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978-1-107-01424-4 - Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia

Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

This study explores the process by which nationhood became the key category of Jewish self-understanding in Galicia.¹ It sheds new light on the nature and development of Jewish nationalism beyond the Zionist movement by examining how a Diaspora Jewish nationalism came to dominate the entire spectrum of Jewish politics by the beginning of the twentieth century. Despite having been fully emancipated since 1867, most Jews in Galicia remained for years largely unpoliticized, unfamiliar – like many residents of East Central Europe – with notions of “assimilation” or “nationality.”² By 1914, Galician Jews had grown considerably more aware of their political power and how to wield it, and most agreed that the Jews in fact constituted one of the nationalities of the Habsburg Empire that deserved national rights.

Zionism was a part of the rising nationalist movements in Europe and not simply a reaction to them. As nationalist assumptions increasingly shaped the terms of political discourse in Galicia, increasing numbers of Jews there absorbed these ideas, which guided their cultural and political choices. More and more Jews imagined themselves members of a Jewish national community. Other options were available. Notions of Jewish identity grounded in religion or ethnicity, identification with the Austrian state and/or with another nationality, persisted throughout this

¹ I use the term *self-understanding* rather than *identity* to avoid the problems of ambiguity and reification suggested by the latter. See Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond Identity,” in Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 44–6. Later uses of the term *identity* should be read with this perspective in mind.

² Jeremy King, “The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond,” in *Staging the Past* (West Lafayette, Indiana, 2001), 112.

Cambridge University Press

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

period alongside multiple forms of Jewish national identity.³ Nationalist intellectuals, aware of the wide variety of modern identities affecting their potential constituents, struggled to convert uncommitted souls to their camp. In the process, their definition of the nation itself – its symbols, membership, and political program – evolved. This mirrored similar developments among the Jews' Galician neighbors.⁴ Indeed, Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian nationalism developed not only parallel to one another but in constant conversation and cross-fertilization with each other.⁵ All three communities similarly possessed potential national components but only late in the nineteenth century developed a widespread consciousness of nationhood. Jewish national identities were thus both modern and constructed; they did not represent the inevitable discovery of an existential truth, as Zionist historians have typically suggested.

A case study of the Jewish nationalist movement in Galicia offers numerous advantages. Galician Jewry constituted one of the largest Jewish communities in the world before the First World War, yet it has attracted very little scholarship.⁶ The Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria

³ Marsha Rozenblit has demonstrated the tendency of Habsburg Jewry to espouse a "tripartite" identity: Austrian politically, German (or Czech or Polish) culturally, and Jewish ethnically. This last part constituted a spectrum that ranged from religious ties to political nationalism, which she argued was held only by a minority of Jews. While this multilayered identity obtained in Galicia as well, by 1907 most Galician Jews – in contrast to those in other parts of Cisleithanian Austria – did embrace political nationalism and demanded their rights accordingly. Marsha Rozenblit, "Sustaining Austrian 'National' Identity in Crisis: The Dilemma of the Jews in Habsburg Austria, 1914–1919," in Pieter Judson and Marsha Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York, 2005), 178–80, and M. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford, 2001).

⁴ Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848–1914* (Ithaca, 2001), 4.

⁵ Kai Struve, "Gentry, Jews, and Peasants: Jews as Others in the Formation of the Modern Polish Nation in Rural Galicia during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," in Nancy Wingfield, ed., *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe* (New York, 2003), 103–26.

⁶ For example, Marsha Rozenblit's 1992 review of literature on Habsburg Jewry skips over Galicia completely, a problem which she herself recognized. Marsha Rozenblit, "The Jews of the Dual Monarchy," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 23 (1992): 160–80. The lacuna is most obvious in William McCagg's *A History of Habsburg Jews, 1670–1918* (Bloomington, 1989); McCagg's entire thesis of Jewish national "self-denial" rests on labeling Galician Jews, two thirds of Cisleithanian Jewry, an exception to the rule. An important corrective to this gap is Israel Bartal and Antony Polonsky, eds., "Focusing on Galicia: Jews, Poles and Ukrainians 1772–1918," *Polin* 12 (1999), and particularly the recent work of Rachel Manekin. See also Piotr Wróbel, "The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule, 1869–1918," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 25 (1994): 97–138. Post-Habsburg Galician Jewry, especially in the period of the Holocaust, has received more

