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## **Rebel Rabbis: The Radical Political Theologies of Joel Teitelbaum and Elmer Berger**

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### **Abstract:**

In this paper, I'm exploring Zionism's impact on modern Judaism by writing intellectual histories of two prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century anti-Zionist Rabbis: Rabbi Elmer Berger and Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum. Though they approach Judaism from profoundly different perspectives, their shared anti-Zionism illuminates distinct traditions that see Judaism and Zionism as incompatible. To better understand these rabbis, I review their major texts and describe how their political theologies evolved throughout their lives. I offer two intellectual portraits and explore how their anti-Zionism is informed by their respective religious traditions and the evolution of the State of Israel. I conclude by arguing that these thinkers offer new angles to appreciate Zionism's dramatic impact on Judaism and how various religious denominations responded to internal Jewish debates over nationalism and statehood.

**Keywords:** Judaism, Zionism, Political Theology, Religious Traditions, Nationalism, Identity

In 1955, after nearly a decade as a leader of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, Rabbi Elmer Berger finally visited the Middle East. In his correspondence with the head of the Council's board, Lessing J. Rosenwald, Berger shares his experiences in letters that were later published in the book, *Who Knows Better Must Say So!* He discussed politics and anti-Semitism with the Chief Rabbis of Egypt and Iraq; he spoke with the Prime Minister of Lebanon; he even visited a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. At the end of his trip, he traveled to Israel. Berger writes,

I say to you, friends and people with whom I am honored to be associated, that Judaism is on trial out here; and Jews too. And the judges are not only these poor refugees but are business people of all nationalities; government officials of many countries; simple tourists from the four corners of the earth. All of these do not stop and haggle over the legalities and the proprieties of governmental action needed to solve the problem. They just see the problem and find no rationalizations good enough.<sup>1</sup>

Rabbi Elmer Berger was a follower of Classical Reform Judaism, the dominant form of American Judaism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that redefined the Jewish people as a religious community, asserted universal moral values, and encouraged Jews to assimilate into mainstream American cultural life.<sup>2</sup> For Berger, Zionism, which sought to create a Jewish state in Palestine, had taken Judaism in a dangerous direction.<sup>3</sup> He feared that replacing religious practice with ethno-political nationalism would undermine Reform Judaism and would create a humanitarian catastrophe in the Middle East.

During Berger's travels in Israel, another rabbi across the world was

establishing a profoundly new kind of Jewish practice, one that translates the fundamentalism of Hungarian Ultra-Orthodox Judaism into American Jewish life. Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, otherwise known as the Satmar Rebbe, argues that true Jews must live in exile and fulfill all the commandments to bring the messianic world. Ultra-Orthodox Judaism was formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and dramatically reshaped modern Judaism by insisting that "true" religious Jews uphold the highest standard of the commandments and resist cultural assimilation.<sup>4</sup> Most generally in this strand of Judaism, messianism entails the defeat of good over evil and the return of all Jews to Palestine by a divinely ordained miracle and "ingathering of exiles."<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Teitelbaum encouraged his followers all over the world to reject Jewish nationalism and to obey the highest standard of the commandments.

Elmer Berger and Joel Teitelbaum are two of the most notable anti-Zionist Rabbis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though both claim to express ideological continuity with the past, they formulate new responses to Zionism that are reflective of the issues confronting Jewish political life. They are outliers to the spread of Zionism across the spectrum of modern Judaism, and though they present innovative programs, they drive forward novel Jewish theologies that reflect long-standing ideas from within their respective traditions. Teitelbaum translated Hungarian Ultra-Orthodox practice into American Judaism to create a numerically prosperous community. Berger advocated for Classical Reform Judaism and became arguably the last of his ideological kind.

For Elmer Berger, Reform Judaism and Zionism are plagued by essential contradictions. Before major changes, Reform Judaism advocated for the dissolution of the Jewish nation with a greater emphasis on social and cultural integration into emerging European nation states.<sup>6</sup>

Berger feared that Zionism was replacing Reform Judaism's attempt at religious acculturation with false national liberation. In his view, Zionism would normalize diaspora Jews into falsely reconstructing a Jewish nation that would support Jewish ethno-nationalism in the Middle East. He thought that previous generations of Reform Rabbis trivialized this threat, and he was not going to make the same mistake.

For Joel Teitelbaum, the question of particularism and universalism was beside the point: Zionism poses an existential threat to the integrity of observant Judaism. By misleading Orthodox Jews into participating in a secular project that rebels against traditional Jewish religious orthodoxy, Jewish nationalism is jeopardizing the coming of the Messiah. Zionism is not merely masquerading as a messianic movement; Zionism is actively anti-messianic because it rebels against the idea that God would bring the Jews to the land of Israel when the Messiah arrives. As different as they were, neither thinker had room for ideological reconciliation with Jewish political sovereignty or reconstituting a Jewish national body.

Though Berger and Teitelbaum are profoundly different, their ideological engagement with Zionism illustrates a gap in how scholars approach Zionism and the formation of modern Judaism. What can scholars learn about the creation of modern Judaism through the early religious conflict over Zionism? How did anti-Zionist thinkers draw on longstanding traditions as supposedly mainstream Judaism integrated political nationalism? Reading Berger and Teitelbaum in conversation with one another offers a new angle to explore how Zionism was almost universally accepted by Jews all over the world.

This paper examines these figures to explore how their radically different conceptions of Judaism led to Jewish anti-

Zionist political theologies. As different as they were, their anti-Zionist ideologies are grounded in theological differences over the meaning of Judaism. According to Elmer Berger, Jewish political nationalism is an oxymoron because Jews are not a secular, ethnic nation. For Joel Teitelbaum, Zionism undermines traditional Judaism by rebuilding a Jewish commonwealth in the land of Israel before the messianic era.

Though they write in different languages and understand Judaism in completely different ways, they represent two forgotten traditions of internal Jewish conflict over Zionism. I analyze their understandings of Judaism, their responses to Zionism, and offer a portrait of the religious and theological ruptures that their critiques reveal. In my conclusion, I point to new questions to better grasp how Zionism has impacted the formation of modern Judaism.

