

**Between Berlin and Tel Aviv:
Simon Rawidowicz and the Politics of Culture**

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Abstract

Simon Rawidowicz (1896–1957), a scholar, publicist and ideologue, devoted much of his career to the Hebraist movement, the movement for the revival and advancement of the Hebrew language. In this thesis I open the study of a critical period in the development of Rawidowicz's thought within the context of this movement, in the years 1930–1932. At this time, he was living in Berlin and working to establish a worldwide organization for the development of Hebrew culture. Rawidowicz wrote a series of Hebrew essays and manifestos proposing a set of revolutionary theories regarding the relationship between Jews living in the land of Israel and the Diaspora, and the nature of Jewish life. These theories, opposed to mainstream political and spiritual Zionism, have been mostly overlooked both by scholars and Jewish communal leaders.

In an attempt to understand better the way in which Rawidowicz's philosophy of Jewish life and culture developed, I have brought together the original Hebrew sources in which he presents his viewpoints, as well as published contemporary responses to them. The main theses which run throughout these articles foreshadow his later work, both scholarly and ideological-political. In this exploration of these largely forgotten sources, I aim to shed light on the charged and fractious environment in which this discourse took place as well as assess the peculiar robustness of Rawidowicz's philosophy. This study ultimately engages the ways in which these debates from the early 1930s still resonate with and challenge Jewish thought in the twenty-first century. I have included English translations of select articles in an appendix so as to offer the reader access to some of the materials I have collected.

Foreword

Acknowledgements

If I had to categorize this thesis, I would term it an exploration: it has carried me to the far reaches of Jewish and Zionist thought and back in ways that I never expected at the outset. Without the help and advice of my friends, colleagues, professors and advisors, it would have never been possible, and I would like to briefly mention them and thank them for their contribution to this work. Professor Eugene Sheppard has been exactly the kind of advisor I was looking for: both challenging me to go farther with my work but also letting me explore the material on my own. His comments and feedback always pushed me to take the next step. I would also like to thank Professors Jonathan Decter, Marc Brettler, and Vardit Ringvald for their help with the translations that appear in the appendix to this work, and Professor Steve Dowden for serving as a reader for this thesis. Karen Adler Abelson and Maggie McNeely in the Brandeis University Library Archives & Special Collections, as well as Rachel Misrati at the Jewish National Archives at Hebrew University in Jerusalem worked diligently with me as I waded through the various archives. James Rosenbloom in the Brandeis University Library's Judaica Reference also was a great help in locating a number of the sources studied here. Sylvia Fuchs Fried has been incredibly helpful and supportive throughout this whole project as well. Arnie Band of UCLA provided useful background information and papers; and Professors Jonathan Sarna, Ilan Troen, and Reuven Kimelman played crucial roles in aiding in the development of the topic of this thesis as well as offering advice and acting as a sounding-board over the course of the past year. I would specifically like to

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thank Professor Troen for his help with *Chalav U'Dvash: Brandeis' Journal of Zionist Thought*, which I credit with sparking my interest in Zionist history and thought. Avi Bass and Amelia Leibhold also contributed by editing portions of this thesis. From the Israel side, I would like to thank Aharon Horwitz and Eliezer Israel for providing moral support, and from New York, Ariel Beery for helping brainstorm thesis topics. Professor Benjamin Ravid has been an important resource throughout this project. His research laid the groundwork without which this thesis would have been impossible; he also has helped personally by answering all manner of questions about Rawidowicz's life and work. I would also like to thank him for his permission to work with his father's papers as well as his comments on the final draft. Abe Roisman and Bryan Wexler played an important role by allowing me to borrow their cars so that I could drive to Professor Ravid's house to work with these materials. Finally, I would like to thank my girlfriend Adra Horn who has helped me keep my feet on the ground and my head out of the clouds from beginning to end.

A Note On Translations, Transliterations and Hebrew Titles

Due to the nature of this thesis, the majority of sources are in Hebrew, and there are a significant number of quotations which are my own translations of the source material. I have aimed to be as accurate as possible in these translations, but they are not definitive. Due to these Hebrew sources and their often ambiguous nature, in a number of locations I discuss the exact terminology; so that the reader will not be confused, I have refrained from using scientific transliterations of these Hebrew titles throughout the work (šalōm vs. shalom), unless it provides a semantic differentiation (‘abodâ vs. ‘ubdâ). I also generally use translations of the article titles, but give the Hebrew on their first mention

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and also in the Bibliography. Inversely, for the names of organizations such as the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* (World Hebrew Union), I generally use the Hebrew name and give the English translation on their first mention.

A Note On The Term “Israel”

The term “Israel” is a complicated matter. Complications arise from the history of the term and its modern-day meaning. In 2008, “Israel” colloquially means the State of Israel that was established in 1948, but for Simon Rawidowicz, “Israel” represented the entirety of the people of Israel, not just those who live in the land of Israel.¹ This makes the translation of Rawidowicz’s works, both in the appendices and quotations, a complicated issue because he will often use “Israeli” not to mean a citizen of the State of Israel but adjectivally to mean “a member of the people of Israel.” To reduce confusion and ambiguity, I attempt throughout to refrain from using “Israel” as a stand-alone term, and use “State of Israel,” “land of Israel,” or “people of Israel” where appropriate. I also alternate “Jewish people” for “people of Israel” with the same meaning, even if it has a different Hebrew term (*ha-am ha-yehudi* vs. *am yisrael*).

¹ See the correspondence during the winter of 1954–1955 regarding the name and nature of “Israel” between Simon Rawidowicz and David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel. Published partly in Simon Rawidowicz, *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity: Essays on the Ever-Dying People*, London: University of New England Press, 1986, 194–204.

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I

Historicity is imbued with a sort of circular logic: If you are deemed “important” then you will be remembered, and then when others are forgotten you will be the only one left who *can* be. The 2005 founding of the Herzl Museum by the World Zionist Organization (WZO) may have a decisive impact on the collective memory of Theodor Herzl and his works. As greater funds are devoted to bring Jewish teens and young adults to the land of Israel for trips intended on inculcating Jewish identity through an identification with Zionism, the WZO will try to convince organizations that coordinate such experiences that their museum is of educational value. If so, then thousands of impressionable, young minds will learn much more about Herzl and his Zionist vision than they teach in Sunday school. As such, it is important to realize the extent to which such museums (which are sometimes more shrines than museums), and the choices of what to include, exclude, and explain are exercises in the politics of shaping collective memory and identity. Every minutiae reflects a conscious curriculum decision: the opening with the Dreyfus affair, the supposition that Herzl was uninterested in Jewish affairs before this event, the focus upon Herzl as an actor and director, even in politics, and the closing of the museum with a show entitled “Altneuland” (Old-New Land), referring to Herzl’s utopian novella in which he describes his vision of the future society of the land of Israel. In all, the museum reflects an accepted Zionist understanding of the history of the movement for a Jewish state in the land of Israel, an understanding fraught with caveats, all too often ignored.

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For every Herzl, there are thousands who had other ideas; and the same could be said of every Ahad Ha'am or Vladimir Jabotinsky, who do not have multimillion-dollar museums erected in their namesake. There are many figures who do not fall strictly within the defined boundaries of "Zionism," "anti-Zionism," "post-Zionism," or some other label. In this work, I hope to explore a deviant form of Zionism – deviant in that it denies the monopoly of the land of Israel on Hebrew culture and calls for a partnership between Jews around the world – which has the potential to inform heated debates about the relationship between the land of Israel and the Diaspora, the Zionism of Dr. Simon Rawidowicz

Born in 1896 in Grayevo, Lithuania, Rawidowicz spent his entire life moving westward.² Fleeing to Bialystok during the first World War, Simon Rawidowicz exerted significant energies advocating for the Hebrew language, established schools and cultural funds within the framework of the Zionist movement. In 1919, he moved to Germany to pursue his studies of philosophy, history and Semitics at the University of Berlin. In the Weimar Republic, Rawidowicz continued his Hebraist efforts which he had begun in Bialystok; notably he founded the Ayanot publishing house (1922), and edited a series of publications, including Maimonides' *Sefer Ha-Madda* (Book of Knowledge) and the works of Rabbi Nachman Krochmal. Throughout his life, Rawidowicz would remain a prolific publisher. All the while continuing his Hebraist work, he received a doctorate in

² For more biographical information on Dr. Rawidowicz, see *The Life and Writings of Simon Rawidowicz*, by Benjamin Ravid, in *State of Israel, Diaspora and Jewish Continuity* (University of New England Press, 1986). The following is a summary of this Ravid's essay. Additional biographical treatments can be found in *Studies in Jewish Thought*, ed. Nahum Glatzer (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974) and the similarly named (note that it is a different volume) *Iyyunim be-Mahshevet Yisrael*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1969).

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1926 from the University Berlin for his studies of Ludwig Feuerbach, and married. By 1929, he and his friends founded the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri* (Hebrew Community Center), a community center in Berlin for Hebrew speakers. This would act as the base of operations for his political activity over the next few years, which I will study here. In 1931, Rawidowicz published an expanded version of his dissertation; two years later the Nazis rose to power. With the pressure on universities to establish antisemitic policies, he was not given a position, and he took a job in Great Britain at the Jews' College in London. He would take a position at the University of Leeds in 1941, where he would be appointed the head of the Hebrew Language and Literature department in 1946. Joining the editorial board of *Ha-Olam*, a magazine to which he had previously been a frequent contributor, he continued his publishing efforts, finally establishing a new publishing house (Ararat) and numerous new publications such as *Metzudah*. After spending the war years in what he considered to be the last-standing outpost for Hebrew in Europe, his brother Jacob Ravid, who lived in the United States, urged him to move westward once again, and in 1948 he took up a position at the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago (today Spertus College). In 1950, he was invited to Brandeis University, and was awarded the Michael Tuch Chair in Hebrew Literature and Ethics, "in recognition of the significant position which Hebrew Culture holds in Western Civilization and for the encouragement of the highest scholarship, research, and teaching in this vital area."³ At Brandeis, Rawidowicz played a vital role in the development of the Hebrew Language and Literature program, which along with the founding of the graduate program in 1953, would morph into the department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies (NEJS). It is truly

³ Simon Rawidowicz, Michael Tuch Foundation award, Brandeis University Library Archives & Special Collections, Waltham Massachusetts. 13 May 1950.

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unfortunate that Dr. Rawidowicz suffered a series of heart attacks in the summer of 1957 and passed away at the age of sixty with a significant amount of work unpublished. Much of it would be published in the years following his death, but many of his articles to this day remain untranslated from German, Yiddish and Hebrew, creating a gap in the English scholarship and understanding of Rawidowicz. In part, this thesis aims to close that gap.

II

Studying his philosophy of Jewish life in the Diaspora has helped me to understand better the establishment of the department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies (NEJS) at Brandeis University. As a prime mover behind the department, Rawidowicz's understanding of the currents of Jewish history, religion, and literature profoundly influenced its curriculum and philosophy of Jewish education. As such, the far reach of Rawidowicz's conception of Judaism can help understand the orientation of the department, and has provided an invaluable context to my Brandeis education.

In this thesis, I do not plan to discuss at length the founding philosophy of NEJS. I am studying another one of Rawidowicz's projects, what would become known as the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* (officially translated into the rough "World Hebrew Union").⁴ The *Brit Ivrit Olamit* still meets today, but if Rawidowicz were to enter its offices on Hillel Street in Jerusalem, he would be deeply disappointed; while the "*Brit*," as he liked to call it, does enter into the realm of Hebrew publishing and encouraging Hebrew culture, it does not serve the revolutionary purposes that Rawidowicz envisioned for the Jewish people.

⁴ Ravid, Benjamin, "Brit Ivrit Olamit," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 17, ed. by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed, Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007, 125–126. See the discussion of the name of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* on page 50.

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III

When approaching the work of any one person, dichotomization into distinct spheres is not always possible. As Rawidowicz wrote in his 1935 essay “Philosophy as a Duty,” discussing the life of Maimonides:

Maimonides shares the fate of mansided thinkers working on different fields of intellectual life, one part of their work being overshadowed by the other ... However, the very significance of [his] achievement consists just in his embracing of these two great worlds ... Only when taken together do we get the substance of Maimonides. If you consider only one of these two and overlook the other, you fail to conceive the very greatness and peculiarity of Maimonides.⁵

I have no doubt that Rawidowicz placed himself in a similar category. Men are often apt to identify with their heroes, whether they be Maimonides, or Mendelssohn, or even Rabbi Nachman Krochmal. Even so, with regards to Rawidowicz, I focus primarily on the problem of his political work and orientation. Reading through his writings on the problems of Israel in the Diaspora, one cannot but see that he was thoroughly educated in the Hebrew literate tradition; his works are peppered with references across the entire spectrum of classical Hebrew literature. The influences, both esoteric and exoteric, of the great thinkers upon whose shoulders Rawidowicz stood are clear. While the articles studied here are polemical and ideological rather than academic in nature, his erudition is still apparent, and serves an important role, rooting Rawidowicz in the Jewish literary corpus; as we will see, Rawidowicz’s hopes for the Jewish people lie deep in a tradition of learning and literary creativity. The astute reader who is familiar with Rawidowicz’s ‘academic’ writings will find gems in the articles under investigation here. Rawidowicz expounds concepts and positions that we find nearly twenty years later, reappearing in

⁵ Simon Rawidowicz, “Philosophy as a Duty,” *Studies in Jewish Thought*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America (1974), 305.

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works published in other languages, and in more academic publications than the Zionist newspapers and magazines that Rawidowicz haunted.

When Rawidowicz wrote these articles, he had two aims. In his own terms, he aimed to establish a new *halacha*, or theory or philosophy of Jewish life, and a new *ma'aseh*, or political program based upon this *halacha*. Most of the articles that I study here follow this pattern, with an opening section rooted in a discussion of the theory of Jewish life, and a second part in which he applies his theories to a real-life political problem. What is in many ways so interesting about this is the failure of both, and the fact that since the accepted Zionist program has failed in many of the ways Rawidowicz anticipated, his arguments are still relevant, but ignored.

What makes Rawidowicz unique is his viewpoint on the development of the Jewish people, or as he later put it, the “house of Israel.” This makes even his least outstanding comments remarkable. His philosophy, which I will discuss in-depth in Chapter 3, has a certain idea of *longevity*. He not only thought in terms of hundreds of years into the future – considering what Jewish life would be like in the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries and beyond – but also considered the relationship between contemporary Jewish life and the past. While he did not explicitly state this interest, his style betrays a philosophy of Jewish literature that understands past creations of Jewish culture and thought not as something with which to be broken in the Zionist project, but rather as a continuum to be extended, deepened, and built upon in the land of Israel and the Diaspora. As he discusses in his later essays such as “On Interpretation” (1957), he raises the scaffolding of modern Jewish life and declares its inherent value for its own sake. Rather than simply writing it off as “commentary,” Rawidowicz sees the modern

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period of Jewish life as having just as much validity and revelatory truth – to an extent, as he argues in “Theory and Practice” (Hebrew: Halacha U-Ma’aseh), perhaps even more – than the originary source texts and life experiences upon which they draw.

His understanding of the Jewish world as a continuum is not only related to intangibles such as culture, but also to his conception of the Jewish people as a singular entity never to be divided. According to Rawidowicz, if the Jews are to build a vibrant life in the land of Israel, they must not break their ties with what came before, but build in *partnership*. This concept of the methodology of partnership between Jewish communities is developed in opposition to Ahad Ha’am’s paradigm of center and circumference, which called for the establishment of the Jewish state in the land of Israel as a “cultural center” which the Diaspora could imitate.⁶

What is especially exciting about how Rawidowicz explains his viewpoints is that he consistently sees himself as a Zionist, even as he opposes the exact political program of his Zionist contemporaries. As he writes, “Zionists are not guilty, but the accepted Zionism is!”⁷ He redefined Zionism in forward-looking terms with regards to the Diaspora, but still affirms the Zionist dream of building a Jewish state in the land of Israel. In certain ways he is more realistic than mainstream Zionists in his understanding of the necessity of the Diasporic arm of the Jewish people for the task of the Zionist

⁶ Ahad Ha’am writes in his 1897 essay “The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem”: “This Jewish settlement ... will become in course of time the center of the nation. ... Then, from this center, the spirit of Judaism will radiate to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, to inspire them with new life and to preserve the over-all unity of our people.” Ahad Ha’am [Asher Ginzberg], “The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem,” *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, ed. Arthur Hertzberg, Atheneum, New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959, 267.

⁷ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” (Hebrew: Shutefut Shel Kiyyum), *Ha-Olam*, 2 June 1932, 323.

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enterprise. He does not hold that the Diaspora wing is necessary for strategic purposes, which some argue today; for Rawidowicz, the partnership was primarily creative-cultural, and he sought to bring the Diaspora into the Zionist project as stakeholders, not martyrs. From the viewpoint of 1948, when only ten percent of the world Jewish population resided in the land of Israel, completing the Zionist dream seemed difficult without the other ninety percent. In the early 1930s, before the destruction of European Jewry, all the more so it would have seemed absurd to alienate world Jewry, to take a course of action that had the potential to create cultural fractures within the Jewish people that could lead to its demise as a national group with a singular, unified identity, affiliation and destiny.

IV

In this thesis, I do not set out to glorify the work of Rawidowicz. His *Brit Ivrit Olamit* project failed – his thought, however interesting and perhaps applicable to the debates of today, failed to gain traction, and his organizational work did not achieve its goals. That was not completely his own fault, as there were extenuating historical circumstances. Rawidowicz fled Germany for England in 1933 when he realized the grave danger that Adolf Hitler posed to the Jewish communities in Europe and around the world, and his organization, the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, had to be relocated. It was this dislocation that ended up spelling the end of the possibility that his Hebrew Conference, which he had worked so hard to create, would take place in the near-term. With a power struggle erupting over the location of the conference and its aims, it would take until

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1950, nearly twenty years after the original “preliminary” conference, for it to come to fruition.⁸

If Rawidowicz failed in achieving his organizational goals, the Zionist movement certainly did not by any means. While attending the 36th Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in the summer of 2006, I saw hundreds of delegates from around the world come together and debate important issues regarding the future of Zionism and the State of Israel. But what was their impact and relevance? The self-importance but ultimate insignificance of the World Zionist Organization in today’s world, even with its financial clout (which at the time of writing is being challenged by the falling American dollar), demonstrates the grave problems that exist within Zionism, the State of Israel, and the Jewish people. How much of a say should Diaspora Jewry have in the daily doings of the Jewish state? What is their part to play in the centuries-to-come? That Rawidowicz was asking these questions demonstrates that he was ahead of his time; that is not to make a value judgment as to the relationship between the land of Israel and the Diaspora, but Rawidowicz recognized the facts as he saw them and asked the appropriate questions, that many Zionist leaders would not consider until decades later. If Rawidowicz failed, it was not due to a lack of brilliant criticisms of the Zionist movement; much has changed in the world since he was writing in *Moznayim*, *Davar*, and *Ha-Olam*, but his criticisms remain valid. In a time when Diaspora Jewish leaders struggle with the problems of

⁸ For an in-depth historical account of this power struggle, see Benjamin Ravid, “Simon Rawidowicz and the Brit Ivrit Olamit” (Hebrew: Simon Rawidowicz Ve-Brit Ivrit Olamit: Perk Be-Yehesim Bein Tarbut Ivrit Be-Tefutzah Le-Ideolgia Ha-Tzionit), *Studies and Critiques in the Hebrew Language and its Literature: Proceedings of the 16th Hebrew Scientific Conference in Europe* (Hebrew: Mehkarim U-Masot Be-Lashon Ha-Ivrit U-Be-Sifreiteiha: Divrei Ha-Kinus Ha-Hamadai Ha-Sisha-Esre Be-Europa), Jerusalem: Graphos Print (2004), 119–154.

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accusations of dual loyalty, “supporting Israel” but still criticizing it for its transgressions in the occupied territories, when Jewish culture is thriving in America but struggling in other parts of the world that lack its economic resources and political capital, his ideas of *partnership* have something very powerful to contribute. Simultaneously, as America becomes a worldwide cultural hegemonic power, feeding the hopes and dreams of billions (including millions of modern-day Israelis) with consumerist notions, the danger of “imitation” to worldwide cultural diversity makes Rawidowicz’s concepts of *creativity* important not only for Jews but universally.

I must admit that I was initially attracted to studying Rawidowicz because of the distinct lack of scholarship and widespread knowledge about his viewpoints on the Diaspora. While many, such as Nahum Glatzer,⁹ a colleague at Brandeis University, realized the revolutionary ideas taking shape in Rawidowicz’s mind and the importance of his Hebrew writings, I believed that there was room for improvement. Perhaps it also was an attraction to a period in which the future of the Jewish people was completely different from today’s, the horizon completely open in ways it now can never be. In 1931,

⁹ In a draft of the lecture notes for a memorial address given at Brandeis University in February 1958, Nahum Glatzer opens: “[Rawidowicz] was a passionate lover of Hebrew and – I measure my words when I say this – the most outstanding representative of Hebrew prose in this period. Reading Rawidowicz is like listening to a full orchestra. He made use of all the tonal and symphonic qualities of the Hebrew word. He confronted his listener with the rich and profoundly beautiful tradition of a language, at once sacred and human, abstract and earthly, complex and simple. . . . This was not a matter of linguistic artistry, but rather a deepseated belief in *the essential unity of Israel*. Rawidowicz applied the ancient name of Israel to this symphony of trends and traditions, philosophic opinions and prophetic visions, rebellious outbursts and established order: historic phenomena which in turn formed and fashioned the Hebrew language. All this together, is Israel, Rawidowicz taught.” Glatzer, Nahum, Papers, Lectures: ‘Simon Rawidowicz,’ Brandeis University Address, Brandeis University Library Archives & Special Collections, Waltham, Massachussets, box 74 of 93. Typed manuscript, 1–2. Note that this portion of the text was under erasure, presumably dropped from the lecture as it is found with a line struck through it (emphasis in original).

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the Nazis had not yet come to power and the most defining and devastating moment of modern Jewish history was not even an inkling in the mind of the leaders of the Jewish world. Today, with a Diaspora politically empowered for the preservation of the Jewish people and the wellbeing of the people of Israel, Rawidowicz's call for partnership may seem to be fulfilled. However, he specifically rails against the type of "partnership 2000" in which the Jewish Agency teamed up Israeli and American "sister cities" in a major municipal fundraising effort;¹⁰ perhaps the modern understanding of partnership differs from that of Rawidowicz. As the roles of the Diaspora and the State of Israel split – one needs only to look at the differing viewpoints on the goals of monumental initiatives such as Birthright Israel for a demonstration of this trend – Rawidowicz's criticism of Zionism as well as the Diaspora for the inability to see themselves as a part of the same project continues to resonate strongly. I am honored to unearth Rawidowicz's revolutionary ideas, that have great, unrealized potential. The discussion between the Diaspora and the State of Israel is lacking today, and perhaps Rawidowicz has something to contribute.

¹⁰ Rawidowicz writes that "I do not preach for a partnership between Jerusalem and New York, between Tel-Aviv and Warsaw, between a particular moshav [settlement] or community [in the land of Israel] and another city in the Diaspora [... but] between *Israel here and there*, between Israel and Israel, between Jew and Jew, between Jewry and Jewry." Simon Rawidowicz, "Existential Partnership," 19 May 1932, 292.

Chapter 1: Breaking from the Mainstream

I

On June 21, 1931, a week before the seventeenth Zionist Congress was to commence in Basel, Switzerland, another congress, smaller and somewhat peculiar, was taking place in Berlin. At the Preliminary Hebrew Conference (Hebrew: Ha-Knesia Ha-Ivrit Ha-Mukdemet) – “preliminary” as it was meant to be just the beginning, leading towards development of a Hebrew congress on a much larger scale – Dr. Simon Rawidowicz proposed the creation of a new organization “for education, for literature, for science, and for art in Israel,”¹¹ to be known as the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* (World Hebrew Union). After Dr. Rawidowicz’s speech and the heated discussions which followed – in which he argued that “[t]he prevailing ideology until now ... cannot sustain and develop a creative Hebrew movement in the Exile”¹² – he was finally in the spotlight. However, this conference was not his first foray into the discussion of the development of Jewish life in the “Hebrew Exile,” as he liked to call it. In this chapter we will consider his writings and thought leading up to this conference and see how it sheds light onto its development.

Earlier that year, and perhaps before, Dr. Rawidowicz was expressing his views critical of what he would come to call the “accepted Zionist doctrine” of the central and exclusive place of the land of Israel in the life of the people of Israel. Over the course of

¹¹ *The Hebrew Conference in Berlin* (Hebrew: Ha-Knesia Ha-Ivrit Ba-Berlin), Berlin: Brit Ivrit Olamit, 1932, 3.

¹² Simon Rawidowicz, “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile” (Hebrew: Le-Irgun Ha-Golah Ha-Ivrit), *Moznayim*, 9 July 1931, 2.

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the years 1930–1932, Dr. Rawidowicz published a series of articles in Hebrew publications such as the Zionist daily *Davar* (Tel Aviv), *Moznayim*, a weekly literary magazine also published in Tel Aviv,¹³ and *Ha-Olam*, a weekly Zionist organ based in London. Over the course of these articles, the way in which he outlined his conception of Jewish life changed significantly, but his solution to the “question of Israel that is in the Exile”¹⁴ would remain relatively consistent: the people of Israel need to establish a thorough partnership between the land of Israel and the Exile with the goal of creating a vibrant, thriving and creative Hebrew culture for all Jews, wherever they lived. Dr. Rawidowicz’s organization aimed to aid the development of Hebrew literature, science, and art, and he hoped that it would encompass all Jewish organizations in the Exile. It today no longer operates, at least not as Rawidowicz originally envisioned; with the passage of time, we have seen the success of the Zionist movement in the drive to establish a Jewish state and a Hebrew-speaking society. Along with this development, the State of Israel has laid exclusive claim to a vibrant Hebrew national culture; this is in direct opposition to Rawidowicz’s position in the early 1930s. Still, we can learn much from his ideas and the discourse in which he found himself.

In a footnote to the published proceedings of the 1931 Hebrew Conference, there is a very brief outline of Dr. Rawidowicz’s involvement in these issues. In 1929, he delivered a speech in the “*Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri*” in Berlin in a discussion between a set of columnists and Jacob Klatzkin, a Jewish writer and academic who could easily be

¹³ At a later date, this magazine would switch to a monthly format.

¹⁴ Note the qualitative differences between “Exile” and “Diaspora.” In this work, they refer to two specific Hebrew words, *galut* (Exile) and *tefutzot* (Diaspora). The choice of one over the other is normally considered a value judgment by the speaker because of the negative connotation of the term “exile,” whereas “diaspora” has less ideological baggage.

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categorized with those who negated the Diaspora. While he did discuss these issues in a speech commemorating the seventieth birthday of the autonomist Simon Dubnow, which we will discuss shortly, his first full piece focusing on the question of the Exile was published in *Moznayim* in December 1930 under the title “For the Renewal of Our Literature” (Hebrew: Le-Shem Hidush Sifruteinu). Over of the following year and a half, Dr. Rawidowicz would publish articles in March, July, and December of 1931 in which he fleshed out his ideas regarding what exactly he meant by a “renewal of our literature.” It turns out that literature itself was not his exact area of interest, but this may have been affected by the founding of a new organization (the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*) that June. Finally, in May 1932 Dr. Rawidowicz published two articles in which he spelled out more clearly, though still not systematically, his new conception of the Hebrew movement and its role in Jewish life. Over the course of these articles, written within a compressed period of a mere eighteen months,¹⁵ the reader will discover a transformative metamorphosis in Rawidowicz’s understanding of Jewish life and civilization.

In October 1930, Dr. Simon Rawidowicz honored another Simon – Simon Dubnow – on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. Born in 1860 in Mstislavl, Belorussia, Dubnow is another example of an eastern-European Jewish intellectual migrating westward and settling in Berlin. An historian and politician, Dubnow represents an elder and a foil to Rawidowicz. His writing on the history of the Jewish people served for him as a wellspring of understanding of the nature of the Jewish people; his philosophy of Jewish history as migrating “centers” led him to oppose Ahad

¹⁵ Due to the technical details of their publishing, this time period may be even shorter, down to a year. See note 121 for a discussion of the publication of the last article studied here, “Existential Partnership.”