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01424-4 - Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia

Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

3

(a province of the Habsburg Empire, now part of Poland and Ukraine) was home to nearly 900,000 Jews by 1910, constituting about 11 percent of the area's total population.⁷ Moreover, as a disproportionately urban population, Jews comprised over a quarter of the province's two major cities (Lemberg and Cracow) and formed either a majority or plurality in dozens of smaller towns and cities, particularly in the eastern half of the province.⁸ Jews spoke their own language (Yiddish), practiced a different, largely endogamous religion (Judaism) whose rituals served as barriers to integration, and performed a unique economic role (overwhelmingly and disproportionately commercial) in a society in which language, religion, and occupation served as the key determinants of nationality. Jews also broadly shared a belief in several millennia of commonality, a bounded group favored by God. In short, although officially recognized only as a religious group by the Austrian authorities, Jews in Galicia in fact constituted a group economically and culturally distinct from their non-Jewish neighbors, much as they did in Russia.⁹

Unlike Jews in Tsarist Russia, however, Galician Jews since their emancipation in 1867 enjoyed wide-ranging civil and political rights more typical of Central and Western Europe.¹⁰ Jews in Galicia, for example,

attention. See, for example, Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1919–1945* (Bloomington, 2002) and Omer Bartov, *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (Princeton, 2007) and the sources cited there.

⁷ The remaining population was predominantly Polish (about 88%) west of the San River and Ruthenian (about 65%) east of the river, with a significant Polish minority (about 22%).

⁸ In 1880, for example, Jews constituted 45.6 percent of the city residents and 48.1 percent of the town residents in Eastern Galicia. Max Rosenfeld, *Die polnische Judenfrage* (Vienna, 1918), 77.

⁹ Stauter-Halsted, op. cit., 37. Jerzy Motylewicz emphasizes the foundations of *national* differentiation even before the nineteenth century, although his use of that term is anachronistic. "Jews, Poles, and Ruthenians formed the three basic national communities, each with its own religion, language, culture, and internal cohesion that defined the group's place in urban society.... The groups were partially segregated and sometimes concentrated in particular 'ethnic streets.' Their houses were also differentiated, both externally and internally, and this was linked closely to their occupational differentiation. The overall outcome of these manifold differences, above all religious and economic differences, was to provide a solid basis for the rivalries and antagonisms that manifested themselves with increasing vigor from the middle of the nineteenth century on." Jerzy Motylewicz, "Ethnic Communities of the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland," in *Galicia: A Multicultural Land* (Toronto, 2005), 48.

¹⁰ In contrast to Western Europe, where emancipation was "marked more by continuity than rupture," Jewish emancipation in the Habsburg Empire followed a Central European model, "comprehensive in scope and protracted in duration." David Sorkin, "Port Jews and the Three Regions of Emancipation," *Jewish Culture and History* 4.2 (Winter, 2001), 42. In the case of Galicia, the process lasted from 1789 until 1867. See Chapter 1.

Cambridge University Press

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Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)

enjoyed freedom of occupation, residence, and property ownership. In marked contrast to Russian Jewry, Galician Jews could publish relatively freely, vote and hold political office if their tax bracket allowed it, and hold public meetings in any language. Galician Jews, in fact, enjoyed a key legal advantage even over their Western counterparts. There existed the theoretical possibility of securing certain national rights, guaranteed to linguistic minorities in the Habsburg Empire after 1867. In practice, Jews were never recognized as constituting such a community.¹¹ Yet Jews still benefited from living in a multinational context in which, unlike in Western Europe, national pluralism was the norm and national minority movements flourished.