In the name of defending their understandings of Jewish tradition and history, these rabbis confront what has arguably been the most powerful Jewish national movement in history. Yet, Berger and Teitelbaum's efforts to defend their respective traditions have been a forgotten chapter in modern Jewish history. Nevertheless, the ideas and debates that animated Zionism's religious dissidents can illuminate new, unexplored territory in Jewish history. Whether one agrees with them or not, they present critiques that are worth taking seriously. I hope that in the ensuing chapters I can offer a richer, fuller understanding of the history of modern Judaism, the past and present debates over Jewish nationalism, and the lively issues animating contemporary Jewish thought.

**Joel Teitelbaum and Satmar Hasidic Thought: Past, Present, and Future**  
*Biography*

Joel Teitelbaum was born in Sighet, Hungary on January 18, 1887.<sup>7</sup> Though he

was not the oldest, he was the descendant of two prominent rabbis and was thus born with the potential for significant rabbinic authority. The town of Sighet was located next to Maramaros County, a bastion of Ultra-Orthodoxy in Hungary.<sup>8</sup> Ultra-Orthodox Judaism is a movement that emerged in Hungary in the 1850s to serve as a bulwark against the influence of secularization on Central European Jews.<sup>9</sup> They radicalize the interpretive process of Jewish law by forbidding cultural or religious innovation; prominent Ultra-Orthodox rabbis elevate cultural customs like dress, language, and gender relationships to give them the status of absolute religious authority.<sup>10</sup> Ever since the rise of Hasidism through the enigmatic spiritual leader, Rabbi Israel b. Eliezer, also known as the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), this region had been a fortress of Jewish traditionalism.<sup>11</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, various disciples of the Baal Shem Tov founded Hasidism as a movement to creatively imbue traditional Jewish practice with spiritual fervor and intense devotional practice.<sup>12</sup> Teitelbaum was born into the Hasidic Ultra-Orthodox tradition and incorporates many of its ideas into his political thought. As the second son to a major Hasidic dynasty, Teitelbaum's father told him to leave town when his brother was appointed as his successor to avoid political conflict between them.<sup>13</sup> Joel Teitelbaum relocated to the small Hungarian city of Satu Mare and quickly amassed a following because of his Talmudic erudition, his pugnaciousness, and most importantly, his religious fundamentalism in Jewish ritual life.

Because of his provocative personality, Teitelbaum had many enemies.<sup>14</sup> He opposed almost anyone who was not sufficiently committed to his understanding of Jewish purity, and he did so with a unique ferocity. The main target of his ire, along with Jewish assimilationists, Reform Jews, and the

Neo-Orthodox, are the Zionists. For Teitelbaum, the attempt to create a Jewish commonwealth in the land of Israel before the coming of the Messiah is the greatest desecration of the modern world. It is not simply misguided; for Teitelbaum, Zionism is actively anti-messianic.<sup>15</sup> Throughout his writings, he argues that Zionism violates God's protection of Jews in exile. At the end of tractate *Ketubot* in the Babylonian Talmud, there's a discussion about three oaths made between the Jewish people and God to protect them among the nations of the world.<sup>16</sup> These three oaths include Jews promising to not return to the land of Israel or to rebel against the nations of the world. In turn, God would guarantee Jewish survival before the coming of the redemption. According to Teitelbaum, by violating the precept to not return *en masse* to the land of Israel, the Zionists nullify God's covenantal protection for Jews among the nations of the world.

Even though from a distance he seems like a radical rabbinic figure, Teitelbaum's intellectual work is almost entirely grounded in accepted traditional sources.<sup>17</sup> He published his first book, the *VaYoel Moshe*, in 1959 and it was the first comprehensive religious polemic against Zionism and the State of Israel after 1948.<sup>18</sup> Though there were many Ultra-Orthodox rabbis expressing these ideas before the Holocaust, he was the first major rabbinic thinker to write an entire book on the subject.<sup>19</sup> The work is composed of three main sections: an essay about the three oaths, an essay about whether the commandment to settle in the land of Israel is still applicable, and an essay on the use and supposed revival of the Hebrew language.

His second major book is called *Al ha-Ge'ula Ve-al ha-Temura*, and it was published after the 1967 war. He wrote it because he felt like the anti-Zionist consensus among his followers was eroding.

The book is specifically about Zionism (rather than focusing on the component parts of Zionist anti-messianism) and aside from the introduction, it is a collection of his public teachings from after the war.

### *Understanding of Jewish History*

At its core, Teitelbaum thinks that exile and redemption orient all of Jewish history. The three oaths described in Tractate *Ketubot* in the Babylonian Talmud outline the principles of this theology: do not rebel against the nations of the world; do not try to forcefully return to the land of Israel; and the other nations in turn will not inflict excessive suffering upon the Jewish people. In the *VaYoel Moshe* and *Al-HaGeula Ve'al ha-Temura*, Teitelbaum argues that as the final redemption approaches, true Jewish believers should refrain from explicit messianic activity and should instead continue studying Torah and fulfilling religious commandments. Teitelbaum's messianic theology is rooted in the rabbinic idea that Satan and a mystical, demonic force named Samael meddle in history to thwart the coming of the messiah. The only practical response to their intervention is to put their trust in God by remaining in exile until the Messiah arrives.

One powerful example of this religious attitude is explained in the exodus from Egypt from the second book of the Torah. Teitelbaum argues that throughout each step of the exodus, the Jewish people are uncertain whether the miracles are genuinely divine. He writes, "Therefore, the people of Israel did not know clearly at the time of their going out from which side the redemption came to them, whether from the side of the holy God, or if it was from the side of the evil force (*the sitra achra*), until it was verified for them that God took them out of Egypt."<sup>20</sup> Rather than simply trusting the appearance of miracles, Jews should treat them with skepticism before they are revealed as true or

false. According to Teitelbaum, Satan and Samael intervene in history through the guise of miracles, and it is especially important to treat them with distance.