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Ha'am's conception of Center and Circumference years before Rawidowicz expressed similar objections. As a politician, Dubnow established the *Judische Folkspartay* (Jewish Peoples Party) and ran in the Russian elections of 1905; he promoted the concepts of Jewish "autonomism," that the Jewish people had greater opportunities to develop their lives in the Diaspora by establishing self-governing communities within foreign countries. In this way he opposed both the Zionists, who wished that all Jews move to the land of Israel, and the assimilationists, who would see the Jewish people dissolve into the masses. Rawidowicz attempted to make a similar distinction but arrived at vastly different conclusions. While both were concerned with cultural autonomism, Rawidowicz was less interested in the political aspect of returning to the old communal structures¹⁶ but more with internal Jewish autonomy.¹⁷ Whereas Rawidowicz moved to England in 1933, Dubnow also left Berlin for Lithuania, but sadly was murdered in the *Shoah* after the Nazi liquidation of the Riga ghetto in the winter of 1941.

At the beginning of his speech, which was delivered at the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri* and partially published in *Davar* on October 23rd 1930 as "Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow" (Hebrew: Ha-Tzionut Ba-Golah Ve-Simon Dubnow), Rawidowicz stressed the fact that he was giving it in Hebrew. It was his belief that he was "speaking in the spirit of Simon Dubnow"¹⁸ when he honored him using the Hebrew language. That Rawidowicz gave this speech, at which Dubnow likely was present, speaks to the

¹⁶ See Simon Dubnow, "Fourth Letter: Autonomism, the Basis of the National Program," *Essays on Old and New Judaism*, in *Nationalism and History*, ed. Koppel S. Pinson, New York: Meridian Books, 1958, 137.

¹⁷ We see here an example of the internalization of the foreign affairs of the Jewish people; see page 72.

¹⁸ Simon Rawidowicz, "Zionism in the Diaspora and Simon Dubnow" (Hebrew: Ha-Tzionut Ba-Golah Ve-Simon Dubnow), *Davar*, 23 October 1930, 1641.

importance of the relationship that existed between them and the attention that a careful reader must pay to any potential commonalities between their philosophies. In this speech, which was reprinted in part in *Davar* on October 23, 1930, Rawidowicz first congratulates Dubnow on reaching his healthy age, and then briefly discusses Dubnow's autonomist beliefs and his debates with Ahad Ha'am. He then discusses more broadly the relationship between Zionists and those of Simon Dubnow's school (*Beit Midrash*), and poses a question: "What will the relationship between Zionist Jews in the Exile to the teachings of Dubnow and his school be?"¹⁹ Rawidowicz promptly pounces on the opportunity to answer his own question. He devotes nearly half his speech to the dangerous qualities of the Zionist concept of the negation of the Exile and the need for creativity. He then returns to the subject of Dubnow's birthday, with a blessing that Dubnow should soon complete "the dream of his *aliyah* to the land [of Israel]"²⁰ and an affirmation that the land of Israel is the future of the history of the people of Israel.

This speech is not listed in many of the resources relating to Rawidowicz's thought about the relationship between Jews in the land of Israel and those residing in the Exile. In Benjamin Ravid's bibliography of his father in the appendix to *The Writings of Rabbi Nachman Krochmal* (Hebrew: *Kitvei Rabbi Nachman Krochmal*, or abbreviated *Kitvei Ranak*),²¹ which is organized topically rather than chronologically, this article is listed along with other pieces Rawidowicz wrote about or in memory of Dubnow, and in the other articles it is not referenced at all. Also, in the history recounted in the *Brit Ivrit*

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *The Writings of Rabbi Nachman Krochmal* (Hebrew: *Kitvei Rabbi Nachman Krochmal*), ed. Simon Rawidowicz, Waltham, Massachusetts: Ararat, 1961, 519–525 (Hebrew pagination).

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Olamit conference proceedings, it is omitted. This could be due to a lack of knowledge about the article's printing in *Davar*: as *Davar* was published in Tel Aviv, the compiler of the conference proceedings (who presumably was based in Berlin as that was where the conference took place and also where the proceedings were published) may not have been familiar with it, even if he had been present for the event. What this document does show us is a fragment of the intellectual and cultural Hebrew life that existed in Weimar Berlin, Rawidowicz's place within it, and the prevailing discourse that was taking place. The *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri*, where this event took place, was also the location of Rawidowicz's 1929 speech, of which no transcript has been published, but we can draw from this chain of events a sense of the center of Hebrew culture that the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri* represented. When Simon Rabinovitch wrote in "The Dawn of a New Diaspora" about Simon Dubnow's acclimation to life in Berlin, he discusses the vibrant intellectual environment in which Dubnow found himself,²² and we can imagine Rawidowicz's place in this world as well. Rabinovitch lists a number of the people with whom we know that Dubnow associated; this demonstrates the extent to which emigrant scholars and intellectuals both integrated themselves into and contributed uniquely to their new home. It was within this environment that Rawidowicz lived, and out of this environment that he drew a significant inspiration for his work to reinvigorate Hebrew culture in the Exile as he watched the center of Hebrew publishing migrate away from Berlin just as easily as he and others had migrated to it.

²² "[U]pon Dubnov's arrival in Berlin a circle of émigré protégés quickly gathered around him ... Other scholars and friends with whom Dubnov associated in Berlin, both émigré and German, included Josef Meisl, Simon Rawidowicz, Mark Wischnitzer, Ismar Elbogen, David Koigen and Aaron Friedman." Simon Rabinovitch, "The Dawn of a New Diaspora: Simon Dubnow's Autonomism, from St. Petersburg to Berlin," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 50 (2005): 274–275.

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Many of the concepts and phrases that characterize his work through the 1950s can be found in this early article. The later articles and *Babylon and Jerusalem*, his *magnum opus*, are outside the scope of my research, but even a superficial reading will show, for example, that Rawidowicz would come to reuse ideas such as that “[t]he relationship between Diaspora Jewry and the land of Israel is not that of an exporting company and importing company only” and “no man lives except if he is creating.”²³ He also discusses the dialectic of Babylonia and Jerusalem along with the two Talmuds, those of Babylon and Jerusalem, representing the creative efforts of the two foci of Jewish life. The fact that so many of his ideas – down to the exact language – are formulated so early attests to a vibrant discussion that was taking place within his intellectual circle at the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri* leading directly to the founding of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*. Not only does Rawidowicz borrow ideas from the works of the time period studied here, but in a number of places he quotes nearly verbatim from his earlier articles, without any citation. This shows that he was either using stock language from his rhetorical toolkit or that he was referencing his earlier works at the time of writing. At the same time, Rawidowicz had not at this time fully developed his ideology and language that would drive his political and polemical work. We will continue to uncover the language that Rawidowicz created and utilized, to understand how his conceptions of Jewish life changed. By understanding the progression of his viewpoints, we can understand the underlying philosophy that allowed him to believe at the same time in the reality of life in the Diaspora and not lose sight of the Zionist dream.

²³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Zionism in the Diaspora.”

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Of particular interest are Rawidowicz's positions against the negation of the Exile alongside his consistent affirmation of his Zionist identity. It is this peculiar juxtaposition that provides the greatest challenge to traditional Zionism, a new understanding that allows not only for a Zionist existence in the Diaspora but a new conception of the roles of the land of Israel and the Diaspora within the people of Israel. When Rawidowicz writes that "in the current Israeli reality, this idea [of negation of the Exile] is nothing but futile and dangerous," that "this [the discussion of the negation of the Exile] is nothing but the question of the affirmation and negation of the land of Israel," and that "all who negate the Exile in the end negate the land of Israel,"²⁴ he could be mistaken for a disciple of Dubnow. The way in which both Rawidowicz and Dubnow attempt to place themselves as a "middle path" between extremist assimilators and extremist Zionists²⁵ begs the question: what are the defining characteristics of Rawidowicz's philosophy of Jewish life that differentiate him from the autonomists who he is praising in his discussion of Dubnow? This is a question that Rawidowicz recognizes when he noted

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Dubnow writes in "Reality and Fantasy in Zionism" that "Opposition to the theory of autonomism is found in two extreme camps: among the proponents of assimilation and among the political Zionists" (Simon Dubnow, "Sixth Letter: Reality and Fantasy in Zionism," *Essays on Old and New Judaism*, in *Nationalism and History*, ed. Koppel S. Pinson, New York: Meridian Books, 1958, 155). Note the similarity in Rawidowicz's self-placement when he writes that "Assimilation, reform, western liberalism, etc. came and said: The Exile is an instrument bringing *blessing* to Israel. Bring forward from the Geniza the old and deep letter: The Holy one, Blessed Be He, did justice to Israel when he dispersed them amongst the nations. The Zionists came and said: The Exile is naught but a curse, a curse of God! ... I recognize that the Exile is not a blessing and not a curse, but a fact" (Simon Rawidowicz, "Organization of the Hebrew Exile," 9 July 1931, 4). Note that not only Dubnow and Rawidowicz aimed to place themselves at the center of the dialectic (they both used the logic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis), but also Ahad Ha'am sees his spiritual Zionism as a more moderate form of Zionism between political Zionism and assimilationism. This point requires an in-depth study into the differences between these "moderate" responses to Zionism and assimilation and how they envisioned themselves.

that he would deal with this question “in a separate article,”²⁶ but it is one with which he certainly does not deal with systematically in any works of this time period. If it did come (and a study of the bibliography that appears in *The Writings of Rabbi Nachman Krochmal* does not show an article dedicated to this topic), it certainly was late in its arrival and perhaps would have served him well in his efforts to profess his ideology to a public that seemingly would not lend its collective ear.

While Rawidowicz disagreed with the Zionist movement’s standard ideology, he strongly identified himself as a Zionist.²⁷ The fact that Rawidowicz asked the question of how Zionists in the Exile should relate to Dubnow’s philosophy shows that he considered the problems that Jewish autonomism presented to Zionists in the Diaspora and Zionism generally. Dubnow’s autonomism, as a competing ideology to Zionism, presented an opposing narrative of the development and history of the Jewish people than Zionism’s exilic-redemptive model. Dubnow’s alternate vision of nationalism in “The Doctrine of Jewish Nationalism” argues that the most highly developed and refined nation is precisely that which

loses not only its political independence but also its land, ... and it becomes dispersed and scattered in alien lands, and in addition loses its unifying language; if, despite the fact that the external national bonds have been destroyed, [and] such a nation ... reveals a stubborn determination to carry on its autonomous development – such a people has reached the highest stage of cultural-historical individuality and may be said to be indestructible.²⁸

²⁶ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice” (Hebrew: Halacha U-Ma’aseh), *Ha-Olam*, 8 December 1931, 958.

²⁷ See the discussion on “Existential Partnership.”

²⁸ Simon Dubnow, “First Letter: The Doctrine of Jewish Nationalism,” *Essays on Old and New Judaism*, in *Nationalism and History*, ed. Koppel S. Pinson, New York: Meridian Books, 1958, 80.

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Autonomism envisioned the pinnacle of Jewish civilization as the “spiritual and historical-cultural” model of national existence, superceding “the stages of tribal nationalism, ancient culture and political territory.”²⁹ Relating a different model of Jewish national history and a differing philosophy out of which to interpret current events, autonomists challenged the Zionist responses to antisemitism and the rise of political nationalism. For Jewish nationalists living in the Diaspora, autonomism presented a unique test to political Zionism in that it presented both a practical program for Jewish political rights, albeit within their diasporic birthplaces and not the land of Israel, and also affirmed their existence in the Diaspora while Zionists negated it.

For Rawidowicz, the perennial Diaspora Zionist and Hebraist, there were a number of dangers here. He did not focus on the problem of Jewish minority rights, but rather the question of the future of the Jewish people. If Jews would develop differing models of the past, it would naturally lead to divergent futures. Also as a Hebraist, he could not agree with one who advocated the loss of “its unifying language.” So Rawidowicz had a seemingly impossible task in front of him: to convince the Zionists that he was a Zionist, and to convince the non-Zionists that he was right. Within this context, Rawidowicz’s tongue-in-cheek remark about Dubnow immigrating to the land of Israel makes sense as a not-so-subtle attempt to reinforce the message that while he may not believe in the negation of the Exile, he still identifies strongly as a Zionist. And by simultaneously stating that the land of Israel is “the destiny and future of the history of

²⁹ Ibid, 84–85.

Israel,”³⁰ he is clearly broadcasting his views on Jewish history to the autonomist camp – crucial for those whose ideology is based upon a broad philosophy of Jewish history.

II

Rawidowicz did not once discuss the problem of Hebrew literature in his Dubnow speech at the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri*, though this would become the focus of his thought in the coming articles. In “For the Renewal of Our Literature,” published in *Ha-Olam* in three weekly installments between December 2 and 16, 1930, Rawidowicz focuses directly on the problem of Hebrew creativity. He writes of a situation he “discovered,” that seemingly all the Hebrew writers were moving to the land of Israel. This probably refers to his specific experiences of Hebraist life in Weimar Berlin, which declined as the hyperinflation of the German Mark decreased, making publishing more expensive.³¹ In this article, Rawidowicz begins somewhat apolitically with a discussion of literature but quickly reaches two critical questions that define his thought: Is there a need for Hebrew literature in the Diaspora? And, is there a place for it? His answer is unequivocally “yes” to both. In this way, Rawidowicz frames his discussion by beginning not with the *how* of renewing literature, but the *why*. He questions hidden assumptions and unrealized dogmas in the search for a truly open debate. His thought is characterized by his approach to the questions of the life of Israel from the position of a seasoned scholar used to the open environment of the academy; and ultimately he arrives at a fresher conclusion because of it.

³⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Zionism in the Diaspora and Simon Dubnow” (Hebrew: Ha-Tzionut Ba-Golah Ve-Simon Dubnow), *Davar*, 23 October 1930, 1641.

³¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December, 1930, 971; Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, London: Yale University Press, 1996, 200.

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After sustained criticism of *Ahad Ha'am*, Rawidowicz calls for “partnership” between the land of Israel and the Exile, based on the conclusion that Diaspora Jewry will only accept a new Hebrew culture if they have a part in creating it. This discussion of “partnership,” and the strictly Rabbinic terminology such as “*Hilchot Shuftin*” (Laws of Partnership)³² in which Rawidowicz dresses the issue, will be echoed in later articles, especially “Existential Partnership” (Hebrew: *Shutefut Shel Kiyum*). Rawidowicz in this article also echoes his October speech with discussion about whether Diaspora Jewry is simply “a company for export and import.” What is important to realize are the currents flowing both backwards and forwards between his articles and his vibrant reuse of concepts, which illustrate his intellectual development, the shifting political ideas and ideology of the relationship between the Land and Diaspora of Israel.

The second installation, published on December 9, 1930, moves from his account of what he sees as the roots of the decline in the Hebraist movement in the Diaspora to a discussion of those whom he labels “extreme negators of the Exile.” He argues that negation of the Diaspora is in its essence the negation of Judaism in the Diaspora, which negates Judaism generally, which ultimately negates even the land of Israel!³³ Rawidowicz again discusses the metaphorical roles of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud in the culture of the Jewish people, just as he did in “Zionism in the Exile,” and also states that he will not change his opinions on these matters, “even if ... the land of Israel were to be able to absorb in the course of the next fifty years millions of Jews and solved the political, economic, and in a wider and complete fashion, the cultural question

³² An Aramaized version of “the laws of partnership,” playing on the titles of Maimonides’ books of the *Mishne Torah* (*Hilchot X*).

³³ See page 41.

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of Israel.”³⁴ This demonstrates both Rawidowicz’s early consideration of the distant future, as we will discuss in Chapter 3, and his deep commitment to his positions. The latter claim, that he will not recant, can be read both as an anticipation that he will be attacked for his views, and also a demonstration that he must have already been engaged in polemical battles over his beliefs, a fact confirmed by the comments of Dr. Wislevski at the Hebrew Conference.³⁵

In the final installment of this series, Rawidowicz calls for the establishment of a “*Brit Ha-Sifrut Ha-Ivrit*” (Hebrew Literature Society),³⁶ what appears to be an early version of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*. The goals of this *Brit* are to “build for us Hebrew literature and Israeli science!”³⁷ Rawidowicz hopes that “every writer, man of science, teacher, businessman, even reader, every Hebrew foundation, school and library, will lend their hand to this *Brit*,” and thus “the foundation of the renewal of the Hebrew culture in the Exile will be laid.”³⁸ Rawidowicz sees in the future of the *Brit* a monthly journal as well as a daily paper. This reflects an early development of a later understanding of the scope of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* project.

Between the two early articles, “For the Renewal of Our Literature” and “Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow,” printed six weeks apart, one can find many similarities. Authors often re-use phrases and language as an element of personal style, but even a

³⁴ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1930, 995.

³⁵ See page 48.

³⁶ Full title: “*Brit Ha-Sofrim Ve-Ha-Korim Ha-Ivrim Be-Artzot Ha-Golah*” (English: “Covenant of Hebrew Readers and Writers in the Lands of the Exile”). Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” (Hebrew: *Le-Shem Hiddush Sifroteinu*), 16 December 1930, 1015.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

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superficial reading of these articles show that something peculiar is going on. Compare the following sections:

Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow

No man lives except if he creates. And a national collective, a society of men [sic] – even more so! Exilic Jewry will not live except if it creates. It is our obligation to strive for the cultivation of the creative faculties of this Jewry.³⁹

For the Renewal of our Literature

No man lives except if he creates. And a national public, a society of men – even more so! The Diaspora will not live except if it creates. It is our obligation many times more to strive for the cultivation of the creative faculties of this Jewry.⁴⁰

In the same paragraph in both documents, Rawidowicz continues:

Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow

Exilic Jewry is not only an importing and exporting company in its relation to the land of Israel. In other words, it is not only a company for sending men and money to the land of Israel, and not a company for the reception of cultural goods and value from the land of Israel. All who neglect the obligation of Exilic Jewry to create value and goods of its own, value and goods that will enrich the treasury of Jewry in Exile and in the land [of Israel] – undermine the existence of Exilic Jewry and the building of the complete land of Israel as one.⁴¹

For the Renewal of our Literature

Are you coming to make Exilic Jewry into a *company for export and import?! In other words, that it will be on the one hand a company for sending men and money to the land of Israel, and on the other a company for the reception of spiritual goods and value from the land of Israel? All who see Diaspora Jewry strictly as this company and turn a blind eye towards the marked need for creativity in all who still exist – undermine the existence of Exilic Jewry and the building of the complete land of Israel as one, “circumference” and center!*⁴²

What is interesting is the lack of reference in “For the Renewal of our Literature;” he does not write “As I said in my recent speech” or “As I have said before” but presents it as new material. One possible explanation is that Rawidowicz might have seen himself as writing for two distinct, mutually exclusive audiences. Rawidowicz may have received a variety of Hebrew periodicals from around the world, but he was among the educated

³⁹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Zionism in the Diaspora.”

⁴⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December 1930, 972.

⁴¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Zionism in the Diaspora.”

⁴² Simon Rawidowicz, “For the Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December 1930, 972.

elite, and thus is not representative of the general population; he might have assumed that a reader of *Davar* in Tel Aviv would not see his other article in London's *Ha-Olam*. At the same time, we find that the major response to Rawidowicz's *Ha-Olam* article, Asher Barash's "Literature of a Tribe or Literature of a People?" (Hebrew: Sifrut Shel Shevet O Sifrut Shel Am?), was published in Tel Aviv's *Moznayim*. That the first article was published in one place and its response in another points towards a vibrant discourse taking place between these two publishing centers, discrediting this possibility of two audiences. Ultimately, as we shall see, Rawidowicz's goal was a worldwide Hebrew society and partnership that would naturally lead to the fusion of these two arenas of Hebrew linguistic development. We will also see that as he develops the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, he publishes less and less in *Davar* and *Moznayim*, and more in *Ha-Olam*. This trend may not have been intentional, but might be due to the fact that his organization was strongest in the Diaspora, and also could be related to his struggles with the *Brit* branch in Tel Aviv.⁴³

Another potential explanation of the duplication discussed above draws upon the observation that while these articles were published in a particular chronological order, it does not necessarily imply that they were written in that same order. *Davar* was printed in Tel Aviv and *Ha-Olam* in London, while Rawidowicz was living in Berlin. In the 1930s, when e-mail was not an option, to publish worldwide took time. Articles printed

⁴³ For an in-depth discussion of the history of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* following this conference, see Benjamin Ravid, "Simon Rawidowicz and the Brit Ivrit Olamit." Interesting to note is that Rawidowicz's publishing in various centers of Jewish life demonstrates a way in which Rawidowicz views on the worldwide Jewish political system manifested themselves in the publishing industry: while he may have been critical of the land of Israel's publishing industry's focus on selling books to the Diaspora Hebrew-speaking communities, he saw them both as central players in his political program.

in *Moznayim* included a byline with the date and location of writing; based on this data we can estimate that it took *at least* two to three weeks for *Moznayim* to print an article written in Berlin.⁴⁴ Considering that these two articles were published within five weeks of each other, this difference is not enough to separate the articles. It certainly is possible to speculate that Rawidowicz was drafting his article that would later appear in *Ha-Olam* when he was asked to present brief remarks at the seventieth birthday celebration of Simon Dubnow, and he drew upon that material for his speech. That would certainly explain the differences between the two excerpts – while their respective openings may have been word-for-word, as one continues the texts become significantly more distinct from one another, as would be expected if one were speaking extemporaneously.

III

These two articles are especially interesting when considered in the light of articles printed in response to them. Rawidowicz had more space in which to present his ideas in *Ha-Olam* than in his speech at the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri*, as it was printed in *Davar*, but it was in the Tel Aviv press that he received his primary response. In “Literature of a Tribe or Literature of a People?” by Asher Barash,⁴⁵ published in *Moznayim* only four weeks after the conclusion of the “For the Renewal of Our Literature” series, the writer attributes his motivation to “Dr. Simon Rawidowicz’s article

⁴⁴ This lower bound is based on Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile.” As the speech was given on June 21st, 1931, and printed as an article on July 9th and 16th, 1931, that gives a lead time of eighteen days. Presumably, it would take longer to print an article that was not simply a newsworthy “rush transcript” but was actually written by the author. Original articles most likely would also go through more editorial control which would delay their printing; published transcripts probably did not as much. Looking through the archives of these Hebrew publications, it is not uncommon to find that the editors often “find” a missing article they had meant to publish months beforehand.

⁴⁵ Asher Barash, “Literature of a Tribe or Literature of a People?” (Hebrew: Sifrut Shel Shevet O Sifrut Shel Am?), *Moznayim*, 22 January 1931, 9.

that was published in the last issue of *Ha-Olam*.⁴⁶ In the Diaspora press, Rawidowicz does not receive any response of this magnitude; to compare, Barash's article was appended with two full pages of discussion. It seems that Rawidowicz's early articles simply disappear and only his later pieces are noted as significant by his contemporaries.⁴⁷ I will not discuss this in depth here, but it is important to recognize Rawidowicz's rising notoriety over the course of publishing this series of articles. Starting from a basis at the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri* in Berlin, he attempts to spread his ideas, and as he gains political capital he tries to effect even greater change, towards the creation of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*. Only with the publication of his next article, "Two Questions that are One" (Hebrew: Shte'i She'elot She-hen Ehat) in March 1931, does Rawidowicz begin to solicit more serious responses.

In "Two Questions that are One," the last article Rawidowicz would publish before the Preliminary Hebrew Conference that would take place in June, he begins in a similar fashion to Barash:

When I read Asher Barash's speech "Literature of a Tribe or Literature of a People?" in the last edition of *Moznayim*, I was thrown into the complex of feelings of one who had heard the echo of his voice after a long pause, as an echo that came after despair [that it would not come], when I would not dare to hope that it would come... Finally, the echo has arrived.⁴⁸

One can definitely sense a deep relief – *someone* was listening! And all the more so, someone in the land of Israel! Rawidowicz is happy that Barash is engaging in "self-criticism [on the issue of literature], both of himself and the collective."⁴⁹ What follows is

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ For a discussion on these responses, see Chapter 4.

⁴⁸ Simon Rawidowicz, "Two Questions that are One" (Hebrew: Shte'i She'elot She-Hen Ehat), *Moznayim*, 5 March 1931, 7.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

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a series of quotations from Barash's article, which Rawidowicz uses to make the point that these truths will be what *saves* the people of Israel, and should not be brushed aside as "a betrayal against 'patriotism' of the land of Israel."⁵⁰ When he quotes Barash, for example saying that "the hope and future of our literature is as a shared creative effort of the Hebrew nation in the land [of Israel] and the exile,"⁵¹ it could easily be mistaken for later writings by Rawidowicz! Following the silence after the publishing of his earlier articles, this reciprocating voice must have been a great relief, and given him hope for his conception of the People of Israel as a single indivisible being.

Rawidowicz begins to de-emphasize his previous focus on objective literature, that is literature in the sense that it is something physical such as in the form of books and magazines, and re-focuses on the holistic development of Jewish creative life wherever it exists. In "For the Renewal of Our Literature," he gives an extended exposition upon the decline of Hebrew literature in the Diaspora, implying that he views the problem as the decline of the Hebrew publishing industry. That this narrative is not repeated (as so much else is) in the later article is a sign of Rawidowicz's dramatic personal shift: here a new picture of Rawidowicz's concerns emerges. This is apparent from a study of the *names* of the articles: "For the Renewal of our Literature" (December 1930) progresses to "Two Questions that are One" (March 1931) to "Existential Partnership" (December 1931). This is the current of Rawidowicz's thought as it progresses chronologically, shifting from "literature" to "questions" to ultimately "partnership" between the land of Israel and the Diaspora. In "For the Renewal of Our Literature," Rawidowicz implies that the goal is literature in an industrial sense, writing that "You cannot imagine how great will be the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

national-spiritual destruction *if the Hebrew language stops being the language of Jewish literature in the Exile* ... Even when we were to merit [that this would not happen], and see our literature in the land [of Israel] stand up at the spiritual and economic level that we would like...⁵² This is distinct from the sense of culture that Rawidowicz explains in “Two Questions that are One.” There Rawidowicz describes “the culture of Israel which will be created in the future” as “Culture both in the foundational meaning and also in the ‘wide’ meaning, in the language of ‘the masses’ . Not strictly literature and philosophy (*haskala* or Jewish enlightenment) only, not culture that is a framework and supplement for the life of the theoretical State, but culture that is the life, the State, and all which is bound up in them”⁵³ and as “Not popular culture in the regular understanding ... but culture which nurses the roots of the soul of the ingathering of the people and fertilizes its life.”⁵⁴ Here we see two different explanations of the “Hebrew culture” which Rawidowicz sees as disappearing in the Diaspora. The understanding in both is that the culture is not strictly limited to the written and spoken word but also exists in a higher realm which does not deal in the “technical ruses” from which Rawidowicz wants to free what he considers the Jewish cultural establishment (i.e. the printing industry). Rawidowicz sees the development of Jewish culture not only as a for-profit enterprise but also a for-Jews enterprise.

Immediately after positing his understanding of Jewish life, he comes straight out against those Diaspora Jews who have come to him, demanding him to take the next step and denigrate the land of Israel. Rawidowicz responds ironically, “as if I have come to

⁵² Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1930, 994.

⁵³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 March 1931, 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 7.

beat down our Zionist aspirations! This is the primitive thought process of those of our camp both in the Exile and the land [of Israel] – if it is possible and even necessary to establish a foundation of culture and literature in the Exile, why do we need the land of Israel?”⁵⁵ Throughout the entirety of Rawidowicz’s work, he maintains his self-identification as a Zionist. In fact, he seems to be trying to develop what he would later call “real Zionism, which is more than building Zion – but rather is the building of *Israel* and its renewal.”⁵⁶ At the same time, he recognizes the need to “differentiate between the Zionist Organization and Zionism generally,”⁵⁷ and he sees the ideals of Zionism as separate from the actions of that organization. Zionism for Rawidowicz is not simply a political program, but a vision of the potential for Hebrew life – about which he thinks primarily in cultural terms – and he preaches this understanding consistently.

At the same time, Rawidowicz does not claim to have all of the answers. In “Two Questions that are One,” he mentions the “question” of the Jews and Jewish culture over twenty times. His use of terminologies such as “question,” “question of Israel,” and so on with reference to the Jewish people is slightly disturbing to the twenty-first century reader, who has become accustomed with associating the phrase “Jewish question” with the Nazi murderers who were rising to power at the same time as Rawidowicz sat in his study writing these same words. For Rawidowicz, this question was open-ended: given his political opinions, if he were able to only place these deep questions that he was asking onto the agenda, that would still be a success. If he could do more than that – so much the better!

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 2 June 1932, 324.

⁵⁷ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 2.

