

Chapter 8

“NOTHING BUT A DISILLUSIONED LOVE”?

Hans Kohn’s Break with the Zionist Movement

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Zionism is founded on the link between politics and violence. Our *raison d’être* was to combine Zionism and ethical demands. A vain [attempt] at this is a contradiction in terms. We must withdraw and as much as we are active, combat Zionism.

—Hans Kohn, 22 December 1929

I too am convinced that the Jews will establish a majority here. It is merely a question of nerves. . . . If we will have the money and the army, the Arabs will become powerless. And, ultimately, the world is indifferent to what happens in other countries. The question is how long will the nerves of the Jews hold out. And here is the “dangerous” element in *Brit Shalom*, for *Brit Shalom* . . . corrodes, or at least attempts to corrode, the so-called troops’ morale.

—Hans Kohn, 21 April 1930

Political Crisis and Academic Creativeness

Hans Kohn’s (1891–1971) life’s work marks the beginning of nationalism studies as we know it. From the time of Herder, the major theoretical contributions toward an understanding of nations and nationalism had been written by nationalist thinkers who viewed nationalism as universal and natural. By contrast, Kohn did not write his major works on nationalism as a nationalist, but during and after a slow and painful break with his own national movement—the Zionist movement. “It gave me a better understanding of the pitfalls and self-deception inherent in most national movements,” he would write in his memoirs.<sup>1</sup> Although not the only scholar in the early twentieth century to approach nationalism academically,

critically, and comparatively—Carlton Hayes and E. H. Carr should not be forgotten—for decades he was, undoubtedly, the field’s most influential and prolific scholar. In dozens of celebrated books, Kohn historicized nationalism and exposed it as “first and foremost a state of mind.”<sup>2</sup> More important, in several monographs he attempted to explain historically why nationalism developed in such diverse ways, and in the process he charted an extremely influential distinction between two archetypes, or rather families of nationalism: civic nationalism, on the one hand, and ethnic nationalism, on the other. His work profoundly shaped common views of nationalism well into the 1960s.

Kohn’s lifelong fascination and grappling with nationalism began as a young Zionist in Hapsburg Prague and matured with the advent of World War I, when nationalism became, in his words, “problematic” (*fragwürdig*) and needed to struggle for its soul.<sup>3</sup> Zionism’s aspiration for a Jewish state also became hopelessly problematic in his eyes at that time because it aspired—overtly or covertly—for a Jewish nation-state in a land with an overwhelming Arab majority. According to Kohn, it was precisely the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that made Zionism’s “Arab Question” the movement’s touchstone. As a Jewish nationalist and a Zionist he claimed the latter movement had to renounce all aspirations for a Jewish nation-state and commit itself instead to the creation of a binational Arab-Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>4</sup> Following his migration to British-ruled Palestine in 1925, Kohn cofounded the Brit Shalom Association—the first organization to advocate the creation of a joint Jewish-Arab state in Palestine—and served as its first secretary. Fellow binationalist Zionists were Kohn’s mentor, the philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965), and his friends from youth, the philosopher Hugo Bergmann (1883–1975) and journalist Robert Weltsch (1891–1982).<sup>5</sup>

His eventual break with Zionism, including binational Zionism, marked his emergence as a scholar of nationalism, challenging the premise of its “natural,” “authentic,” and “self-explanatory” character. The binationalist Brit Shalom Association, it should be noted, advocated the most dovish position within the wide ideological spectrum of Zionism. As the experiences of the late 1920s further radicalized Kohn’s worldview, he, the most conciliatory member of that association, effectively found himself beyond the ideological boundaries of Zionism. His break with the Zionist movement is significant because it facilitates the demarcation of the ideological boundaries of Zionism, at least at one end of the spectrum. Beyond Jewish politics, it also offers a compelling case study of the relations between a politically engaged intellectual and an ideological movement in the age of mass politics.

Published in the mid-1960s, Kohn’s memoirs described this break and his subsequent emigration from Palestine in an almost technical manner.<sup>6</sup> His diaries and countless letters to Zionist and non-Zionist colleagues, however, testify to a great emotional and ideological upheaval. His colleagues recalled that Kohn “left brokenhearted. Suddenly he recognized this path was wrong,”<sup>7</sup> and he actually abandoned it “out of despair.”<sup>8</sup> Most previous studies concerning Kohn have focused on his published oeuvre and have pointed to a conceptual affinity between

his writings on Jewish nationalism as an active Zionist and his general theories of nationalism elaborated later as an American professor.<sup>9</sup> What is missing from these studies, however, is an examination of the nature and significance of the break that separates these two distinct chapters in Kohn's intellectual biography. His irreversible rupture with Zionism took place during the six years before he left Palestine in the spring of 1934, and its mark on his scholarly work is the purpose of this chapter. Based on an analysis of his unpublished diaries and correspondence as preserved in multiple archives, it explores the political and intellectual crisis that turned Kohn away from, and ultimately against, the national movement with which he had identified for twenty years and propelled him into what eventually became a brilliant career as a critical and comparative scholar of nationalisms. Not only did his academic work fill the void left when his Zionist activities ended, but his research on nationalism was also inspired by his need to explain his own break with it; he had to write about it.

### Dynamics of a Break

In the fall of 1929 Hans Kohn resigned from his position in Keren Hayesod (the Foundation Fund of the Zionist Organization) for reasons of conscience. He could not see a way to bridge the gap between his worldview and that of official Zionism and, therefore, could not see himself continuing to represent it. Kohn continued his activity in the Brit Shalom Association for an additional year, but in September 1930, he retired from it, too, claiming that the association simply did not take seriously its own principles. Brit Shalom had compromised where it shouldn't have, he said, and it had systematically bypassed the key problems of Zionism and of Palestine, instead wrapping itself "in a cloud of innocence." His primary concern, he continued, was that "from this cloud there is no possibility of influence."<sup>10</sup> Kohn, who lost his livelihood by resigning from Keren Hayesod, was determined to find his place in academia. In the early 1930s he spent much of his time abroad and completed the writing of six books.<sup>11</sup> The more radical his critique against Zionism, the greater the gap separating him from his companions became. And the more he distanced himself from this social circle, the more he drifted away from their ideological worldview. After enduring years of frustration and failed attempts to obtain an academic position, in November 1933 Kohn was invited by Smith College in Massachusetts to serve as a professor of modern history. A few months thereafter, in the spring of 1934, he left Palestine with his wife and child, never to set foot on its soil again.

Kohn described his ideological progression during those years in a letter to his friend Robert Weltsch: "When I talked about binationalism, . . . the others still did not want to hear anything about it. And today, when I say that one can no longer talk about binationalism in its old sense, but only of a protected minority status, I am once again isolated, and the others say what I had said already in 1925."<sup>12</sup> Kohn, who began advocating binationalism in 1919, abandoned this approach

some ten years later in favor of a concept of a Jewish minority in Palestine whose rights and existence would be protected by law under the guardianship of Britain and the League of Nations. But this idea interested no one at the time, neither the Arabs nor the British, and certainly not the Zionists. Kohn's transition from this position to a total break with Zionism was swift and hardly noticeable. After all, within the mainstream Zionist movement and the *yishuv* (the Zionist Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine), Kohn was perceived as someone who had long ago crossed the line.

### “Silence and Parting”

The Arab riots that jolted Palestine in 1929 with a storm of violence, and especially the Zionist and British reactions to them, were the immediate historical backdrop to Kohn's break. A wider reading of his writings, particularly his personal papers, however, demonstrates that his turn away from Zionism had roots prior to the summer of 1929. In the mid-1920s Kohn was fully committed to the mission of Zionism, but like many other members of *Brit Shalom*, his commitment to binational Zionism derived from grave concerns—the fear that the Zionism that he and his friends espoused was at a point of a moral collapse and on the verge of becoming a movement one should neither participate in nor support. The founding of *Brit Shalom*, and, above all, the genesis of the binational idea, stemmed in part from the extreme pessimism of individuals who assessed the limits of their Zionism. Thinkers such as Arthur Ruppin and Hugo Bergmann continuously asked themselves how they would act if they were to realize that the implementation of Zionism necessitated objectionable means?<sup>13</sup> Kohn was not the only one who repeatedly referred to *Ahad Ha'am's* dictum, “If this is the Messiah, I do not want to see his coming.” Hagit Lavsky has already noted that as early as 1921, Kohn dealt theoretically with the question of a break with Zionism, a question that he reiterated throughout the 1920s.<sup>14</sup>

In 1928 Kohn experienced a series of sobering transformative events. One was an escalating confrontation over the nature of the association's activities with Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), the pioneer of Jewish sociology, director of the Palestine Land Development Company, and by far the most prominent Zionist in *Brit Shalom*. Kohn wanted to transform *Brit Shalom* from an association that represented a principle into an active and enterprising body. Ruppin fiercely rejected this idea, mainly for tactical reasons. In Kohn's eyes, “Ruppin's scandalous inactivity”<sup>15</sup> placed grave moral responsibility on the association. After the riots of 1929, Kohn's frustration only escalated. A significantly more traumatic experience was the murder by Jews of two random Arabs passing by Kohn's home on the night of 8 June 1928. Kohn, who overheard the murder, wrote in his diary of a neighbor who instructed him to say, regardless, that the murderers were Arabs.<sup>16</sup> He wrote to Weltsch: “We have degenerated in a horrible way due to our nationalism. . . .