To further emphasize the importance of obeying divine redemption in the Bible, Teitelbaum explains how Israel could have fled Egypt during the ninth plague: darkness. The Jewish people could have rebelled against God and established their own kingdom, but they maintain their quietist posture and warrant the revelation at Sinai. He writes,

I explained that during the plague of darkness there was a great test for Israel that they should not create a government for themselves and leave Egypt before the right time, because the Egyptians were bound under their hands, and one person couldn't see his fellow, and no one could do anything. Israel could have escaped because the Egyptians were not able to delay them, and they also had the power to slay their enemies and kill them... They did not do so because the time of exile had not been completed and it had not been permitted to go out even one moment before the proper time.<sup>21</sup>

For Teitelbaum, the entire exodus story is about maintaining faith in God. He hints at an exegetical story about the children of Ephraim who try to leave Egypt before the right moment and are massacred. This story, as well as his entire conception of the exodus from Egypt, is a warning against violating Jewish theologies of exile. Exile and political quietism are the orienting force driving Jewish history forward. Thus, for Teitelbaum, Messianic quietism expresses an ultimate faith in divine majesty over human affairs and in the viability of the covenant between God and Israel.

The Satmar Rebbe applies this theologically significant view of exile onto every aspect of Jewish life, including Biblical examples of warfare. On the holiday of Hanukkah, many assume that Jews are celebrating a military victory over the ancient Greeks. However, Teitelbaum argues that war is never miraculous; war is always the result of natural forces. The miracle celebrated, then, is strictly about how one set of candles burned for eight days. He writes, “Likewise, even with the Hanukkah miracle, which was victory of the few over the many and the weak over the strong, the rabbis did not establish a holiday over the military victory but rather just for the miracle of the candles.”<sup>22</sup> Because war is never miraculous, special attention must be paid when seemingly miraculous things happen in battle; for Teitelbaum, this may mean that it is the work of Satan or Samael. In light of Israel’s victory in the 1967 war, Teitelbaum insists that no war, in particular one in which innocent lives are shed, can be miraculously delivered by God.

Teitelbaum’s political passivity does not preclude the use of martial language; in fact, that language was central to his understanding of the confrontation between Ultra-Orthodox Judaism and Zionism. A great irony is that despite calling for political passivity for the Jewish people at large, he invokes military language to describe an almost Manichean battle between the forces of good and evil.<sup>23</sup> One clear example is when he writes, “Even more so, in the horrific abomination of the Zionist State which violates the serious oaths we made with God, and it violates our religion and plants heresy and blasphemy in the entire world and delays our redemption and the deliverance of our souls. Of course, we need to battle against this impure idea.”<sup>24</sup> Teitelbaum’s political quietism does not stop him from engaging with secular governments, nor does it preclude loud, vicious battles with political

opponents. Ironically, maintaining messianic, political passivity is ensured through forceful, sometimes violent, examples of political activity.

In Teitelbaum’s worldview, the stakes are absolutely crucial because, after the Holocaust, the world is at the precipice of messianic redemption. Throughout the first section of the *VaYoel Moshe*, he argues that the three oaths are the central feature of Jewish faith in exile. Though the great medieval scholar Maimonides omits them from his codex of Jewish law, Teitelbaum argues that he did this because exile theology is the foundation of all the commandments and thus does not need to be included. Past scholarship has demonstrated that the three oaths played a more significant part in Jewish history than is normally assumed.<sup>25</sup> By breaking the three oaths and organizing for a return to the land of Israel, the Zionists are consciously violating the covenant created between God and the Jewish people. Like in past moments when Jews tried to return to the land of Israel, Teitelbaum elevates the three oaths to temper these messianic ambitions.<sup>26</sup>

In the introduction to the *VaYoel Moshe*, Teitelbaum explores the fundamental ideas behind his political theology. During moments of Jewish crisis, the rabbinic paradigm generally works to examine how the Jewish people have brought about their own suffering. Teitelbaum immediately rejects a Jewish theology without reward and punishment because doing so would demand admitting God’s role in abandoning the Jewish people to this disaster. Because relinquishing the covenant of reward and punishment from God is impossible, Teitelbaum opens by exploring what the Jewish people did to warrant the Nazi genocide. After the collective trauma of the Holocaust, the ability to locate a human cause offered agency and control; he is trying to rebuild and protect an entire way of life that was almost annihilated. The ability to find a

reason for the Holocaust can help restore order to a seemingly chaotic world.

This leads to his most provocative claim: the Zionist rebellion against Jewish political passivity is nothing less than anti-messianic and demonological; their collective violation of the three oaths caused the Holocaust. He writes,

Now in our generation, we don't have to look in the hidden places for the sin that caused this disaster because it's clear and explicit from the words of the Rabbis when they told us about the sins of the oaths... But in our great sins this happened, the heretics and blasphemers made all kinds of efforts to violate these oaths, to ascend the wall, and to establish for themselves a government and freedom before the right time, which is to force the end, and they continued to gather most of the nation of Israel to this impure idea.<sup>27</sup>

For Teitelbaum, the destruction of European Jewry happened because of a theological rupture in Jewish covenant between God and Israel. The obvious, public attempt to break with Jewish tradition caused the near destruction of the Jewish people. Again, though this feels provocative, there were religious Zionist leaders who made very similar claims. Most notably, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, one of the most prominent religious Zionist rabbis, made the disturbing claim that the Holocaust wiped out the exilic portion of the Jewish people who would not return to the land of Israel for the coming redemption.<sup>28</sup> Though both claims sit uncomfortably for modern readers, we can properly contextualize them within their era.

In the wake of the Holocaust, Teitelbaum argues that Jewish notions of exile and redemption have endured through every pivotal moment in Jewish history. If the covenant could endure through countless

examples of suffering and persecution, then there is little reason to believe that traditional frameworks for Jewish history could not continue. Jewish history could be organized within this rabbinic paradigm, and Teitelbaum employs his understanding of a traditional narrative to make sense of contemporary Jewish suffering.

### *God, Miracles, and Messianism*

Teitelbaum argues that the metaphysical state of Jewish exile is ongoing even after the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. God remains omnipotent and omniscient, and there has not been a break within the Jewish tradition. The covenant is alive, Jews remain in exile, and this subsequently demands that Jews uphold their religious obligations and responsibilities.

