

## [H-Diplo Roundtable XVIII, 21 on The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews](#)

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### Roundtable Review

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Introduction by Samuel Moyn

**Michael N. Barnett.** *The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2016. ISBN: 9780691165974 (hardcover, \$35.00/£27.95).

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Introduction by Samuel Moyn, Harvard University

Michael Barnett begins *The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policy of American Jews* by recounting his book's origins. It goes back, he recalls, to his experience driving his children to religious school. He was struck, he writes, to find a banner for the "Save Darfur" movement for victims of alleged genocide festooning the Jewish temple—but, as a famed scholar of

humanitarianism, he also sensed an intellectual opportunity.

In response, Barnett has produced a masterful overview and interpretation of what he calls the “foreign policy” of American Jewry. After an introductory chapter giving a sophisticated theory of how such a minority could have a foreign policy in the first place and what the possibilities and constraints have been for a diaspora population like the Jewish people in Western history generally, Barnett turns to the past to explore how deep, and to undermine how sturdy, present-day assumptions about American Jewish ideology are. In particular, Barnett hopes to show that Jewish investment in the State of Israel, no matter what criticism it attracts, is a historical outlier. For a variety of reasons, he shows, Jewish foreign policy has often been universalist rather than particularist—or, in Barnett’s favored terminology, cosmopolitan versus tribalist.

The implication is that whatever conjuncture led to the post-1967 American Jewish investment in the support of the Israeli state as its prime foreign policy could erode — indeed, relatively soon. And Barnett is equally interested in how Jewish cosmopolitanism, with its deep taproots in the Jewish past, seems once again to be blossoming in our day, as part of a humanitarian and human rights politics that have burgeoned in Western societies and the United States in particular in recent decades.

This H-Diplo Forum provides a rich and thought-provoking encounter with Barnett’s insightful book. Each of the three reviewers praises *The Star and the Stripes* for its extraordinary achievements; each also raises an interesting question that might take Barnett’s analysis even further.

In his useful comments, James Loeffler welcomes Barnett’s inquiry but puts pressure on his focus on the internationalist dimensions of Jewish investment in the affairs of others. “Beyond providing an alternative to Israel-centered foreign political focus,” he asks, “precisely what work does distance-based cosmopolitanism do for the domestic needs of the Jewish polity?” He suggests that a full understanding of the recent transformations of American Jewish politics would need to concern itself not merely with an international shift from ‘tribalism’ to ‘cosmopolitanism’ but also with a shift from investment at home to investment abroad. Changing patterns of opportunity for domestic coalitions for change after the 1960s may have been of pivotal importance in this regard.

Among other insightful questions in his response, Stephen Hopgood wonders if it is possible any longer to generalize about American Jewry, including when it comes to its attitude to the world. “When,” Hopgood asks, “does diversity pass from difference into fragmentation?” He recognizes, however, that Barnett has rightly told a unified story about the place of Israel in American-Jewish organizational politics, while also locating a fascinating topic in how some Jews may have compensated for the controversy that Israeli policy stokes by seeking less complicated international causes in human rights and humanitarian activism.

Finally, in her laudatory intervention, Janice Stein credits Barnett for investigating general phenomena — for having written an interpretation of “diaspora linkages, diaspora politics, and diaspora identities at a time in world history where diasporas are growing.” The book, for this reason, is relevant far beyond its insights into its specific case. Welcoming his historical reconstruction of the vicissitudes of American Jewish relations to the world, Stein worries that Barnett might have allowed hope to substitute for fact in his depiction of present-day American Jewry as embracing a foreign

policy of *tikkun olam*, or repair of the world by Jewish humanitarian organizations, over a preferential treatment of the Jewish state.

### Participants:

**Michael Barnett** is University Professor of International Affairs and Political Science at George Washington University. Among his books are *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Cornell University Press, 2011), and *Paternalism Beyond Borders* (edited, Cambridge University Press, 2017).

**Samuel Moyn** is Jeremiah Smith, Jr. Professor of Law and Professor of History at Harvard University. His most recent book is *Christian Human Rights* (Pennsylvania, 2016).

**Stephen Hopgood** is Professor of International Relations at SOAS, University of London. He is author of *The Endtimes of Human Rights* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International* (also Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), and co-editor (with Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri) of the book *Human Rights Futures* (Cambridge University Press, *forthcoming*) in which he also has a chapter titled 'Human Rights: On the Road to Nowhere.'

**James Loeffler** is Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of Virginia and former Dean's Visiting Scholar in International Law at Georgetown University Law School. His publications include *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (Yale, 2010), and two forthcoming books, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Human Rights and Jewish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Yale) and an edited volume, with Moria Paz, *The Law of Strangers: Jewish Lawyering and International Law in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge).

**Janice Gross Stein** is the Belzberg Professor of Conflict Management and the Founding Director of the Munk School at the University of Toronto. She is a Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the author more than a dozen books and over one hundred articles. She has published in *International Organization*, *International Security*, *Security Studies*, and *Journal of International Law and Politics*. Her latest book is *Digital Diplomacy*. She specializes in the analysis of political decision making, at the intersection of psychology, history, and political science.