One can say today, that 95 percent of the *yishuv* supports such murders. . . . Here innocent people were murdered, passersby. Even the Germans did nothing like this. The French intelligentsia was in turmoil about the Dreyfus affair. Here the murder interests no one. Who can afford to be a part of this? Just like in the world war, each barbarity, like this barbarity, is presented as a necessity. Beyond the moral level, I see also the practical problem in such a position. Where does it lead? [Yitzhak] Ben Zvi [one of the *yishuv's* leaders and later Israel's second president] claimed it will scare the Arabs. I claim the total opposite. . . . An indescribable racial hatred takes place here."<sup>17</sup> After this event, his relations with the *yishuv* changed.

Kohn was in Europe when the riots broke out in Palestine during the summer of 1929, and he followed them with great concern. "News from Palestine on the general uprising of the Arabs," Kohn wrote in his diary on 26 August 1929. "[T]hat which I have feared, has come into being. It had to come sometime. And we are to blame; for we did not practice any other policy!"<sup>18</sup> That same day, in an oft-quoted letter, Kohn urged Buber not to stop at proclamations—"declarations simply do not do the trick"—and to act immediately, for "if we do not *act*, act 'unconditionally,' i.e., without considerations for the self-interest of groups . . . it will soon be too late."<sup>19</sup> Kohn oscillated in those days between utter despair and the hope that out of this crisis a new awareness and a new Zionist policy would arise. He hoped the new policy would show that the Zionist movement understood how to transform itself to assist, rather than oppose, the Arab national movement. Days thereafter, Kohn wrote Judah L. Magnes, chancellor of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who was also a fellow binationalist:

I am afraid the Zionist movement will again go the wrong way, the way all governments and nations would go: . . . I am afraid that our friends do not understand the true situation: we are faced by the "national revolution" of an oppressed people. The Arab mob is fighting for a nation, or a nationalistic idea—ideal, just as our people, or the *Simm Fëin* did. And there are only two ways left now: either to oppress the Arabs and to keep them down by a permanent display of strong military force, a colonial and imperial militarism of the worst sort—or Zionism must ultimately discover its true face, which has nothing to do with state, majority, or political power. . . . We all ought to . . . do all we can to find a way to the Arabs and to change entirely the face of Zionism in light of pacifism, anti-imperialism, democracy—and this means the spirit of true Judaism. Now we have to show all the cleanliness [*sic!* i.e., purity] of our thinking, to remain objective, impartial, not to become subject to herd instincts. Our great hour has come! I should like to act together. I never was as excited as now. I feel it goes to the root of all my human consciousness. If we waver only a little, I feel true Zionism is lost!<sup>20</sup>

Kohn's glimmer of hope for the reform of Zionism was short lived. The following day he wrote in his diary that the policy of the Zionist executive was worse than what he could have ever conceived, and thus he "must not be there or be a part of it. We will secede then slowly! Silence and parting!"<sup>21</sup> The day after that, Kohn wrote again that his resolve was only strengthened to "abandon Zionism

as political Zionism, as an organization. I cannot partake in the responsibility. It means sharing the guilt for a crime. I want to retire from Keren Hayesod in the winter, without drama. We shall need to limit ourselves [economically], but I shall be able to breathe freely!”<sup>22</sup> On 18 September matters progressed to the extent that he wrote Weltsch “a farewell letter of sorts to the twenty-one years of my Zionist activity, which was so intertwined with my friendship with him, that the things merged one into the other. . . . As far as Zionism is concerned, he [Weltsch] cannot draw my conclusions. He is also more materially dependent. But I cannot be there any longer; for what grows there runs completely counter to my intentions, and my activity in the group [Brit Shalom] is used only to conceal and support that which should neither be concealed nor supported.”<sup>23</sup>

### Forced Resignation from Keren Hayesod

Although Kohn’s decision to resign from Keren Hayesod was the result of much drawn out personal reflection, in a certain sense it was influenced by external pressures as well. Even prior to his return to Palestine in the summer of 1929, Zionist publicists attacked an article by Kohn in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in which he criticized the supporters of the “iron fist” policy within the British administration. Such an approach, Kohn claimed, revealed a misunderstanding of “the deep roots of the tragic enmity” between Arabs and Jews in the Holy Land, and “surely is not the way for a swift pacification in the land.” Instead, Kohn called for a return to the policy of the first British high commissioner of Palestine, Herbert Samuel (in office 1920–25).<sup>24</sup> The Hebrew-language newspaper *Davar* published a response under the sarcastic title “‘Zionist’ Clarification,” which mocked Kohn’s explanation and questioned his Zionism (hence the quotation marks around “Zionist”). The article attacked Kohn ad hominem for his lack of national party discipline at a particularly difficult time for the movement: If Zionists like Kohn expressed themselves in such a manner in the world press, *Davar* asked, “how can we hope that this press will change its skeptical and disapproving attitudes toward our enterprise?”<sup>25</sup> Weltsch shared German Zionist leader Fritz Naftali’s (1888–1961) feeling that the spirit of the published response to Kohn and especially its title were “identical, more or less, to those of the [German] *Völkisch* newspapers, which, when writing about a certain socialist, place[d] the word ‘German’ in quotation marks.” In the same letter, Weltsch claimed that *Davar* “casts doubt on Hans Kohn’s ability to manage Keren Hayesod’s propaganda department. This position has no merit. . . . I was notified that on the basis of the *Davar* article, the [right-wing] revisionists in Palestine have begun collecting signatures demanding that the officials of Keren Hayesod fire Hans Kohn.”<sup>26</sup>

Kohn was not indifferent to the “inconceivable incitement against” him and wrote in his diary that “if people here were empowered, they also would have tried me and Hugo [Bergmann] for treason.”<sup>27</sup> Kohn knew full well that some of his colleagues and superiors in the Keren Hayesod offices were planning behind his

back to remove him from his position. Shmuel Sambursky, a Brit Shalom member, recalled a meeting when a superior in Keren Hayesod asked to initiate impeachment proceedings against Kohn. "He is waiting only for a letter from the public, and then he would initiate an investigation against Hans Kohn. He requested that Bodenheimer write such a letter."<sup>28</sup> Sambursky viewed the attack upon Kohn as a "traitor" as part of a wider battle in the *yishuv* against Brit Shalom and what Berl Katznelson, the intellectual leader of labor Zionism, labeled at the time "the rootless intellectuals."<sup>29</sup> At the end of those months, therefore, Kohn did not really decide to resign from Keren Hayesod, but rather was forced to leave.

On 22 October 1929, Kohn sent a letter of resignation to his superior, Arthur Hantke, claiming he realized that his "heretic Zionist conceptions" might damage "the smooth functioning of the office." Toward the end of the restrained letter, Kohn wrote: "Today I am almost forty years old, twenty of which—the very best years—I have devoted purely to Zionist work and thought. In a certain sense, thus, I feel orphaned. I also do not know where to begin, and integrating into a new world will not be easy for me, but it had better happen now rather than in a couple of years when integration would be even harder."<sup>30</sup> A month later, Kohn detailed the motivation for his decision to Berthold Feiwel (Feiwel is a fascinating figure, but in this context all I will mention is that he was director of the Jewish Colonial Trust, and earlier, the first director of Keren Hayesod):

Lately, I have become increasingly aware that the official policy of the Zionist Organization and the opinion of the vast majority of Zionists are quite incompatible with my own convictions. I, therefore, feel that I can no longer remain a leading official within the Zionist Organization. The Zionism that I have championed since 1909 was at no time political. I and a group of my friends regarded Zionism as a moral-*cum*-spiritual movement within which we could realize our most fundamental humane convictions: our pacifism, liberalism, and humanism. It has often been argued that we [Jews] could not unreservedly sponsor pacifism or ethical politics among the European peoples because this would result in our being regarded as aliens and traitors. Zion was to be the place where we would be able to realize our humanitarian aspirations.

The reality of the Zionist movement and of Jewish settlement in Palestine is far from all this. You know that for years I have been fighting the battle for those ideas which to me represented the very meaning of Zionism. Eventually these ideas acquired focus in the so-called Arab question. For me, this question became the [moral] touchstone of Zionism. This conclusion was, however, not prompted by any particular sympathy for the Arabs or excessive appreciation of their merits. I was concerned not with the Arabs but with the Jews, their Jewishness and the confirmation of their humane [values]. It has, alas, become increasingly clear to me that, in this respect, the Zionist Organization has failed utterly. The decisive experience was the Arab national uprising in August 1929. . . .

