

The Maccabean *and The Melting Pot: Contributionist Zionism and American Diversity Discourse, 1903–1915*

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At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Zionist movement in the United States anticipated and helped shape the discourse on American diversity and assimilation. Between 1901 and 1920, the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ), the largest Zionist organization in the United States, published a monthly magazine, *The Maccabean*, out of New York. The Jewish nationalists who contributed to this journal advocated the creation of a Jewish state or autonomous center in Palestine (or elsewhere) while also asserting the compatibility of Zionism and Americanism. In doing so, *Maccabean* authors advanced ideas associated with the metaphor of “the melting pot,” as well as ideas future scholars would associate with terms such as “cultural pluralism” and “cosmopolitanism,” which would all become fixtures in discussions of diversity.

Though scholars have gone to great lengths to distinguish these terms, under the umbrella of Zionism they are linked in advancing a contributionist model to American and global diversity. “Contributionism” refers to minority groups making a positive contribution to the state in which they live, to the majority population, and to all the different groups that live in it. Jewish immigrants would contribute to American society, not just economically, but *culturally*. In the same way, the Jewish state or autonomous region would contribute culturally to world civilization. *Maccabean* writers who advocated the melting pot, cultural pluralism, or cosmopolitanism may have differed on details, but they all presented optimistic visions of Jewish contributions to the United States, balancing

assimilation and Americanization with ethnic pride and communal integrity. *The Maccabean's* synthesis of Zionism and Americanism helped lay the foundations for modern debates over diversity.

Modern Zionism is not the only framework with which to understand the idea of Jewish contributionism. As Jeremy Cohen explains, this ancient idea dates to the Hebrew Bible, is featured in the New Testament, and persists through the medieval, early modern, and modern periods. German thinkers such as Moses Mendelssohn, or the founders of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement, all believed that Jews made a positive addition to German society. Both predate modern Zionism. Books referring to “Jewish contribution(s)” appeared in 1919, 1925, 1927, and 1938. Some invoked Zionism, but others did not.¹ Zionism plays a minor role in Jeremy Cohen and Richard I. Cohen’s 2008 volume, *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization*.

In the American Jewish context, contributionism did not always equal Zionism. To take one example, in the early twentieth century, a group of students founded the Intercollegiate Menorah Association to advance Hebraism—their term for modern, secular Jewish culture—in the United States. The cultural aspect was key. As Daniel Greene notes, these intellectuals advanced “an inclusive definition of American national identity” along with a “cultural definition of Jewish identity.” For some nonreligious Jews, secular Zionism became their expression of Jewish culture. But their project was a thoroughly American one. As Greene observes, while many in the Menorah Association were Zionists, some were not; they preferred a “non-partisan” organization “based on a broader conception of Jewish identity than Zionism alone.” They saw Hebraism primarily as a positive contribution to “the American nation.”²

Zionist contributionism, however, lent a political urgency to the Hebraist project. By helping Jews abroad, American Zionists were helping Jews at home. Moreover, Jewish contributionism in the United

1 Jeremy Cohen, “Introduction,” in *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea*, ed. Jeremy Cohen and Richard I. Cohen (Portland, OR: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 3.

2 Daniel Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism: The Menorah Association and American Diversity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 2, 22, 33.

States was also distinguished by Jews' being just one among many ethnic groups. Americanized Zionism directly engaged the issue of American diversity, encompassing the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and cosmopolitanism, and extending beyond the Jewish community to include all immigrants and minority peoples in the United States. A study of *The Maccabaeen* demonstrates this contributionist rhetoric in the American Zionist context. Though *The Maccabaeen* ran from 1901 to 1920, this study concludes in 1915, when philosopher Horace Meyer Kallen, a frequent contributor to *The Maccabaeen*, most fully developed his idea of cultural pluralism in repudiation of the melting pot. By this point, the contributionist case for American Zionism had been firmly established in the pages of *The Maccabaeen*.

This contributionist framework influenced many non-Jewish intellectuals in the United States, as well as Jews and non-Jews across the globe. It was a Jewish writer from England, a contributor to *The Maccabaeen*, who introduced the term “melting pot” into the zeitgeist. The Zionist origin of the American melting pot, along with responses in *The Maccabaeen*, provides an excellent point of departure for this analysis.

One Play, Many Opinions

On 5 October 1908, *The Melting-Pot*, a play written by English Jew Israel Zangwill (1864–1926), opened in Washington, DC. This was the first significant public use of the term “melting pot,” which would become the defining metaphor for American diversity. The play told the story of David Quixano, a Russian Jewish immigrant to New York. David, a musician, composes an “American symphony” to demonstrate his appreciation for his newfound home. Meanwhile, he falls in love with Vera Revendal, a Russian Christian immigrant to New York. David then discovers that Vera's father, Baron Revendal, had led the pogrom on David's home city of Kishinev, murdering his family. Despite the baron's best efforts, love conquers all in America, and Vera and David live happily ever after.

The romance between these star-crossed lovers reflected a broader and more important phenomenon: the immigrant's love for the United States. David expresses this love while explaining the uniqueness and novelty of American diversity: “America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot

where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming!... Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.”³ The performance, doused in heavy-handed rhetoric of American exceptionalism, impressed the opening night audience, including progressive president Theodore Roosevelt, to whom Zangwill dedicated the play. After the play moved to Chicago, settlement worker and philosopher Jane Addams, who had encountered hundreds of immigrants as director of Hull House, pronounced herself a big fan of Zangwill’s production. For her and Roosevelt, it represented a positive vision for the United States, where foreigners are welcomed with open arms and become Americans like any other, leaving Old World prejudices behind. Each group, Jews included, contributed to the construction of a new ideal American identity.⁴

Not everyone liked Zangwill’s play. Many American Jews denounced what they interpreted as a blatant endorsement of intermarriage, a paean to assimilation that foretold the end of Jews and Judaism in the New World.⁵ Zangwill, a literary celebrity in the Jewish and non-Jewish

3 Israel Zangwill, *The Melting-Pot*, first performed in 1908 and published in 1909. Citation from Edna Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill’s Jewish Plays* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 288. All citations from Zangwill’s *The Melting-Pot* are from the Nahshon volume.

4 Zangwill had been espousing this sort of contributionist rhetoric at least as early as 1895, in his lecture, “The Position of Judaism,” republished in *North American Review* 160, no. 461 (April 1895). See Erik Greenberg, “A Prophet and His People: Israel Zangwill and His American Public, 1892–1926 and Beyond,” doctoral dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 2012, 34–35.

5 As Neil Larry Shumsky has shown, this criticism was largely unfair: *The Melting-Pot* expresses significant ambivalence about assimilation and celebrates the way non-Jewish characters embrace and retain Jewish culture. See Neil Larry Shumsky, “Zangwill’s *The Melting Pot*: Ethnic Tensions on Stage,” *American Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (March 1975): 30–31. Similarly, historian Philip Gleason has brilliantly traced the ambiguous American history of the melting pot idea, labeling it a “symbol of fusion of and confusion” without any fixed meaning. For excellent histories of American discourse on ethnic amalgamation, see Philip Gleason, “The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion?” *American Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1964): 20–46; and Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), esp. ch. 3, “Melting Pots.”

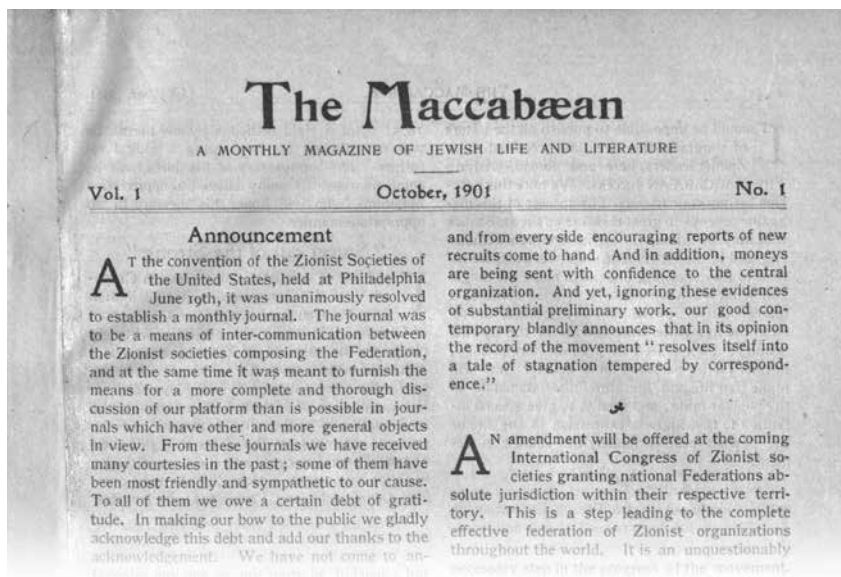
worlds, had married a non-Jewish woman, feminist Edith Ayrton, in 1903.⁶ It was not a huge leap to imagine David Quixano as a stand-in for the playwright and Vera for his wife. Those who took that leap believed Zangwill was encouraging American Jews down the path of complete assimilation, leading to the dissolution of Jewish community and identity.