Galician Jews thus sat on the frontier between Eastern and Central Europe, religiously and economically similar to Russian Jewry, but legally more like their Western brethren.¹² As such, they present an ideal community in which to examine the process of nationalization. Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish intellectuals attempted to mobilize their potential constituents behind competing political programs throughout divided Poland in the second half of the nineteenth century. Only in Galicia, however, were they relatively free to do so. The press operated without severe censorship, associational life expanded every year, and political enfranchisement provided opportunities for engagement and empowerment. Galicia's unique conditions led Paul Magocsi to locate the "roots of Ukrainian nationalism" in the province, dubbing it "Ukraine's Piedmont" in reference to the Italian province that led the unification of modern Italy. Keely Stauter-Halsted has argued the same regarding the development of

¹¹ See Gerald Stourzh, "Galten die Juden als Nationalität Altösterreichs?" *Studia Judaica Austriaca* X (1984): 73–98, and his larger work, *Die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in der Verfassung und Verwaltung Österreichs 1848–1918* (Vienna, 1985). See also Kurt Stillschweig's dated but important article, "Die nationalitätenrechtliche Stellung der Juden im alten Österreich," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft der Judentums* 81 (July–August 1937), 321–40.

¹² Israel Bartal perhaps overstates the case in writing that "Galician Jewry was no different from the rest of East European Jewry." Galician Jewry, for example, maintained a greater rural presence than in Russia or Posen. (36.6% of Galician Jews lived in small villages in 1897 compared to 18.1% of Russian Jews; Ben Zion Rubenstein, *Galizia un ihr Bevölkerung* [Warsaw, 1923], 71.) Nevertheless, the basic point is correct. As Bartal notes, "The Jews of Galicia performed the same function in the ethnic and class structure of the surrounding society as did the Jews elsewhere in divided Poland. They constituted a distinct social class with their own religion and economic role in an environment in which every ethnic group possessed its own distinguishing economic features." Israel Bartal, "The Heavenly City of Germany' and Absolutism a la Mode d'Autriche: The Rise of the Haskalah in Galicia," in Jacob Katz, ed., *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model* (New Brunswick, 1987), 34.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01424-4 - Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia

Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

5

Polish nationalism.¹³ Galicia served a similar function in the history of Jewish nationalism.

Yet Jewish historians have tended to overlook Galicia by focusing either on the numerically more significant Russian Jewry or on the other emancipated communities in Western and Central Europe. Most Zionist historiography has also under-emphasized the importance of this community, particularly in the pre-Herzlian period, by which time Galician Zionists could already boast a considerable degree of organizational infrastructure.¹⁴ This neglect reflects the general historiographical trend overlooking this community but is also due to the unusual nature of Galician “Zionism.” This was largely a Diaspora-oriented movement, directed primarily toward national cultural work in the Diaspora (i.e., building Jewish national consciousness) and the acquisition of national minority rights, long before Zionists in either Russia or the West had begun to engage in such activity.

Precisely because of its focus on “normal” nationalist activities such as the cultivation of Jewish national culture and the nationalization of Jewish identity, however, Galician Zionism offers an excellent opportunity for integrating the history of Jewish nationalism into its European context. A case study of Jewish nationalism in Galicia corrects past bias by scholars who, focusing primarily on Russia and Western Europe, have tended to emphasize the uniqueness of Zionism as a national movement. Jews, many point out, were not concentrated in a single territory, and Zionism ostensibly sought not the overthrow of foreign rule but rather the removal of its people to a foreign territory.¹⁵ This view sees nationalism

¹³ Paul Magocsi, *The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism: Galicia as Ukraine's Piedmont* (Toronto, 2002); Stauter-Halsted, op. cit., 11–15.

¹⁴ Characteristic of this trend is David Vital's *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford, 1975), whose narrative moves geographically from Russia to the West, skipping over Galicia completely. Just two monographs have focused on Galician Zionism. Nathan Gelber's *Toldot ha-tenuah ha-tsiyonit be-Galitsyah, 1875–1918* (Jerusalem, 1958), although dated, remains the classic work on this subject. Gelber, born and raised in Galicia, is still that community's most important historian. However, his work is very affected by its Zionist agenda. One senses in it that Zionism is some hidden stream of history that Jews increasingly discovered, rather than a conscious choice that Jews increasingly made. Zionist chauvinism also leads him to focus primarily on the organizational history of the Zionist movement rather than understanding Jewish nationalism as constituting a range of ideas across the political spectrum. Adolf Gaisbauer's *Davidstern und Doppeladler* (Vienna, 1988), far more limited than Gelber due to its use of only German-language sources, similarly focuses on the organizational history of the movement and tends to ignore the critical issues of culture and identity that were at the heart of Zionist discourse.

