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Can Jewish Ethics Speak to Sovereignty?

ABSTRACT

Sovereignty remains one of the most contested political issues of our time. Prominent scholars on the American left have argued that Jewish ethics provides useful resources for the critique of sovereignty. Against these scholars, this article contends that the fixation upon Jewish values is liable to hinder the development of a forceful rejoinder to sovereignty's defenders. To temper the enthusiasm for ethics as a framework for arbitrating conflicts over sovereignty, this article revisits an internal Zionist debate surrounding the relationship between ethics and politics. Drawing on the work of Jakob Klatzkin (1882-1948), this article argues that critics of sovereignty should downplay ethics, focusing instead on cultivating the political imagination required to envision and defend non-sovereign regimes.

KEYWORDS

political ethics, sovereignty, Zionism, state

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INTRODUCTION

Sovereignty remains one of the most contested political issues of our time. Starting in the 1990s, global transformations—unprecedented levels of migration, the rise of non-state actors, human rights regimes, transnational capital flows, and European integration—led scholars to debate whether the Westphalian order was on the verge of collapse. Noting the aforementioned global transformations, many scholars declared that sovereignty—once the default mode of political organization—was "waning," in decline, or even obsolete (Sassen 1996; Krasner 1999; Brown 2010; Benhabib 2011). This debate turned largely on empirical diagnoses: Have non-state actors replaced states as the decisive political agents? Do states retain control over what transpires within their borders? Will states be eclipsed by supranational bodies like the European Union? Yet these empirical diagnoses also inspired a normative literature dedicated to exposing sovereignty's supposed liabilities as a theoretical ideal (Cocks 2014; Krause 2015). In hindsight, many of the more sweeping proclamations from this period appear premature. After the 2008 financial crisis, Brexit, Trump, and the rise of ethno-national populism, sovereignty's hold on the political imagination appears more tenacious than scholars predicted. To take one example: In his September 2017 speech to the United Nations, Donald Trump used the words "sovereign" or "sovereignty" twenty-one times.[1] Noting this tenacity is not tantamount to conceding that the contest has been decided in sovereignty's favor; it merely indicates the high stakes and complexity of these protracted struggles.

In this article, I examine whether Jewish ethics—and ethical discourse more generally—can contribute meaningfully to these controversies. Prominent scholars on the (American) academic left have argued that studying Jewish ethics can help us to diagnose sovereignty's dangers—and, ideally, recast political community in non-sovereign terms. The reliance on Jewish ethics is not altogether surprising, given that Zionism and the State of Israel are among the pet examples of scholars who condemn sovereignty as an inherently flawed ideal. In the Western imagination, the figure of the Jew has traditionally symbolized statelessness and an apolitical condition. Yet, starting in the 2000s, critics began to depict the State of Israel—and, by extension, the Jews—as the paradigmatic sovereign nation. For example, theorists determined to release political "thought and practice from the dream of sovereign power" have argued that the Zionist case

offers an especially powerful demonstration of sovereignty's violent, exclusionary logic (Cocks 2014, 2). Similarly, Jewish critics of Zionism often trace the movement's failings to its supposed commitment to the sovereign paradigm. Yet critics who adduce the Zionist case do not only reject "the dream of sovereign power"—they also tout (Jewish) ethics as a theoretical counterweight. Thus, Jewish critics of Zionism have identified the adoption of diasporic Jewish values (e.g., hospitality, responsiveness to the other, cohabitation) as a sine qua non for the establishment of a more just regime in Israel/Palestine, a regime that rejects the logic of sovereignty (Butler 2012).[2] For these critics of sovereignty, it is precisely Judaism's ethical teachings—as opposed to, say, the rabbinic legal corpus—that harbor transformative political promise.

In this article, I hope to temper the widespread enthusiasm for ethics as a framework for arbitrating conflicts over sovereignty, territory, and political enfranchisement. To challenge the presumption in favor of ethics, I offer a markedly different take on the Zionist example. On my reading, the Zionist case, which purportedly vindicates the political promise of ethics, actually exposes their comparative political impotence. As we will see, the controversy surrounding the political purchase of (Jewish) ethics predates the establishment of the State of Israel. Indeed, in the interwar period, Zionist intellectuals debated the wisdom of investing political energy in projects of ethical cultivation. In this article, I seek to acquaint contemporary critics with this internal Zionist debate. I revisit this historical episode to challenge assumptions (about the relationship between ethics and politics, state and nation) that underwrite ethical approaches to the critique of sovereignty. Contrary to what contemporary critics suggest, reservations regarding ethics need not express a dogmatic commitment to the sovereign state. In the early twentieth century, it was precisely an appreciation for the political vitality of diasporic Jewish communities that led some Zionist thinkers to reject a politics centered upon the promotion of "Jewish values." In other words, the turn to ethics aroused opposition from within the precincts of non-sovereign political thought. Thinkers who rejected the notion, made canonical by Bodin, Hobbes, and Spinoza, that the sovereign state exhausts the possibilities for political organization also rejected the move to found modern Jewish politics upon ethical doctrines. With greater historical perspective, we can appreciate why critics of sovereignty might be wary of reflexive invocations of "Jewish values"—which are liable to

hinder the development of a forceful rejoinder to traditional justifications for sovereignty.

Thus, my bid to dethrone ethical idioms begins with a plea to expand the archive on which contemporary critics draw. Specifically, I aim to divert attention from "the usual suspects"—that is, the luminaries (mostly French and German) of modern Jewish thought. Ethical critics tend to pin their political hopes on the discovery of Jewish moral exemplars—showcasing theorists (such as Levinas) who offer philosophically sophisticated meditations on self-other relations. By contrast, I propose that we study texts of a more polemical bent, written largely by Eastern European Jews. After WWI, the dire predicament of Eastern European Jews pushed nationalist thinkers of all types (e.g., Zionists, autonomists) to debate regimes for national autonomy, self-determination, and self-rule. The annals of Jewish nationalism arguably constitute one of the richest nodes of theoretical reflection upon the merits of sovereign and non-sovereign regimes. Yet these texts have largely been ignored by political theorists and scholars of modern Jewish thought. This oversight is unfortunate, I argue, because these texts offer a framing of the controversy surrounding sovereignty that departs from both the Schmittian rubric of political theology and from contemporary idioms of ethical critique. By revisiting this corpus, I venture, critics of sovereignty can expand the theoretical repertoire, replacing appeals to moral conviction with a study of institutions and practices.

In this spirit, I devote the bulk of this article to the work of Jakob Klatzkin (1882–1948), a philosopher, editor, translator, and Zionist intellectual. Klatzkin has received scant attention in English-language scholarship. This neglect is not altogether surprising, given that little of Klatzkin's voluminous oeuvre has been translated from the original German and Hebrew.[3] Yet Klatzkin's comparative obscurity may also reflect aspects of his life and work that prove difficult to assimilate to familiar rubrics. Although classified as "the most radical denier of any possibility of a future Jewish life in the Diaspora," Klatzkin never moved to Palestine (Hertzberg 1997, 315). Moreover, Klatzkin's penchant for polemical stridency can make for uncomfortable reading—as when he dismisses the Jewish demand for equal rights as evidence of craven assimilationism.[4] In short, Klatzkin resists neat appropriation as a prophetic voice of moral condemnation or as a precursor in principled dissent.