We pretended to be innocent victims. . . . But we are obliged to look into the deeper cause of this revolt. . . . The Arab national movement is growing and will continue to grow. In a short time it will be much more difficult for us to reach an agreement than it is today. Increasing our numbers by tens of thousands will not



make it any easier. I believe that it will be possible for us to hold Palestine and continue to grow for a long time. This will be done first with British aid and later with the help of our own bayonets—shamefully called *Haganab* [i.e., defense]— . . . but by that time we will not be able to do without the bayonets. The means will have determined our goal. Jewish Palestine will no longer have anything of that Zion for which I once put myself on the line.<sup>31</sup>

### Between One Break and Another: Losing Faith in Brit Shalom

After resigning from Keren Hayesod in October 1929, Kohn continued his activities with Brit Shalom for one more year. His gradual detachment from the association during that time had two dimensions: on the operative level, Kohn lost all faith in Brit Shalom's impact, resolve, and methods; on the ideological level, he gradually distanced himself from the vision of a binational state. In fact, after the 1929 riots Kohn opted for a plan that differed entirely from the one Brit Shalom advocated. While the association strove for the establishment of a binational state, Kohn already spoke merely of securing a protected-minority status for the Jews in Palestine. Whereas Brit Shalom's primary strategy was advocacy and propaganda within the Zionist movement and *yishuv* society, Kohn despaired totally of the possibility of convincing those parties or influencing Zionist policy, desiring instead to convince the British directly. He hoped that they, in turn, would dictate the perimeters of the game to the Zionists. In spite of these differences, he still saw great significance in Brit Shalom's agitation within the Zionist movement.<sup>32</sup>

As early as September 1929, however, Kohn began to doubt whether Brit Shalom could ever redeem Zionism. Writing about German Zionists who, after the riots, had adopted a "radical Brit Shalom policy," he wondered: "How could it help? Memoranda, brochures, etc. as long as there is no clear awareness of the fundamentals of what is morally unjustifiable. One has to decide: morality or Zionism. Ruppin saw this confrontation with great precision and chose Zionism. RIP"<sup>33</sup> Kohn grew more and more convinced that Brit Shalom had not and could not fulfill its mission as a significant opposition party within the Zionist movement. Aboard a ship returning from Europe to Palestine, Kohn wrote about the difference between him and the association. Whereas Kohn objected on moral grounds, on principle, to the aspiration to create a Jewish majority in Palestine, Brit Shalom apparently considered it legitimate, even if politically problematic, and therefore recommended that fellow Zionists moderate this aspiration solely on political-diplomatic grounds. But the "concession" (*Verzicht*) that worried Kohn most was the association's tendency toward ideological compromise vis-à-vis the Zionist leadership. Each watering down of Brit Shalom's positions in the hope of solidifying the base of support was a dangerous illusion that "destroys us," he wrote; the base of support was not expanding, and the association was losing face and its moral backbone.<sup>34</sup>



On Rosh Hashanah 1929 Kohn wrote in his diary that so long as he was not entirely convinced of the possibility of implementing Zionism morally, he could not participate in Brit Shalom's activities. Many there believed they should not abandon Zionism even if it necessitated morally questionable means; therefore, they could justify the use of force. "If obligated to choose between an aggressive, military policy and abandoning Zionism," Kohn proclaimed, "I shall choose the second."<sup>35</sup> During a Brit Shalom meeting three days later, Jacob Thon attacked Kohn for his *Frankfurter Zeitung* article, criticizing him for a lack of national loyalty. Kohn fought back.<sup>36</sup> The day he resigned from Keren Heyesod, Kohn also resigned from his position as treasurer (and board member) of Brit Shalom.<sup>37</sup> He continued working on Brit Shalom's plans, but his diaries record the feeling that all his efforts were in vain: "It is a shame that all of this has nothing to do with reality. It leads to no conciliation or understanding; these are merely dreams [*Traumgebilde*]. What's the point in all that? Either a true peace treaty—which is possible—or the war goes on, a war of the repression of the Arab freedom movement. One shouldn't participate in that!"

Nevertheless, Kohn did participate. He continued attending Brit Shalom's meetings and worked in its framework on his draft of a constitution through which he again strengthened his beliefs in the association's mission.<sup>38</sup> Distinct from prior programs, Kohn's draft—which no longer called for the old binational idea but for a protected-minority status for the Jews—was written almost as a matter of principle, with the knowledge that it had no chance of adoption by a broad segment of the *yishuv* and its leadership. In fact, he did not even plan to make it public to the Jewish community. He intended to offer the idea to British and international authorities in the hope that they would pressure the nations of the land to accept it.<sup>39</sup>

Until the beginning of summer, Kohn oscillated between the feeling of moral commitment to implementing the founding ideas of Brit Shalom and his growing concern that the association was not fulfilling its mission and even contradicted it in three ways: first, Brit Shalom was not allowed to speak in the name of Zionism and, thus, it misled the Arabs; second, the association had become a propagandistic fig leaf of political Zionism, imparting a dovish appearance to the movement, regardless of its actions;<sup>40</sup> third, the association provoked great hostility within the Zionist movement, thus strengthening the hawkish opposing camp.<sup>41</sup> Kohn's impressions from the association's meetings were gloomy: "Afternoon meeting of Brit Shalom. All the discussions float in a vacuum. . . . Brit Shalom—with well-meaning intentions but lacking courage and panicked about its own impact—conveys a tragicomical impression. Hugo attempts to unify ethics and Zionism and this must fail";<sup>42</sup> "Brit Shalom meeting: a struggle for unrealities";<sup>43</sup> "Afternoon meeting of Brit Shalom. Perplexity and helplessness vis-à-vis the situation. Doom comes. It is not inevitable, but there is no one who will take measures to prevent it."<sup>44</sup>

At the Brit Shalom meeting of 4 May, matters reached a boiling point: "In the last meeting of Brit Shalom, there was a confrontation between me and Thon

on the question of individual freedom of action and freedom of conscience. . . . I have merely pointed out that instead of attacking certain isolated members for their activity [that is, Bergmann and Kohn himself], it would have been much more fitting to attack Ruppin for his scandalous inactivity and his similarly scandalous behavior against Brit Shalom [after leaving the association].”<sup>45</sup> He wrote to Weltsch about Brit Shalom-type initiatives, suggesting that at the current stage “all these are merely lies, after all, which do not even fool the Arabs nowadays. Only a small part of the [Arab] Christians still believe our propaganda.”<sup>46</sup>

By the summer of 1930, Kohn’s eventual break with Brit Shalom was merely a question of time. In June 1930, Kohn’s criticism of the association was so harsh that he wrote to Weltsch in all seriousness that the hawkish “Jab[otinsky] is more Brit Shalom than Brit Shalom itself.”<sup>47</sup> Kohn’s criticism grew more and more ad hominem. In July he charged Zionist policy with deception and Bergmann with self-deception.<sup>48</sup> In a letter to Weltsch, Kohn described the Brit Shalom meeting of 19 July: “The afternoon meeting continued until two o’clock. Nothing was achieved. Those people sense the monstrous injustice that the Zionists perpetrate here . . . but they are helpless. In essence, [they are] idle, obviously morally preferable to [David Werner] Senator and Ruppin, but, logically, they are very weak. Decent people—but very bad politicians.”<sup>49</sup> During those weeks, Kohn demanded that the association follow the essentially impossible route of taking a stand against the Balfour Declaration and the Mandatory rule.<sup>50</sup> “The worst,” Kohn wrote in his diary, “is the dishonesty of the Brit Shalom people; they want to ‘do something for’ the Arabs, but if the government does something that even looks like complying with this demand, then they scream univocally with all the rest.”<sup>51</sup>

These harsh statements can be misleading, as Kohn kept most of his critiques to himself. He described his work with Arthur Ruppin and Georg Landauer as “shameful” and as “a dark chapter in my political judgment,” and added “how tainted am I after twenty years there [in the Zionist movement].”<sup>52</sup> In another letter to Weltsch he noted that as a matter of fact, only a year ago he had been “blind,” but then he corrected himself immediately: “that is, I wasn’t blind anymore . . . but I did not have the courage to think things through; it was too convenient.”<sup>53</sup> Kohn’s breaking point resulted from Brit Shalom’s meeting on the evening of 14 June 1930. Again, he described his gloomy impression to Weltsch: “Yesterday evening there was a Brit Shalom meeting. It was lethal in all aspects. Ruppin’s unadulterated spirit spoke from [Joseph] Lurie, who seemed to have been instructed by him before the meeting, and Ernst Simon, Shmuel Sambursky, Escha, and Boné did not attend. I did not utter a word and Hugo, too, seemed like someone who has accepted his fate. The only one in whom some reason flickered was Rabi Ben-yamin. Kalvarisky and Schwabe together with Lurie completed the apes’ dance. . . . I decided never to go there again.”<sup>54</sup> After many months and even years of doubting that the members of Brit Shalom could act with the seriousness and resolve that should have followed from their views, Kohn finally acknowledged that Brit Shalom did not, and never would, fulfill what he perceived as its mission as an active

opposition party within Zionism. Two months later he wrote a formal letter of resignation to the association:

I would like to ask you to register me henceforth not as a "member" of Brit Shalom, but merely as its "friend." I would like to explain the reason for this request only briefly: Now—when Zionism is coming ever closer to being Judaism's most aggressive and reactionary faction—only a unified and resolute group can oppose this development. A group that is just as serious in its belief in peace, human solidarity, and liberal humanism as other groups are regarding their platforms. A group of people who insist on the implementation of their platform and who will stand or fall on its basis. People who do not merely profess their faith in the platform, even though that, too, is honorable. . . .

Often members of Brit Shalom are linked to a great degree to the formal Zionist Organization—which they accept willy-nilly—and despite their stance, and maybe also despite their best intentions, their deeds cannot really match their views, and so it [their worldview] loses its impact. All this, of course saps Brit Shalom of all its power and leads it to write piles of pretty peace proposals, welcomed by all, but which are never implemented because they are up in the air, because they simply bypass the fundamental problem—which is not pretty at all—and which is welcomed by none. And so, Brit Shalom errs and misleads others as to the real problem. It wraps itself in a cloud of innocence, but from this cloud, there is no possibility of influence. . . .