Shortly after the play opened, an editorial in *The Maccabaeen* lamented *The Melting-Pot's* conclusion, where “traditions of centuries go by the board, and Russian Jew and Russian are married,” thanks to the former’s belief “in the amalgamation of races in America.” The unnamed *Maccabaeen* writer had no wish to “quarrel with the character Quixano,” but found it “rather peculiar” that Zangwill offered “the play as his message to Jews and Americans.” The perplexed author called it “inconceivable that the man who for so many years advocated Zionism should have written [*The Melting-Pot*].” The editorial concluded, “The message of assimilation should come from American reform rabbis, not from Israel Zangwill.”⁷

This was the second time Zionists felt betrayed by Zangwill. He had once been one of them, a friend to Theodor Herzl, present at the earliest Zionist congresses, a leading activist in the movement to establish a Jewish state in the land of ancient Israel. In 1903, however, he soured on the prospect of a return to Palestine and embraced Herzl’s “Uganda Plan,” calling for the creation of a Jewish state in East Africa. After Herzl died the following year, the majority of Zionists rejected this African alternative. Undeterred, in 1905 Zangwill founded the Jewish Territorial Organization, committed to the notion that the Jews needed a state, but it could be located in any territory, from Africa to the Americas, and not necessarily the land of ancient Israel. He maintained his belief in Jewish contributionism, penning the introduction to the 1925 book, *The Real Jew: Some Aspects of the Jewish Contribution to Civilization*. Though Zangwill’s rupture with the Zionist movement made him

6 For an excellent analysis of Zangwill as celebrity, see Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena: The Career of Israel Zangwill* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), esp. ch. 1, “Becoming a Celebrity: Israel Zangwill’s Life and Work,” 9–34.

7 Unnamed author [probably Louis Lipsky or Jacob de Haas], “The Melting Pot,” *The Maccabaeen* (November 1908): 187.



First issue of *The Maccabæan*, October 1901.
(Courtesy Klau Library)

enemies, Territorialism remained within the mainstream Zionist orbit until his death in 1926.

Reform Judaism, on the other hand, stood outside the mainstream Zionist movement, and criticism of the Reform movement was not uncommon in *The Maccabæan*. Though many individual Reform Jews were Zionists, including prominent rabbis like Judah Magnes and Stephen S. Wise, the official policy of the Reform movement, as stated in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, rejected Jewish nationalism and peoplehood altogether. Article 5 read: “We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.”⁸

This was the view held by Dr. Samuel Schulman, Reform rabbi of New York’s Temple Beth-El, who also commented on Zangwill’s

8 Pittsburgh Platform, Article 5. Adopted at Pittsburgh Conference, 16–19 November 1885.

play. In a sermon printed in the *American Hebrew*, a New York–based Jewish weekly, Schulman asserted that the “idea that America is a meeting place of nations” was well established in the public sphere. The notion that Judaism’s participation in “the process and mutual cooperation and coalescences of the various elements in the American national life” will require some adaptation was “quite common” to the Reform movement in the United States “for the last fifty years.” Further impugning Zangwill’s originality, he asserted the term “melting pot” did not originate with the English playwright.

Schulman claimed to have used the term “melting pot” from his pulpit on Passover, 30 March 1907, over a year before *The Melting-Pot* debuted in Washington, DC. He quoted his old sermon at length: “America, which is the melting pot of all nationalities, which has hospitably received a variety of races and creeds, and which offers opportunity to the best in Judaism to make itself felt as an influencing force in the composite national life.” Schulman hoped that American Judaism, following the teachings of the prophets, would “become a moral power, educating and uniting men, not a self-centered, narrow racialism estranging them.”⁹

After quoting himself, Schulman labeled this view the bedrock of Reform Judaism. “We are to become Americans and remain Jews in religion. We are to assimilate to our environment as much as possible,

9 Samuel Schulman, “Judaism and Inter-marriage with Christians,” sermon delivered at New York’s Temple Beth El, reprinted in *The American Hebrew* (20 November 1908): 59. Schulman cited a sermon from Passover, dated 30 March 1907. Schulman’s sermon as potential origin of the term “melting pot” is noted in Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 215. On 217–218, Nahshon also points to a book by English writer Ford Madox Ford, *The Spirit of the People: An Analysis of the English Mind* (London: Alston Rivers, 1907). Ford’s book has a chapter called “The Melting Pot,” in reference to England and in particular to London. It is unknown whether Zangwill read this book or heard Schulman’s sermon, but the fact that “the melting pot” was being used in England and America in 1907 suggests it existed in common parlance, at least among educated elites. The term “melting pot” appears as a metaphor for American diversity and assimilation as early as 1889 in two articles in *The New York Times* that contrast America as assimilationist melting pot with Canada as bicultural country, both English and French, with French Canadians particularly resistant to assimilation in both countries.

without surrendering the essential principles of our faith.” Crucially, he implored his fellow American Jews to “emphasize *religion* and not *race*.” Jews should value “the melting pot” for the “influences of American democracy,” which will in turn allow “the pure gold of a world-conquering Judaism” to “at last become apparent.”¹⁰

Schulman’s criticism of Zangwill, then, is not due to the metaphor of the melting pot, but rather because of the playwright’s seeming insistence “that the only way to become a true American is by intermarriage.” Schulman opposed intermarriage for religious reasons, had no interest in Jewish racial “purity,” and welcomed converts. He simply feared that intermarriage without conversion would lead to the “gradual absorption and destruction of the Jewish religion,” what he later called “spiritual suicide.” He mocked Zangwill, first a Zionist and then a Territorialist, for becoming an “exterminationist.”¹¹

Schulman’s critical conclusion about Zangwill went well beyond what the editors of *The Maccabean* had leveled. “It comes from poor grace, therefore, from a man like Zangwill, whose only contribution to Jewish thought and Jewish life is the intensification of race pride and the preaching of Jewish nationalism, to preach also to those who dwell in such a free land as America the gospel of mixed marriages.” He summarized the view as follows: “As for myself, I believe in the extermination of the Jew through intermarriage. As for those who want to be Jews, let them go back to Palestine.” He labeled Zangwill’s view “anti-Semitic.”¹²

The editors of *The Maccabean*, so critical of Zangwill in their own journal, jumped to his defense in the face of Schulman’s attack. Despite having lumped Zangwill the assimilationist with “Reform Rabbis” in their critique of *The Melting-Pot*, they made clear their preference for the English playwright over Samuel Schulman. “Dr. S. Schulman, rabbi of Temple Beth-El, a rabbi [*sic*] anti-Zionist and a doughty champion of the Jewish mission in exile, has preached a sermon on ‘intermarriage’ full of malicious and ill-natured criticism of Israel Zangwill.” The author

10 Schulman, “Judaism and Intermarriage.”

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

mocks Schulman's description of Judaism as "prophetic religion" as a flimsy barrier against intermarriage. "What shall preserve the Jew as Jew? is the question Zangwill asks." With Judaism as prophetic religion alone it would be essentially identical to Christianity. If Jewishness is Judaism alone, and Judaism abandoned nationalism for universalism, "the logical conclusion is the 'melting pot.'"¹³

Why did the editors of *The Maccabean* criticize *The Melting-Pot* in one issue, comparing Zangwill to assimilationist Reform rabbis, and then in the next issue, defend Zangwill from an attack by an assimilationist anti-Zionist Reform rabbi? A close analysis of *The Maccabean* shows the idea of the melting pot, far from being incongruous with Zionism, was in fact very much part of the American Zionist movement. This compatibility went beyond Zangwill's formulation for Jewish assimilation in America and particularism in Palestine (or any available territory).¹⁴ American Zionists embraced elements of the melting pot because of the *contributionist* nature of their Jewish nationalism. That is, they defended Zionism not only as a form of Jewish self-preservation, but also because it would benefit America and the world.

In this way, the melting pot was similar to the ideology that it is often pitted against—that is, cultural pluralism, the ancestor to modern multiculturalism. American pragmatist philosopher, founding faculty member of the New School for Social Research, and leading Zionist intellectual Horace Kallen (1882–1974) claimed to have come up with the term "cultural pluralism" in 1906 or 1907 as a doctoral candidate and teaching assistant at Harvard, in conversation with his student Alain LeRoy Locke. Locke went on to become the first African American Rhodes Scholar, a philosophy professor at Howard, and a leader of the New Negro Movement of the 1920s, also known as the Harlem Renaissance.¹⁵

13 Unknown author [probably Louis Lipsky or Jacob de Haas], "Schulman on Zangwill and Intermarriage," *The Maccabean* (December 1908): 230.