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The questions which Rawidowicz asks are still relevant today. He consistently thinks within a framework that not only considers the next five or ten years – or even the “next generation” – but the next few hundred. When Rawidowicz presents a great fear that the Diaspora will develop “cultural ‘independence’” from Jewry in the land of Israel,⁵⁸ his fears are not rooted in a fear of the Diaspora doing anything new and innovative. This is an important semantic distinction: Rawidowicz does not use the word *shichrur* or “liberation” to describe this independence but *atzmaut*, related to the word for power. Rawidowicz was not afraid that the Diaspora would develop power of its own; he firmly believed that the Diaspora *needed* some say in its cultural development. Yet Rawidowicz strongly believed, as he later writes about in “Existential Partnership” (May 1932), that Jewish life in the land of Israel and the Diaspora was connected in a very basic way, such that neither can be free of the other and maintain the unity of Israel. As such, his use of the term *atzmaut* for “independence” is significant since it designates that he does not consider the relationship of the Diaspora and the land of Israel to be one based around the problems of dominion or dependence, but one based around the problems of self-identification and the ability for worldwide cultural cross-pollination. Over time, Rawidowicz feared, the Jewish people would develop different cultural *lingua franca*, and reach a point where Jews would either not be able to identify or even communicate with one another, destroying the worldwide unity of the Jewish people. For when the problems for Judaism on an individual and communal level were based on the point of a “why,” as Rosenzweig put it,⁵⁹ Rawidowicz was concerned with the “why” of

⁵⁸ Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 March 1931, 8.

⁵⁹ Franz Rosenzweig, “The Builders: Concerning the Law,” *On Jewish Learning*, ed. N. Glatzer, trans. N. Glatzer and W. Wolf, New York: Schocken, 1955, 78f.

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inter-communal identification and relations. At a juncture when Zionism was a distinctly minority position in world Jewry, Rawidowicz realized that they lived at a perilous time. If a Zionist truly cared about the grand success of the vision which propelled him, Rawidowicz argued, the commonly accepted Zionist principles such as Ahad Ha'am's understanding of the Jewish world consisting of a "center" and "circumference" would have to go by the wayside and be replaced with an understanding of "partnership."

Within the context of "Two Questions that are One," as the title suggests, Rawidowicz posits that in order to solve the "Jewish question" in a constructive manner, it is impossible to dichotomize between the "questions" of Israel in the Diaspora and Israel in the land (of Israel). For Rawidowicz, the two are connected at all levels. The way in which he describes it, in language that he would continue to make use of in later articles, is: "The center and circumference hold one Tallit, they are involved in one body, the two of them live as one, the two of them create as one, the two of them live the same life with some differences, the two of them create the same creation with some differences."⁶⁰ Thus, Rawidowicz did not posit that the lands of Israel and the Diaspora are exactly alike but stresses that in his opinion they are of the same substance, and cannot be separated. The peculiar relationship between the lands of Israel and the Diaspora is one which Rawidowicz stresses but in many ways should have been self-evident to those whom he criticizes as dealing strictly with the ruses and technicalities of the printing industry – if Diaspora Jewry does not have the capabilities to read, understand, *and interpret* Hebrew cultural creations, including literature, then there will be no audience for the yet-to-be-created Hebrew cultural center in the land of Israel!

⁶⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, "Two Questions that are One," 12 March 1931, 9.

Chapter 2: The Hebrew Conference and its Aftermath

I

At the end of “Two Questions that are One,” Rawidowicz sets the stage for what comes next: he pronounces that “the time to act has arrived,” calls for a “world Hebrew society,” and invites his readers to join him at the Congress for Hebrew Culture that he hopes will take place at the latest by the end of the summer.⁶¹ In June 1931, this conference became a reality. This was not the first time that a Hebrew conference had been called in Berlin; as Rawidowicz noted in his keynote address that would later be published under the title “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile” (Hebrew: *Le-Irgun Ha-Golah Ha-Ivrit*), there was another conference in 1909 out of which, unfortunately, the initiatives developed had mostly failed.⁶² One could argue that Rawidowicz’s conference “failed” as well, as the organization that it created, the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, did not fulfill Rawidowicz’s goals. There were a number of extenuating historical circumstances that contributed to this, and I will not delve into that discussion at this point, but this conference was extremely interesting to students of Zionism and Hebraism. It brought out a whole host of issues and provides insight into the ways that the Zionist communities in the Diaspora and the land of Israel understood their needs and each other.

Compiled and edited from the conference proceedings, “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile” was published in two installments, with five sections overall. Not much was changed in its publication in *Moznayim*, except that some of Rawidowicz’s

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² For a discussion of the 1909 Conference on Hebrew Language and Culture, see Michael Brenner, 197.

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remarks in his keynote speech were added to his welcoming remarks to form the first of the five sections. Its title can be understood in two ways – as a call for the creation of a new organization that will serve the “Hebrew Exile,” or a call for that same exile to organize itself. Most likely it is a combination of both, the creation of a new umbrella meta-organization of all of this “Hebrew exile” to organize its constituent groups (as Rawidowicz writes, “the end to all lone organizations!”⁶³) and make it more effective going into the future. A key element of this development is the innovation in Rawidowicz’s thinking with regards to the reprioritization of education and youth as higher than literature and language as physical objects. At the same time, Rawidowicz demonstrates an astonishing level of consistency; while he does experience a transformation of sorts with regards to the elevation of the Hebrew people over the Hebrew literature, his goals of an enrichment of Jewish life maintains a high priority even as his methodology crystallizes.

As a whole the article follows a pattern of introduction to the discussion of Rawidowicz’s theory of creativity within culture, which he had previously expounded upon, partnership between the land of Israel and the Exile, and a conception of the Exile as a “fact” that must be dealt with. This flows into a discussion of a political program to carry out these theories practically, which carries with it philosophical biases of what is necessary to create a world in which Rawidowicz’s theoretical ponderings will come to fruition.

According to Rawidowicz, the standing ideology of the Zionist movement does not have the ability to sustain a creative Hebrew movement in the Exile. The

⁶³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 3.

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organizations that had until that time existed, in Rawidowicz's view, only cared about the *language* itself, and still effectively drank the cool-aid (*meymav shatinu kulanu*) of Ahad Ha'am and his theories of the center and circumference and of imitation as a part of human nature.⁶⁴ For Rawidowicz, those theories should be respectively replaced with partnership (*shutefut*) and creativity (*yetzirah*). His motto is "If not here – where? If not 'here' – not 'there.' Here and there, there and here – this is the teaching of partnership between the land [of Israel] and the Diaspora,"⁶⁵ and he hopes to establish societies both within the land of Israel and in the Diaspora which are thoroughly educated so that they have the ability to be creative and develop this partnership. The goal is to create a "complete culture of Israel,"⁶⁶ which cannot be done without both sides⁶⁷ of the people of Israel.

Within the framework of theory, Rawidowicz's innovations include the understanding that the Diaspora needs to buy into whatever new Hebrew culture will be created by the Zionist enterprise; the long-term aspects of this process necessitate a seemingly contradictory but ultimately holistic plan. This manifests itself in Rawidowicz's understanding that Diaspora Jews should root themselves wherever they are, utilizing their Diaspora environment as a source of creativity even if the ultimate goal is eventual *aliyah* to the land of Israel. In Rawidowicz's view, Diaspora Jewry must be a stakeholder, a "cultural partner in the creative Hebrew program in the land of

⁶⁴ Simon Rawidowicz, "Organization of the Hebrew Exile," 9 July 1931, 2.

⁶⁵ *Hebrew Conference in Berlin*, 9. Note that this was not published in the *Moznayim* article but was only included in the conference proceedings. However, it exists in a later article, Simon Rawidowicz, "Existential Partnership."

⁶⁶ Simon Rawidowicz, "Organization of the Hebrew Exile," 9 July 1931, 3.

⁶⁷ Rawidowicz often refers to it as "faces" of Israel.

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Israel,”⁶⁸ rather than serving as a consumer or spectator. The Diaspora ought not to simply imitate the land of Israel, but contribute to its ongoing creation. That is to say, Rawidowicz believed that Ahad Ha’am’s conception of the land of Israel as the spiritual center of Jewish life may or may not be a good idea in theory, but if the land of Israel simply pronounces itself as the source of all things authentically Jewish, it could raise a significant crisis within the Jewish world. As Jewish culture around the world was and continues to be highly diverse in nature, an exclusive claim by communities in the land of Israel on the production of “natural” Judaism is one that would not be easily accepted by Jews in the Diaspora who do not identify with the kinds of Jewish culture developing in the land of Israel, and especially by those do not or cannot speak Hebrew. According to Rawidowicz, the obsolescence or perhaps supersession of Jewish culture in the Diaspora, and the long-standing Hebrew and Jewish literary tradition which he studied academically, ultimately leads to a negation of all forms of Diasporic Jewish existence inasmuch as Diaspora Jews attempt to live Jewishly within a culture that does not speak their national language. The exclusion of these cultures by Zionism leads to an exclusion of the life that created and informed it, and additionally the creators themselves; this is what Rawidowicz meant when he wrote in “For the Renewal of Our Literature” that “all who negate the Exile negate Judaism in the Exile, and thus Judaism generally, and finally also the land of Israel.”⁶⁹ The inclusion of the Diaspora is for Rawidowicz a crucial step because the land of Israel must not be arrogant, claiming ultimate supremacy when it does not deserve it: the land of Israel does not create authentic Jewish culture simply by itself but only through the involvement of the Diaspora Jewry.

⁶⁸ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 9 July 1931, 5.

⁶⁹ See page 27. Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1930, 994.

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This is not the first occasion on which Rawidowicz uses the terminology of partnership, but this is the most extensive elaboration of his theory to-date. In his speech on Simon Dubnow, he suggests that Zionists in Exile take part in the culture around them, but does not use the term “partnership” in the sense that he uses in this article.⁷⁰ Here he uses two words related to “partnership,” but not the word “*shutefu*” that he uses in later articles. Rather, in the Simon Dubnow speech, Rawidowicz hopes that Diaspora Jewry will contribute to “our common [*meshutaf*] treasury,” and calls upon Zionists to “participate [*hishtatfu*] in the creation of the Diaspora’s [culture].”⁷¹ In “For the Renewal of Our Literature,” Rawidowicz describes the need for the Diaspora to “take part in the activity of creating ... Hebrew culture,”⁷² and in “Two Questions that are One,” he builds towards his ideology of ‘partnership’ when he writes:

[Hebrew culture has] two partners: The land of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora. It is not up for judgment, and neither is any portion of the “shares” of this partnership up for sale. History will come in the 25th or 30th centuries to decide; we will deposit our fate in its keeping. So long as most of the People of Israel and its upbuilding is found in the Diaspora, there will not be a complete culture of Israel without the partnership in the creativity of these Jews that are in the Diaspora.⁷³

Two aspects differentiate Rawidowicz’s understanding of partnership in “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile” from his earlier work. First of all, his explanation of the theory of partnership is more sustained in this article than any previous one. That is to say, he does not simply invoke the word “partnership” but attempts to differentiate it from Ahad Ha’am’s theories. Additionally, in this article, he translates it into a concrete political program with not only a goal in mind but a philosophy of Jewish life that he

⁷⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Zionism in the Diaspora.”

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December 1930, 972.

⁷³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 March 1931, 8.

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hopes will enable the solidification of a worldwide Jewish culture of partnership and creativity. The two concepts of “partnership” and “creativity” fit into and interface with the mechanisms of the Zionist system of thought so easily that one could term Rawidowicz’ juxtaposition of his two ideas as drop-in replacements for Ahad Ha’am’s theories of center and circumference, and imitation. In this way, Rawidowicz attempts to simply switch out these two cogs of the Zionist ideology with some of his own. His criticisms of Ahad Ha’am fit together into the cohesive whole because he is not simply saying what he disagrees with but is attempting to remedy the Zionist movement in a positive and constructive manner.

II

It is with this theoretical prolegomenon that Rawidowicz calls for the creation of a new organization, called the *Brit Ha-Ivrim* (“Covenant of the Hebrews”), which would later be called the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* (“World Hebrew Union,” or literally “The Worldwide Covenant of Hebrew”). The last three sections of the article discuss the program of the *Brit Ha-Ivrim*, its goals, organization and orientation. In Rawidowicz’s vision, the *Brit Ha-Ivrim* will be an all-encompassing and perhaps hegemonic umbrella organization of all Hebrew-oriented Diaspora organizations, “organizing the whole of the Hebrew exile.”⁷⁴ At the same time, it will maintain a non-political aura. What is potentially comical about this aspiration is first that Rawidowicz believes that all the Jews of the Diaspora will join under a single united banner, just as the Zionist Jews have joined under the banners of the Zionist institutions; he saw the possibility for two sets of national institutions, one based in the land of Israel and one based in the Diaspora, interfacing for

⁷⁴ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 2.

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the Jews as corporate entities. Additionally, his vision of a non-political organization was somewhat naïve; all organizations, especially one touching upon issues in a political culture, are political. We can learn from the fact that he even *discusses* the supposedly non-political nature of his organization that he was aware of and concerned about the politics it would bring about.

To comprehend Rawidowicz's understanding of "Hebrew exile," it is important to study relevant terms he uses. He has conceptions of "Hebrew Israel"⁷⁵ as well as "Nationalist Jewry in Exile"⁷⁶ that beg the question: what is the status of other Jews, who may be in Exile but are not nationalist or do not speak Hebrew or do not see themselves as Hebraist? It appears that the author was concerned with organizing the Hebraist forces within the Diaspora in an effort to strengthen them and grow this sector of the Jewish world so that it would be a palpable force. There is no question that however Rawidowicz felt about the theories of "center and circumference," "imitation" and "negation of the Exile," for him the ultimate goal was to build the land of Israel into a Jewish state, a center – not necessarily *the* center – of Jewish life with a strong Hebrew culture. He simply took the viewpoint that this movement was for the long haul since the Diaspora was here to stay, and urges that those interested in the Zionist enterprise accordingly take measures to ensure that over the course of one- to two-hundred years their goals would have the ability to come to fruition.

A key element of the transformation of Jewish life which Rawidowicz wants to see take place can be perceived in his organization's methodology and the way in which he made his pitch for it at the conference. The two main jobs of the *Brit*, in the order in

⁷⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

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which Rawidowicz discusses them, are education and spiritual-creative growth.⁷⁷ That Rawidowicz places education, a topic which he has never before discussed in his published articles, at the top of his list of priorities is revealing and significant. While he is wary of focusing too much upon education, he curiously identifies the educational apparatus of his envisioned organization as being equivalent to the cultural organization.⁷⁸ The combination of culture and education into one entity corresponds with Rawidowicz's public admission that he was previously wrong with regards to the real problem in the Diaspora. As he writes:

In past years I have spoken a lot about creating a union of Hebrew literature (*Brit Ha-Sifrut Ha-Ivrit*). In the beginning it was nothing before my eyes except a salvation of literature, science and art. To the extent that I have descended to the depths of the question ... I have recognized that the "*Brit Ha-Ivrim*" needs to be a foundation and high center for all forms of Hebrew culture, for all our attempts, activities, and desires for the establishment of [the people of] Israel."⁷⁹

Thus, Rawidowicz's understanding of the goal of the enterprise has changed from increasing the vibrancy of Hebrew literature by dealing with the publication and distribution of books, literary magazines and the like, to a holistic understanding of the culture out of which they come. He describes this vision as primarily consisting of developing the educated population necessary to both create and consume such works.

Rawidowicz is willing to go to all ideological lengths to see his vision carried out. Even though Hebrew is a central element of what he seeks to create, he consistently pushes off difficult issues to a later time (a tactic to build a broad coalition by ignoring divisive issues), whether it be the language spoken in schools⁸⁰ or the name of the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 4.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 3.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 4.

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organization.⁸¹ He even skirts the edge of what would be considered heresy with the suggestion that the Hebrew movement team up with the Bund and perhaps “find a *modus vivendi* with Yiddish”⁸² because they can serve as an internal ally. For Rawidowicz is interested in finding the allies necessary to transform worldwide Jewish culture into “Hebrew culture,” rather than isolating his and his colleagues’ cultural experiment. To do so, it would be necessary to work together to fight the Zionist Organization, which in Rawidowicz’s view did not have culture at the top of its list of priorities, and wanted to subjugate the Diaspora to a position of spectator of the Hebrew cultural developments and life within the land of Israel.

III

Even without the above-mentioned items, Rawidowicz’s ideological acrobatics would have gotten him into hot water. In the days, weeks and months following his speech and its publication he received both critiques and praises from all over the Jewish world. Z. Werbow, a delegate to the Hebrew Conference from the United States, wrote a report in *Ha-Doar*, a Zionist newspaper in New York City:

The most intense session in the whole three days was the third, the discussion regarding Dr. Rawidowicz’s speech. ... The session lasted all evening, past midnight, and ceased at a late hour of the night with [the words] “to be continued;” and when the fourth session convened the next morning, the issue of Dr. Rawidowicz’s speech still enwrapped the delegates.⁸³

This heated discussion of Rawidowicz’s speech at the conference sheds light upon his next articles, which were published in December 1931 and May 1932. Few disputed that it was necessary to do *something* to develop Hebrew culture, but many had critiques of

⁸¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 1 December 1931, 936.

⁸² Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 4.

⁸³ Z. Werbow, “The Preliminary Hebrew Conference (Letter from Berlin)” (Hebrew: Ha-Knesia Ha-Ivrit Ha-Mukdemet, Michtav Me-Berlin), *Ha-Doar*, 31 July 1931, 540.

his ideology. Baruch Krupnick (Karu), an editor of the *Encyclopedia Judaica* and a member of the board of the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri*,⁸⁴ comes off as somewhat perturbed and puzzled by the ideological mores that the structure of the conference was giving off; he would have liked there to be another speech that balanced Rawidowicz's "extremist innovations" that "stand against all that has been written until now in Hebrew literature."⁸⁵ Krupnick implies here that "Hebrew literature" maintains a predicate not only of its language but its content.⁸⁶ Specifically, he was insulted that Rawidowicz's speech was made the keynote, thus betraying an ideological bias of the conference organizers. Many were surprised at the political character of the conference⁸⁷ and appear to have felt misled as to its nature.

Still, Rawidowicz had his supporters. A particular Dr. Nadil was disturbed by the fact that the organizers, being nearly completely Berliners, were not familiar with the situation in the rest of the Exile, but still railed against those who decried Rawidowicz, calling them "cheap demagogues."⁸⁸ A number of delegates expressed feelings that Rawidowicz was misunderstood by his opponents and that it was important to follow through on his platform for the sake of the Exile, for those outside the land of Israel who

⁸⁴ "Letter from Berlin" (Hebrew: Michtav Me-Berlin), *Ketuvim* (Tel Aviv), 20 February 1930.

⁸⁵ *Hebrew Conference in Berlin*, 32

⁸⁶ This can be seen as paralleling the discussions in every age about the definition of the "Jewishness" of works, whether their existence within the sphere of "Jewish" literature and art is based upon the act of their creation or the content of their being. As we will see, Rawidowicz does not explicitly state his views on the subject, but implies that he views this Jewishness not as being tied to the spirit of its creation and the ability of the Jewish people to assimilate it into their already-existing cultural frameworks, with his intense focus on the need for Jews comprehensively educated. For a discussion of Rawidowicz's "pan-Hebraism," see Chapter 3.

⁸⁷ This is slightly ironic, considering Rawidowicz's appeals to keep the *Brit Ha-Ivrim* a strictly non-political organization.

⁸⁸ *Hebrew Conference in Berlin*, 33.

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were not learning Hebrew or who would never move to Israel. Perhaps representative of the ideological bases of the conference, Dr. Ya'akov Cohen, a chairman of the session, expressed support for Rawidowicz but tempered it with an expressly Zionist emphasis on settling the land, saying that the work in the Diaspora was dependent on the inability to move to the land of Israel, with an eye ultimately towards *kibutz galuyot* (ingathering of the exiles). As he would stress later in the conference, he opposed organizations that were *strictly* for the Diaspora.⁸⁹ According to Cohen, both land and language are salvific factors of the Jewish people,⁹⁰ whereas for Rawidowicz, language is the primary salvific element of Jewish life. Most interesting of these comments was the last, by a Dr. Wislevski of Berlin, when he notes that “I have opposed most of Rawidowicz’s thought on a number of occasions.”⁹¹ In this way, he insinuates that even though this is the most extensive attested development of Rawidowicz’s ideology to-date, he has been expressing ideas divergent from the mainstream for quite some time.

Rawidowicz’s response to this debate was a reiteration of his views and also a discussion of the theory behind the theory. He speaks of the unity of Israel and the Zionist project, saying that “the issue of building is one, and the content of the building is one: Israel. Do not worry about the two authorities. The land of Israel and the Exile are one body.”⁹² He claims that he is only against the construction of the people of Israel as a center and circumference, and the “laziness” of the Hebrew writers with regards to the Diaspora. Rawidowicz notes the difference between the theoretical and practical portions of his speech, yet he does not see them as orthogonal but rather complimentary: “On the

⁸⁹ Ibid, 48.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 35.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

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foundation of these issues of theory, it is possible to arrive at a new program in our camp.”⁹³ At the same time he denies the charge that his views are mutually exclusive from land of Israel-based Zionism. According to Rawidowicz, building the Diaspora will not take energy away from the building of the land of Israel but rather will reinforce it. Finally, he closes with an appeal to the delegates to re-apply the energy of their discussions to practical work building the Diaspora.

Rawidowicz also displays his long-term outlook on the Zionist project.⁹⁴ As he says, “Look within human history – how long does a period of political control last?” Rawidowicz considers the creation of Hebrew culture a long-term project, and here he appears to be taking the Herzlian Jewish State as only a *stepping-stone* on this path. When he considers that many states only last thirty to fifty years, he writes that “even for a ‘short’ period such as this, [how much] literature and Torah, *halacha*, scientific systems, and ways of work are created.”⁹⁵ Note what he *does not* say, that if the Jewish state lasts for only a short time, what a disaster it would be, rather what good they could do in such a period!

IV

To explain the reaction to Rawidowicz’s speech, we can look at the sources that detail the planning of the conference. In its announcement and call for delegates, re-published in the appendices to the conference proceedings, we find that this “preliminary conference” lists the following items on the agenda for discussion:

1. The situation of the Hebrew movement (education, literature, science and art) in the Diaspora;

⁹³ Ibid, 36.

⁹⁴ For a deeper discussion of this issue, see Chapter 3.

⁹⁵ *Hebrew Conference in Berlin*, 36.

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2. The question of the organization of the “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*,” to clarify its function and establish its structure;
3. The establishment of the first Hebrew Congress in the Exile;
4. The foundation of a provisional organization to enact the decisions of the “preliminary conference.”⁹⁶

To what extent does Rawidowicz’s discussion of the theories of creativity and partnership constitute a realistic fulfilling of the first strophe, discussing the evidence of the reality of the Hebrew movement and the Jewish people in the Diaspora at that time? It is clear that Rawidowicz believed that his understanding of the situation of the Hebrew movement in the Diaspora would ensure the success of the *Brit Ha-Ivrim* where previous organizations had failed. For others, it must have been somewhat of a shock to come to a conference that was supposed to be non-political and focused on building a new, all-encompassing organization for the fledgling Hebrew movement, and hear Dr. Rawidowicz proclaiming what he surely believed to be truths but were bound to cause political controversy. As Dov Lipitz, one of the other organizers, described it in an article in *Ha-Olam* on June 16th, 1931, five days before the conference, the conference’s “spirit will be practical, far from all forms of politics.”⁹⁷ One delegate in particular opened his comments on Rawidowicz’s speech by saying that he had “run away from politics” only to find them here at the conference!⁹⁸

An important element that can shed light on the way in which Rawidowicz’s speech was received as well as the dynamics of the conference, was the name of the

⁹⁶ Ibid, 76.

⁹⁷ Dov Lipitz, “For the Preliminary Hebrew Conference” (Hebrew: Likrat Ha-Knesia Ha-Ivrit Ha-Mukdemet), *Ha-Olam*, 16 June 1931, 454.

⁹⁸ *Hebrew Conference in Berlin*, 33.

organization that the conference was called to create.⁹⁹ As mentioned previously, the documents leading up to the conference use the term “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*.” In Dov Lipitz’s June 16th article, he also writes that a major goal of the conference is to create a “*Brit Ivrit Klalit*” (General Hebrew Union). Rawidowicz preferred the term “*Brit Ha-Ivrim*” over “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*,” which would eventually become its official name.¹⁰⁰ This is indicated by the documents: in his speech, he uses “*Brit Ha-Ivrim*” or simply “*Brit*” with a single exception. This one case was in a section in which he is also beginning to use a parallel terminology, “*Keren Ha-Hinuch Ha-Ivri*” (Hebrew Education Foundation), to refer to the educational apparatus that he wants to create out of this “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*.”¹⁰¹ Perhaps since his speech opened the conference, throughout the three-day meeting, most people used Rawidowicz’s terminology. However, by the end of the conference, this name lost in favor to the alternate, which became the official name of the organization.¹⁰²

Beginning on August 25, 1931,¹⁰³ the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* began publishing fairly regular

⁹⁹ Also Rawidowicz’s discussion of the name “*Brit*”: “And against our skepticism towards the word ‘*Brit*’, we must see in it one of the appointed words of our religion and of the establishment of Israel.” Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Ravid, Personal Correspondence, 1 February 2008.

¹⁰¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 4.

¹⁰² *Hebrew Conference in Berlin*, 58. The shift back towards the original name appears to be the working of Dov Lipitz, who gave a speech on the technical aspects of the “*Brit Ha-Ivrim*.” Within this speech he continued to call it “*Brit Ha-Ivrim*,” but started using the language of “*Olamit*” and “*Brit Ivrit*.” In the discussion following his speech, he expressed discomfort with the name “*Brit Ha-Ivrim*” because it seemed “sectarian” (p. 51), and calls it fully “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*” at the closing of the session (p. 52). Notably, the conference proceedings do not record an official vote on the name of the newly created organization.

¹⁰³ “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*” (Hebrew), *Ha-Olam*, 25 August 1931, 653–654; “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*: With Regards to the Collection of Dues in the Year 1931” (Hebrew: *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, *Likrat Mifal Ha-“Sela” be-shnat 1931/TRZ”A*), *Ha-Olam*, 22 September 1931, 737–738; “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*,” *Ha-Olam*, 29 September 1931, 758–759; “Notes of the *Brit Ivrit*

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updates in *Ha-Olam*. On September 29th of that year, a membership form for the *Brit* was published in that same magazine.¹⁰⁴ Still, while Rawidowicz mostly caved and began using the full name “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*” or even “*Brit Ivrit*,” there are cases where the name “*Brit Ha-Ivrim*” slips through.¹⁰⁵

Why is there a difference between what Rawidowicz preferred and the full name of the organization? In his article “Theory and Practice,” he writes in a parenthetical comment that he does not prefer that his has not won out, but “if the decree is that ‘Olamiut’ (‘universality’) will become part of the name of the new organization, it should be called ‘*Brit Ivrim Olamit*’ (‘Worldwide Covenant of the Hebrews’ or ‘World Union of the Hebrews’).”¹⁰⁶ For Rawidowicz, the most important aspect of the name of the organization was that “*Ivrim*” (Hebrews or Hebrew people) be prioritized over “*Ivrit*” (Hebrew language). The Hebrew language and creativity as physical objects were not for him the end-game, but rather his peculiar vision was the creation of a “Hebrew public,” or rather the strengthening of Hebrew forces within the Jewish people.

V

In addition to the discussion at the Berlin conference, there exists also a printed debate. It is easy enough to say that Rawidowicz would have no reason to write in his following articles that he felt like a “voice calling out in the desert” as he did in “Two Questions that are One.” In fact a significant portion of his next article, “Theory and

Olamit” (Hebrew: Yediot Ha-“*Brit Ivrit Olamit*”), *Ha-Olam*, 6 October 1931, 777–778; et al.

¹⁰⁴ “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*,” *Ha-Olam*, 29 September 1931, 759.

¹⁰⁵ Simon Rawidowicz, “Remarks on a Declaration” (Hebrew: He’erah Le-Hatzharah), *Moznayim*, 19 May 1932, 15.

¹⁰⁶ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 1 December 1931, 936 (emphasis in original).

Practice,” which was published in the London weekly *Ha-Olam* during December 1931, deals primarily with the clarification of points raised in “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile.” He opens the article with a contextualization of his place in the playing-field of the Zionist movement:

When a man deviates from “the way of the king,” whether in a small way or in a large one, in the realm of thought or of action – he must know that he is obligated to stand and explain his doings again and again, to clarify his thoughts with regards to mistakes, made wittingly or unwittingly, against one’s will or not. He must explain his explanations and all things, and in most days it will overwhelm his other doings.¹⁰⁷

Who is this “king” of whom Rawidowicz speaks? If it would be any one person, it would be Ahad Ha’am, as Rawidowicz juxtaposes himself directly against his concept of “center” and “circumference.” Rawidowicz most likely did not mean specifically any one person, as he never calls anyone a “king.” Another potential explanation is that term “king” could also be a reference to messianic language, with the concept of Jesus as “king of the Jews.” If Rawidowicz meant it in this fashion, he is making a statement about the secular messianic qualities being ascribed to the Zionist movement.¹⁰⁸ What Rawidowicz certainly meant by this statement is a profound acknowledgement of the fact that he had left the commonly tread ground of the mainstream Zionist ideology, blazing a new path that he must defend.

