

## Predecessors: Sociology Before Sociology (1882–1948)

**Abstract** Proto-sociological studies, which related to the nascent Jewish Israeli society, were produced since the late nineteenth century. Three genres of early social science were practiced by in the period 1882–1948: social analysis produced by organic intellectuals, or ideologues, of the Jewish-Zionist political movements; research conducted by experts on colonization, as assigned by institutional agencies; and the academic conceptual and historical work of migrant Jewish scholars affiliated with HUJI (founded in 1925).

**Keywords** Arthur Ruppin · Colonization experts · Dov Ber Borochov  
Haim Arlosoroff · Hebrew University of Jerusalem Israel (HUJI)  
Palestine · Martin Buber · Organic intellectuals · Protosociology  
Sociological predecessors

Sociological studies—or rather, proto-sociological studies—relating to the nascent Jewish Israeli society began to be produced in late nineteenth century. In the proto-sociology phase of this discipline very little distinguished sociology, politics, and ideology (Zionist ideology). Three genres of early social science practices may be discerned in the period between the onset of Zionist settlement in 1882 and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948: (1) social analysis produced by organic intellectuals, or ideologues, of the Jewish-Zionist movements, especially the socialists, but also by the *Mizrahi* and women thinkers; (2) research

conducted by experts on colonization, assigned by agencies of the British Mandate for Palestine (from 1920) as well as by the planning divisions of the Zionist World Organization and the Jewish Agency, which comprised, especially, economic and demographic research; and (3) academic conceptual and historical work carried out by migrant Jewish scholars, mostly from Germany, who were affiliated with the HUII.

## 2.1 ORGANIC INTELLECTUALS

The socialist ideologues of the Labor movement had been the precursors of Israeli social science and thus the predecessors of the would-be sociology of the future. The earlier ideologues hardly knew Palestine, if at all, and what they speculated about was mainly the nature of emerging Jewish nationalism in Eastern Europe at a time of great social upheaval, rising anti-Semitism, and widespread migration. Later ideologues were indeed organic intellectuals of the organizing Jewish working class in Palestine.<sup>1</sup> The Russian-Jewish intellectual Dov Ber Borochov (1881–1917) is widely perceived as one of the topmost Zionist-socialist thinkers. He analyzed Jewish history in Marxist terms but also modified Marxist theory in the light of Jewish history. He saw the productivization of the Jewish people as the path toward the alleviation of its tribulations and maintained that this end could be realized only in Palestine (Borochov 1983). In 1905 he founded, in Russia, the Workers of Zion Party (Poale Zion). In his essays *The National Question and the Class Struggle* of 1903, and *Our Platform* of 1904 (Borochov 1983), he proposed to complement the Marxist materialist vocabulary of a “vertical” class structure, with a “horizontal” concept of “territorial conditions of production.” The “conditions” facilitate the historical continuity and formation of cultural identity of a human group, and enable social development. Human groups that lack such a base are doomed to be deprived and cannot develop a normal social structure. This is why the Jews in feudal Europe were excluded from the primary branches of production and pushed to marginal employments such as petty brokerage, commerce, and finance. Their employment structure took the shape of an inverted pyramid, thin at the productive base and broad at the top with tertiary occupations.

With the emergence of capitalism, gentiles also entered these “Jewish” professions, and Jews were perceived as competitors. Hence the rise of modern anti-Semitism. Economic deprivation drove Jewish mass emigration from Eastern Europe. Economic logic was bound to direct them to a

target country where capitalism was not yet developed. They would find this country in Palestine. Their immigration there would be economically determined (“stichic”) and would not need an ideological nationalistic boost. Borochof thus produced a materialist theory of how to be “national” without being “nationalist.” As for the development of Jewish society in Palestine, given his brand of Second-International, evolutionary Marxism, he produced a theory of stages in which the first stage is the construction of a “normal” class society (i.e., capitalist society, initiated by the Jewish bourgeoisie), and the second stage is a class struggle led by the proletariat in transition to a socialist society. For at least the first half of the twentieth century Borochof’s theory served as an inspiration to the Jewish radical intelligentsia in Palestine and abroad (Leon 1971).