Review by Stephen Hopgood, SOAS, University of London

In *The Star and Stripes*, Michael Barnett looks at the history of the relationship between American Jews and the wider world, including and especially with Israel. It comes at a critical time, one when the demographic basis thought to underlie America's remarkable support for Israel is, some claim, fragmenting even when the commitment of the American state to provide military support to Israel seems unshakeable. On the one hand, our era is one where the number of American Jews who identify as Jewish by religion continues to fall rapidly, leading to increased intermarriage of Jews with non-Jews with predictable effects on the number of children of such unions raised 'Jewish.'<sup>1</sup> These Jews almost unanimously say they are proud to be Jewish, but they have a much more skeptical attitude to Israel than older generations.<sup>2</sup> On the other, a new \$38 billion military aid deal was agreed in September 2016 and while President-elect Donald Trump's victory was seen by Israeli newspaper

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Haaretz as the biggest triumph for antisemitism in the United States since 1941, Trump has promised to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, a long-held dream of the Israeli right.<sup>14</sup> Some even hope Trump's win might signal the end of the two-state solution.<sup>15</sup> The implications of Trump's election for the American-Jewish establishment, which strongly favored Hillary Clinton, are also likely to play out in unpredictable ways.<sup>16</sup>

Barnett's book makes an extremely important contribution to contextualizing this potential contradiction. The first thing Barnett shows, persuasively, is how the, often uncritical, commitment of American Jews to Israel is a recent and relatively short-lived phenomenon (from 1967 to the early 2000s), especially in the context of the vast history of Judaism as a whole. The relationship of American Jews to Israel has not always been unconditional, nor at some points especially warm. Although obvious, the fact that there are *two* Jewish communities of such size and influence - Israeli Jews and American Jews - is an important point to bear in mind. The United States has not taken second place to anyone for a hundred years, for more years than that there has been an ongoing dialogue between Jews in the United States (where they found a hospitable home in large numbers) and Jews globally. That is, for decades before Israel was founded.

Interrogating this long dialectic between American Jewish political thought and action is a second important contribution of Barnett's work. This puts the process of dialogue, rather than a given, singular 'interest,' at the core of the analysis (hence foreign 'policies' not 'policy'). What it means to be Jewish in the United States is thoroughly part of a debate about the attitude one should have to the world and the commitments one takes on in relation to political life. Rare among diasporas, this conversation has survived centuries of brutality. It is a debate in which the world-historical role of Jews and Judaism, including responsibilities Jews bear for others, has persisted despite understandable calls for a more self-protective tribalism. Focusing on the fraught practice of foreign policy-making enables Barnett to reiterate the obvious problem with the easy conflation of 'the Israel lobby' with 'the Jewish lobby' which many anti-Zionist critics are apt to make. Being Jewish is just as much tied, at least on a *Prophetic* reading, to humanitarian action in the world at large as it is to protecting Israel at all costs.

One might ask: Does it make sense to talk about 'American Jews' as a coherent entity at all when it comes to foreign policy? Does not this risk assuming into existence the very thing that Barnett's analysis makes problematic? If there is not 'a' foreign policy, but foreign policies plural, foreign policies that overlap with those of other social groups (like end-time-believing evangelical Christians), then might we reverse engineer the discussion to ask why we would any longer take 'American Jews' as a coherent identity *for foreign policy purposes*? If fewer young American Jews feel anti-Semitism to be a problem, if out-marriage continues, if the number of Jews identifying as religious continues to fall, if Israel looks less and less like a victim and more like an aggressor, as remaining Holocaust survivors die, will it still be possible to identify the group 'American Jews' as the referent of a coherent set of foreign policy concerns that are distinctly 'Jewish'? That is, while American Jews continue to be an identifiable demographic category, the notion that this category should have its 'own' foreign policy (in the sense that the plural foreign policies are variant outcomes of the one process) makes less sense. This raises a fascinating possibility: Devoid of a threatening 'other' in the United States, is Israel the essential glue that prevents assimilation passing the tipping point beyond which being Jewish becomes little more than an historical legacy as new generations come to maturity? Is Israel necessary to keep the hyphen intact in Jewish-American?

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In other words, when does diversity pass from difference into fragmentation? How deeply are American Jews divided between Ultra-Orthodox, Orthodox, Reform, and secular, between the Neocons and the Realists, between the Liberal Internationalists and cosmopolitans and the Zionists, between Democrats and Republicans? Does it make more sense to see alliances between ideological communities in foreign policy that do not reflect ethnic, cultural, and religious boundaries? The pivotal role of Jews and Jewish thought in the history of the Left internationally is often overlooked, for example. Are not American Jews increasingly just like other hyphenated Americans, with a growing diversity of views on all topics, Israel included? Do we just assume, because of an unrivalled history of suffering barbarous persecution, that Jews will always identify themselves as part of *the same* foreign policy conversation – as an ontological (if constructed) reality that requires a foreign policy of its own? A community that agonizes *as one* about the approach to take to Iran, anti-Semitism, Russia? Perhaps the reality is of an American Jewish community so diverse and in many cases so substantially assimilated that it makes sense now to talk only about shades of *American* foreign policy? Perhaps even for American Jews the past really is (or will be soon) another country? Except, that is, for Israel.