But that is precisely my point: While understandable, the search for inspiring moral paragons is not without theoretical and political drawbacks. Specifically, the fixation on Jewish values has led critics of sovereignty to neglect more fundamental questions about the grounds of the polity. Any serious bid to contest sovereignty's default status must, I submit, defend the viability of alternative regimes. Klatzkin's work assumes renewed significance at the current juncture because he helps us grasp why ethical critics have trouble meeting this challenge. As a fierce critic of the moralizing tendencies of cultural Zionism, Klatzkin exposes liabilities of predicating political mobilization on adherence to abstract ideals, however morally attractive. Klatzkin's reservations regarding ethics emerge from his study of Jewish history—specifically, from his analysis of the conditions that enabled diasporic Jews to exercise self-rule. In other words, Klatzkin advances a theory of what makes a non-sovereign polity work—and it is precisely this understanding that prompts him to reject political appeals to so-called Jewish values. Analysis of the inner workings of non-sovereign polities is sorely lacking in the contemporary discourse. Via this excursus into the annals of Jewish nationalism, I hope to persuade contemporary critics to investigate the historical conditions for and political viability of non-sovereign regimes. A historically informed critique of sovereignty is more powerful than an ethics of particular identity, I contend, precisely because it enables us to see that the critique of the state need not entail a parallel critique of the nation.

THE ETHICAL TURN IN THE CONTEMPORARY CRITIQUE OF SOVEREIGNTY

Before I turn to Klatzkin, I must explain how ethics has emerged as a signature discourse for negotiating contemporary transformations in the global order. In what follows, I juxtapose two examples of the ethical approach from which I dissent—Joan Cocks's *On Sovereignty and Other Political Delusions* (2014) and Judith Butler's *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (2012). Admittedly, Butler and Cocks pursue distinctive projects and draw on different archives. Butler seeks to mobilize "Jewish/not-Jewish" sources for opposition to Zionism, sources whose political purchase derives precisely from the challenge they pose to "sovereign notions of the subject and ontological claims of self-identity" (Butler 2012, 9). Cocks would expose the modern "idea of sovereign power" as an elusive dream that, when pursued,

breeds violence and domination (Cocks 2014, 4). Cocks presents the Zionist movement, which she glosses as "the search for Jewish sovereign freedom," as one of two case studies illustrating sovereignty's "political psychology and logic" (the second being the colonization of North America) (Cocks 2014, 101, 107). Mindful of these differences in emphasis and aims, I do not mean to imply that Cocks and Butler pursue a joint project or constitute a "school." The juxtaposition nevertheless proves fruitful as an illustration of theoretical currents prevailing on the academic left (especially in America). Beyond shared opposition to the State of Israel, Cocks and Butler share certain assumptions about what sovereignty means and why it is amenable to ethical critique.

Why do I characterize Cocks's and Butler's interventions as instances of ethical critique? What makes this critique ethical, I contend, is less the sense of moral outrage at crimes perpetrated by the sovereign state—which crimes, Butler and Cocks imply, are not incidental—than the way in which theorists go about sundering received political attachments. Convinced that sovereign power is necessarily oppressive, Cocks and Butler undertake an investigation into the ethics of particular identity. The question that preoccupies Cocks and Butler is whether identity can be figured in ways that encourage ethical responsibility to the other. Thus, Butler and Cocks predicate the campaign against sovereignty, and for alternative political regimes, upon a philosophical investigation of the self (both individual and collective). Given the myriad idioms available for the critique of sovereignty, why do Butler and Cocks invest political hopes in the ethics of particular identity? On my reading, the recourse to ethics reflects an understanding of sovereignty as something more than a regime type, something more than a legal authority that is ultimate and absolute. Playing with the linkage between "the sovereign state" and "the sovereign self," Butler and Cocks treat sovereignty as an existential/psychological complex. According to Cocks, the sovereign state and the sovereign self express the same "conceit and ambition"—namely, the ambition to be completely self-determining (Cocks 2014, 4). Thus, the "target" of Cocks's critique "is not political societies on the scale of the large territorial modern state but the sovereign conceit and ambition of modern states large or small, as well as the same conceit and ambition on the part of the individual, the ethnos, the demos, and the human race as a single entity" (Cocks 2014, 4). In short, instead of scrutinizing the nation-state's characteristic legal and political institutions, Cocks and Butler look behind the regime to criticize its animating ethos.

Why fixate upon sovereignty's animating ethos, instead of, say, weighing the respective merits of sovereign and non-sovereign regimes at any given historical juncture? The fundamental assumption underlying the ethical turn is that only a certain kind of self—namely, a stereotypical sovereign self—would crave the ultimate and absolute power that sovereignty promises. As Cocks explains, "the search for sovereign freedom can be initiated only by a self that has already cut potential ties of identification with other entities in the world, or has had its ties cut by others, for it is only then that those other entities become alien beings over against which the self believes that its sovereign freedom must be fought and won" (Cocks 2014, 44). Here, Cocks traces support for a specific political ideal back to an unduly hermetic conception of subjectivity. Butler also presumes that one's theory of selfhood determines whether one supports or opposes the current regime of Jewish sovereignty in Israel/Palestine. We can see as much if we examine a question that she formulates when glossing texts by Edward Said: "Is it precisely through a politics that *affirms* the irresolution of identity that binationalism becomes thinkable?" (Butler 2012, 31). With this formulation, Butler implies that adoption of a particular theory of identity—specifically, one in which identity can be attained "only with and through the other"—is a prerequisite for endorsing a concrete political program (i.e., binationalism) (Butler 2012, 31). Conversely, those who purport to be discrete, autonomous subjects are dismissed as unlikely or imperfect recruits to the binationalist cause. Thus, Butler prefers "the Levinasian position" to Buber's "I-Thou," because the latter "would insist on separate identities, culturally distinct, which nevertheless federate as a cooperative dialogue and venture" (Butler 2012, 38). It is scarcely surprising that Buber the political activist failed to oppose settler colonialism, Butler implies, given that Buber the philosopher failed to incorporate alterity into the self. In short, Butler and Cocks trace support for the sovereign state back to a philosophically unsophisticated and morally reprehensible vision of the self.