The *Eretz Yisrael* (Palestine) branch of *Poale Zion* was established in 1906. One of its founders was David Ben Gurion (1886–1973). Ben Gurion was among few thousands of young Jewish socialists who emigrated to Palestine from Russia and Poland in the years before and after WWI and established the Jewish Labor movement there. In the 1920s Ben Gurion would become the leader of this movement and in the 1930s he led the Jewish community in Palestine. In 1948 he came to be the founder of the state of Israel and its first prime minister (until 1963). What is of interest to us here is that he was also a leader of the programmatic transition of the Labor movement from its Borochofian “class struggle” point of departure to its destination of national class cooperation. Borochof’s stages theory delegated the first stage of the formation of the economy to the bourgeoisie, and the second stage of class struggle to the workers. Ben Gurion and his colleagues realized that the impoverished conditions of Palestine would not attract capital investment. They thus determined that workers should take on not only the goal of future struggles but also the immediate task of economic and social construction through national public financing. This meant a transition from inter-Jewish class struggle to class cooperation. The ideology they elaborated in theory and in practice was called socialist constructivism. This was a distinctive way to create a local national economy through the combination of private donations, national allocations, and public/collective implementation. In the 1930s Ben Gurion called this approach “from class to nation” (*mem’a’amad le’am*); meaning that the Labor movement was not the avant-garde of a particular class but of the whole nation (Gorni 1973).

Haim Arlosoroff (1899–1933), from the Young Worker Party (*HaPoel HaTzair*), a non-Marxist socialist organization, articulated a

remarkable analysis of the exceptionality of the Hebrew working class in Palestine. His doctoral dissertation was submitted to Werner Sombart at the University of Berlin, and there he criticized the reductionist Marxist approach to class. In his later analysis of the Hebrew working class in Palestine, the peculiarity of this class was underlined: it was a class whose consciousness preceded its actuality; it occupied the top of the social and cultural ladder; and it headed a project of nation building in a complex colonial situation. Jewish socialism in Palestine was thus dubbed by Arlosoroff as “people socialism” (*Volkssozialismus*), organically tied to the history and culture of the nation. And he dubbed the Jewish nation, as a whole, a “proletarian nation” (Geter 1977).<sup>2</sup> The mainstream of the workers movement, as represented by Ben Gurion, Arlosoroff, and others, preferred the idealist socialism of Nachman Sirkin (1868–1924) to the materialist socialism of Dov Ber Borochoy.

In 1920 the socialist parties established the *Histadrut* Federation of Hebrew Labor, a multifunctional organization—including cooperative settlements, trade unions, welfare and health care funds, educational and cultural institutions, production, trade and construction enterprises, and even security organs—which was considered the “state before the state.” In 1930 the old workers parties (the Union of Labor party [*Ahdut HaAvoda*, formerly *Poale Zion*] and Young Worker party) joined the Workers of *Eretz Yisrael* Party (MAPAI), which would make, in different guises, the core of the Labor movement from then on. So between the 1920s and the 1940s the tie between nationalism and socialism tightened, and a turn from revolution to constructionism took shape (for critical evaluation, see Sternhell 1997).

While the social(ist) thinkers of the Labor movement grappled with theorizing the relations between class and nation, the organic intellectuals of the nationalist right-wing movement denied class’s relevance to nationalism altogether and demanded that any internal discord be deferred to later days, after the nation stood firm (ironically, echoing in some sense the logic of Borochoy’s approach of “normalization first”). Their foremost leader and intellectual figure was Zeev Jabotinsky (1880–1940), who called this approach monist nationalism. Instead of class politics, he advocated a patriarchal social policy, in which the basic needs of the people (nutrition, shelter, clothing, schooling, and health) would be taken care of by the benevolent state.

