism: Marxism and Zionism in the writings of Ber Borochov*, “Zionist Ideas” 1984, No. 10, pp. 69-83; M. Mintz, *Israel and Diaspora in the Thought of Ber Borochov*, “Jewish Frontier” 1982, No 49(8), pp. 16-20.

⁵⁵ B. Borochov, *Tafkid ma'amad ha-polim be-hagshamat hateritorialism*, [in:] *Ktavim I*, edit. L. Levita, D. ben-Nachum, trans. M. Avidov, Tel Aviv 1955, pp. 327-8. This work was originally written in Russian and first published in Yiddish. See also B. Borochov, *hatza'at programa shel Poalei tсион*, [in:] *Ktavim II*, edit. L. Levita, D. ben-Nachum, trans. D. ben-Nachum, M.Z. Volfosvski, Y. Rabi, Tel Aviv 1958, p. 108. This programme was originally written in Russian and published in Yiddish.

⁵⁶ B. Borochov, *Two Currents in Poale Zionism*, [in:] *Class Struggle and the Jewish Nation...*, p. 151. Borochov stressed that he prefers to sideline the dispute between the anarchists and the state-socialists as it interferes with the socialist unity necessary for the concrete struggle for overpowering capitalism and will only be relevant after its completion. See also his outline for a book on the national question in *Ktavim I*, pp. 338-352. This is an unpublished manuscript from the Borochov archive, written originally in Russian ca. 1907; B. Borochov, *Hamishtara Ba-hevra ha-kapitalistit*, [in:] *Ktavim III*, edit. L. Levita, S. Rechav, trans.

a fantasy of the middle-bourgeoisie, aspiring to bolster its hegemony. In practice, Zionism can only be realized by the proletariat and its vision should be an autonomy, as part of the Ottoman Empire⁵⁷. Like Lenin, Borochov preferred making empires into multinational frameworks, rather than dismantling them and establishing nation-states in their stead⁵⁸. Just before his untimely death, he penned a programme for making the short-lived independent Ukraine into a multinational federation⁵⁹. Nevertheless, Borochov vehemently opposed the Bund's and the Seimist party's struggle for Jewish autonomy in Russia and Austro-Hungary, and the notion of "personal autonomy". He argued that autonomy can only be gained by a violent struggle, which is unrealistic for the scattered and powerless Jews. Only after the establishment of a national autonomy in Palestine will the Jews be able to exercise the political power to demand such an autonomy from the future multinational empires⁶⁰.

Borochov's autonomism is different from Dubnow's autonomism not only in his Palestine-orientation, but also, and more importantly, in completely degrading the cultural aspect of sovereignty or autonomism. Nationalism, for him, is merely an offshoot of distorted economic circumstances, and in the case of oppressed peoples like the Jews, a tentative means in their healing. He envisions that after the wave of socialist revolutions in Palestine and elsewhere, the political will be supplanted by the social, and national differences will gradually fade away in favour of a unified society of workers⁶¹.

Poalei Zion in Palestine, led by David Ben-Gurion (later the leader of Mapai, the more centrist Workers Party, founding father and first Prime Minister of the State of Israel), and Yitzchak Ben-Zvi (later the second president of Israel), dovetailed with Borochov's reluctance regarding the vision of a Jewish state. In a speech in November 1915 in Cleveland, Ben-Gurion opposed the Zionists who argued for positing the claim for a Jewish state as the formal Jewish demand in the new world order at war's end.

The prospect of purchasing the land of Israel for the Hebrew people is basically economic, not political [...]. What we essentially want is not the **state** of Israel, but rather the **land** of Israel. Our aspiration is not government, but homeland. Rule over the land is not the main thing.

S. Even-Shushan et al, Tel Aviv 1966, pp. 354-357. It was originally published in Yiddish in 1912 and completed according to drafts from the Borochov's archive.

⁵⁷ B. Borochov, *ha-platforma shelano*, [in:] *Ktavim I*, p. 210; 294. This basic piece was originally published in Russian; the referred-to paragraphs were omitted from the English translations. See also: B. Borochov, *vas wilen di poalei-tzion*, Vilna 1907; Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*, pp. 36-38.

⁵⁸ See: Y. Slezkine, *The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism*, "Slavic Review" 1994, No. 53(2), pp. 414-452. For Borochov see *hatza'at programa*, pp. 111-112.

⁵⁹ See: M. Mintz, *Zmanim Hadashim, Zmirot Hadashot: Ber Borochov 1914-7*, Tel Aviv 1988, pp. 380-383.

⁶⁰ B. Borochov, *ha-platforma shelano...*, pp. 222; 238-257; 265-270; B. Borochov, *Австро-еврейский Годовщины, "Рассвет"* 1913, No. 23, pp. 8-10. See also Y. Gorny, *me-ra'ayon ha-otonomia le- ra'ayon ha-medina be-mishnato shel Ber Borochov*, "Keshet" 1968, No. 10(3), pp. 118-139. Gorny downplays Borochov's Marxist anti-statism.

⁶¹ B. Borochov, *The National Question and the Class Struggle*, [in:] *Class Struggle...*, pp. 51-74; B. Borochov, outline for a book on the national question.

We want to settle the land, and to strike roots in it economically, culturally and socially. We wish to become a people rooted in its land, economy and society⁶².

Before World War I, they concurred with his design of a Jewish autonomy in a multinational and democratic Ottoman empire. At the end of the war, the party convention demanded that “Turkey become a free federation of free peoples, arranging autonomously all their national affairs”. They opposed any national organization aimed at disengagement from the Ottoman Empire⁶³.