It does seem that most of Rawidowicz’s attention in this article is directed towards this defense. There is very little in this article that is truly original material; but what is, we will find particularly interesting. The first of the four sections of this article

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ For a larger discussion of Rawidowicz and messianism, see note 149, and also page 73.

discusses generally the dangers of dogmatism and the need for open debate.¹⁰⁹ The second section of the article attacks his discreditors who misinterpret his remarks regarding the inclusion of the Bund and Yiddishists in the creation of the “Hebrew Exile” as well as a discussion of assimilation, in which he claims that all Jews have undergone “assimilation” to varying extents. Rawidowicz points out how many Orthodox Jews see Zionism as a form of assimilation, but also that “against [the Orthodox] we can find any number of acts of assimilation in [their] life.”¹¹⁰ He presents a thesis on the modern Jewish experience: the emancipated Jew cannot escape some form of “assimilation.” Simply by being exposed to modern European civilization he assimilates, whether it is on the level of language (one can certainly see the influences of European languages on modern Hebrew), thought, or even religious practice and norms. In response to this, Rawidowicz presents a radically pan-Jewish viewpoint,¹¹¹ claiming that all forms of creativity by Jews is “Jewish” in some sense, or at least these creations are not any less Jewish (and more “assimilated”) than any other Jewish creation.¹¹² At the same time,

¹⁰⁹ One of the interesting aspects of the way in which this article was printed is that there is an asterisk after its title, in which there is a note from the editors saying that it is “for the sake of free discussion,” implying that there were already forces working within the publication that would like to see Rawidowicz silenced yet the editors are committed to free speech.

¹¹⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 8 December 1931, 958.

¹¹¹ This is further developed in Chapter 3.

¹¹² Rawidowicz here utilizes a similar polemical tactic to his 1943 article “On the Concept of Galut,” translated from Yiddish in *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity: Essays on the Ever-Dying People* (London: University of New England Press, 1986), 98–117. In “On the Concept of Galut,” Rawidowicz argues that the terminology of the “*galut* (exilic) mentality” loses its meaning when it is used by anti-Exile Zionist ideologues to criticize all opponents for whatever characteristics they do not like. Rawidowicz’s discussion of assimilation demonstrates that the terminology of assimilating similarly loses its value as everyone can be seen as assimilating. Thus, one cannot use assimilation – on any of its potential levels – as a measure of inclusion or exclusion from the development of Jewish culture.

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Rawidowicz claims that in fact his ideology is the best hope for Jewish unity, from the understanding that

Israeli creativity in the Exile will change and find new forms, make use of foreign tongues and live in foreign literature, and even so will be Israeli creativity. And who knows, perhaps Israel in the Exile will create for itself *new languages*, inasmuch as the masses in Eastern Europe created a living spoken language and inasmuch as the *maskilim*, the poets and the assimilating researchers created any number of *styles* of foreign languages in the western countries.¹¹³

According to Rawidowicz, these new linguistic developments represent a kind of Jewish creativity even though it is not in Hebrew. He certainly recognized the greatness of Jewish creativity that had taken place in Yiddish, as well as other Jewish languages such as Judeo-Spanish, Aramaic and Judeo-Arabic when he penned his “Theory and Practice” and explained that commentary is a source of creativity;¹¹⁴ for what is the product of literary creativity but the development and expansion of language? For Rawidowicz the Hebraist, the development of Hebrew – the relationship between the Biblical, Rabbinic, medieval and modern periods – paralleled the development of the Jewish people. Languages develop over time; to declare one stage of this development, or the cultural creations of that period, as supreme over all others is not only short-sighted but renders impotent the ability for contemporary creation. Taking together the inevitability of contact with non-Jewish sources of inspiration in the modern period, and the goals of the reinvigoration of the Hebrew language and the development of new Hebrew culture, that Hebrew would remain at the status quo of one period was equivalent to saying that Jewish culture would remain permanently static as well.

¹¹³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 8 December 1931, 958.

¹¹⁴ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 15 December 1931, 978.

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Rawidowicz recognized that Jewish culture would not remain static. As such, unity only comes from a pluralistic understanding of Jewish culture, “progressive” and inclusive in nature. For Rawidowicz, cultural unity drives political unity: the solution is not the creation of a diverse organizational board, establishing a meeting-place for the leaders of Israel at the summit while they dine at the feet of the throne of the Lord; it is a long-term establishment of the heterogeneity of Jewish culture that at once invites Jewish innovation but cautions Jews from losing touch with other Jewish communities and that which ties them together. As generations pass, his fear is not that Diaspora Jewry would create new cultures as an inherently dangerous possibility, as B. Bergman said at the Hebrew Conference,¹¹⁵ but that these communities will drift apart if their cultures are not created together in a form of partnership. In a worst-case scenario, the Diaspora communities would ignore the Hebrew culture created in Israel as irrelevant to their life, leading to a fractured Jewish world. The question of Israel in its homeland and its exile is not a zero-sum game: Rawidowicz’s ideology focuses not on degrading the land of Israel but preserving the Diaspora; in Rawidowicz’s understanding, the land of Israel cannot be built out of the destruction of the Diaspora. Without a worldwide Jewish culture, Exilic Jewry will not maintain its ties with the land of Israel, because “if the Hebrew language, or the Hebrew movement, does not escort Jewry on this road, and does not participate in the transformation [of Jewish culture], in the end it [Hebrew] will remain *outside of the life of Israel*.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ *Hebrew Conference in Berlin*, 32.

¹¹⁶ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 8 December 1931, 959 (emphasis in original).

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The third section of this article has two foci. Rawidowicz first attacks all forms of cultural racism and ethnocentrism in order to make the point that Jews living in the land of Israel are not culturally superior to Jews living outside of it. He then discusses the symbolism of the Talmud within his previous article, representing the vitality of Jewish creativity in the land of Israel and the Diaspora. In an article that appeared immediately preceding the publication of the second half of “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile” on July 16th,¹¹⁷ 1931, P. Lahover writes

What is with the ‘explosive language’ of ‘Babylonian Talmud’ and ‘Jerusalem Talmud’ that Dr. Rawidowicz uses, and not for the first time ... ? For the ‘Babylonian Talmud’, like the ‘Jerusalem Talmud,’ is an exegesis upon the ‘Mishna,’ a negotiation on the matter of the Halachot which are in the ‘Mishna’ and in the ‘Baraita’, both of which were creations of the land [of Israel].¹¹⁸

In response, Rawidowicz brings forward an argument that the Babylonian Talmud may have been based upon creations of the land of Israel, but that does not make them non-creative in their own right. Rather, one should see that “all creations of the spirit are nothing but interpretation, interpretation of life, interpretation of reality.”¹¹⁹ All the more so, Rawidowicz posits (but does not exhaustively prove), on a basic level works whose function is interpretation or commentary are simpler and generally better than those interpreted, and he takes this theory from the Biblical source all the way to modern writers. He would later expound upon this theory of the value of interpretation in his seminal article “On Interpretation” (1957), in which he writes similarly, “There is no creation which is not at the same time interpretive. Still further, not only a thought but

¹¹⁷ Lahover’s article appears on pages 1–2, and Rawidowicz’s begins on page 2.

¹¹⁸ P. Lahover, “The Hebrew Conference, Action and Theory” (Hebrew: He-Knesia Ha-Ivrit Le-Ma’aseh U-Le-Halacha), *Moznayim*, 16 July 1931, 2.

¹¹⁹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 15 December 1931, 978.

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even our sense experience is deeply steeped in interpretation.”¹²⁰ The early development of this thought in Rawidowicz’s philosophy is similar to the early developments of other strains of his view of Jewish life in the Diaspora. Rawidowicz claims in a number of places that he would never change his opinions, and in certain ways he seems to have held clear to his principles: until his dying day (“On Interpretation” was published posthumously) it appears that he believed in his theory of interpretation, and literary traits such as the Talmudic references would reappear throughout his major works, noticeable in the title of *Babylon and Jerusalem*, his *magnum opus* (also published posthumously).

VI

On May 12th, 1932, *Ha-Olam* printed Rawidowicz’s short piece “For the Foundation of the Hebrew Cultural Foundation” (Hebrew: Le-Yesod Keren Ha-Tarbut Ha-Ivrit), in which he made an argument for why the “Hebrew public” should support the efforts of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*. The following week, another article by Rawidowicz under the name “Existential Partnership” appeared; this article had been received earlier but was delayed in publication for five months, since *Shevat* 5692 (January 1932), for “technical reasons.”¹²¹ In this four-chapter article, Rawidowicz not only responds to his critics and reiterates his views from the Hebrew conference, but significantly expands upon his thesis of partnership. He also makes another argument for the existence of the Diaspora and discusses the difference that he sees between *Zionists* and *Zionism*, that is

¹²⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “On Interpretation,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 26 (1957): 84.

¹²¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 19 May 1932, 291. I doubt that the editors were being malicious in publishing it late; there are many cases of articles appearing in *Ha-Olam* months later with a simple note from the editors; see S. S. Kanterowitz, “On Literature and Language” (Hebrew: Al Ha-Sifrut Ve-Al Ha-Safah), *Ha-Olam*, 17 February 1931, 136–137.

that he identifies the problems within the Zionist ideology itself and would like to see himself as a partner with the Zionists whose program he opposes.

Within this article, Rawidowicz redefines a number of key terms, including “partnership,” “*panim*” (faces or sides), “unity,” and “Torah.” These terms and their definitions supply his ideology with content: Jewish life (“Torah”), its stakeholders (“*panim*”), *modus operandi* (“partnership” and “creativity”), and outcome (“unity”). “Existential Partnership” becomes the strongest expression of Rawidowicz’s ideology to date, completing the crescendo of his thought from his first published article on the subject. While the article is in no way systematic in its layout of this ideology, it can be picked out of his work with little difficulty.

For Rawidowicz, “partnership” is not simply strategic, a set of shared objectives or for a specified period of time, but “partnership to the root and foundation ... partnership for life and for death.”¹²² He writes that there is to be “no independence of one from the other,” but not in the political sense: “No one partner can exist completely” without the other.¹²³ Finally, Rawidowicz states that the people of Israel consists of not two parts but one body and that the partnership should be seen not as between the corporate entities of the Diaspora and the land of Israel but between “Israel here and there, Israel and Israel, Jew and Jew, Judaism and Judaism.”¹²⁴ This partnership, in Rawidowicz’s opinion, will end with the outcome of “unity.” Unhappy with the common understanding, which he calls “*hetziut*” or “half-unity” which threatens to break the people of Israel in two, Rawidowicz interprets the ideal unity of the people of Israel as

¹²² Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 19 May 1932, 291.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 292.

existing on the levels of “the root and the foundation, for life and for death, and in destiny.”¹²⁵ In this way, Rawidowicz combines the two ideas to give some form of definition to what he means by “Israel” – a term which he uses to mean the whole of the people of Israel but rarely defines. Rawidowicz parallels the people of Israel to God when he writes:

This partnership between the side of the land [of Israel] and the side of the Diaspora in the people of Israel is somewhat related to the two descriptions of “thought” and “extension” in the thought of *Baruch Spinoza*. “Thought” and “extension” are two descriptions of the object (Substance). The thing – God – expresses itself in both of them.¹²⁶

At once, he ascribes to the Jewish people attributes of God such as being indivisible¹²⁷ and describes the Jewish people as developing into as a Godly “kingdom of Priests,” via the application of his ideal of complete partnership.

When Rawidowicz describes this partnership, he uses a strange turn of language that cannot be found in other writers of the time: the use of the singular form of “*panim*,” “*pan*.”¹²⁸ Unattested in the Bible in this singular form, the Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon gives a theoretical form “*paneḥ*.”¹²⁹ Still, this root is connected with words such as *Penimi* and *Pnim*, meaning “internal,” and that is the sense that Rawidowicz means when he writes that “the accepted position is impressed with the idea of *one-sidedness* [*had-*

¹²⁵ Ibid, 291.

¹²⁶ Ibid (emphasis in original).

¹²⁷ This can also be seen with the language of the use of physical objects by the Jewish people. The concept of the Jewish people making use of a single set of Phylacteries or a single Tallit, as well as the “*Pan*” language demonstrates Rawidowicz’s understanding that just as a single human body cannot be divided in two without causing death, neither can the same be done to the Jewish people.

¹²⁸ Notably, Rawidowicz uses the term “*partzuf*” for face with regards to the unity of the people of Israel in Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 March 1931, 9.

¹²⁹ Brown, Francis. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006, 815 (cf. Strong’s Concordance 6440).

peniut], one-sidedness that would like to see itself as two sides [*ke-panim*], two sides of truth [*ke-panei emet*].”¹³⁰ It is not the first time that Rawidowicz uses words such as these, but it is the first time that he fully explains the terminology of “*pan*” (side) in relation to the unity of Israel. In “Two Questions that are One,” Rawidowicz writes that “[the land of Israel and the Diaspora] stand on guard of cultural creativity, both internally and externally [*klapei panim ve-klapei hutz*],”¹³¹ and also he discusses the “sides” of the question of Jewish life, but uses the word “*tzad*.”¹³² Additionally, in his early article “For the Renewal of Our Literature,” Rawidowicz uses the term “*Panim*” (in construct) when he ends his article “Let us go and renew the Israeli creativity [*et pnei ha-yetzira ha-yisraelit*],”¹³³ but it does not refer to the “sides” of the people of Israel as in “Theory and Practice,” when he writes that “There are two sides [*panim*] to the people of Israel, one directed towards the land of Israel, and the other towards the Diaspora.”¹³⁴

In previous articles, Rawidowicz has introduced terms and concepts upon which he later builds. In the case of “*panim*” and unity, he does the same: that which he introduces in “Theory and Practice” is greatly expanded here, where Rawidowicz writes that “If in the renewal of the side of the land of Israel [*ha-pan ha-eretz-yisraeli*] in the sides [*pnei yisrael*] will be wrapped up in the renewal of the side of the Diaspora [*pan-ha-tefutzot*] – then the face of Israel will shine as one.”¹³⁵ Rawidowicz also applies this language to an understanding of Zionism “*bat panim*” (literally “a daughter of faces,” but

¹³⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 19 May 1931, 291.

¹³¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 March 1931, 9.

¹³² Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 12 March 1931, 7.

¹³³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 16 December 1930, 1015.

¹³⁴ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 1 December 1930, 937.

¹³⁵ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 2 June 1932, 324.

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metaphorically referring to the two halves of Israel as two sides of a face), meaning that it should consider both aspects of the land of Israel and the Diaspora as important:

Real Zionism contains more than building Zion – it proclaims the building of *Israel* and its renewal. When Zionism contains more than “Zion-ism” it is *more* able to renew itself and to realize its goals. Zionism ‘*bat panim*’ ... that sees the two sides of Israel is the only thing that can create world-wide Judaism, it is the only thing that can realize the dreams of generations of Jewry.¹³⁶

In this way, Rawidowicz has combined the concepts of partnership and unity to define his vision for Zionism and the people of Israel; all that is required for Rawidowicz now to do is to define what the content of the life of Israel will be. In the final section of this article, Rawidowicz attempts to do just that in creating a “wider” definition of Torah, “not only in the written Torah and the oral Torah, not only in the Masoretic text and all that has come out of it, on top of it and against it – but particularly in the sparks of the Torah of the life of all of Israel, in the sparks of the spirit and creativity of life in the masses of Israel, wherever they are.”¹³⁷ This definition of Jewish life, to be enacted through the previously listed methods, caps off the development of Rawidowicz’s thought on the subject over the course of the 1930–32 period. For Rawidowicz, the goal is no longer *literature* or *language* as physical objects and artifacts, as he expressed in his earliest articles, but has transformed radically into a “renaissance of the spirit of Israel in the Diaspora”¹³⁸ on all levels.

¹³⁶ Ibid (emphasis in original).

¹³⁷ Ibid, 325.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 3: The Quest for Rawidowicz

I

The problem posed by the source material is that Rawidowicz never declares a personal manifesto in this period. Our challenge is to read his writings and to try to interpret and extrapolate a general philosophy which we could apply to Jewish life today and in the future. In nearly every article that he wrote in the time period under discussion, there are notable cases in which Rawidowicz explicitly states his views on Zionism, often in a negative light. With a close reading of his language (the terms he uses and their context), polemics (the articles of his opponents and their points that he chooses to comment upon, pointing to what he felt was worth defending), as well as his political programs (the methods through which he seeks to solve the “Jewish problem” in a constructive manner), we can begin to piece together what I hope to be a consistent reading, sufficient to holistically understand Rawidowicz’s program of Jewish life in ways that before now have been either misinterpreted or, at the very least, ignored. We find that his goals remained steadfast even as his methodology transformed dramatically. This is a testament to Rawidowicz’s intellectual capacity to reinterpret boldly both his experiences as well as the historical data, and to the strength and vitality of his earliest visions to reinvent the dispersed Jewish people into a worldwide people of Israel, creative, vigorous, and self-sustaining.

Crucial to this understanding is recognition of Rawidowicz’s transformation from a man focused on literature as a physical object to be attained, to a wider understanding

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of the needs of Jewish life.¹³⁹ This is clear from his speech at the Preliminary Hebrew Conference in Berlin, June 1931: he stood before the crowd and declared that whereas previously he had hoped to establish a *Brit Ha-Sofrim Ha-Ivrim* or Union of Hebrew Writers and Readers, now he wanted to create a *Brit Ha-Ivrim* (Covenant of the Hebrews).¹⁴⁰ Outside of this transformation, I believe that Rawidowicz maintained a significant level of self-consistency which is slightly more subtle: when it came to an understanding of the Jewish people as one indivisible body, or substance¹⁴¹ both within the planes of time and space,¹⁴² as well as a personal reflection of himself as a Zionist in opposition to Zionism, a Zionism in which he saw the ability for change, and the nature of the Jewish people along with it.

Rawidowicz declares a clear cognitive dissonance to his readers: the primal unity of Israel alongside the ability of Jews and their dispersed communities to self-determine Jewish culture in ways independent of one another – and, to a certain extent, the realization that this self-determination was already taking place. This represents both a great opportunity for Rawidowicz to redefine the Zionist mission but also a grave danger

¹³⁹ For more on this, see Chapters 1 & 2, specifically the discussions about his speech at the Preliminary Hebrew Conference, “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile.”

¹⁴⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 3. This transformation was not so shocking as one would believe – he shows a consistent ambivalence towards the publishing business; see Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December 1930, 972; Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 March 1931, 7–8; Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 9 July 1931, 5. In the early article “For the Renewal of Our Literature” (December 1930) he recognizes that it is not just a question of literature, but also a policy question (p. 995).

¹⁴¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 19 May 1932, 291.

¹⁴² This may be a function of Rawidowicz’s pattern of self-quoting, as outlined in Chapter 1, which led him to re-use language in ways that could be read as consistency in beliefs when it is simply the reformulation of chunks of his ideology, in which the really significant part is what has changed from one article to the next. Further study could take advantage of this to study the dynamics of Rawidowicz’s thought.

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to the Jewish people. Rawidowicz would not like to see a homogenous people of Israel – in fact, he writes how he is supportive of the “different languages” developed by disparate communities.¹⁴³ He also hopes that Jewish communities take stock in the cultures in which they live, learning from their positive attributes and building Jewish culture on top of them.¹⁴⁴ He expresses these views at the same time that he sees Hebrew as an essential cornerstone of the potential for long-term Jewish unity,¹⁴⁵ but he proposes a quite liberal understanding of what “Hebrew” means. This is because for Rawidowicz, culture and unity are intrinsically related; worldwide culture breeds worldwide unity, and a lack of worldwide culture leads to fragmentation. Rawidowicz sees the Hebrew language and its culture as an antidote for his fear: that at some point there will be a portion of the people of Israel who will end up “outside of Israel,” in the sense that they do not relate to their coreligionists elsewhere.¹⁴⁶ This fear is one that inhabits all of his thought, and forces him to think in a very long-term fashion about the future of the people of Israel.

II

As Rawidowicz defines them by their dogmas of “center and circumference” and “imitation,” the Zionists sought a unification of the Jewish people in their ancient homeland in Palestine. He does not really make much of a distinction between what would be termed “political” or “spiritual” Zionists; in Rawidowicz’s categorization, the Zionists saw this unified group as able to create the society which would at once be

¹⁴³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 8 December 1931, 958.

¹⁴⁴ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 15 December 1931, 978; Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 9 July 1931, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1930, 994.

¹⁴⁶ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 2 June 1932, 324.

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united in their beliefs of the culmination of Jewish history and also create a hegemonic Jewish culture to be imitated around the world. In this view of Jewish history, the Jews in the land of Israel will be the “in-group” of the future of the Jewish people, and those outside of it are ultimately doomed to fade away and disappear. In Rawidowicz’s opinion, the “reformers and liberals” were nearly as bad, seeking integration and assimilation into their surrounding cultures, destroying the unity of Israel by identifying less with their fellow Jews than with the non-Jews in their midst. Along with the Bund and other Yiddishists, they developed communally-invented cultures, rooted in a local Jewish language, yet unintelligible to outsiders, including other Jews. In opposition to his contemporaries who saw these two concepts in battle with one another, Rawidowicz recognized the *Kulturkampf* taking place¹⁴⁷ but validated all sides of the debate. In an attempt to create a consonance between them, Rawidowicz tried to bring them together into a unified philosophy of Jewish life that saw strength in a diverse and creative culture, and unity stemming from a backbone of educated, culturally-literate Jews, and a happy medium between local Jewish culture, the universal Jewish experience, and the ability to cultivate it across generations.

Rawidowicz’s true fear was the breakup of the Jewish people into fragments that, while not burning the bridges that spanned them, would not maintain them either.

Rawidowicz realizes a danger that the “popular” or “accepted” Zionism poses to the Diaspora, if the Zionist project would come to succeed and Zionist ideology remain the

¹⁴⁷ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 1 December 1931, 936. In this case he is referring to an ideological war taking place within the *Hebraist* camp. All the more so one would recognize that there is one taking place within the Jewish people generally, and is an example of the internalization of events taking place in the outside world; see page 72.

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status quo. If the Zionism contemporary to Rawidowicz *was* successful – and by “successful” I mean here completely, one hundred percent successful in all of its aims and goals – it would endanger the Diaspora’s *raison d’être*. However, the danger was not success; if the Zionist movement was fully successful, I doubt that Rawidowicz would have been terribly upset. The danger, then, was the reality that no political or ideological movement is truly successful. A still-birthered Zionist project, along with a fully-born Zionist ideology endangered the Diaspora more than anything else, because the spiritual Zionist ideology scuttled the Diaspora’s will to create for itself. And for Rawidowicz, the Diaspora was a fact with which Zionism must reckon. In this way, Rawidowicz tried to envision Zionism more realistically as a long-term project, perhaps even one that would last for hundreds of years, one that would not stop even if the problems for which it was initially founded were solved.¹⁴⁸ This is because for Rawidowicz, the problem of the Jewish people is not one that ever ends, but it is a process or mode, a continual struggle for the unity in the face of forces, both internal and external, which would have it destroyed. This long-term understanding of the nature of the problems that face the Jewish people is a negation of all forms of messianism within Zionism, and in certain ways, Rawidowicz’s reformulation of the Zionist mission is one that sees the reality that the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine would not be the savior that the disciples of Herzl believed that it would be.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 2 June 1932, 323–324.

¹⁴⁹ We see him write about the negation of the Diaspora as being respectable for a time of “Sabbatai Zevi, in the days of the Messiah,” implying that negating the Diaspora and an extreme understanding of the Zionist project as messianic in the nature of its outcome is a misnomer. Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1930, 994.

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What sets Rawidowicz apart from others is this long-term view, both of history generally¹⁵⁰ and of Zionism in particular. He not only sees the need to connect the Jewish people with the past, writing about the need for literature to be enriched by the “golden chain” of its past,¹⁵¹ but sees the way in which the Zionist project must extend into the far future – and take measures to plan for it and ensure its success. This is not a singular parenthetical remark: he frequently writes of the multi-century nature of the project, extending even up to the twenty-fifth and thirtieth centuries.¹⁵² He demonstrates the extent to which he first saw the struggle for the fate of Israel in the Diaspora as being first and foremost an existential crisis for the totality of Israel when he says in his keynote address: “He who does not hear the language of the destiny of Israel in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well as beyond... will not set out on the path to the salvation of the question of our existence!”¹⁵³

III

What really captures Rawidowicz’s attention is the question of the eternity of Israel. Will Israel last forever? According to Rawidowicz, “we all believe in the eternity of Israel,”¹⁵⁴ but belief does not force the hand of reality. The question in 1931 was not whether the “second half” of Israel will survive biologically – no one could have envisioned the horror that awaited European Jewry – but whether the “second half” would still be considered “Israel” in three hundred years, or if it would be seen as outside

¹⁵⁰ Perhaps this came from his academic side, where he studied a range of figures that cut a wide swath of history, from Saadya Gaon to Mendelssohn and Feuerbach. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the relationship between his academic and ideological pursuits.

¹⁵¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1930, 994.

¹⁵² Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 March 1931, 8.

¹⁵³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 9 July 1931, 5.

¹⁵⁴ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 26 May 1932, 306.

the Jewish people. Within the context of these writings, which were primarily aimed at a Hebrew-reading, Zionist audience, he is making these comments with the angle and aim of buffering his statements about the need for vitality of life in the Diaspora and appease his listeners so that they will at least do *something* to help the Diaspora. However, perhaps there is more here than political wrangling: Rawidowicz himself writes a number of times (using the same exact phraseology) that “I have not made a covenant with the angel who determines what is eternal,”¹⁵⁵ implying that he himself is not totally invested in the life of the Diaspora as an eternal feature of the Jewish people. While he determines that the Diaspora is a “fact,” and potentially is making a pun with the idea that life in the Diaspora is “work” (‘*ubdâ*, or fact, has the same root as ‘*abodâ*, work), then perhaps it should reap some sort of return on investment! What Rawidowicz is getting at is that he sees the positive nature of the future of the people of Israel in the land of Israel, but is not willing to give up on the Diaspora – though he cannot know whether it will last forever or not. What he is clear about is that whatever happens to the Diaspora, the same fate will befall the land of Israel. The logical conclusion of his thought is that the Zionist movement must do whatever it takes to ensure the Diaspora’s vitality, for its own sake if not for the sake of Jews in the Diaspora. He is also fairly certain that at least for the near-to medium-term (meaning at least the next few generations), the Diaspora will continue to exist,¹⁵⁶ and so they must plan accordingly to deal with the situation and make sure that it does not atrophy on their watch.

¹⁵⁵ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 26 May 1932, 306; Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1931, 994; Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 9 July 1931, 4. המלאך הממונה על הנצחיות.

¹⁵⁶ “However, our generation and the coming generations after us will necessarily exist in exile...” (Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 9 December 1930, 994) and

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The other thing that Rawidowicz is fairly sure about is the need for Hebrew to be the language of the people of Israel, wherever they be. He writes: “We must educate the people of Israel in Exile until they recognize that the Hebrew book is not a *mitzvah* (commandment) dependent on the land [of Israel] but is a great requirement, a requirement of every Israeli wherever he is,”¹⁵⁷ formulating the obligation of the use of Hebrew in religious terms.¹⁵⁸ He also claims that if Hebrew stops being the language of the Exiled Jewish people, then the interregnum will last quite a long time; it will not only take a long time to rebuild Hebrew cultural literacy, but it will cause irreparable damage to the unity of Israel which Rawidowicz holds so high. Hebrew should, in Rawidowicz’s view, “accompany” the Jewish people to the next stage of their development, which he does not clearly define. In this way, the content of the Jewish people is less important than the means through which they reach whatever new heights they achieve; he never defines this “culture” that he wants to see develop, outside of the characteristic that it will be “Hebrew,” and that it will have certain impacts on the Jewish people. With regards to its Hebrew-ness, it is clear from his discussion of the name “*Brit Ha-Ivrim*” and “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*” that he means not the Hebrew language (*ivrit*) but the Hebrew people (*ivrim*). In this way, I would term Rawidowicz’s view on Jewish culture as either “pan-Hebraist” or “pan-Judaist.”

Rawidowicz does not explicitly state what he sees as the Jewish future; he expressly avoids answering his own questions when it is not to his rhetorical advantage.

also see Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 26 May 1932, 307, where he claims that most of the people of Israel will still live in the Diaspora for at least two generations.

¹⁵⁷ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 1 December 1931, 936.

¹⁵⁸ See below for a discussion of Rawidowicz’s co-option of religious terms.