14 Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 183.

15 For more on Locke and Kallen's relationship, see David Weinfeld, "What Difference Does the Difference Make? Horace Kallen, Alain Locke, and the Development of Cultural Pluralism in America," doctoral dissertation, New York University, 2014.

For Locke, cultural pluralism manifested in an aesthetic movement to gain African Americans civil rights. For Kallen, cultural pluralism emerged from Zionism as an anti-assimilationist idea that allowed different ethnic groups to coexist in the United States. It stood in opposition to the coercive melting pot, which forced immigrants to conform to the dominant Anglo-Protestant American norm. Kallen believed immigrant groups should maintain their cultures to contribute to American society. As Arthur Goren notes, Kallen especially championed “Hebraism,” his term for secular Jewish culture, as “a vital component of American civilization,” albeit one among many.¹⁶ Kallen developed his Hebraist and Zionist cultural pluralism in his frequent contributions to *The Maccabaeian* and brought it to Americanized fruition in a 1915 essay in *The Nation* magazine, aptly titled, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot.”

In a rebuke to Zangwill, Kallen replaced Quixano’s “American symphony” with another musical metaphor, “the symphony of civilization.” Kallen’s vision equated ethnic groups with musical instruments, retaining their unique sounds while playing together in harmony and enriching the broader American society.¹⁷ Each group would make their particular contribution to ameliorate the whole. This philosophy of cultural pluralism had an even greater representation in the pages of *The Maccabaeian* than did the melting pot. Considering that between 1908 and 1914, *The Maccabaeian* published seven articles that directly criticized the melting pot, and numerous others that touched on the idea, it is safe to say that *The Maccabaeian*, despite its ostensible focus on establishing a Jewish state or cultural center in Palestine, was rife with discussion of diversity in the United States.

Above all, *Maccabaeian* authors hoped to show that Jews would contribute to America through immigration and to the world through an autonomous Jewish entity in Palestine. In terms of the former, Zionism provided a nexus point for American ideas on diversity, especially

16 Arthur A. Goren, *The American Jews: Dimensions of Ethnicity* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980), 67.

17 Horace M. Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot,” *The Nation* (18–25 February 1915), reprinted in Horace M. Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924, republished New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1998), 117.

the melting pot and cultural pluralism. *The Maccabaeen* gave that convergence a voice. That both the melting pot and cultural pluralism coexisted in *The Maccabaeen* suggests a harmonious American Zionist symphony based on the principle of contributionism. This principle, consistently expressed in *The Maccabaeen*, demonstrates how American Zionism anticipated and shaped discourse concerning diversity in the United States.

Even before *The Melting-Pot* debuted, *The Maccabaeen* both advanced and criticized ideas such as the melting pot, demonstrating the malleability and variability of Zangwill's metaphor and of American Zionism, and anticipating modern debates on diversity in the United States. *The Maccabaeen's* particular brand of Zionism—political and cultural in Palestine, cultural and integrationist in America—moderated the melting pot. As American Zionists, both melting pot advocates and cultural pluralists wanted the same thing: a proud, cohesive Jewish community, living in the United States as patriotic citizens, sharing with and learning from non-Jewish neighbors, and supporting a Jewish state in Palestine. Nonetheless, Zangwill's critics posited rigid distinctions between the melting pot and cultural pluralism. Modern scholars followed suit.

Zionism and Scholarship on American Diversity

Perhaps the best example of this framework is historian David Hollinger's 1995 masterpiece *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*. Though he did not examine *The Maccabaeen* or Zionism in particular, Hollinger distinguished between the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and a third idea he called "cosmopolitanism." Though he acknowledged that Zangwill's *Melting-Pot* called for a cultural mixture and the creation of a new American identity, he correctly observed that the metaphor became associated with a "conformist impulse to melt down the peculiarities of immigrants" and turn them into copies of white Anglo-Protestant Americans.

Kallen's cultural pluralism, by contrast, "emphasized the integrity of each descent defined group" and "defended the right of immigrants to resist assimilation and to maintain cohesive communities devoted to the perpetuation of ancestral religious, linguistic, and social practices."

Cultural pluralists, according to Hollinger, sought to preserve ethnic identities at all cost, even if that meant quasi-segregation of immigrant communities.

The third idea, cosmopolitanism, was represented by white Anglo-Protestant writer and Zionist sympathizer Randolph Bourne, whose 1916 *Atlantic Monthly* article, "Trans-National America," was inspired by Kallen's "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot." Like Kallen, Bourne denounced assimilation and celebrated ethnic cultural contributions to the United States, including those of Jews. Bourne's follow-up article in the *Menorah Journal*, "The Jew in Trans-National America," linked Jewish contributions to Zionism and cosmopolitanism. To Hollinger, cosmopolitanism offered a middle ground, implying "strength and resilience" for immigrants to retain their ethnicities while also emphasizing a "dynamic mixing" of cultures that the pluralist model seems to deny.¹⁸

This cosmopolitan *via media* resisted the assimilationism of the melting pot and the separatism of cultural pluralism. It encouraged individual freedom to move among communities, cultural blending but not erasure, and hybrid rather than monolithic identities. Hollinger saw cosmopolitanism as the foundation of a "post-ethnic" America, with Bourne as its champion. He saw Kallen's and Zangwill's ideas as not quite villainous, but as inadequate for modern America, fundamentally inferior to cosmopolitanism.

Numerous other scholars, before and after Hollinger, have championed an equivalent of this cosmopolitan ideal. Historian John Higham, who corresponded with an elderly Kallen, called it "pluralistic integration."¹⁹ Werner Sollors, whose landmark study *Beyond Ethnicity* influenced Hollinger, contrasted cultural pluralism with the philosophy of Kallen's friend Alain Locke.²⁰ Subsequent scholars have pitted the

18 David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995, Tenth Anniversary Edition, 2005), 91–94.

19 John Higham, *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 231–246.

20 Werner Sollors, "A Critique of Pure Pluralism" in *Reconstructing American Literary History*, ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 250–279.

modern, progressive, flexible cosmopolitanism of Locke or Bourne—or both—against Zangwill’s oppressively assimilationist melting pot on the one hand and Kallen’s static, conservative cultural pluralism on the other.²¹

Scholarship coming out of Jewish studies challenges these characterizations of Kallen’s views. In *Zionism & The Roads Not Taken*, Noam Pianko argues that the work of Sollors, Hollinger, and others

distorts the conscious effort Kallen made through his writings during the early decades of the twentieth century to find a language of collectivity that supported both permeable and fixed boundaries of identity. These readings fail to appreciate Kallen’s attempt to dissolve the tension between national autonomy and integration.²²

More important, these readings solidify the rigid boundaries between the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and cosmopolitanism, ideas that are in fact more similar than different, united by the principle that diversity contributes to American society. All three ideas functioned in tandem in *The Maccabean*, undergirded by the Zionist premise of contributing here and there. In the Jewish state, Jews would bring progressive ideas from Europe and America to modernize the Jewish nation. At the same time, Jewish culture and ethics would add color and character to the diverse multiethnic world of America. *The Maccabean*’s articles on the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and cosmopolitanism outlined a symbiotic relationship for Zion and America.

According to Pianko, some American Zionists embraced a non-statist vision of nationalism along the lines of the writer Asher Ginsberg

21 See Ross Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2001); Everett Helmut Akam, *Transnational America: Cultural Pluralist Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); and Jonathan M. Hansen, *The Lost Promise of Patriotism: Debating American Identity, 1890–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

22 Noam Pianko, *Zionism & The Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 47.

(1856–1927), the Russian-Jewish Hebraist better known by his pen name, Ahad Ha'Am (Hebrew for “One of the People”).²³ Ahad Ha'am was considered the father of cultural Zionism, a movement that claimed Palestine as a spiritual center for Jewish culture, language, and religion, but did not require the formation of a political entity. The idea was that Jewish culture would blossom in its ancestral homeland and radiate to Jews across the Diaspora.

Though most *Maccabaeen* contributors supported Herzl's political Zionism that explicitly called for Jewish statehood, they recognized the value of Ahad Ha'am's cultural program. They hoped the cultural content of *The Maccabaeen* would stimulate ethnic pride to stem the tide of assimilation. The editors printed Ahad Ha'am's writings alongside the writings of explicitly political Zionists such as Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau and articles specifically geared to Zionism in the United States.

