



## Article

# Rebranding God: The Jewish Revival Movement between Homeland and Diaspora

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**Abstract:** Against the gloomy forecast of “The Vanishing Diaspora”, the end of the second millennium saw the global emergence of a dazzling array of Jewish cultural initiatives, institutional modalities, and individual practices. These “Jewish Revival” and “Jewish Renewal” projects are led by Jewish NGOs and philanthropic organizations, the Orthodox Teshuva (return to the fold) movement and its well-known emissary Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidism, and alternative cultural initiatives that promote what can be termed “lifestyle Judaism”. This range between institutionalized revival movements and ephemeral event-driven projects circumscribes a diverse space of creative agency. Indeed, the trope of a “Jewish Renaissance” has become both a descriptive category of an increasingly popular and scholarly discourse across the globe, and a prescriptive model for social action. This article explores the global transformations of contemporary Jewishness, which give renewed meaning to identity, tradition, and politics in our post-secular world in two different sociopolitical contexts. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research, we interrogate the relations between “diaspora” and “homeland” by analyzing two case studies: the Jewish revival movement in Budapest, Hungary, and the Jewish renewal initiatives in Israel. While the first instantiates a diasporic movement anchored in a post-denominational and post-secular attempt to reclaim Jewish tradition for a new generation of Jew-llennials (Millennial Jews), the second group operates against the Orthodox hegemony of the institutional Rabbinate by revisiting religious ritual and textual study. By proposing new cultural repertoires, these movements highlight the dialectic exchange between center and periphery. The ethnography of religious revival decenters the Israeli Orthodoxy as “the homeland” and positions the diaspora at the core of a network of cultural creativity and renewal, while remaining in constant dialog with Israel and other diasporic communities.

**Keywords:** diaspora; homeland; Jewish revival; Jewish spirituality; globalization; cultural creativity; anthropology; Israel



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The Jews are not a historical people  
and not even an archeological people—the Jews  
are a geological people with rifts  
and cave-ins and strata and fiery lava.  
Their history must be measured  
on a different scale.

Yehuda Amichai, *The Jews* (Amichai 1994)

If we are part of a movement then this movement has a lot of power right now.  
This movement has a huge task in front of her: to rebrand God!

Yitz Jordan (*Punk Jews* 2012)

## 1. Between Diaspora and Homeland: Jewish Present, Continuous, and Progressive

This article started on two rooftops 3000 miles away from each other—one in Dharamsala, India, and the other in Budapest, Hungary. During a back-packing trip in India, Rachel took part in an ad hoc Rosh Hashanah prayer service conducted at a rooftop restaurant that included a neo-Hasidic rabbi, a group of Israeli backpackers, half a dozen young American Jews, and a Jewish Buddhist monk from a nearby monastery. In this exceptional ritual moment, spiritualities of different kinds—Jewish and non-Jewish—were seamlessly integrated. Several years later, she observed the blossoming of a full-fledged Jewish renewal community in Israel, by the name of the Yeshiva-Ashram, led by a controversial neo-Hasidic rabbi. During her field work, Rachel witnessed Buddhist meditation, shamanic rituals and Sufi chanting integrated into the traditional Jewish prayer. These innovations were packaged as “Jewish spiritual renewal”. Traveling across the Atlantic to the North American Jewish Renewal bi-annual conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, she witnessed the multidirectional personal, communal, and theological connections between the Israeli version of renewal and the North American one.

In Budapest, on another rooftop, Daniel documented the liberty young Hungarian Jews take in reformulating the Sukkot ritual in an improvised sukkah overlooking the infamous Jewish ghetto wall<sup>1</sup>. The young men and women who gathered on the rooftop did not have a conventional sukkah (a hut constructed for use during the week-long festival) to speak of, but instead they improvised a makeshift tent from a blanket. None of the special ritual artifacts supposedly used on this religious occasion were there: the conventional sukkah, the *lulav* (a closed frond of the date palm tree), or even the *siddur* (prayer book). This did not seem to bother the participants who were happy to let Anna Bálint, the only participant with some sort of Hebrew education, to lead the prayer, paying no importance to the fact that she was a woman. Most of them, we learned, were members of Moishe House<sup>2</sup>, a motley crew of second- and third-generation Hungarians with Jewish roots or with partly Jewish roots who were seeking a way of living their Jewish heritage and engaging with their culture and tradition without the stiltedness of the Jewish establishment. On such occasions, we witnessed the rise of a young millennial generation juggling Jewish form and content in unorthodox ways.