¹⁵ Arthur Hertzberg, for example, begins the introduction to his classic sourcebook as follows: “Zionism exists, and it has had important consequences, but historical theory

Cambridge University Press

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Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)

as essentially a state-seeking movement, an assumption which has of late been questioned.¹⁶

By seeing beyond the long-term territorial goals of Zionism and focusing instead on the processes that engendered and drove the movement, several scholars of Jewish nationalism have begun to integrate its history into broader models of nation formation, particularly those that consider the premodern roots of contemporary nations. Gideon Shimoni, for example, while recognizing the novelty of the Jewish nationalist movement, has resoundingly rejected postmodernist theory, with its emphasis on the “inventedness” of nations, at least as applied to the Jewish case.¹⁷ Increasingly dissatisfied with, as Michael Stanislawski put it, “the school of thought whose Bible is Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* and whose warring high priests have been Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm,” many Jewish scholars prefer the model outlined by Anthony Smith. Smith acknowledges the role of modernization in sparking nationalist movements but stresses the importance of preexisting “*ethnie*” as the basic material out of which nations are formed.¹⁸

does not really know what to do with it... The root cause of [the historians’] difficulty ... is that Zionism cannot be typed, and therefore easily explained, as a “normal” kind of national *risorgimento*. To mention only one important difference, all of the other nineteenth-century nationalisms based their struggle for political sovereignty on an already existing national land or language (generally, there were both). Zionism alone proposed to acquire both of these usual preconditions of national identity by the *élan* of its nationalist will. It is, therefore, a maverick in the history of modern nationalism.” Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (New York, 1959), 15. Jewish linguistic, cultural, and even religious disunity further undermined their claim to nationhood, although Eugen Weber and others have shown how such disunity plagued even the most “advanced” national cultures well into the nineteenth century. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (London, 1979).

¹⁶ Rogers Brubaker, “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism,” in John Hall, ed., *The State of the Nation* (New York, 1998), 276–8. Brubaker indicates four examples of non-state-seeking nationalisms, including “the nationalism of national minorities,” precisely the case here analyzed.

¹⁷ Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover, 1995), 4–51. Landmark works of the “postmodernist” perspective include Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983); and Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990). For a thorough review and critique of modernist and postmodernist paradigms, see Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London, 1998), and A. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, 1999).

¹⁸ See A. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 187–98, A. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover, 2000), 52–77, and A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986). To be sure, the so-called modernist scholars do not deny the cultural origins of modern nations. Ernest Gellner,

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01424-4 - Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia

Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

7

“Modern Jewish nationalism,” concludes Stanislawski, “did not invent the Jewish nation, nor did the pre-nationalist notion of nationhood coincide with its later meaning.”¹⁹ Jewish nationalism, in other words, may have arisen out of a preexisting *ethnie*, but the transformation of Jewish “corporative” identity into Jewish nationalism was ultimately a function of the Jewish encounter with modernity and the “identity crisis” that this engendered.²⁰

Shimoni especially emphasizes the role of the intelligentsia in affecting this transformation.²¹ Estranged from past, primarily religious forms of Jewish identity, but unwilling or unable to integrate fully into non-Jewish national collectives, Jewish nationalism provided secular intellectuals with a solution to this existential angst. Intellectuals drew especially on deeply engrained, religious traditions of the Jewish *ethnie*. This reflects Anthony Smith’s critique of the entire notion of “invented traditions.” “The ‘inventions’ of modern nationalists,” he writes, “must resonate with large numbers of the designated ‘co-nationals,’ otherwise the project will fail. If they are not perceived as ‘authentic,’ in the sense of having meaning

for example, followed his famous quip, “It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way around,” by noting that nationalism uses preexisting “cultural wealth.” It would be a mistake to conclude, he writes, “that nationalism is a contingent, artificial, ideological invention, which might not have happened, if only those damned busy-body interfering European thinkers [had not imposed it upon us].” Gellner, *op. cit.*, 55–6. The problem is not so much these scholars’ denial of preexisting cultural building blocks but rather their explanation of their transformation. As Shimoni points out, they explain the emergence of national movements such as Zionism in terms of “economic displacement and social hostility (anti-Semitism),” but do not sufficiently consider the role of “collective ethnic consciousness” among Jews. Shimoni, *op. cit.*, 8.

¹⁹ Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, 2001), xviii.