Why, we might then ask, have American Jews been so successful at impacting on foreign policy where Israel is concerned? This raises the question of identity in a different form. We see other successful lobbies besides the lobby for Israel – the National Rifle Association is an obvious case – and we see other diaspora groups – Cuban Americans, for example – who have been influential on specific issues to do with their erstwhile homeland. But none has been so uniquely effective as the broad movement for more or less unconditional American support to Israel. The outcry that greeted John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's notorious *The Israel Lobby* was an example of this commitment to the naturalness of the U.S.-Israel link.<sup>4</sup> As avowed Realists, they asked (as it were) why not a different Middle Eastern ally if the constellation of forces and interests in U.S. foreign policy changes? Recall the classic Realist mantra, no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interests. If this is unthinkable then why? Not, surely, because of the power of the Israel lobby? More because there is a reality to the cultural, historical, demographic, and social linkages between Israel, at least the idea of Israel as a civilized haven for history's ultimate victims in an inhospitable region, and the United States. Americans as a whole retain a remarkably strong affinity for Israel. Gallup reported in 2016 that American sympathies towards Israel trumped those for the Palestinians 62% to 15%. This figure, even stronger among the religious, Republicans, and those older than 49, is an increase from the year 2001. Support for Palestinians has not altered in that time; the number of those moving from 'no opinion' to sympathy with Israel is the change.<sup>5</sup> A waning of the commitment of American Jews will not necessarily weaken U.S. support for Israel.

This would be fortunate, because one of Barnett's core concerns, linked to his seminal work on humanitarianism,<sup>6</sup> is that young American Jews are tapping into their cosmopolitan roots by increasingly involving themselves in various kinds of humanitarian enterprise, doing 'repair work' or *tikkun olam*. It would be interesting to know if young Americans of *all* faiths and backgrounds are now going into humanitarian and social justice enterprises in greater numbers? Is this something about the United States? Maybe as a declining superpower, its people – exposed via social media and cheap travel to the rest of the world like never before – are more cosmopolitan than their parents and grandparents? One inspiration for *tikkun olam*, Barnett suggests, may be as a way to serve humanity while avoiding the ubiquitous human rights condemnation of Israel. This raises the problematic

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relationship American Jews have had with the language and practices of human rights, the hegemonic ideology of modern cosmopolitans. These problems are well documented, whether via tensions between the genocide and human rights frames visible after the Second World War or the critique of Israel made by many international human rights Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). The high-profile departure of Robert Bernstein, a co-founder, from Human Rights Watch, alleging anti-Israeli bias was a case in point. Barnett alerts us to an increasing commitment on the part of younger American Jews to engage with the world in ways that do not relate to Israel or necessarily to Judaism at all.

All of which may be just the natural outcome of a process whereby Jews have found a home in America that they are confident is permanent and safe. That at least this subset of Judaism as a whole has, at last, ceased to wander. Maybe we are even witnessing the beginning of a divergence between the Israelis and the Jews? What will matter, if so, is not the supposed power of the Israel Lobby, or the seemingly waning commitment of young American Jews to Israel, but broader support for Israel among the American population as a whole allied to a seemingly iron-cast security commitment from the U.S. state to the one state in the Middle East that it sees as both a reliable ally and, contra Realism, a friend.

Review by James Loeffler, University of Virginia

Any listener to National Public Radio in the United States will be familiar with the frequent program sponsorships of the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), 'the leading Jewish international development and human rights organization.' In 2010, to promote its twenty-fifth anniversary, the leadership commissioned a short comedy film directed by Judd Apatow. Various Hollywood celebrities, both Jewish (Andy Samberg, Jerry Seinfeld) and non-Jewish (Lindsay Lohan, Tracey Morgan) voiced their support for its good work. Towards the end of the five-minute spot, a bunch of stars riffed on the connection between the group's name and its mission. "They probably don't help any Jews," says Sarah Silverman, "I mean, like, Jews are fine." "That name is so bad," complains Julia Louis Dreyfus, "Is it a *world* thing? Is it a Jewish thing?" Finally, Triumph the Insult Dog proposes a better alternative, "Jews helping *goyim* [gentiles]."<sup>14</sup>

The ironies and anxieties running through the promotional film speak, especially the inclusion of non-Jews to emphasize the AJWS's cosmopolitanism, highlight its apologetic quality. After all, hardly any one pauses to ask the American Red Cross whether it helps only Americans or non-Americans or why it has a Christian religious symbol in its organization's name. The strangeness of Jewish internationalism, however, directly triggers questions and confusion about the nature of ethno-religious parochialism, American Jewish identity, and the politics of global civil society today. The American Jewish commitment to the world is not self-evident; it must be explained and thereby justified.