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the British occupation of Palestine and the British Mandate, Ben-Gurion became closer to the Herzlian vision of a Jewish state, parallel to his shift from class to national struggle. Jewish sovereignty was curbed not by principal considerations, inspired by Marxism and its Borochovist adaption, but by the Arab national combat against Zionism and international circumstances⁶⁴. Nevertheless, as Gorny documented, other prominent members of the workers, like Berl Katznelson, another leading figure of Mapai (Workers of the Land of Israel party), expressed at various occasions principal socialist anti-statism⁶⁵.

Martin Buber and Brit Shalom: Anarchist non-statist Zionism

Martin Buber (1878-1965) was probably the most resolute, consistent and challenging opponent of Jewish statism who presented a clear anti-statist theological position. Many of his disciples, including Samuel Hugo Bergman (1883-1975), Hans Kohn (1891-1971), Akiva Ernst Simon (1899-1988), and Robert Weltsch (1891-1982) followed in his footsteps in their advocacy of non-statist Zionism. Buber’s followers were key-activists in “Brit Shalom” (Covenant of Peace), founded in 1925 in Jerusalem⁶⁶, when Buber was

⁶² D. Ben-Gurion, *Mi-Mamad Le-am*, Tel Aviv 1933, p. 10, emphasis in the original text. Ben-Gurion does not, however, rule out the establishment of a Jewish state if it finally comes from the economic and social reality of the Yishuv in the land of Israel and suits the international situation.

⁶³ See Y. Gorny, *Ha-she’elah ha-aravit ve-habeaya ha-yehudit: zramim medinyim-ideologyim ba-tsyonot be-yahasam el ha-yeshut ha-aravit be-erets Israel ba-shanim 1882-1948*, Tel Aviv 1986, pp. 98-100; I. Bartal, *me-,erets ha-kodesh’ le-erets historit – otonomism tsioni be-reshit ha-mea haesrim*, [in:] *Kozak u-bedwi...*, pp. 152-169; Y.B. Bassat, *Rethinking the Concept of Ottomanization: The Yishuv in the Aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908*, “Middle Eastern Studies” 2009, No. 45(3), pp. 461-475.

⁶⁴ See: Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*, pp. 140-142; but compare to Shumsky, *tsionut...*, pp. 226-228.

⁶⁵ Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*, pp. 138; 219-221. In the 1940s, Katznelson followed Ben-Gurion and advocated for the state solution, see: *Ibidem*, pp. 302-303. On Federalism and binationalism among the workers’ parties, some of them stamped by anti-statism, see: Y. Gorny, *From Binational Society to Jewish State: Federal Concepts in Zionist Political Thought, 1920-90 and the Jewish People*, Leiden 2006.

⁶⁶ On Brit Shalom see: H. Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe: The Distinctive Path of German Zionism*, Detroit 1996, pp. 162-224; S. Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom, 1925-1933*, Leiden 2002; S.E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad*, Princeton 2007, pp. 9-44; A. Gordon, *Brit Shalom vaha-siyonut ha-du le’umit: ‘Ha-be’ayâ ha-aravit’ ki-she’elah Yehudit*, Jerusalem 2009; Z. Maor, *Moderation from Right to Left: The Hidden Roots of Brit Shalom*, “Jewish Social Studies” 2013, No. 19(2), pp. 79-108; Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*

still in Germany, and its offshoot, Ihud (Unity), founded in 1942, and led by Buber⁶⁷. Both factions advocated Jewish-Arab binationalism, as we shall see, some of their activists promoted binationalism not as another structure of a state, but rather as an alternative to the state⁶⁸.

In his early Zionist days, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Buber advocated Zionism focused on individual identity, (anarchic) religious renewal and cultural innovation; at this stage he ignored, rather than explicitly resisted, Herzl's vision of a Jewish state⁶⁹. Before and during World War I, Buber's renouncement of the state was mainly based on his adoption of *völkisch* ideology⁷⁰ and other Central European currents that critiqued the modern state as "artificial" and alienated *Gesellschaft*, and built upon individualistic and utilitarian assumptions. In its stead, they championed the "authentic" and intimate community (*Gemeinschaft*), grounded in the social nature of man and the renewed rootedness in the soil⁷¹. To this Buber added "biblical humanism" marked by anarchism and utopian communitarian socialism, as demonstrated in his 1918 *The Holy Way*: "The idea of God as the sole owner of the land [...] is the cornerstone of the Jewish social concept. It corresponds to the idea, in the political sphere, of the sovereignty of God, that is, of God as the sole sovereign of the community. From Moses to Samuel, the leaders are merely deputies of God [...]"⁷². The substitution of the judges – whose epoch he lauds elsewhere⁷³ – by the kings signifies the degeneration of "a unified community [...] permeated by the guiding presence of the Divine", by "the temporal state", prone to "adjust communal life to the demands of the established powers"⁷⁴. Buber's anarchism does not resist human political life as such, yet demands to make the spir-

⁶⁷ See: S. Ratzabi, 'shlilat medinat haumah': beyn Hannah Arendt le-Buber ve-ishey merkaz Eiropa b'brit Shalom' ve-agudat ihud, [in:] *leumiyut u-musar: ha-siah hatsyoni he-hashe'alah ha-aravit*, edit. E. Lavi, Jerusalem 2014, pp. 213-50; Y. Heller, *The Birth of Israel 1945-9: Ben Gurion and his Critics*, Gainesville 2000, pp. 161-180; Y. Heller, *mibrit shalom le-ihud: Yehuda Leib Magnes ve-hama'avak le-medinah du-leumit*, Jerusalem 2003; Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*

⁶⁸ On Buber's political approach throughout his long intellectual career, see: P.R. Mendes-Flohr, *Introduction*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, ed. idem, Chicago 2005, pp. 3-33; Z. Maor, *Martin Buber*, Jerusalem 2017.

