Introduction

The Study of Jewish Politics and the Politics of Jewish Studies

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When Jews and Judaism appear in twenty-first century public discourse, the context is often political. Whether it's the president of the United States claiming that Jewish American voting patterns demonstrate "great disloyalty," an election in the UK being rocked by accusations of pervasive antisemitism, or the continuing struggle over the State of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians, politics is arguably the primary lens through which Jewish matters are perceived.[1] From a contemporary standpoint, then, it may be difficult to remember the time not long ago when many assumed that a history of statelessness had consigned the Jews to an apolitical existence.

Writing in the mid-twentieth century, in the wake of the mass murder of European Jewry and the establishment of the State of Israel, Hannah Arendt notoriously claimed that the Jews, having been stateless for millennia, "had no political tradition or experience. . . . It has been one of the most unfortunate facts in the history of the Jewish people that only its enemies, and almost never its friends, understood that the Jewish question was a political one." She described "specifically Jewish political enthusiasm" as consisting of little more than a "dim cloud of general philanthropy and universalism," and saw Jewish communal leaders as little more than babes in the woods, vulnerable to the machinations of savvier operators.[2] Arendt was always a controversial writer. In this case, however, she struck a universal nerve. Scholars around the world sought to refute her and to vindicate the "political judgment of the Jew."[3] Throughout these postwar conversations, historical claims

about the relationships of Jews to politics were thoroughly charged by contemporary political concerns, just as these concerns were informed by changing understandings of the past.

When Arendt complained about the Jews' supposed failures of political judgment, she voiced a then-common interpretation of Jewish history. For Arendt and many of her peers, as the historian Ismar Schorsch points out, the Nazi extermination of European Jewry appeared to confirm a widespread conception that "in the diaspora Jews were destined to remain the passive victims of historical circumstances beyond their control."[4] In the same period, advocates of the triumphant Zionist project wanted to make their case that, for the first time in two millennia, Jews had returned to politics on their own terms, a claim that perfectly complemented the notion of a passive and apolitical Jewish diaspora. Finally, American Jewish communities remained in need of a positive way to describe Jewish participation in a multifaith liberal democracy, one that would not simply recapitulate European mistakes. In these circumstances, even the most evenhanded scholarly attempt to present an image of the Jews' relationship to politics could not help but run afoul of some significant constituency.

Note that the debate which Arendt sparked was not about specific policy issues or ideologies but turned on the very applicability of foundational political concepts to Jewish experience. Again, doubts about whether Jews could be said to have participated in politics stemmed largely from their history of dispersion. According to influential modern definitions, politics is an activity that occurs at the state level. In the mid-twentieth century, scholars were fiercely divided regarding whether Jews have historically engaged in politics, displayed political wisdom, or penned works of political thought. Our interest is in this metadebate: Are the Jews "political" in any meaningful sense? As we will see, the stakes of this debate are high. From a practical standpoint, judgments regarding the degree of political agency possible in diaspora informed scholars' stances on pressing controversies surrounding Zionism, diasporism, and liberalism. From a theoretical standpoint, these historical judgments provided ammunition for defenders and critics of received political concepts. Ideally, then, the study of Jewish political thought promises to both inform Jewish (and non-Jewish) public opinion and to reorient the discipline of political theory by expanding received conceptions of what counts as "political." Today, the very aspects of Jewish history that were once seen as disqualifying can provide critical resources for scholars determined to imagine politics beyond the state form.

Excavating a Tradition, Establishing a Field

Given persistent doubts about the extent of Jewish political agency, it is perhaps not surprising that, prior to 1980, "Jewish political thought" did not exist as a dedicated field of study.[5] In historical perspective, the contributors to this volume are part of a novel endeavor. Although historians have long studied the Jews' fraught negotiations with ruling powers, as well as the ideological movements (e.g., Zionism, Bundism, liberalism) that reshaped Jewish life at the turn of the twentieth century, they did not propose the establishment of a discrete scholarly field.[6] Moreover, the question of whether Jews constitute a religion or a nation is arguably the central controversy of modern Jewish thought—with obvious implications for political theory.[7] Yet, prior to the 1980s, there was no subdivision within academic Jewish studies dedicated to political thought, akin to "modern Jewish thought" or "medieval Jewish history." Nor did American political scientists study the Jews (or, for that matter, any other non-Western traditions of political thought).[8] As this volume attests, today it is relatively uncontroversial to dedicate a fellowship year to the study of "Jewish political thought," yet not long ago, the category did not exist as an organizing rubric that could support a diverse research agenda. It was only once these doubts about the Jews' "politicalness" could be assuaged—if not entirely overcome—that a proper academic field could emerge.

The first initiatives toward the establishment of a "field," with all that entails—conferences, journals, course offerings, research institutes—were premised on the claim that there exists a Jewish political "tradition." The first programmatic call to study this tradition, penned by Daniel Elazar, appeared in 1980, and the 1990s and early 2000s witnessed three large-scale collaborative projects dedicated to the tradition's recovery: the *Jewish Political Studies Review*, *The Jewish Political Tradition* anthologies, and the *Hebraic Political Studies* journal.[9] Identifying the scholarly influences that allowed these projects' sponsors to assert the existence of a Jewish political tradition is relatively straightforward. Although not always cited by name, Simon Dubnow (1860–1941) arguably provides the historiographical inspiration for the entire enterprise. The intellectual architect of the autonomist movement within diaspora nationalism, Dubnow famously crafted a master narrative that ascribed cultural and political independence to diasporic Jews. In Dubnow's rendition the demise of the ancient Hebrew state did not mark the Jews' exit from history and politics. Rather, in every generation and in every

region, Dubnow claimed, the Jews constituted an autonomous political community (even while subject to gentile rulers).[10] Dubnow's classification of the *kahal* (the semiautonomous community of the medieval and early modern periods) as a polity, rather than a religious congregation, provides the historical basis for claims regarding an unbroken tradition of political *action*. Similarly, claims for unbroken traditions of political *thought* would be inconceivable without the contributions of scholars who showcased the sophistication of rabbinic political reasoning.[11] With the establishment of the State of Israel, the challenge of reviving once-dormant areas of traditional Jewish law, or *halakhah*, such as the laws of war, strengthened the perception that the rabbinic corpus contained a treasury of political reflection.[12] Building on prior work that celebrated the political agency of diasporic Jews and the vitality of rabbinic discourse, scholars insisted that there is a Jewish political tradition worthy of sustained study.