The case of AJWS is just one that Michael Barnett takes up in his masterful new book on American Jewish internationalism. Barnett's great achievement is to approach his subject as a scholar equally versed in the study of the politics of nationalism and global humanitarianism. Whereas other scholars have previously only detected a more generic ethnic liberalism or religious ethics fueling American Jewish participation in global justice movements, Barnett rightly insists on seeing a more deep-rooted and coherent ideological politics—and political theology—operating in American Jewish society. In

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doing so, he significantly advances our understanding of the unwritten rules of contemporary internationalism as a whole. Yet, paradoxically, the more he nuances and contextualizes internationalism in a Jewish key, the more he raises deeper, unanswered questions about the nature of American nationalism and internationalism and their ties to Jewish political behavior today.

The history of Jewish internationalism has long been hidden in plain sight. Central to any account of modern Jewish history, for instance, is the image of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, a French-Jewish organization founded in 1860. The Alliance created an international network of Jewish schools around the Middle East and functioned very much as an international non-governmental organization in its legal advocacy work. Yet only recently have scholars begun to recognize its politics as a form of modernist transnationalism rather than merely an expression of liberal philanthropy or imperial citizenship.<sup>100</sup>

Of late, similar work has opened up new vistas in other areas of European Jewish and international history.<sup>101</sup> Yet the story of American Jewish internationalism has lagged significantly behind.<sup>102</sup> There are potentially several reasons for this phenomenon. When historians of American Jewry have spoken of Jewish internationalism, they have typically framed it exclusively in terms of the self-proclaimed universalist mission of American Reform Judaism to spread monotheistic ethics or the heaven-o-earth materialism of Jewish socialism, a Yiddish-accented analogue to the Second International. Between the extremes of apolitical religion and Marxist politics, it seemed as if there was no other American Jewish internationalism worthy of discussion.

Undoubtedly, much of this was due to the dominance of the myth of American (Jewish) exceptionalism. So deeply at home in America, the theory goes, Jews embraced the liberal paradigm, shrinking themselves into the citizenship framework. This meant disavowing formal international politics save for domestic advocacy and philanthropic campaigns.<sup>103</sup> A consequence of the scholarly acquiescence to this strategic move has been a historiographical reluctance to see American Jews as practicing conscious, organized politics in the international arena. It has also produced an over-obsession with the specter of American Jewish influence and lobbying, as if organizations such as the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) were the result of nefarious ethnic plots rather than a logical extension of the democratic power of grass-roots organizing combined with grass-top advocacy.

AIPAC is discussed briefly in Barnett's book (258). But he wisely chooses to frame American Jewish politics in the broadest and deepest possible terms. To do so he offers his own historical account of the development of the American Jewish political imagination. His keen insight is that particularism and universalism course through American Jewish society together, forming a discrete political ecosystem that must be understood in its entirety to make full sense of its constitution and function. Rather than partition Zionism and support for Israel from Jewish humanitarianism and human rights activism, Barnett sees the two as linked together in the self-conceptions of American Jews as non-state actors with a set of 'foreign policies' of their own.

One of the most provocative arguments in the book is that the rise of American Jewish interest in "tikkun olam" (religiously-inflected social justice) projects such as the humanitarian relief and development aid work of the AJWS reflects a shift away from Israel advocacy towards a more frictionless form of progressive globalist politics. If tribalism always competes with universalism, Barnett

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argues, then younger American Jews disaffected by Israel today seek a safer way to reconcile their Jewishness with internationalist sensibilities by pursuing global action far away from Israel and the Middle East. Far easier to build houses in Central American villages or volunteer in South African shantytowns, in other words, than to grapple with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Barnett is surely right that any choice reveals ideology. Internationalism is never a neutral value. It reflects assumptions and commitments. Indeed, in keeping with other recent scholarship, Barnett seeks to move beyond stock images of internationalism itself as a mild progressive ken for a harmonious fraternity of nation-states (the Olympic Games, the United Nations) or a utopian search for a transnational social order (the Communist International, the Catholic Church). Beyond national, socialist, or religious internationalisms, then, he wants to probe the meanings of *liberal* internationalism. We urgently need more of this kind of work—a corollary to the studies of human rights history, Non-Government Organization (NGO) history, and transnational history.

Still, one wonders, in the final analysis, if he goes *far enough* in his pursuit of the meanings of American Jewish internationalism. Liberalism, tribalism, and universalism are nebulous concepts that often mask deeper political commitments and motivations. It is easy enough to posit a tension between a right-drifting tribalist Jewish state and a left-leaning cosmopolitan American Jewish community. But why precisely does that liberalism take as its target distant, vulnerable populations? Why not simply turn inwards to the domestic scene in American society? Why, in other words, do American Jews *need* the world at all? Beyond providing an alternative to Israel-centered foreign political focus, precisely what work does distance-based cosmopolitanism do for the domestic needs of the Jewish polity?

I suspect that answering these questions would require further interrogating the character of American progressive liberalism and the shifting terrain of American politics. It may very well be true that American Jewish internationalism's humanitarian turn is a consequence of a collective distancing from the Israeli nation-state (though that proposition remains yet to be proven rather than merely asserted).<sup>14</sup> But it could also be plausibly argued that the changes in Jewish politics reflect the larger transformation and polarization of American politics.