⁶⁹ See: G.G. Schmidt, *The First Buber: Youthful Zionist Writings of Martin Buber*, Syracuse 1999; G.G. Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897-1909*, Tuscaloosa 1995; and his early and influential Zionist addresses in M. Buber, *On Judaism*, New York 1973, pp. 11-107.

⁷⁰ See: G.L. Mosse, *The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry*, [in:] *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a "Third Force" in Pre-Nazi Germany*, New York 1971, pp. 85-89; P.R. Mendes-Flohr, *Divided Passions...*, pp. 83-109; B. Susser, *Ideological Multivalence – Martin Buber and the German Volkisch Tradition*, "Political Theory" 1977, No. 5, pp. 75-96.

⁷¹ See: J. Harris, *General Introduction*, [in:] *Tönnies: Community and Civil Society*, edit. J. Harris, trans. M. Hollis, Cambridge 2001, pp. ix-xxx; F.K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933*, Cambridge 1969, esp. pp. 164-171; P.R. Mendes-Flohr, *From Mysticism to Dialogue: Martin Buber's Transformation of German Social Thought*, Detroit 1989, pp. 54-72.

⁷² M. Buber, *The Holy Way*, [in:] *On Judaism*, p. 116.

⁷³ M. Buber, *Kingship of God*, trans. R. Scheimann, New York 1967.

⁷⁴ M. Buber, *The Holy Way...*, pp. 117-118.

it, rather than power, its foundation and guiding principle. “The prophets did not fight the state as state, even though it has dislodged the form of community that was conceived as God’s immediate congregation; they fight a state that lacks a divine, spiritual element”⁷⁵. The Jewish kings of the first commonwealth failed to live up to this lofty ideal; in the second commonwealth “[r]itualism and nationalism join ranks” against the communitarian ideal. Even the Hasmonean kings succumb to despotism and refrain from realizing the idea “that political life should be informed by a religious spirit”. Only the Essenes, a sect marginalized by Jewish historical memory, preserve the prophetic tradition in their shared property, “total, living community” and rejection of “man’s rule over man as ‘unjust and Godless’”⁷⁶. Contemporary Jewish aspirations for regeneration, Buber maintains, cannot overlook this unique Jewish tradition. Zionism could not and should not be founded on the prevailing concept of the nation state, on “the unholy dogma of the sovereignty of nations”, as Judaism teaches that “only the spirit” is sovereign⁷⁷. In his summary, Buber introduced his anarchic and communal Zionist vision.

Community, as the realization of the Divine in the shared life of men;

Soil, as the maternal element of such a shared life, bestowed by God on the community alone and not on any individual man;

[...] **The community**, in its multifarious forms, as local community, cooperative society, fellowship and brotherhood, as the cell-unit of every community in which the immediate relationship between man and man, the carrier of the Divine, assumes lasting shape;

The commonwealth, as the association of communal units that are full of vitality and [...] whose interrelationship is based on the same immediateness that is present in each of them individually [...];

Mankind, as an association of such commonwealths, interrelated in the same immediateness [...] ⁷⁸.

Hans Kohn (later one of the most prominent forerunners of nationalism scholarship), a devoted disciple of Buber, dovetailed his *völkisch*-inspired communitarian anti-statism⁷⁹. In his 1922 book *Nationalismus*, he praised the *völkisch* spirit in Germany for resisting the disastrous blunder of Enlightenment: identifying nation with state. This unholy amalgamation of nation and state ushered in the corruption of the moral fiber of nationalism, recurrent wars and, for many who found national life inappropriate, lifeless individualism. Yet true nationalism, Kohn argued, had nothing to do with state and power. It is a community of people united in their common descent and “historical destinies”. It is a cultural association, in the “deep”, *völkisch* sense articulated by Fichte,

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 120-122.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 135-136.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 146.

⁷⁹ On Kohn’s stance see: N. Pianko, *The Roads Not Taken...*, pp. 144-157; A. Gordon, *Toward Nationalism’s End: An Intellectual Biography of Hans Kohn*, Waltham 2017, part 2.

Buber and others⁸⁰. Kohn argued: “The state is something ephemeral, artificial, created by some people and corrupted by their needs; the *volk* is something eternal, Divine”⁸¹.

Following Buber, Kohn combined *völkisch* primordialism and utopist universalism.

The national sentiment, detached from its territorial state-faith [...] will help determine the destiny of mankind through the power of the traditions of blood, will make their souls tremble at the dark attachment to past powers [...]. The common ancestry and similar mentality of groups and alliances will come to the fore... the same dreams and premonitions that arise in their quiet hours from the depth of the blood shall magically wind about them [...]”⁸².

Through the inferno of the Great War, humanity had finally become conscious of cosmic unity, of the universal *volk*; the mystical overcoming of rationalistic individualism would eventually usher in a unified humanity.

According to Kohn’s ideal, Zionism should therefore strive for “a state [...] which is no longer ‘a state’, sovereignty (*Herrschaft*) which is no longer ‘sovereignty’, but *an-archia*”⁸³. Or, more concretely: “The Zionists in Palestine must highlight not the idea of the kingdom but that of the agricultural settlement; their aim must be not the quantitative majority but the qualitative way”⁸⁴.