Teitelbaum focuses on the language of miracles because he thinks that during moments of apparent Zionist victories, something more sinister is at work. One fascinating way Teitelbaum explores this is through the sin of the golden calf. At the beginning of *Al ha-Geula Ve'al ha-Temura*, Teitelbaum argues that the Jewish people are simply looking for a new leader, not an idol to worship to replace God. It starts with good intentions, but once the calf is formed, it takes on a life of its own. Teitelbaum writes, "What appears to be the explanation of the words in this matter is that all of the medieval commenters (of blessed memory) already understood that Israel did not think the calf was for idol worship. Rather, they wanted to draw down a certain kind of strength to serve as their leader in place of Moses."<sup>29</sup> He creatively argues that Satan inhabits the golden calf to tempt the Jewish people into sin. The calf begins to dance, and this makes it seem like it is a genuine deity. For Teitelbaum, when redemption is imminent, demonic forces operate in the world to undermine the coming perfection.

Teitelbaum builds on this idea by noting something obvious about secular nationalism: even though religious Zionism argues that it is miraculous, it is not invested in observant Judaism. He connected this to traditional responses to the appearance of a prophet; if the prophet is truthful, then Jews will return to Torah and the commandments. Teitelbaum explains, “In any case, they must distinguish between a true prophet and a false prophet since a true prophet will rely on the laws of Moses and the lying prophet will beautify idol worship, which is abandoning Torah.”<sup>30</sup> Because Jewish nationalism is ultimately a secular project, it leads to Jews abandoning Torah and therefore cannot be messianic. If it cannot be properly messianic, then the entire project must be idolatrous because a partial return to the land of Israel before the end times is impossible. Something much more sinister must be at work, and Teitelbaum argues that it was the result of Satan and Samael.

This suspicion became more pronounced as the 20th century unfolded. After the Six Day War, Teitelbaum could feel his community’s anti-Zionist consensus weakening. He understood that Israel’s victory was making the world accept the normalcy of the state even though he thought the victory was a fraud. Teitelbaum argues that Satan needed something compelling to tempt people away from the redemption, so he incarnates himself in Jewish nationalism. Now, Israel’s victory in 1967 and these supposed miracles are further confusing the Jewish people, which had already been the case since the founding of the State. Teitelbaum writes,

Satan did all of this to thwart and lead astray even one person in Israel... at the foundation of their faith and to delay (God forbid) their redemption through the violation of the Oaths. And of course, this happens through all his strength in bringing signs and

miracles that are revealed to tempt Israel in different ways, and this isn't a new understanding of Satan's ways.<sup>31</sup>

Miracles can oftentimes be deceptive; Satan employs the perception of a miracle to tempt observant Jews into either pacifying themselves to Zionism or into knowingly accepting it even though it is a rebellion against Judaism.

Teitelbaum argues that the war is both not a miracle and that the ways in which it appears miraculous are due to Satan’s intervention. For Teitelbaum, wars can never be divine and are always natural. He writes, “And definitely in the case of the Zionist war with the Arabs that it did not even have the reality or the scent of a miracle, because it's obvious that the Arabs and the Ishmaelites are not warriors.”<sup>32</sup> This strange quote illuminates some of his practical political sensibilities; he argues that “the Arabs and the Ishmaelites are not warriors” to support the idea that the war is the result of natural causes, not God. Teitelbaum argues that the war is both not a miracle and the ways in which it appeared miraculous are the result of Satan. The temptation to accept secular nationalism was only growing and it therefore must be aggressively rejected.

Teitelbaum argues that Ultra-Orthodox Jews could work to bring the Messiah by staying in exile, studying Torah, and fulfilling the commandments, while waiting patiently for God’s return. He writes, “The coming redemption depends entirely on the merit of the Avenger (Natrona) to wait until the coming of the Messiah, and to not turn to any other redemption (God forbid) before the coming of the Messiah.”<sup>33</sup> The exilic posture is ongoing; true observant Jews must pray and live faithfully to have the divine kingdom restored.

Among all the thinkers involved in the internal Jewish conflict over Zionism,

Teitelbaum is one of its most prominent Orthodox critics. He offers a serious critique of Jewish nationalism from within canonical religious sources, and though he died nearly fifty years ago, his anti-Zionist political theology continues to raise important questions: How viable is the bridge between secular nationalism and observant Judaism? With wide-ranging, authoritative sources from across the Orthodox canon, he creates a theological framework that rejects Zionism as an anti-messianic rebellion against Jewish life in exile. Even though his work clearly did not stop the spread of Zionism in Orthodox Jewish communities, the existence of his critique stands as an ongoing testament to the fragile balance between Orthodox Judaism and Zionism.

Even though it's quite important, there are various limitations to Teitelbaum's thinking. By making Zionism responsible for the Nazi genocide, he ascribes guilt to Jewish Zionists rather than the Nazis who administrated the Holocaust. Furthermore, his use of supernatural language to describe the unfolding of Israeli history is a rarely accepted way of understanding Jewish nationalism, let alone any modern historical phenomenon.

Though he was one of the most prominent anti-Zionist rabbinic dissidents, on some of the most important issues, Teitelbaum's theology is directly opposed to Rabbi Elmer Berger's thought. Their fundamental, irreconcilable differences animate any analysis of their political theologies. Their thinking arises from distinct intellectual and historical traditions yet nevertheless, they remain two of the most significant anti-Zionist rabbis of the 20th century. We are going to explore what this tension means through an analysis of Berger's ideology in the next section.

## **Rabbi Elmer Berger and the Forgotten Intellectual Legacy of Classical Reform Judaism**

### *Biography*

Rabbi Elmer Berger was born in Cleveland in 1908.<sup>34</sup> His life and writings, which span almost fifty years, are almost entirely ideologically consistent. Throughout his work, he is committed to vindicating his understanding of a historically grounded vision of American Reform Judaism. For Berger, the debate over Zionism is primarily a debate about Jewish history, and he uses archeology, biblical criticism of the Hebrew Bible, and modern historical scholarship to validate his Jewish narrative.<sup>35</sup> Berger relies on Western academic tools to craft his theology in contrast to Joel Teitelbaum who is writing from within the Orthodox religious canon. His anti-Zionism reflects a deeper commitment to Classical Reform Judaism rather than a political perspective, although a thoughtful political perspective on the conflict later emerges.<sup>36</sup> In the late 19th century, Reform Rabbinical leaders were strongly opposed to Zionism for what were then obvious reasons; namely, Classical Reform Judaism rejected the idea of Jewish nation and thus, individual Jews should continue to assimilate into their host societies rather than organize as a separate, political collective. Zionist particularity conflicted with the universalist values of early Reform Judaism.<sup>37</sup>