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That being said, there is evidence that he did not leave unturned the possibility that the Jewish people would outlive the Rabbinic-Talmudic system that developed over the 1900 years of the Common Era. He is eager to compare the cultural projects in the Diaspora and the land of Israel to the creation of a new Talmud; he also seems eager to recast religious concepts to describe cultural, national and ideological phenomena that are not strictly religious. His use of the language of the *shaharit* (morning) prayer service, asking whether the people of Israel “still hold one tallit”¹⁵⁹ or “still wear a single phylactery,”¹⁶⁰ personifies Israel as a body with the ability to take such actions (and summarily cannot be split in two). He obviously is not asking whether all of Israel literally uses a single set of phylacteries, but rather whether the *shema* that is contained therein is the same for all of Israel. In this way, Rawidowicz characterizes the daily cultural life of Israel in religious terms, which is telling of his ethos of cultural development: he sees a need to build Hebrew culture out of its historic literature, much of which is by its nature a religious literature; yet at the same time he wants to present an opportunity for cultural innovation rooted in the varying cultures in which Jews live.

For Rawidowicz, it is not simply a question of whether the Lord is the one, singular God of Israel, but if the people of Israel who declare this credo are one and singular as well. And the answer was clear-cut: Israel is one, just as God is one, even if it has two aspects.¹⁶¹ That the Zionist movement was ignoring one half of the Jewish people

¹⁵⁹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One,” 5 Marcy 1931, 9; Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December 1930, 972; Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 9 July 1931, 4; Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 15 December 1931, 979.

¹⁶⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 8 December 1931, 958.

¹⁶¹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 19 May 1932, 291.

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was a travesty for Rawidowicz,¹⁶² and he was afraid that at the end of the day one half would be lost. He uses the religious metaphor of Jacob (Israel) and his brother Esau to illustrate this when he called for his listeners to

step away from the polishing of swords within our camp, and hold [...] back from political infighting: For the sake of the creation of an organizing framework, so that we will merit a strong organizational foundation, able to sustain the ‘twins’, Jacob and Esau as one.¹⁶³

In this case, his metaphor of the “twins” represents two halves of the family of Israel; Jacob represents the side of the patriarchal family tree with a diminutive set of offspring, representing the Jews living in the land of Israel, whereas Esau represents the other side of Abraham’s descendants who vastly outnumber the ancient children of Israel¹⁶⁴ who ultimately ended up outside of the people of Israel. Rawidowicz fears this will befall the people of Israel in the Diaspora.

This parable with the Biblical characters of Jacob and his older brother Esau is not unique; due to his scholarly work, it would be surprising if Rawidowicz was not aware of its use in medieval Jewish exegesis.¹⁶⁵ Notably, Rawidowicz internalizes a metaphor that is traditionally external: whereas a traditional Rabbinic understanding of the Jacob-Esau relationship has Esau representing the Roman Empire and later Christianity, now it refers to an internal player in the Jewish scenario. While Gerson Cohen’s research on the subject was published ten years after Rawidowicz’s sudden death, the way in which the

¹⁶² Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 2 June 1932, 323.

¹⁶³ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 2.

¹⁶⁴ See Gen. 37 where Joseph’s brothers sell him to a group of “Ishmaelites.” This implies that Ishmael’s side of the family had grown incredibly faster than his younger half-brother’s; that Esau married a daughter of Ishmael (Gen. 28:9) identifies him strongly with this camp.

¹⁶⁵ For an in-depth treatment of this topic, see Gerson Cohen, “Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought,” *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

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Rabbis traditionally utilized the metaphor of the two twins of the Abrahamic family to refer to Christians – who at one point were a sect of Judaism that broke away and ultimately have outnumbered the Jews – is striking in that Rawidowicz uses it similarly. We know that Jews and Christians of the early Common Era exerted much effort to self-differentiate. We cannot make a value judgment as to whether the Jewish-Christian schism was a net positive or negative for the Jews, neither can we speculate about the possibilities of “what if” the Jews of the early centuries of the Common Era had worked to keep the Christians within the framework of Judaism; Rawidowicz is discussing whether or not the Diaspora Jews will separate from what he believes to be the destiny of the Jewish people, in the land of Israel. I interpret Rawidowicz making an argument about cultural content, not religion, if given the opportunity to replay a similar situation of preventing a national schism, Rawidowicz would rather have the two twins remain part of the same family rather than separate and only very late in life make peace with one other.

What makes this an altogether more complex parable in Rawidowicz’s thought is the question that it begs: what are the boundaries of Jewish thought and culture, and ultimately the people of Israel itself? Within the context of a discussion of the break between early Rabbinic Judaism and emerging Christianity, one could easily claim that it is a question of false messianism. With the proclamation of Jesus as the messiah, Christianity made the decisive break with what would become normative Jewish religion under Rabbinic authority. In a time when there were sects of Jews proclaiming the sovereignty of the land of Israel over the people of Israel with a messianic twist – both secular and religious – one could see a parallel between Zionism and Christianity, from

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the point of view of someone who did not believe in the more modern movement's messianic character.

Another example of this internalizing trend is when Rawidowicz discusses the chauvinistic nationalism sweeping Europe, such that only people of English "stock" can truly understand the English culture, and Germans German culture, etc. He argues polemically that Zionists should make an effort to avoid *internal* or *territorial* chauvinism: saying that only Jews living in the land of Israel can understand Jewish culture.¹⁶⁶ Rawidowicz re-frames the problems of the Jewish people, raising the internal problems to the level of the external in an effort to cause his fellow Jews to realize the dangers lurking within, both in the cases of the success or failure of the Zionist project. This constitutes a unique understanding of the requirements and content of Jewish life. Part of this developed from Rawidowicz's place in life: as an eastern European Jew living in Germany, he could not identify with a *Volkish* understanding of the Jewish people that required that Jews needed "blood and soil," as Martin Buber argued in his pre-World War I writings.¹⁶⁷ He could not see himself as a German, and could not identify himself against the eastern European Jews as many German Jews had done. He saw quality in the content of German high culture, and so could not reject that either. The only solution, for someone in such a crux of identity, in search of a worldview with the possibility of effectively manage all of these contradictions, was an understanding that does not deny land, as Franz Rosenzweig does, any authority in the life of the nation. But he denies it

¹⁶⁶ Simon Rawidowicz, "Theory and Practice," 15 December 1931, 978.

¹⁶⁷ For a in-depth discussion of the issues of "blood and soil" in Jewish thought, see David Biale's *Blood and Belief: The Circulation of A Symbol Between Jews and Christians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Of specific interest is chapter 5, "From Blood Libel to Blood Community," pp. 162–206.

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primacy in cultural creation. For what does the soil contribute to the act of creativity, outside of landscapes sentimental of an imagined glorious past? For Rawidowicz, an eternal migrant but still a Zionist, the solution was one that did not place any one group of Jews higher than another but rather qualified all Jewish content against a single metric that is at once incredibly simple to understand and yet impossible to measure or determine: to what extent is your creativity connected with the Hebrew culture of the past? And yet he urged Jews to create, and not imitate the past. Like all cultural theoreticians, he walks the fine line between social engineering and a true understanding of what makes for vitality in life.

IV

What is interesting about Rawidowicz is not that he is concerned with Jewish unity and the development of Jewish culture – these are issues that many people both then and now find of the greatest importance. What makes Rawidowicz interesting is that even with his views, he considered himself a Zionist. Still, when he envisions Zionism, it is a theoretical form that did not exist at the time of his writing. A careful reader of Rawidowicz must recognize the stark differences separating 1931 from 2008, and how this inhabits his work: when Rawidowicz wrote about the Diaspora he did not understand it to mean simply American Jewry as a hegemonic body alongside a smattering of Jewish communities in other countries aligned parallel to the land of Israel, as it is today, but there existed vibrant Jewish communities across Europe as well as in many of the Arab countries.¹⁶⁸ At the same time, Rawidowicz's ideas still hold something important that

¹⁶⁸ Notably, the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* was active in Egypt; the concept of a Zionist or at the very least Hebraist cultural organization operating there today would in many ways be

can inform this century's discussions about the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora – even when the realities of the Diaspora have changed so drastically.

When he talks about the “Zionism” that is the answer to the problems of the Jews, Rawidowicz is talking about Zionism “*bat panim*,” a technical term recognizing the plurality of the people of Israel.¹⁶⁹ There is a reason, however, that while he is trying to at once differentiate himself from “accepted” Zionism, he is trying to remain within the Zionist camp, which is that he actually was a Zionist – he simply saw himself as a Zionist with a deeper viewpoint on history (which he would consider to be more realistic), the historical mission of Zionism, and the far distance which the Zionist movement would have to traverse to reach the promised land. In this way, Rawidowicz is bringing to light many of the criticisms of Zionism that have been brought to bear over the past hundred years, and answering that they are generally correct, but that *Zionism can change* to meet the challenges of today and the future, inasmuch as it follows Rawidowicz's philosophy of the history and future of the Jewish people.

Rawidowicz's view differs from the Zionist catechism in a number of crucial ways. Primarily, he does not see life in the land of Israel as the only way to be a Zionist. At the same time, what is important in recognizing his Zionist identity is not what he does say, but what he leaves out. While Rawidowicz explicitly states that a major cause of the decline of the Hebrew culture in the Diaspora is the *aliyah* of major literary figures to the land of Israel, leaving the Diaspora lacking for cultural developers,¹⁷⁰ he does not take the next step and say that those who have moved to the land of Israel should move

impossible because of modern political and ideological realities. “Notes of the Brit Ivrit Olamit” (Hebrew: Yediot Ha-“Brit Ivrit Olamit”), *Ha-Olam*, 6 October 1931, 778.

¹⁶⁹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 2 June 1932, 324.

¹⁷⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December 1930, 971.

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back for the sake of the Diaspora's cultural vitality. While Rawidowicz states that he "must live in this 'fact,'"¹⁷¹ meaning that he would live in the Diaspora, he quickly brings in his language about eternalities, doubting the characteristic of eternity of the Diaspora – so even if he must live in it, perhaps his children will not. He also makes life in the Diaspora into an issue of *shlihut*, the sending of *shlihim* or emissaries, where he recommends that the land of Israel send out *shlihim* of a sort to "preach our ideas, [...] to be dispersed amongst the Diaspora of Israel and invigorate the Exile,"¹⁷² he does not say that they should live in the Diaspora *for its own sake*, for the reason that it is superior to the land of Israel, but *for the sake of improving the Diaspora*. At the same time, Rawidowicz maintains a hope at the beginning of his keynote address that the Zionist Congress will deal with the issues that he is bringing up, and enable him to remain within the framework of the Zionist movement,¹⁷³ but ultimately he determines that the current iteration of the Zionist movement is unable to do so.

How much is an idea caught up in its implementation? For Rawidowicz, the Zionist concept is separate from the organizations established to carry it out. To what extent, then is Rawidowicz's Zionism actually Zionist, and to what extent is it something else that he would simply like to think of as Zionist, because of his roots and long history within the Hebraist community which had natural attractions to Zionism? We must ask the question of the essence of Zionism: is the essence of Zionism its ideology, methodology, or eschatology? That is to say, is the essence of Zionism its ideas and theories, the methods for its implementation (as spiritual Zionists might put it, "the

¹⁷¹ Simon Rawidowicz, "Organization of the Hebrew Exile," 9 July 1931, 4.

¹⁷² Simon Rawidowicz, "Organization of the Hebrew Exile," 16 July 1931, 7.

¹⁷³ Simon Rawidowicz, "Organization of the Hebrew Exile," 9 July 1931, 2.

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striving”), or a conceptualization of the end of the history of the Jewish people?

Rawidowicz seeks to replace all three of them, yet the commonality remains the Hebrew language and the culture with which it is backed. Is this still Zionist? According to his critics, it is not, but Rawidowicz firmly believed that it was as he consistently discussed “our camp,” referring to the Zionists. The combination of his unorthodox ideas of the two faces of Israel and the eternal fight of Zionism forces us to see his core understanding of Zionism as not at all separate from the path of Jewish history that led up to the point of the development of the very same Zionist movement. In this way, Rawidowicz saw himself as Zionist even if other Zionists could not comprehend the core idea behind his philosophy: that Zionism was the next step in the development of the Jewish people, or that a form of non-political Zionism rooted in a deep understanding of its roots *would have to be* the next step in the development of the Jewish people.

Why should “Zionism” be the framework for this new philosophy of Jewish life that Rawidowicz is suggesting in his speeches and articles? He could have picked any movement – certainly the autonomists, with whom he agrees on many counts – or even create a new movement, but decided that “Zionism” or at least its name was the vehicle through which he could develop his philosophy. If a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, the same would Rawidowicz’s philosophy be the same were he not to try to co-opt Zionism with some of his very non-Zionist ideas. The reason is primarily his own roots in the Zionist movement, in which he had worked significantly in the past. It also is because he really did not disagree with Zionism’s goals but rather realized that the problems were intractable. In truth, Rawidowicz’s ideas are *not* non-Zionist, however much they appear on first reading. The other Jewish movements of the day did not place

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Hebrew on the pedestal that Zionism did, and for Rawidowicz, the Hebrew language – or “Hebrew culture” as he defined it – was the most important element of the future society that Zionism sought to create.

V

To the mind of one who is well versed in the contradictions of history, it is second nature to try to merge them together into a higher understanding of life that allows for simultaneous cognitive dissonance with a significant lack of amnesia or selective reading. As such, to an academic such as Rawidowicz, whose profession, like all academics, was based upon the technical skill of being as nuanced as possible, it was a basic next step to create a more nuanced understanding of Zionism that enabled the distinct ideas of Land and Diaspora, Jewish and Host cultures, unity and heterogeneity to live together in harmony. One who comes into this viewpoint also has the ability to fall easily into the trap of believing that the idea is easily disseminable, transmissible to the masses in its full form. While Rawidowicz was a scholar of Maimonides, I doubt he held the medieval views of the “multitudes” that his elder did.¹⁷⁴ Rawidowicz’s views on the capacity of the “Hebrew public” to absorb knowledge of their people and become an educated public demonstrates that he saw the goal of his organization not only to educate this public, but to educate this public to create not a kingdom of priests, but a people of *maskilim* or

¹⁷⁴ At the same time, there are undertones in his articles that point to a more complicated understanding of the public that he was attempting to educate. He refers to his discussion as “chapter headings,” saying that he was speaking in “hints,” and even writes that people will try to attribute to him statements that he never stated, all reminiscent of the introduction to the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides’ philosophic *magnum opus*. Either Rawidowicz was referring to the limited time and space allotted to his remarks, or he really had a somewhat esoteric meaning to his philosophy. Most likely it was the former, but as Rawidowicz wrote extensively on the philosophy of Maimonides, we can be certain that he was familiar with this text.

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educated, enlightened, modern people living lives of nuance, gaining value from learning about their people, their history, and taking part in the life of literature. Thus, for Rawidowicz, his ideal society was an expansion of his personal Hebraist lifestyle, and the inclusion of all Jews within it.

Like many other topics, Rawidowicz does not go into much detail as to the curricula of the educational apparatus of the *Brit Ha-Ivrim*, leaving that decision to his successors, but he does make it clear that not only is education his top priority, but he equates education with culture. He also recognizes that education cannot be the sole priority of the organization; both as an academic and a politician, Rawidowicz realized the gap between the classroom and public life. There are many organizations that spend their entire energies on the problem of education,¹⁷⁵ and he does not want the *Brit Ha-Ivrim* to go that route. In a way that he does not explain quite clearly, he wants to create a learned public, because “a person who does not learn, does not exist, and a public all the more so.”¹⁷⁶ This is a transformation of his earliest speeches and writings when he writes that “No man lives except he who creates. And a national public, a humane society – even more so!”¹⁷⁷ In his formulation of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, he shifts from the creation itself to a discussion of the methodology for the establishment of a society in which creation is possible. As such, it appears that for Rawidowicz, the goal is not the transference of knowledge between generations but the *act of learning as a cultural activity* by all members of the public.

¹⁷⁵ Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 4.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷⁷ Simon Rawidowicz, “Renewal of Our Literature,” 2 December 1930, 972.

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In an effort to understand what Rawidowicz means by “education,” we can look at the potential differentiation between “education,” and “learning” as he discusses in his later 1948 speech “On Jewish Learning.”¹⁷⁸ In it, he talks about two things: the transference of the Eastern European tradition of Jewish learning, and also educating the Jewish public beyond the ‘B.M.’ degree (Bar Mitzvah). The crucial difference between his later article, which was the expansion of a speech (this time given at the opening of the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago), can be seen in the technical terms “*hinuch ivri*” (Hebrew education), which he uses extensively in his discussion of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, and “Jewish learning,” which is the topic of his Chicago speech. A difficulty in comparing these two works philologically is that they were written in different languages. As such, the term “*hinuch*” may indeed have the meaning of the English “learning.”¹⁷⁹ In the articles studied here, Rawidowicz refrains from the term “*limmud*,” which he *does* make use of in his English speech “On Jewish Learning” when he coins the phrase “*Da lifnei mi atah lomed*,” or “know before whom you learn,” playing against the saying “*Da lifnei mi atah omed*,” or “know before whom you stand.”

¹⁷⁸ Simon Rawidowicz, “On Jewish Learning,” *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity: Essays on the “Ever-Dying People”*, London: University of New England Press, 1998, 130–146.

¹⁷⁹ Also note the semantics of the terms “learning” and “studying” by the Yiddish- and English-speaking Orthodox communities to mean specifically *Jewish* learning, exclusive of secular or critical studies of Jewish thought, history and religion. For a more in-depth discussion of this topic, see Max Weinreich, *History of the Yiddish Language* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 211: “The concept *lernen* (study) is so specific that it is untranslatable into a “Christian” language. English “to study,” for example, is unsuited, for in study there will come a time when the student has completed his studies and graduates. The “eternal student” in occidental societies is a tragicomical figure. But *lernen* is a lifelong activity. The scholar is a *talmid-kohkem* (literally a disciple of the sage) – a student his is and remains. And the maximum of *lernen* is desirable.”

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It is not under debate whether Rawidowicz saw education as important; he places it high on his organization's agenda. However, the fact that his organization is not strictly educational shows that he has an understanding that education is not the be-all and end-all of Jewish life; the goal is not simply the transmission of information through the generations but something else on top of that, as he would define it, "culture," which is separate from the educational process but informed and predicated by it, enabling the people to create cultural works. Rawidowicz in these articles is painting a picture of a society to which the litterateur is not as the patient is to the hospital – he would prefer society to be for the sake of the living – or the synagogue to the "minority who attend"¹⁸⁰ – he would prefer that the educated be the majority. What Rawidowicz dreams of is a Heine who would write in Hebrew,¹⁸¹ and he seeks a "full" education to enable this, more than integrating aspects of the land of Israel into the classroom.¹⁸² The editor here notes confusion about what Rawidowicz means at this juncture, demonstrating that what Rawidowicz was presenting here was a seemingly innovative idea about Jewish education, or at least considered so by the editors: that the problems of education and culture are one and the same, that people must establish a strong foothold in culture to learn language and vice-versa. He never explicitly states that they are one and the same, but his association of the offices of culture and education under one roof shows this understanding.

¹⁸⁰ Simon Rawidowicz, "Organization of the Hebrew Exile," 16 July 1931, 5.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸² Simon Rawidowicz, "Theory and Practice," 1 December 1931, 936.

Chapter 4: Rawidowicz, His Contemporaries and Critics

I

As much as it might seem from the singular lack of response, Simon Rawidowicz was not speaking to an empty room when he wrote his articles during the period under study. In fact, the topics of Hebrew culture, the relationship between the land of Israel and the Diaspora, and the Zionist movement were vastly important topics of the day; Rawidowicz was operating within this environment, both being influenced by and influencing those who read the same journals, magazines and newspapers as he did. A cursory wade through the vast sea of Simon Rawidowicz's papers and clippings, which remain to this day in his son Benjamin Ravid's basement, will demonstrate that Rawidowicz was reading widely within the contemporary Hebrew press, and his articles show this as well. He quoted from a wide variety of sources, including publications from the United States, the United Kingdom, and the land of Israel, and his papers show that he retained clippings also from the German press, carrying them with him in suitcases around the world as he left Nazi Germany and then moved from Britain to the United States. His markings on these papers show him noting all the places where his name, his ideas, and the projects with which he was involved, appeared in the paper. This must have been a monumental task, but it enabled him to comment on those articles that he thought were worth the response.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Rawidowicz was involved in the planning of the Preliminary Hebrew Conference of 1931, which took place in Berlin. Rawidowicz gave the keynote address, which had both its supporters and attackers. As the conference and

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its direct aftermath was discussed at length previously I will not discuss the conference itself, but in this chapter, I aim to give an overview of the notable articles¹⁸³ that were published in the second half of 1931 and the beginning months of the following year. We will see how Rawidowicz is differentiated from his contemporaries, and also the manner in which he responds: he does not primarily attack his contemporaries with whom he does not agree but makes use of them to further outline and define his beliefs. Ultimately, studying these articles and his responses will help us gain a better understanding not only of the context of his thought and how he was perceived, but the nature of Rawidowicz's polemical style and perhaps an understanding of why his ideas failed to gain the traction necessary for their wide acceptance.

Rawidowicz's formula for responses to his articles is basically to deny that he said what was claimed. What is strange, and forces us to look more deeply into Rawidowicz's style, is that almost universally, the quotations that Rawidowicz supplies are *not* what you would expect. If one attacks another with the written word, it would be quite normal to quote the parts of the opposition with which you disagree. Rather, Rawidowicz does not quote his opponents' claims that Rawidowicz said something in particular. So when he comes out and says that someone "did not follow my thought completely" or that "I never said statement X," he does not mean that the other articles are claiming anything about himself; rather he is simply side-stepping their main arguments and differentiating his ideology from everyone else's, establishing himself as a unique offering within the field of Zionism. In other words, Rawidowicz contrasts himself with others who are writing on the same topics as himself, either in beliefs or in

¹⁸³ "Notable" in the sense that either Rawidowicz noted them in his published articles, or that they seem particularly applicable to the discussion.

reasoning. This is a particular polemical tactic that a student of Rawidowicz must recognize has wide implications for the way we must read his works in the context of the printed debate: Rawidowicz knew how to attack others but ultimately refrained from completely destroying the ideas of those with whom he did not completely agree, as we will see. He reserved this special treatment only for those with whom he saw himself as diametrically opposed, such as Ahad Ha'am.

II

On July 30, 1931, about a month after the conference, *Moznayim* printed an article by a man called Shmueli (no last name was given), "Creation and Culture" (Hebrew: Yetzira Ve-Tarbut). In this article, which states outright in its subtitle that it is in response to Rawidowicz's address at the conference, the author agrees that there is a catastrophe developing for Hebrew literature, but inverts Rawidowicz's solution: instead of *partnership* between the land of Israel and the Diaspora being the solution, Shmueli claims that the problem is a *lack of involvement* of the Diaspora in the culture of the land of Israel.¹⁸⁴ Instead of a progressive view of the nature of Jewish culture, the "spiritual center" represents a return to the sources of culture, just as it is a return to the geographical source of the Jewish People; and "only in the land of Israel is this solution fully possible."¹⁸⁵ Shmueli does not "negate the creativity of the Exile and the culture of the Exile" but does not see it having the same potential as that of the land of Israel, due to its distance from the roots and nature of the people, lacking a "completeness" that is

¹⁸⁴ Shmueli, "Creativity and Culture (In response to the article of S. Rawidowicz, 'For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile')" (Hebrew: Yetzira Ve-Tarbut, Le-Ma'amaro Shel S. Rawidowicz, 'Le-Irgun Ha-Golah Ha-Ivrit'), *Moznayim*, 20 July 1931, 11.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

never defined.¹⁸⁶ This “completeness” seems to be tied to a conception of Jewish culture being a closed book, tied to its past and unable to innovate in the future without looking back to its “roots”; this is based off of a model conceiving of Jewish culture as having broken away from its roots at some point and losing its authenticity; thus, the return to the land of Israel is necessary to reclaim the authenticity of Jewish culture. These views on the nature of Jewish culture are in direct opposition to Rawidowicz, who maintained that creativity was possible in the Diaspora as well as in Israel. As well, Rawidowicz’s understanding of the nature of “commentary”¹⁸⁷ – and its worthiness as an authentic work of creativity – and the culture of the Diaspora created over its thousands of years of existence separate him from this critique, which denies the nature of this culture.

Still, when Rawidowicz responds to Shmueli in his December 1931 article “Theory and Practice,” he focuses not on Shmueli’s critique of Rawidowicz’s understanding of creativity and culture (the name of the article!) but on his concluding comments, in which Shmueli claims that building a creative Exile is “the beginning of the process of the disintegration” of the Jewish people.¹⁸⁸ Rawidowicz’s claim is that this creative Exile in fact *guards* the unity of the people of Israel.¹⁸⁹ Following this, Rawidowicz briefly glosses over the remaining points that Shmueli brings up, mainly by saying “I did not speak about X” or “I do not see Y in the land of Israel.” It is also contained in a large parenthetical construct (*thirty* printed lines in *Ha-Olam*), which demonstrates that Rawidowicz saw this polemical discussion as somewhat out of the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 15 December 1931, 978; also see Simon Rawidowicz, “On Interpretation.”

¹⁸⁸ Shmueli, 12.

¹⁸⁹ Simon Rawidowicz, “Theory and Practice,” 8 December 1931, 958.

context of the points he is trying to bring forward within his article. Notably, he claims that Shmueli did not “descend to the depths of my opinion”¹⁹⁰ and that he does not want to talk about the *value* of the creation in the Exile, or the break between creativity and culture: from this, we learn that Rawidowicz sees these as basic assumptions of the discussion that he does not want to get into the position of having to defend. As we will see from looking at further examples, Rawidowicz is getting frustrated that his critics are not understanding his points and focusing on what he sees as less important.

Besides denying the claims of his critics, Rawidowicz uses them to posture. In “Existential Partnership,” he responds to a series of articles in a section entitled “Miscellaneous Items,” which after a deeper reading, one will find are not really so miscellaneous after all. With each article that he brings forward, Rawidowicz further defines his opinions and differentiates himself from his contemporaries within the Hebraist movement.

Eliezer Steinman, in his article “Corrections” (Hebrew: Tikunim) printed in *Ha-Olam* on the 28th of July, 1931, does not call Rawidowicz by name. Rather, he mentions a “*Brit*,”¹⁹¹ and calls it “tragic” because it sees the Jews living in the Diaspora as ultimately temporary “visitors” in the Diaspora, a transitional generation similar to that of the Jews who passed forty years in the desert. While it is not completely clear if Steinman is referring to the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, I believe that his usage of the term “*Brit*” signifies such a reference, and he attacks Rawidowicz’s uncertainty regarding of the eternity of the Diaspora. In this article, Steinman writes about the need for an affirmation of the Diaspora as a permanent structure within the Jewish people, but when Rawidowicz

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Eliezer Steinman, “Corrections” (Hebrew: Tikunim), *Ha-Olam*, 28 July 1931, 574.

responds he does not discuss these points at all. Rawidowicz picks out two positions about the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel, that the land of Israel will be always tell the Exile to “receive, receive, receive, and that they [the land of Israel] will give, give, give,” and that “it is clear that the Jews of the rich centers in the lands of Exile in the future will look upon the people of the land of Israel from on high” and ultimately support them.¹⁹² Instead, Rawidowicz tries to place himself between these two positions by defining himself negatively with respect to Steinman’s article, and brings out again his views on “partnership.”

In the same article, Rawidowicz responds to a speech by Marcus Ehrenpreis at the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri*, reported by Z. Werbow in the November 17th issue of *Ha-Olam*. In his speech, Ehrenpreis discusses the relationship between the land of Israel and the Diaspora, and comes out as a distinct supporter of the Diaspora as the “natural” form of Israel, and its mission as tied up in the nature of life in dispersion.¹⁹³ For Ehrenpreis, the people of Israel “*are not a political people and cannot in any way found a state and live according to laws and political order like all the nations.*”¹⁹⁴ Additionally, he sees the Jewish people’s dispersed nature as going back to the depths of Biblical culture, seeing the Bible as a creation of the Diaspora: “Outside of a small portion, it was created in Exile,”¹⁹⁵ and he also discusses the Babylonian Talmud, and other Rabbinic creations that were developed in the Diaspora. For Rawidowicz, he must respond because Ehrenpreis

¹⁹² Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership,” 19 May 1932, 292; Eliezer Steinman, 574.