Buber’s and Kohn’s anti-statism inspired Brit Shalom’s platform and Zionist activity. Buber and his followers held that state-nationalism would unavoidably fuel the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine, as both parties would compete over majority and domination. Nationalism focused on communal life and cultivation of the soil, in contrast, would foster cooperation between the two peoples⁸⁵. Brit Shalom’s activists employed diverse arguments to degrade state-Zionism. Samuel Hugo Bergman, for instance, contrasted “authentic” Jewish Zionism, centered on the holy land, spiritual renewal and ethical nationalism, with false Zionism, emulating the prevailing “gentile” power nationalism. “Therefore, a harsh operation must be carried out,” he wrote in his diary in

⁸⁰ H. Kohn, *Nationalism*, [in:] *The Jew: Essays from Buber’s Journal Der Jude*, edit. A.A. Cohen, trans. J. Neugroschel, University 1980, pp. 20-30; See also his *Asien Nationalismus*, [in:] *Nationalismus*, Wien and Leipzig 1922, pp. 75; 77; 83-84; H. Kohn, *Martin Buber, sein Werk und seine Zeit*, Hellerau 1930, pp. 165-166; H. Kohn, *Knisat ha-yehudim le-toch ha-hevra ha-modernit*, “Ha-poel Ha-tzair” April 15, 1927, pp. 30-33 and April 24, 1927, pp. 11-13.

⁸¹ H. Kohn, *Perspektiven*, [in:] *Nationalismus...*, p. 19.

⁸² H. Kohn, *Nationalismus...*, p. 29; see also his *Prespektiven...*, pp. 18-22; H. Kohn, *Brief an Freunde*, [in:] *Nationalismus...*, p. 51; H. Kohn, *Nationismus und Gewalt*, [in:] *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit: Handbuch des aktiven Pazifismus, im Auftrage der Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner*, edit. F. Kobler, Zürich 1928, pp. 89-93.

⁸³ H. Kohn, *Prespektiven...*, p. 22. On the anarchic dimension of Kohn thought see his *Um die Ewigkeit*, [in:] *Vom Sinn des Judentums, Ein Sammelbuch zu Ehren Nathan Bitrnbaums*, edit. A.E. Kaplan, M. Landau, Frankfurt a. M. 1925, pp. 40-42. See also H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, Leipzig 1923, pp. 91-94. For a more detailed discussions of Kohn’s anti-statism see the above mentioned works of Pianko and Gordon and Z. Maor, *Moderation...*, pp. 91-93.

⁸⁴ H. Kohn, *Beavodat ha-yeud*, “Ha-poel ha-tzair” (November 25, 1927): p. 16.

⁸⁵ See: M. Buber, *Nationalism*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 48-57; M. Buber, *A Proposed Resolution of the Arab Question*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 58-61; M. Buber, *A National Home and National Policy in Palestine*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 81-91; D. Avnon, *Martin Buber: The Hidden Dialogue*, Lanham 1998, pp. 43-44; 149-154; 159-161; 180-181; 204-206.

the summer of 1928, “in which Zionism must un-Europeanize (*ent-europäisieren*) itself [...]. All the remains of European ideologies, which are associated with the concepts of national language, states, etc., must be liquidated”⁸⁶. Re-sacralization of Jewish nationalism, he averred, is mandatory for overcoming power-nationalism’s demonic allure.

[...] As a result of the secularization (*verweltlichung*) of Judaism [...] the religious concepts obtained a secularized, politicized meaning. In Jewish history, concepts like Zion, exile, redemption have both political-worldly and religious-otherworldly meaning. However, just as the Reform movement did its best to erase the worldly dimension [...] so the national Jew was inclined to overlook the theological meaning, or even to discredit it as a false ghetto-construal. Messianism was transformed into mundane imperialism, exile into political irredentism, redemption into state-building. [...] Zionism should be religious, or it should not exist⁸⁷.

Ernst Akiba Simon, for his part, resorted in his 1932 essay *Against the Sadducees* to Dubnow’s historicist narrative, arguing that since the destruction of the Second Temple, Judaism has “overcome” the inferior state-nationalism.

The world has not yet overcome the era of power and state-coercion, but we [= the Jewish people, Z.M.] got over it no later than 70 BC. We morphed our national disaster into a fertile seed of new life. Zionism is not allowed to turn the wheel of history back [...]. **We must accept the Pharisees’ condemnation of the last Jewish state even before its destruction, and even more so after it.** Indeed, the Arabs too should not approach the state as an ultimate ideal [...] but relinquishing the state-phase can only stem from the people itself... such Pharisees – the Arabs do not have now [...]. We can help them [...] by serving as a living example of a people which lack a state voluntarily, and do not consider itself among the nations⁸⁸.

As mentioned before, binationalism, Jewish-Arab cooperation and autonomism as part of a broader, multinational framework was widespread among various Zionist stripes, especially the workers during the 1920s and 1930s⁸⁹. After the great Arab uprising of 1936-1939, the outbreak of World War II, and the existential threat to the well-being of Eastern European Jewry, the Biltmore decision of 1942 altered the Zionist consensus and bolstered the stance fighting for a Jewish state. Buber, however, retained a staunch anti-statist claim which he grounded in diverse principles. First, albeit a growing renouncement of *völkisch* ideology, he continued to prefer land and (a meta-historical concept of) people over state, now alluding to the former’s holy aura in Jewish tradition. The real goal of Zionism, he concluded in his 1945 *bein am le-artso* (Between

⁸⁶ S.H. Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe*, edit. M. Sambursky, Königstein/Ts. 1985, p. 250.