Enter *The Maccabaeen*

In 1901, when the first issue of *The Maccabaeen* appeared, Zionism was a weak force in America. Only after Louis Brandeis became a leader of the movement in 1914, and especially after the Balfour Declaration and World War I, did Zionism begin to play a significant role in American Jewish life.²⁴ Even then, most Jews leaving Europe voted with their feet, choosing to come to the United States over the land of ancient Israel. The American Jewish “establishment,” wealthy Reform Jews of German origin, felt comfortable in the United States; moreover, they had formally rejected Zionism in the 1885 Pittsburgh platform. At the other end of the spectrum, the most traditionally religious rejected Zionism as blasphemous, preferring to wait for the Messiah to redeem them. Some socialists and anarchists found Zionism too narrow and particularistic, or too dismissive of Yiddish language and secular culture. Even Jews sympathetic to Zionism, typically Eastern European immigrants, focused on working hard and providing for their families.²⁵

23 Pianko, *Zionism & The Roads Not Taken*, 45–48.

24 “Until 1914, Zionism in America was a moribund affair,” Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 2.

25 For good accounts of American Jewish ideologies at the turn of the century, see Tony

Only a small but vocal minority of American Jews offered time and money to support the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This band formed the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ) in 1897. Four years later, they started publishing *The Maccabaeen*. Despite Zionism's relative unpopularity in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, Zionist intellectuals from that period formulated influential ideas about culture and diversity in America. *The Maccabaeen* provided a platform for thinkers to express ideas not just about Jewish nationalism, but about interethnic coexistence in the United States.²⁶

The name "Maccabean" was fitting. It referred to the Maccabees, ancient Jewish warriors who led a revolt against the Greek-Seleucid king Antiochus and restored Palestine to Jewish control in 165 BCE. The Maccabees did not fight purely military battles; they also fought against the assimilating influences of Hellenism. This story, celebrated during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, also narrates the rededication of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, which had been desecrated and turned into a house of worship for Zeus. The strength of the Maccabees came in their resistance to both antisemitism *and* assimilation.

The Maccabean was anti-assimilation but not anti-American. In her study of the journal, Naomi W. Cohen emphasized the American orientation of the magazine. In 1901, the FAZ had 3,800 dues-paying members receiving the journal. They may not have been the wealthiest Jewish Americans, but they were likely well established in the United States. By 1914, that number increased to 12,000, and by 1919 to 176,000.

Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009) and Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

26 David Biale observes, "Much of the discourse about America as a 'melting pot' or as a pluralistic nation of cultural minorities was originated by Jews to address the particular situation of Jewish immigrants," in "The Melting Pot and Beyond: Jews and the Politics of American Identity," in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 18. See also Daniel Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism: The Menorah Association and American Diversity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

Progressive Era American Zionism was fluid and unformed. There was no official Zionist platform, even in the FAZ. This fluidity went beyond factionalist debates. American Zionists were capitalists and socialists, secular and religious, Reform and Orthodox (and later Conservative and Reconstructionist). This was true not just because of the divided nature of the Jewish community, but because Zionism itself was not well defined. American Zionism was itself pluralist, reflecting the democratic nature of American society open to white people. *The Maccabaeian* could be considered centrist or progressive, yet it published content from representatives of all the aforementioned groups.

Though connected to the World Zionist Organization, the FAZ's situation in America gave it a very different agenda than the European branches. *The Maccabaeian* catered to comfortable, English-speaking Jewish readers—a Yiddish supplement was abandoned after a few issues. Articles asserting the compatibility of Americanism and Zionism abounded, with titles such as “Patriotism and Zionism,” “Zionism and American ideals,” and “Zionism and American Citizenship.”

As Cohen notes, the journal contained a “rich and varied menu” of essays, poetry, and fiction by prominent contemporary writers, creating a rich repository of Jewish culture.²⁷ Though *The Maccabaeian* never achieved the breadth, sophistication, or reach beyond the Jewish community of the *Menorah Journal* (1915–1962), it served as an important source of news, ideological content, poetry, and propaganda for the small but passionate American Zionist community. According to Melvin Urofsky,

Zionism in America has not been limited to a narrow Jewish experience, but has been part of and reflective of larger trends in the over-all society; that in the United States, the movement has not only been Zionist, but American as well; that it has enjoyed its greatest successes precisely when its goals and methods have coincided with the dominant trends in the broader society.²⁸

27 Naomi W. Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897–1948* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 16. The first chapter is on *The Maccabaeian*.

28 Urofsky, *American Zionism*, 2.

The Maccabaeen gave Zionist writers an opportunity to explore their visions for Jewish life *in the United States*. The writers, mostly U.S. citizens, celebrated American diversity. They rejected segregation and separatism, aside from an inconsistent opposition to intermarriage. They were Zionists and American patriots, with the intellectual flexibility to make those ideals compatible.

One such Zionist and American patriot was the magazine's first editor, Louis Lipsky (1876–1963), from Rochester, New York. Already employed at the daily newspaper *American Hebrew*, Lipsky received no payment for his work at *The Maccabaeen*. For the first issue, in October 1901, none of the writers—including Max Nordau and Henrietta Szold—received any monetary compensation. Lipsky recalled that “the publication was always in financial difficulties” and never seemed able to pay its staff. He edited the journal in its first year and was then replaced by Englishman Jacob de Haas (1872–1937), a religious Sephardic Jew from London whom Herzl sent to lead the Zionist movement in America. Lipsky and de Haas rotated the editorship until 1920, when the monthly magazine dissolved, replaced by the weekly newspaper *The New Palestine*.²⁹ By World War I, according to Urofsky, “the *Maccabaeen* reached thousands of readers and enjoyed a reputation of being a serious literary periodical as well as the chief English advocate of the [American Zionist] movement.”³⁰

The editors and writers of *The Maccabaeen* did not overly emphasize the establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land. Most Jews in the United States had no interest in moving to the Middle East and making *aliyah*—the Hebrew term for ascending to Zion. Instead, the journal stressed “the strengthening of Jewish national sentiment and national consciousness” without advocating a concrete political agenda. The FAZ mostly ignored the Muslim and Christian Arabs who formed the majority of the population of Palestine, focusing instead on building financial support from Jews in the United States to an important but distant cause.³¹ They also worked on finding a place for Jews in American society.

29 Louis Lipsky, Section 1, “A Memoir of Early Days” (New York, 1962), in *Memoirs in Profile* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975), 49–50.

30 Urofsky, *American Zionism*, 116.

31 This contrasted with a minority of socialist Zionists, who were more attentive to the

The Maccabaeon was not the only outlet for American Jews to advance contributionist Zionism. Arthur Goren points to two other American Zionists who did precisely that: Reform Rabbi Judah L. Magnes (1877–1948) and Jewish Theological Seminary scholar Israel Friedlaender (1876–1920). In response to Zangwill's *Melting-Pot*, Magnes delivered two sermons at Temple Emanu-El in 1909. The first, in February, he called "A Republic of Nationalities," and noted that "American culture, American nationality can be made fruitful and beautiful by contact with the cultures of the varied nationalities that are among us," particularly that of the Jews.³²

In October, Magnes's sermon "The Melting Pot" flipped the script on Zangwill's play, describing Quixano's American symphony as a "vast monotone." Anticipating Horace Kallen's musical metaphor for cultural pluralism, Magnes noted that a real symphony contains a harmony "produced by a variety of distinct sounds," and the real "symphony of America must be written by the various nationalities that keep their individual and characteristic note, and which sound this note in harmony with their sister nationalities." In rejecting "the harmony of the Melting Pot," Magnes advanced "the harmony of sturdiness and loyalty and joyous struggle."³³ True American Jewish contributionism, of the kind the San Francisco-born Magnes desired, required retention of cultural identity.

Even before *The Melting-Pot* hit the stage, Israel Friedlaender offered a contributionist model for Jewish culture in America. In December

Palestinian Arabs and preached unity among Jewish, Muslim, and Christian workers. Within the mainstream FAZ, there were also some exceptions, including Henrietta Szold, Jessie Sampter, and Judah L. Magnes. Szold and Magnes advocated a binational state within a Zionist framework.

32 Goren, *The American Jews*, 67; Judah Magnes, "A Republic of Nationalities," *The Emanu-El Pulpit* 2, no. 6 (13 February 1909): 10. In Arthur Goren's earlier work, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment 1908–1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 4, he notes that intellectuals such as Magnes "presented ethnic pluralism as a permanent and desirable feature of American society," and then he quoted from Magnes' sermon, "The Melting Pot."

33 Judah Magnes, "The Melting Pot," *The Emanu-El Pulpit* 3, no. 1 (9 October 1909): 9–10. Quoted in part in Goren, *New York Jews*, 4.