It is harder to venture a definitive explanation for why these strands came together at this precise juncture. The founding initiatives all cite the establishment of the State of Israel as a point of departure, and all the leading scholars profess Zionist convictions. As David Hartman writes in the foreword to *The Jewish Political Tradition*: "The rebirth of Israel provides the Jewish people with a public arena where they themselves must take charge, drawing on the strength of their tradition to give a direction to political life and a content to political aspiration."[13] But why did the tradition's recovery become imperative some thirty years after the founding of the state? Elazar's project debuted in a stormy period within Israeli politics, marked by the end of the Labor Party's hegemony in 1977 and the First Lebanon War in 1982. It is tempting to read *The Jewish Political Tradition* as a testament to the optimism that prevailed in the early years of the Oslo process (1993), when it was not unreasonable to believe that furnishing traditional prooftexts might convince Israelis to embrace liberal democracy. Yet the field's enabling conditions were sociological as much as historical, tied to the emergence of a scholarly cohort equally at home in Western philosophy and the rabbinic tradition. The leading figures behind *The Jewish Political Tradition* anthologies, the *Jewish Political Studies Review* and related projects, and *Hebraic Political Studies* share striking commonalities. The founding scholars were all Jewish men—many of them native English speakers with yeshivah backgrounds who, by virtue of their bicultural upbringing, were conversant in both American and Israeli norms. In this sense, the projects are built on diasporic networks, Zionist convictions notwithstanding.

What, beyond the investment in building institutional infrastructures, characterizes these early initiatives? As befits work that consciously strives to chart a new research agenda, there is an aspiration toward comprehensiveness. In Daniel Elazar's words, "The Jewish political dialogue began with the emergence of the Jewish people as a body politic over 3200 years ago. . . . It has continued ever since."[14] Elazar's claim to tradition rests on the evidence of this vast time span. The proper object of study, in Elazar's view, is Jewish political behavior, specifically the principles guiding the design of communal institutions. Having surveyed Jewish history from the patriarchs to the State of Israel and the American Jewish Congress, Elazar claims to have identified a single template that structures the entirety of Jewish political experience. In all times and places, Elazar contends, Jews have governed themselves according to a set of biblically derived covenantal principles. Whether as a matter of conscious decision or subliminal influence, Jews have hewed to an organizational blueprint that is theocratic, republican, federal, and egalitarian—elements of which recur "in one form or another in every period of Jewish history."[15] In short, Elazar claims that Jews have always done politics in more or less the same way.

Elazar's insistence on transhistorical constants strains scholarly credulity. Yet the internal tensions that result from Elazar's dogged pursuit of continuity are symptomatic of the methodological and political dilemmas that confronted many of the field's founders. In his determination to locate covenantal models "in every period of Jewish history," Elazar echoes Dubnow, who refused to privilege the biblical state over the medieval *kahal*. To attest the tradition's existence, Elazar must affirm diasporic political practices. At the same time, however, Elazar clearly views the establishment of the State of Israel as a watershed moment, "the renewal of full Jewish political life."[16] As this formulation suggests, Elazar is not prepared to level all distinctions between the State of Israel and diasporic institutions, whose political status is now rendered "partial." This retreat from the project's Dubnovian underpinnings is consistent with Elazar's belief that the Land of Israel is "the only place where complete Jewish individual and collective self-fulfillment is possible."[17] Here we see that the field's founders were torn between their Zionist convictions and the "diasporism" implicit in the methodologies they employed to establish an unbroken tradition.

The Jewish Political Tradition anthologies (three of a projected four have been published) exhibit consummate scholarship and vast erudition. The volumes bring together texts from the Bible to the modern period, organized

according to thematic rubrics (the first three volumes are subtitled *Authority*, *Membership*, and *Community*, respectively) and paired with contemporary commentary. Like Elazar's work, the volumes are comprehensive in scope and seek to establish the canon for a burgeoning field. Moreover, like Elazar, the editors delineate the field's mandate in terms of a "tradition"—in this case, a tradition of political thought. In their editorial vision, however, Michael Walzer (also a contributor to this volume) and his team of coeditors (including another of our contributors, Menachem Lorberbaum) display a far more sophisticated approach to the constituents of tradition and its potential political uses. Because the tradition's boundaries are set with reference to the criterion of "intertextuality," its contents are diverse and contentious.[18] Here "tradition" means an ongoing conversation that participants enter from multiple, often opposing, standpoints. The editors locate the tradition's contemporary political import in this dialogical ethos, which they present as a useful resource for enhancing pluralism and democracy in the State of Israel.

Reconstructing debates that unfolded over generations, in multiple literary genres, the anthologies challenge readers to expand their definition of the political to include sources that might otherwise be classified as "legalistic," "theological," or "scholastic." For example, the medieval Karaite exegete Elijah Basyatchi's critique of midrashic interpretation is included in volume 1 (*Authority*), since it bears on the legitimacy of rabbinic authority.[19] A text of this kind bears scant resemblance to the classics studied in the American political theory curriculum, nor is it readily assimilable to received political categories.

Yet the editors nevertheless encounter some of the same dilemmas surrounding the political standing of diasporic institutions that bedeviled Elazar. Walzer opens the introduction to the first volume by anticipating the skepticism of readers educated in Western traditions—where "the association of politics with the state is pervasive"—regarding the existence of a Jewish political tradition.[20] Against those who insist that statelessness consigned the Jews to an apolitical condition, Walzer contends that "politics is pervasive, with or without state sovereignty."[21] Here Walzer adopts an emphatically Dubnovian stance, refusing to grant the state conceptual priority. Walzer and his colleagues go even further, celebrating the *kahal*—"the polis of exilic Jewry"—as "the miracle of Jewish politics."[22] When one examines the third volume of *The Jewish Political Tradition* (*Community*), however, one finds a more qualified approach to the *kahal*'s classification as a polity. While rejecting Arendt's categorical dismissal of Jewish political judgment, the editors

are nevertheless at pains to stress limitations on diasporic political agency.[23] "Because of the circumstances of the exile, there never was a sovereign *kahal*. No community of Jews in the diaspora was ever in control of its fate in the way that the citizens of Athens were."[24] As a matter of historical fact, this assertion is certainly true. Its authority over Jews notwithstanding, the *kahal* remained subordinate to the state. The point is not to deny the manifest limits to Jewish power and independence, but to question whether acknowledging the sober realities of diasporic history requires one to classify Jewish institutions as less than fully political, and therefore not subject to analysis via the categories of political thought. (Nor, in this more pessimistic view, could diasporic history serve as a resource for such thought.) At times, even when laudatory, the editors treat the *kahal* as an imperfect approximation to the real thing: "We also mean to celebrate a remarkable political achievement that has hardly been recognized in the past: the members and leaders of the diaspora *kehillot* [pl. of *kahal*] managed to sustain a common life without sovereignty, without territory, without the authority and agency provided by a state."[25] Here the editors entrench the state's paradigmatic status, thereby limiting the theoretical interest and import of texts written under conditions of statelessness. Even at their most enthusiastic, the editors seem unsure as to whether Jewish traditions can generate alternative political standards.