Consequently, in this theoretical idiom, the self emerges as the proper target of critical intervention. Indeed, work on the self becomes a political imperative, an inextricable component of the campaign against sovereign power—for "only through this fissuring of who I am do I stand a chance of relating to another" (Butler 2012, 6). To enable us "to engage in a relationship without exerting sovereign power against one another," the critic must first loosen "rigid self-other antinomies" (Cocks 2014, 126). If one accepts the diagnosis that the loss of "polymorphous perversity"

through the consolidation of a more enclosed, less empathetic self encourages relations of domination, the key question becomes how to relax the self's boundaries (Cocks 2014, 44). At this juncture, ethics emerges as an indispensable resource. For diasporic Jewish ethics prove ideally suited to advance projects of "self-departure"—or so Butler contends (Butler 2012, 5). On Butler's rendition, "ethics comes to signify the act by which place is established for those who are 'not me,' comporting me beyond a sovereign claim in the direction of a challenge to selfhood that I receive from elsewhere" (Butler 2012, 9). In sum, ethical critics presume that projects to reconfigure the polity must start with ethical work on the self. Thus, they devote more energy to envisioning "a relation to alterity which is irreversible and defining" than they do to mapping the contours of a non-sovereign polity (Butler 2012, 5).

To say that Butler and Cocks scant institutional concerns is not to imply that they are indifferent to the state. Indeed, both thinkers are animated by the hope for the establishment of a regime which is more capacious than the nation-state. Butler and Cocks both assert the need to establish "a new entity" in Israel/Palestine "in which each people could enjoy the practices to which it is attached, foster bonds of solidarity with one another, and exercise equal political agency" (Cocks 2014, 126).[5] Yet they devote scant energy to concrete dilemmas of institutional design—or to elaborating theoretical justifications for, say, a regime that uncouples citizenship from territory. Such tasks do not command their attention, I would argue, because Butler and Cocks presume that readers who affirm the irresolution of identity are predisposed to embrace the "correct" political positions. In the ethics of particular identity, determinate political consequences are expected to follow directly from ethical work on the self. To take one example: When summarizing Said's work, Butler identifies "a sustained dispossession of this 'I'" as one condition "for a new polity, one in which identity never fully returns to itself, where identity remains cast out in a web of relations that cannot eradicate difference or return to simple identity" (Butler 2012, 50–51). Here, the conditions for the polity—presumably, Butler intends a concrete political regime—are affective, ethical, and philosophical, rather than historical, institutional, or legal. Similarly, when Cocks adduces examples of "actually existing exceptions to sovereign politics in Israel/Palestine," she points not to the Parallel States Project (LeVine and Mossberg 2014) or Two States, One Homeland—groups that propose concrete alternatives to the territorial nation-state—but to the

Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions and the weekly protests in the Palestinian village of Bil'in (Cocks 2014, 126). The activists whom Cocks admires contest sovereignty not by devising local, layered, and overlapping political regimes, but by eroding the self's boundaries and identifying as generic "humans" (which identification ostensibly facilitates multi-ethnic coalitions). Indeed, Cocks places her hopes for "the enlargement of freedom" in the region on residents' willingness "to step outside the limitations of a sovereign/subject relationship and into a human-to-human frame" (Cocks 2014, 127). Although Cocks and Butler advocate the establishment of a new polity, they focus their critical energies on getting the ethics right—and, here, correctness is judged philosophically—on the assumption that the desired political conclusions will follow.

But do determinate political positions follow from one's philosophy of subjectivity? Granted, ethical critics can enrich our understanding of political motivation—for individuals trapped in a narcissistic circuit of self-concern are unlikely to join campaigns for justice. Yet my aim, in this article, is to convince readers that the investment in ethics is nevertheless misplaced—for two reasons which I will state now without providing the necessary substantiation (given space constraints). Hopefully, the objections will gain force as I elucidate Klatzkin's critique (in the next section), and I will return to them in the article's conclusion.[6]

First: The ethics of particular identity does not provide sufficient resources for non-sovereign political thought, because philosophical conceptions of subjectivity do not yield determinate political stances. Were Jews to embrace alterity or adopt a "human-to-human frame," they would still need to initiate further conversations about the institutions, practices, and policies necessary to constitute a viable polity. Ethics provides little guidance on such matters, precisely because the repudiation of sovereign subjectivity does not entail a determinate stance on, say, the merits of one-state, two-state, or federal solutions to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. To adjudicate between competing proposals, we need to exercise political imagination and historical judgment, weighing the ability of different regimes to fulfill the political aspirations of those who reside in the region.

Second: The ethical critique risks discrediting theoretical idioms that put the polity on center stage, because it shrouds the self in moral suspicion. Tracing the state's crimes back to a hermetic, even solipsistic, sense of self, ethical critics look askance at any political claim that presupposes

a bounded self (e.g., the nation or the people). Such claims arouse suspicion if one assumes, as Butler and Cocks do, that the pursuit of sovereign power is an inevitable temptation for every bounded self. Operating under these assumptions, justifying a federal regime (which accords local autonomy to distinct national groups) is liable to become incredibly fraught. Once we divorce the state from the self, however, the project of devising non-sovereign political arrangements becomes relatively straightforward. Indeed, a critic of sovereignty need not be a critic of the self or the nation. The proper object of critique, I would argue, is not solidarity, belonging, or national identity, but the poverty of political imagination when it comes to envisioning political agency beyond the nation-state.

THE ZIONIST CRITIQUE OF ETHICS

The limitations of the ethical critique of sovereignty are manifest, I contend, when we situate the current debate within a broader historical narrative. In this spirit, I turn to the Zionist essays of Jakob Klatzkin, collected in his 1925 volume, *Tehumim* (Boundaries). Butler and Cocks interpret resistance to ethics as evidence of a dogmatic investment in sovereign conceptions of self and nation. By contrast, reading Klatzkin helps us to see why thinkers who resist the hegemony of the sovereign state might be skeptical regarding the political purchase of ethics. To adopt an admittedly polemical framing: Zionist thinkers of the 1920s and '30s have more to teach us about politics without sovereignty than right-thinking American leftists.

Klatzkin proves a key figure for the current conversation, I want to suggest, because his attack on the political salience of ethics emerges from *within* the universe of non-sovereign political thought. In what sense is Klatzkin profitably classified as a theorist of non-sovereign politics? As we will see, the question that exercises Klatzkin surrounds the historical, religious, and legal conditions that enabled Jews to achieve autonomy in galut—that is, in the absence of territorial concentration, equal rights, or state power. Departing from Hobbes and Spinoza (whose *Ethics* Klatzkin translated into Hebrew), Klatzkin does not hesitate to accord political standing to non-sovereign communities, such as the Jewish *kahal*—and he mines Jewish history for evidence of such a polity's inner workings. Klatzkin's investigation of the conditions that supported a diasporic polity is prompted by a diagnosis of the political crisis confronting modern Jews. In his Zionist essays, Klatzkin seeks to chart a trajectory for national independence now that

emancipation and enlightenment have rendered pre-modern forms of Jewish politics—foremost among them the *kahal*—obsolete. In the course of substantiating this diagnosis, Klatzkin advances a theory regarding the political work that Jewish institutions, practices, and law once performed in diasporic communities. It is precisely this understanding of the enabling conditions for exilic self-rule, I contend, that leads Klatzkin to reject ethics as a valid basis for nationalist political mobilization.