¹⁹³ Z. Werbow, “Ehrenpreis on the Land of Israel and the Exile” (Hebrew: Ehrenpreis al E-Y Ve-Golah). *Ha-Olam*, 17 November 1931, 904.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid* (emphasis in original).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

supports the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, claiming that “its time has come”¹⁹⁶ and implying that the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* espouses, or should espouse, the same ideas as he does. Rawidowicz comes out firing, claiming that he is not as pro-Diaspora as Ehrenpreis with his discussion on the nature of the Jewish people; Rawidowicz places himself between the “Zionism that negates the Diaspora” and the “western reformers who affirm it”, and restates his unique synthesis. Similarly to his response to Steinman, he is not responding to the nature of the criticisms of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*, but negatively defines his positions on the nature of his thought. Why would Rawidowicz attack a supporter, when supporters are one of his greatest needs? From the context of the debate, we can presume that Rawidowicz was not aiming simply to oppose Ehrenpreis but to separate himself from someone who he saw as being slightly overzealous on the side of the Diaspora; in an effort to maintain an independence of thought and perhaps distance himself from the supporters of the Diaspora. Even if Rawidowicz’s land of Israel did not have supremacy over the Diaspora, many of his supporters did not share his views on its primal importance and could be characterized as negators of the land of Israel! As Rawidowicz strived to find a Zionist golden mean, he attacked writers on both sides of the spectrum.

There are many more responses that demonstrate the features of Rawidowicz’s polemical style discussed above. I want to focus also on the other articles related to Rawidowicz’s positions that were coming out to which Rawidowicz does not explicitly respond, because it will show how his ideas are being understood by his contemporaries. There are generally two camps following the 1931 conference: those who appreciate

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Rawidowicz, and those who do not. Overall, few understand Rawidowicz, and the results can be seen in his writing.

In *Ha-Doar*, S. Rosenfeld wrote a piece called “On the ‘Center’ and the ‘Circumference’” (Hebrew: Al Ha-“Merkaz” Ve-Al Ha-“Heikef”). Rosenfeld comes out on the side of Rawidowicz, calling his opponents (specifically Ya’akov Cohen) “unbelievers in the reality of all details of the Exile,”¹⁹⁷ but ultimately sees the land of Israel as the center of the totality of the national project, in opposition to Rawidowicz on this point.¹⁹⁸ At the same time, Rosenfeld recognizes the problems that would be caused by prematurely abandoning the Diaspora. Still, the fact that Rosenfeld writes that “we are not allowed to abandon the Exile until the center is built” implies that once it *is* built then the Diaspora can be abandoned. Rosenfeld understands the need of a “spiritual center” to “Judaize” the Diaspora because, according to him, the Diaspora does not “know Judaism from its left or right”¹⁹⁹ and must be watered like a desert. In this way, Rosenfeld does not completely agree with Rawidowicz in all of the details, but as a whole seems to coming out mostly on his side. On the other side, P. Lahover writes in “The Hebrew Conference, in Theory and in Practice” (Hebrew: Ha-Knesia Ha-Ivrit Le-Halacha U’le-Ma’aseh)²⁰⁰ that he agrees with Rawidowicz *practically* in terms of doing work to resuscitate the Exile but disagrees in terms of his *ideology* behind it.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ S. Rosenfeld, “On the ‘Center’ and the ‘Circumference’” (Hebrew: Al Ha-‘Merkaz’ Ve-Al Ha-‘Heikef’, *Ha-Doar*, 14 August 1931, 550.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 551.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Also see brief discussion of this article in Chapter 2.

²⁰¹ P. Lahover, “The Hebrew Conference, in Theory and in Practice,” 2.

III

There is a wide spectrum of thought on the future of Hebrew, the Jewish people, and Zionism, and many see it as important to say *something* about what Rawidowicz is bringing forward. Some of it he chooses to respond to, and other he feels best are let alone. In this way, a complete study of Rawidowicz's contemporary criticism must encompass a wide study of the Hebrew press, which falls outside the scope of this project. Still, a cursory study has shown the depth of the discussion taking place at this period, not only around the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* but generally about the movement for Hebrew within the Jewish future.

Some saw Rawidowicz as a central figure within this movement, opening the doors to its wider success outside those already enamored by the ideals of Hebrew culture. In an article by Dr. Hayyim Nahman Shapira published in September 1931, the author describes the Hebrew Conference as if it is 1897 all over again. Paralleling the Hebrew movement to "its sister" the Zionist movement, Shapira sees the founding of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* as moment of truth when the Hebrew movement can really take off. This view of the *Brit* as a parallel movement to Zionism, serving a different purpose for a different location (i.e. the Diaspora), was not unique; in an article in May 1932, Dr. Joseph Klausner wrote about how the "Keren Tarbut" (cultural foundation) of the Hebrew movement should be seen as the "third national foundation" in parallel with the *Keren Ha-Yesod* and the *Heren Ha-Kayemet*.²⁰² Still what is interesting about Shapira is that while he sees the Berlin Conference as the beginning of the new life of the Hebrew movement, he says that "still, we have not yet merited for the Hebrew Herzl, and who

²⁰² Joseph Klausner, "The Third National Foundation" (Hebrew: Ha-Keren Ha-Leumit Ha-Shilishit), *Ha-Olam*, 12 May 1932, 275.

knows if we will merit to this in the near-term?”²⁰³ One would think that Rawidowicz, as the motivator of the new spirit of the Hebrew movement that Shapira is talking about – having placed its beginning in the 1931 conference – would have liked to be identified as this new “Herzl” of the Hebrew movement. But he is not. Rawidowicz does not respond to this article by saying that he either sees or does not see the conference in the same way as Shapira, nor does he position himself as a “Hebrew Herzl” (in many ways this would have been pompous of him) but neither does he come out in opposition to the conception of a new beginning of this movement in which he was so invested.

IV

While all this is going on, there seems to be a great disconnect happening within the Hebraist movement. On June 14, 1931, exactly one week before Rawidowicz spoke about organizing “the Hebrews” instead of “Hebrew,” another conference of Hebrew writers opened in Tel Aviv, which bears strikingly resemblance to that in Berlin, opened with a speech by Jacob Fichman about the development of a “world organization of Hebrew speakers” (literally “a world organization of people who know Hebrew”). In his speech, Fichman also writes about the previous attempts to organize the Hebraist movement internationally that had failed, specifically the 1909 Hebrew conference in Berlin.²⁰⁴ In contrast to Rawidowicz, he opens with a pronouncement that “in my speech,

²⁰³ Hayyim Nachman Shapira, “On the Threshold of the 1897 of the Hebrew Movement” (Hebrew: Al Miftan 1897 Shel Ha-T’nua Ha-Ivrit), *Ha-Olam*, 22 September 1931, 783.

²⁰⁴ Jacob Fichman, “On a World Organization of Hebrew Speakers” (Hebrew: Al Histadrut Olamit Shel Yodei Ivrit), *Moznayim*, 18 June 1931, 20. Also, this theme of previous attempts that failed came out also in the speech of Asher Barash about the history of the P.E.N. club, and its changing relationship with pacifism and world culture; see Asher Barash, “The Writer’s Association and the P.E.N. Club” (Hebrew: Agudat-Ha-Sofrim U-Klub Pa"n), *Moznayim*, 18 June 1931, 21–22.

I will deal only with practical matters.”²⁰⁵ What is particularly striking, outside of the chance that there would be two conferences taking place so close to one another with so similar topics of interest, is just how close Fichman’s position is to Rawidowicz. These points of connection only make their greater differences come out in starker contrast. Whereas they both recognize that there is a deep crisis within the field of Hebrew literature, and Fichman does admit that the difficult task is “to organize all the isolated and far-flung Hebrews in the whole world,”²⁰⁶ he takes quite a different stance with regards to the relationship between the land of Israel and the Diaspora. Whereas Rawidowicz calls for “partnership,” Fichman writes that “the center [of his proposed organization] will be in the land of Israel, with branches in all the dispersed Exile.”²⁰⁷ He continues to describe his plan of action:

We will establish our fortresses first of all in the land of Israel. In every city and settlement a group of people will be found, both young and old, that will heed our call. We will not ask much from them – we will cast upon them small obligations, and the first obligation – *to buy Hebrew books*. And we are sure, that the land of Israel itself will give us a great many members for the organization of Hebrew speakers. *Afterwards we will send out people to the lands of the Exile.*²⁰⁸

The parallels between Rawidowicz and Fichman, not to mention the other published remarks from the Tel Aviv conference, cannot be ignored. Fichman calls for a single organization of all the Hebrew speakers in the world,²⁰⁹ and also describes it as “world-wide” (*olamit*).²¹⁰ Still, the purposes of the organizations are very different; while Fichman’s organization is expressly pointed at *speakers* or *those knowledgeable* of

²⁰⁵ Jacob Fichman, 20.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid (emphasis added).

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

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Hebrew, Rawidowicz's is not. Not once in his speech does Fichman mention "education," arguably the most important tactic that Rawidowicz hoped to employ to develop the Hebrew society he describes. The order of operations is also reversed: the research and development, in Fichman's view, should take place in the land of Israel and then be distributed, like books, in the Diaspora. What Rawidowicz would say to Fichman (since there is no published response, we must speculate) is that Jews in the Diaspora should not buy Hebrew books because it is an obligation but they should understand the obligation to be involved in Hebrew creativity. Buying Hebrew books follows Hebrew education that enables them to be literate; if they cannot speak Hebrew then who will buy Hebrew books?

In a set of remarks by Kadish Yehuda (Leib) Silman at the same conference, Silman brings up a seriously similar idea about a "cultural foundation" (*keren tarbut*) and its relationship to the other two "national foundations" (*Keren Ha-Kayemet* and *Keren Ha-Yesod*). They both also see it having functions for "education and literature," with education coming first for both. There is a large degree of similarity between their ideas, and it forces us to consider not that Rawidowicz was unoriginal, but that his original concepts were not in the initial idea but their expansion to a higher level and the insertion of an ideology that elevated the Diaspora from the depths to which it had been lowered by political and spiritual Zionism. As we will see, these elements are what separates Rawidowicz from Silman, just as it separates Rawidowicz from Fichman.

Note the difference between how Rawidowicz and Silman construct the relationships between their respective organizations and the Zionist movement, both in their *raison d'être* and functioning. Silman maintains just as *Keren Ha-Kayemet* is

established for agriculture and *Keren Ha-Yesod* for settlement, a “cultural foundation” should be established “for the work of education and literature.”²¹¹ He also sees it as “parallel to the Zionist organizations”²¹² which is similar to Rawidowicz when he makes the case for a similar type of organization, writing that

If we are allowed to establish two foundations for one need, the building of the land of Israel, all the more so are we permitted to establish a *third* foundation for another, special need, that is not fulfilled by the two mentioned foundations.²¹³

Both recognize the Zionist movement’s lack of involvement in Hebrew literature.²¹⁴ However, whereas Silman writes that “We mean to build a mutual relationship with the Zionist organization and to dialogue with it, so it should not worry about loss, because more likely it will gain,”²¹⁵ Rawidowicz in fact sees his organizations as *parallel* to the Zionist organization in jurisdiction, in the sense that the Zionist organizations will serve the future of the land of Israel, and the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* (and its *Keren Ha-Tarbut*) will serve the Diaspora. That being said, while these organizations may function in parallel, Rawidowicz only utilizes this parallel to justify his organization’s existence. This can also be seen in an article published by one of

²¹¹ Kadish Yehuda (Leib) Silman, “The Culture Foundation” (Hebrew: Keren Ha-Tarbut), *Moznayim*, 18 June 1931, 22.

²¹² *Ibid*, p. 23.

²¹³ Simon Rawidowicz, “For the Foundation of a Hebrew Culture Foundation” (Hebrew: Le-Yisod Keren Ha-Tarbut Ha-Ivrit), *Ha-Olam*, 12 May 1932, 274. Also see the article by Joseph Klauzner on the opposite page in *Ha-Olam* in which he takes a similar stance; Joseph Klausner, 275. Note that Klausner was in attendance at the Tel Aviv conference; “Report of the Meeting” (Hebrew: Din Ve-Hesbon Shel Ha-Veida), *Moznayim*, 25 June 1931, 14.

²¹⁴ Silman writes “The trouble of the Zionist Organization currently reflects itself in the work of education, and the complete lack of activity until this point that the Zionist organization has taken to help Hebrew literature;” Kadish Yehuda (Leib) Silman, 23. Also see Rawidowicz when he writes that his vision “cannot be delivered by the established ‘Tarbut’ societies and not by the Zionist Organization;” Simon Rawidowicz, “Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” 16 July 1931, 2.

²¹⁵ Kadish Yehuda (Leib) Silman, 23.

Rawidowicz's supporters, Aryeh Simon, on May 12th, 1932,²¹⁶ in which he claims that the *Keren Ha-Tarbut* (and also the *Brit Ivrit Olamit* by association) is for "Circumferencial Zionism" (*Tzionut Ha-Heikef*) while *Keren Ha-Yesod* and *Keren Ha-Kayemet* are for the "Central Zionism" (*Tzionut Ha-Mercaz*). This is in opposition to Silman, who writes that "the center of work must be in the land of Israel,"²¹⁷ even as he sees that "in the end, our goal is to worry also for the Hebrew writers in the Exile and also for education in the Exile."²¹⁸

These differences between Fichman, Silman, and Rawidowicz do not sufficiently paint a picture of the Hebraist movement at the moment of Rawidowicz's departure from the mainstream. Hopefully this brief reading of some of the other published remarks from the Tel Aviv conference will begin to illustrate more clearly how Rawidowicz is deviating from the mainstream of his movement, and to recognize the deep departure that he took when he gave his keynote address in Berlin. Not only is he seriously departing from the accepted Zionist dogmas when it comes to the priorities of Zionist movement and its efforts, but he is reconstructing the goal of the Hebraist movement: Not the Hebrew language but an ephemeral group of "Hebrews," who he does not define as "Hebrew speakers" as Fichman does, but takes a more open-ended approach through which he hopes to educate the next generation of Jews in Hebrew culture.

²¹⁶ Aryeh Simon, "For the Hebrew Culture Foundation" (Hebrew: Le-Shem Keren Ha-Tarbut Ha-Ivrit), *Ha-Olam*, 12 May 1932, 276. Note that this is the same edition of *Ha-Olam* that contains the articles about a *Keren Ha-Tarbut* by Rawidowicz and Klausner.

²¹⁷ Kadish Yehuda (Leib) Silman, 24.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

V

This discussion of the environment in which Rawidowicz found himself in 1931, the back-and-forth that took place surrounding his ideas, and also the way in which Rawidowicz handled it is helpful because it helps us to gain a more contextualized reading of Rawidowicz's articles in this period. On first approach, Rawidowicz appears to be highly repetitive: not only does he lift entire sections of one article from another, but he constantly responds to the same comments over and over again. He makes attempts to utilize this polemical debate to push forward his ideas but he ultimately spends a significant portion of his articles (which certainly were under the tyranny of space constraints) refuting the same words from different people. His use of the same language over and over again is not the work of a systematic thinker, but that of a highly skilled polemicist who knew not only how to express his ideas in writing but had obviously spent a serious amount of energy supporting his ideas in heated discussion off the printed page. Of course, not everyone was receptive to them, as Dr. Wislevski noted at the Berlin conference,²¹⁹ but it certainly gave him the opportunity to transform his language into a pointed tool of destruction.

Over the course of 1930–1932, there is a process of transformation and crystallization within Rawidowicz's thought. A close reading will show the roots of the ideology of "partnership" and "creativity" in his earliest Hebrew writings in this period, even as these concepts developed. Through this process, something strange happens as Rawidowicz takes fewer and fewer departures from what he had written previously; the rate of change slows as he settles on his conceptions of internal Jewish relations. By the

²¹⁹ See page 48

beginning of 1932, Rawidowicz was not simply repeating himself, but often it feels as if it is merely a reformulation of earlier intellectual propositions. There is a certain amount of frustration seeping through the surface of these writings. It is as if Rawidowicz is in a futile search for an effective representation of his new big idea that would take the Jewish world by storm and lend articulation to the fleeting misgivings that both Zionists living in the Diaspora and those who cared about the future of worldwide Hebrew culture (two groups which often overlapped) had towards the project for a Jewish State in mandatory Palestine.

Why were Rawidowicz's readers, both his supporters and detractors, not getting his message? I believe that answer lies in the extremely nuanced viewpoints he promotes and the long-term understanding of the Zionist project that I discuss in Chapter 3.

Additionally, he abstracts away and reduces significant problems within his ideology, potentially because he really does not have space, or perhaps because he simply did not have the answers. He continually says of various issues, such as the relationship between his thought and Simon Dubnow's, that he either does not have the space, or will talk about it in "another place." In the case of the Simon Dubnow article, he writes that "To the basic differences between my thought and that of the cultural autonomists in the Exile, etc. on the problems of culture, I will dedicate a separate article"²²⁰ – but he does not write this article during the period under discussion, if at all.²²¹

²²⁰ See Simon Rawidowicz, "Theory and Practice," 8 December 1931, 958.

²²¹ Unfortunately I have been unable to study the entire corpus of Rawidowicz's work but I have been unable to find such an article in the Rawidowicz bibliography published in *Kitvei Ranak*. However, as I have found, there are at least one item missing from this bibliography ("Letter to the Editor"), and so I am not completely certain that this article does not exist. Even if it does, it would not serve our purposes for this study, because if it took him ten years to write such an article, his thought would have changed significantly

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What is missing from the Rawidowicz writings is a systematic philosophical treatise on the Jewish people and his concepts of “partnership” and “creativity.” Ultimately, Rawidowicz had hoped that *Babylon and Jerusalem* would serve this purpose, but even this work is to a large extent unsystematic. Still, not counting edited works such as his publication of the writings of Nachman Krochmal and Moses Mendelssohn, Rawidowicz himself did not publish a full-length book outside of the 500-page edition of his dissertation research on Feuerbach. What would be most useful as a whole – both for us and for him – would not necessarily be a book, but even an article systematically articulating his philosophy of Jewish life would have both made a large part of this study unnecessary and also provided much-needed ammunition for the operations of the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*.

Perhaps it is a problem of an overly stylistic and archaic writing style (a better characterization might be *maskilic*), which could alternately be classified as strikingly beautiful. Perhaps it is a problem that he was simply searching for the best way to express his ideas and never did find it. Or perhaps he was unable to do this; we will never know. What we do know is that the times were most unpropitious; within two years of his conference, Adolf Hitler had risen to power. As the eyes of the Jewish world watched in horror at the unfolding persecution of the Jewish people living in Nazi Germany, matters of Hebrew culture faded in importance. Rawidowicz’s fourteen-chapter work on the “Existence of the Diaspora” (Hebrew: *Kiyyum Ha-Tefutzah*) was really focused on “Israel in Germany.” The sad fates of history would ultimately determine the loss of Rawidowicz’s great Hebrew-reading public in Europe and transform the world in ways

enough from the time period under discussion that it would be simply not useful; such an article would be useful for a study of Rawidowicz in that period, not in this one.

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he could never have expected. By the time that Rawidowicz arrived at Brandeis, many of the assumptions about the relationship between the various countries of the Diaspora that existed in 1931 had changed in truly basic ways, and along with it the ways in which one Jewish community related to another.

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It is important to note that this work is just a beginning. Ultimately, as the work of a senior honors thesis, I have studied a focused period of time and approached a limited set of focused questions. As such, I have cut short many pursuits, inserting them as footnotes, that otherwise, had I more time to consider them, could have developed into further chapters and profoundly deepened this research. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly explore avenues for future research as well as factors that have affected this project that should be taken into consideration.

A major dilemma facing research of writings such as those of Rawidowicz, in many ways a major factor leading towards its disregard within English-language scholarship, is that of *language*. That being said, it makes it all the more valuable and necessary because for the average reader of the English language, texts such as Rawidowicz's Hebrew articles are simply not accessible. Over the course of this research, my skills in reading Hebrew texts from this period have improved significantly, and were I to begin again, I could partake in a much more serious and rigorous study of the Hebrew press of this time period than comes out in Chapter 4. In addition to Hebrew, a scholar with knowledge of German could do the same in the German-Jewish press, especially the *Judische Rundschau* (Jewish Review), in which Rawidowicz wrote a number of pertinent articles. Another major question that a survey of the Weimar press could answer would be the relationship between Rawidowicz's conception of "progressive" cultural development with those of his contemporaries living in late Weimar Germany.

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Another challenge is that of archival research. Much of Rawidowicz's work is published, but there are also many gaps to be filled between the publication of one article and the next. A significant amount of correspondence exists, both in archives in the State of Israel and in the Diaspora. In January 2008, while in Jerusalem, I waded through the archives at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which holds correspondence between Rawidowicz and Joseph Klausner, Martin Buber, and others, but unfortunately most were from outside the time period under discussion and were also hand-written, for which I was not prepared. Closer to Brandeis, Benjamin Ravid, Rawidowicz's son, has a significant amount of archival material in his basement, including letters, unpublished manuscripts and clippings. The clippings were especially useful in studying what Rawidowicz was reading in this time period, and scholars of Rawidowicz are incredibly fortunate that these papers have survived; they provide valuable insight into Rawidowicz in a way that is simply not possible for many other thinkers who do not have such a comprehensive set of papers. As such, they are a valuable resource that should be protected and organized for future use, so that others can make use of them without damaging them. A more organized set of archives would enable an exhaustive study of the time period with more attention paid to Rawidowicz's life outside of the printing press. Additionally, while the bibliography of Rawidowicz's major writings found in *The Writings of Rabbi Nachman Krochmal* is incredibly useful for a scholar of his thought, this study has found already a some shorter writings that are not listed there and a catalogued archive could help in the creation of a more complete bibliography.

In addition to technical challenges, there are wider issues that require further study. These extend both temporally and in depth: it would at once be desirable to search

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for the roots of Rawidowicz's ideas presented in this treatise – there is an interesting article from 1920 about Ahad Ha'am,²²² who Rawidowicz would later criticize, that I was unable to procure – as well as whether and how Rawidowicz's views on Hebrew culture changed as he relocated to England and lived through the Second World War and the *Shoah*. Did Rawidowicz express the same viewpoints on the relationship between Jewish communities around the world once the face of the Jewish world was disfigured forever by the Nazi menace? As well, how do Rawidowicz's views extend into his academic work and scholarship? I began a study of this topic with an overview of the history of the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies department, which Rawidowicz was instrumental in developing, but was unable to pursue it due to a lack of time; my preliminary research did not show enough evidence to demonstrate conclusively that Rawidowicz was interested in the NEJS project as anything more than the scholarly duty of developing a world-class graduate program in both ancient and modern Judaic studies, but perhaps a deeper study that looks over more than simply old course catalogues and internal memos, delving into the Rawidowicz archives, will find something different.

Prior to Rawidowicz's work on the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies department, he had been involved in the development of the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago (today Spertus College), though to a lesser extent than at Brandeis. At the opening convocation of the College of Jewish Studies, he gave a speech later published as "On Jewish Learning," in which he develops a philosophy of Jewish hermeneutics that is important in light of his discussions of Jewish education that I discuss in this thesis. An overview of articles published in his later years such as this one, including his 1949

²²² Simon Rawidowicz, "Ahad Ha-am and His School" (Hebrew: Ahad Ha-am U-Beit Midrasho), *He-Hayyim* (Vilna), 1920, ed. 2, pp. 5–6; ed. 3, pp. 5–7.

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Yiddish lecture “Two that are One”²²³ – note the similar name to the Hebrew “Two Questions that are One,” published in Hebrew in 1931 – shows that a wider reading of Rawidowicz’s texts on his philosophy of Jewish life in the Diaspora will not only be fruitful but is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of his contributions to Jewish thought.

One last area of study that I believe is important but I was unable to fulfill within the scope of this work is a discussion of Rawidowicz’s *Babylon and Jerusalem*, published posthumously in 1957. An order of magnitude larger (and thus an order of magnitude more complex) than the works studied in this thesis, I believe that in order to have a complete study of Rawidowicz these works must be taken into account. This treatise is not such a comprehensive study but one must ask: what is missing, or new, in *Babylon and Jerusalem*? I believe the fact that Rawidowicz was talking about the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds twenty years before the publication of these late volumes is significant, because it reflects his early insight into the cultural struggles between Jews living in the land of Israel and the Diaspora in late antiquity and geonic times. Along with this, as this treatise has hopefully demonstrated, Rawidowicz projected that struggle over the understanding of authoritative Judaism onto the twentieth century struggle between Zionism and various competing factions. I hope that a careful scholar will one day study further the relationship between these works.

Rawidowicz’s work certainly deserves scrutiny from an academic standpoint; I believe firmly that not only does it merit it, but that the study of “deviant” forms of

²²³ Yiddish lecture given at the Zukunft Symposium in New York City on February 20, 1949. Published in *Zukunft* 54 (1949), pp. 282–289. Translated to English and published in *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity* (London: University of New England Press, 1998), pp. 147–161.

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Zionism such as Rawidowicz's can inform Zionist, Israel, and Jewish studies as a whole. Zionism is often treated either too dogmatically or too dryly, considered either as a religion of historical philosophy or a relic of the past. Writers such as Rawidowicz, who are relegated to the sidelines, offer the opportunity to not only bring new concepts to light but demonstrate the vitality of Zionist thought. Writers like Rawidowicz, whose works are not available in English in truly significant doses, have much to contribute but are being ignored due to the linguistic challenges that they present to the reader. In this vein, I invite the reader to explore not only the attached translations in the following appendix, but the original Hebrew texts and try to understand the vitality of thought that these writers represented at their time and have to contribute today.

Appendix I: Introduction to Translations

When Walter Benjamin writes about the “afterlife” of a text in translation,²²⁴ he could not be speaking more perfectly than of the works of Rawidowicz. It is a great tragedy that his work has been largely ignored in the modern discussion of Zionism. Approaching this project, I firmly believed that it would be a useful endeavor if only to resurrect his thought, not so that it would become a political force, but to enable others to discover it. Translation, then, is not only an added bonus but truly an essential aspect of such a project in light of this viewpoint. For if these works were ignored previously partially due to bad timing and perhaps an audience unwilling to listen to contrary points of view, in the twenty-first century, when the terms “partnership” and “creativity” have been reclaimed by Zionists, a major barrier to entry to these texts is the difficulty of their Hebrew. A translation into modern language, whether sensible English or an updated style of Hebrew, would seem not only the best way to bring these works to the world but also the perfect accompaniment to a project whose work was their interpretation.

Why is Rawidowicz’s Hebrew so difficult, and what problems has it posed for the work of translation? Rawidowicz was writing in *Moznayim*, the magazine of the organization of Hebrew writers in the land of Israel, and *Ha-Olam*, a Zionist organ based in London. As such, both Rawidowicz and his colleagues were working to stretch the boundaries of the newly reborn language, inventing new constructs and neologisms to make it come alive again. Today, some of their linguistic experimentation may have

²²⁴ Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, eds. Rainer Schulte, John Biguenet, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 71–82.

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fallen out of use – or were never taken up by others – and end up outside the boundaries of modern Hebrew. Additionally, across the board most of the writers of Hebrew at the time – especially those who were born in the Diaspora, as Rawidowicz was – learned Hebrew as a second or third language. That these writers could write so extensively and at such a high level in what was essentially a foreign language demonstrates their commitment to the language, but also influenced their writing style. This can make their Hebrew difficult for those who do not speak the writer’s native tongue. On top of all this, since none of the works are pointed outside the titles, it makes exact translation difficult because the reader cannot be sure whether terms are in construct, are nouns or function adjectivally, and so on. While the use of *mater lectionis* does help, for key terms such as *Ivrit* (Hebrew), we simply cannot tell how it is meant to function. While this generally does not impede upon comprehension of the text, developing an acceptable rendering of the original text becomes difficult with these problems’ compounding.

There are a number of difficult terms and phrases in these works, and while I do not aim to examine every ambiguous word, I hope to briefly discuss some of them that give meaning and nuance to the text. In particular, the use of the word “Israel” is important because of the ways in which the term has changed between 1931 and today. In the 1930s, “Israel” was not yet a country, and Rawidowicz certainly did not mean it as such when he wrote these articles. There is extensive correspondence between Rawidowicz and David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of the State of Israel, over the choice of the name “Israel” for the Jewish state. While a literal translation of “Israel” is technically feasible, its meaning has changed away from that of Rawidowicz. The solution is to translate it into language that makes sense for today’s reader, i.e. “the

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people of Israel” rather than just “Israel.” This is distinct from translating it into the more common “Jewish people.” “People of Israel” is more comprehensive, casting a wider net than the tribe of Judah (from which the term “Jew” derives). I believe this is both a significant choice in translation and a significant change in popular meaning: “*ha-am ha-yehudi*” (the Jewish people) has come into vogue, just as “*tefutzot*” (Diaspora, lit. “dispersal”), demonstrating a value choice over terms such as “*am yisrael*” or “*golah*.” I do not wish to make a value judgment, but they each contain nuances that give value to the text over time.