A case in point, once again, is the AJWS. Like many other American Jewish organizations, the AJWS recently felt compelled to issue a statement in response to the American presidential election results. The message is striking for its rhetoric of pluralist cosmopolitanism against *American* parochialism:

Presidents, governments and elections come and go—and some make our work much easier and others much harder. Regardless of who is in power, we are guided by our enduring belief that it is our obligation to build more just and equitable societies. We are committed to working across cultures and continents to repair our broken world. We are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh and Jain. We are spiritual, religious and secular. We are American, African, Caribbean, Latino and Asian. We are gay, straight, trans and intersex. We live and love in different ways, and we are proud of who we are.<sup>15</sup>

In the face of a new wave of American populism, the AJWS's reflexive response is to emphasize *not* its American or Jewish political values, as some other organizations have done, but its worldly post-national globalism. It is the "world" that is most paramount, while the American and Jewish strands

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are decidedly muted, if not missing, from the announcement of the organization's ethical-political position. It is not hard to see this as an implied critique of Trumpism as a recrudescence of *American* populist ethnoracial nationalism that must be met by an anti-parochial cosmopolitanism. When they go small, we go large. Still, one is left wondering if this constitutes an expression of liberal progressive political values—or a retreat into antipolitics? Either way, does this not suggest that American Jewish tribalism and universalism may be impacted less by Israel than by the currents of American society? We arrive back at Heine's Law, with which Barnett opens his inquiry: "If you want to understand the Jews, start by looking at the Gentiles" (7-8).

These are obviously questions for further studies and other books. In the meantime, we are very fortunate to have Michael Barnett's clear-eyed, stimulating road map with which to survey the past, present, and possible futures of the star(s) and the stripes.

Review by Janice Gross Stein, University of Toronto

Michael Barnett has written an important book on an impossibly difficult subject. The author modestly claims that this is a book about the foreign policies of American Jews. That crisp sentence contains multiple worlds.

To tell that story, the book has to dig deep into the workings of American democracy over time. And Barnett does not disappoint. He explores the capacity of the United States over time to create space for waves of immigrants who brought with them memories of their past laced at times with nostalgia and attachment to a home, not the home they left but the home they imagine. He also examines the difficult and delicate issue of how much space citizens in a vibrant democracy have to press their government on issues of foreign policy. Barnett makes it clear that politics never stopped at the water's edge, but how much space *is* there to press a government on issues that matter to ethnic, national, or religious groups? Are they different in kind from groups and interests that push on economic issues or military and security policy? And if their fellow citizens think they are, what hidden biases lurk beneath the language of pluralist, liberal democracy that comes so easily?

This is a ground-breaking book about diaspora linkages, diaspora politics, and diaspora identities at a time in world history where diasporas are growing, are more easily connected to 'at home' and are becoming more self-assured and politically active. It is also a time when the "other" is being made more prominent, and talk of "integration" is growing louder across the developed democracies as more people are on the move. In this sense, Barnett's history of the foreign policies of American Jews is a history of the future as well as the past.

This book does more. It is also about cosmopolitanism and tribalism, an attachment to family and kin, clan and history, story and myth that finds political expression. It is about the inevitable tension between the two, in a group that is both travelled and rooted, global and parochial, and is constantly navigating the contradictions amongst these tendencies. Barnett does a brilliant job in telling this story, in grappling with the ways political communities understand their obligations to others, always sensitive to the competing pulls and attractions. In the life of political communities in an evolving American democracy, how do communities move through the concentric circles of compassion, from family to friends to neighborhood to nation to the world?

In the long history of American Jewry, through the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, no group understood more reflexively the protection that cosmopolitanism and pluralism bring, even as parochial attachments tugged at the heartstrings and drew on community resources. These twin pulls to cosmopolitanism and community continue to shape American Jews as they both lead global humanitarian movements and sustain deep networks of community support and solidarity. That tension, as Barnett so elegantly demonstrates, is ever present, deepening or fading partly in response to material circumstances and identity, to changing national and international environments and to an evolving community that, in each generation, shades the story of its past differently. It is not by accident that Barnett's title speaks of the "foreign policies" of American Jews. This is a story not only of pluralism within a democracy, but also of pluralism within a community, of diverse views and policies, of community tensions and differences, of feelings of belonging and betrayal that cut to the bone because this is, after all, a story of family and friends and neighborhood and community.

The book does still more. It grapples with the age-old 'Jewish Problem' and 'Jewish Question,' subjects that are almost taboo in politically correct societies but that nevertheless continue to be discussed in private, in lowered voices, among Jews and non-Jews, but rarely together, in part because these issues are so incendiary. Jewish foreign policies, Barnett argues, have always had these two overriding concerns. The Jewish Problem is the age-old worry about harm coming from non-Jews; when non-Jews see Jews as a problem to be solved, Barnett explains, Jews are endangered and that continues to be a concern for Jews everywhere, especially after the Nazi period. The Jewish Question is about the appropriate mix of universalism and particularism. Are the Jews a people *apart* from the world or a *part* of the world?

Barnett's anchors his richly interpreted history of American Jews around these two poles. Their answer to the Jewish Problem has always been integration rather than separation, a part of rather than apart from American politics. As a minority they understood that they could best help Jews and others at risk through coalition politics at home and liberal internationalism abroad. They also struggled with nationalism, their own and others. Deeply aware of the excesses of nationalism and the price Jewish communities have paid when nationalism ran amuck, American Jewish leaders were at first wary of Zionist appeals to Jewish nationalism and a Jewish political project. Only later, when Israel seemed at risk, did American Jews unite in support of a beleaguered Jewish democracy.