1907 he delivered a lecture before the Mickve Israel Association in Philadelphia. His talk was titled “The Problem of Judaism in America,” and it focused on resistance to assimilation. This was a problem because America, unlike Europe, was relatively kind to the Jews, largely because of its tolerant ethnic pluralism: “The true American spirit understands and respects the traditions and associations of other nationalities, and on its vast area numerous races live peaceably together, equally devoted to the interests of the land.” Also relying on a musical metaphor, Friedlaender noted that human beings could contain multiple identities and were not “cheap-musical slot machines which could only play a single tune.”³⁴

The Polish-born Friedlaender’s vision was explicitly contributionist. In 1907 he said:

In the great palace of American civilization, we shall occupy our own corner, which we will decorate and beautify to the best of our taste and ability, and make it not only a center of attraction for the members of our family, but also an object of admiration for all the dwellers of the palace.

He insisted that Jews would be a crucial building block to American culture, returning to another numerous metaphor, including music:

With souls harmoniously developed, self-centered and self-reliant; receiving and resisting, not yielding like wax to every empress from the outside, but blending the best they possess with the best they encounter; not a horde of individuals, but a set of individualities, adding a new note to the richness of American life, leading a new current into the stream of American civilization.³⁵

34 Israel Friedlaender, “The Problem of Judaism in America,” lecture delivered on 8 December 1907 in Philadelphia. Printed in Israel Friedlaender, *Past and Present: A Collection of Jewish Essays* (Cincinnati: Ark Publishing Co., 1919), 274–275. Also cited in part in Baila Round Shargel, *Practical Dreamer: Israel Friedlaender and the Shaping of American Judaism* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1985), 138.

35 Friedlaender, “The Problem of Judaism in America,” 277–278. Cited in part in Shargel, *Practical Dreamer*, 139–140.

Both Magnes and Friedlaender were not just committed to Jewish continuity; they were also passionate Zionists. For Magnes, his Zionism blended with his American patriotism to produce this contributionist vision. In the case of Friedlaender, he was likely influenced by the work of Russian-Jewish historian Simon Dubnow (1860–1941). Friedlaender had translated several of Dubnow's historical works into German and English and also adopted some of his philosophy of "Autonomism." Friedlaender's talk before New York's Jewish Endeavor Society, "Dubnow's Theory of Jewish Nationalism," was printed in the June 1905 issue of *The Maccabean* and then reissued as a pamphlet by the FAZ.

Dubnow worried that Zionism would lead to the neglect of the Diaspora, especially in Eastern Europe, where most Jews lived. He pushed instead for the development of a Jewish autonomous cultural center within the Russian empire that would cater to Jewish religious and educational needs and would also include secular Jewish culture in Hebrew and Yiddish. Friedlaender rejected Dubnow's lukewarm attitude to Zionism but thought that some form of Autonomism could exist in America, a place where Jews could "remain 'among the nations' but still continue to be an 'Israel.'"³⁶

Relative to other minorities in the United States, Jews and particularly Zionists played a prominent role in developing ideas about diversity. In a 1917 article in the *New York Tribune*, white Anglo-Protestant journalist Arthur Gleason noted that on the topic of religious and national diversity in the United States, "the clearest of American thinkers of all are the Jews." He listed Louis Brandeis, Horace Kallen, Judah Magnes, and several others "among the many who are defining our citizenship." Gleason observed, "The three nationalities in our country most highly self-conscious, and therefore truest to their traditions, are the American Germans, the American Jews, and the American 'Anglo-Saxons.'" He criticized the melting pot concept and supported a multi-ethnic

36 Israel Friedlaender, "Dubnow's Theory of Jewish Nationalism," an address delivered before the Jewish Endeavor Society, New York, 7 May 1905, published as a pamphlet (New York: The Maccabean Publishing Company, 1905), 11. This talk was originally published in *The Maccabean* (June 1905).

commonwealth where “the Jew must be encouraged and aided in his noble and wistful desire for the recovery of his ancient home.” He echoed Brandeis, proclaiming that the Jew’s “Zionism makes him the better American.”³⁷

Gleason did not explain why Zionism enhanced Jewish Americanism, or why American Jews were so adept at describing diversity. Unlike other European immigrants to the United States, Jews were well situated to navigate the insider/outsider role, to balance a more universalist commitment to integration with a particularist orientation toward the Jewish community.³⁸ Since many Jews identified with a Jewish nationality, race, or ethnicity—as opposed to a Jewish religion—a sturdy secular Jewish culture emerged.³⁹ Zionism provided that culture with a political goal that could be supported financially and expressed literarily in America.

Another advantage Jews had was racial. As Eric Goldstein notes, “racial language became a staple of the Zionist organ, the *Maccabaeon*, which published defenses of Jewish racial identity and criticized Jewish leaders who denied the racial component of Jewishness.”⁴⁰ *The Maccabaeon* shows that race is a social construction; its Zionist writers constructed an American Jewish racial identity, and that identity was white.

Jewish whiteness allowed for easier integration in the United States, as nonwhite groups—including Asians, Native Americans, Latinos, and especially African Americans—were always treated worse both legally and socially. In this way, Jews were similar to other white immigrant groups of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially

37 Arthur Gleason, “Melting Pot or Commonwealth?” *New York Tribune* (8 July 1917): 2.

38 In “The Dialectic of Jewish Enlightenment,” introduction to *Insider/Outsider*, Biale et al. observe, “no one evidently feels the pressing need to write a book entitled ‘Multiculturalism and the Italians’ or ‘Multiculturalism and the Irish,’” 4.

39 For a look at the development of American Jewish ethnicity in a non-Zionist context, see M.M. Silver, *Louis Marshall and the Rise of Jewish Ethnicity in America* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2013).

40 Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 92. See also 262, fn. 23 for list of relevant articles.

the Italians.⁴¹ While modern whiteness scholars might classify these European immigrants as “in-between people,” most American Jews saw themselves, and were seen, as white. In the public arena, some questioned Jewish whiteness, but more often they advocated for racial (pseudo) science that classified (Ashkenazi) Jews as a separate subgroup *within* the broader white category. *The Maccabaeian* advanced precisely this position, claiming the benefits of whiteness—and by extension civilization—along with a degree of racial separateness to fight off assimilation. *Maccabaeian* writers regarded Jews as distinct from other white groups, but always placed Jews in the white category.

Zionist intellectuals in the United States and elsewhere often relied on the racial pseudoscience of the era. They mostly ignored African Americans; in Victoria Hattam’s words, they assisted a process of “fixing race, [and] unfixing ethnicity.”⁴² Race was biological and unchangeable. Ethnicity, equivalent to culture, could be shaped. Most American Zionists took Jewish whiteness, and even “European-ness,” as a given. They designated Jewish culture as progressive and elite and thus worthy of preservation and development, a valuable contribution to global and American civilization. They did not approach black culture the same way. Blacks are mostly absent from *The Maccabaeian*. There were no African elements in Zangwill’s *Melting-Pot*. Kallen excluded jazz from his cultural symphony. Within a contributionist Zionist framework, Jewish whiteness was the doorway to Americanization, enabling Jews to add to the fabric of American culture.

As whites and non-Catholics, Jews suffered far less prejudice in the United States than they did in Europe. In the nineteenth century, and perhaps even in the twentieth, anti-Catholicism proved stronger than antisemitism in the United States. In the words of Stephen Whitfield, American antisemitism represented a phenomenon when “the dog did *not* bark.”⁴³ Jews were different, and occasionally threatened or disparaged,

41 See Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

42 Victoria Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 51, 58–60.

43 Stephen J. Whitfield, “The Longest Hatred,” *Reviews in American History* 23, no. 2 (1995): 367.

but they were also the periodic beneficiaries of philosemitism. Though they suffered nativist discrimination, the period of 1901–1920, in which *The Maccabean* ran, came *before* a major increase in American antisemitism. This relative lack of antisemitism presented American Jews with an opportunity to integrate into an advanced economy while maintaining their religious heritage.

Jewish culture prized literacy and education, producing a disproportionately large number of journalistic publications. Jews entered institutions of higher learning in large numbers—both public schools such as City College and Hunter College and elite universities such as Harvard and Columbia. The development of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, a secular Jewish cultural organization that spread to campuses across the country, emblemized broader Jewish entry into the intellectual if not social and economic elite of America. Zionist ideas in *The Maccabean* fit well into the discourse of the American intellectual community.