Beyond sovereignty itself, other concerns at the forefront of contemporary political theory find their way into *The Jewish Political Tradition*. These include the place of religion in the public square, religious pluralism, and the role of the social critic. The anthological structure of *The Jewish Political Tradition* foregrounds such matters by transforming selected sets of passages into prooftexts of "the Jewish political tradition," sometimes through robust editorial commentary but just as often simply through categorization and architectonic (i.e., when ancient differences of opinion on marriage between the schools of Hillel and Shammai are classified under the subheading "Living with Disagreement" in a chapter titled "Controversy and Dissent").[26]

The editors are eager to highlight what they consider the pluralism of rabbinic deliberation, in hopes of furnishing traditional warrants for religious pluralism. Unlike early Zionists, who were famously drawn to the Bible, Walzer prefers rabbinic literature, whose worldly, mundane outlook he deems more conducive to democratic political culture. In his single-authored works, Walzer defends the virtues of rabbinic deliberation against biblical theocracy, which he deems "anti-political."[27] The mobilization of rabbinic

debate toward political ends exemplifies another of Walzer's signature themes, that of the "connected critic," who seeks to improve his or her community by offering pointed criticism, which should not be mistaken for hatred since it comes from a place of love.[28] In *The Jewish Political Tradition* and related works, Walzer provides Jewish intellectuals with a traditional language with which to frame their connected critique.

This volume stands on the shoulders of these previous efforts. The recognition of the continuity and pervasiveness of Jewish political activity, even under conditions of statelessness and dispersion, is foundational to any study of Jewish political thought. Relying on such insights, we can chart new paths forward, in keeping with contemporary concerns. Precisely because we are untroubled by anxiety about whether Jewish thought is properly "political," we no longer consider it necessary to establish the existence of a singular, continuous (even if multivocal and internally contested) "tradition" as a prerequisite for the field's legitimacy. Furthermore, we prescind from the task of providing prooftexts to substantiate contemporary commitments to liberalism, pluralism, and the like, in part because we no longer presume that either the scholars or the audience for this research are Jewish. The connection among scholar, reader, and material may, but need not, involve the kind of personal investment characteristic of "connected criticism." At this juncture we can proceed more eclectically, with a methodology guided less by a desire to codify a specific canon and more by an instinct to explore.

Terminology, Translation, Legibility: Provincializing Western Political Theory

In *Provincializing Europe*, Dipesh Chakrabarty declares that "European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations."[29] As a young student growing up in India, Chakrabarty relates, he scarcely questioned the universal validity of the categories—largely of European provenance—through which he analyzed the world. Marx's utter ignorance of Indian history notwithstanding, the critical tools that he bequeathed enabled Chakrabarty's generation to make sense of their own experiences. It was only after Chakrabarty traveled to Australia for graduate study that he grasped the provincialism of European thought. Confronted with radical differences

between concrete instantiations of abstract universals such as "modernity" and "democracy," Chakrabarty concludes that "our historical differences actually make a difference."[30] In their global diffusion, Chakrabarty explains, "the universal concepts of political modernity encounter preexisting concepts, categories, institutions, and practices through which they get translated and configured differently," such that Indian and Australian democracy scarcely resemble each other.[31] Although unwilling—and, on some level, unable—to abandon Western frameworks, Chakrabarty nevertheless insists that European instantiations of political modernity are themselves local adaptations.

European thought is indispensable, then, because academics the world over operate within institutions whose framing assumptions derive from Western traditions. At the current juncture, Chakrabarty contends, it is practically impossible to advance campaigns for social justice without invoking "universal" concepts of European provenance (e.g., democracy, equality, rights). European thought is inadequate to the analysis of Indian political experience, however, because purportedly universal rubrics occlude the divergent forms that political modernity has taken in societies, for example, in which communion with gods and spirits is a routine occurrence. Alert to the inescapable dilemma that confronts scholars of Indian politics, Chakrabarty proposes to "provincialize" rather than repudiate Europe. To "provincialize," in this context, means to excavate the "irreducible elements of those parochial histories" that linger in "concepts that otherwise seemed to be meant for all," and thereby challenge their universalist pretensions.[32]

From the moment of its inception, the field of Jewish political thought has wrestled with similar dilemmas of terminology, translation, and legibility. Of course, the location of (Ashkenazic) Jewish scholars with respect to a hegemonic "West"—in which they figured largely as internal "others"—is not identical to that of (postcolonial) Indian scholars.[33] Yet the scholars who first embarked on the study of Jewish political thought voiced similar doubts regarding the applicability of received categories. How relevant are the concepts of a modern political philosophy that equates political agency with sovereign power to a tradition that developed under conditions of statelessness? Uncritical adoption of reigning concepts is liable to yield the conclusion, familiar from mainstream Zionist historiography, that diasporic Jews were profoundly "apolitical"—and, consequently, that there is no such thing as "Jewish political thought" between Bar Kokhba and Herzl. Moreover, prior to the nineteenth century, Jewish

thinkers seldom addressed political matters via the recognized idioms of Western philosophy. Grappling with the mismatch "between the categories and divisions most appropriate to the tradition and those most familiar to students of modern political theory," Walzer adopts a "compromise" approach that prioritizes traditional categories without sacrificing legibility.[34] The editors of *The Jewish Political Tradition* decided not to group texts under familiar rubrics such as "political obligation" or "individual rights," Walzer explains, "for they would require an artificial and inevitably suspect extraction of texts from their legal and doctrinal (as well as their historical) contexts."[35] At the same time, Walzer suggests that even though Jewish writers may have used a different vocabulary, they have taken up the same kinds of questions that engaged Western political theorists: "questions about obligations and rights figure obliquely in many of their arguments."[36]

The determination to move beyond documented historical influence to uncover thematic continuities between Jewish and Western traditions reflects the deferential posture that founding scholars felt it necessary to adopt toward established philosophical canons. To reconstruct a Jewish political tradition, scholars searched for passages that "sounded political" to Western ears. Walzer, for example, often notes resemblances between the texts excerpted in *The Jewish Political Tradition* and canonical texts, as if to certify the political content of the former. When the rabbis explore questions regarding decision-making procedures, Walzer claims, they "reiterate in their own idiom the Greek argument about the one, the few, and the many."[37] The impulse to situate Jewish texts with respect to Western canons is especially pronounced in the series' third volume (*Community*), as the following examples demonstrate. Although the distinction between enforcement and coercion—"a conventional one in Western law"—"doesn't appear explicitly in rabbinic literature, it is equally apparent in Jewish law," or so the editors contend.[38] Consequently, it is scarcely surprising that discussions of coercion in the marketplace and in divorce law "sound very much like the debates about 'positive freedom' set off by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*."[39] There are differences, of course. "Maimonides doesn't look—as John Locke would later do"—for material signs of tacit consent, searching instead for a moral sign.[40] But these differences in emphasis only reinforce the notion that Jewish authors, no matter how traditional, addressed "many of the central political questions."[41] Indeed, for Walzer and his coeditors, these questions resound across geographical and temporal boundaries, such that one can classify rab-

binic debates about the synagogue assembly as "a Jewish version of what the contemporary philosopher Jürgen Habermas has called an 'ideal speech situation.'"[42]

The comparative impulse reflects laudable pedagogical concerns. Walzer and his colleagues hope to illuminate Jewish texts by situating them within a more familiar context. Indeed, "integration" of Jewish texts is one of the project's stated goals: "we want to take this body of Jewish thought out of its intellectual ghetto."[43] Yet these framing gestures sit in tension with the meticulous work the editors have performed combing the archives for texts liable to seem eccentric, challenging, or obscure to American audiences. For they predicate these texts' theoretical interest on proximity to Western classics, which are tacitly upheld as the political norm. Indeed, the editors risk preempting radical criticisms of, say, social contract theory, that could emerge from the encounter with unfamiliar Jewish texts. In short, these "compromise" solutions—their investment in disciplinary legibility (and their aforementioned doubts about diasporic Jews' political bona fides)—prove insufficiently radical. While grappling with similar tensions between recognized conceptual frameworks and local political experience, scholars of Jewish political thought have been reluctant to pursue the kind of provincialization that Chakrabarty advocates.