However, major historical trends upended Reform Judaism, including the massive migration of Eastern European Jews to America, the rise of Nazism and anti-Semitism in Europe, and the decline of spiritual participation in Classical Reform shuls.<sup>38</sup> In the early 20th century, Classical Reform ideology was influenced by competing forms of Judaism and was beginning to reformulate itself, on religious issues as well as on the question of Zionism. Significantly, after Britain issued the Balfour

Declaration, Reform Judaism welcomed major changes to accommodate the growing influence of Jewish nationalism.<sup>39</sup> In 1937, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) voted to establish a new statement of principles, which tacitly accepted Zionism and reformulated central aspects of Reform Judaism.<sup>40</sup>

In response to these changes, a group of Reform Rabbis organized to create the American Council for Judaism: an explicitly anti-Zionist Jewish organization that aimed to foster principles of Classical Reform Judaism and to oppose Jewish nationalism.<sup>41</sup> The Council's primary goal was to uphold Classical Reform ideology, a belief system that was being upended by ideological changes in the broader movement. The Council was the most serious early Jewish opposition group to Zionism and the creation of the State of Israel. Though the Council's original mission was strictly religious, over time it evolved into a secular, anti-Zionist political organization aimed at shifting American Jewish public opinion about Israel.

Elmer Berger became one of the leaders of the Council during the 1940s, and he was the most recognizable rabbinic figure in the movement.<sup>42</sup> The Council was popular in Jewish communities that were assimilated into relatively stable positions in the American social hierarchy. In 1945 just after the Council was founded, there were nearly 10,000 members.<sup>43</sup> From its earliest days through its near dissolution after 1967, Berger was the Council's most vocal ideological spokesperson.

The Council survived for almost two decades, but by then, most of the Reform movement had already accepted Zionism. After the war in 1967, the Council almost dissolved, and most American Jewish communities adopted Zionism as an important and essential element of their conception of Judaism. Berger resigned as Vice President and founded the American

Jewish Alternatives to Zionism.<sup>44</sup> He led this organization for several years before retiring in the early 1980s, although he continued to write and speak well into the final years of his life.

While serving as a leader in the Council, Berger wrote several books explaining the Council's Judaism, their response to Zionism, and his own reflections on anti-Zionism in America. His writing (and understanding of Judaism) blends historical scholarship, references to the Bible, and a commitment to the values of Classical Reform Judaism. For Berger, authentic Reform Judaism embodies the best of the Jewish tradition adapted for the modern world. His books include *The Jewish Dilemma* (1945), *A Partisan History of Judaism* (1952), *Who Knows Better Must Say So!* (1955), *Judaism or Jewish Nationalism* (1957), and *Memoirs of an Anti-Zionist Jew* (1975). His early works focus on his understanding of Judaism and the looming threat of Jewish political nationalism while his later works are an overt political rejection of the State of Israel's role in the modern Middle East.

#### *Universalism and Particularism*

As a reform rabbi and modern Jewish scholar, Elmer Berger is greatly influenced by the academic study of Judaism. He argues that Jewish scholarship validates his most serious historical assertion: Jewish history (to the extent that writing such a history is possible) is defined by the struggle between Jewish particularity and Jewish universalism. The prophetic era in the Old Testament is an example of expansion while the Middle Ages represent a period of contraction. Berger is convinced that Judaism is a religion practiced by independent human beings, not by members of a singular, coherent Jewish nation.

From the earliest days of the Bible to his present era, Berger theorizes that Judaism

is an ongoing encounter between those who identify with this belief system and the world around them. In his book *A Partisan History of Judaism*, Berger explores how various nomadic tribes settled in Canaan over three subsequent waves. As documented by his understanding of historical and biblical scholarship, Judaism assimilated certain customs over many generations. Though these Jewish precursors are not related, they are nomadic peoples who share the memory of a “desert God.” These peoples are distantly connected to the events narrated in the Hebrew Bible, and he explains how various Jewish rituals emerge from Midianite customs that Jethro teaches his son in law, Moses. Berger explains,

These three injunctions, then, sacrifice of the first-born, observance of the Passover and the prohibition against boiling a kid in the milk of its mother, together with the rite of circumcision, probably comprised the original, or at least were among the earliest, requirements of the religion of this desert god about whom Moses had learned from his Midianite father-in-law.<sup>45</sup>

Though these disparate tribes lived across ancient Canaan, there are moments in the Bible that hint at a shared connection, such as when the prophetess Deborah calls on the tribes to gather to fight the Philistines in the Book of Judges. There is a short period of unity during the Davidic dynasty, but it quickly collapses. This moment of Jewish sovereignty is replaced by in-fighting, corruption, and eventually the dawn of the prophetic era. Berger understands this early migratory period and the brief reign of an Israelite kingdom as an illustration of the heterogeneous, disparate origins of Judaism.

After the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezer conquers the surviving Judaic kingdom, the prophet Jeremiah issues

a plea for integration into Babylonian society. In exile, Jewish individuals could worship God without being bound to particularistic customs or to a specific land; they could create a spiritual foundation that eliminated temple sacrifice and land-based practice. Berger writes, “With a Judaism of moral values, universal in scope and with a god no longer attached to land or tribe, these people could now become an integral part of the civilization to which they were taken as captives and there maintain their integrity in a religious sense.”<sup>46</sup> Jews could emerge as members of their respective societies who practice a distinctive and meaningful faith. Ethical monotheism, the belief in one universal God who upholds a universal moral standard for all human beings, is fully untethered from the limitations of Jewish particularism. Through this new diasporic identity, Jewish individuals could practice a Judaism that embodied what Berger called “high religion.”

This major step gave birth to what Berger thinks is the greatest Jewish historical tension: opposite the prophetic tradition, which emphasizes universal morality and integration with wider society, is the particularistic impulse that emphasizes Jewish nationhood. The struggle is born in two great historical moments. The first is when Ezra and Nehemiah return to Palestine and insist on separating Jews from the native inhabitants and surrounding cultures. The second example is when Constantine issues a decree that Jews are a nation in the 3rd century. Before Constantine’s decree, Berger claims that anyone could practice Judaism. Berger writes, “Judaism was a religion to which anybody could subscribe, whether or not he was born a Jew, whether or not he was born in Israel or Palestine. Creed, not race or nationality, was the hallmark of a Jew.”<sup>47</sup> As universalism was being smothered by the idea of a Jewish nation, Judaism was segregated outside of normative society. For

Berger, this contrast between Jewish universalism and particularism is the defining struggle of Judaism.