⁸⁷ S.H. Bergman, *Die Religiöse Situation in Palästina*, “Der Morgen” 1934, No. 10(8), pp. 348-349. See also S.H. Bergman, *Religiöser Zionismus*, “Europäische Revue” 1926, No. 1(12), pp. 370-373; *Hebräischer Humanismus*, “Jüdische Rundschau” April 24, 1938, pp. 1-2; S.H. Bergman, *Sfekot (Mikhtav el ha-orekh)*, [in:] *Bamishel*, edit. N. Rotenstreich, Tel Aviv 1976, p. 59; Z. Maor, *Moderation...*, pp. 93-5; Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*

⁸⁸ E.A. Simon, *Neged ha-tsdokim*, “Sheifoteynu” 1932, No. 3(5-6), pp. 160-162. The last sentence alludes to Numbers 23:9. See Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*, p. 198, and S.E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border...*, p. 42.

⁸⁹ See the overview in B. Morris, *One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict*, London and New Haven 2009, pp. 44-60; Y. Gorny, *From Binational Society...*

a People and its Land), should be Zion, that is “the pairing of a holy people with the holy land”, and this unique holy land demands that its settlement be carried out according to utmost ethical criteria⁹⁰. Buber realized that the demographic and geopolitical situation in Palestine dictates that a Jewish state will necessarily entail partition of the holy land, an outcome he refused to accept “partition [...] that is, creation of a tiny Jewish state, thoroughly militarized and not viable”; alternatively, Buber suggests a binational Palestine, part of a “federation of greater Syria”⁹¹. After his prediction was realized in the 1947 UN decision and the 1948 Independence War broke out, Buber lamentedly summarized what he deemed as the failure of Zionism in accepting the partition programme.

[Tearing one part of the land away from the rest, and in the torn off portion [...] a majority [of Jews], and the thing's name would be a Jewish state. They frivolously sacrificed the completeness of the land that the Zionist movement once set out to “redeem”. If only we can attain sovereignty! The life concept of “independence” was replaced by the administrative concept of “sovereignty”⁹².

Importantly, Buber was not alone in holding the “Greater Land of Israel” superior to the establishment of the Jewish state; Hashomer Ha-tsair, also inspired by Central European land romanticism (albeit without Buber’s religious flavour) and Marxist anti-statism shared this conviction and favored binationalism⁹³. Yitzchak Tabenkin, one of the most prominent leaders of *Hakibbutz Hameuchad* (United Kibbutz Movement) wrote in the same anarchist vein in 1944: “I avoid the two extremes: neither state phobia nor state fetishism, for the state is not an ideal. The main issue is the people and not the state: we wish to rule nature and not man, and the state means rule over man”⁹⁴.

Second was Buber’s moral argument. Considering the significant Arab population in Palestine and its escalating resistance to Zionist aspirations, Buber demanded to judiciously draw the borderline between morally justifiable and unjustifiable national aims, according to several tenets. Firstly, that even if we must do injustice, it is minimized to our essential needs; and secondly, that our means will correspond to, and not contradict, our goal. The aim of Zionism, Buber contended, is not a Jewish polity – which is, at best, a legitimate means – but rather “the rehabilitation of the Jewish person”. This aim cannot be reached, but only contaminated, by immoral means. Indeed, the mere mass immigration of Jews to Palestine and their settlement does injustice to the native Arab population, but as long as it serves the aims of establishing a Jewish commonwealth that will reinvigorate Jewish life, it can be justified. A Jewish state, resulting from “thirst for

⁹⁰ See the English translation from the German edition: M. Buber, *On Zion: The History of an Idea*, trans. S. Godman, London 1973.

⁹¹ M. Buber, *A Majority or Many?*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 167-168.

⁹² M. Buber, *Zionism and 'Zionism'*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, p. 223.

⁹³ See Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*, p. 283; 293-300; 322; Y. Heller, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-202; 205-208.

⁹⁴ Cited in Y. Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs...*, p. 308; See also Y. Heller, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-223.

possession and [...] hunger for power”, conversely, violates, rather than serve the aim of Zionism, and is thus indefensible⁹⁵.

Thirdly, Buber opposed the state-cult as the expression of the popular and hazardous preference of “the political principle”, namely, viewing government and the political framework as the focus of individual and public life over “the social principle”, highlighting the real social life, that is the network of significant ties between a certain society’s members⁹⁶. Social problems are the crucial ones, and should be dealt with by society itself and not by its rulers, who are mainly preoccupied with their own interests. When social problems are neglected, political issues take the lead. Buber criticizes Hegel’s perception of the state as the realization of God on earth. In Buber’s view, this is the source of the moral corruption of both the Right and the Left in the twentieth century, and the popularity of Fascism. Only the separation between Divine revelation and the state can generate a human space in which a person can judge any political demand and decide whether to accept or decline it⁹⁷. In the Jewish-Arab context, “politicization, reaching pathological, almost catastrophic dimension”, hampers any chance for a peaceful solution. Political questions of majority, sovereignty, decision procedures etc., inevitably highlight the conflict, which only can be tempered, if sidelined, by the “real” social issues, like work, culture and the like, in which cooperation is feasible⁹⁸. Binationalism, then, is not another political pattern, but an attempt to get free from political patterns in general and focus on a society that grows bottom up.

Fourthly, Buber negated statism on the grounds of his communitarian, anti-Marxist socialism, as developed in his 1947 *Paths in Utopia*. Buber argued that while Marx, as we have seen above, aimed at abolishing the state and juxtaposed socialism with the negation of power, his adherents, especially in Soviet Russia, made the state into the cornerstone of their socialist project. True socialism should liquidate the state and establish in its stead a healthy society built as a net of cooperative communities, the only possible hotbed for solidarity and responsibility. The political regime, which Marx rightly characterized as founded on the principle of divide and rule and amplifying the major rifts in society, must be transformed into an anarchic social relationship between people.