In this volume we conduct an experiment in the provincialization that previous scholars resisted. To this end we have taken the volume's conceptual framework from one of the centerpieces of the liturgical tradition: the High Holiday *maḥzor* (prayerbook). We have chosen to structure the volume around a terminology derived from a Jewish prayer service in an effort to challenge disciplinary norms that render Jewish texts derivative or deficiently political. Our choice is motivated by a sense that the usual ways of carving up the intellectual terrain do not do justice to the Jewish phenomena in question and risk blunting our critical acumen. Rather than shoehorn Jewish texts into Western frameworks or pursue a compromise approach with an eye toward legibility, we hope to uncover the political imagination that animates the lived experience of Jewish traditions of study, prayer, and action. As the editors of *The Jewish Political Tradition* acknowledge, "political theory" was not a genre of Jewish writing, and yet political thought can be found within Jewish texts in other genres. We see liturgy as a site that contains both implicit and explicit statements about the value that Jews throughout the ages have placed on varying configurations of human and

divine power. Furthermore, in liturgy, these statements are lived and enacted through bodily choreography, spoken aloud, and ritually repeated in a way that sets them apart from more scholarly texts, such as the Babylonian Talmud. The latter is the special property of the yeshivah (academy) and the *bet midrash* (study hall), while the liturgy is much closer to being the common possession of Jewry as a whole. Our move here is simultaneously playful and serious, like a rabbinic *midrash* or *petiḥta* that grounds an exegetical or theological claim about scripture in a pun or folk etymology.[44]

Our title, *The King Is in the Field*, is offered in a similar spirit. Only one of our three sections, *Malchuyot* (Regimes), deals even nominally with monarchy, and divine monarchy at that. None of our contributors address this classical trope of sovereignty directly; this is, after all, a volume on *modern* Jewish politics. The saying "The king is in the field," however, is associated with the month of Elul, the last month of the Hebrew calendar and the lead-in to the Days of Awe. It is not itself a holiday, and yet the calendar directs the Jewish people to prepare for holidays. The workers continue to labor in their own fields, but they are to behave as if the king, normally ensconced in his distant palace, could walk up to them at any moment. The "field" in the saying is of course a metaphor for all one's ordinary daily activities, and not just in the sense of an academic "field" of study. (In academic contexts, "the king is in the field" would signify the entrance of politics into disciplines from which it was previously excluded.) Categories normally distinct overlap; the lines between the sacred and the profane are blurred. Such melding is presented as the appropriate preparation for the liturgical high point of the year.

Our reliance on categories "internal" to the tradition is not intended to lay claim to greater authenticity, nor is it to deny our manifest debt to Western protocols for the study of politics. Nevertheless, given the "inadequacy" of these protocols, we are moved to develop a conceptual framework from Jewish sources. Here, we follow Chakrabarty: "The point is not to reject social science categories but to release into the space occupied by particular European histories sedimented in them other normative and theoretical thought enshrined in other existing life practices and their archives."[45] In other words, we treat Jewish liturgy as a font of "normative and theoretical thought" rather than a mere "case study" amenable to analysis via existing tools. Mindful of the West's "indispensability," we nevertheless accord priority to provincial Jewish categories, in the hopes that so doing will enable us to disclose alternative conceptualizations of political community. These, in turn, may serve as resources for further research, including dialogue with nonstatist concep-

tions of politics in the West, and with the political thinking of other communities marginalized by the West (such as indigenous communities).

Toward the Development of a Jewish Political Lexicon

In a standard volume on political theory, one would expect to find essays organized chronologically or thematically (e.g., authority, membership, community). These rubrics reflect powerful assumptions about the development and proper study of political thought. The task incumbent on scholars of political thought, in this view, is to recapitulate the historical unfolding of traditions and seek out persistent, cross-cultural themes. In this volume, by contrast, we have organized the volume's essays under three Hebrew headings: *Malchuyot* (Regimes), *Zichronot* (Remembrances), and *Shofarot* (Blasts [of the ram's horn]). With this alternative organizational scheme, we hope to suggest new ways in which texts can resonate with one another and with their historical and political contexts. Our headings are taken from the additional prayer service of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year)—known as the *musaf 'Amidah*—and, as we will see in what follows, they have already been subject to political appropriation by twentieth-century intellectuals.

What is the *musaf 'Amidah* in Jewish liturgy, and in what sense does it express a provincial conceptualization of the political domain? The blowing of the *shofar* (ram's horn) constitutes the centerpiece of this service, which is recited in the afternoon on Rosh Hashanah. During this service, the shofar is sounded repeatedly, accompanied by the recitation of three sets of ten biblical verses (from the Torah, Prophets, and Writings): one set organized around themes of kingship/regimes (*malchuyot*), one around themes of remembrance (*zichronot*), and the final set devoted to the shofar itself (*shofarot* [pl. of *shofar*]).

Scholars of liturgy have long differed regarding whether the *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofarot* rubric was developed in the tannaitic period (ca. second century CE), or whether it predates the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.[46] For our purposes, the precise dating is less important than the fact that the prooftexts cited to attest the prayer's composition illustrate the entwinement of halakhic decision-making with political contestation in an imperial context. Indeed, one of the sources cited in nearly every academic study of the prayer's composition highlights the political exigencies driving the rabbinic elaboration of shofar-blowing practices. In the Jerusalem Talmud,

Rabbi Yakov bar Aha brings a story in the name of Rabbi Yohanan to explain why the shofar is blown in the afternoon.[47] Originally, the story goes, the shofar was blown in the morning.[48] However, the Romans mistook the ritual blowing of the horn early in the morning for a call to arms and launched an attack of their own, killing the assembled Jews. To avert such fatal misunderstandings, the rabbis moved the shofar blowing to the afternoon service. They reasoned that, if the shofar were blown in the afternoon, after a full morning of prayer, the Romans would understand that the instrument was sounded in a ritual, rather than a martial, context.