²⁰ Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881* (Philadelphia, 2005), 13. On the role of identity crisis in the development of nationalist movements more generally, see Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (New York, 2000), xiv ff. For a critique of the notion of crises in Jewish history, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale* (Berkeley, 2002), 8–10.

²¹ See also the now dated work of Miroslav Hroch, *op. cit.* Like Smith, Hroch emphasizes the necessity of “preconditions” for nationalist movements but is most interested in tracking the role of the intelligentsia in creating them. He delineates three phases of a successful national movement. First, intellectuals begin to explore the history and culture of their perceived nationality out of a purely “scholarly interest.” This exploration then expands into a period of “patriotic agitation,” which sometimes leads to the rise of a mass national movement. Hroch’s study of the “smaller European nations” skips Jewish nationalism, despite his passing recognition that the Jews “only underwent assimilation in certain individual cases” (96). Elsewhere, however, Hroch argued against those who would exclude Zionism from comparative typologies. Hroch, “Zionismus als eine europäische Nationalbewegung,” *Judentum und Christentum* 1 (2000): 33–40.

Cambridge University Press

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Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)

and resonance with ‘the people’ to whom they are addressed, they will fail to mobilize them for political action.”²² Ironically, only by understanding the unique building blocks that formed the Jewish nationalist movement can one appreciate its similarities to other movements.²³

To be sure, recent scholarship has questioned the distinction between this “ethnicism” and outright “primordialism,” the worldview – advocated most of all by nationalists themselves – that assumes the premodern existence of nations. “Ethnicism,” writes Jeremy King, “amounts to a more subtle elaboration of primordialist errors,” because it traces a direct line between premodern ethnic groups and later nationalist manifestations.²⁴ Even asserting the existence of bounded, ethnic groups before the rise of nationalism is problematic, he argues, and reflects a teleological nationalist bias. “Ethnic groups are not national antecedents but national products,” insists King. Rogers Brubaker has similarly criticized the tendency of historians to reify nations and ethnic groups rather than viewing them as contingent and shifting. “They are not things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* the world – not ontological but epistemological realities.”²⁵ Nevertheless, Jews in fact did manifest *groupness* (to use Brubaker’s term) in the prenational period. Pieter Judson, for example, emphasizes that Czech nationalists focused on linguistic distinctiveness because “Czechs” and “Germans” could not be differentiated by religion, class, or color.²⁶ Jews, however, were distinguished by religion and class, as well as linguistically – at least among the traditional masses. King himself – in the same passage just cited – describes Bohemian Jews as having long constituted a “tightly bounded community, its members ... defined consistently by multiple institutions and practices.”²⁷ Keely Stauter-Halsted has likewise argued that

²² Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 198. Nationalists, he writes elsewhere, are more akin to archaeologists selectively mining their nation’s past for material than to chefs who are inventing new dishes out of universal ingredients. Smith, “Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations,” *Nations and Nationalism* 1, no. 1 (1995): 3–23. Hroch writes similarly, “Intellectuals can invent national communities only if certain objective preconditions for the formation of a nation already exist.” Hroch, “From National Movements to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe,” in Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., *Mapping the Nation* (London, 1996), 79.

²³ Smith makes this point specifically in regard to the Zionist case. See his “Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism,” *Israel Affairs* 2, no. 2 (Winter, 1995): 1–19. Brubaker also acknowledges the benefit of “raw materials” in explaining the success of a nationalist movement. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 14.

²⁴ Jeremy King, “The Nationalization of East Central Europe,” 114.

²⁵ Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 79.

²⁶ Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), 21.

²⁷ Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans* (Princeton, 2002), 7–8.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01424-4 - Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia

Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

9

rural Polish Roman Catholics, Ukrainian Greek Catholics, and Jews living in close proximity to each other while sharing few cultural institutions, “encouraged the formation of group identity among co-religionists.”²⁸

This approach reflects the current direction of scholarship in Habsburg studies. In recent years, numerous scholars have analyzed the process by which nationalist intellectuals in the Habsburg Empire constructed their various communities, and not necessarily out of a single, clearly bounded ethnic group.²⁹ The popular paradigm of “construction,” which implies that existing “materials” can be assembled in a variety of ways, suggests both the “ethnic origins of nations” as well as their modernity, belying nationalist teleologies that present nations as ontological realities, or at least as the inevitable product of history.