Yet, Buber did not only base his anti-statist socialism on a revisited Marx. His key socialist protagonists were his friend Gustav Landauer, and the French Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, both highlighting bottom-up, communitarian, and voluntarist socialism. Buber concurs with Proudhon’s gloomy prediction of a future socialist state:

⁹⁵ M. Buber, *Politics and Morality*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 169-175. See also M. Buber, *Dialogue on the Biltmore Program*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 162-163.

⁹⁶ M. Buber, *Gandhi, Politics and Us*, [in:] *Pointing the Way: Collected Essays*, edit. and trans. M. Friedman, New York 1957; M. Buber, *Society and the State*, [in:] *Pointing the Way...*, pp. 161-76; M. Buber, *The Validity and Limitation of the Political Principle*, [in:] *Pointing the Way...*, pp. 208-219.

⁹⁷ M. Buber, *The Validity and Limitation...*, pp. 212-213.

⁹⁸ M. Buber, *Two Peoples in Palestine*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 200-202.

A compact democracy [...] in which the masses have no more power than is necessary to ensure a general serfdom in accordance with the following precepts and principles borrowed from the old absolutism: indivisibility of public power, all-consuming centralization, systematic destruction of all individual, corporative, and regional thought⁹⁹.

Thus, the dismantling of society under capitalism should be resolved by decentralized communitarian socialism and not by state-centralism

The era of advanced Capitalism has broken down the structure of society. [...] [Capitalistic centralism] succeeded [...] in atomizing society. Exercising control over the machines, and, with their help Capitalism wants to deal only with individuals; and the modern State aids and abets it by progressively dispossessing groups of their autonomy. [...] Even the transfer of capital to the state is powerless to modify the social structure [...]. From this point of view, the heart and soul of the Cooperative Movement is to be found in the trend of a society towards structural renewal [...] psychologically speaking, it is based on one of the eternal human needs, even though this need has often been forcibly suppressed or rendered insensible: the need of man to feel his own house as a room in some greater, all-embracing structure in which he is at home. [...] the only thing that can do that is an association which makes for communal living¹⁰⁰.

In the Zionist context, Buber believed that the kibbutzim, the agricultural cooperative settlements, could serve as the seeds of such bottom-up socialism that would render state power-structures obsolete.

Fifthly, and lastly, was Buber's biblical anarchism. In Buber's 1930s and 1940s writings on the Bible, he declares that his interpretation is aimed at constructing the "theo-political", an actual political message grounded in his reading of the Divine message. Buber's narrative is simple (and simplistic): Kingdom is a sin, motivated by imitation of the surrounding world, and anticipating the modern Zionist quest for "normalization". Exodus from Egypt means first and foremost, liberation from the Egyptian model of a centralist and despotic rule, in which the king is idolized. The Jewish ideal, conversely, precludes kings as God is the only ruler. Moses embodies an idiosyncratic model, namely the unity of the spiritual and political leadership, aiming at a unified yet decentralized polity without the accustomed power mechanisms of government. Moreover, Jewish theo-political creed, according to Buber, aspires to a combination of rootedness in the land of Israel and constant diasporic nomadism, as suits an infinite God, of whom the prophet says, "the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3)¹⁰¹.

The history of biblical Judaism is the tragic failure to live up to this lofty ideal, as the ongoing rebellion against Moses and the establishment of Jewish kingship after the failed attempt of the Judges era demonstrates. The Jews were always tempted to follow

⁹⁹ M. Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, Syracuse 1996, p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 139-140.

¹⁰¹ M. Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant*, New York 1958. See: P. Mendes-Flohr, *The Kingdom of God: Martin Buber's Critique of Messianic Politics*, "Behemoth: A Journal on Civilization" 2008, No. 2, pp. 26-38; D. Ohana, *Ambiguous Messianism: The Political Theology of Martin Buber*, "Religion Compass" 2011, No. 5(1), pp. 50-60.

“the laws of the Gentiles” and emulate the prevailing centralized kingships. More significantly, the interminable wars sparked the pressing need for a powerful ruler and a consolidated society. Yet, the only feasible way for the holy people to live in the holy land is to stand the trials and prefer God’s sublime withdrawal from power over illusory *Realpolitik*. As the Jewish people made the wrong choice, its destruction was unavoidable. Buber believed that his biblical message was highly relevant to contemporary Zionism which cannot escape Jewish destiny, and thus must adopt anarchism – which is the political expression of true belief in God – in order to survive. Binationalism is both the concrete implementation of the required Jewish relinquishing of power, and the only way to prevent incessant Jewish-Arab wars, which, in its turn, result in aggravating centralism and despotism, as in the days of the Bible.

Buber was well aware that his anti-statism had no public sway outside the small circles of Brit Shalom and that he was seen as a defeatist. He used the biblical narrative to identify himself as a “true prophet” – and a true patriot – while the Zionist leaders who promise prosperity to a corrupt commonwealth were heirs of the false prophets.

Hananiah was a forthright patriot [...]. He was convinced that Jeremiah had no love whatsoever for his country, for if he had, how could he have expected his people to bend their necks to the yoke? [...] What [Hananiah] called his fatherland was a political concept. Jeremiah’s fatherland was a land inhabited by human beings, a settlement that was alive and mortal. His God did not wish it to perish. He wished to preserve it by putting those human beings under the yoke [...]. False prophets are not godless. They adore the God of success [...]. The true prophets know the little, bloated idol that goes by the name of “success” through and through. They know that ten successes that are nothing but successes can lead to defeat, while on the contrary ten failures can add up to a victory, provided the spirit stands firm. When true prophets address the people, they are usually unsuccessful; everything in the people that craves for success opposes them. But the moment they are thrown into the pit, whatever spirit is still alive in Israel bursts into flame, and the turning begins in secret which, in the midst of the deepest distress, will lead to renewal¹⁰².

