This is the first study of the Zionist movement in Germany, Britain, and the United States which recognizes “Western Zionism” as a distinctive force.

From the First World War until the rise of Hitler, the Zionist movement encouraged Jews to celebrate aspects of a reborn Jewish nationality and sovereignty in Palestine, while at the same time acknowledging that their members would mostly “stay put” and strive toward acculturation in their current homelands.

The growth of a Zionist consciousness among Western Jews is juxtaposed to the problematic nurturing of the movement’s institutions, as Zionism was consumed increasingly by fundraising. In the 1930s Zionism evinced questionable administrative motives and talents, which unsettled even its stalwarts such as Louis Brandeis and Henrietta Szold. While Zionist images assumed a progressively greater share of secular Jewish identity, and Zionism became normalized in the social landscape of Western Jewry, the organization faltered in translating its popularity into a means of “saving the Jews” and “building up” the national home in Palestine. This was the period in which the Jewish masses were approaching their most serious and ultimately fatal challenge.
Western Jewry and the Zionist project, 1914–1933
Western Jewry and the Zionist project, 1914–1933

Michael Berkowitz
For my mother,
Gloria Berkowitz,
and the memory of my father,
William Berkowitz (1917–1995)
It may be claimed that a nation, like an individual, is valuable only insofar as it is able to give everyday experience the stamp of the eternal. Only by doing so can it express its profound, if unconscious, conviction of the relativity of time and the metaphysical meaning of life. The opposite happens when a nation begins to view itself historically and to demolish the mythical bulwarks that surround it.

Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

There is no set of maxims more important for an historian than this: that the actual causes of a thing’s origins and its eventual uses, the manner of its incorporation into a system of purposes, are worlds apart; that everything that exists, no matter what its origin, is periodically reinterpreted by those in power in terms of fresh intentions; that all processes in the organic world are processes of outstripping and overcoming, and that, in turn, all outstripping and overcoming means reinterpretation, rearrangement, in the course of which the earlier meaning and purpose are necessarily obscured or lost.

Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*
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5 Chaim Weizmann  
6 Jewish and non-Jewish political leaders including Nahum Sokolow, Chaim Weizmann, the president of the United States (Warren Harding), David Lloyd George, Arthur James Balfour, Sir Wyndham Deedes, Berthold Fiewel, Lieb Jaffe  
7 Nahum Sokolow  
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Preface and acknowledgments

In my dissertation and book on the attempted nationalization of Western Jewry (Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993]), one of the recurrent themes is that early Zionism functioned, to a great extent, as a self-consciously male movement. In the course of my research, however, I noticed some intriguing women activists and groups of women who received scant attention in the historiography. I decided that my initial post-dissertation project would focus on these women and their role in Zionist nationalization.

A faculty development grant from St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, allowed me in the summer of 1989 to delve into the Zionist women project, primarily at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. In examining material pertaining to Zionist popular culture, I became aware that the pre-1914 processes of constructing a Jewish national consciousness were already undergoing a dramatic change during the Great War. The deeper I dug the more I saw that there was a story to tell about the reception of Zionism among Western Jews in the 1920s and early 1930s – which might be critical in understanding how the movement assumed the shape it did in the West, well before the declaration of the State of Israel. I was particularly struck by four observations: that the movements in Germany, Britain, and the United States were not as dissimilar as suggested by the secondary literature; that Zionists in these nations perceived each other as sharing vital interests, separate from other Zionist constituencies; and that after 1921 fundraising came to dominate the practice of Zionism in each of these countries. Western-acculturated Jews furthermore shared a common stock of symbols and images through which they identified with Zionism.

In 1989–90 I enjoyed a Monkarsh Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles (then the West Coast affiliate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America). I continued work on Zionist women, which became the red thread in my study of the interwar movement. A grant from the Lucius Littauer Foundation (1990) allowed me to return to the archives in Israel and see the larger contours of
Preface and acknowledgments

the present study. After settling in Ohio, a Rapoport Fellowship from the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati facilitated my foray into the history of Zionism in the United States; I perceived that it is impossible to untangle the American and West European Zionist experience, despite a body of historiography which asserts that the national strands of the movement are utterly distinct. A DAAD-Leo Baeck Institute award for the study of German–Jewish history and culture allowed me to work at the Leo Baeck Institute on the Upper East Side of New York, and a grant from Indiana University’s Center for the Study of Philanthropy supported my research at the Hadassah Archives in midtown Manhattan. The bulk of research was accomplished while I was a fellow of the Wiener Library, of Tel Aviv University’s Institute for German History, from October 1991 to March 1992.