To grasp Klatzkin's striking appreciation for the vitality of non-sovereign polities, we must start with his analysis of the political predicament of modern Jews. A historical judgment regarding the dire consequences of the centralized modern state provides the catalyst for Klatzkin's political intervention. Specifically, Klatzkin identifies the loss of national autonomy—which he dates to the twin processes of enlightenment and emancipation—as the central crisis of Jewish modernity. On Klatzkin's narrative, the Jewish community was independent in the middle ages and in the early modern period, given limits to the state's reach and—more important from Klatzkin's perspective—given unwavering fealty to halachah. "We had our own court [*bet-din*], which even imposed fines and punishments, and it alone did we obey. . . . We were subject to none but our rabbis and elders; the foreign authority's regime [*shilton*] did not have control over our land and our property" (Klatzkin 1925, 39). Klatzkin is scarcely alone in identifying the loss of communal autonomy as the defining crisis of Jewish modernity. Klatzkin's work is nevertheless distinguished by the use of "galut" as the relevant concept for analyzing the political implications of these historical dislocations. The political crisis to which Zionism responds, Klatzkin suggests, is best understood as an epochal rupture within the galut. On this periodization, the *haskalah* provides the fault line separating robust forms of galut from degenerate forms consigned to extinction. "It is impossible to draw any conclusions about the contemporary galut from the galut of the period prior to the *haskalah.* They are two different kinds of galut" (Klatzkin 1925, 77). Klatzkin is convinced that the contemporary galut is untenable—and, as a result, he advises Jewish nationalists to focus their political energies on the land of Israel and the Hebrew language. Thus, it is scarcely surprising that peers lamented the "extremism" of Klatzkin's position.[7] Yet contrary to what one might expect from a professed "negator of the exile," Klatzkin never dismisses galut as inherently oppressive. Departing from conventions of Zionist historiography, Klatzkin presents a strikingly sanguine, even

romanticized view of Jewish independence prior to emancipation. In the words of his contemporary Joseph Klausner, "Klatzkin, who is a negator of the galut, does not abolish the galut" (Klausner 1934, 156).

Adapting rabbinic concepts to illuminate contemporary political predicaments, Klatzkin frames his historical diagnosis as a lament for the galut, whose imminent demise he predicts. What does "galut" signify for Klatzkin and why is it unlikely to survive the trials of emancipation? Once barriers to social integration have fallen and religious norms have eroded, Klatzkin contends, Jews living outside of the land of Israel no longer inhabit a condition of "galut" (strictly speaking):

> Our sages spoke well: Even if the nations of the world are exiled, their exile [*galutan*] is not galut. But for Israel—who does not eat their bread or drink their wine—their exile [*galutam*] is galut.[8] And now that we do eat their bread and drink their wine—in the end, our galut will no longer be galut. That is, the end of our national foreignness which will decrease and come to an end. (Klatzkin 1925, 54)

According to the rabbinic definition that Klatzkin adopts, expulsion from one's homeland does not in and of itself constitute "galut." Rather, "galut" requires isolation from the dominant culture of one's adopted land—and it is assumed that halachah alone mandates the requisite insularity. Thus, in a period of widespread disregard for halachic prohibitions, the political situation of diasporic Jews is irrevocably altered, heralding the end of "galut."[9] In Klatzkin's view, the collapse of rabbinic authority and concomitant diminution of foreignness are not welcome developments but losses to be mourned. Amplifying the rabbinic resonance of the argument, Klatzkin taxes the corrosive forces of enlightenment with "destruction"—the "destruction [*hurban*] of our religion, our temple [*bateinu*] in galut" (Klatzkin 1925, 77). With the metaphor of *hurban*, Klatzkin suggests that the loss lamented is that of the institutions, such as the *kahal*, that ensured cultural distinctiveness and political independence in earlier periods. "The destruction [*hurban*] of our religion is the destruction of our state [*medinateinu*] in galut, the destruction of our third temple [*bateinu hashlishi*], our dwelling [*bateinu*] on foreign soil" (Klatzkin 1925, 54). Here, Klatzkin equates diasporic religious institutions with the ancient Hebrew state, inverting the conventional understanding of galut as a condition of passivity and dependence, the antithesis of the independence enjoyed in

biblical times. If Klatzkin doubts the wisdom of investing in diasporic politics post-*haskalah*, it is precisely because, on his diagnosis, historical developments preclude the continued existence of a "state in galut."

What is the political theory implicit in Klatzkin's lament for the demise of galut? As his terminological choices reveal, Klatzkin considers the *kahal*—which he repeatedly glosses as a "state" (*medinah*) or "kingdom" (*malchut*)—a legitimate polity. Thus, when explaining Judaism's persistence in the pre-modern galut, Klatzkin writes, "A fortified wall stood between us and them [non-Jews] and within the wall—a Hebrew state [*medinah*] in miniature (to cite Heine's incisive formulation)" (Klatzkin 1925, 49).[10] In other words, Klatzkin classifies diasporic Jewish communities as bona fide polities—as opposed to religious congregations—even though they remain subject to external jurisdiction. More than a literary flourish, Klatzkin's classification expresses a deeper theoretical conviction. Klatzkin dissents from the tradition of Bodin, Hobbes, and Spinoza, a tradition that reserves the title "commonwealth" for entities that wield sovereign—that is, ultimate and absolute—power. As Hobbes states, "For if we could suppose a great Multitude of men to consent in the observation of Justice, and other Lawes of Nature, without a common Power to keep them all in awe; we might as well suppose all Man-kind to do the same; and then there neither would be, nor need to be any Civill Government, or Common-wealth at all; because there would be Peace without subjection" (Hobbes 1996, 118–19). Refusing Hobbes' categorical distinction between a sovereign state and a disorganized "multitude," Klatzkin expands the universe of bona fide polities. According to Klatzkin, meaningful self-rule is possible even without the "Power Unlimited" that Hobbes equates with "absolute Sovereignty" (Hobbes 1996, 155).

Moreover, against the tradition of Hobbes and Spinoza, Klatzkin does not predicate political community on concentration within and control over territory. In the passage cited above, Hobbes discounts the possibility of a world government. Because peace requires subjection, the world must be carved up into territorially bounded states, each answerable only to its own sovereign.[11] When Klatzkin extols the independence of exilic Jews, he severs legal jurisdiction from territory. Indeed, Klatzkin goes so far as to ascribe a shared constitution to Jews scattered across the globe. In the pre-modern galut, Klatzkin writes, "The communities [*kehillot*] of Israel did not only share one faith, they also shared one constitution [*hukah*], and we were subject only to our rabbis and our elders" (Klatzkin 1925, 49). Granted,

Klatzkin pins his hopes for the Jewish future on the land of Israel. Yet, as Klatzkin explains, territorial concentration only becomes necessary at a specific juncture, for contingent historical reasons. "As long as our lives were concentrated within our religious state [*medinateinu hadatit*], we did not know the danger of destruction, and the land of Israel was not a condition for the nation's existence. Since our state [*medinateinu*] on foreign soil was destroyed, however, the land of Israel has become a condition for our existence" (Klatzkin 1925, 94). In principle, one can establish a polity and preserve national identity without territorial concentration. For these reasons, Klatzkin is best understood as a theorist of non-sovereign, diasporic politics.