Since Jews were granted citizenship in France in 1848, the struggle between sectarianism and universalism had been causing greater and greater points of tension. Jewish emancipation's success led to the emergence of an ever-fiercer counterfoil: Jewish political nationalism. For Berger, Zionism represents an existential threat to Jewish assimilation because it recreates the historically dubious idea of a Jewish nation under the guise of a secular, cultural revival. For Berger, the most compelling Judaism is rooted in prophetic values which aspire to sanctify universal morality in the common struggle for freedom. It is within this framework, and within this understanding of Judaism, that the foundational theology of Classical Reform Judaism is born.

#### *The Essence of Reform Judaism*

As a universal religion, practicing Jews have an obligation to uphold a shared moral standard. Though particularistic Judaism thrived in the Middle Ages, emancipation allows for Berger's most central Jewish idea, ethical monotheism, to take center stage. According to Berger, each prophet introduces a new element to universal Jewish spirituality, each of which calls on people to look beyond their tribe to live in harmony with humanity. Berger explains, "The idea of one god for all peoples representing a single standard morality with one set of moral values applying to all peoples - this was the completion of the revolution in religious thinking which these men brought about."<sup>48</sup> For Berger, the Hebrew prophets teach that fulfilling the letter of the law is insufficient; if certain ethical standards are neglected, then the society is doomed to failure. Reform Judaism is building on this foundational achievement and emphasizing these values as the

cornerstone of an enlightened Judaism for the modern world.

According to Berger, the 18<sup>th</sup> century German Jewish thinker, Moses Mendelssohn, created the ideological framework to grant citizenship to French and German Jews in newly emerging nation states.<sup>49</sup> There is nothing extraordinary or deficient about Jews; they are ordinary people who practice their own religion which is distinct from dominant forms of European Christianity. Berger explains, "Emancipation was the fulfillment of the desires of ordinary human beings who happened to be Jews, to be free. This desire in all men antedated nations."<sup>50</sup> While a new system was making Jewish freedom possible in the modern world, freedom as a Jewish ideal had existed since the dawn of the prophetic era. Mendelssohn began the process of liberating Jews from the ghetto, thus allowing for Jewish acceptance while creating the possibility for a real Jewish reformation.

The one demand of emancipated Jews was that they would give up their particularistic customs and assimilate into the surrounding society. Liberal democracy could grant them everything as individuals, but nothing as an organized collective. Berger observes that in Mendelssohn's view, most Jews wanted to be integrated and to practice a faith with universal appeal. As Berger explains, "Mendelssohn had shown them how they might be both free and Jews, even though the process he advocated for meant a progressive dissolution of 'the Jewish people.' Judaism could survive though 'the Jewish people' might disappear. Judaism was of the spirit of man. It was universal in appeal."<sup>51</sup> When given the choice between freedom and an outdated notion of "Jewish peoplehood," most Jews would choose freedom. As the "spirit of man," a universal Judaism could finally emerge.

Jewish emancipation creates the need for Reform Judaism. As various European

societies granted new opportunities for Jews, Judaism as a religion must adapt. Berger writes, “In a way, the average Jew gave the answer by emancipating himself whenever he had the opportunity. When his Judaism did not keep pace with emancipation, he assimilated. Where it did, he proved that it was possible to be an integrated citizen and a faithful Jew.”<sup>52</sup> This reformation began in Germany, and newly emancipated Jews were committed to creating a Judaism that would not impede on their social, cultural, and national integration into German life. The essence of Reform Judaism, in each of its various incarnations across Europe and the United States, is to facilitate Jewish integration while adapting Judaism for the modern world. The prophetic ideals that had too often taken a backseat were now able to exist front and center.

#### *The Future of Emancipated Jewish life*

Berger rejects the notion of a “Jewish problem” that calls for a specifically Jewish solution.<sup>53</sup> In his view, medieval European anti-Semitism was one issue within a broader system of feudal domination. The seemingly distinct “Jewish problem” of integrating Jews into emerging nation-states was a relic of that age; in the modern world, Jewish co-religionists should participate in the struggle for universal human freedom. Berger argues, “Those who believe in emancipation, then, simply believe that history sustains the struggle of Jews for equality as an integral part of the eternal struggle of man to be free, that there is no such things as a permanent ‘Jewish problem’ peculiar to a ‘Jewish people.’”<sup>54</sup> Emancipated Jewry should continue advocating for integration and should abandon an inaccurate notion of Jewish peoplehood. Remarkably, Berger thinks that liberal democracy had itself integrated prophetic values into its conception of freedom. Jews are able to join normative liberal democratic societies

because those cultures had already integrated the best of the Jewish tradition as its foundation. For Berger, there is no contradiction between democratic citizenship and universalist Judaism; they complement one another perfectly.

Berger believes that emancipation offers the greatest opportunity to rebuild a Judaism that upheld the universal moral direction of Jewish life. Emancipation would lead to integration which would bring about better economic and social prospects for Jewish co-religionists. Jews wanted simple human needs: freedom, dignity, and an opportunity to contribute to the broader world. Berger says, “In a hundred and fifty years more than half of the Jews of the world have risen above the degradation and persecutions of pre-democratic societies to full stature in an enlightened world. Given a decent chance in a decent world, the rest will follow the pattern.”<sup>55</sup> While religious law preserved Jewish continuity during the Middle Ages, it was no longer relevant for the modern world. For Berger, Judaism serves the individual; one’s observance of Judaism manifests in how well they join in the struggle for universal human rights.

Despite his professed continuity with the past, Berger was writing during the 1940s and had to contend with a dramatic ideological challenge: rising anti-Semitism in Europe. In creative and sometimes unpersuasive ways, Berger attempts to fold increased anti-Semitism into a broader story of democratic backsliding. For example, when Berger discusses the Dreyfus Affair, which was an anti-Semitic trial of a French general that supposedly led to Theodore Herzl theorizing Zionism, he argues that the trial was not an example of Jewish marginalization within French society; rather, the exact opposite is the case: One Jew came to represent the entire nation. For Berger, anti-Semitism increases when liberal

democracy struggles; it is not born of a universal hatred of Jews.