P.S.: As far as I'm concerned, I do not wish this step to be made public beyond the narrowest circle. As long as Brit Shalom is "persecuted"—even if this is a mistake—I will publicly identify myself with it entirely.<sup>55</sup>

For twenty years—as a cultural Zionist and later a binational Zionist—the core of Kohn's Zionist agenda was the same: namely, that Zionism should never be just another small national movement aspiring for political sovereignty and a nation-state. Having lost faith also in the viability of binational Zionism, Kohn gave up the long struggle for Zionism's soul and for the first time left it to his opponents to define it. In the late 1930s, when he wrote that "Zionism is the Jewish national movement that aims at the reestablishment of Palestine as a Jewish nation-state," it was the clearest indication that he saw no glimmer of hope for Zionism.<sup>56</sup>

### A Perplexed Guide: Kohn and Buber

A central element in Kohn's break was the development of a critical distance between himself and Martin Buber, who had been his mentor from his initial Zionist stirrings. At the time that he was breaking with Brit Shalom and Zionism, Kohn also concluded writing the first biography of Buber, which he had begun in early 1924.<sup>57</sup> One cannot overstate Buber's influence on the young Kohn and the personal bond the pupil felt with his teacher. Hillel Kieval showed long ago how Buber became a spiritual guide to Kohn and his fellow members of the Prague "Bar Kochba" Zionist student association. Buber gave his first address on Judaism to the

association in Prague in 1909, and many of its veterans described that evening as an enchanted encounter and as “an indelible experience, [which] located our Zionist views on a truly stable foundation for the construction of our work. A foundation that was entirely new to many of us.”<sup>58</sup> Kohn’s first edited volume (which he compiled as the chairman of Bar Kochba) was *On Judaism*, which was a project carried out in the spirit of Buber and with his guidance.<sup>59</sup> Kohn also dedicated the first book he published to Buber.<sup>60</sup> When he began writing Buber’s biography two years later, it was very much from the perspective of a disciple and was even written with Buber’s cooperation.

Despite Buber’s considerable influence and Kohn’s commitment to him, as early as World War I and more clearly during his Palestine years, the student’s implicit critique of his teacher began to grow stronger. For example, Kohn criticized the political “romanticism” in Buber’s periodical *Der Jude*, and prior to the 1929 riots he complained that Buber was not active enough regarding the Arab Question and that his Zionist speeches in those years were overly abstract and ignored the various practical questions.<sup>61</sup> Despite his growing criticisms, Kohn composed a sympathetic biography of Buber by using the formula “Buber: His Work and Times.” He attributed almost every negative element in the biography to the spirit of the times, whereas his descriptions of Buber’s personality derived from deep identification and appreciation.

The writing of this book, however, was also an act of leave-taking from a teacher. In those years of crisis, it enabled Kohn, and perhaps even forced him, to do some soul-searching and critical thinking about Buber’s path and his own, even if he did not make this criticism explicit in the pages of the book. After concluding the biography, Kohn wrote in his diary, “Some people wonder why, in my book about Buber, I so often quote my own works, my own deeds, etc. After all, the book should at the same time be my intellectual autobiography and my confrontation—simultaneously testifying to the strong feeling that lends unity to all of my books, which, at first sight, seem so disparate in their topics. Simultaneously, it reflects the unity of my essence, the dissonances therein, and its path.”<sup>62</sup> In many ways this book can be seen as Kohn’s projection of his own location (i.e., on the margins of Zionism) onto the various chapters of Buber’s life.<sup>63</sup> In a letter to Weltsch, Kohn was even blunter: “It is truly more an autobiography than a biography of Buber. For it shows my path and ours, my youth and ours, from which I part ways in this book and which I have analyzed and criticized in the book. . . . I choose the legitimate form of a biography of another man, a great man, to be able to say things I couldn’t have said on my own behalf.”<sup>64</sup>

In the spring of 1929, Buber attempted but failed to help Kohn acquire a position at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In the wake of the Arab riots, a few months later, Kohn confronted Buber with his far-reaching conclusions, in an attempt to goad his mentor into even more radical and resolute Zionist action. This was a cry for help from a pupil in crisis. Even though the theoretical gap between the two was not so significant, Buber, in contrast to Kohn, perceived primarily the hand of fate and the tragic element of the riots.<sup>65</sup> Kohn became

increasingly critical of Buber's personality and conduct, and although he saw him as a great thinker, he also viewed him as a rather small man in the hours of historical trial.

In his letters to Buber, Kohn made small jabs: he alluded to Buber's physical distance from Palestine and raised Buber's initial embrace of World War I in order to draw a parallel to his conduct in the current crisis. Buber, for his part, found in Kohn's dramatic letters, which repeatedly dealt with the idea of a break with Zionism, a troubling degree of dogmatism.<sup>66</sup> In his diary entry for 2 September 1929, Kohn complained that "Buber is ambivalent again just as in 1914."<sup>67</sup> That same day he wrote to Magnes, claiming that the riots were a historical trial of one's commitment to the cause, in which Buber, "unfortunately . . . again seems like he was in 1914–1915: ambivalent and unclear."<sup>68</sup> On 25 September, Kohn wrote Buber a letter toying with the idea of a break with Zionism, discussing the situation in Palestine while equating it to the moral, political trial raised by the outbreak of World War I. In the letter he referred to Buber's detachment from the reality on the ground:

You are lucky not to see the Palestinian and Zionist reality in its details, but Zionism *as it is today*, the Zionist goals, are unacceptable. From here, we cannot continue without becoming estranged from our own principles, which now must be put into action in all seriousness. The situation resembles 1914, that is like always and everywhere. It is not about Ishmael, only about Isaac; that is, about our goal, our life, and our deeds. I fear we lend our support to something that we cannot condone. But this is something that will drag us further, out of false solidarity, into the quagmire. Zionism must be carried out peacefully, or be carried out without me. Zionism is not Judaism.<sup>69</sup>

In a letter to Buber the next day, Kohn again noted Buber's distance from the Palestinian reality: "Facing that Zionism, I am utterly in despair. This is something I did not wish, even in the years 1910–1914 or 1918. And this is what happened. I see it in thousands of details that you cannot see from afar."<sup>70</sup> A few days later, Kohn wrote in his diaries: "Buber's conduct in this Zionist crisis is a major disappointment. . . . He doesn't take either himself or his teachings seriously. He labels that serious conduct as one-dimensional doctrinairism (is there, then, deliberate ambivalence in his teaching?) as he himself makes very dark compromises. This does not discredit his teaching; it only discredits him."<sup>71</sup>

Kohn subtly embedded his escalating criticism of Buber in the biography, as he told Weltsch: "I've expressed excruciatingly harsh criticism in places where the regular reader could not detect my dispute with Buber."<sup>72</sup> After the publication of the biography, Kohn wrote to Buber:

My book about you must be out by now. I clearly feel that it represents a turning point in my development, as it is a book that was not conceived or written as a confession and yet became one. A turning point and an avowal in a dual sense: looking backward, it represents thanks for and an accounting of twenty years of progress and work, a period that began with your speech about the meaning of Judaism and

that was shaped and guided by your teachings, a period in whose center stands a Zion that is only now revealing itself to me in its true form and has nothing in common with the national war [*Völkerkrieg*] in Palestine, a bad war that has been raging since 1917 and perhaps even longer but that we were not able to see from Prague around 1910. A turning point and an avowal of the future: it is not an accident, even though it was completely unintended and unpremeditated, that in my third chapter, the one devoted to the World War, I conclude your Zionist development with a Zionist creed that most people will no longer regard as Zionist . . . and now, in 1929, twenty years after 1909, your teachings—perhaps a practical, doctrinaire, consistent, Landauer-like conception of your teachings—have pointed the way to me that I am preparing to pursue. . . . Everything here is riddled with the sin of the (international) state of violence, everything is unfruitfully politicized; but maybe reality—the political turn of events, admittedly after the collapse of [this new] Sabbateanism, and with the loss of all hope for normalization—will bring about a new breakthrough, and our Zion would be resurrected—but maybe all of my material and spiritual springs would be blocked [by then], and I would have to leave.<sup>73</sup>

Hence, even in this concluding letter, Kohn did not spare Buber his jabs: he emphasized again that the transformation he had undergone stemmed necessarily and coherently from Buber's teaching, a teaching that guided him "as a practical, doctrinarian, consistent" view. He believed that had Buber taken himself and his teaching seriously, he would have experienced a similar transformation. At the end of 1929, then, Kohn had reached the conclusion that Buber did not take his own humanist, Jewish, and Zionist views seriously and therefore did not act accordingly. This is precisely the same accusation he directed at the Brit Shalom Association a year later and was actually the very accusation he directed against himself. The tension between Kohn and Buber, as far as I know, never reached an open confrontation, and it seems that the two always retained a considerable amount of mutual respect. But from then on, their bond progressively weakened. The scholarly confrontation of the biographer Kohn with his Zionist mentor Buber, which turned into his own Zionist soul-searching, became a key element in his eventual break with the Zionist movement.<sup>74</sup>

### Toward the Scholarly Vocation

Another dimension of Kohn's break with Zionism is, of course, his scholarly work. During those years Kohn's Zionist career was replaced in many regards by emerging academic ambitions. The beginning of Kohn's academic career predated his break with Zionism and emigration from Palestine. Admittedly, most of his earlier publications were more philosophical than scholarly.<sup>75</sup> Even his early books, however, published before the riots of 1929—*History of Nationalism in the East* (*Geschichte der Nationalen Bewegung im Orient*, 1928) and two additional research volumes that were written in a more "popular" style—his book on Soviet Russia, *Meaning and Fate of the Revolution* (*Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, 1923) and the 1926 *History of the Arab*



*National Movement (Toldot Hatenuah Haleumit Haaravit)*—display a discernible scholarly approach. As of the mid-1920s, Kohn also published regularly in academic periodicals such as *Zeitschrift für Politik*. These works began to express in scholarly language the evolution of his political views. Already in *History of Nationalism in the East* (which he started writing prior to his immigration to Palestine), Kohn situated the Zionist project not in the context of Jewish history but within a broader framework of events in the East—modernization, decolonialization, and budding Arab nationalism—and this angle gave it entirely different proportions. As noted earlier, a biting review of this work in *Davar* (titled “Zionism in Two and a Half Pages”) included some highly personal criticisms and challenged Kohn’s position in Keren Hayesod.<sup>76</sup>