This classification is crucial for evaluating Klatzkin's critique of ethics, I submit, for it is precisely an appreciation for the political robustness of exilic Jewish communities that leads Klatzkin to doubt whether appeals to Jewish values can advance Zionist political aims. The critique of ethics is a thread that runs throughout Klatzkin's oeuvre, from his early critique of his teacher, Hermann Cohen, to his polemical interventions in Zionist debate. In the latter texts, Klatzkin complains that luminaries of cultural Zionism have made the same mistake as Cohen (a non-Zionist)—both locate Judaism's defining traits in its moral doctrines. As early as 1931, Klausner summarized the "essence" of Klatzkin's political project as a "war against spiritual Zionism"—that is, a campaign against attempts to found Jewish nationalism upon "abstract ideas" and "beliefs and opinions" (Klausner 1934, 154). As Klausner's précis suggests, Klatzkin's polemic does not map onto now-familiar oppositions between "political" and "cultural" Zionism (e.g., state vs. cultural center, West vs. East, the problem of the Jews vs. the problem of Judaism). Rather, Klatzkin criticizes cultural Zionism from an avowedly rabbinic perspective, exposing its complicity with spiritualizing tendencies that became entrenched in Emancipation's wake. Klausner identifies the following declaration from *Tehumim* as Klatzkin's political motto: "For this was Zionism created: To redeem the foundations of our being from the trial of spirituality and abstraction and to elevate them into living foundations" (Klatzkin 1925, 136).[12] Klatzkin's critique of ethics is, first and foremost, a critique of attempts—by Ahad Ha'am and his disciples—to predicate Zionist politics on fealty to a set of abstract moral principles.

Conventionally hailed as the father of "cultural Zionism," Ahad Ha'am (the pen name of Asher Ginsberg, 1856–1927) advocated the establishment of a spiritual center in the land of Israel, whose influence would radiate outward to regenerate Jewish culture worldwide. Klatzkin and Ahad Ha'am

exhibit certain commonalities—both attach immense significance to the Hebrew language and the land of Israel without predicating the land's political efficacy on the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state. Similarities notwithstanding, Klatzkin nevertheless objects to what he considers Ahad Ha'am's characteristic move—the "exaggerated interest," on the part of a professed nationalist, "in philosophizing about the essence of Judaism" (Hertzberg 1997, 320). To Klatzkin's dismay, spiritual Zionism "attempts to define the Jewish national spirit in abstract terms, characterizing it as an ethical system and a unique *Weltanschauung*, expressed in such concepts as, for example, the ideal of social justice, the messianic idea, the concept of abstraction and the like" (Hertzberg 1997, 320). Although undoubtedly polemical, Klatzkin's characterization of Ahad Ha'am's work is not without foundation. Ahad Ha'am does undertake a search for the national spirit, and he famously locates Judaism's essence in an exceptional moral genius. Ahad Ha'am hails the Jews as the people

> which, almost from the moment of its first appearance in the world's history, has existed only to protest vehemently and unceasingly on behalf of the rights of the spirit against those of the strong arm and the sword; which from time immemorial to the present day, has derived all its spiritual strength simply from its steadfast faith in its moral mission, in its obligation and its capacity to approach nearer than other nations to the ideal of moral perfection. (Ahad Ha'am 1962, 234)

Indeed, with a nod to Nietzsche, Ahad Ha'am extols the Jews as the "Supernation"—the "single nation better adapted than other nations, by virtue of its inherent characteristics, to moral development, and ordering its whole life in accordance with a moral law which stands higher than the common type" (Ahad Ha'Am 1962, 228). Yet Ahad Ha'am does not merely advance a controversial characterization of the essence of Judaism—he touts Jewish moral superiority to intervene in a controversy surrounding the proper aims of Zionist politics. Unlike "our latter-day Zionists, who base their Zionism on economic and political grounds," Ahad Ha'am insists that the pursuit of moral perfection can serve as a basis for national revival (Ahad Ha'Am 1962, 232). "A belief in the fundamental morality of the Jewish spirit is not in the least opposed to the ideal of the national revival, but rather affords the true historical basis and logical substructure of that ideal" (Ahad Ha'Am 1962, 240). Without denying the importance of

"political freedom," Ahad Ha'am treats the material "body" as a means to the achievement of spiritual ends—specifically, the revitalization of moral ideals that have ossified under the weight of halachic strictures (Ahad Ha'Am 1962, 153). In short, Ahad Ha'am does not merely caution against flagrant violation of moral norms—he contends that the pursuit of moral perfection can awaken the energies required to advance nationalist projects.

Against Ahad Ha'am, Klatzkin objects that the fixation upon moral development impedes the "renewal of Judaism on a national foundation"—and he advances his own, contrasting political program while elaborating this objection (Klatzkin 1925, 16). Klatzkin pursues the campaign against "Judaism of the spirit" by opposing the evanescence of ideas, values, and sentiments (i.e., content) to the constructive power of what he calls "forms [*tzurot*]." By "forms," Klatzkin intends "the barriers of the nation," the laws, material practices, and institutions "which define and establish national life" (Klatzkin 1925, 52–53). Thus, Klatzkin's debate with Ahad Ha'am turns not on the respective merits of, say, compassion and ruthlessness, purism and realpolitik, but on the ability of abstract ideas to ground political community. Klatzkin's central theoretical contention is that "the power of the shell is greater than that of the seed" (Hertzberg 1997, 321). In other words, national independence can be maintained through reliance on "forms" alone:

> There can be no national base in an ethical doctrine, in ideas and concepts, in a *Weltanschauung*. National apartness is inherent in the many forms and prohibitions of our religion, not in the spirit of our ethics. Only our religion, and not the spirit of our ethic, can crystallize our national identity, because religion possesses binding power and authority. Unlike the abstract spirit of ethics, our religion is rich in forms which can fashion and protect a national life. (Hertzberg 1997, 321)

To substantiate this assertion regarding the constitutive power of forms, Klatzkin adduces evidence from the pre-modern galut. "It is this power of our religion which impressed forms [*tzurot*] on the length and breadth of our lives. . . . It is this power of our religion which even bequeathed us a kingdom [*malchut*] under conditions of subjugation" (Klatzkin 1925, 50). In short, Klatzkin's opposition to the cultural Zionist program is predicated upon a theory about the inner workings of a non-sovereign polity—specifically,

that the "forms" of communal life secured Jewish independence in the absence of sovereign power or territorial contiguity.