The establishment of the State of Israel in May of 1948 proved Buber right in his bleak prediction of the unsuccessfulness of his prophetic idealism. Even post factum, he refused to revise his staunch opposition to a Jewish state, although he did not become an anti-Zionist and declared “I have nothing in common with those Jews who imagine that they may contest the factual shape which Jewish independence has taken”¹⁰³. In a provocative essay in an avantgarde Jewish-American periodical, *Jewish Newsletter*, Buber argued that his Zionism was not headed towards “a political state, but a great human collective community”, yet

¹⁰² M. Buber, *False Prophets*, [in:] *Israel and the World: Essays in Time of Crisis*. Syracuse 1997, pp. 116-117. On the actual backdrop of the essay see: M. Buber to E. Michel, March 3, 1947, *Letters of Martin Buber: A Life of Dialogue*, edit. N.N. Glatzer, P.R. Mendes-Flohr, New York 1991, p. 517. See also M. Buber, *Biblical leadership*, [in:] *Israel and the World...*, pp. 119-133; M. Buber, *Prophecy, Apocalyptic and the Historical Hour*, [in:] *Pointing the Way...*, pp. 192-207.

¹⁰³ M. Buber, *Israel and the Command of the Spirit*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples*, pp. 292-293.

[i]t was Hitler who brought Jewish masses to Palestine, not selected people who felt that there they must fulfill their lives and prepare the future. So, selective organic development was replaced by mass immigration and the indispensable necessity to find political force for its security [...]. [T]he majority of the Jewish people preferred to learn from Hitler rather than from us. Hitler showed them that history does not go the way of the spirit but the way of power¹⁰⁴.

After the establishment of the state, Buber hoped for an inner change that would gradually focus on the “social principle” and thus marginalize the “political principle”; and for a religious renewal that would return Judaism to its prophetic and ethical vision. He wished for an international constellation that would catalyze Israel’s overcoming of its isolation and aggressiveness and enable its integration into a peaceful federation of the Middle East¹⁰⁵. This hope, as we all know, did not come true.

The contemporary advocates of non-statist Zionism

As the State of Israel is about to celebrate its seventieth anniversary in 2018, it becomes an almost uncontested reality. Even if we do not accept Ben Gurion’s approach that Zionism was like a scaffolding on a building site upon which the Jewish state should be erected, and after the building of the state has been accomplished¹⁰⁶, the scaffolding is superfluous, a meaningful Zionism without a state is hardly imaginable. Even the ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel, who opposed Zionism on various religious grounds, retain their anti-Zionist ideology, while accepting the state post-factum and enjoying its benefits¹⁰⁷. Moreover, although binationalism has been resurrected in the last two decades due to the collapse of the peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians based on the two-states solution, it was not founded on the critique of the state in itself¹⁰⁸. It seems that the dominant struggle within Israel today is between advocates of preserving, and even amplifying its national and particularist character, and supporters of changing Israel from an “ethnic” to a “civic” state. The ethnic-based anti-statism of Buber and his cohort have been forgotten.

¹⁰⁴ M. Buber, *Old Zionism and Modern Israel*, “Jewish Newsletter” June 1958, No. 14(11); on his criticism of the establishment of the state, see also M. Buber, *Israel’s Mission and Zion*, [in:] *Israel and the World...*, pp. 258-260.

¹⁰⁵ M. Buber, *Should the Ichud Accept the Decree of History?*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, 245-253; M. Buber, *The Children of Amos*, [in:] *A Land of Two Peoples...*, pp. 253-258; see: D.N. Myers, *Between Jew and Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz*, Waltham, Mass 2008, pp. 95-96.

¹⁰⁶ See Y. Gorny, *David Ben-Gurion: From the Zionist Movement to the Jewish People*, “Studies in Jewish Civilization” 1991, No. 1, pp. 222-228; A. Feldestein, *Ben-Gurion, Zionism and American Jewry, 1948-63*, trans. R. Rubin, London 2007, pp. 132-133.

¹⁰⁷ See: B. Brown, *ha-yahadut ha-haredit ve-hamedina*, in *kshyahdut pogeshet medina*, [in:] *kshyahdut-pogeshet medina*, edit. K. Glicklich, Tel Aviv 2015, pp. 77-268.

¹⁰⁸ See: B. Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-27.

After the marginalization of Marxism, and even more so – of its anarchist interpretation, and the decline of the ideal of Jewish diasporism – what are the prospects of non-statist Zionism? It seems that this once significant approach has two successors.