There are several institutions and individuals deserving special praise and thanks: Yoram Mayorek and his staff at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, particularly my dear friends Pinchas Selinger and Reuven Koffler; at the Wiener Library at Tel Aviv University, Ms. Gila Michalowski; Dr. Abraham Peck and his staff at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati; the DAAD and the Leo Baeck Institute; the Jewish Historical Society in Waltham, Massachusetts; Ms. Pamela Brumberg of the Littauer Foundation; Drs. David Lieber and Elliot Dorff of the University of Judaism; Ira Daly at the Hadassah Archives in New York; the Melton Center for Jewish Studies, the Department of History, the College of Humanities, and the Graduate School of the Ohio State University. The visual materials are reproduced courtesy of the Central Zionist Archives and the Wiener Library in Tel Aviv.

Along with the readers from Cambridge University Press, many colleagues read (or heard) parts of the manuscript and offered wise counsel. It is a better book due to the thoughtful efforts of David Sorkin,
Preface and acknowledgments

Steven Zipperstein, Derek Penslar, Mitchell Hart, Kevin McAl eer, Claudia Prestel, Ursula Baumann, Billie Melman, Shulamit Volkov, David Cesarani, Alon Confino, Mark Levene, Gary Schiff, Mark Grimsley, Susan Tananbaum, Leila Rupp, Ken Andrien, Irina Livezeanu, Eve Levin, Marilyn Waldman, Jonathan Sarna, Michael Brenner, John Efron, Jack Kugelmass, Miriam Dean-Otting, Richard Freund, Mitch Levine, Bernard Friedman, Glenn Sharfman, George Vascik, Shelly Baranowski, Leslie Adelson, John Hoberman, David Luft, Miryam Glazer, David Brenner, Mark Gelber, Allon Gal, Melvin Adelman, Margaret Newell, Laurence Silberstein, Sean Martin, Mary McCune, Larry Bell, Kelly McFall, Steve Williams, Joy Scime, Joseph Galron, and Karen Anderson Howes. I am grateful to Laurence Silberstein for sharing with me his manuscript in progress, and through his good auspices, for seeing an unpublished paper of Yaacov Shavit on archaeology in Israel. Amy Alrich helped with the preparation of the bibliography. In addition to the funding agencies, the generosity of friends and relatives made this work possible. Eli Shai made my many stays in Jerusalem intellectually exciting and a pleasure; Dr. Ernest Oliveri (West Side) and Michael Littenberg (East Side) were wonderful hosts during several trips to the Big Apple; and Michael McHale graciously accommodated me in Boston.

Although he has been only indirectly involved in this work, my Doktorvater George Mosse serves as a great inspiration, mentor, and friend. I am fortunate also to have an understanding and good-humored editor, William Davies of Cambridge University Press.

Members of my family, especially my sister, Edie Needleman, were always willing to lend a hand wherever and whenever needed. Some of the photographs used in this volume (only a fraction of which are in these pages) were taken by the staff photographer at the Central Zionist Archives; some were taken in Columbus by my brother-in-law, Dr. Lawrence Needleman. My wife, Deborah Rozansky, did most of the painstaking photographic work for this volume in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. But there is no doubt that her most wonderful “development” during the writing and research for this book was the birth of our daughter, Rachel. She’s the supreme joy of our lives.

In nearing the completion of this book, I was greatly saddened by the death of my father. My friends helped me through a most difficult time. It is to my mother, Gloria Berkowitz, and the memory of my father, William Berkowitz, that this work is dedicated. Their unconditional love and support encouraged me to seek my heart’s content. These now closed chapters are for my dear parents; those that lie ahead will be for my daughter and wife.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJA</td>
<td>American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJC</td>
<td>Bund jüdischer Corporationen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZK</td>
<td>Bund zionistischer Korporationen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZA</td>
<td>Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJJG</td>
<td>Deutsch-jüdisch Jugend-Gemeinschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWZ</td>
<td>Federation of Women Zionists (of Great Britain and Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Hadassah Archives, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUJFGBI</td>
<td>Inter-University Jewish Federation of Great Britain and Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IZA</td>
<td>Intercollegiate Zionist Organization of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA</td>
<td>Jewish Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDC</td>
<td>American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JFB</td>
<td>Jüdischer Frauenbund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JNF</td>
<td>Jewish National Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPS</td>
<td>Jewish Publication Society of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KC</td>
<td>Kartell-Convent der Verbindungen deutscher Studenten jüdischen Glaubens (Union of German Students of the Jewish Faith)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KH</td>
<td>Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>Kartell jüdischer Verbindungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKL</td>
<td>Keren Kayemet L'Israel (Jewish National Fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZV</td>
<td>Kartell zionistischer Verbindungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBI</td>
<td>Leo Baeck Institute, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBK</td>
<td>Palästina-Bilder-Korrespondenz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC, CZA</td>
<td>Photo collection, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UJA</td>
<td>United Jewish Appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPA</td>
<td>United Palestine Appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UZF</td>
<td>University Zionist Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VJJVD</td>
<td>Verband der jüdischen Jugendvereine Deutschlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VJSt</td>
<td>Verein jüdischer Studenten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIZO</td>
<td>Women’s International Zionist Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOA</td>
<td>Zionist Organization of America</td>
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