The political and intellectual elite of the Zionist settlers had encountered in Palestine the presence of an indigenous Arab population, of

which it was, previously, little aware. It took it some time to realize that it faced an “Arab question” (Gorni 1987). For the right wing, which saw the world, in the first place, through the lenses of international conflict, this did not come as surprise. Jabotinsky reckoned from early on that Arabs and Jews in Palestine were heading toward a national confrontation. He famously deemed that Jews must erect an “iron wall,” which would deter the Arabs and make them, willy-nilly, recognize the Hebrew nation in Palestine (on Jabotinsky, see Shimoni 1995, 236–268).

But for the socialist Zionists, committed as they were to socialist brotherhood and cosmopolitan justice, this posed a great inconvenience and pushed them to some theoretical acrobatics. Borochoy and other early thinkers (including the young Ben Gurion and Yitzhak Ben Zvi [1884–1963], a future president of Israel) toyed with the idea that the Arabs were, in fact, descendants of the ancient Hebrews, and therefore they would eventually return to their fold. Another idea was that there would emerge a common interest and sense of solidarity between the Hebrew and the Arab working classes, and that the mass of impoverished peasants (*fellahin*) would ultimately turn against their class oppressors (the landowners [*effendis*]). In any of these scenarios, the Arabs of Palestine were not perceived as having a distinct national identity (*wat-tan*) within the greater Arab nation (*umma*). If this had made some sense under the conditions of the Ottoman regime, it changed when the British Mandate for Palestine was established (at the end of WWI), and especially as it seemed to be favoring the idea of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, as was declared by Lord Arthur Balfour in 1917. The creation of a distinct political unit out of Palestine encouraged the rise of a Palestinian national identity, and the growing Jewish immigration soon prompted Palestinian enmity. The violence that erupted in the beginning, and again toward the end, of the 1920s, finally brought home to the Labor elite the realization of a growing national conflict and the need to prepare the Jewish community for it (Shapira 1999).

There was another type of organic intellectual in the early days of the Jewish settlement in Palestine, who had an altogether different attitude to the “Arab question”: *Mizrahi* intellectuals (the term *Mizrahi* refers to Jews from Moslem countries). Moshe Behar and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, who recently made some of the thought of Middle Eastern Jews available to contemporary readers (in the English language), define this category as follows: “Middle Eastern Jewish intellectuals [are] Jewish men and women whose thinking was informed and shaped by their expressed

affinities with, and sense of belonging to, the Middle East, or Orient, and its peoples and cultures” (Behar and Ben-Dor Benite 2013, xxviii).<sup>3</sup> The involvement of these intellectuals in the Hebrew national project differed from that of their Jewish European colleagues. Middle Eastern intellectuals were undergoing rapid modernization under the influence of European agencies but were still organic members of their societies and communities, and they explored, in Lital Levy’s words, “what it meant to be Arab, Jewish and modern, reimagining themselves and their communities through the regional vocabulary of modernity and enlightenment” (cited in Behar and Ben-Dor Benite 2013, xxx). There had been almost no continuity, however, between the thought of these intellectuals and the intellectual discourse of the academic institutions that were established in the *Yishuv* and later in the state.

Another category of thinkers who were doomed to marginality in the emerging locus of Hebrew intellectual and academic life were feminist women. During the 1920s and 1930s, the “first wave” of Jewish socialist feminists struggled for equality in the division of labor, while liberal feminists struggled over civic equality (especially the right to vote). Their voices would decline later on, reemerging much later as a “second wave” of feminism in the 1970s and 1980s (see Chap. 6).

## 2.2 COLONIZATION EXPERTS

A second track along which “sociology before sociology” developed in the first half of the twentieth century was research done by experts affiliated with official institutions, whether governmental ones, such as the British statistical department, or quasigovernmental ones, such as the Jewish Agency and the ZO. This research was mostly demographic, economic, and geographical rather than sociological, but issues of a sociological nature were unavoidably touched by it.