Unfortunately, little attempt has been made to consider the construction of a Jewish nationality.³⁰ Scholars still tend to understand Jewish nationalism as a reaction to anti-Semitism and the emergence of organic nationalist movements in Central and Eastern Europe rather than as parallel and coterminous with other nationalist movements as a result of the same forces. Shimoni and others, however, have successfully demonstrated how our understanding of Jewish nationalism can be broadened through the use of theoretical typologies, and equally, how these typologies can be enhanced through the study of Jewish nationalism.

²⁸ Stauter-Halsted, *op. cit.*, 37. This Polish sense of Jewish “otherness,” she writes, only grew toward the end of the century, as some Polish nationalist leaders used economic and cultural references to the Jews as foreigners to strengthen national identity among Polish peasants. Stauter-Halsted, *op. cit.*, 42.

²⁹ See, for example, Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*; Keely Stauter-Halsted, *op. cit.*; John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1988) and *ibid.*, “The Construction of Nationality in Galician Rus’: Icarian Flights in Almost All Directions,” in Ronald Suny and Michael Kennedy, eds., *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 109–164; Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca, 2008). Recently, over a dozen of the empire’s leading historians contributed to a volume entitled, *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*. The theme of construction also runs through the essays in Nancy Wingfield, ed., *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*. Rashid Khalidi’s classic study of Palestinian nationalism understands its subject in these terms as well. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York, 1997).

³⁰ Bartal’s work, *op. cit.*, is a critical exception. The original Hebrew title of his survey of East European Jewish history, *Me-umab le-leum* (From Corporation to Nation), emphasizes precisely this process. See also I. Bartal, “From Corporation to Nation: Jewish Autonomy in Eastern Europe, 1772–1881,” *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 5 (2006): 17–31.

Cambridge University Press

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Joshua Shanes

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Like other nationalist movements, the “Zionist” movement in Galicia focused on nationalizing Jewish identity and securing national rights in the Diaspora. It provides an excellent example of how integrated into its European environment the Jewish nationalist movement truly was. It also addresses the problem of the Jews’ anomalous demographic dispersion. Situated in the multinational Habsburg Empire, Galicia provides a context in which total territorial concentration was not a prerequisite for securing national rights. More important, it provides a context in which nationalist movements themselves did not necessarily demand full independence, that “the political and national unit should be congruent,” but could be satisfied with a degree of national autonomy.³¹

In fact, by approaching Jewish nationalism as a cultural process rather than simply a political movement, one can incorporate even self-declared “assimilationists” into the narrative of Jewish national construction. One of the problems in dealing with Zionist sources, including Zionist historiography, is their tendency to dismiss opponents – many of whom subscribed to strong notions of Jewish collective identity – as assimilationist.³² Part of the problem lies in the ambiguity of the terminology itself. Nineteenth-century Jewish activists who described themselves as assimilationist rarely meant that they advocated the total abandonment of their Jewish identity, what Todd Endelman has labeled “radical assimilation.”³³ Most intended only the modernization of the Jews and their *integration* into non-Jewish society as *Jews*. Recent scholarship drawing on Milton Gordon’s distinction between “acculturation,” “integration,” and “assimilation” is helpful in clarifying this misunderstanding.³⁴ As Jonathan Frankel put it, “the loss of linguistic and cultural distinctiveness is not seen [among modern scholars] as necessarily bringing with it a loss of collective identity.”³⁵

³¹ Gellner, op. cit., 2. On Jewish Diaspora Nationalism in Austria, see David Rechter, “A Nationalism of Small Things: Jewish Autonomy in Late Habsburg Austria,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* (2007): 87–109, and Gerald Stourzh, “Max Diamant and Jewish Diaspora Nationalism in the Bukovina,” in *From Vienna to Chicago and Back* (Chicago, 2007), 190–203.

³² Nathan Gelber, for example, consistently refers to the Zionists’ integrationist opponents in this way.

³³ Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656–1945* (Bloomington, 1990), 4.

³⁴ Stanislawski, op. cit., 7–9; Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale* (Berkeley, 2002), 11–12.

³⁵ Jonathan Frankel, “Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography?” in Jonathan Frankel and Steven Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), 22.