The book ends with a message of yet another shift in the foreign policies of American Jews. Three generations removed from the Holocaust and two generations after the War of 1967, American Jews are increasingly reverting to cosmopolitanism and asserting their liberal and pluralist values. These values fit less and less comfortably with an Israel that is increasingly nationalist and religious and that makes less space for minorities and for dissent. The tension between tribalism and cosmopolitanism, Barnett predicts, will continue and create multiple possibilities as these two combine in more ways than we can imagine.

Barnett suspects that there is a turn to the prophetic tradition within Judaism, a tradition that encompasses all these contradictions and tensions. Yet the evidence that American Jews today are leaning toward the prophetic tradition rather than to tribal responses is necessarily more thinly documented than the richly documented historical arguments. Barnett uses growing engagement in *tikkun olam*, or repair of the world by Jewish humanitarian organizations, as an indicator, but there is no financial or survey evidence that American Jews are backing away from their support for Israel.

Barnett rightly hesitates to go beyond what the evidence can bear, and right now the evidence is not definitive.

If future foreign policies of American Jews are uncertain, Barnett has given us the coordinates and a map of the terrain deeply rooted in both ancient Jewish and modern American history. We could not ask for a better guide.

Author's Response by Michael N. Barnett, George Washington University

In the first instance, I want to thank Stephen Hopgood, James Loeffler, and Janice Stein for their generous remarks and constructive observations. I decided to write a book on the subject of the foreign policies of American Jews knowing full well that this is not an area for the thin-skinned. It is territory defined by the presence of an array of hardened, and often polemical, positions. Accordingly, it is not unusual for any intervention to spark heat, without illumination. My good fortune is to have had the book discussed in this roundtable by three exemplary scholars who are ready to wrestle with the argument on its own terms, and, in doing so, point to contributions, limitations, and unexplored domains opened up by, the argument. For that I am truly appreciative.

The reviewers raise a host of interesting issues, not all of which I can take up here. I am most interested in picking up three themes: the transnational history of the Jewish people; the anxieties of a transnational people; and how the extraordinary election of Donald Trump might shape the future foreign policies of American Jews.<sup>108</sup>

Before doing so, though, I want to address a particular point raised by each of the reviewers. Stein asks important questions about whether the evidence supports my claim that there is a relationship between the rise of *tikkun olam*, or repair of the world by Jewish humanitarian organizations, and the rumored distancing of Israel from Israel in the contemporary period. I am not fully convinced, either, as I openly acknowledge in the text. When I first began the research for the book, I thought it would be a lot easier to produce the evidence to adjudicate one way or the other. About half-way through my research I realized that the standard way scholars have assessed American Jewry's relations with Israel, data often produced through survey research and voting patterns, was inconclusive at best and, at worst, poorly constructed. Consequently, I began searching for other evidence and indicators. Some of the best came in the form of focus groups and internal reports for Jewish organizations regarding the priorities and concerns of American Jews. These forms of evidence do demonstrate considerable unease with Israel and growing affinity with *tikkun olam*, but they have real limits in two important ways. One is that they cannot discern whether there has been any sort of historical change. These are snapshots, not moving pictures. The evidence is that American Jews are increasingly uneasy with Israel, but tying this unease to a rise in *tikkun olam* requires claims not based on available evidence (though the available evidence certainly does not provide any reason to reject the hypothesis, either). The other limit is defined by the fact that I characterize the relationship between American Jews and Israel as one of ambivalence. Ambivalence is hard to pick up, and nearly impossible to measure in terms of variations. Because it is difficult to measure, though, does not mean that we should fall back on our available 'hammers,' such as the standard survey polls that often use support for Israeli policies as a measure of support for Israel. So, I am left with a hypothesis – that distancing from Israel is related to a rise in *tikkun olam* – that I cannot confidently declare a winner based on the presented evidence. That said, there was certainly enough circumstantial

evidence, in addition to previous patterns in history, to justify advancing the hypothesis. At the very least, I think that the reviewers agree that posing this question opened up a very different way of thinking about the history of American Jewry's relations with Israel, Jewish nationalism, and the world.

Loeffler raises an interesting question: why do American Jews go global to demonstrate their commitment to social justice? This is a great question, one that is rarely asked of American Jews – or any ethnic or religious group. One of the great puzzles of humanitarianism is why individuals often choose to help 'distant strangers' when there are plenty of strangers next door that need help. Why did the abolitionists focus on slavery in the Caribbean when workers in Manchester were existing in slave-like conditions? As I suggest but do not elaborate, my sense is that many of the same factors that account for Christian and Islamic humanitarianism probably also help us understand Jewish humanitarianism, including globalization, growing wealth, education, and a sense of humanity. But I posit two additional, Jewish specific, factors: the fact that Jews are doing, historically speaking, better than ever, and that Israel no longer seems to need the same degree of help. Under these conditions, American Jews can focus on other people's problems. But it still raises the question of whether there are 'Jewish specific' reasons why American Jews shifted their concern from domestic to global justice. In other words, assuming that other religious communities demonstrate the same spatial pattern of giving as American Jews, are the reasons different? Good question. Scholars of humanitarianism have often posited a variety of reason why distant strangers are more attractive than proximate strangers: it is easier to turn on and off one's obligations to those you need not ever encounter; they appear to be more "deserving" than proximate strangers who are often blamed for their own suffering; and it provides a clearer symbol of one's "humanity." There are no reasons to think that American Jews are immune to these reasons.