A major political issue that motivated much of this research was the controversy between the Jewish community, the Palestinian Arab community and the British government over what was termed “the absorptive capacity of Palestine” (Troen 2011, 163–183). The ruling was that the number of (Jewish) immigrants would be limited by the “absorptive capacity” of the country. The Zionist institutions had to ascertain that they met this criterion and they established research units to furnish the data. There was a tacit understanding between politicians and experts about the political significance of the findings. The Arab position

was that the country was too poor for a great inflow of immigrants. The Zionist response was that the country was poor because it had long been neglected by its Arab inhabitants (or its Ottoman rulers) and that with modern expertise and technology—that the Jews would bring to it—would be able to absorb millions of newcomers. The Zionist Federation and the Committee of American Zionists commissioned an experts report to this end.<sup>4</sup> In 1935 the Jewish Agency formed an economic research department, headed by Dr. Arthur Ruppin (see below) and after his death, by Dr. Alfred Bonne. Bonne would later be the first head of the Faculty of Social Sciences at HUJI. While the dominant ethos was associated with agriculture, Bonne favored urban, industrial, and commercial economy. After the 1942 Biltmore Declaration, in which Ben Gurion proclaimed the plan to establish a Jewish state, he formed an experts committee to advise him on future social and economic policies.

Another political debate in which experts and planners were involved concerned the proper model of settlement and development of the Jewish community (Penslar 1991). The model of private farming in the early period of settlement (the *Moshavot*) could not have provided the development and employment needs of large numbers of immigrants (Shafir 1996). The Labor movement began experimenting with agricultural communes—the *kibbutzim*—before WWI, and between the 1920s and 1940s, it adopted them as its prime model of constructing a socialist Zionist society. It was helped in this by Jewish German experts in colonial settlement. They introduced to Palestine the idea of cooperative settlement in national lands. But there was also the opposing view, which became louder in times of economic crisis: economic development should be left to market forces. This latter view was supported mainly by American Zionist leaders (e.g., Justice Louis Brandeis) and experts. It did not win the day, though private investment did play an important role in development, especially in urban industry and commerce (Troen 2011, 3–84).

An expert on Zionist communal settlement, who stood midway between capitalist and the socialist orientations to the Jewish colonization of Palestine, was the German Jewish sociologist Franz Oppenheimer (1864–1943). In 1919 he was the first official professor of sociology in Germany (at Goethe University) and later he served as a professor at the universities of Berlin and Frankfurt. Before turning to economics and sociology, he had been a physician. His thought was dedicated to “curing” society from the “disease” of poverty. He published many sociological tracts, among the most renowned of which was *The State*.<sup>5</sup>

Oppenheimer was an agrarian romantic, determined that the root cause of modern economic and social strife was the overwhelming power of the great landlords in rural areas. They expropriated the peasants, who fled to crowd the cities, causing a general decrease in the level of wages. He concluded that communism was economically inefficient and capitalism was socially unjust and deliberated a third way between communism and capitalism.

The solution he advocated was liberal socialism, consisting of cooperatives of free peasants. At the beginning of the century he was captured by Zionism and was courted by Theodor Herzl himself (the visionary and founder of the Zionist movement). Though he did not settle in Palestine, he became involved in the discussion and planning of the Jewish settlement there. In 1911 an experimental farm was established, based on his plan, with the active aid of Arthur Ruppin (for more on Ruppin, see below). Some of its principles (national ownership of the land and mutual responsibility of the workers) were acceptable to the young pioneers, while other principles were rejected by them (professional management, differential wages, etc.) and the project failed. It diffused, though, into Jewish settlement through other channels.

In order to meet the challenges of Jewish immigration, settlement, and development as well as Arab antagonism, the Jewish organizations erected an infrastructure for statistical research.<sup>6</sup> The major figure in this regard (second only to Ruppin) was Roberto Bachi (1909–1995). Born in Italy, where he was educated and started a promising career, he moved to Palestine in 1938, pressed by anti-Semitism. In 1947 he was nominated professor at HUJI, where he established the department of statistics. Later, he became the first dean of the Kaplan School for Economics and the Social Sciences. Simultaneously, with the establishment of the state, he created its Central Bureau of Statistics and headed it until 1971. In the 1960s he created within the Institute for Jewish Studies a unit for demographic research. He was a winner of the Israel Prize in 1988. As Anat Liebler (Bar Ilan University), a researcher in the history and sociology of Israeli statistics, put it, statistics was mobilized in the open for Zionist purposes during the prestate era, and in the state era, it became a transparent, yet efficient, tool for the same purposes (Liebler 2004). Given the romantic propensity of prestate sociology (e.g., Buber) and the structural propensity of sociology in the state era (e.g., Eisenstadt), the future discipline of sociology did not adopt quantitative methods,