In the spring of 1929, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was about to establish the world’s first academic chair in “International Peace.” Kohn, viewing himself as most suitable to fill the position, suggested his candidacy to Magnes—a binationalist, a friend, and the chancellor of Hebrew University—with the following words:

In my opinion, it should be a chair for political science and political philosophy, held by a man who is a real pacifist and interested in and actively striving for international peace, at the same time especially devoted to the political dilemma of the Middle East. I do not think there are many serious candidates for this chair. This professor could have a very important task: giving our youth a really liberal and pacifist political education and combating the narrow outlook that we encounter so often in our midst. It would be a task that attracts and allures me. I should find here—after long years of thankless toil, but still at the zenith of my creative forces—as teacher and as author, my life task for which I believe myself qualified, by my general faculties, my inclinations and tendencies, my work and my training.<sup>77</sup>

Before the selection of the chair, Magnes wrote to Buber—who, like him, worked for Kohn’s appointment to the position—that many reservations regarding Kohn’s candidacy “result[ed] from dissatisfaction with Dr. Kohn’s political position.”<sup>78</sup> In August 1929, two weeks after the outbreak of the riots, the decision was made, and the university nominated Norman Bentwich, not Kohn, to the chair. Kohn’s diary records great frustration over the fact that his pacifism hindered his candidacy for the chair in “international peace,” a fact that struck him as utterly absurd. His resolve not to let himself be crushed by the loss of what he called up until then his “life task” is remarkable. Soon after, he embraced the outcome and rationalized his loss, asserting that in the current conditions, the position “would have given me more suffering than joy. I would like at one time to be a teacher at a German or American university. There I could give full expression to my teaching abilities and I would have an incentive for scholarly work.”<sup>79</sup>

The connection between his break with Zionism and his entry into academia was evident in the fact that a few days prior to his resignation from Keren Heyesod, Kohn roughly outlined a book titled *Philosophy and Sociology of Nationalism* that already pointed in a direction similar to his seminal work, *The Idea of Nationalism*, published



in 1944.<sup>80</sup> Half a year later, Kohn sketched an outline of works he planned to write before he would turn forty-five (in 1955), which covered eight topics: the philosophy of politics; the social psychology of modern Judaism; the philosophical foundation of politics and religion; the history of the national movement in the East; the “political problem of the Orient (Orient and Occident: on the boundary of two worlds)”; the political problem of Palestine; nationalism and national rights in the Soviet Union; and the philosophy and psychology of nationalism.<sup>81</sup>

Indeed, the moment he decided to quit Zionist activity, an academic career became his preferred alternative. In the two months between his resignation and his actual departure from the offices of Keren Hayesod, he wrote impatiently of his desire to devote himself completely to scholarship: “As long as I was at Keren Hayesod, I wasn’t able to do it, for I felt complicit in the Zionist deeds.”<sup>82</sup> The great turmoil surrounding his resignation hindered him from any academic work during the time. (“In the current situation, I cannot work at all; it consumes me from within. This must stop.”<sup>83</sup> “Days pass in constant nervousness, devoid of content and work.”<sup>84</sup>) When he traveled to the United States in the summer of 1930, he stressed both in his diary and to others that the journey was related to scholarly matters and would have no connection whatsoever to Zionist issues: “I do not wish to lecture before Zionist organizations. . . . I do not wish to come to America as a Zionist, I do not wish to be labeled or proclaimed as such, I do not wish to interfere in real Zionist politics—but rather to come as a scholar, a lecturer in political science and Judaism.”<sup>85</sup>

Initially, Kohn welcomed the period of forced unemployment.<sup>86</sup> He devoted the time to learning and study, just as he had during his years as a POW in World War I. He made good use of the time and published widely. Years went by, however, and no academic position appeared on the horizon. In the fall of 1932, when he also lost his position as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* correspondent and had already used up most of his savings, Kohn grew increasingly anxious regarding his future. He asked for Magnes’s assistance in finding a teaching position at an American university.<sup>87</sup> Magnes thought he should continue seeking a post at Hebrew University, but Kohn considered that an unlikely prospect: “I have established for myself now in Palestine, at great personal expense to me—not only financially, but much more as regards emotional woes, intellectual strain, heart suffering—a position of independence.”<sup>88</sup> Kohn refused to endanger this independence by further pursuing a position at Hebrew University.

His scholarship on the contemporary history of the Arab world, including the 1931 books *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East* and *Orient and Occident*, evidenced the developments in Kohn’s thinking on the future of Palestine, Zionism, and the Arab national movement.<sup>89</sup> Even though he attempted as much as possible to avoid a clear expression of his personal political views, he was unambiguous in asserting that the Palestinian Arabs had a national movement for all intents and purposes, and he added that this awakening of national consciousness renders impossible “even in the Orient,” the “swallowing” of one nation by another, the elision of its national identity or its assimilation.<sup>90</sup> He also alluded to the 1929

riots, stating: "History shows that suppressed nations won their freedom only through uprisings and violence, the lack of which was used by the oppressors as proof of the legitimacy of the current situation."<sup>91</sup> Kohn left Palestine in the spring of 1934 after being invited to serve as a professor of modern history by Smith College, in Massachusetts. On his very last day in Palestine, he concluded the final lines of his book *Western Civilization in the Near East*.<sup>92</sup> This was his last book on the East; Kohn now shifted not only his life but also the focus of his research westward.

### A Pacifist in the Zionist Movement

Kohn's pacifism was a central element in his break with Zionism. He became a pacifist during World War I, and from 1925 on he served as the Palestinian representative to War Resisters' International (WRI). During the late 1920s he became one of the organization's central figures.<sup>93</sup> At an international conference of WRI in 1928, Kohn delivered an influential address titled "Active Pacifism,"<sup>94</sup> in which he expressed some remarkable points with regard to his Zionist activity. First, he stressed that the hardest tasks for the world's pacifist struggle were in the new nation-states such as the successor states that had replaced the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those nations, he claimed, previously strongholds of anti-militarism, now saw militarism as the highest expression of national sovereignty.<sup>95</sup> If the relevance to the Palestinian context was merely implicit initially, the heart of Kohn's piece created a most explicit link:

In a state of multiple nationalities, the problem of pacifism in the context of domestic policy is presently more urgent and difficult than the problem of pacifism in the context of foreign policy. . . . For the Czechs need an army not for war against external enemies but rather to suppress the Germans at home. At present such a problem exists in each multinational state. . . . *The quantitative concept of [a national] majority must cease to be a power-political concept bestowing exclusive rights [Vorrechte].* A similar problem exists in Palestine. I do not regret this. *Pacifist convictions are worth something only if upheld when one's own interests are at stake.* For this offers us not only the possibility of espousing theoretical principles, an easy thing, but also the possibility of living out these principles. *Like all other pacifists, we have to prove such principles not in battle against another people, not through the education of other peoples, but rather in the education of our own people.* . . . We have to conduct this battle, which I see today as the decisive spiritual battle, above all in the midst of our people against our own people. . . . Hence I am happy that we Jews, *returning* to Palestine, are not coming to an unpopulated land and can uphold—on the basis of this specific material, this specific life task before us—the seriousness and sense of reality of our principles as well as the meaning of Judaism.<sup>96</sup>

For Kohn, the riots of 1929 were not only a test of Jewish and moral values, but equally of pacifist values. "Now we must put ourselves to the test," he wrote to Buber, "for otherwise, what is the worth of our pacifism, anti-imperialism, and

socialism?”<sup>97</sup> After the riots of 1929 Kohn attributed greater importance to the conduct of his fellow pacifists within the Zionist movement and focused his gaze primarily on Magnes and Einstein. Occasionally he praised them,<sup>98</sup> at other times he expressed doubt as to whether they would withstand the trial,<sup>99</sup> and often he expressed despair regarding their conduct. For example, Kohn raged in his diary that Albert Einstein “published in the *Manchester Guardian* a scandalous article of deceitful Zionist phraseology of the most common kind, and he stabs me in the back in such a manner, for he is a pacifist. It is precisely things like that that drive me crazy.”<sup>100</sup>

Kohn often expressed his belief that there was no better setting for a modern Jew to fight for his radical views than within Zionism in Palestine. Yet a few days after his resignation from Keren Hayesod, he wrote in his diary, “We cannot act for peace etc. here any better than anywhere else. The claim according to which one can fight for humanity here [more than anywhere else] is false.”<sup>101</sup> A major element in Kohn’s break was his growing conviction (which, as established above, predated the riots) that the leaders of Zionism and the majority of the *yishuv* did not, in fact, want an end to the conflict with the Arabs and may even have needed it. Kohn’s ongoing dilemma was about the modus operandi of a Zionist pacifist in such a position. In early 1930 he wrote that “the Zionists want war; [hence] the mission of the pacifists in the movement must be to deny [it] men and money so long as there is no peace.”<sup>102</sup>

At the end of the Palestine chapter of his life, after he had already turned his back on Zionism, Kohn wrote that “the pacifists’ struggle must primarily be against nationalism. The goal: absolute cosmopolitanism. Then, only then, will disarmament be possible. Setting of goals: (a) in the short term: the individual must not volunteer to participate in war or in the preparation for war ([with the pretense of] the defense of his own people); (b) in the long term: ending the era in which the highest duty was the individual’s loyalty to the nation and educating men toward loyalty to humanity, a world-state [*Erdstaat*] (protect humanity from the nation).”<sup>103</sup> Kohn, who is so identified with the distinction between destructive and benign nationalism, seemed to find all nationalism destructive in those months. Pacifism’s chief adversary, he argued, was not militarism, as one would imagine, nor the modern state, but nationalism. Probably more than any other conceptual foundation, pacifism offered Kohn an ideological platform for a radical critique of Zionism. In those years his pacifism could not be divorced from his newly acquired insights on the nature of nationalism, but a few years thereafter, Kohn’s pacifism, too, evaporated.<sup>104</sup>

## Conclusion

Preceding and following the 1929 riots, Kohn gradually neared a breaking point in parallel arenas in his life: first, as the head of the propaganda department of Keren Hayesod who became very critical of its goals; second, as a central figure

in Brit Shalom who lost his faith in the group, its resolve, and its impact; third, as the author of the first biography of Buber, through which he found himself confronting his spiritual mentor and his own path; fourth, as a scholar seeking to devote himself fully to impartial academic endeavors, who wrote his important works on the Middle East and Arab nationalism in those years while conducting research that changed his perception of the developments in the Middle East and the Arab world; and, finally, as a radical pacifist at the height of his activity in international organizations, who saw Palestine as a decisive arena for pacifist struggle but despaired of the possibility of forging a significant pacifist current within Zionism (not even within its most dovish wing—Brit Shalom).