Significantly, the rabbinic narrative that explains the service's fluid composition showcases both the dynamics and the stakes of translation in an imperial context. A delicate negotiation with the ruling powers is necessary, in this context, because the shofar bears a dual resonance, alternately rousing the troops to battle and heralding divine revelation. The shofar's polysemy arguably reflects the intermingling of realms that are often separated in the modern, secular imagination. Yet, in flagging the distinctive political imagination that the shofar has historically encoded, we are not making a naive bid for authenticity. Indeed, the story on which we draw resists sharp distinctions between what is "Jewish" and what is external to the tradition. In a context of political subordination in which misunderstanding is tantamount to death, the rabbis made halakhic decisions for pragmatic, political reasons: to pacify hostile rulers. In other words, the "internal" vocabulary that encodes a rabbinic political imagination is itself political, established through a delicate negotiation with the hegemonic power. The political language that we seek to recover is thus provincial in the literal sense—it was established by subjects in a far-flung province of the Roman empire—but it also illustrates the dilemmas of provincialization that Chakrabarty diagnosed.

By adopting the liturgy's taxonomy as an organizing framework, we aim to recapitulate the rabbis' gesture when reconfiguring the prayer sequence for Rosh Hashanah. The rabbinic negotiation with politically imposed constraints does not constitute mere capitulation, nor is it identical to a "compromise" approach. The rabbis did not abandon their practice; they continued to blow the shofar, risks notwithstanding. Moreover, to lessen these risks, they chose not to issue a clarificatory announcement addressed to the Romans in Latin or Greek. Rather, they revised the sequence of their traditional practice, in hopes that their intentions would be legible to the Romans even while expressed in Hebrew. Inspired by the rabbis, we have chosen not to "speak Greek" but

rather to affirm a provincial form in full awareness that this is done in dialogue with canonical traditions of Western political thought.[49]

The time is ripe for such a provincializing gesture, we would argue, since Jewish politics is no longer an exclusively Jewish affair. (Nor is the study of Jewish political thought the exclusive province of scholars who identify as Jewish, as was the case through the 1990s.) As Rebecca Kobrin's chapter in this volume demonstrates, Jewish political controversies have long engaged non-Jews. It is scarcely surprising that fierce debate swirled around the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in the Polish press, post–World War I, given the material consequences of American Jewish philanthropy for Polish Jews' neighbors. Non-Jewish engagement with Jewish debates has arguably intensified in the United States, especially as attitudes toward Israel became an ideological litmus test post-1967. As Shaul Magid documents, Zionism and the State of Israel have become obligatory reference points for white and Black nationalists located on opposite sides of the American political spectrum. Reading the work of Alice Walker, Vincent Lloyd argues that affective and political ties to Jewish activists shaped Walker's early views of justice and judgment. One could argue that recourse to provincial Jewish categories is outdated, now that Jewish controversies are part and parcel of mainstream political discourse (which, in the American case, is conducted largely in English). Yet the essays in this volume suggest otherwise. To justify their political demands, Magid argues, Black and white nationalists have learned to speak in Jewish idioms (e.g., "white Zionism"). At the current juncture, the translation process works in both directions; non-Jews have adopted Jewish terms and concepts, just as Jewish thinkers have framed their arguments with an eye toward Western political traditions.[50]

Again, this dynamic is hardly new. In the above-cited *aggadah*, the rabbis presumed that the Romans were (or could become) minimally conversant in things Jewish. Hence their confidence that, were the Romans to observe the Rosh Hashanah prayer service from the very beginning, they would be able decipher the shofar's meaning by the time that *musaf* rolls around. At a moment when "Jewish politics" has assumed an urgency that transcends the (shifting and porous) boundaries of the Jewish community, we believe that a more systematic effort of provincialization is required. It is no longer persuasive to contend that Jewish concepts must remain marginal, opaque, or questionably "political" unless translated into "Latin" or "Greek." As an empirical matter, the volume demonstrates, intellectuals and activists

from a variety of backgrounds increasingly frame their political claims through engagement (sometimes admiring, often agonistic) with Jewish movements, terms, and concepts. Consequently, contemporary scholars of Jewish political thought are relieved of the "burden of proof" that made it hard for earlier generations to contest prevailing disciplinary norms.

Regimes, Remembrances, and Shofar Blasts

A source from the Babylonian Talmud offers the following explanation for the practice of reciting *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofarot*, which R. Yehuda brings in the name of R. Akiva: "And recite before me on Rosh HaShanah verses that mention kingships, remembrances, and *shofarot*: Kingships so that you will crown me as king over you; Remembrances so that your remembrance will rise before me for good; and with what will the remembrance rise? It will rise with the *shofar*" (Babylonian Talmud, *Rosh Hashanah* 16a).[51] Of course, the liturgy's meaning and significance have been subject to myriad interpretations in contexts rabbinic, academic, and popular. One of the most intriguing glosses cited in Shmuel Yosef Agnon's *Days of Awe* anthology suggests that the *musaf* prayer has long been understood to express a distinctive political vision. "The matter of *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofarot* should be interpreted in accordance with three epochs in Israel: *malchuyot* represents the first days when he became king in Jeshurun,[52] *zichronot*, that we always remember those days, and *shofarot*, that we await the shofar of the messiah."[53] In this reading, the Rosh Hashanah *musaf* is an exercise in political education. The liturgy invites the worshiper to recapitulate the trajectory of Jewish history, the defining events of which involve the loss and anticipated restoration of political independence. If R. Akiva enjoins humans to affirm divine sovereignty and accept divine judgment, this commentator recalls the period of Jewish political independence and gestures toward the ultimate redemption, collapsing the distance between mundane and transcendent political regimes. For this commentator, *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofarot* are keywords in a Jewish political lexicon.

A cursory glance through Agnon's bibliography to locate the author of this provocative commentary yields a surprising discovery. Although the passage reads like a medieval gloss, it was actually written by Agnon himself in the 1930s. As Gershom Scholem relates, "With his caustic sense of humor Agnon included in *Days of Awe* a number of highly imaginative (and imagi-

nary) passages culled from his own vineyard, a nonexistent book, *Kol Dodi* ('The Voice of My Beloved'), innocently mentioned in the bibliography as a 'Manuscript, in possession of the author.'"[54] Once we learn that the "anonymous" commentary on *malchuyot, zichronot, and shofarot* is in fact Agnon's handiwork, it is hard to read the gloss as anything but a Zionist proclamation[55]—although Scholem's "unmasking" here places Agnon in yet another long Jewish tradition, that of pseudepigraphy.[56] For our purposes, the precise ideological stance that Agnon imputes to the service is less significant than the way in which he articulates a political vision in dialogue with these sources.