which were left for the departments of statistics, demography, and economics. One case in point was the Institute for Applied Research, which was established by Louis Guttman (1919–1987). Guttman, born in the USA, arrived in Israel in 1947 and became an internationally renowned scholar in quantitative research methodology and public opinion surveys, and he laid the ground for these practices in Israel. He also won Israel Prize, in 1978.

### 2.3 THE PROFESSORS

Finally, the third type of precursory sociology took the form of conceptual and historical work, which was conceived by Jewish German immigrant scholars. Two figures from HUJI, who were officially nominated as sociologists even before there was a department with this name, are particularly of interest to us: Arthur Ruppin, who was also the major figure in early Israeli settlement activity, and the renowned philosopher Martin Buber. Both were ardent Zionists but also radical peace activists. Their sociological heritage has recently raised interest and also become a matter of controversy due to new critical studies: Ruppin is accused of being a racist nationalist and Buber of being a romantic nationalist (Bloom 2011; Ram 2015).

Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943) made his reputation as a leading Jewish statistician and demographer as a young person in Berlin. He was steeped in social Darwinism, a form of scientific racism that fed German nationalistic ideologies, and he was an exponent of eugenics policies, in addition to sport and hygiene, as means of improving the race or preventing its degeneration. One of his sources of inspiration was biologist-philosopher Ernest Haeckel (1834–1919), who would be found, after his death, to be a harbinger of Nazi racist theory. Ruppin was not exceptional in this regard, neither among scholars of his day, in general, including those in Europe, the USA, and the Soviet Union, nor among his Jewish and Zionist peers (Hardt 2000; Falk 2006; Hirsh 2014; Efron 2007). It would be anachronistic, though, to impose upon him our own post-World War II aversion to such racism. Yet it would also be implausible to ignore the intrinsic racist assumptions of this sociology (for a scathing contemporary criticism of Ruppin, see Bloom 2011; for an apologetic response, see Morris-Reich 2006).

Ruppin's three volumes on *The Sociology of the Jews*, from 1930, based on his lectures at HUJI, are probably the most accomplished overview of the subject in the interwar era (Ruppin 1930). Except for its racial aspects, this work includes a thorough analysis of Jewish social,

economic, political, and even cultural history. As was usual in the sociology of his time, Ruppin distinguished between the static (conditions) and the dynamic (action) dimensions of social life, and he identified the static with hereditary, inherent racial features, and the dynamic with environmental, exogenous influences. He conceived the Jewish people to be a “race” created in 1000–1500 BC, through the mix of different peoples in the Near East region (Aramaic, Bedouins, and Philistines). When the Jews had been dispersed outside *Eretz Yisrael*, they blended again with the various races of their locales but kept their distinction by later ingathering and inbreeding again. So the dynamics of Jewish history (and other national histories) is described by Ruppin as a flow of moments of racial mixture (intermarriages) followed by moments of racial purity (endogamy). Modern Jews belong to three major racial clusters: the Babylonian, the Spanish, and the *Ashkenazi* (according to his calculation, 92% of modern Jews belong to the latter category).

Ruppin’s discussion of this racial history concentrated upon the physiological features that define, ostensibly, the various Jewish types (facial feature, skull structure, etc.). His racism can be described as “soft” to the extent that neither on the factual level, nor on the normative level did he believe in exclusive racial purity or in racial superiority, such as was claimed, for instance, for Aryan Germans. With that, he certainly had preferences for the image of the tall, healthy, robust North European physiology, and among the Jews, for the *Ashkenazi* image. In any event, he believed races are not fixed and final but may alter or disappear according to environmental circumstances. He believed, in fact, that in modern times, in cases where Jews are accepted as equal members of society, they lose their distinctive features and their group affiliation and disintegrate and assimilate (Ruppin 1930, vol. 3, 85). In fact, the fear of growing anti-Semitism (mainly in Eastern Europe), on the one hand, and of growing assimilation (mainly in the West), on the other hand, were the major motivations for Ruppin’s turn to Zionism.