Kohn's Zionist national perspective was gradually replaced with the supranational one of great empires. In his memoirs he stated that in the early twentieth century the Hapsburg monarchy (his fatherland) was about to turn into "a truly multinational state,"<sup>105</sup> and it seems that Kohn remained loyal to this unrealized Austrian idea. Accepting Palestinian citizenship (and gladly giving up the Czechoslovakian one), Kohn wrote in his diary that actually, "I was always Austrian. Austria I loved."<sup>106</sup> He loved the promise of higher human ideas surpassing religion and nationality. He identified similar potential in the 1920s in the British Empire,<sup>107</sup> the Soviet Union,<sup>108</sup> and later in the United States, all of which he saw as radical alternatives to the new nation-states. This aspect was also connected to his break with Zionism, as a letter to Weltsch from the spring of 1930 states: "It is likely that by using aggressive means, it will be possible to establish here a [Jewish] majority. But what will be here then? Nothing. A small Jewish state. What do I have to do with that? What does anyone have to do with it? If I am interested in states [at all], it is [in states such as] the English or the Russian, where there are great possibilities [for the formation] of a future and of a new type of man—something which is completely lacking here. For this small state . . . will always be armed to the teeth against the irredentism from within and the 'enemies' all around. Aware of its weakness, it will always remain a hotbed of exaggerated nationalism."<sup>109</sup>

In fact, no idea or ideology filled the void created by his withdrawal from the Zionist movement. His pacifism, which played such a crucial role in the break, totally lost its critical edge outside the framework of the national movement: what was the value or legitimacy in demanding that other nations avoid the path of war? Indeed, Kohn himself abandoned pacifism within a few years. Similarly, Kohn stressed at the time that his break with Zionism was the most Jewish thing to do. When he explained the grounds for his withdrawal to Berthold Feivel, he stressed, "I was not concerned with the Arabs but with the Jews, their Jewishness and the confirmation of their humane [values]. . . . In this respect the Zionist Organization has failed utterly."<sup>110</sup> One of his mottos at the time was that "Zionism is not Judaism," but Kohn was far from coherent regarding this Jewish aspect. After having immigrated to the United States, his activity within Jewish frameworks diminished dramatically.<sup>111</sup> The void created by his rejection of Zionism was filled by an alternative perspective—academia. From an activist member of the Zionist

national movement, Kohn turned into a scholar analyzing the promises and perils of various national movements, in academic writing that aimed at being impartial, critical, and uncompromising.

Until the possibility of settling in the United States arose, Kohn seemed trapped in Palestine and complained about the tremendous emotional stress: “I cannot stay in the country. I become too nervous because politics disturbs all the time. Time and again, I wish to end the story—and cannot.”<sup>112</sup> After quitting Brit Shalom, Kohn’s evaluation of the Zionist movement grew even harsher, along with his disregard for the merit of Brit Shalom: “Zionism,” he wrote in his diary in the summer of 1932, “is completely and openly an oppressive, antisocial, freedom-suppressing movement. . . . In this regard, the good will of a few [or] the subjective dignity that others may have, Hugo Bergmann for example, does not change a thing.”<sup>113</sup> His diaries and private correspondence in the four and a half years between his resignation and his immigration to the United States attest to his deep intellectual confusion and intense emotional turmoil. Bergmann understood well what his friend was going through and wrote to Kohn in the autumn of 1933 the following lines: “In the last year or two we have drifted apart. And as much as I regret this, I cannot change it, and neither can you—even though often it is not because of your views, but because of the manner in which you express them in smaller circles. There is no one who could not understand, on the personal level, your hatred and resentment of Jewish Palestine—you’ve been wronged too much and you [after all] were so deeply bound to the whole thing, and ultimately yours is nothing but a disillusioned love.”<sup>114</sup>

## Notes

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1. Hans Kohn, *Living in a World Revolution: My Encounters with History* (New York, 1964), 53.
2. Hans Kohn, *World Order in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 1942), 93; idem, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York, 1944), 10.
3. Hans Kohn, “Nationalismus,” *Der Jude* 6, no. 11 (1921–1922): 674–86.
4. Hans Kohn, “Zur Araberfrage,” *Der Jude* 4, no. 12 (1919): 567–69. A translation from the German can be found in Wilma Abeles Iggers, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: A Historical Reader* (Detroit, 1992), 239–42. The political structure he envisioned, it may be noted, was clearly influenced by Austro-Marxist concepts of national autonomy.
5. The literature on Martin Buber is vast, e.g., Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, *From Mysticism to Dialogue: Martin Buber’s Transformation of German Social Thought* (Detroit, 1989); Maurice S. Friedman, *Martin*

- Buber's Life and Work* (New York, 1981). The best available biographical introduction to Hugo Bergmann is Miriam Sambursky, ed., *Samuel Hugo Bergmann: Tagebücher & Briefe* (2 vols.) (Königstein/Ts, 1985). For an excellent recent introduction to Robert Weltsch's biography, see Stefan Vogt, "Robert Weltsch and the Paradoxes of Anti-Nationalist Nationalism," *Jewish Social Studies* 16, no.3 (spring/summer 2010): 85–115.
6. Hans Kohn, *Living in a World Revolution*, 143, 145.
  7. Transcribed interview of Robert Weltsch by Hagit Lavsky and Israel Kolatt, 9 July 1979, Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division (henceforth referred to as ICJOHD), (I83)15. All archival texts cited here, with the exception of Kohn's letter to Judah L. Magnes, were composed in German. The translations that appear here are mine.
  8. An interview of Nathan Hofshi (Frankel) by Ayala Dan-Kaspi, 1974, ICJOHD, (114) 37.
  9. Kenneth H. Wolf, *The Idea of Nationalism: The Intellectual Development and Historiographical Contribution of Hans Kohn* (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame, Indiana, 1972); Hagit Lavsky, "Nationalism between Theory and Practice: Hans Kohn and Zionism" (Hebrew), *Zion* 67, no. 2 (2002): 189–212; Yfaat Weiss, "Central European Ethnonationalism and Zionist Binationalism," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 93–117; Hedva Ben-Israel Kidron, "Hans Kohn: One of the Founders of Nationalism Research," in *Beshem baumah: masot umaamarim al leumiyyut vetsiyonut* (In the nation's name: essays and articles on nationalism and Zionism), ed. Hedva Ben-Israel Kidron (Beer Sheva, 2004), 361–88; Andre Liebich, "Searching for the Perfect Nation: the Itinerary of Hans Kohn (1891–1971)," *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 4 (2006): 579–96; Lutz Fiedler, "Habsburger Verlängerungen: Imperienkonzepte im Werk Hans Kohns," *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 6 (2007): 477–508.
  10. Hans Kohn's letter to the Brit Shalom Association, 22 September 1930, The Central Zionist Archives (henceforth CZA), A187–1a.
  11. Five of these books were published between his resignation and his immigration to the United States. They include: the biography *Martin Buber: Sein Werk und seine Zeit* (Hellerau, 1930); *L'Humanisme juif: Quinze essais sur le Juif, le monde et Dieu* (Paris, 1931); *Nationalismus und Imperialismus im vorderen Orient* (Frankfurt, 1931); *Orient und Okzident* (Berlin, 1931); *Der Nationalismus in der Sowjetunion* (Frankfurt, 1932). Kohn completed the writing of a sixth book—*Die Europäisierung des Orients*—on his very last day in Palestine, in mid May 1934. This book, which appeared in 1934, was his last on the Middle East. Ironically, Kohn also brought to print his two-volume Hebrew-language history of Zionism: Hans Kohn, *Perakim letoldot hara'ayon batsiyoni* (Chapters from the history of the Zionist idea), 2 vols., (Warsaw, 1929–1930).
  12. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 17 May 1930, Hans Kohn and Robert Weltsch Correspondence (AR6908) (henceforth HKRWC), Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York, reel I.
  13. Shalom Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism* (Leiden and Boston, 2002), 137–46. Arthur Rupp's diary, CZA, A107/951, entries 18 July 1919, 27; 21 January 1921, 57; 1 May 1921, 56; 30 October 1923, 110–11. I thank Nadine Garling for these references. Robert Weltsch's letter to Hugo Bergmann, 24 November 1921, Jewish National and University Library (now referred to as the National Library of Israel (henceforth NLI), Manuscript Department, 4° I502/I334, 2 (reference drawn from: Anja Siegemund, "Kassandrarufer: Robert Weltsch, eine Stimme des Verständigungszionismus," Anne Birkhauer, ed., *Jüdischer Almanach* (Frankfurt, 2001): 110, 124.
  14. Quoted in Lavsky, "Nationalism Between Theory and Practice," 197.
  15. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 8 May 1930, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, Robert Weltsch Collection (henceforth RWC), AR7185, box 7, folder 18; Hans Kohn's diary, entries 15 February, 29 September, and 28 October 1928, Hans Kohn Collection (henceforth HKC) (AR259), I, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York. This debate is documented also in a formal document of the Brit Shalom Organization: "A [correction of a] Report regarding a Debate between Dr. Arthur Rupp, Dr. Hugo Bergmann, and Dr. Hans Kohn on Brit Shalom Issues," 16 November 1928, CZA, A187–40.