In the introduction to *Days of Awe*, Agnon acknowledges that the collected texts have undergone a translation process. Agnon rendered Aramaic texts into Hebrew and polished the sages' occasionally rough language: "Yet, although I have not kept to their style, I have kept their meaning very well indeed," Agnon promises.[57] Yet, as the foregoing reveals, Agnon's editorial work went beyond cosmetic adjustments required to make rabbinic texts accessible to modern readers. Acquaintances report that Agnon described *Kol Dodi* as "the voice that I hear in moments of illumination and creation."[58] For Agnon, the act of translation was one of profound identification, in which the discursive conventions of the source material enabled him to generate a political language responsive to contemporary predicaments (which, in the introduction to the 1946 edition, he describes as bleak).[59] Moreover, by adopting a literary persona, Agnon both indulges and subverts the fetish of authenticity—readers conversant in the tradition (who know that the *Kol Dodi* does not exist) are in on the joke.[60] In this episode of literary masquerade, we can see how, writing at a specific juncture and in response to contingent political circumstances, Agnon develops a provincial political idiom from the *musaf* service.[61]

In the following chapters, we orchestrate a parallel encounter with the *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofarot* verses, to see whether new political configurations might emerge in response to contemporary concerns.[62] Given our historical location, it is not altogether surprising that many of the volume's essays criticize, or expressly reject, the Zionist historiography that Agnon draws out of the *musaf* service. Yet the point is not to establish the precise ideological leanings of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy but to encourage theoretical creativity by working within and against traditional constraints. How might our analysis change if, like Agnon, we adopt liturgical idioms and rabbinic interpretive practices as critical tools? Although we have not gone so far as to don a literary mask, we hope that something of Agnon's playful spirit shines through in our proposal to treat "regimes," "remembrances," and

"blasts" as political concepts. Again, our aim is not to enshrine these terms as *the* definitive political framework. Instead we examine how the political resonance of the assembled texts changes once they are organized according to this provincial triad rather than chronologically or geographically.

Malchuyot/Regimes

The *malchuyot* verses proclaim divine sovereignty. The poetic composition that prefaces the collection of biblical verses is the *'Aleinu*—a prayer that is recited daily but receives a dramatic twist on Rosh Hashanah through the addition of a regal choreography.[63] In many synagogues it is traditional for worshipers to perform a full prostration when reciting the phrase, "And so we bow, acknowledging the supreme sovereign, the Holy One, who is praised."[64] Although the first paragraphs of the *'Aleinu* include a blatant, even chauvinistic, assertion of Jewish election (which some contemporary Jews omit), the prayer concludes with a vision of universal redemption through acceptance of divine sovereignty. This ambivalent universalism recurs at the conclusion of the *malchuyot* verses, which anticipate a time when "all that you have made will recognize you as their maker, all that you have created will understand that you are their creator, and all living beings will say: Adonai, the God of Israel, is sovereign, ruling over all."[65]

In the chapters of our own *malchuyot* section, scholars wrestle with two of the conundrums that these verses foreground: the translation of divine sovereignty into mundane, this-worldly institutions, and the possibility of encompassing the concrete particulars of Jewish political history within universal trajectories. The Hebrew root *m–l–ch* constitutes a semantic field around kingship. But just as the ancient Israelites transformed the nexus of divine sovereignty and human kingship that they saw around them in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia, the chapters in this section approach the question of authority from unexpected angles. They do not ignore the fundamental issue of *who* should rule. However, in different ways, they are more concerned with the question of *what* rules: with the invisible orders that manifest in and through the human exercise of power.

This issue is quite salient in the problem of law. Is the "rule of law" ever a real, live possibility, or is it always a smokescreen for human interests and desires? Many forms of liberalism have wagered that the rule of law is both possible and desirable, and many forms of anti- and post-liberalism have

argued the reverse. The long history of Christian anti-Judaism casts its shadow over this discussion.[66] If we examine what is at stake in these polemics against legalism and Judaizing, we find that the underlying issues are about the strength and role of norms, and the way that they should be embodied in enduring institutions.

Jewish political thought takes place both within and beyond this shadow. In Israel, where the legal system is a complex mixture of inheritances from the Ottoman and British periods as well as from the selective Zionist appropriation of Jewish sources, the debate is often framed along familiar "church and state" lines.[67] Irene Tucker and Arye Edrei, however, approach the issue with different aims. For Tucker, the fundamental issue is the paradox of constitution itself, and how a polity with no constitution deploys political-cultural concepts like "dignity" in ways that cut across the religion-state divide. Her treatment of the problem of institutionalizing transcendental, preexistent rights weaves together the national and international dimensions, placing Israel in the global horizon of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ultimately, Tucker is concerned with the way in which the cultural recognition of the preexistent and transcendental nature of human rights, which manifests even in everyday habits and practices like speech patterns (such as the Israeli *dugri*), both undergirds and threatens the apparent necessity of the state as guarantor of those rights.

Edrei offers a similarly creative reframing of critical debates. Rather than questioning whether it is appropriate for Jewish law to shape civil law, Edrei asks whether Israeli civil law could have an impact on *halakhah* itself. Focusing on the career of Israeli supreme court justice Menachem Elon, Edrei contends that he went beyond the typical concerns of the *Mishpat 'Ivri* school, which sought to reinvigorate Jewish legal tradition by finding ways to use it to inform Israeli civil law. This aim was more nationalist than religious, constituting halakhic tradition as a popular, spiritual inheritance of the nation. Elon, however, rejected this impulse to bifurcate the religious from the secular, national components of halakhic tradition, not by "theocratically" imposing Jewish law on secular Israelis but by attempting to intervene in halakhic tradition itself, setting himself up as a *posek* (halakhic decisor). The usual lines separating norm and institution are again traversed by a creative cut across the distinction.

Halakhah itself crosses another major boundary between state and corporation: the dichotomy between homeland and exile. The force of the homeland/exile binary derives from the various associated binaries that issue from

it, the most important of which is power/powerlessness. Classical Zionist historiography assumed a simple one-to-one correlation between homeland and power, and between exile and powerlessness. In response, anti-Zionist activists have placed a counter-emphasis on the virtues of diaspora, or even, as the Jewish Labor Bund put it, on *doikayt* (Yiddish for "hereness," as opposed to the Zionist "thereness"). Yet the dichotomy is clearly overdrawn on both sides. As Meirav Jones shows, the negation of exile was never necessary to Zionism—and, by extension, neither the negation nor the negation of the negation need inform Jewish politics today. Drawing a connection between Zionist negation and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century liberalism's negation of the state of nature, Jones reveals the intimate intertwining of Zionist thought with modern European political theory. She then taps into poetry for an affective understanding of the longing that shapes Zionist nostalgia, and asks whether Jewish yearning for corporate existence could exist without negating nonsovereign forms. In his own chapter, Michael Walzer expresses skepticism about that possibility, but explores it nonetheless, through a treatment of the everyday politics of diaspora communities. In line with his foundational earlier work, Walzer lays out a conception of statelessness, concerning himself with the meaning of power and authority in contexts where leaders lack legitimate access to violence for the purpose of coercion. The alternative, communal pressure, is weaker when measured from the vantage point of the state, but this does not mean that it does nothing. As Walzer puts it, using only communal pressure, "money is raised; a Jewish civil service is recruited; religious services are provided: there are synagogues and temples, Jewish hospitals and nursing homes, day care centers and day schools."[68] Tracing the lines of force that produce these outcomes, Walzer attempts a political taxonomy of diasporic power. More than some of the other contributors to this volume, Walzer relies on Greek categories; even here, however, his perhaps surprising conclusion is that, for Jews, the key to diasporic power extends beyond money and charisma to learning. Transmission of communal narratives, norms, habits, and practices is the sine qua non of Jewish "citizenship" for Walzer. This imperative to remember and to teach leads us to our next section.