Klatzkin's critique of the ethical turn within Zionism is two-fold: He denies that moral principles can support a *national* community, given their universalism, and he denies that moral principles can ground a *living* community, given their abstraction. To elaborate the first objection: Klatzkin discerns an inherent tendency towards universalism in moral ideas. "The property that is the moral idea can be bestowed on others: And that is what makes it praiseworthy—that it is equal for all beings and available for all to achieve, and its destiny is to become the property of the world" (Klatzkin 1925, 33). The Jewish pedigree of certain moral ideals notwithstanding, these values are not, strictly speaking, national, since they strive to overwhelm local constraints and encompass humanity as a whole. In this sense, "there is nothing in this spirit [Judaism's ostensible moral spirit] which can support national definition, and there is much in it to cancel national uniqueness" (Klatzkin 1925, 26). Ahad Ha'am and his disciples, Klatzkin objects, fail to realize that so-called "prophetic ideals" strain against the national projects for which they have been recruited (Klatzkin 1925, 34–35). Moreover, attempts to isolate the spirit of Judaism carry the twin risks of chauvinism and scholasticism. Having predicated political mobilization on adherence to a set doctrine, Ahad Ha'am and his followers expend immense energy articulating said doctrine, isolating its distinctive features, distinguishing it from superficially similar Christian ideals, etc. In Ahad Ha'am's hands, Klatzkin objects, the national project has become a philosophical project, a pursuit of ever more refined theological determinations. Placing Judaism's "fate in the hands of philosophical research," spiritual Zionists fail to appreciate the qualitative difference between a "kingdom of priests" and a mundane polity (Klatzkin 1925, 26, 40).

Yet Klatzkin objects not only to the universalism of the values that Ahad Ha'am endorses, but also to their abstraction—their disconnection from the obligations of positive law. On Klatzkin's diagnosis, moral ideals prove ill-suited to the political task at hand precisely because they can be severed from the legal and practical contexts that have historically constituted the basis of any given polity. As Klausner explains, glossing Klatzkin's argument: "One may command deeds, but it is impossible to command beliefs and opinions" (Klausner 1934, 154). Thus, against Ahad Ha'am, Klatzkin exhorts Zionists to adapt the signature strategies of the exilic polity to a new historical context marked by pervasive secularization. If Ahad Ha'am

would salvage moral doctrines from the ruins of rabbinic Judaism, Klatzkin would salvage Judaism's "national assets, its body: laws" (Klatzkin 1925, 83). Rather than propagate Jewish values, Klatzkin contends, it is incumbent upon Zionists to develop functional equivalents for halachic laws, boundaries, and fences, now that halachah's authority has been irrevocably compromised.

In short, Klatzkin's resistance to reliance upon Jewish values stems not from intoxication with brute force but from a theoretical conviction that "forms" alone can resuscitate national autonomy. Klatzkin's peers and interlocutors often complained that his work was marked by an empty formalism.[13] This complaint does not lack for justification—at times, the function of "forms" appears limited to the preservation of national difference, to "apartness" for its own sake. Yet contrary to critics' objections, Klatzkin's project is not altogether devoid of "a central normative meaning" (Buber 2005, 57). On Klatzkin's definition, a national community is a bounded community. In galut, "our Sabbaths and our holidays, our seasons of joy and sorrow, our statutes [*hukeinu*] and our laws [*mishpateinu*], our customs and our manners" set the "boundaries" (*tehumim*) of the Jewish community (Klatzkin 1925, 52). Yet the space thereby delineated was not merely one of Jewish difference, but an arena for meaningful self-rule. Detailing the political function of halachah in the premodern galut, Klatzkin stresses the breadth of the *beit din's* jurisdiction, which extended to the imposition of fines and punishments and enabled Jews to avoid non-Jewish courts (*archaot*). In Klatzkin's romanticized portrait of "ghetto" existence, halachah was the lone source of legitimate authority—the dictates of the gentile state were scorned as "evil decrees" (Klatzkin 1925, 49). In this sense, Jewish communities were genuinely self-governing—"even in galut we lived a sovereign [*malchut*] life, a kingdom within a kingdom [*malchut betoch malchut*]" (Klatzkin 1925, 49). For our purposes, the theoretical implications of Klatzkin's account are more important than their historical accuracy (or lack thereof). Against Ahad Ha'am, Klatzkin puts the practice of self-rule at the heart of Zionist politics. "We do not aspire to the land of Israel in order to realize the ideas of Judaism. For us, territorial redemption [*geulah artzit*] is an end unto itself: a life of national freedom [*herut*]" (Klatzkin 1925, 40). In these essays, Klaztkin presents a vision of political freedom which does not take the form of an aspiration to sovereign power—and he predicates freedom's achievement on laws, practices, and institutions, rather than ideas, values, or sentiments.

To distill Klatzkin's polemic to a concise motto: Prophetic ideals are no substitute for what has been lost, post-emancipation, nor can they help Jewish nationalists build a suitable replacement. Yet a clarification is in order regarding Klatzkin's stance toward morality. Although Klatzkin campaigns against those who place ethical refinement at the heart of Zionist politics, he does not dismiss moral considerations as irrelevant, nor does he justify wanton disregard for the plight of non-Jews. Thus, in an essay on the "Arab question," Klatzkin warns that Zionism would lose its "moral right" were its leaders to accept a hypothetical British grant of hegemony over the land of Israel (Klatzkin 1925, 149). Throughout the essay, Klatzkin attacks the hypocrisy of Zionists who demand national minority rights for European Jews, but appear willing to exploit British power at the Arabs' expense—which hypocrisy is liable to "destroy our moral stance" (Klatzkin 1925, 150). In these passages, Klatzkin recalls activists to a shared set of norms and expectations, and warns repeatedly against forms of "national zealotry" that contravene morality (Klatzkin 1925, 151). Thus, the critique of ethics does not absolve political activists from moral accountability.

Indeed, Klatzkin aims not to release political power from moral constraint; rather, he denies that abstract moral reasoning suffices to address concrete political predicaments. With this objection, Klatzkin positions himself as the heir to what he identifies as canonical traditions of Jewish moral legislation, from which Ahad Ha'am has (unwittingly?) deviated. In other words, Klatzkin campaigns against abstract ethics (which he dismisses as Christian) in the name of a more concrete moral practice (which he declares authentically Jewish). Although Klatzkin rails against the cultural Zionist obsession with isolating the spirit of Judaism, he often succumbs to a similar temptation to crystallize Judaism's essence—for example, when he proclaims Judaism's "signature" to be "the rule of law" (Klatzkin 1971, 124). In passages such as these, Klatzkin advances a reductive mirror image of Ahad Ha'am's spiritual essentialism, depicting Judaism as wholly orthopractic. Judaism "is therefore not a belief but a religion [*dat*], that is, a constitution [*hukah*]. That is Judaism's praise and its power: the giving of laws and the severity of legalism" (Klatzkin 1971, 125). Again, Klatzkin's depiction of Jewish orthopraxis is neither original nor especially sophisticated—but, for our purposes, it helps to clarify the nature of his objection. Klatzkin objects not to moral argument as such, but rather to the distillation of moral principles absent a legal/political framework—which distillation, he

contends, deviates from Judaism's primary moral innovation (namely, the embodiment of morality in positive law).