On 23 January 1909, *Maccabean* editor Lipsky read a paper in the Max Nordau Auditorium of New York's Educational Alliance building titled, "The Duty of American Jews," which *The Maccabean* reprinted the next month. Lipsky advocated secular, progressive Zionism, attacked Reform Judaism and Orthodox Judaism, and implicitly labeled Zangwill un-American, criticizing assimilating American Jews who sought to be "the first of all peoples coming to this country to jump into the melting-pot which Israel Zangwill has imported to the United States."⁴⁴ Nonetheless, he went to some length to demonstrate the compatibility between Americanism and Zionism, implying that most American Jews would stay in the United States, Americanize, and contribute to American society—a contributionist vision actually quite similar to the melting pot.

The Zionist Melting Pot in America

Before he wrote *The Melting-Pot*, Zangwill drew upon a long tradition of American thought about racial and ethnic amalgamation. He began

44 Louis Lipsky, "The Duty of American Jews," *The Maccabean* (February 1909): 46.

to contemplate the melting pot in a Zionist context. In the March 1904 issue of *The Maccabaeian*, he wrote a piece titled, "Zionism and Loyalty," which attempted to reconcile Americanism with Jewish particularism. He observed that "nationality in the modern world has become optional." Though he believed in cultural preservation, he applauded the ease with which "Englishmen become Boers ... Canadians become Americans or Americans Canadians at their own pleasure." American Jewish Zionists who departed for the Holy Land would be "friends carrying to the new community the love for America and the admiration for its ideals," while those who stayed in the United States would make better citizens because of their ability to display "only such sympathy for Palestine as German-Americans have for the 'Fatherland.'"⁴⁵ American Jews would contribute American culture and ideals to Palestine, while Zionist loyalty would bolster their American patriotism.

The following year, another *Maccabaeian* contributor and Territorialist, Max Levy, gave a Jewish contributionist vision of the melting pot *avant la lettre*. Influenced, he said, by Spencer, Huxley, and Darwin, and convinced the Jewish race was subject to the theories of evolution, Levy painted a harsh, segregated portrait of pluralistic America, which he imagined as "a colony of Irishmen in one section, of Frenchmen in a second, of Italians in a third, of Anglo-Saxons in a fourth, Arabs in a fifth, Negroes in a sixth, Semites in a seventh, and so on through the whole scale." This would negate the American people's defining feature, "the intercommingling of the blood of the white races of the whole earth."⁴⁶

Levy thought Jews would benefit from "the admixture of their blood" with that of other Americans. Jews, he wrote, have something of value to give, so why not get something in return? "The Jew has undoubtedly many desirable qualities which would be diluted by transmission and infusion among other races, but he has also much to gain by this very dilution, and the absorption of some qualities boasted by other races."

45 Israel Zangwill, "Zionism and Loyalty," *The Maccabaeian* (March 1904): 133.

46 Max Levy, "Jewish People and the Laws of Evolution," *The Maccabaeian* (May 1905): 189.

Other groups, including “the Anglo-Saxon, the Frank, the Goth, the Celt, the Scot,” have particular traits, “and they all cherish them as sacredly as does the Jew his own.” Levy did *not* advocate wholesale assimilation. Like Zangwill, he saw an alternative, modeled after other nations. Jews, like other peoples, needed their own territory “where they may reach their highest development.” With a strong national home, individual Jews could leave to other countries and “invariably assimilate and become an integral part” of the host society. For Levy this outcome was “inevitable” and “also just and proper.”⁴⁷

Yet Levy insisted on “a certain merit” to perpetuating the races through granting every people “its local habitation, under its own control and regulation.” This way, the race could “work out its whole destiny and development” and “preserve the qualities that distinguish it from other races.” Levy recommended Territorialism, as Jews had qualities that would benefit all of “human development” and thus needed a state where they would be able “to maintain and to cultivate along their own particular lines.”⁴⁸

Territorialists and Zionists believed Jews had something to offer. In the United States, they should provide their unique racial gifts through assimilation—and for some, through intermarriage. To preserve the purity of those gifts, they should also establish a state, in Palestine or elsewhere. This is the early American Zionist model. The Jewish state enters the family of nations, an international federation of elite cultures. In America no such federation is necessary. America would be the site of the fusing of the races, to which Jews would contribute.

In 1905, Levy’s melting-pot formulation proved acceptable to the editors of *The Maccabean*. When Zangwill advanced this ideal with his play in 1908, the journal’s writers mostly criticized his play for encouraging intermarriage and assimilation. Yet some offered qualified defense. In 1911, editor Lipsky noted immigrants were “strengthened by the cultural values” they brought with them. Though typical immigrants sought to assimilate, they had an “instinctive desire” to show off the

47 Ibid, 191.

48 Ibid, 192.

“heirlooms” they have “hidden in the corner.” Jews desired “a history, an encyclopedia of Jewish life” to hold on to as they entered “the melting pot of nations.” When Jews went in for a “melting diversion,” they entered “into the pot with all their clothes on ... with their national and racial traits, their habits, their hopes, their history.” Jews who allowed themselves “to be fused” felt the need to “bring with them values of their own,” despite being “invited to become one of the brotherhood.”⁴⁹

In “To Melt or Not to Melt,” a similar piece from November–December 1914, English Zionist writer Maurice Simon—brother of Ahad Ha’am translator Leon Simon—recognized the strength of Jewish racial particularism but also of American religious universalism, or theism. Maurice Simon, who would later edit a volume of Zangwill’s writing, thought the melting pot would be a failure if Jews “become merely melted without being fused; that is, if they lose their distinguishing Jewish characteristics”; however, it would be a success if “they become fused without being melted; that is, if they acquire all the externals of Americans while retaining the idealistic outlook on life which is the heritage of their people.” Simon even regarded the melting pot as a Darwinian test for true Zionists: “It may be that the Promised Land is once more destined for that part of the seed of Abraham which shall pass through the ‘melting pot’ of America unscathed.”⁵⁰

Zangwill rejected this criticism. *The Melting-Pot* was more nuanced than it appeared. Some form of ethnic mixing, from intermarriage or simple interaction, remained paramount, but particularism proved essential. The Jewish, Irish, and Italian portions needed to be recognizably Jewish, Irish, and Italian to add their particular flavors to the mix. Furthermore, Zangwill himself never sought the disappearance of Jewish identity, in America or elsewhere. A Territorialist, Zangwill intended for a global refuge to exist for Jews in Palestine or elsewhere that would preserve Jewish culture and peoplehood.

49 Louis Lipsky, “The Maccabean Anniversary,” *The Maccabean* (March–April 1911): 102.

50 Maurice Simon, “To Melt or Not to Melt,” *The Maccabean* (November–December 1914): 180–181.

Cultural Pluralism for Zion and America

Like Zangwill, Kallen loved America and American diversity. He was the German-born son of an Orthodox rabbi and immigrated to Boston at age five. A leading American Zionist, he also became a distinguished pragmatist philosopher who helped found the New School for Social Research in 1919. Though he first used the term “cultural pluralism” in print in 1924, his best-known exposition of the idea is in his 1915 essay, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot,” published in *The Nation*. He explained: “‘American civilization’ may come to mean the perfection of the cooperative harmonies of ‘European civilization,’ the waste, the squalor, and the distress of Europe being eliminated—a multiplicity in a unity, an orchestration of mankind.”⁵¹ Kallen’s formula was contributionist: Immigrants made the United States better, not just economically, but culturally.

Kallen’s ideal for the United States replaced the melting pot with a federation of nationalities. He was not the first to make this proposal. In his 1897 essay, “The Conservation of the Races,” black intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois argued against assimilation and in favor of preserving distinct cultures: “For the development of Negro genius, of Negro literature and art, of Negro spirit, only Negroes bound and welded together, Negroes inspired by one vast ideal, can work out in its fullness that great message we have for humanity.”⁵² He developed this point further in his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, introducing “two-ness” and “double-consciousness” to present a positive spin on multiple and hybrid identities.⁵³

While Du Bois focused on the racial divide, Kallen highlighted immigrant groups. He wrote “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot” in response to his University of Wisconsin colleague E.A. Ross’s 1914 nativist screed *The Old World in the New*. Kallen introduced his musical metaphor, arguing that America should be a “symphony of civilization,”

51 Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot,” 1915.

52 W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Conservation of Races,” originally published as *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers*, no. 2 (Washington, D.C., 1897).

53 W.E.B. Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” from *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1903).

with each ethnicity providing its own instrument, working separately but harmonizing together.⁵⁴ According to Hollinger, this vision, despite its apparent radicalism, was “conservative” since it emphasized the isolation and preservation of groups, rather than their interaction and mutual influence.⁵⁵ Yet Kallen’s cultural pluralism was in fact a liberal idea, balancing universalism and particularism to create an outcome best for immigrants and best for America.