Hopgood turns an important assumption of my book into an empirical question. I assert that there is such a thing as an identifiable American Jewish community. It is not coherent. It expands and contracts, congeals and fractures in different ways over time. But however pronounced the internal divisions, there still exists a shared identity that distinguishes American Jews from other Americans. It can be dangerous to make too much of it or give it too much political weight (leading to standard anti-Semitic tropes), but there are reasons why American Jews have chosen to organize as Jews, and this organizational instinct, in turn, helps to create an identifiable entity. Yet Hopgood rightly suggests that boundaries between communities can be more or less stark. Not only do I agree, but generations of American Jews have worried that the lines might disappear, much as Hopgood suggests – this is the fear of assimilation. Although I do not theorize about the factors that lead to the brightening and fading of the lines between American Jews and others, I would like to suggest two lines of argument. One, much of the variation probably owes to the American context. Whether Jews feel as if they are more or less integrated into the American polity is probably caused by developments in the American polity. This does not mean that international factors are not important, which leads to the second line of argument. Global factors that strengthen or undermine the sense of a Jewish people also have an impact. But whether the changing fortunes of a Jewish peoplehood affect how American Jews define themselves in relationship to the United States and the world will depend, in part, on how Jewish peoplehood is defined. There are lots of ways to define Jewish peoplehood, some of which make more severe distinctions between Jews and non-Jews. Below I will return to these issues when discussing the possible impact of the Trump election.

James Loeffler suggests that my framework for thinking about the foreign policies of American Jews holds lessons for other scholars who are writing on Jewish internationalism. If so, this is an accident. But it might be worth reflecting on the steps by which global history affected Jewish internationalism. As the preface spells out, my initial interest in the topic of the foreign policies of American Jews was spurred by contemporary events: the co-presence of American Jewry's strong support for Israel (a form of nationalism) and growing identification with humanitarianism and social justice (a form of cosmopolitanism). As in all contemporary developments, I assumed there was a history, and the question was how to best approach it. My own research in humanitarianism led me to reformulate the question in the following manner: how does a political community come to define its obligations to distant strangers? I soon learned that, at least in the context of the Jewish political community, there are religious and political ways of thinking about this question. There is religious text, which tends to formulate the question in terms of particularism vs. universalism. More important for my argument is the political, and the question of the relationship between insiders and outsiders became reshaped by the all-important emergence of the nation-state in the nineteenth century. In other words, we are now in the thick of the enduring question of the relationship between the national and the international - and for Jews the international concerns the transnational Jewish people and broader concerns for humanity. And, as I demonstrate, these two dimensions of Jewish internationalism become intertwined at various moments. But, really existing, Jewish internationalism is profoundly shaped by the domestic context - that is, the national. Loeffler suggests that this approach, which considers the historical rise of different forms of political organization and imaginings on views of the 'international,' might have some purchase for other students of Jewish internationalism. If anyone should know it is Loeffler, who is writing a history of the relationship between global Jewry and human rights. But Loeffler's reaction suggests something very important: that we can learn a lot about the history of internationalism and transnationalism by studying the case of world Jewry, and, in turn, frameworks of international and transnationalism can offer leverage into the changing organizational forms of world Jewry.

Transnationalism and cosmopolitanism is not for the weak-hearted. This is a world defined in terms of borders. Borders determine much of our fate - including our life chances and circumstances, security, career possibilities, legal rights, and so on. And, in a world defined by spatial, legal, political, and cultural boundaries, those who represent the transnational are not only working against gravity but also posing as a possible threat to the 'nation.' The obvious answer, then, is to surrender to the national. But for many people, and not just the Jews, this is unsatisfactory, imposes artificial boundaries on their sentiments and longings, and potentially forces them to abandon meanings that are central to their lives. Home can be a territorialized and deterritorialized space. One effect of transnationalism and internationalism, and especially in a world of nation-states, is anxiety. Anxiety has been a pronounced theme in much of the writing on Jewish history. And while a considerable amount of this anxiety is defined by the concern for basic physical security, then post-enlightenment process unleashed an ontological anxiety for Jews who found themselves torn from the roots and unable to become firmly transplanted elsewhere. I do not know if Jews are different from other minority, religious, and ethnic groups, but there is little question that much of their anxiety owes to their flickering presence between the national and international.