Ruppin joined the Zionist Movement in 1905, after meetings with Martin Buber (for more on whom, see below) and the Prague Zionist group. He very soon rose to a prominent role in Zionism (somewhat under-estimated by later Labor-influenced historiography). He first visited Palestine in 1907 with a ZO investigatory delegation and returned there the year after to serve as the head of the local ZO office, which became, under his leadership, the headquarters of Jewish settlement in Palestine. He became a member of the ZO directorship and head of its settlement

department, as well as head of the Jewish Agency (1933–1935). In these offices Ruppin was the chief architect of Zionist colonial planning, logistics, and settlement in Palestine and did much to rechannel European Zionism from its diplomatic orientation toward a practical orientation, namely a focus on the actual construction of Jewish society and economy in Palestine, even without a political autonomy, or as preparatory condition for it. Among Zionist leaders Ruppin stood out as pragmatic, and he readily supported liberal initiatives of urban development as well as socialist initiatives of agricultural communes. In fact, it was he who facilitated the first experiment with communal settlements from which would burgeon more than 250 *kibbutzim* (Penslar 1991; Goren 2005). In 1926 he was nominated “sociologist of the Jewish people” at HUJI.

Ruppin believed, or at least wished, that the immigration of Jews to Palestine did not aim to dominate the Arabs of Palestine or to displace them. In the 1925 he established, together with other reputed Jewish intellectuals, the group *Brith Shalom* (Peace Alliance), which advocated conciliation between Jews and Arabs and articulated the concept of a bi-national state (with guarantees for the national rights of the then Jewish minority). Yet, after the violent clashes between Jews and Arabs in 1929, Ruppin lost his faith in the future of conciliation and concluded that the Jewish community should expand its numbers and enhance its power (on *Brith Shalom* see Gordon 2008).

The sociological heritage of Ruppin, with its focus on Jewish demographics, has been embraced (minus its explicit and physical racism) not by the discipline of sociology, but rather, by the Harman Institute for Contemporary Jewry at HUJI (see DellaPergola 1999, 2001). When Ruppin passed away, his university position was bequeathed to Prof. Arie Tartakover (1897–1982), a Polish born graduate of Vienna University and a socialist-Zionist activist. He served in this office until 1952. He researched Jewish history, the Jewish workers movement, and Jewish immigration, and published a two-volume work on Jewish society and Hebrew society, and more. He did not leave his mark, though, on the later path of sociology (see Tartakover 1958; Manor 1962).

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A highly prominent sociological precursor at HUJI in the pre-state era was Mordechai Martin Buber (1878–1965). In his youth, Buber was involved in the formative phase of the sociological discourse in Germany (Mendes-Flohr 1989). When he settled in Jerusalem in 1938 and was

nominated a “sociologist of culture” at HUJI, he was already 60 years old, and had a wide reputation as a Jewish scholar and existentialist philosopher. His seminal work *I and Thou*, from 1923, advocates intersubjective dialogue, bereft of instrumental intentions, and it remains as popular and influential today as it was tens of years ago (Buber 1971). He distinguished between two basic human attitudes: the I-it attitude (*Ich-Es*) and the I-thou attitude (*Ich-Du*). The I-it attitude is one of cognition, and thus also of distance and of objectivity. One usually relates this way to “things,” but also, commonly, to persons. The I-thou attitude, is one of recognition, of being one with another. This is a rare moment of mental and sensual intimacy and mutuality. In some sense this conceptualization is inspired by the distinction drawn by Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936), the forefather of German sociology, between *Gesellschaft* (community) and *Gemeinschaft* (society, or association), the former with its rational formal will (*Kurwille*), the latter with its authentic natural will (*Wesenwille*) (Tönnies 2001 [1887]). The same distinction is also echoed in Max Weber’s seminal differentiation between “substantial rationality” (*Wertrationalität*) and “instrumental rationality” (*Zweckrationalität*). Not unlike Weber, Buber saw modernity as magnifying the I-it module and as spreading it throughout the social terrain. This was at the root of his criticism of both liberalism and communism and of the state institution as such. In all these cases, a “thingness” of a huge magnitude overcomes and suppresses interhuman relations.