Cultural pluralism is easily discernible in *The Maccabean*. It did not only come from Kallen. On 26 April 1906, A.H. Fromenson, editor of the Orthodox Yiddish newspaper the *Tageblat*, gave an address to the Yale Zionist Society, reprinted the following month in *The Maccabean* as “The Sociological Function of the Jew.” Fromenson quoted French writer Anatole France, who proclaimed: “The various nations must take their places in the universal federation as living and not as dead entities.”⁵⁶

That summer, and still two years before the debut of *The Melting-Pot*, Kallen advanced his contributionist cultural pluralism in the form of Jewish nationalism. In July 1906, he gave an address, “The Ethics of Zionism,” reprinted in the August issue of *The Maccabean*. He posed three questions: “What then has the Jew done for civilization? What is his place in the evolution of the human race? What is his moral worth to humanity?”⁵⁷ To answer them, Kallen set up a pluralistic framework for civilization. He imagined the cultures of the world fighting a Darwinian struggle for superiority and survival. Kallen justified Zionism because it preserved the Jewish spirit, which had a positive influence on other nations. Kallen’s vision was hierarchical: Some cultures were worth

54 Horace Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot,” *The Nation*, 18–25 February 1915.

55 Hollinger, *Postethnic America*, 85.

56 A.H. Fromenson, “The Sociological Function of the Jew,” *The Maccabean* (May 1906): 187.

57 As Arnold Eisen notes, Kallen’s “two chief rationales for Jewish survival were the contributions Jewish culture could make to world civilization, and then specifically the contributions American Jews could make to American civilization.” See Eisen, *The Chosen People in America: A Study in Jewish Religious Ideology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 47.

preserving; others were not. Those worth preserving were those that could contribute. Despite the hardship it suffered, the Jewish community remained, in Kallen's words, "the lightbearer of the world. In a society of ignorance and superstition it constituted a nucleus of culture and enlightenment."⁵⁸

In addition to cultivating their own culture, Jews assimilated into their surroundings, learning languages of host countries and adopting national traits, becoming "Russian, English, French, Austrian, or American," reducing their "racial character to a sectarian label" to blend in.⁵⁹ Political Zionism provided a solution to this problem. Kallen repudiated the "Culture-Zionism of Achad Haam," labeling it "assimilation" and "at best only an intensification of the status quo." Ahad Ha'am's program, unlike Herzl's, did not explicitly call for a Jewish *state* in Palestine, but rather a cultural center in Palestine that would radiate Hebrew culture to Jews throughout the Diaspora. Kallen, however, feared that without a state apparatus, "the criss-cross of influence" would dilute Hebraic culture in Palestine. Jews needed to undertake this movement on "native soil, under native laws, amid native institutions."⁶⁰

Kallen insisted the ideal development of a "race's life, the expression of its spirit, the envisagement of its moral idea in art and letters," needed "the permanent occupation of a definite territory." He believed Jews could benefit from "the free struggle of Jew with Jew,"⁶¹ ignoring, like many other Zionists, the Arab population in Palestine. He imagined a Jewish-only melting pot in Zion, with Jewish immigrants from all over the world producing the ideal Jewish culture. This would only work if this Jewish nation existed in safety and autonomy, under the protection of an independent state government.

In America, Zionism would be different. Though Kallen advocated Herzl's statist political Zionism, he also provided a framework for

58 Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," 66–67.

59 *Ibid.*, 69.

60 *Ibid.*, 70.

61 *Ibid.* Cited in part in Sarah Schmidt, "Horace M. Kallen: The Zionist Chapter," in *The Legacy of Horace M. Kallen*, ed. Milton R. Konvitz (New York: Herzl Press / Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987), 78.

cultural pluralism in the United States. From a global perspective, many nations should exist to bring diversity to the world. The Jews should be one such nation, in Palestine or elsewhere. America was a nation of nations, a stand-in for the world. In America, every culture should be allowed to preserve itself in a modern American form. Jews would be one such culture, like the English, Irish, or Italians.

Kallen's Jewish nationalism applied to both Palestine and America. Wherever they lived, he encouraged Jews to express "a vigorous natural life and the moral law in social organization, art and letter, functioning in the *family of nations* as an indispensable force." The Jewish contribution to "human civilization and progress, by virtue of its physical integrity and spiritual splendor" justified the Jew's "moral right to live." His "ethic of Zionism"⁶² applied as much to America as it did to Zion.

Constance Pessels, an English teacher in San Antonio with a doctorate in ancient languages from Johns Hopkins, advocated a similarly contributionist Americanized Zionism. His 1908 contribution to *The Maccabaeian*, "The Pragmatic Value of Zionism," explicitly referenced Harvard philosopher William James (Kallen's mentor at Harvard), employing James's pragmatist language to "appraise the cash value of Zionism." Pessels wrote:

[Zionism] stands for the conservation of those qualities which have made the Jew such a valuable asset in the spiritual and religious life of the world, for the perpetuation of those distinctive qualities of race and character, which, in spite of the numerical inferiority of the Jewish people, have forcefully influenced the civilization of Europe and America.⁶³

In keeping with the pragmatic spirit of *The Maccabaeian*, Pessels did not ask American Jews to go to Palestine. He called for a Jewish cultural contribution to American (and European) civilization.

Editor Jacob de Haas offered a similar ideal in his 1910 *Maccabaeian* article "The Jew in the Melting Pot." He wrote:

62 Ibid., 71. Emphasis mine.

63 Constance Pessels, "The Pragmatic Value of Zionism," *The Maccabaeian* (Feb. 1908): 63–64.

Where would we be without the distinct efforts of the English, and the Scotch and the Irish and the German in this land? Each one has left a distinct mark on what we call American civilization, and the mark was made by the ego of race consciousness. On the contrary [to the melting pot] I claim that we need each other as we are. We are not a flat unified people. We are at least four worlds within these states, and if we want to dream into the future let us dream of the confederation of the races, not their individual destruction.⁶⁴

Although de Haas was a Zionist, this passage did not concern Zionism, but rather the perpetuation of ethnic groups in the United States. In this explicitly contributionist passage, de Haas, an Englishman, showed a keen understanding of American diversity. He at least implicitly embraced some notion of melting, as each group absorbed the “distinct mark[s]” left imprinted by the others on “American civilization.”

Others echoed Kallen’s musical pluralism. In his 1911 *Maccabaeen* piece, “The Spiritual Aspects of Zionism,” London rabbi and leading British Zionist Joseph Hochman urged the abandonment of universalism beyond appealing to the common bond of monotheism. He insisted, however, “that a brotherhood implies variety in individualities harmonized by fundamental kinship.... The creed shall be universal, not the expression and the application of it.... In the national expressions of that common creed shall be the variety of individualities which the kinship shall harmonize.”⁶⁵ Hochman too was writing about Zion’s place in the world, not the Jews’ place in America.

Another *Maccabaeen* contributor, Dr. Abram Lipsky, presented an idea similar to Kallen’s cultural pluralism. In his 1913 article, “Zangwill’s Melting-Pot,” which criticized the play, Lipsky prophesied that “America can show the world a nation living at peace with nation upon the same domain, each contributing to the common welfare and zealous for the establishing of the common house. Not community of blood, but

64 Jacob de Haas, “The Jew in the Melting Pot,” *The Maccabaeen* (December 1910): 198.

65 Joseph Hochman, “The Spiritual Aspects of Zionism,” *The Maccabaeen* (March–April 1911): 103–104.

community of purpose binds these millions together.”⁶⁶

Kallen introduced his idea of a federation, as well as the musical metaphor, to *The Maccabaeon* late in 1914. In an article that had been rejected by *The Nation* (the same magazine that would publish his “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot” the following February), Kallen wrote not about America, but about Zionism:

Our western world is a world of nationalities. Its strength has lain in the conservation of and harmonious development of differences of national type. The great European tradition is an international mosaic, having nationalities for its base, and the culture and civilization of Europe, at least, are the culture and civilization of the European nations, developed by the harmonious and discordant contacts of these nations.... In the concert of nationalities whose reciprocally interacting cultures make up the symphony of civilization, the Jewish people are recorded as having played a distinct part. The Hebraic note which has been an expression of their corporate life has given to the history of Europe an unquestionable coloring, for the possession of which that history is claimed to be spiritually the richer.⁶⁷

Kallen regarded the Jewish nation as a crucial contributor to the international “symphony of civilization.” From there, it was just a hop, skip, and a jump to immigrant Jews playing their part in the American orchestra.⁶⁸ For Kallen, cultural pluralism and Zionism were deeply intertwined.