Zichronot/Remembrances

The *zichronot* verses testify to the capaciousness of God's memory, which encompasses all events past and future. "Nothing is forgotten in your awe-

inspiring presence, nothing concealed from your gaze."[69] In the section's introductory poem (attributed to Yose ben Yose, fifth century CE), divine remembrance is inextricably linked to divine judgment.[70] Judgment is inescapable, because God remembers each individual and their deeds, but those who do not forget God are unlikely to stumble. The selected biblical verses highlight God's remembrance of discrete individuals (Noah and the patriarchs) with whom covenantal relationships were established, as well as formative incidents (the binding of Isaac). These verses underscore themes of covenantal faithfulness, establishing a connection between memory and divine power.[71]

Jewish studies have long been dominated by history and historians. As a guild, historians are not all equally comfortable with Orwell's dictum that "who controls the past, controls the future."[72] Yet it is clear that how historians describe the past, and even the names given to particular periods ("Middle Ages," "Renaissance," "Enlightenment"), both reflect and shape contemporary arrangements of power. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi ignited a long-running controversy when he claimed that academic history represented a radically different constellation of power and knowledge from traditional Jewish memory, a "faith of fallen Jews."[73] At first blush, the *zichronot* verses would appear to epitomize the static, naive approach to the Jewish past that, on Yerushalmi's view, modern historiography shatters. (Indeed, the Hebrew words *zachor* and *zicharon* [*zichronot* is the plural] share the same etymological root.) Yet for contemporary historians unburdened by alienation and "fallenness"—whether because it is no longer presumed that scholars of Jewish history are themselves Jewish,[74] or because the university no longer functions as a stand-in for the *bet midrash* (rabbinic study hall)—Yerushalmi's distinction is liable to seem overdrawn. Rather than simply constituting "traditional memory," the *zichronot* verses display a sophisticated awareness of the link between covenantal promises and contemporary political judgments. Moreover, once we suspend the presumption of a now-sundered enchantment, the political dilemma that weighed on Yerushalmi—can modern historiography replace collective memory as a foundation for Jewish identity?—loses much of its urgency. At a moment when the assimilationism versus nationalism binary that Yerushalmi inherited no longer exhausts the political valence of Jewish historiography, we are freed to think anew about the ways in which remembrance informs community and the kinds of community that it constitutes.

Awareness of the deep link between description of the past and action in the present pervades the contributions of Assaf Tamari and Philipp von Wussow. For Tamari, the usual historiographic context of Ḥayyim Ṿital, a

foremost student of the great kabbalist Isaac Luria, has not captured his unique political imagination. The Safed kabbalists of the sixteenth century occupy a distinct place in the landscape of Jewish studies: symbols of a revitalized mystical-messianic thinking in the wake of the catastrophe of Spanish expulsion, they also call forth ambivalence about the ostensible dangers of political messianism. Focusing on Ṿital's accounts of his dreams (not usually mined for political resonance), as well as his relationship to the Muslim Ottoman rulers of Palestine, Tamari offers an alternative take on messianism's political valence, one that escapes the oppositions of Scholem's "restorative/apocalyptic" binary. Tamari's treatment of the "truth" of dreams recovers a dynamic political dimension of the Safed scene, joining local geography to global imaginaries. Von Wussow, by contrast, seeks a new approach to one of the most prominent subfields of contemporary political theory, the German-Jewish intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s. Von Wussow starts from a recognition that "German-Jewish philosophy" has become a kind of totemic figure in both the academy and in the culture at large, used and abused for numerous (and conflicting) political purposes. Taking an intellectual-historical approach, Von Wussow shows how the politics of German-Jewish "philosophy" and "theory" before the war were effaced in a postwar German effort to forge a usable "Jew" to think with. Von Wussow's intervention into how we remember "German-Jewish philosophy" keeps a constant eye on the reciprocal relationship between intellectuals in their own context and their representation in ours.

The politics of relations between Jews and non-Jews in history and historiography form the horizon for the contributions of Rebecca Kobrin and Shaul Magid. Kobrin, engaging American Jewish philanthropy in interwar Poland, seeks to demonstrate the manifestly political character of such charity in the context of rising American influence. American Jews may have intended simply to aid their coreligionists (who were in many cases their former neighbors), now suffering massive dislocation and poverty in the wake of the First World War and its associated pogroms. In practice, however, they were perceived by non-Jewish Poles as agents of both American empire and a transnational Jewish polity. Kobrin's discussion, like many others in this volume, seeks to expand our conception of what counts as political by challenging the perceived apolitical status of philanthropy—and by remembering this past in this way, she also addresses the politics of contemporary Jewish philanthropy.[75] Meanwhile, Shaul Magid addresses the rhetoric of Zionism as a discourse often perceived as an intramural Jewish affair (albeit

one with fateful consequences for non-Jews). Magid inflects Zionism's Jewishness differently by observing how this rhetoric has been taken up and deployed by non-Jews in the United States. In particular, he notes the fraught connection of Zionism and race in the language of white and Black nationalists from the early twentieth century to the present. By incorporating these non-Jewish "Zionisms" into our historical memory, Magid challenges our ability to represent Zionism as a unitary and "Jewish" phenomenon, and calls for us to reevaluate the lines we draw among ethnocentrism, racism, and racialization in our thinking about Judaism and Zionism. As with all the essays in *Zichronot*, the link between history/memory and power gives rise to a call for action, leading to our final section.