Such experiences, complemented by the insights of actors and critics across the globe, turned our attention to the manifold Jewish landscapes and lifestyles as they evolve before our eyes. We pondered the global transformations of contemporary Jewishness, which give renewed meaning to identity, tradition, and politics in our post-secular world. In the process, everyday Jewish subjectivities and official doctrines seem to diverge and intersect in profound ways across the “diaspora” (Budapest, USA) and “homeland” (Israel).

We thus set out in this paper to interrogate the dialectic relations between “diaspora” and “homeland” by analyzing two case studies: the Jewish revival movement in Budapest, Hungary, and the Jewish renewal initiatives in Israel. While the first instantiates a diasporic movement anchored in a post-denominational and post-secular attempt to reclaim Jewish tradition for a new generation of Jew-llennials (Millennial Jews), the second group operates against the Orthodox hegemony of the institutional Rabbinate in Israel by revisiting religious ritual and textual study. By devising new cultural repertoires, these movements highlight the dialectic exchange between center and periphery. Our ethnography of religious revival decenters the Israeli Orthodoxy as “the homeland” and positions the diaspora at the core of a global network of cultural creativity and renewal, while remaining in constant dialog with Israel and other diasporic communities. By highlighting the bottom-up processes of contestation and alternative counter-cultural ways of revising tradition, our ethnography reveals practices of revival that defy the logic of centralization. Complementarily, diasporization emerges as a creative process that reads Jewish history and practices against state, nationalism, and institutionalized religion.

## 2. Jewish Revival Inside Out

The end of the second millennium saw the emergence of a dazzling array of cultural initiatives, institutional modalities, and individual practices, grouped together under the labels “Jewish revival” and “Jewish renewal”, in Israel, Europe, and North America. From Chabad’s global tactics of outreach into new social spaces, through alternative cultural projects that are often dubbed Jewish spirituality, to local, community-based educational activities, these enterprises are realigning the contours of Jewish identity, engagement, and affiliations across the three geographic centers of contemporary Jewish life. Centered largely in Europe, North America, and Israel, projects of revival have also recently extended to uncharted territories in China and Latin America (Heilman 2022).<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the trope of a Jewish renaissance has become both a *descriptive category* of an increasingly popular public and scholarly discourse across the globe and a *prescriptive model* for social action. The urgent call to revive Judaism has engulfed all realms of Jewish culture, education, and modes of devotion, replacing older categories of practice with the promise of innovation, authenticity, and relevance.

Against the gloomy forecast of “the vanishing Diaspora” (Wasserstein 1996), which prophesied the dissolution of European Jewry in the wake of World War II, since the 1990s, the Jewish revival discourse has posited an alternative future beyond the flourishing communities in Israel and the United States. In her internationally debated policy paper, *A New Jewish Identity for Post-1989 Europe*, historian Diana Pinto claimed that post-Cold War Europe could be turned “into the third pillar of a world Jewish identity at the cross-roads of a newly interpreted past, and a pluralist and democratic future” (Pinto 1996, p. 15). Anti-Semitism, thought to have been a thing of the past in most of Western Europe and no longer state policy in Eastern Europe, has reared its head in France, Hungary, and in other countries throughout Europe (Kovács 2010; Berenbaum 2008). As numerous researchers show, these developments have triggered Jewish communities to redefine their position regarding the homeland and diaspora in diverse ways, ranging from assimilation to segmentation and increased immigration (*Aliya*) to Israel (FRA 2018; DellaPergola and Staetsky 2021). At the same time, reflecting Pinto’s call to animate a “Jewish space”, Jewish NGOs and philanthropic organizations, the Orthodox *teshuva* (return to the fold) movement and its well-known emissary, Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidism, and alternative cultural initiatives that promoted what can be termed “lifestyle Judaism” (Monterescu and Zorandy 2022) or “identity à la carte” (Kovacs et al. 2011) attempted various forms of communal and religious revival.