> The essence of the law [*torah*] of Moses is perhaps not morality in and of itself, but morality in the sense of statute [*hok*] and law [*mishpat*]. Earlier moral doctrines [*torot*] were nothing but theories [*torot*], pleasant interpretations. In contrast, the law [*torah*] of Moses is not a theory [*torah*], in the sense of a setting forth of principles; rather it is a constitution [*hukah*] or a legal doctrine [*torat hukim*]. (Klatzkin 1925, 180)

On Klatzkin's interpretation, Judaism conveys moral instruction not through the dissemination of "moral and theoretical ideas" but through practices of commandment and obligation (Klatzkin 1971, 124). In rabbinic discourse, morality and politics are inextricably linked, in the sense that moral precepts do not exist independent of the legal framework of a discrete political community. Again, the point is not to assess the validity of Klatzkin's characterization, but to clarify the terms of his critique. As a critic of ethics, Klatzkin does not absolve political actors of moral responsibility. Rather, he questions whether the affirmation of Jewish values, in and of itself, can inspire the kind of agency required to found a vital political community.

Klatzkin proves significant for contemporary debates, I have argued, because his unsparing critique of ethics emerges from an analysis of what has historically enabled Jews to exercise self-rule in the absence of a sovereign Jewish state. Admiration for the political function of halachah leads Klatzkin to conclude that ethical principles do not provide a sufficiently robust foundation for political community, given their abstraction. Before turning to the conclusion, a brief word is in order regarding Klatzkin's political program and its implications for my classification of him as a theorist of non-sovereign politics. Convinced that halachic Judaism can no longer serve a political function in galut, Klatzkin predicates national revival on the contemporary "forms" of land and language. "Since the withering of our religion's power, we have no unifying power other than that of the unity of land and language" (Klatzkin 1925, 65). In the essays that I have discussed, Klatzkin provides scant details regarding the positive program that he advocates (beyond the insistence on land and language). He does, however, stress that Zionists should craft a political program centered primarily

on the land of Israel, as opposed to, say, campaigning for equal rights in Europe. Without denying the importance of political organizing in diaspora, Klatzkin would limit its scope to initiatives that amplify national consciousness (e.g., national minority rights) and prepare the groundwork for the anticipated "redemption" (e.g., instruction in Hebrew and, interestingly, Yiddish) (Klatzkin 1925, 92, 83).[14] Some might object to my classification of Klatzkin as a theorist of non-sovereign politics, given his preoccupation with the land of Israel. Here, two clarifications are in order. First, to classify Klatzkin as a theorist of non-sovereign politics is not to say that he is a diaspora nationalist. Klatzkin's point of departure, as a Zionist intellectual, is the conviction that historical transformations have rendered diasporic autonomy obsolete. Against Simon Dubnow, Klatzkin insists that the campaign for national autonomy in Europe is misguided, an exercise in futility (Klatzkin 1925, 37, 75). Thus, while Klatzkin offers a theoretical account of the material and historical conditions that enabled Jewish communities to flourish in galut, he contends that these conditions no longer obtain—with the result that nationalists must concentrate on the land of Israel.

Second, to advocate for territorial concentration in the land of Israel is not to endorse sovereignty as a political regime. In other words, the conviction that the land of Israel constitutes the proper geographical location for Jewish national projects does not commit one to pursue sovereign power over that territory. Klatzkin glosses his own aspiration as the establishment of "territorial-political [artzit-medinit] rule"—as opposed to cultural Zionism's "rule of absolute justice" (Klatzkin 1925, 40). Klausner uses similar language to summarize Klatzkin's position—Klatzkin advocates establishing a "center which is not only spiritual, but political-economic [*medini-calcali*] as well as spiritual, in the land of Israel" (Klausner 1934, 157). In other words, neither Klatzkin nor Klausner uses terms such as "sovereignty" or "state"—and it would be anachronistic to assume that support for a "political" center constitutes a tacit endorsement of a sovereign Jewish state. In this period, the decision between regimes was one of the most contentious questions in Zionist politics, and even "mainstream" figures (e.g., David Ben Gurion) proposed regimes of local autonomy, rather than the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state (Shumsky 2018). Thus, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the political regime that Klatzkin prefers from the mere fact that he professes attachment to the land of Israel. Again, Klatzkin provides scant details—and it is worth noting that, to the extent that Klatzkin was politically aligned, he did not align with the Zionist left.[15] Yet the brief glimpses

that Klatzkin does afford—for example, a call for Jews and Arabs to join forces in an anti-imperialist uprising against the British—suggest that his political aspirations do not align closely with those of the nation-state and its partisans (Klatzkin 1925, 148-151).

CONCLUSION

My animating concern in this article is that we lack the theoretical resources required to craft a compelling defense of non-sovereign regimes—at a moment when such a defense is urgently needed, given the deepening crisis of the liberal order. To rectify this deficit, I have related a story about the debate, among Zionist intellectuals, surrounding the advisability of founding a political movement upon ethical principles. We may be able to learn more about non-sovereign politics from Zionist thinkers of the 1920s and '30s, I wager, than from contemporary theorists who protest the moral outrages committed by sovereign states. How can this historical excursus illuminate our current predicament, at a moment characterized by increasing doubts about Israel's future as a Jewish nation-state (on the one hand), and increasingly vocal assertions of sovereignty as a counter to forces of globalization (on the other)?

As currently framed, the theoretical debate opposes ethics to sovereignty (and, by extension, the nation). Critics who would challenge the nation-state's hegemony are advised to study ethics, theorize subjectivity, and promote diasporic Jewish values. For scholars working in these idioms, ethical cultivation is a crucial component of the campaign against the current regime of Jewish sovereignty in Israel/Palestine, and against the pursuit of sovereign power more generally. Reading the work of Cocks and Butler, one is liable to conclude that only those invested in sovereignty and its privileges (both political and psychological) would resist this linkage of ethics and politics. With a more nuanced understanding of Jewish political history, however, we can see that this expectation is false. In the first half of the twentieth century, some of the sharpest critics of the ethical turn were students of non-sovereign politics. Again, the point is not merely to clarify the historical record, but to expose the political liabilities of forgetting that the controversy surrounding ethics was an intramural debate. For many on the left today, it seems obvious that support for the sovereign state derives from a moral failing, and, consequently, should be criticized as such. In other words, the presumption that ethics is a privileged

critical discourse is scarcely questioned. Yet, as Klatzkin illustrates, ethics is not the only language available to critics of sovereignty. Moreover, the critical tools that ethics provides are not sufficiently sharp—they fail to yield determinate political conclusions and they shroud the self in suspicion, making it difficult to justify any bounded polity (whether sovereign or not). In sum, our historical ignorance poses a political problem: Critics lack a forceful rejoinder to claims, now resurgent, that sovereign power is a necessary condition for security, agency, and self-determination.