This applies to other phrases, more ambiguous due to the previously noted lack of pointed Hebrew in the main body of the Hebrew articles. In compound terms relating to Jews or Israel in Exile or the Diaspora, the lack of pointing leads to significant ambiguity. There is a wide variety of syntactic combinations in which Rawidowicz can place together terms such as “*Yisrael*” (Israel), “*Yahadut*” (Judaism), “*Eretz Yisrael*” (the land of Israel), “*Golah*” (Exile), or “*Tfutzot*” (Diaspora): when he writes for example “*Yahadut she-b[a]-golah*” (Judaism that is in [the] Exile) or “*Yisrael she-b[a]-tefutzot*” (Israel that is in [the] Diaspora), the ambiguity leaves the realm of linguistic curiosity and enters that of semantic importance. For it could be translated either “Israel in Exile,” “Israel in *the* Exile,” or even “Exilic Israel” in some cases. In the first, “Exile” is a condition; the second, a place; and the third, a mode. To effectively read Rawidowicz, we must understand which one of these distinct meanings is in use, but because the text is unpointed we cannot tell if a *patah* and its following *dagesh* exist in the *bet*, which would point towards a defined object, “in the Exile” versus “in Exile.” I have translated these items by context, based on the meaning of the passage in which the case exists. If

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Rawidowicz was discussing the Jews living in the Diaspora, I would translate it as “in the Exile.” Most often Rawidowicz does not mean Exile as a condition; but sometimes when he writes the somewhat less ambiguous (but still problematic) “*Yahadut Ha-Golah*” (lit. Judaism of the Exile) or “*Yahadut Ha-Tefutzot*” (lit. Judaism of the Diaspora), he does not mean literally the people or religion of that place but the mode of Jewish life or method of development of the people of Israel in the Diaspora (as opposed to the mode of Jewish life in the land of Israel), and I translate it as “Exilic Judaism.”

Rawidowicz wrote a significant number of his works in languages foreign to English. A cursory reading of his bibliography in *The Writings of Rabbi Nachman Krochmal* shows in fact the great majority was written in Hebrew, with a smattering in German, English and Yiddish. The publication of his work in English has nearly always required some amount of translation, and here it is no different. How is this translation different? Primarily it is that here the goal is not solely publication for the sake of reading, but additionally for the sake of as the opening an academic discussion that has not existed previously. In addition to reading these texts to access Rawidowicz’s thought, I hope to prepare the reader to grapple with them in their original Hebrew if they choose to do so. In this way, I believe I am closest to Rawidowicz’s vision for his work; he envisioned a world in which Jewish readers would have the knowledge of the Hebrew language and its literature to approach works such as his own. I hope to remain faithful to the Hebrew in a way that enables the reader to utilize the texts authoritatively if he chooses, or alternately use them as a stepping stone to the originals, allowing him to study and decide for himself the extent to which the thesis I have developed holds up under the pressure of its sources. I strongly believe that not only am I unable to do justice

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to the original Hebrew, but that Rawidowicz would be quite unhappy with a translation that served more as a buffer than an invitation to the Hebrew language.

I do not aim to ape Rawidowicz's text. His style is too repetitive, and a literal translation would be simply unreadable. That is not to say that Rawidowicz's Hebrew is untranslatable into English nor is badly written. I am no poet, and neither was Rawidowicz, and I do not wish to overly poeticize and polish his language when it was not in the original. Yet if we are simply translating word-for-word, and not translating grammar, then we end up with a situation where we have Hebrew grammar (translated into English) as glue for English words.

I as translator cannot justify a literal translation, but also cannot justify the way in which his works have been selectively translated in the past, editing out sections that prove too difficult to translate or simply do not make sense. The reader must know that the text that appears on the page before him is sufficiently loyal to the original to trust it as a reasonable representation of its mother language. While some translations here are not complete, the sections translated are not abridged. That is to say, if I have not translated an article to its very end, it is because I have translated the opening sections that I believe most important to its understanding, and translate it to the end of the printed section. Included in full are "Two Questions that are One" (Hebrew: Shte'i She'elot Sh'hen Ehat) and "Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow" (Hebrew: Ha-Tzionut Ba-Golah Ve-Simon Dubnow). I have translated in part "Existential Partnership" (Hebrew: Shutefut Shel Kiyyum), part I of IV.

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Simon Rawidowicz, “Zionism in the Diaspora and Simon Dubnow” (Hebrew: Ha-Tzionut Ba-Golah Ve-Simon Dubnow), *Davar*, 23 October 1930, 1641.

From a Speech on the Celebration of the Jubilee (for his 70th Birthday) in Berlin.

As I stand before the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri* (Hebrew Cultural Center) of Berlin, its book clubs and educated men, to join with the community in blessing *Simon Dubnow* on his 70th birthday, I come to announce that we are part and parcel to this honored man. And as I speak in Hebrew, I know that I speak in the spirit of Simon Dubnow. Yes, he is our colleague in the *Beit Midrash*,²²⁵ as one of his most lofty and original creations – “The History of Hasidut” (Hebrew: Toldot He-Hasidut) – was written completely in Hebrew. And I do not need to add that Dubnow is a master of a most pleasant Hebrew style that should be praised.

This fact that that we – that is, the community of believers in the Hebrew language in the Exile that want to build the land of Israel – stand together here in the celebration of the life of Simon Dubnow also verifies his great synthesis: Dubnow is not an extremist. The man is not a commentator or a “pursuer of peace” – but rather, he acknowledges and supports every Jewish activity and every movement of Israel *that is in some way interested in the national existence*. He is the creative synthesizer. In “Letters on Judaism, Old and New” (Hebrew: Michtavav Al Ha-Yahadut Ha-Yeshana Ve-Ha-Hadasha), he has revealed the secret to his synthesis of nationalism. The synthesis between “ghetto” and “assimilation,” the synthesis between the guarding of fences and their great bursting, for the sake of guarding Judaism.

²²⁵ Jewish house of study

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We have spoken here to great extent about the personality of Simon Dubnow as a historian and researcher. And I mean this foundational, core idea Dubnow's writings, in his research and worldview. This jubilee of Dubnow needs to serve for us as a day of introspection: assessing ourselves, assessing the man, [assessing] Zionism, both political and spiritual, Ahad-Ha'amian – in battle with this same Dubnowian foundational idea, the idea of autonomism. Dubnow does not believe in the Jewish state of Theodor Herzl; this was not his ideal. In contrast to his friend and colleague Ahad Ha'am, Dubnow came and said: the land of Israel can serve even as a central community of Israel, a Jewish center, but not the [only] center! And this is not a battle on for the sake of heaven alone. In response, Ahad Ha'am came and taught that the salvation of Israel will come from *centralization* and not *dispersion*. And there is no centralization except in the land of Israel, for which its affinity has not deserted our national consciousness, and can still serve as national center. Centralization in the land of Israel, and not dispersion in the lands of Exile – this is the way. Israel will never receive its national-political rights in Exile. And even if the nations of the world recognize the rights of every national minority – they will not recognize the special rights of the Israeli minority. The life of Israel will never reach *completeness*, because Israel in the Exile does not have national freedom. They are dependent upon others and hang on their religion. Ahad Ha'am's view of the teaching²²⁶ of Dubnow is utopian, and all who support his [Ahad Ha'am's] teaching of the Exile are investing in a dubious venture. *Negation of the Exile* – this is the basic answer of Zionism towards the teachings of national autonomism in the Exile in its different forms.

²²⁶ Literally “Torah”

Appendix I: Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow (Translation)

Thus, basically, were the debates between Zionism and Dubnow's school,²²⁷ until the breakout of the Great War.

And the reality of Israel after this war?

At the beginning it seemed as if both would come to fruition.²²⁸ On the one hand²²⁹ came the Balfour Declaration, in which many saw²³⁰ the signs of the Messiah and the beginnings of salvation; and on the other hand, the arrival of autonomous rights in different lands of Exile. On one hand, the Israeli land of Israel, like the French France and the English England; and on the other, Jewish²³¹ ministers hold highly respected offices in the national autonomist regions in Ukraine, in Lithuania, etc. [But] life came and clipped off a lot – in its wings, or also in its roots? – of the Balfour Declaration, came and also clipped the wings and roots of Israeli autonomism in the Exile. And now the question returns to its place: What will be the relationship of Zionist Jews in the Exile to the teaching of Dubnow and his school? There is no doubt that it is an obligation of Zionism, and especially Zionism in the Exile, to re-examine his teaching, its tactics and strategy, to enlighten the teaching of Dubnow – and to enlighten Israeli reality in the exile.

And here we must pronounce: We do not agree with the negation of the language and culture of Hebrew in the Exile, for which many commentators on Dubnow have advocated, commentators who have distanced themselves [from it]. And it is not necessary to make an “excuse” for this. It is possible and necessary to find new ways to

²²⁷ *Beit Midrash*

²²⁸ אלה ואלה דברי אלהים חיים הם

²²⁹ Lit. “from one side”

²³⁰ Lit. heard

²³¹ Lit. “Israeli”

Appendix I: Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow (Translation)

somewhat repress the linguistic war in the Exile, which eats at us in every which way and has very few positive qualities: it corrupts every good aspect of the Exile; it hinders the revelation of the truest expression of Exilic Jewry; it drives the spiritual rebels to sit in *sitra d'yimina*, but nevertheless escaping from Hebrew cultural creativity, in the Hebrew language, in the Exile – where will it be remembered? Against this we must surrender the idea of *negation of the Exile*. In the Israeli reality in our days – it is nothing but a *dangerous* idea and concept. It is really not a question of the affirmation or negation of the Exile – but the affirmation or negation of *Judaism*. All the more so: It is not but a question of the affirmation or the negation of the *land of Israel*. It is clear that without a living Jewry in Exile, the land of Israel will not develop and Israel will not serve its needed purpose and future. The Exile needs the land of Israel, and vice-versa. All who negate the Exile in the end negate the land of Israel. No man lives except if he creates. And a national collective, a society of men [sic] – even more so! Exilic Jewry will not live except if it creates. It is our obligation to strive for the cultivation of the creative faculties of this Jewry. If this [creative faculty] passes from the world – also this [Jewry] will pass from the world. Exilic Jewry is not only an importing and exporting company in its relation to the land of Israel. In other words, it is not only a company for sending men and money to the land of Israel, and not a company for the reception of cultural goods and value from the land of Israel. All who neglect the obligation of Exilic Jewry to create value and goods of its own, value and goods that will enrich the treasury of Jewry in Exile and in the land [of Israel] – undermine the existence of Exilic Jewry and the building of the complete land of Israel as one.

Appendix I: Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow (Translation)

We hope that Mt. Zion will be at the *head* of the mountains. However, we are obligated to be concerned that the rest of the mountains that are in the Exile not flip to valleys of suffering and tears. We are obligated to guard the height of the spiritual and economic life of *Diaspora Jewry*, and all who guard it will merit the blessing of what Diaspora Jewry deposits into our common treasury.

All of the time when Babylonia is in Israel and Israel is in the state of mind of Babylonia – it is necessary that there be a Babylonian Talmud. I do not know if Babylonia will be eternal. I have not made a covenant with the angel that determines eternity. However, if we will guard the spirit of Judaism, for its own sake and for the sake of the realization of our hopes in the land [of Israel], go and participate in the creation of this Babylonian Talmud. This Babylonian Talmud will not turn its *against* the Jerusalem Talmud, but will paddle alongside it to create a single Talmud with its members that are in Jerusalem.

Only from this position do we receive a single great item from the teachings of Dubnow. And if all of this we add and say: Mt. Zion at the head of the mountains. The soul of Israel, and not this only but also its body and hands, demands that the center of Jewry be in the land [of Israel], even if you believe that *the teaching of Dubnovian autonomism in the Exile will sustain its Jews even with the existence of the Israeli center in the land [of Israel]*.

We did not come to please the man of the day with our words. To cause, in intention and knowledge. In any case, we are sure that our words will serve as pleasurable for him. And it will make his heart happy to see Hebrew Zionism in the Exile, drinking thirstily from his words.

Appendix I: Zionism in the Exile and Simon Dubnow (Translation)

I know that Simon Dubnow has already dreamed of his *aliyah* to the land [of Israel]. This dream comes, and is postponed, from Passover to Passover.²³² I remember that five years ago Ahad Ha'am was sorry that "Rebbi Shimon" still sat in Berlin, the new Exilic yeshiva, chapters of the Exilic yeshiva within the Exile. And still we bless our man of the day, that after he finishes his Hebrew creation "The History of Hasidut" he will merit to go on *aliyah* soon to the land of Hebrew *work*, to the land of the destiny and future of the history of Israel.

S. Rawidowicz

²³² The Passover Seder traditionally ends with the call "Next year in Jerusalem!"

Appendix I: Two Questions that are One (Translation)

Simon Rawidowicz, “Two Questions that are One” (Hebrew: Shte She’elot She-Hen Ehat), *Moznayim*, 5 March 1931, 7–9; 12 March 1931, 8–9.

Part I: *Moznayim*, March 5, 1931, pp. 7-9:

When I read Asher Barash’s speech “Literature of a Tribe or Literature of a People?”²³³ in the last edition of *Moznayim*, I was thrown into the complex of feelings of one who had heard the echo of his voice after a long pause, as an echo that came after despair [that it would not come], when I would not dare to hope that it would come... Finally, the echo has arrived. When I published my article “For the Renewal of Our Literature”²³⁴ in *Ha-Olam*, I worried that I would be a voice crying out in the wilderness.²³⁵ In this hour, when people are focused upon other political and economic issues, on “Yavneh and her sages,” no one pays attention to the “Yavneh” that is in Jerusalem and in New York, in Warsaw and Kovno, etc. This is a good sign for our literature in the land of Israel, which does not lull itself during *Pseukei D’zimra*,²³⁶ and goes out and inquires throughout the land, even to the Jews in the Exile and their literature. This time has arrived. And so, I congratulate Asher Barash that he has gone out to conduct self-criticism [on this issue], both of himself and the collective. And in this, our souls are one. Therefore, let us expound upon this. As we will see, the question of literature and culture in the land of Israel is but a question of Hebrew literature and culture in the Exile, two that are one.

²³³ Hebrew: “Sifrut shel Shevet O Sifrut shel Am?”

²³⁴ Hebrew: “Le-shem Hidush Sifroteinu”

²³⁵ Isaiah 40:3, קול קולא במדבר פנו דרך יהודה ושרו בערבה מסלה לאלהינו

²³⁶ Preliminary morning prayer service. Alternately “which does not congratulate itself with songs of self-praise.”

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I am honored to have “motivated” the consultation of writers in the land [of Israel] on the future of our culture and literature. If only this question would not be taken off the agenda until they find its solution! There are two aspects²³⁷ to this question, but they are one: The aspect of the land of Israel on one hand, and the aspect of the Diaspora on the other. We hear from Barash terrifying things from the side of the land of Israel, such that will shock the hearts of those both in the land of Israel and the Exile, the hearts of all who are “not paying attention,”²³⁸ saying “All is well, all is well,”²³⁹ but do not see the “*Mina, Mina Takel U-pharsin*”²⁴⁰ that is written – but not yet sealed – on the wall of our lives. I praise those who “dare” to say words such as these:²⁴¹ “If time should pass²⁴² and we (the Jews of the land of Israel and her writers) will be separated more and more from world Jewry and there will not be spiritual, personal and cultural connections between us, we will decline and become focused on insignificant issues and conflicts that are not worth the interest of the world, even the Jewish world”; “If we keep the lake (the land of Israel) isolated [from other bodies of water], its waters will flow [away], and it will become saltier and saltier, and after a long time, God forbid, it may become like the Dead Sea”; “If the process of amputation from Jewry in Exile in the spiritual and literary senses continues, it will bring misfortune to all of our people, both here and there. Those who remain here to run the spiritual industry and achieve all kinds of profit from exporting to [the Diaspora] are making a big mistake. A number of men of action,

²³⁷ Lit. “sides”

²³⁸ Zephaniah 1:12: וְהָיָה בְּעֵת הַהִיא אֶחָפֵז אֶת־רִירוֹשָׁלַם בְּגֵרוֹת וּפְקֻדָתַי עַל־הָאֲנָשִׁים הַקָּפְאִים
עַל־שְׁמֵרֵיהֶם הָאֲמֹרִים בְּלִבָּם לֹא־יֵיטִיב וְהָיָה וְלֹא יָרַע

²³⁹ Lit. “Shalom, shalom.” See Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11: לֹא־אֲמַר שְׁלֹום וְשְׁלֹום וְאֵין שְׁלֹום

²⁴⁰ Daniel 5:25: וּדְגָה כְּתֻבָּא דִּי רְשָׁים מְנָא מְנָא תִּקְל וּפְרָסִין

²⁴¹ Following quotes from Asher Barash’s “Literature of a Tribe or Literature of a People?” (Hebrew: Sifrut Shel Shevet O Sifrut Shel Am?).

²⁴² Lit. “If the days lengthen”

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knowledgeable of the publishing industry – they already tried that, and failed. The Hebrew literature in the land [of Israel] arrived there only as a distant echo, and in the passage of the ocean became bloated and lost its voice...”; “It is not enough, it seems, to export intellectual goods. They will be interested in the literary goods that we create here only when they feel the need, to which they also give something, in which they also participate in the creation (of the nation)”; “Therefore, the hope and future of our literature is as a shared creative effort of the Hebrew nation in the land [of Israel] and the Exile; if the small portion (in the land of Israel) does not participate in this national-humanistic literary creative action (in all of world Jewry) – so the literature of the collective, discussed here, will decline and a revival will not follow.” There are those who believe that the explication of these “secrets” constitutes in some way a betrayal of “patriotism” to the land of Israel. It is just the opposite: only this explication of the truth, and not vain proclamations and voodoo,²⁴³ will *save* Israel. “Truth from the land of Israel” – only of this is the Exile and the land of Israel in need. Pronouncing belief is not a remedy. In the land of Israel, do not pray before sleep for the Hebrew spiritual creativity in the Exile.²⁴⁴ Do not accept the decree of today’s situation, and do not see in it a sign for the generations [to come]. Let them not say: The Hebrew Exile is discussed to death – and after the decree of history, there is nothing [to discuss]. Do not believe in solutions that are only evasions, in Hebrew writers in the land of Israel’s criticism of

²⁴³ Lit. “whispers on the injury”

²⁴⁴ This section makes use of a unique grammatical construct, using the prohibitive form “Al” in conjunction with a third-person imperfect. It is possible that this is equivalent to the normal prohibitive, except for the first strophe (“Do not pray before sleep...”) seems out of place because Rawidowicz seemingly would want Jews of the land of Israel to care for the Diaspora. Possibly here, the author means that the Diaspora does not *need* the land of Israel to worry so much about it – an understanding of the Diaspora as needing a sort of auto-emancipation.

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America and American Hebrew writers of the land of Israel, etc. The time has arrived to liberate ourselves from all these technical ruses (lowering the price of books, sending traveling agents, “book sellers” from the land of Israel to the Exile, etc.), [as well as the claims] that we cannot firmly base the Hebrew culture in the land [of Israel] and cannot set down a foundation for Hebrew culture in the Exile. The creators in the land of Israel will proclaim their conclusion to the leaders of the people: The cultural position of the Exilic Jews²⁴⁵ cannot remain as it is! Breathe the spirit of creation into these Jews,²⁴⁶ and in this we will also generate ourselves; when Exilic Jewry surrenders, we will become stronger and be reinforced. This is the way to create the literature of a people, the science of a people, the art of a people (not popular culture, in the common understanding – this is not what we have yearned for – but rather a culture that nurses the soul of the ingathered people and fertilizes its life), Hebrew literature that will be a reflection of the soul of Israel. This has not yet entirely gone on *aliyah* from Babylonia, and will not completely leave the people of Israel²⁴⁷ in the Exile. This is the way to create literature and science that has within it creativity, stamped with the signature of Israel.

When I said these things in my speech in Berlin²⁴⁸ and in the previously mentioned articles, writers from the Exile demanded that I [take the next step, and] insult the land of Israel... as if I came to beat down on our Zionist aspirations! This is the primitive thought process of some of those in our camp in the Exile and in the land [of Israel]: if it is possible and if it is necessary to establish cultural and literary foundations

²⁴⁵ See Simon Rawidowicz, “On Interpretation,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 26 (1957): 120. Here he uses the term “Exilic Israel.”

²⁴⁶ Lit. “Go and insert the spirit of creativity to these Jews”

²⁴⁷ Lit. “assembly of Israel” (*Knesset Yisrael*)

²⁴⁸ It is unclear which speech in Berlin is referred to here.

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in the Exile, what is the need for the land of Israel? Because it was established thus, the land of Israel is necessary for the soul and body of the nation like the spark of life. It follows that not a single “remnant of the survivors and refugees” of Hebrew creativity remain. And thus you find that most of the Zionists of the Exile, between east and west, return their Torah [teaching] to Sinai: The Torah is the Torah of the land of Israel! The demands of the Hebrew culture in the Exile were placed on a “*Kazayit*,”²⁴⁹ for the blessing of “fulfilling their obligation.” One hundred and fifty excuses will be found to accept the decree of the destruction of Hebrew in the Exile. In the hour of depression, they leap behind the guise of “economics,” etc.: Before you invest money in the cultural activity in the Exile, before you risk your lives for the establishment of a forum for literature, for life and science in the Exile, go and establish this forum in the land of the flowering of our literature, and you will see a blessing from your labor. It flows easily from their lips: It is forbidden to establish Hebrew literature and science in the Exile, the wilderness; there is no earth for his feet and no sky for his head. In the Exile, it is necessary, the scientific and literate activity will become concentrated in the hands of the Yiddishists (*Yiddish-Wissenschaftlicher Institute*, etc). And in the land of Israel – everything is “natural” in the pursuit of natural [Jewishness]. And we recognize: Natural or unnatural – nature comes first.

Every true idea, for this hour or for generations, is liable to become an obstacle for its holders [eventually] – when they do not understand it correctly,²⁵⁰ or interpret it according to its appearance! The announcement of the primacy of the land of Israel in

²⁴⁹ Rabbinic term for the size of an olive, used to specify the minimum amount for legal obligation. For example, a person is allowed to eat on Yom Kippur up until the size of a “*kazayit*.”

²⁵⁰ Lit. “according to Jewish law”

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Jewish life in the Exile – this is really only posturing. However, how great is the danger of this idea, in that it infers weird conclusions such as “Negation” of the Exile (as if it could truly happen), which is in reality but the negation of Judaism in the Exile and the affirmation of assimilation and total destruction. When they come and demand in the name of this great “bourgeois” to bring an end to the latest literary experiments in the Exile, when they come and say: God forbid that Exilic Jewry create Hebrew cultural goods and the land of Israel fill with their shortcomings, and [the land of Israel] will not need to prepare dinner [for itself], but will receive its sustenance from above, “stamped” with a stamp on newspapers and books, on banknotes to different foundations, etc. As if there is no place in the Exile except for “official” Judaism, and not for creative Judaism! And no one points out²⁵¹ – if it will not be creating, then from where will it be “stamped”?

Some messengers appointed²⁵² [sic] by the Zionist propaganda [machine] believe that it is a national obligation to explain to the community of Israel in the Diaspora of the Exile²⁵³ that the Land of Israel serves today as the “Garden of Eden” for Hebrew culture, for literature, for science and for art; and all the experiments that were done and that will be done in the future in the spiritual realm by Jews of the Exile are nothing but absurd works of “worthlessness” and so on. They say: [Take] your will in Hebrew culture, in Hebrew literature and in science – go to the land of Israel! For in the Exile there is no basis, no foundation, no future for your cultural enterprise, and all the more so – there is no need!

²⁵¹ Lit. “and these do not raise upon their hearts”

²⁵² Missing letter, possibly nun [*memunim*]

²⁵³ קהל ישראל שבתפוצות הגולה

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Could the propaganda of “renaissance” really bring a blessing of plenty to our world? What does the community of Israel in the Exile learn from this propaganda, really? There is nothing to learn, except that the side of negation that pushes this propaganda accepts – with pleasure or deep regret – that it not necessary to do any Hebrew cultural work in the Exile, as if the hour has arrived to abandon the Exile and to transfer her to the assimilationists and the Yiddishists. And it is worth it and fitting to do this, [almost] as if it were a national positive-commandment – here is the Hebrew cultural ideal, that the nation dreamed of for so many years, materializing in the land of Israel. And so, why all this Israeli cultural struggle in the lands of the Exile? This is really completely worthless. Does the community of Israel in the Exile really conclude with the affirmation of this same propaganda (that in my opinion is evil and dangerous no matter your point-of-view)? Does this Zionist propaganda really convince the Israeli living in the Exile – whether he comes from the right or from the left, from the side of the disciples of Jabotinsky or from those bound up in the Labor movement – to participate in the partnership with the reality of the cultural enterprise in the land [of Israel]? No and no.

And here lies the awful²⁵⁴ danger of destruction: abandoning the Exile, doing the minimum of their obligation to say the “*Kaddish Derabanan*”²⁵⁵ on its wretchedness, and still not building the heavenly Land of Israel. And how many excuses and rationales are there for this Zionist propaganda. And the cultural needs of the land [of Israel]? The various foundations care for this, and so what are we to do?

²⁵⁴ From אָר (fearful)

²⁵⁵ Special prayer said after learning Torah

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The time has arrived for the spokespeople of Zionism, their hearts full of the Hebrew culture, to consider these issues and consult on the risks. You cannot imagine just how much cultural destruction spreads in Israel as a result of this propaganda. Better that this does not ever come into the world, destroying the Exile and not creating in the land [of Israel].

If this were a question of the distribution of books, of conquering the cultural marketplace, of economic stipulations for the spread of cultural value from the land of Israel to the Exile, if it was just a technical question, a question of the organization of the export of books, grapes, or another branch of “products of the land [of Israel]” to outside the land [of Israel] – I would not feel required to deal with this question. If it were such, it would be enough to cast the yoke of solving all these problems upon the back of the “publishers” and the rest of the “interested people” that deal with these issues. However, all these issues beg the solution of one foundational question, the basis of the majority of the questions of our lives in the land of Israel and the Exile.

The time has arrived to bring forward²⁵⁶ this question in all its harshness and extremity, as is the best way to clarify heavy questions of this sort. Can the strength of the land of Israel *alone*, the land of Israel in our days and the land of Israel in the near future, create the culture of Israel *in its entirety*, as was desired and yearned for by tens of generations that dreamed and sacrificed their lives for it?

There is no mercy in judgment, and we cannot but return to the question of negation, full and automatic-reflexive negation of one of a number of positions.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Lit “stand up”

²⁵⁷ Lit. “sides”

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Can Exilic Jewry realize this mission *on their own*? No and no. From this one learns: The complete and yearned-for Jewish culture, a culture that will be pleasant for the ancient, traditional nation, for the nation of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, etc. will never come except from a working partnership between the land of Israel and the Exile. The culture of Israel that will come in the future – culture in the basic meaning and also in the “wide” meaning in the language of the “masses;” not just literature and enlightenment, not a culture that acts as a framework for the life a pseudo-state, but a culture that *is* the life, the state, and that which is wrapped up in them – has two partners: The land of Israel and the Jews and the Diaspora. It is not up for judgment, and neither is any portion of the “shares” of this partnership up for sale. History will come in the 25th or 30th centuries to decide; we will deposit our fate in its keeping. So long as most of the People of Israel and its upbuilding is found in the Diaspora,²⁵⁸ there will not be a complete culture of Israel without the partnership in the creativity of these Jews that are in the Diaspora. (Also here you see how great is the ignorance, cultural shallowness, and danger of the well-known “negation” of the Exile. The negator of the Exile causes damage to our cause of the Israeli renaissance. This is not the place to expand on this item.) If the complete renaissance of Israel is a common enterprise, how will we be able to despise the “*Hilchot Shuftin*” (laws of partnership, Aramaic)? Therefore, we must painstakingly examine the ways of our cultural enterprise and its systems, in order to set up its authority, in the authority of *shuftin* (partnership, Aramaic).