After the Holocaust, Berger tries to apply this analysis to Nazi Germany, arguing that Germany never genuinely created democratic customs and that an anti-Semitic backslide was inevitable. He writes, “The failure of liberal Judaism and emancipation for Jews in Germany proves nothing at all with regard to Jews and Judaism in states with established democratic traditions.”<sup>56</sup> Berger insists that however tragic it may have been, the Holocaust is one serious setback within a longer story of emancipation, assimilation, and integration. As the vanguard of emancipation, the fate of the Jew will continue to symbolize the destiny of liberal democracy itself.

Berger argues that a new American Judaism needed to continue the Jewish reformation that began in Europe. For Berger, the United States is a uniquely appropriate place for Reform Judaism because American freedom solidified individualism as a key foundation of the State. Berger explains, “Because this is so and because Judaism, like any religion, is deeply personal and individual, there is no separatism involved between Americanism and Judaism. One may be a part of the American people and worship in Judaism without any conflict of loyalties or attachments.”<sup>57</sup> The American project, as Berger understands it, is complementary with the ongoing Jewish aspiration for universal freedom. If genuine Reform Judaism succeeds, then American Judaism would be the best example of Jewish Reformation in the world.

This is the backdrop for Berger’s confrontation with Zionism: He thought the Reform movement was abandoning its core principles and ceding ground to the Jewish national program. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Reform Judaism began to adapt to major historical events, such as the Balfour

Declaration, rising anti-Semitism in Europe, and increased Eastern European immigration to the United States. While Classical Reform Judaism insisted that Jews constituted a religious community, various Reform leaders contemplated changing their statement of principles. In 1937, the Reform movement adopted a new platform which supported the “rehabilitation of Palestine” by seeking to “affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland.”<sup>58</sup> For Berger, these changes were antithetical to the meaning of Reform Judaism, the project of emancipation, and the role that American Jews played in society.

As Berger emerged as a leader within the American Council for Judaism, he tried to conceptualize what Classical Reform Judaism would mean now that the State of Israel was a reality. Berger writes, “The American Council for Judaism believes Judaism is a religion and that American Jews are individual citizens of the United States; not members of a separate “Jewish” community marked out by secular interests which are different from the secular interests of their fellow Americans of other faiths.”<sup>59</sup> Berger led the Council for nearly 25 years, desperately fighting for these values as major changes transformed American Judaism.

In 1951, Berger wrote *Judaism or Jewish Nationalism* to articulate the Council’s ideals after the founding of the State of Israel. For Berger and his fellow Council members, Reform Judaism should be in direct opposition to Zionism and should therefore oppose a movement that is antithetical to the project of Jewish reformation, integration, and emancipation in the modern world. The Council survived until 1967, but it nearly collapsed after the war. Berger was forced out as leader, and he established a different organization: American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism.<sup>60</sup> Though he continued to write through the end of his life, Berger was finished with his career

as a rabbi, and he stepped back from any major role in Jewish community building and advocacy.

One remarkable element of Elmer Berger's legacy is that he was close friends with the head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Research Institute in Beirut (PLO): Fayez Sayegh.<sup>61</sup> In the later decades of his life, Berger worked with the PLO to analyze the historical distinction between Judaism and Zionism. The PLO began using Classical Reform theology to recognize the legitimacy of Jewish religion while rejecting its nationalist claims in Palestine. Berger became more involved in directly opposing the State of Israel's policies towards the Palestinians, and he expressed deep sympathy for Palestinian nationalism and the PLO. Berger had close ties with several Palestinian intellectuals, and although he no longer had a major foothold within any American Jewish community, he continued to influence the debate over Zionism and the State of Israel through his relationship with the PLO.

Even though he was a marginal figure within American Judaism, Elmer Berger sustained a contemporary version of Classical Reform just as the broader movement was diverging from it. At its core, Berger argued against how secular nationalism could replace Jewish worship in American Jewish communities. He feared that diaspora Jews would serve a foreign nation state to encourage their governments to offer unconditional support, and he was worried that this new conception of Jewish nationhood would make peace between Jews and Palestinians impossible. For Berger, this was an unacceptable ethical position, and he rejects Zionism, from within his vision of Judaism and then finally beyond it.

Though he avoids radical theological claims like Joel Teitelbaum, Berger's unflinching faith in European liberal democracy ultimately failed with the Nazi

Holocaust. As complex as it may be, Berger's insistence that emancipation and liberal democracy could cure the world of anti-Semitism does not stand up to historical scrutiny. Furthermore, his loud anti-Zionism also obscures something else: on a purely religious level, his Judaism offers little religious content; there's almost no vision for what practical Jewish worship or service would look like.

Despite their limitations, one throughline through which to understand Berger and Teitelbaum is through their shared rejection of Jewish nationhood. Berger rejects Zionism's attempt to construct a Jewish nation, and he argues that Zionism would corrupt how American Jews related to Judaism and Jewish history. In sharp contrast, Teitelbaum conceived of a Jewish nation that only included those sufficiently observant; everyone else had disobeyed the essence of real Judaism and was cut off from the Jewish collective. Berger and Teitelbaum have almost nothing in common except for a shared antipathy to the Zionist re-envisioning of Jewish peoplehood; their opposition was rooted in the deepest possible disagreement over how Zionism undermined their respective religious traditions.

Though they represent markedly different Jewish traditions, Joel Teitelbaum and Elmer Berger are mainstream thinkers who watched as their movements evolved in ways that they found untenable. As futile as it seemed at the time, their leadership was instrumental in the continued vitality of their belief systems. They inherited ideologies born in Europe and translated them into the American context, thereby assimilating and transforming older ideas into a new paradigm. For both Berger and Teitelbaum, their desire to protect these respective traditions led them to creatively adapt them to rapidly changing worlds. We can thus see how modern Judaism evolved away from their ideologies, and over the course of their

lives, their ongoing anti-Zionism illustrates how these older traditions may have engaged with the dramatic changes affecting Jews all over the world.