Shofarot/Blasts

In the Rosh Hashanah liturgy, the shofar verses evoke the revelation at Sinai, which was accompanied by the sound of the shofar. In the words of the introductory poem (fifth century CE), "You revealed yourself in a cloud of glory, to speak to your holy people, allowing them to hear your voice from the heavens."[76] The shofar sound announces the penetration of the mundane by the transcendent, both at the beginning of Israel's history (Sinai) and at the anticipated redemption. Thus the liturgy invokes "the great shofar proclaiming our freedom," which will accompany the ingathering of the exiles and the restoration of the temple service.[77] At these moments of rupture, the shofar's call communicates the commandments and promises that have shaped the Jewish political imagination. Yet the shofar also serves more mundane functions in the Hebrew Bible, rousing troops to battle and proclaiming new moons.[78]

Just as the sound of the shofar links the moment of revelation to that of redemption, contemporary political theology wrestles with the paradoxes of theocracy and messianism. Gershom Scholem already worried, in his famous letter to Franz Rosenzweig, that his fellow Zionists were naive to believe that "the [Hebrew] language has been secularized, and the apocalyptic thorn has been pulled out."[79] As a scholar of the messianic claimant Shabbetai Zvi, Scholem both admired and feared the power of messianism to disrupt the orderly house of the rabbinic commandments. Several decades later, Scholem's controversial and disloyal student, Jacob Taubes, extended Scholem's analysis of Zvi to the arch-messianist of all Jewish history: Paul of Tarsus. For Taubes, the whole problematic of twentieth-century political theology,

as exemplified by the Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt, was first signaled by Paul and his belief that the coming of the messiah meant the suspension of Torah law; if "the whole palaver" was about to come to an end, there would be no need for durable norms or institutions.[80] Political theology, renewed in the contemporary academy, maintains this interest in the dangers of apocalypse. And yet, by emphasizing the subversive power of redemptive hopes, more ordinary facets of revelation can be overlooked. In the *aggadic* tale cited earlier, it was the mundane meaning of the shofar—the military meaning—that called down Roman violence, whereas "prayer" alone was safe, its potent theological charge notwithstanding. Moreover, the fact that the shofar was historically blown during rituals of excommunication, the primary tool by means of which the *kahal* policed communal boundaries, suggests that, in the rabbinic imagination, the shofar is entwined with practices of institution *building*. As the *shofarot* verses emphasize, the drama of Sinai surrounded the teaching of Torah and *mitzvot* (commandments); the Exodus itself was a redemption, but not an apocalypse.[81] Freedom, ingathering, "joyous occasions"—these too are *shofarot*.

For these reasons, the shofar's summons to struggle often reveals battle lines that are unclear. This is demonstrated by the essays in our own *shofarot* section, all of which grapple with the call to messianic politics, with the purported risks of this call, and with attempts to mitigate these risks (or to challenge the presumption that messianism is in fact risky). The summons, then, is directed not against an obvious enemy but rather toward the intellectual and spiritual challenges of a complex reality—with what one translation of *teruah* renders as "the splintered call."[82]

Lihi Ben Shitrit provides an example of this splintering through her examination of the contradictions of Jewish feminist politics in the context of occupied East Jerusalem. On the one hand, the liberal Jewish feminists of Women of the Wall seek equal access to Jewish holy sites; on the other, this struggle for access is weaponized to further the Israeli domination of the Temple Mount and to diminish Palestinian claims to the site. Ben Shitrit carefully explores the intricate politics of the Israeli feminist coalition, while illuminating its counter-positioning of Palestinian Muslim women as anti-feminist actors. Through her focus on the "ambiguity of complicity," Ben Shitrit delineates ways that emancipatory goals must be paired with critical analysis if they are to contribute to democratic freedom.

The difficult entanglement of liberation and oppression is similarly explored by Menachem Lorberbaum, this time on the theoretical level of the

theopolitics of Zionism and post-Zionism. For Lorberbaum, a theological critique of the political is needed to prevent the "ultimate closure" of the moral horizon sought by the state; theology, however, often ends up sanctifying the state instead. This is just as true for Jews as for Christians, necessitating intervention by an alternative, prophetic theology that can interrupt the state's claim to absolute status. Theology does not automatically supervise and correct politics; it is "just as much in need of deconstruction," and this requires constant critical reflection.

Finally, Vincent Lloyd considers the paradoxes of Black liberation and Christian anti-Judaism in the work of Alice Walker. Rejecting both incurious condemnation and exculpatory justification of Walker's antisemitic outbursts, Lloyd examines the ways that Walker was deeply shaped by Jewish themes, both in acceptance and rejection. He also shows how a particular understanding of all-expansive Christian love, combined with a New Age rejection of the very concept of judgment (the latter of which is projected onto Jews), leads Walker to view Judaism as oppressive and the struggle against it as liberatory. In a far more perceptive discussion than would have been possible had he treated Walker's antisemitism as beneath intellectual analysis, Lloyd shows how the general tendency of antisemitism to present itself as a politics of liberation found its way into the particularities of Walker's Black and Jewish loves and concerns.

Conclusion

Since the climactic events of the mid-twentieth century, judgments, both popular and scholarly, about the Jews' political standing have been shaped by emergent political developments. As we have argued, the field of Jewish political thought was established in response to contemporary political concerns, and its contours have been shaped by shifting perceptions of what constitutes pressing issues. This volume is no exception to these complex, often fraught, negotiations between academic scholarship and its material, historical, and political contexts. The volume's genesis and execution were bracketed by two events widely perceived as realigning global political fault lines. The fellowship year coincided with Donald Trump's election as president of the United States, and as contributors completed their chapters, the world was paralyzed by the coronavirus pandemic. As the volume went to press, the crisis mode that reached its apotheosis in the sacking of the US Capitol

on January 6, 2021, had receded somewhat with the return of noncharismatic leadership as personified in Joe Biden, although the political and legal aftershocks of Trump continued to dominate headlines. In Israel, rotating Prime Ministers Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid had assembled a diverse and expressly nonideological coalition, promising technocratic expertise. Yet the government fell after less than one year, with the result that Israelis faced their fifth election in the span of less than three years. As the pandemic continued to grind on—and fears of ecological catastrophe intensified—hopes for a return to mundane politics were repeatedly dampened. It is too soon to divine what these events portend for Jewish and world politics, or even, arguably, how their imprint is manifest in the volume's collected essays. Cognizant of the risks of premature prophecy, we will nevertheless venture a few tentative hypotheses about the political currents that run through the volume and hint, in oblique ways, at the broader circumstances of its composition.

If *The Jewish Political Tradition* volumes were conceived at the height of the Oslo peace process, this volume drops at a moment when the two-state solution is essentially a dead letter, and consequential realignments in Middle Eastern geopolitics have been formalized through the (Trump-brokered) normalization of relations between Israel and several of the Gulf States. At this transitional moment, when the nation-state model appears increasingly inadequate to the challenges at hand and, as such, no longer monopolizes Jewish debate, the volume's essays reflect the thirst for new political paradigms (or, at the very least, new political vocabularies). Moreover, the essays capture the ambivalent longing for a redemptive horizon that took hold as politics assumed an increasingly feverish, existential tenor (in both Israel and the United States). In the grips of the pandemic, many of us find ourselves caught between the desperate desire for a return to "normalcy" and the faint hope that a crisis of this magnitude will inspire radical forms of political creativity. Here, the shofar's nonapocalyptic meanings resound, as our contributors seek to inject elements of luster (charisma, even) into the kind of mundane institutions, practices, and norms that have long held Jewish communities together, and which also serve as the condition of possibility of any political life shared by Jews and non-Jews. Perhaps critical self-reflection, honest dialogue, and analysis rooted in compassion can avert the severity of the decree.