16. Hans Kohn's diary, 8 June 1928, HKC, box 18, folder 2.
17. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 12 June 1928, RWC, box 7, folder 18.
18. Hans Kohn's diary, 26 August 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
19. Hans Kohn's letter to Martin Buber, 26 August 1929, *The Letters of Martin Buber*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer and Paul Mendes-Flohr, trans. Richard and Clara Winston and Harry Zohn (New York, 1991), 370.
20. Hans Kohn's letter to Judah L. Magnes, 2 September 1929, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (henceforth CAHJP, Jerusalem), P3/2665.
21. Hans Kohn's diary, 3 September 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
22. Hans Kohn's diary, 4 September 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
23. Hans Kohn's diary, 18 September 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
24. Hans Kohn, "Indien! Die Schwankende Brücke: Englands grosses Problem," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 8 September 1929, 1–2.
25. B. B. "Zionist' Clarification," *Davar*, 22 September 1929, 2.
26. Robert Weltsch's letter to Fritz Naphtali, 24 October 1929, CZA, A 145/153.
27. Hans Kohn's diary, 17 October 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Kohn relates here to a parallel (though lesser) assault against Hugo Bergmann following his article on "The Event in Jerusalem," on the front cover of the *Prager Tagblatt* of 28 August 1929.
28. Shmuel Sambursky's undated letter to Leo Hermann, CZA, A 145 (The Leo Hermann Collection), 153. Kohn himself was well aware of the plot, but since nothing was openly said, he could not do much more than complain about the ugly atmosphere, in a private letter to Leo Hermann. See Kohn's letter to Hermann, 3 October 1929, HKC, box 8, folder 9.
29. Kohn's letter to Hermann, 3 October 1929, HKC, box 8, folder 9; Shmuel Sambursky's letter to Leo Hermann, 29 September 1929, CZA, A 145, 153; Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948* (New York, 1992), 191.
30. A copy of Hans Kohn's letter to Arthur Hantke, 22 October 1929, CAHJP, P3/2399.
31. Hans Kohn's letter to Berthold Feiweil, 21 November 1929, HKC, box 8, folder 9. English translation based on Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, ed., *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (New York, 1983), 97–99.
32. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 21 April 1930, HKRWC, reel 1.
33. Hans Kohn's diary, 8 September 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
34. Hans Kohn's diary, 26 September 1929, box 18, folder 4.
35. Hans Kohn's diary, 5 October 1929, box 18, folder 4.
36. Hans Kohn's diary, 8 October 1929, box 18, folder 4.
37. Hans Kohn's diary, 19 October 1929. The formal letter of resignation was mailed a few days later: Hans Kohn's letter to Ernst Simon, 21 October 1929, CZA, A187/1a.
38. "Basis of an Arab-Jewish Understanding in Palestine," Martin Buber Archive, NLI, Arc. Ms. Var. 350, Het, 376/224. For a discussion of this plan, see Hagit Lavsky, "Nationalism between Theory and Practice," 202–3; Joseph Heller, *Mibrit shalom leibud: Yehudab leib magnes vebamaavak lime-dinab duleumit* (From Brit Shalom to Ichud: Judah Leib Magnes and the struggle for a binational state) (Jerusalem, 2003), 70.
39. See Hans Kohn's diary, 2 November 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Chaim Weizmann was the sole Zionist leader to whom Kohn asked Magnes to mail the draft—and only in a private and personal letter (Hans Kohn's letter to Judah L. Magnes, 4 November 1929, CAHJP P3/2665). His cautious optimism regarding the constitution project evaporated when Magnes, "out of a complete lack of psychological understanding" and contrary to Kohn's explicit request, publicly discussed the constitution draft (Hans Kohn's diary, 2 November 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4).
40. See 15 November 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
41. Hans Kohn's diary, 24 April 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
42. Hans Kohn's diary, 21 November 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
43. Hans Kohn's diary, 17 January 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.



44. Hans Kohn's diary, 18 February 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4. At the same time, Kohn also pointed to positive potential in the association's activity and, at any rate, continued attending Brit Shalom's meetings and investing his energies in its cause (Hans Kohn's diary, 7 March 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4).
45. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 7 May 1930, RWC, box 7, folder 18. See also Hans Kohn's diary, 4 May 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Kohn, incidentally, was convinced that Ruppin, even after leaving Brit Shalom, continued to exert influence in it through "his" people (Joseph Lurie, Jacob Thon, and others).
46. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 8 May 1930, RWC, box 7, folder 18.
47. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 10 June 1930, RWC.
48. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 17 July 1930, HKRWC, reel I.
49. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 22 August 1930, HKRWC.
50. Hans Kohn's diary, 11 June 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
51. Hans Kohn's diary, 12 June 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
52. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 1 July 1930, HKRWC, reel I.
53. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 20 July [1930], HKRWC, reel I.
54. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 15 June 1930, RWC, box 7, folder 18. See also Hans Kohn's diary, 14 June 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
55. Kohn's letter of resignation from Brit Shalom, [22] September 1930, CZA, A187-Ia. See also Hans Kohn's diary, 22 September 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Kohn wrote similarly to Magnes about the reasons he quit Brit Shalom: "I do not think the B[rit] Sh[alom] [Association to be] of much worth as long as those members who have any influence do not consider the principals of B. Sh. which they profess—binding for their public life. . . . The Revisionists or the workers' party exercise some appeal because they stand and fall by their principles. The B. Sh. members do not" (Kohn's letter to Magnes, 2 October 1930, CAHJP, P3/2665). Even after having quit Brit Shalom, Kohn continued publishing articles in its periodical, *Sheifoteinu*. See Hans Kohn, "Several Remarks on Constitutional Issues of the Palestine Mandate I," *Sheifoteinu*, 2, no. 1 (Adar 5691 [February 1931]): 20–28; idem., "Several Remarks on Constitutional Issues of the Palestine Mandate II," *Sheifoteinu*, 2, no. 2 (Nisan 5691 [April 1931]): 47–50; idem., "The Armenian Refugees in Syria," *Sheifoteinu*, 2, no. 7 (Tishrei 5692 [September 1931]): 250–254; idem., [no title], *Sheifoteinu*, 3, no. 4 (Tammuz 5692 [July 1932]): 117–20.
56. Hans Kohn, *Revolutions and Dictatorships: Essays in Contemporary History* (Cambridge, MA, 1939), 299.
57. Hans Kohn's letter to Martin Buber, 8 March 1924, *Letters of Martin Buber*, 310–11. The actual intensive writing of the biography manuscript began only in 1927. Most of the correspondence between Buber and Kohn—beginning in 1911 and continuing into 1964—is kept at the NLI, Jerusalem, Arc. Ms. Var. 350, CHET, 376.
58. Robert Weltsch, quoted in Hillel J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry: National Conflict and Jewish Society in Bohemia, 1870—1918* (New York, 1988), 137.
59. As Gershom Scholem stressed very patently in an interview to Meir Lamed, 15 June 1964, CJHOD, 38 (29), and as was clearly laid out in Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry*, 147–48. Kieval pointed out that Buber's sponsorship of the edited volume served to support "the spiritual-intellectual party" in the association, which circled around Weltsch and Kohn.
60. Hans Kohn, *Nationalismus: Über die Bedeutung des Nationalismus in Judentum und in der Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1922).
61. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 29 January 1929, HKRWC, reel I.
62. Hans Kohn's diary, 11 April 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
63. Thus Kohn's book elaborated on Buber's 1903 turn from Zionist activities to other fields of Jewish and philosophical activity (Hans Kohn, *Martin Buber: Sein Werk und seine Zeit* (Hellrau 1930), 45–47. Kohn projected his own liminality onto the lives of many of his friends and colleagues such as Ruppin (who carried the full burden of the contradiction between his