Although shaken somewhat, the sovereign state still reigns as the default mode of political organization. Given these circumstances, the burden of justification rests with critics who propose that we entertain alternatives to the sovereign state. The ethics of particular identity has little to say about whether a regime of, say, local autonomy allows for meaningful self-rule. My hope is that reading Klatzkin can help us to identify theoretical approaches better suited for evaluating whether regimes such as local autonomy can actually perform some of the crucial political functions that the sovereign state has arrogated to itself. For Klatzkin, non-sovereignty is not a mood, an idea, an ethos, or a philosophical vision of subjectivity. Rather, non-sovereignty is a concrete regime type. Exilic communities can exercise self-government, Klatzkin contends, under certain historical circumstances and given the right practices, laws, and institutions. On Klatzkin's framing, the pressing political question is not how to incorporate the other into the self, but how to reconstitute political community after the *kahal's* demise. This question cannot be resolved solely or primarily through recourse to Jewish values, nor can it be understood on the analogy of interpersonal relations between two individuals. Similarly, the political challenges confronting contemporary critics—whether grappling with the collapse of the Oslo peace process or the threat of defections from the European Union—are not helpfully understood through the prism of self/other relations. Supplementing the literature of ethical self-cultivation with a political-theoretical meditation on the inner workings of non-sovereign polities, I venture, may help critics engage with these pressing matters. To be clear: I am not calling for the adoption of Klatzkin's concrete political prescriptions (e.g., land and language), but rather for renewed attention to law, history, and institutional design.

The moment is ripe for such a reframing, I would argue, precisely because it is no longer obvious that the nation-state constitutes the definitive solution to the Jewish question.[16] The demise of the Oslo process has

inspired a new round of proposals for federal, confederal, and binational solutions to the conflict, as well as increasingly vocal calls to implement what activists term "the vision of sovereignty" by annexing parts of the West Bank.[17] With the collapse of post-WWII ideological configurations, questions once thought settled—surrounding the imperatives of sovereignty and the nation-state's justification—have reopened. At this moment of peril and possibility, there is no shortage of maps, plans, or proposed solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nor have maps, plans, and proposals—including proposals for non-sovereign regimes—been in short supply throughout the history of Zionism. What is lacking is a rigorous theoretical examination of non-sovereign politics, a theory that would enable us to adjudicate between competing proposals. Again, the ethics of particular identity provides little guidance when evaluating the respective merits of, say, federal, confederal, and (one- or two-) state solutions. The differences between these regimes are not helpfully understood by analogy to contrasting conceptions of subjectivity, such that we could decide between them by assessing the philosophical coherence of their underlying ethical commitments. Throughout the history of Zionism, proposals for non-sovereign regimes have proliferated on both the right and the left, advanced by individuals who uphold a variety of religious, ethical, and philosophical commitments. In other words, there is rarely a direct or discernable relationship between the theory of subjectivity to which one subscribes and one's stance on the attainment of sovereign power (whether Jewish, Palestinian, or civic/Israeli). Thus, the explanatory power of ethics is quite limited when it comes to arbitrating between competing proposals for reconfiguring political regimes in the region.

Historical and political judgment are necessary to navigate what appears to be the moment of the nation-state's eclipse within Jewish politics. I have argued that extant ethical discourses make a negligible contribution to honing practical judgment. In conclusion, I want to raise the additional concern that these discourses' prestige may actually impede the development of the requisite theoretical idiom. Ethical critics exhibit a psychologizing tendency which subjects all borders, boundaries, and identities (whether individual or collective) to intense suspicion. Indeed, Butler and Cocks prioritize work on the self precisely because they fear that the bounded self invariably harbors impulses toward domination. Yet, as Cocks herself acknowledges, the desire for sovereign power does not stem solely or primarily from racism, xenophobia, or narcissism. The state's enduring

appeal also derives from the security, self-determination, and freedom that it promises. It would be a grave mistake, both strategically and normatively, to abandon ideals of autonomy and self-rule. Indeed, the challenge confronting critics is to break the state's monopoly on such aspirations by demonstrating that they can also be achieved in non-sovereign regimes. Yet the ethical idioms currently in vogue threaten to scuttle this project—or, at least, make it infinitely more complicated—because ideals such as self-rule tend to be bound up with traditional notions of subjectivity. Thus, even regimes of local autonomy or "overlapping sovereignty" are liable to arouse ethical suspicion, for they generally presuppose a "self" which is bounded (i.e., the nation), rather than "polymorphously perverse." Once we separate the state from the self, however, we can more readily address aspirations to autonomy and self-determination. To expand the possibilities for political organization beyond the sovereign state, we need to undertake a rigorous examination of the respective merits of sovereign and non-sovereign regimes as vehicles for self-determination. To repeat: The proper object of critique is not solidarity, belonging, or national identity, but the poverty of imagination when it comes to envisioning political agency beyond the nation-state. My hope is that, having made Klatzkin's acquaintance, we can initiate a much-needed conversation about how to cultivate the requisite imagination.

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NOTES

1. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/19/world/trump-speech-united-nations.html.
2. To avoid the implication that these values are exclusively Jewish—and to avoid treating Jewishness as a static entity—Butler calls them "Jewish/not Jewish." See Butler 2012, 2, 6.
3. Brief translations from Klatzkin's Zionist writings can be found in Lewisohn 1935 and Hertzberg 1997. All translations from Hebrew are my own unless otherwise noted. When possible, I cite from the translations excerpted in Hertzberg 1997.

4. See Lewisohn 1935, 167: "Klatzkin is a passionate and intrepid spirit. His arguments may wound and shock. Many of them are irrefutable."
5. See Butler 2012, 6, 33, 34, 50, 53.
6. The following argument draws on Cooper 2015.
7. See Bergmann 1922 and Lewisohn 1935, 166.
8. Midrash Rabbah Eichah 1:28.
9. For a contemporary variation on the argument that emancipation negated the galut, see Weiss 2016.
10. Significantly, Ahad Ha'am also contends that, prior to emancipation, a "wall" protected Jews from assimilation – yet he characterizes the barrier in question as a "spiritual wall." Nor does Ahad Ha'Am define the space delineated as a state or polity. See Ahad Ha'Am 1909.
11. The argument here follows Cooper 2014.
12. See Klausner 1934, 154.
13. See Bergmann 1922, 24, 25–26; Klausner 1934, 156; and Buber 2005, 56–57.
14. Peers who objected to what they considered Klatzkin's single-minded focus on the land of Israel (Kaufmann 1920, 11, 13, 20 and Bergmann 1922, 15–16, 18) missed nuances of Klatzkin's argument – specifically, his recognition that certain kinds of political organizing were still necessary in Europe. See Klausner 1934, 156.
15. For the idiosyncrasy of Klatzkin's political positioning, see Hotam 2013, 146-7.
16. This article was written before the passage of the "Nation-State Law" by the Israeli Knesset in July 2018. One could object that the law's passage reflects the continued hold that the nation-state exerts on the Jewish political imagination. Although I do not have room to elaborate, I would nevertheless argue that the law's passage actually illustrates the waning of the nation-state as a Jewish political ideal. In retrospect, the law may symbolize the death knell of a regime that aspired to be a "normal" nation-state (i.e., "Jewish and democratic"). For the law's proponents, ideals of Jewish hegemony and the sanctity of the land trump ideals of self-rule and national self-determination. Indeed, many of the law's supporters advocate "one-state" solutions of various kinds.
17. For examples, see http://www.alandforall.org/english and http://womeningreen.org/sovereignty/.

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