²⁵⁸ כל שעה שרוב מנינה ורוב בנינה של כנסת ישראל נצויים בתפוצות

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And one more aspect²⁵⁹ of the question: If we do not convince the land of Israel soon to join the internal joint cultural effort²⁶⁰ with the national Exile, the danger is great that with the cultural “independence” in the realm of Jewish culture, Jews of the Diaspora will take a different road, and develop in ways²⁶¹ that are not desirable for our enterprise in the land [of Israel]. The danger is great that a rising push within national Exilic Jewry for “freedom” from the land of Israel will develop in a way not desired by the historic Israeli project in the 20th century! We must respond to our comrades who proclaim – and there are people even in recent years that say these sorts of things – that the land of Israel takes from the Exile everything that it has in life and thought, and does not give anything [back]; the land of Israel is made “to consume and not to create”;²⁶² that the [Zionist] movement in the Exile is nothing but a movement to strengthen itself and does not bring any renewal to the People of Israel in the Exile. It only builds bridges to itself, and establishes Temples for itself. Even were the land of Israel able to quickly absorb even part of all the millions of Jews in the Exile that see themselves as part of the people of Israel,²⁶³ and wanted them with all their hearts, well and good. But given the current situation, or even if it changes for the better, this will not be able to answer the question of Israel that [remains] in the Exile. Even if the land of Israel is entitled to take – in content and in spirit – take and not give, influenced and is not influencing, merits and not

²⁵⁹ Lit. “side”

²⁶⁰ Alternately “internal cultural working partnership”

²⁶¹ Lit. “take form” or “metamorphose”

²⁶² Lit. “to eat and not to make”

²⁶³ Lit. “that are living Israeli lives”

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giving rights?... Israel that is in the Exile wants a future Israeli life to go according to its needs, and may direct their prayers towards another heaven...²⁶⁴

Here many foundational, core problems for our future in the land [of Israel] and in the Exile are stowed away. The “political” Zionism, the official Zionism, the practical Zionism, in all its forms, conceals this complex of problems. However, our “Divine camp,” the camp of Hebrew creativity, religious Jews, scientists, and writers, are not allowed to speak their minds even for a brief moment on this foundational question; appropriate for men of science and literature. The subject of the yoke of culture in the land [of Israel] will require time also for these questions, that they are definitely alive in all types of Israeli life. When men of spirit, creators in the land of Israel treat this question of the existence of Israel in the Exile, its economic and cultural issues, and not in a temporary fashion, the “emptiness” in the spiritual life of the land of Israel will be filled, this that the best creators feel, as a result of this a number of defective aspects of the soul of the land of Israel will be corrected. And if you do these things in truth and belief, finally we will create a full Hebrew culture, finally the creators will have the chance to feel that they are rolling their Torah scroll “for the eyes of all Israel,”²⁶⁵ that all Israel has partnered in its creation, partners in giving and receiving, enjoying and enjoyable, finally partners in strength and partners in action.

²⁶⁴ Lit. “request a new sky for its prayers”

²⁶⁵ See Deut. 31:7, 34:12; Josh. 3:7, 4:14; 2 Samuel 16:22; 1 Kings 1:20; 1 Chronicles 28:8, 29:25. This idiom appears to be used with regards to the establishment of leaders for the ancient Israelites.

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Part II: *Moznayim*, March 12, 1931, 8–9:

We still stand at the beginning of the development of the relationship between the land of Israel and the Exile. Does the land of Israel in our days have the strength to act as a “center” for the Exile? – on this question I will not pass judgment here. Has the land of Israel since the [first world] war produced literature, science and art that can fertilize the untamed hearts of Exilic Jewry to create and self-determinate? – I will not discuss this here either. It is necessary for us to cleanse the hearts of the Exile and the land of Israel. “Influencers” and all kinds of “agents,” those supposedly fighting for the honor of the land of Israel, who explain that the land of Israel will not be built except through the destruction of the Exile, culturally and nationally, do not stand among us!²⁶⁶ I have heard from²⁶⁷ Hebrew writers that it is a “sin” to publish Hebrew books in the Exile. They say: There are publishers in the land of Israel guilty of the sin of national “treachery” for saying that it is time to set up shop for Hebrew literature in the Exile – even for the sake of the development²⁶⁸ of literature in the land [of Israel]. Certainly we must free ourselves from some of this form of “stewardship” for the sake of strengthening the ties between the cultural Exile and the renewed land of Israel.

People have, and always will, make *aliyah* from Babylonia to the land of Israel, and make *yeridah* from the land of Israel to Babylonia. However, Babylonia does not have a new Babylonian Talmud, and [neither does] the land of Israel have a Jerusalem Talmud of its own. The gates of Babylonia are open to the land of Israel, and vice-versa.

²⁶⁶ See note 244 regarding the use of the third-person prohibitive. Also, in this case and in a few other places, I have inverted Rawidowicz’s somewhat confusing sentence structures for the ease of the reader.

²⁶⁷ Lit. “from the mouth of Hebrew writers”

²⁶⁸ Lit. “fortification”

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It is still seen as a hope to create a *Babylonian-Jerusalem* Talmud.²⁶⁹ We can still take preventative steps against the growing separation between the new Babylon (of which there is more than one in our day) and the new land of Israel. The creators of the spirit of Israel and those who cherish her, both in the land [of Israel] and in the Exile, will be creators, each in his own country and place. It should come out of the recognition of [the] nation, and not out of haughtiness or the modesty of a *tribe*. It should spring from a common source and cause, for the Israeli Babylon and for the land of Israel. Therefore, I thank he who has revealed: “We must cease this worthless and evil relationship, which treats with indifference everything which occurs in the mind and heart²⁷⁰ of our brothers in all of the lands.”²⁷¹ In recent years, I have unfortunately encountered an excessive number of people on the side of the land of Israel who lack an understanding of the life of Israel in the Exile and its needs. In my heart, melancholy thoughts were awakened that I was concerned to discover: Do we still hold, together, a single Tallit? A Babylonian, who gone on *aliyah* to the land of Israel, stands from morning ‘till night, ecstatic. A resident of the land of Israel, who has gone on *yerida* to Babylonia stands all day and wishes to abolish these Jews of Babylonia, the wretched, the “good-for-nothing”, etc. etc His mercy on them is the mercy of a complete man, a man who has ascended to the highest summit, who blesses God in everything – on a man that does not have anything... (And I do not deny that the activities in the land of Israel may excite anyone who lays eyes upon them, while Jewish life in the Exile might not excite anyone, whether they be from the land [of Israel] or the Exile)... It would not be worth it to discuss these viewpoints – why, who

²⁶⁹ תלמוד בבלי ירושלמי

²⁷⁰ “Mind and heart” are singular due to unity of Israel

²⁷¹ Asher Barash, “Literature of a Tribe or Literature of a People?” (Hebrew: Sifrut Shel Shevet O Sifrut Shel Am?), *Moznayim*, 22 January 1931, 11.

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can discuss all forms of superficiality in life, both in the public and private spheres? – if there were not great dangers bound up in the task, dangers to the land of Israel and to the Exile as one, and here is hidden [our] decisive historical mission: *to guard the appearance*²⁷² *of the unity of Israel*. And who is more appropriate and able to receive the responsibility of the history of Israel, to guard the unity of Israel for the future, than the people of spirit and the creators in Israel?

A voice from the land of Israel must be heard in the camp of those who seek the existence of Israel in the Exile: “Exilic Israel,” says the land of Israel that is to be built, “casts upon you the obligation of a national and *independent* life! Stand on guard of your creative life, internal and external, do not fulfill your obligation of Israeli life in the land of Israel. It is work that will be fulfilled by others. You are not a workman, who is obligated to cultivation and growing, so enjoy your days as you will, they will not be made from the spark of life. Our brothers in the Diaspora, plant vineyards for the Hebrew culture in the Exile and eat the fruit thereof. Do not trust [solely] in us, do not rest on the table of the land of Israel only! Set a table for Hebrew culture in the Exile; make your Hebrew culture and set a place for it at the head of your Israeli life. In Exile, you do not have any form of free national sustenance of your own, and no standing, set Israeli policy. The two tablets of culture are in your hands – teach them to your children and speak of them... To the measure that you will establish – of your will and from the joy of creation – the Israeli cultural life in the Diaspora, to the measure that you will strive to correct Hebrew creation of all kinds, to the measure that you will make the culture of Israel in the Israeli Exile profitable and make use of its own language – to this extent you

²⁷² פרצוף

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will aid in the revival of the spirit of Israel in the lands of the Exile as well as the deepening and enriching of the Hebrew creation in the land of Israel. The land of Israel does not have any hope in a Diaspora that goes and loses its will to create intentionally and with full knowledge,²⁷³ *that castrates itself for the sake of the land of Israel*, breaks its Israeli creative faculties “for the sake of heaven”... and if the Exile does not arrive to the level of desired Israelite completeness – you are not obligated to finish the work, but still you are not free from refrain from your obligation to create the spirit of Israel, in all its forms...”

The time has arrived to review the truth that is in our hands. Agree that there are two partners in the enterprise of our Israeli renewal, as has been said above, we need to announce this, that literature and science will not arrive in the land of Israel completely, Hebrew-humanistically, as desired, without the all parts of national Jewry, the Jews who want to be a part of the life of Israel, taking part in its creation. The Hebrew creativity of the land of Israel will not penetrate the hearts and minds of the People of Israel in the Exile,²⁷⁴ unless they will be a part of the Hebrew culture, a part of the Hebrew creativity, within the borders of the cultural values of Israel. If the People of Israel in the Exile “receive” only – in the end, Israel will be a “fragmented” people, made into “fragments” as was the old settlement in the land of Israel, and a spiritual-cultural “fragmentation” in the Exile, in place of an entirely settled “fragmentation” as in the past generation. Exilic Jewry cannot establish itself as a “fragment,” and the land of Israel cannot be built from an Exilic Jewry that is only a company for export and import in the eyes of the land of Israel, Inc... It is clear that in the coming years, the Exile will weaken and its export

²⁷³ Lit. “that goes and loses – and also knowingly and with intention – its will to create”

²⁷⁴ כנסת ישראל שבגולה

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(money and people to the land of Israel) and its import (cultural value, books, etc. etc.) will become smaller until the point of nothingness. There is no life except creativity, and a public that does not create does not live. And what is the hope of the land of Israel from this public? Many of the conceptual combinations in this arena need to fix up the teaching of the “spiritual” Zionism from the previous generation. In another place, I have proven how the teachings of the “center” and “circumference” in the teaching of Ahad Ha’am are inadequate, how dangerous is the division of labor²⁷⁵ between the center and the circumference, as if the center will live a full life and the circumference will only take a part of it. The example of “partners” in the Platonic ideal is as if the labor of national life has been delivered to the “center” and the job of receiving, of breast-feeding the abundance of their life, looking into that life that is delivered to most of Israel among the nations... and I see an obligation to reiterate:²⁷⁶ If there will not be a ‘circumference’ creating and giving of itself – there will not be a center! The center will not influence the circumference, but rather will be a lonely point of view, without any circumference surrounding it. In other words, a ‘center’ that shines for itself and does not for another... if it will be the judgment of the connection of the circumference and the center, it will be as the relationship between themselves and the ideal of the teaching of Plato, the center will be a “Platonic” center, and the circumference will be a “Platonic” circumference – not a center and not a circumference. And we say, center and circumference hold together one Tallit, they are involved in one body, the two of them live as one, the two of them create as one, the two of them live the same life with some differences, the two of them

²⁷⁵ Lit. “division of functions”. Here I translate it as “labor” for the sake of the English phraseology but also for the metaphor. However, this metaphor is lacking in the Hebrew and there is no language of birthing outside of “breast-feeding”

²⁷⁶ Lit. “to return on my things”

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create the same creation with some difference – the center in a “central” way, and the circumference in a “circumferential” way.

* * *

Inasmuch as I have demanded a renewal of culture and literature in the Exile, I have not done so as an “Exilic” Jew, not because I will remain in the Exile, but rather that even if I lived in the land of Israel, I would not change my stance on our culture in the Exile – as our friends in the land of Israel came and stood up the community of Israel on the great danger of monopoly – resembling a monopoly – that will place all of the national culture in the safekeeping of the hands of the land of Israel in our day. Thus came the writers of the “center” to demand the existence of a creative Hebrew culture in the great “circumference,” in the Diaspora of Israel wherever they are, the existence of Hebrew science of literature for the Jews of the Exile and on this to bless it.

The time to act has arrived. Written between these lines is an ideological and political platform for the creation of a worldwide Hebrew society, that [will require] diligent labor to correct Hebrew creativity, for the revival of Judaism in the Exile and for the strengthening of creativity of our cultural enterprise in the land [of Israel]. I hope that businessmen and writers, participating in this activity (in the meantime in Berlin and in Warsaw) will really build our renewed culture. Would that we will merit to call a congress for Hebrew culture – if not, due to some extremely important internal or external reason for delay – by the end of the coming summer, to open a new chapter in the book of our creativity.

Berlin, February 1931.

Appendix I: Existential Partnership (Translation)

Simon Rawidowicz, “Existential Partnership” (Hebrew: Shutefut Shel Kiyum), *Ha-Olam*, 19 May 1932, 291–293; 26 May 1932, 306–308; 2 June 1932, 322–325.

I: Foundational Remarks on the Teaching of Partnership

In place of the accepted teaching of “center and circumference,” I have presented and clarified numerous times the idea of *partnership* between [the] Exile and [the] land [of Israel]. There are those who see in my idea a “sin” for which I have not atoned, but even these who are not accustomed to rummaging in others’ sins can find something that is not according to Jewish law. Therefore, I see that I must hint here briefly regarding this idea of partnership, as it appears to me that I have placed it in a primary position in the clarification of the question of “[the] land [of Israel] and [the] Diaspora.”

This partnership is not to be understood as it is implemented²⁷⁷ and accepted in practice²⁷⁸, in the world of economics and policy; this partnership does not exist in those worlds. In them, [rather,] the concept [of partnership] is desecrated. All who want to seriously consider the essential nature of this idea of ours must free themselves from all that is established and accepted in it. This partnership of which we speak is explained thus: Partnership to [the] root and foundation, not partnership for the sake of a particular goal, but rather partnership in life and death. This is not partnership for a set time, but partnership everlasting, partnership that according to its internal essence can never cease to be. You find in this idea, like the dogmas of all basic ideas, both *affirmation and negation* together. Its affirmation is an everlasting affirmation, and its negation is an

²⁷⁷ Lit. “as it acts”

²⁷⁸ Lit. “in the world of practicalities” or “the world of practice”

Appendix I: Existential Partnership (Translation)

everlasting negation; the partnership both affirms and negates. This partnership says: *No independence of one of the two partners of this partnership, and no one partner can exist fully if its partner is absent.* Not only does neither of the two partners have independence, “right of monopoly,” and so on, but by taking on the responsibility²⁷⁹ of this partnership, they declare that they will never be alone. This is not a partnership of two *partners complete in themselves*, complete in that they are independent and separate when they are alone, but of two halves, halves that make up a single whole together, two that each requires the existence of the other [to continue]. This partnership is both *willed and necessary*, determined together, partnership that is both foreseen and “free will” together.²⁸⁰ Elementary partnership such as this lives and exists by the strength of *destiny*, and the secret of its existence lies in destiny, existence that is necessary. [From this] partnership, there is no shelter or refuge for either partner. If one partner goes out from the discipline of this partnership, he will disappear from the world, because there is no other possibility for existence except via [this] partnership. And in order to “give a clear explanation,” or to bring an understanding of this partnership into reality, as much as it has been said before, filling the world of thought – I add and say: This is not a partnership of *sides* (and regrettably, this Hebrew word [panim] is not understood in its full foundational depth, and when I say it, I mean in a deeper and more basic meaning than that which is accepted). Partnership of *side* and *side* in *sides*, of two sides of a “face.”²⁸¹ Can the reality of the sides be depicted in the absence of the other?! Is it really possible that one side of the face will not heed the same natural law, the laws of life and

²⁷⁹ Lit. “authority”

²⁸⁰ See Pirkei Avot 3:19: הכול צפוי, והרשות נתונה

²⁸¹ שותפות של פן ופן בפנים, שני פנים בפרצוף

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death,²⁸² that are twisted by the other side? One side will be a sponge for the light of the sun, and the second will be the source of the rays of this “artificial sun”?! In one side, the bloodstream will be strong, and the other – a dripping? We say: Not *sides* but *side* and *side*, and even the faces of Israel are *side* and *side*.

If asked²⁸³ to clarify my thoughts by way of philosophy, I would respond by adding: This partnership between the side of the land [of Israel] and the side of the Diaspora in the face of Israel has some sort of connection (as a connection between them and a connection to itself) to the two descriptions of “Thought” and “Extension” in the teaching of *Baruch Spinoza*.²⁸⁴ “Thought” and “Extension” are two descriptions of the same thing (Substance). The substance – God – reveals itself in both of them. If you hold only one of them, “Thought” or “Extension” – there is no substance, as we know.²⁸⁵

* * *

Theoretical opponents of the teaching of this partnership (and until now they have not completely understood it) advocate for dualism, for two authorities, and so on. And there is no sense in any of these complaints. In truth, the accepted Zionist monism is nothing but a fictitious one, a *pseudo-monism*, its foundation is in a mistaken recognition. (On the foundations of this fictitious monism in the psychological ethos of the past centuries, I will not speak here) This accepted viewpoint does properly understand the secret of the unity of Israel. The impressed concept of unity has nothing in its foundation but the idea of *half-ism*, half-ism and separatism that see themselves as the whole. And

²⁸² Lit. “being and stopping”

²⁸³ Lit. “unraveled to me”

²⁸⁴ See Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

²⁸⁵ Lit. “and these matters are known”

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we accept²⁸⁶ that no half or part ever serves as the whole. In the accepted viewpoint is engraved the idea of *single-sidedness*, single-sidedness that wishes to see itself as the *whole*, as *the true whole*.²⁸⁷ And via this partnership clarified here, we rise to a new level of *unity* in the question of Israel, the unity of Israel, its sides and its destiny.²⁸⁸ And from this we say: This partnership, explained, is unity to the root and foundation, unity in life and death, unity of destiny. The opposition teaching sinks completely into dualism and *half-ism*, such that the Tallit²⁸⁹ of unity is not spread out upon them except for the sake of being seen.

And one more thing: Those who see this partnership as an affront to the land of Israel in our days are making a big mistake. I do not preach for a partnership between Jerusalem and New York, between Tel-Aviv and Warsaw, between a particular settlement or community [in the land of Israel] and another city in the Diaspora. This partnership is not a partnership between “trees and rocks” that grow here and are built there. The partnership is a partnership between *Israel here and there*, between Israel and Israel, between Jew and Jew, between Jewry and Jewry. The partnership is a partnership in the *destiny of Israel*, the destiny that will fall not here only and not there only, but here and there as one, not in the authority of this partner and not in the other, but in the *authority of partnership* as a whole, in the authority of both of them and singularly. And this destiny will be determined not only in the land of Israel but *in all of Israel*.

I have touched upon here only one detail of the *essence* of the teaching of partnership. On other questions caught up in this idea I will deal in another place.

²⁸⁶ Lit. “accepted in our hands”

²⁸⁷ Lit. “who sees themselves as sides, the true sides”

²⁸⁸ Lit. “its destiny”

²⁸⁹ Jewish prayer shawl.

Appendix I: Existential Partnership (Translation)

Practically *one* of the conclusions of the teaching of partnership is: Even *here* it is needed to renew the life of Israel from a recognition of this partnership, even *here* it is necessary to fight for the rights of the spirit of Israel, even here Israel is obligated to live a life of creativity in all its forms, according to its time and place. Here and there, Israel stands on guard and renews its creativity. Here and there – the same thing. The there needs the here, and the here needs the there.

And if not here – where will we find refuge? If not here – where? If not here – nowhere. Here and there, there and here – this is the teaching of the partnership between the land [of Israel] and the Diaspora.

[There are three additional sections in this article, not translated here. They include: “Miscellaneous items,” “Not Zionists, but Zionism,” and “Garden of Eden and Gehenom.”]

Appendix II: Glossary

Notable Historical Figures

Dubnow, Simon (1860 – 1941) was an important historian of Eastern European Jewry, who also wrote a multi-volume history of the Jews. His major research focused on the history of Hassidism, and he developed the theories of autonomism and the idea of multiple centers of Jewish culture.

Ginzberg, Asher (1856 – 1927), writing under the pseudonym **Ahad Ha'am**, was a famous Zionist writer who developed the concepts of Spiritual Zionism, Imitation, and Center/Circumference. This differentiated him from political Zionists who advocated that all Jews move to the land of Israel.

Herzl, Theodor (1860 – 1904) was an Austrian Jewish writer and reporter famous for his publication of *The Jewish State* in 1897. As a leader of the nascent Zionist movement, he advocated for the establishment of a Jewish state and the ingathering of all Jews under the auspices of this state.

Klatzkin, Jacob (1882 – 1948) was a scholar of Jewish thought who lived in Berlin during the Weimar period. An editor of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, he was a participant at the Preliminary Hebrew Conference and an active member of the *Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri*. A competitor for many of the same jobs as Simon Rawidowicz, they espoused highly different views on the place of the Diaspora in Jewish life. He would serve briefly at the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago before Rawidowicz's arrival.

Spinoza, Benedictus (1632 – 1677), nee **Baruch Spinoza**, was a Jewish philosopher who wrote about the nature of religion and the state. A major focus of Rawidowicz's scholarly work, in his work *The Ethics* Spinoza proposed the theory of the modes of substance (God) being thought and extension. Rawidowicz invoked this theory when discussing the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora in his article "Theory and Practice."

Notable Historical Terms, Concepts and Organizations

The **Agudat Ha-Sofrim Ha-Ivrim Be-Eretz Yisrael** (The Association of Hebrew Writers in the Land of Israel) was an organization of Hebrew writers that published *Moznayim*.

Autonomism is the movement for the creation of Jewish autonomous regions in various countries. It was created by Simon Dubnow and the *Judische Folkspartay* (Jewish People's Party) in Russia.

The **Beit Ha-Am Ha-Ivri** (Hebrew Community Center) was a center for Hebrew culture established in 1929 in Berlin. It was the site of the 1931 Hebrew Conference and various meetings of the Hebrew-speaking community in Weimar Berlin.

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The ***Brit Ivrit Olamit*** (World Hebrew Union) was an organization founded by Rawidowicz and his colleagues at the 1931 Hebrew Conference. Rawidowicz preferred the name *Brit Ha-Ivrim* (Covenant of the Hebrews) but ultimately the conference set upon the name “*Brit Ivrit Olamit*.”

The ***Bund*** (General Jewish Labor Union) was a political party in various Diaspora countries that advocated a socialist state in which the Jews would be one of many national minorities; they advocated the use of Yiddish. In his keynote address “For the Organization of the Hebrew Exile,” Rawidowicz called for a *modus vivendi* with the Bund for which he criticized by others in the Hebrew movement who saw them as political enemies because of their advocacy of the Yiddish language.

Center and Circumference was a theory proposed by Ahad Ha’am (Asher Ginsberg) based on the idea that all human society imitates; thus for everyone there is a creative center and a circumference that imitates it. Applied to the situation of the Jewish people, center and circumference meant that the land of Israel would develop into a spiritual center which the Diaspora (the circumference) would imitate.

Cultural (Spiritual) Zionism was a form of Zionism developed by Ahad Ha-am (Asher Ginsberg) that did not claim that all Jews should move to the land of Israel but that ultimately the land of Israel will serve as a “spiritual center” or “creative center” for the rest of the Jewish people, who live in the “circumference.”

Davar was a daily Labor Zionist newspaper printed in Tel Aviv. Mostly publishing news relating to the settlements in the land of Israel, occasionally Rawidowicz’s speeches were published here.

Ha-Doar (The Mail) was a Zionist magazine published in New York.

Ha-Olam (The World) was a weekly magazine published by the Zionist Organization. Over its lifespan it was published in a number of different locations; during the 1930s and 1940s, it was published in London. Generally 16 or 20 pages, each issue it contained news updates and commentary.

The **Hebraist movement** was the movement for the advancement of the Hebrew language.

Keren Ha-Yesod (United Israel Appeal, lit. “The Foundation Fund”) and ***Keren Ha-Kayemet*** (The Jewish National Fund) were two of the national foundations established by the Zionist Organization to build the land of Israel and help Jews settle there. Rawidowicz used their existence to justify the creation of a “third national foundation” that focused on life in the Diaspora, i.e. the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*.

Moznayim was a weekly literary magazine published in Tel Aviv by the Association of Hebrew Writers in the Land of Israel. Later it would become a monthly. Each issue, generally around 15-16 pages contained a scattering of, among other things, poetry and

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short stories, commentary, news updates from around the Hebraist movement, book reviews and publishing announcements.

Negation of the Diaspora is an idea in Zionism that devalues Jewish life outside the land of Israel. There were and continue to be varying levels of negation of the Diaspora, but often people who agree with this idea claim that it is impossible to live a full Jewish life outside the land of Israel, and sometimes that the Diaspora is not worth existing.

Political Zionism was a form of Zionism espoused by Theodor Herzl, Haim Weizman and other Zionist leaders that focused primarily on the establishment of a Jewish state by political means. Political Zionism is also generally associated with the concept of negation of the Diaspora.

The **Preliminary Hebrew Conference** (*Ha-Knesia Ha-Ivrit Ha-Mukdemet*) was a conference organized by Rawidowicz and Dov Lipitz in June 1931 to establish the *Brit Ivrit Olamit*. It was meant to be preliminary to a Hebrew conference on a much larger scale; this conference would not happen for over twenty years due to the rise of Nazism, World War Two, and a power struggle between *Brit Ivrit Olamit* factions in London and Tel Aviv.

The **Zionist Organization** was the organization established by Theodor Herzl at the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. Today known as the **World Zionist Organization**, during the 1930s it held conferences every four years.

Zionism is the movement to establish a Jewish state in the land of Israel.

Notable Hebrew Terms and Concepts

Aliyah (from 'lh, meaning to go up) is the act of moving to the land of Israel.

Galut (Exile) is a highly negative term for the Jewish Diaspora used by Zionists to categorize the state of Jews living in the Diaspora using strong valued language. Taking on the connotations implied by the religious concept of exilic histories, it implies that Jews were exiled from their land and as such should return. In a later article, Rawidowicz attacks the idea of an “Exilic mentality” that is used polemically by Zionists of all types to attack their enemies and their political programs.

Galut Ivrit (Hebrew Exile) was Rawidowicz’s conception of a Hebraist Diaspora. It is unclear whether Rawidowicz meant a Hebrew-speaking Diaspora or a Diaspora of the “Hebrew people,” a term used more widely within the Hebraist movement.

Hikui (Imitation) was the idea proposed by Ahad Ha’am that suggested that a rule of human existence is that humans copy others, and as such Diaspora Jews need something to imitate other than the societies in which they live – that option leading towards assimilation. Ahad Ha’am saw authentic Judaism as emanating from the land of Israel and understood that Jews living in their ancient homeland would be able to innovate in way authentically connected to their Jewish roots, which could serve as a spiritual center

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or center for imitation for other Jews who were not as connected to their Jewish roots because of their life in non-Jewish lands.

Pan (Side or face, plural ***panim***) was the metaphor to which Rawidowicz compared the Jewish people. According to Rawidowicz, the Jewish people have two sides but ultimately they are of the same body (or in this case the same head). Just as a human body split into two will die, he envisions a Jewish future in which Jews in the land of Israel and the Diaspora are divorced from one another, leading to a dystopian reality.

Shutefut (Partnership) was Rawidowicz's replacement for Ahad Ha-am's concept of *center and circumference*. As Rawidowicz envisioned it, there would be a partnership between Jews living in the land of Israel and Jews living in the Diaspora, leading to Jewish unity.

The **Talmud** is the records of the Rabbinic arguments of the early Common Era, composed of the Mishna (c. 200 C.E., edited by Judah Ha-Nasi, which is a commentary on the Torah) and the Gemara (c. 500 C.E., which is a commentary on the Mishna). There are two editions of the Talmud, the **Babylonian Talmud** which was developed in Babylonia, and the **Jerusalem** or **Palestinian Talmud** which was developed in the land of Israel. While highly similar in content, and both are authentic within normative Rabbinic Judaism, the Babylonian version is seen as the more authoritative version of the Talmud.

Tfutzot (Diaspora) is a term for the Jewish Diaspora that has a more positive towards life in the Diaspora. Literally meaning "dispersal," it is etymologically related to the terms that refer to the publication and distribution of books. In twenty-first century Hebrew, it is used more often than Galut to refer to the Diaspora.

Torah (Teaching), when used in the writings of Rawidowicz does not mean the Pentateuch but often the teaching or philosophy of an intellectual such as Simon Dubnow, Ahad Ha'am, or others.

Yeridah (from yrd, meaning to descend) is the act of moving away from the land of Israel.

Yetzirah (Creativity) was Rawidowicz's replacement for Ahad Ha-am's concept of *imitation*. Rawidowicz recognized all forms of life as inherently *creative* as opposed to Ahad Ha'am who categorized it as *imitative*, and wrote about the importance of creativity, saying that without creativity there is no life.

Yisrael (Israel) can refer to the *land of Israel*, the *State of Israel*, or the *people of Israel*. As the State of Israel was not yet created at the time studied in this thesis, Rawidowicz generally used the general term "Israel" to refer to the people of Israel and specifically stated "land of Israel" when he meant to refer to the place.

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