- commitment to Zionist achievement and to human ethics), Hugo Bergmann (who, like him, is marked as treacherous), and Magnes: “He, too, wants to leave Palestine if peace does not appear in the foreseeable future” (Hans Kohn’s diary, 3 November 1929, HKC, box I8, folder 4).
64. Hans Kohn’s letter to Robert Weltsch, 3 May 1930, HKRWC, reel I.
  65. Hans Kohn’s letter to Buber, 2 September 1929, Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten* (Heidelberg, 1972) 2: 347–48.
  66. In a letter to his wife, Buber compared Weltsch’s “remarkable” conduct to that of Kohn, who, Buber argued, was “more doctrinaire, who tended to proclamations rather than seeking a real breakthrough in the labyrinth of facts.” Martin Buber’s letter to his wife, Paula, 3 October 1929, Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, 2: 318.
  67. Hans Kohn’s diary, 2 September 1929, HKC, box I8, folder 4.
  68. Hans Kohn’s letter to Judah L. Magnes, 2 September 1929, CAHJP, P3/2665.
  69. Hans Kohn’s letter to Buber, 25 September 1929, Buber, *Briefwechsel*, 2: 351.
  70. Hans Kohn’s letter to Martin Buber, 26 September 1929, Buber, *Briefwechsel*, 2: 352.
  71. Hans Kohn’s diary, 30 September 1929, HKC, box I8, folder 4.
  72. Hans Kohn’s letter to Robert Weltsch, 3 May 1930 HKRWC, reel I.
  73. Kohn’s letter to Buber, 10 December 1929, Buber, *Briefwechsel*, 2: 357–60 Translation based on *Letters of Martin Buber*, 372–73.
  74. Kohn was deeply indebted to Magnes, who was instrumental in obtaining him a university position in the United States, supported him with advice and kind words, and who introduced Kohn to people in the American academic community in the years following his break with the Zionist movement. In the turbulent months of the autumn of 1929, however, his relationship with Magnes deteriorated in a manner reminiscent of his disappointment with Buber. Kohn hoped that at that time of crisis, Magnes would surface as an alternative Zionist leader, but before long he was disappointed with him. He wrote in his diary that Magnes “has lost all sense of direction. . . . I doubt whether something could be achieved with Magnes. What a shame!” (24 October 1929). But as opposed to his relationship with Buber, the two seem at least to have been intimate enough for Kohn to criticize Magnes directly: “I am very much afraid that the publicity you gave to Mr. Philby’s proposals within the *yishuv* killed every success possible for the plan in London” (Hans Kohn’s letter to Judah L. Magnes, 29 November 1929, CAHJ, P3/2665).
  75. I am referring here to Hans Kohn, *Nationalismus über die Bedeutung des Nationalismus in Judentum und in der Gegenwart* (Vienna, 1922); Hans Kohn, *Die Politische Idee des Judentums* (München, 1924); Hans Kohn and Robert Weltsch, *Zionistische Politik: Eine Aufsatzreihe*, (Mährisch-Ostrau), 1927.
  76. Moshe Beilinson, “Zionism in Two and a Half Pages,” *Davar*, 20 June 1928, 2; Hans Kohn, “Regarding “Zionism in Two and a Half Pages,”” *Davar*, 1 July 1928, 3.
  77. Hans Kohn’s letter to Judah L. Magnes, 13 May 1929, CAHJP, P3/2665.
  78. Judah L. Magnes’s letter to Buber, 4 July 1929, Buber, *Briefwechsel*, 2: 335: “viele davon auf Unzufriedenheit mit Dr. Kohns politischer Einstellung zurückzuführen ist.”
  79. Hans Kohn’s diary, 16 August 1929, HKC, box I8, folder 4. On the chair in “International Peace” and Norman Bentwich’s nomination, see Nachum T. Gross, “Social Sciences at the Hebrew University before 1948,” Hagit Lavsky, ed., *Toldot hauniversitah haivrit biyerusalayim: hit-basesut utsemibab* (The history of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: a period of consolidation and growth) (Jerusalem, 2005), 505–8.
  80. Hans Kohn’s diary, 18 October 1929, HKC, box I8, folder 4.
  81. Hans Kohn’s diary, 6 May 1930, HKC, box I8, folder 4. He had already published some of those books at the time. Others can arguably be identified with his later works, but one planned book he would never publish was “The Political Problem of Palestine,” which may hint at the emotional chaos in the wake of his break with the Zionist movement.
  82. Hans Kohn’s diary, 27 October 1929, HKC, box I8, folder 4. See also Hans Kohn’s letter to Martin Buber, 10 December 1929, *The Letters of Martin Buber*, 372–73.
  83. Hans Kohn’s diary, 25 October 1929, HKC, box I8, folder 4.

84. Hans Kohn's diary, 25 October 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Even afterward, as long as he did not quit Brit Shalom, Kohn complained repeatedly that he "cannot work because of the distressing impact of the political situation" (Hans Kohn's diary, 21 May 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4).
85. Hans Kohn's letter to John Haynes Holmes, 28 January 1930, CAHJP, P3/2400. See also Hans Kohn's diary, 7 January 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
86. Hans Kohn's letter to Judah L. Magnes, 25 November 1929, CAHJP, P3/2665.
87. Hans Kohn's letter to Judah L. Magnes, 17 September 1932, CAHJP.
88. Hans Kohn's letter to Magnes, 9 October 1932, CAHJP.
89. Hans Kohn, *Nationalismus und Imperialismus im vorderen Orient* (Frankfurt, 1931); idem, *Orient und Okzident* (Berlin, 1931).
90. Kohn, *Orient und Okzident*, 51–52.
91. *Ibid.*, 65.
92. Hans Kohn, *Die Europäisierung des Orients* (Berlin, 1934).
93. Kohn was a member of the International Council of the War Resisters' International from 1926 to 1928 and again from 1931 to 1934. On his pacifist career, see Dieter Riesenberger, "Hans Kohn (1891–1971): Zionist und Pazifist," *Zeitschrift für Religions u. Geistesgeschichte* 41, no. 2 (1989): 166–74. See also Adi Gordon, "The Ideological Convert and the 'Mythology of Coherence': The Contradictory Hans Kohn and his Multiple Metamorphoses," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 55 (2010): 273–93. On The War Resisters' International in general and Kohn's role within it, see Devi Prasad, *War Is a Crime Against Humanity: The Story of "War Resisters International"* (London, 2005), especially 118–32.
94. Hans Kohn, "Aktiver Pazifismus," *Neue Wege. Blätter für religiöse Arbeit* (1929): 82–94. Kurt Tucholsky, the Weimar master of political satire and one of the most vocal representatives of German pacifism, corresponded with Kohn regarding the different pacifist concepts. Tucholsky flatly rejected Kohn's "active pacifism" (which did not seem active at all to Tucholsky) on two levels: he said it was neither sufficiently socio-political nor adequately revolutionary (Kurt Tucholsky's letter to the War Resisters' International, 21 May 1929 and Hans Kohn's letter to Kurt Tucholsky, 22 June 1929, HKC, box 14, folder 4).
95. Kohn, "Aktiver Pazifismus," 84.
96. *Ibid.*, 89–90 (emphases in original).
97. Hans Kohn's letter to Martin Buber, 2 September 1929, Buber, *Briefwechsel*, 2: 437. For similar statements see Kohn's letter to Magnes, 2 September 1929, CAHJP, P3/2665. At the end of that letter, Kohn told Magnes that he "participated here [Zurich] in the meeting of the International Council of the War Resisters International." There couldn't be a clearer expression of the manner in which pacifism and Zionism merged in Kohn's world.
98. Hans Kohn's diary, 2 September 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
99. Hans Kohn's diary, 31 August 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
100. Hans Kohn's diary, 22 October 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Equally harsh remarks on both Einstein and Buber can be found in Hans Kohn's diary, 17 October 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
101. Hans Kohn's diary, 17 October 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Robert Weltsch expressed the very same notion and eventually the same disenchantment (Robert Weltsch's letter to Fritz Naphtali, 24 October 1929, CZA, AI45/153).
102. Hans Kohn's diary, 17 February 1930, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
103. Hans Kohn's diary, 13 April 1933, HKC, box 18, folder 4.
104. For a discussion of his break with pacifism, see Adi Gordon, "The Ideological Convert," especially 278–81.
105. Hans Kohn, *Living in a World Revolution*, 3, 18.
106. Hans Kohn's diary, 31 May 1929, HKC, box 18, folder 4. Later, as a historian, Kohn would discuss the monarchy's potential to actually be transformed into a multinational federation (Hans Kohn, *The Habsburg Empire, 1804–1918* [Princeton, 1961], 49–57). For a more

- contemporary discussion of the nationalities question in the late Hapsburg monarchy, see, for example, Dennison Rusinow, "'The 'National Question' revisited: Reflections on the State of the Art,'" *Austrian History Yearbook* 31 (2000): 1–13; Gerald Stourzh, "The Multinational Empire Revisited: Reflections on Late Empire," *Austrian History Yearbook* 23 (1992): 1–22; Robin Okey, *The Hapsburg Monarchy, 1765–1918* (New York, 2000), 283–309.
- I07. "The slowly crystallizing structure of the British Empire may be regarded as one of the most interesting and promising experiments made with the goal of superseding the conception of absolute state sovereignty in the name of general peace and supreme law, without sacrificing the independence and individuality of the parts" (Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East* [New York, 1929], 81.)
- I08. Hans Kohn, *Der Nationalismus in der Sowjetunion* (Frankfurt, 1932), 38–39.
- I09. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 21 April 1930 HKRWC, reel I.
- I10. Hans Kohn's letter to Dr. Berthold Feiwel, 21 November 1929, in Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples*, 97–100.
- I11. Already in the 1940s, Kohn established cordial relations with the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism. Kohn wished the leadership of American Jewry in its entirety would embody a strong, liberal alternative to Jewish statehood. Having failed to convince the heads of American Jewish Committee to take this path, he accused them of "Zionist fellow traveling."
- I12. Hans Kohn's letter to Robert Weltsch, 30 May 1930, HKRWC, reel I.
- I13. Hans Kohn's diary, 29 August 1932, HKC, box I9, folder I.
- I14. Hugo Bergmann's letter to Hans Kohn, 21 October 1933, in Schmucl Hugo Bergmann, *Tagebücher und Briefe, vol. 1, 1901—1948* (Königstein, 1985), 345.