Buber was evidently a humanist, but he also belonged, mentally, to the circle of conservative German professors, especially in the humanities and in the social sciences, whom Fritz Ringer labeled “mandarins” (Ringer 1990). The common denominator of the mandarins was their disdain for liberal modernity. Their own cultural status was founded upon their being the guardians of German *Kultur*, which they counterposed against French and British (and later also American) brands of *civilization*. While *Kultur* was considered authentic and meaningful, *civilization* was considered fabricated and alienating. Like the rest of the mandarins, Buber was intensely anxious and suspicious about modernity.

This is why he did not regard Zionism as a modern national movement, but rather, as an incarnation of an ancient religious covenant. He considered Jewish nationalism to be unique and transcending the realm of common historical causality. The link between the people and its land is not, as is usually the case, a mundane matter of national claim over a territory, but rather, has cosmic and ontological dimensions. Zionism is

a materialization of the sacred covenant between God, his people, and their land. The goal of Zionism is not the rescue of Jews, but rather, the revival of Judaism. This goal can finally materialize only in the form of a future community/*Gemeinschaft*, and not in the form of a liberal republic of citizens, the detested *Gesellschaft*.

Two *Gemeinschaft*-type communities contributed to modern Jewish revival: the Hasidic movement, which began in Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century, and the *kibbutz* socialist movement of twentieth-century Palestine. The former is essentially socialist, without recognizing it; the latter is essentially religious, without recognizing it. Both movements epitomize communal Judaism, the nucleus of the future Jewish *Gemeinschaft* in Zion. The *kibbutz* thus paved a path not simply and merely toward the Zionist conquest of Palestine but toward utopia as such. The *kibbutz* was, for Buber, a utopian nucleus and, in his much quoted evaluation of it, a “glorious non-failure” (Buber 1996; Ram 2015).

Despite the organicist and messianic disposition of his national ideology, Buber displayed a compassionate attitude toward the national demands and claims for the country made by the Palestinian Arabs. He was indeed radical in his unreserved support of the minor (though palpable) peace groups *Brith Shalom* (during the 1920s) and later *Ichud* (Union—during the 1940s and 1950s). These organizations are the ancestors of later peace organizations in Israel, from the radical *Matzpen* (Compass) to the moderate *Shalom Akhshav* (Peace Now). During the 1950s, Buber demanded that Israel takes the initiative to solve the issue of the Palestinian refugees of the state’s War of Independence; He protested the annexation of Arab lands by the state; he demanded a solemn judgment of the massacre of Arab citizens in Kafr Qasim; he demanded the removal (or limitation) of the military government that was imposed on the Arab citizens of Israel; and he condemned the Judaization of the Galilee and its development exclusively for Jews. Violence and injustice toward Arabs were regarded by him as contradicting the essence of Zionism, and as betraying its spirit as well as jeopardizing its viability.

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When one comes to assess the thought of Buber as a whole, one faces its perplexing duality. On the one side, there is the nationalist and messianic Buber, who sanctified the ancient community and even the ostensible blood tie, the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael* and its sacrosanct tie to the people of Israel. These are the building blocks of an organicist and *Volkish*

type of nationalism. Yet on the other side, there is the humanistic Buber, who demanded unequivocal morality and proclaimed that Zionism will reach its goal only when it creates an exemplary society (for an appreciation of Buber's inter-subjective sociological legacy as an alternative to Eisenstadt's social-system sociology see Shamir and Avnon 1999).