Zionist Cosmopolitanism

Though later scholars have tried to distinguish “cosmopolitanism” as a positive middle ground between the melting pot and cultural pluralism, the idea as expressed in *The Maccabaeon* shares contributionist principles

66 Abram Lipsky, “Zangwill’s Melting-Pot,” *The Maccabaeon* (January 1913): 15. Abram (1873–1946) was the brother of Louis Lipsky, leader of the Federation of American Zionists.

67 Horace Kallen, “Dr. Kallen on Zionism,” *The Maccabaeon* (November–December 1914): 187.

68 As Noam Pianko notes, “Jewish and specifically Zionist concerns helped shape this first wave of American pluralism.” *Zionism & The Roads Not Taken*, 105.

from both schools of thought. Confusion arises because cosmopolitanism has had different meanings over time. As Hollinger observes, in mid-nineteenth-century America, “cosmopolitanism carried implications of superficiality and shiftlessness.”⁶⁹

The Maccabaeian mostly adopted this earlier interpretation. In an assertion of Jewish racial particularism, German-born Reform Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal attacked liberal Jews who labeled the ancient Israelite prophets as “cosmopolitan.” In a 1903 piece titled “Israel’s Mission,” he wrote: “The ancient prophets of Israel were all and everyone, without exception, outspoken Jewish nationalists, and cannot be designated as cosmopolitans—as cosmopolitans in your sense of the word.”⁷⁰

Examples in *The Maccabaeian* of this definition of cosmopolitanism abound. In 1906, A.H. Fromenson, chairman of the FAZ propaganda committee, associated cosmopolitanism with the melting pot, of “amalgamated humanity” and “that Wedding of the World from which is to be born the Coming Race.” He regarded this ideal, co-opted by socialists, as utopian: “The cosmopolitan, the citizen of the world, is a beautiful but mythical creature.”⁷¹ The journal reprinted an exchange between Zionist Max Nordau and Irish writer George Bernard Shaw, in which “cosmopolitan” was bandied about as an insult.⁷² In 1909 Rosa Pomeranz wrote, “Out of the racial Jewess there was evolved a cosmopolitan creature . . . [who] made herself at home everywhere except in her own house.”⁷³ In 1911, Hochman warned against the creation of an “undifferentiated, cosmopolitan jelly-world.”⁷⁴ As late as 1915, poet Jessie Sampter referred to “those Jews who believe that all nationalism in itself is evil” as “cosmopolitans.”⁷⁵

69 Hollinger, *Postethnic America*, 88.

70 Bernhard Felsenthal, “Israel’s Mission,” *The Maccabaeian* (March 1903): 135.

71 Fromenson, “The Sociological Function,” 183.

72 Max Nordau, “Dr. Nordau and G. Bernard Shaw,” *The Maccabaeian* (December 1907): 258–259; George Bernard Shaw, “Mr. Shaw’s Jewish Sympathies,” *The Maccabaeian* (January 1908): 27.

73 Rosa Pomeranz, “Zionism for the Jewess,” *The Maccabaeian* (March 1909): 83–84. Translated from German. Pomeranz (1880–1934) was a Zionist author who, in 1919, became the first woman elected to the Polish Sejm as a member of the Zionist party.

74 Hochman, “The Spiritual Aspects of Zionism,” 105.

75 Jessie Sampter, “The Jewish Position (A Formulation),” *The Maccabaeian* (September

Yet *The Maccabaeian* also referred to another sort of cosmopolitanism, one more similar to cultural pluralism or the moderate melting pot. In the 1905 article "Religion and Zionism," Dr. Maurice H. Harris, a Reform rabbi at New York's Temple Israel, applauded Jews who had emerged from the ghettos, while also invoking a turn-of-the-century optimism not yet battered by World War I:

To mingle with the world about them, not merely as on-lookers and denizens, but as participators and citizens, enthusiastically identifying themselves with the world's culture and the world's causes; winning laurels in every great field of endeavor and working side by side and hand in hand with fellowman for all human ideals. . . . The spirit of cosmopolitanism combined with strong national patriotism is a steadily advancing ideal. The world is learning to be more and more tolerant of the divergent characteristics, customs, and convictions of their neighbors about them.⁷⁶

This contributionist Zionist cosmopolitanism liberated not only groups, but also individuals. As individuals, Jews could be citizens of the world and citizens of America, while remaining proud Zionists committed to their Jewish heritage.

The Maccabaeian also recognized another feature of Hollingerian cosmopolitanism, namely that Jews could identify with multiple cultures at once. In his 1903 article "The Ethnic Character of the Jew," Rabbi Meyer Waxman wrote:

It is this modification of character that made mental acclimatization a leading trait in the Jewish character. The Jewish mind adapts itself to every culture with ease. It is the Jew, Heine, who wrote the most perfect and smooth German. It is the Jew, Beaconsfield, who piloted the British ship of state in the most traditional English manner. Finally, it is the Jew, Brandes, who estimates and appreciates the national spirit of various literatures.⁷⁷

1915): 74. Sampter (1883–1938) was born in New York and was physically disabled. She was a Zionist poet and Hadassah educator who made aliyah.

76 Maurice H. Harris, "Religion and Zionism," *The Maccabaeian* (January 1905): 15.

77 Meyer Waxman, "The Ethnic Character of the Jews," *The Maccabaeian* (February 1913):

In Waxman's estimation, Diaspora Jewish hybrid identity allowed for even greater contribution to host societies. Though Jews could modify their "character," or culture, their "primary racial qualities" remained the same. Waxman called this "dualism."⁷⁸ This word, reminiscent of W.E.B. Du Bois's assertion of African American "two-ness," or "double-consciousness," described a contributionist Zionist cosmopolitanism.

Kallen, too, recognized the contributionist cosmopolitanism of the Jew. His 1914 *Maccabaeen* article described diversity among Zionists: "Orthodox believer, reformed, and agnostic, capitalist and workman, German, French, Russian, English, Turkish, Spanish, American."⁷⁹ In an address he delivered that winter in Cincinnati, printed in *The Maccabaeen*, Kallen celebrated the "whole mass of neo-English, neo-Russian, neo-German literatures" written by secular Jews, to say nothing of contributions in Hebrew, Yiddish, Aramaic, Arabic, and Ladino. He called for Zionism not because Jews had failed to adapt themselves to modernity, but because they needed a place where they could "adapt the world" to themselves.⁸⁰

From *The Maccabaeen* to Multiculturalism?

The discourse over American diversity owes much to Zionism. Whether the metaphor was a musical melting pot, a symphony of cultural pluralism, or a cosmopolitan concert, the media were different but the message was the same. In advancing Jewish interests in Palestine and the United States, the writers of *The Maccabaeen* promoted ethnic diversity in America. By asserting Jewish contributions to America, they were asserting, sometimes explicitly, the possibility that many groups could contribute.

53. Georg Brandes (1842–1927) was a secular Jew and literary critic from Copenhagen. His real name was Morris Cohen.

78 *Ibid.*, 53–54.

79 Kallen, "Dr. Kallen on Zionism," 187.

80 Horace Kallen, "The Distinction Between Hebraism and Judaism," *The Maccabaeen* (May 1915): 85–86. Based on address delivered at Third Menorah Convention in Cincinnati, December 1914.

81 Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2007); David A. Hollinger, *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity: Studies in*

The Jewish contribution to American diversity discourse is important, if occasionally forgotten today. Cosmopolitanism is a newly popular term among academics,⁸¹ but the Jewish association with this word is often ignored, perhaps because its pernicious connection to Josef Stalin's labeling Jews "rootless cosmopolitans." The melting pot remains a prominent metaphor, though its connection to Zangwill and Zionism is largely unknown outside academia. In late 1960s and early 1970s, Kallen's "cultural pluralism" came to be replaced by "multiculturalism." This word reflected a new demographic reality in the United States, now populated by millions of immigrants from Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East. Jews, formerly a distinct group, mostly fell into the category of white.

A century ago, the writers of *The Maccabaeans* proudly asserted Jewish distinction. By extension, they asserted the right of all American groups to their distinctions. Zionism made the political case for diversity over homogeneity. By making cultural expression and retention political, they made space for ethnic particularism in an American setting and provided a language to legitimize diversity in the United States. American Zionism advanced a particular kind of diversity, one that allowed for sturdy cultural identities and communities to exist within the United States, not segregated from one another, but in constant contact and communication, allowing for exchange and hybridity without complete assimilation, with individuals having the freedom to explore the different peoples around them. Jews, and other groups, would contribute positively to American society, just as the Jewish and other states would contribute positively to the world.

Ethnoracial, Religious, and Professional Affiliation in the United States (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Adam Etinson, "Cosmopolitanism: Cultural, Moral, and Political" in *Sovereign Justice: Global Justice in a World of Nations*, ed. G. de Angelis and R. Quiroz (New York: de Gruyter, 2010), 25–47.

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