And then there is Israel. I did not set out to write a book about Israel, but rather a book about how American Jews attempt to find a place in the world. Yet Israel is the elephant in the room. There is no

doubt that Israel helped American Jews resist the pull of assimilation, and, in that important sense, helped to keep American Jews Jews. Yet there is also no doubt that Jewish nationalism and Israel have also raised difficult questions for an American Jewry that worries about particularism and favors universalism. In the conclusion of the book, as Hopgood notes, the possibility of assimilation means that a distinctive foreign policy of American Jews will disappear. After all, if American Jews disappear, then American Jewish foreign policy also will. At this current moment American Jews appear to be more inclined to universalism and wary of particularism, but the 'American Jewish Establishment' is arguably more inclined toward tribalism than by cosmopolitanism. This suggests a split between the orientations of Jewish associational life and everyday 'Josephs.'

What might be the impact of Trump's election on this observed distancing between American Jews and Israel and between the majority of American Jews and the American Jewish establishment? The lens of tribalism and cosmopolitanism provides one answer. It is fair to say that Trump has tapped into and sparked America's inner tribalism. Traditionally, American Jews have championed politicians who have favored inclusion and feared those who dip into xenophobic forms of populism. American Jews, in this context, can be expected to align themselves against Trump; and, as expected, Trump underperformed relative to previous Republican candidates. But Trump, so far, has signaled that he will break from precedent and move the American embassy to Jerusalem and give the green light to Israeli settlement expansion. In other words, he will support Israeli policies that are symbolic of Israeli tribalism and have been opposed by most American Jews. What might be the consequence? Israel drifts further to the right, causing a greater sense of distance between itself and American Jews. The American Jewish Establishment aligns itself with a set of policies and an American president that challenge the fundamental values of many American Jews. The end result could be an acceleration of not just a growing distancing between American Jews and Israel but also a very dangerous split within the American Jewish community.

We are facing an interesting reversal from one president to the other: whereas President Barack Obama was adored by American Jews and abhorred by Israeli Jews, Trump seems to be abhorred by American Jews and adored by Israeli Jews (at least relative to Obama). If this is not a reflection of distancing, and precisely along the lines of universalism and particularism, I am not sure what is.

## Notes

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[1] Pew Research Center, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," October 2013, <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/>.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Bradley Burston, "Trump's Win, the Greatest Victory for anti-Semitism in America Since 1941," *Haaretz*, 10 November 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/world-news/u-s-election-2016/1.752064>.

[4] Andrew Blake, "Trump win means no two-state solution in Middle East, Israeli officials says," *Washington Times*, 9 November 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/nov/9/trump-win-means-no-two-state-solution-middle-east/>.

[5] Caroline Glick, "Israel in the Trump era," *RealClearPolitics*, 15 November 2016, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2016/11/15/israel\\_in\\_the\\_trump\\_era\\_132354.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2016/11/15/israel_in_the_trump_era_132354.html).

[6] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

[7] Lydia Saad, "Americans' views toward Israel remain firmly positive," *Gallup*, 29 February 2016, (accessed September 14, 2016), <http://www.gallup.com/poll/189626/americans-views-toward-israel-remain-firmly-positive.aspx>.

[8] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[9] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMuixiFlhNc>; Mark Oppenheimer, "Agency's Shtick Is Jewish Humor for a Good Cause," *New York Times* (10 December 2010), <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/11/us/11beliefs.html>.

[10] Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Moria Paz, "A Non-Territorial Ethnic Network and the Making of Human Rights Law: The Case of the Alliance Israélite Universelle," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Rights Law* 4:1 (2010): 1-24.

[11] Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Cambridge, 2010); Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene, eds., *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Samuel Moyn, "Rene Cassin (1887-1976): Jewish Internationalism and Human Rights," in Jacques Picard, Jacques Revel, Michael P. Steinberg, and Idith Zertal, eds. *Makers of Jewish Modernity: Thinkers, Artists, Leaders, and the World They Made* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016): 278-291; James Loeffler, "'The Famous Trinity of 1917': Zionist Internationalism in Historical Perspective," *Simon-Dubnow-Institut Jahrbuch* (forthcoming). Mention should be made of the important conference convened by historians Nathaniel Kurz and Gil Rubin in 2012 under the auspices of the Columbia University History Department, the Columbia University Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs Human Rights Program, and the Yale University Judaic Studies Program: "Jewish Internationalism. Collective Politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries," Columbia University, 9-10 September 2012.

[12] For a significant recent corrective, see Jaclyn Granick, "Humanitarian Responses to Jewish Suffering Abroad by American Jewish Organizations, 1914-1929" (Ph.D. Thesis, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies [Geneva], 2015).

[13] Tony Michels, "Is America 'Different?' A Critique of American Jewish Exceptionalism," *American Jewish History* 96:3 (September 2011): 201-224; James Loeffler, "Nationalism without a Nation? On the Invisibility of American Jewish Politics," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 105: 3 (Summer 2015): 367-398.

[14] For recent scholarly interventions in this popular debate, see Theodore Sasson, *The New American Zionism* (New York: New York University Press, 2013) and Dov Waxman, *Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict over Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[15] American Jewish World Service, "Post-Election Message by Robert Bank, President and CEO of American Jewish World Service" (press release), 9 November 2016, <https://ajws.org/press-releases/post-election-message-robert-bank-president-ceo-american-jewish-world-service/>

[16] This response was completed 29 December 2016.