Another prominent German Jewish early sociologist who was active in the Jewish community in Palestine in the pre-state era was Siegfried Landshut (1897–1968). Landshut acquired his education at the universities of Freiburg and Frankfurt. Among his teachers were Edmund Husserl, Max Scheler, Alfred Weber, Karl Jaspers, and Franz Oppenheimer (Kressel 1999 [1944]). In 1933 he escaped Nazism and in 1936 he reached Palestine. He was for a while research assistant at HUJI, but his career did not flourish. Apparently, he was perceived as too Marxist for the university professors and as too critical of Marxism for the Zionist Left intelligentsia (*HaShomer HaTzair*) (Kressel 1999 [1944], 8–10). In 1951 he returned to Germany and assumed his professorship in politics and sociology at the University of Hamburg.

In 1941, with the encouragement of Ruppin and Buber and the support of the Jewish Agency, Landshut began a research of the *kibbutz* community. His book on the subject was published, in Hebrew, in 1944, and it is probably the first professional sociology book about the Hebrew community at large and the *kibbutz* in particular (Landshut 1999 [1944]). Landshut investigated the *kibbutz* along the Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft continuum, and he warned of the erosion of the *kibbutz* social ideals (self-work; distributive equality) by force of economic pressures (waged labor; efficiency). But the claim for scientificity and the critical approach were exactly the reasons that the book was received unfavorably by the Labor movement at the time. As explained by a later *kibbutz* sociologist, Stanly Marom: “The *Kibbutz* was then in the center of the struggle for the establishment of the state of Israel and was splashed in a pioneering glamour that enthused the public [...] it was perceived as the bearer of the Zionist flag, not as a subject for objective research” (cited by Kressel 1999 [1944], 12).

In 1946 another sociological volume on the *kibbutz* was published as a cooperative endeavor between HUJI and its main sociologist Martin Buber and the agricultural cooperative movement (The Hebrew University 1946). The volume reflects the main ingredients of Israeli proto-sociology; it numbered only a few professional sociologists; there was cooperation between the research and its national public; the focus was upon Zionist colonization endeavors; there was an adoration of the

*kibbutz* movement (“workers villages”); and the profile of the speakers was homogeneous: all of them were Jewish men, mainly of Central and East European origin. It was, openly, a sociology of Zionist socialists and nationalists, for them and by them.

A thick volume of 681 pages of excerpts that represent Israeli “sociology before sociology,” or rather, Jewish sociology before Israeli sociology, was published in 1954 under the title *Klal Yisrael (Whole the People of Israel): Chapters in the Sociology of the Jewish People* (Dinur et al. 1954). It was a combined historical and sociological enterprise, edited by Ben Zion Dinur, Arie Tartakover, and Yaakov Lishchansky, and it included texts by Ahad HaAm, Borochoy, Ben Gurion, Buber, Dubnow, Katznelson, Ruppin, and others. The book may be considered as sealing the proto-sociology chapter in the sociology of Israel. The term *Israeli society* was not yet in use, and the reference was to the “Jewish people,” or, at a later stage, to the “Hebrew community” in *Eretz-Yisrael*. Israeli society (and hence Israeli sociology), to which we turn next, is an offspring of the state of Israel, which was established in 1948.

## NOTES

1. For a useful overview of Labor ideologues/theorists, see Shimoni (1995, 166–235).
2. Arlosoroff had a short and intriguing life. He lived in Palestine from 1924 and quickly rose to become a senior Zionist leader. In 1933 he signed a “transfer agreement” with the German Nazi government, which enabled the immigration of 60,000 German Jews to Palestine. He was shot to death at the age of 34, when taking a walk on the Tel Aviv promenade. The motive and identity of the assassins remain at the heart of a judicial and political controversy to the present day.
3. Behar and Ben-Dor Benite belong to a large category of Israeli scholars who live and work abroad. Behar is affiliated with the Department of Israeli and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Manchester, and Ben-Dor Benite, with the School of Middle Eastern and Muslim Studies at New York University.
4. Data on aspects of Palestine is to be found also in the *Blue Book* of the British government, from 1926, and in its *Industry Survey*, from 1928.
5. Oppenheimer’s *Der Staat* was originally published in German in 1919, in the *Gesellschaft* series, edited by Martin Buber. It was published in English in 1926 (Oppenheimer 1926).
6. On the German Jewish origins of Zionist statistics, see Efron (2007), Hardt (2000), and Bloom (2011).

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