### Conclusion

When analyzed comparatively, Elmer Berger and Joel Teitelbaum are crucial foils to the development of Jewish political nationalism in the 20th century. Though their ideas were never widely accepted, Jewish

opposition to Zionism is not new, nor is Jewish anti-Zionism necessarily born out of non-religious arguments against Jewish sovereignty. By reading Berger and Teitelbaum, anti-Zionism can be better incorporated into the field of Jewish Studies and scholars can continue to build on the distinction between various forms of traditional Judaism and Jewish political nationalism.

<sup>1</sup> Elmer Berger, *Who Knows Better Must Say So!* Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1970. pp. 68

<sup>2</sup> Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, Wayne State University Press, 1995. pp. 264

<sup>3</sup> For this paper, I'm defining Zionism as the political program to create a Jewish state in Palestine. For a more exhaustive introduction to the various proponents of Zionism, see Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. New York City: Jewish Publication Society, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Michael K. Silber "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition." *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, 1992. pp. 47-49

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 78.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, Wayne State University Press, 1995. ch. 7

<sup>7</sup> Nomi Stolzenberg and David Myers, *American Shtetl*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021, ch. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Menachem Keren-Kratz, "Maramaros, Hungary—The Cradle of Extreme Orthodoxy." *Modern Judaism - A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience*, Volume 35, Issue 2, May 2015, Pages 147–174

<sup>9</sup> Michael K. Silber "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition." *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, 1992. pp. 24-25

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 47-49

<sup>11</sup> Biale, Assaf, Brown, Gellman, Heilman, Rosman, Sagie, Wodzinski, *Hasidism: A New History*, Princeton University Press, 1-3

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 1-3

<sup>13</sup> Nomi Stolzenberg and David Myers, *American Shtetl*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021, ch. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, ch. 2

<sup>15</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *Al-ha-Geula Ve'al ha-Temura* Jerusalem Publishing, 1967.

<sup>16</sup> Zvi Jonathan Kaplan. "Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, Zionism, and Hungarian Ultra-Orthodoxy." *Modern Judaism* 24, no. 2 (2004): 165–78.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1396525>, pp. 170

<sup>17</sup> Allan L. Nadler. *Piety and Politics: The Case of the Satmar Rebbe*. *Judaism* 31, (2) (Spring): 135, <https://login.ezproxy.princeton.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/piety-politics-case-satmar-rebbe/docview/1304357925/se-2> (accessed September 14, 2022).

<sup>18</sup> Menachem Keren-Kratz. "Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum—the Satmar Rebbe—and the Rise of Anti-Zionism in American Orthodoxy." *Contemporary Jewry* 37, no. 3 (2017): 457–79. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45209073>. pp. 473

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 473.

<sup>20</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *Al-ha-Geula*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>21</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *Al-ha-Geula*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>22</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *Al-ha-Geula*, pp. 34.

<sup>23</sup> For more information, see Myers, David N. "'Commanded War': Three Chapters in the 'Military' History of Satmar Hasidism."

<sup>24</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *VaYoel Moshe*, Brooklyn: Jerusalem Book Store, Inc, pp. 16

<sup>25</sup> Aviezer Ravitzky, Michael Swirsky, and Jonathan Chipman, "Appendix: The Impact of the Three Oaths in Jewish History."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>27</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *VaYoel Moshe*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Aviezer Ravitzky, Michael Swirsky, and Jonathan Chipman, ch. 3

<sup>29</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *Al-ha-Geula*, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *VaYoel Moshe*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> Joel Teitelbaum, *Al-ha-Geula*, 9.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Jack Ross, "Rabbi Outcast, Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011, ch. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Jack Ross, "Rabbi Outcast, Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011, ch.1.

<sup>36</sup> Berger's final book, published in 1993, is called *Peace for Palestine*, and it focuses almost exclusively on the armistice agreement that was reached between Israel and the surrounding Arab nations in 1949.

<sup>37</sup> For more on this debate, see chapter four of Ellis, Marc H. *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation: Foreword by Desmond Tutu and Gustavo Gutierrez*. third edition ed., Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004. [muse.jhu.edu/book/8396](http://muse.jhu.edu/book/8396).

<sup>38</sup> Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, ch. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Naomi Wiener Cohen "THE REACTION OF REFORM JUDAISM IN AMERICA TO POLITICAL ZIONISM (1897-1922)." *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 40, no. 4 (1951): 361–94.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43059795>.

<sup>40</sup> "Reform Judaism: The Columbus Platform," *The Columbus Platform* (1937), accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-columbus-platform-1937>.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Kolsky, *Jews against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple Univ Press, 1992, ch. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Ross, ch. 3

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, ch. 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, ch. 7.

<sup>45</sup> Elmer Berger, *A Partisan History of Judaism*, New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1951, 50.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 81-82.

<sup>47</sup> Elmer Berger, *A Partisan History of Judaism*, New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1951, 93.

<sup>48</sup> Elmer Berger, *A Partisan History of Judaism*, New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1951, pp. 76.

<sup>49</sup> Moses Mendelssohn. *Jerusalem and Other Jewish Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

<sup>50</sup> Elmer Berger, *The Jewish Dilemma*, Whitefish, MT.: Kessinger Publishing, 2009, pp. 169.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 174.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 187.

<sup>53</sup> For early Zionist thinkers, most prominently Theodor Herzl, the "Jewish problem" is the question of how Jews should respond to European anti-Semitism. See Hertzberg *The Zionist Idea* for more information of how Zionist thinkers formulated responses to the Jewish problem.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Elmer Berger, *Judaism or Jewish Nationalism*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1957, pp. 124.

<sup>57</sup> Elmer Berger, *A Partisan History of Judaism*. New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1951, pp. 9.

<sup>58</sup> "Reform Judaism: The Columbus Platform." <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-columbus-platform-1937>

<sup>59</sup> Elmer Berger, *Judaism or Jewish Nationalism*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1957, 28.

<sup>60</sup> Jack Ross, "*Rabbi Outcast*, Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011, ch. 7.

<sup>61</sup> Jonathan Gribetz, "The PLO's Rabbi: Palestinian Nationalism and Reform Judaism." *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 107, no. 1 (2017): 90–112.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/90000706>