The first results from the trauma of religious-Zionist thinkers and grass-root Right activists from the 1993 Oslo agreements and the 2005 Israeli disengagement from the Gaza strip, enacted by a former Rightist icon, Ariel Sharon. These events, and the widespread principled willingness to evacuate settlements in a future peace agreement with the Palestinians, heightened the tension between Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel) and the State of Israel. Among an extreme part of the settler youth, there developed an ultra-orthodox-like hostility to the state, seen as ensconced in “foreign” Western values, and an unbending dedication to the land and its settlement, without any regard for the state’s sovereignty¹⁰⁹. But, more relevant is the reservation from the state in itself of two prominent (though not consensual) Zionist-Religious thinkers, Rabbi Menachem Fruman and Rabbi Shimon Gershon Rosenberg (known by his acronym Shagar). Both thinkers revisit the romantic preference of the “authentic” and “intimate” land, community and people over the “artificial” and “alienated” state. For them, the disengagement and its alleged obtuseness towards the settlers demonstrate the inherent alienation of the state and its formal law, and thus render the state inept to express and employ Jewish values. Furthermore, they hold that the state of Israel – as a nation state – curtails the universal aspect of Judaism, cultivated, paradoxically, by the holy land. Rabbi Fruman advocated a peace initiative, premised on the religious Jewish-Muslim shared renunciation of human sovereignty. Israel would withdraw from Judea and Samaria while leaving the settlers, who would be citizens of the land of Israel, rather than the state of Israel¹¹⁰.

Other exponents of anti-statist Jewish nationalist can be found among Jewish-American intellectuals, reinstating the legacy of Horace Kallen, Simon Rawidowicz and others, that we did not discuss here, and reacting to current intellectual re-examination of the nation-state as the sole expression of nationalism¹¹¹. David N. Myers, one of its leading spokesmen, wishes to reintroduce the disengagement of Jewish nationality from the Israeli state. This distinction suits the universal and diasporic nature of the Jewish people and might resolve the anomaly of the State of Israel, as a nation-state of a nation whose majority does live in it and which also has a considerable non-Jewish population. Myers does not ignore the important functions of the state of Israel, but refuses

¹⁰⁹ See on these developments in Y. Sheleg, *Innocence Lost: The Impact of the Disengagement on Religious Zionism*, <http://jcpa.org/article/innocence-lost-the-impact-of-the-disengagement-on-religious-zionism/> [access on: 6.03.2018].

¹¹⁰ M. Fruman, *Sahaki erets: Shalom, Am, Adama*, Tel Aviv 2014, pp. 83-89; 108-110; 133-139; 191, 199; 226-242; S.G. Rosenberg [Shagar], *bayom ha-hu: drashot u-ma'amarim lemo'adey Iyar*, Alon Shvut 2012, pp. 37-40; 128-145. On Rabbi Fruman see: I. Kershner, *From an Israeli Settlement, A Rabbi's Unorthodox Plan for Peace*, “New York Times” December 5, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/06/world/middleeast/06froman.html?pagewanted=all> [access on: 15.02.2018]. On H. Shagar see: S.G. Rosenberg, *Faith Shattered and Restored: Judaism in the Postmodern Age*, trans. E. Leshem, New Milford and Jerusalem 2017.

¹¹¹ See: M. Keating, *Plurinational Democracy, Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era*, Oxford 2001.

to accept it as the only manifestation of Jewish nationality, and highlights the diasporic virtues of Judaism¹¹².

Fascinatingly, Myers reiterates the cultural aspect of Jewish nationality and its religious sources, corresponding to contemporary post-secularism¹¹³. Indeed, excluding Borochof and other Marxist Zionists, non-statist Jewish nationalists – from Dubnow through Ahad Ha'am and Buber to Rav Shagar and Fruman and Myers – highlight that Jewish traditional uniqueness can never be reduced to a nation-state. The contemporary recurrence of non-statist Zionism indicates that this stance echoes deep Jewish sentiments. Future developments, like an Israeli withdrawal from Judea and Samaria, globalization and the ensuing wakening of small nation-states, and the firming up of diasporism in American Jewry might render it relevant again in the future.

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¹¹² D.N. Myers, "Beyond Statism": A Call to Rethink Jewish Collectivity, lecture delivered at the University of Washington, October 10, 2006; D.N. Myers, *Rethinking the Jewish Nation*, "Havrutah" 2011, No. 6, pp. 27-33; D.N. Myers, *Between Jew and Arab...*, pp. 4-8; 77-78; 84-85; 107-108; D.N. Myers, *Jewish History: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford 2017, pp. 73-97. See also Y. Turner, *Hayahas le-tzion ve-latfutsut ba-mahshava hayehudit shel ha-mea ha-esrim: iyunim ba-filosofia shel ha-kiyum ha-yehudi*, Tel Aviv 2014, pp. 256-296.

¹¹³ See his D.N. Myers, *Between Supersessionism and Atavism: Toward a Neo-Secular View of Religion*, [in:] *Secularism in Question: Jews and Judaism in Modern Times*, edit. A. Joskowicz, E.B. Katz, Philadelphia 2015, pp. 261-275.

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Abstract: This essay aims at exploring Zionist currents that resisted the establishment of a Jewish nation-state, their non-statist vision of Zionism and its roots in Jewish conditions and political traditions, as well as in European anti-statist ideologies and national patterns. First, the non-Zionist diaspora nationalism of Simon Dubnow will be examined, as an important point of reference of non-statist Zionisms; then, the reservations of Ahad Ha'am, founder of "spiritual Zionism", from the vision of a nation-state and the Marxian anti-statism of Ber Borochov and his socialist followers will be observed. Thereafter, the anarchism of Martin Buber and his followers in the binational factions "Brit Shalom and Ihud" will be discussed; here anti-statism is manifestly theological. Lastly, the current manifestations of non-statist Jewish nationalism will be succinctly explored, focusing on two religious-Zionist rabbis, the late Menachem Fruman and Shimon Gershon Rosenberg, and the American historian David N. Myers.

Keywords: Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginzberg), Ber Borochov, Simon Dubnow, Martin Buber, Brit Shalom, nationalism, Zionism

Article submitted: 25.02.2018, article accepted: 18.05.2018.