This spectrum between institutionalized revival movements and ephemeral event-driven projects circumscribes a diverse space of creative agency and calls out for a bottom-up empirical analysis of cultural creativity and the reinvention of Jewish tradition worldwide. To address this loose assemblage of social movements and cultural initiatives, in this article, we provide a more comprehensive portrait of what is now a full-fledged transnational field.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Defining Revival

Projects of revival offer different articulations of the temporal and affective relations with the Jewish past and history and project them into the Jewish future. On one end of the spectrum, Orthodox forms of Jewish revival devise new ways to promote what they deem historically authentic Judaism and call for the revival of age-old traditions. For instance, in a lecture titled “Rethinking What We Know About the Universe”, Chabad Rabbi Levi Teldon proposed a “revolutionary” mode of existential reflection: “Drawing on the wisdom of Chassidic teaching, the most basic building blocks of existence are reexamined from the bottom up, revolutionizing our understanding of life, reality, and our place in the world”.<sup>5</sup> On the other end of the spectrum, alternative cultural actors, such as the “unorthodox Orthodox” artists, documented in the film *Punk Jews* in New York City and Marom and Moishe House in Budapest, creatively define postdenominational religious and cultural modalities: secularized but not assimilated, liberal yet adhering to “tradition” as they

understand it. By reconfiguring the concepts of tradition, culture, and religion, they remake new ways of “being Jewish”. Likewise, espousing the New Age credo of “embodied, earth-based transformative Jewish ritual”, the Kohenet Hebrew Priestess Institute announces, “We create ritual as a transformative force in Jewish and human life. We practice spiritual leadership as an act of holding sacred space, time and soul”<sup>6</sup>. In times of the excessive commodification of culture, the task is indeed to “rebrand God” for potential publics.

Defined here as the practices of transmission, social adaptation, and cultural innovation of religion qua “discursive tradition” (cf. [Asad 1993](#)), the terms *Jewish revival* and *Jewish renewal* should be first critically recognized as emic and normative concepts, often used by political and religious actors. Despite their differences, contemporary revival and renewal movements are driven by similar states of dissatisfaction with the present reality, be it the collective survival of the Jewish people, the safety of Jews in the diaspora, or the solvency of Judaism ([Magid 2022](#)). These diverse, often hybrid efforts have emerged in response to the synchronic challenge of global modernity and the diachronic plurality of Jewish life.

However, as analytic concepts, the terms *Jewish revival* and *Jewish renewal* remain vague. To make sense of this wide basis of social action, we propose the following tripartite definition of Jewish revival in temporal, ritual, textual, and communal terms:<sup>7</sup>

1. The attempt to answer the call for urgent adaptation and reformulation of Jewish practice in temporal terms from the perspective of the communal present continuous.
2. The framing of social action in terms of Jewish memory and tradition through textual or ritual reinterpretation.
3. The effort to seek new social and communal frameworks for Jewish life.

This essay seeks to reframe the interdisciplinary scholarship about the emergent transnational social field of Jewish revival. Transcending the standard demarcations between center and periphery, we unpack the dialectic notions of Jewish survival, revival, and renewal. We ask how the attempts at a physical and concrete revival of Jewish life relate to projects of cultural renewal and the calls for a spiritual revival and how are these projects positioned within a global network of diasporic and homeland relations. In the following section, we explore the history of Jewish revival as a dynamic discursive frame whose meanings changed over the course of the twentieth century. We then examine the two case studies in Budapest and Jerusalem and their modalities of revival as a communal practice: their temporalities, spatialities, subjectivities, and degrees of institutionalization.

#### 4. The Newness of Oldness: Historicizing Revival

The concept of Jewish revival has had a checkered history in Europe, Israel, and the United States. As an analytic starting point, we conceptualize the distinctions between revival, renewal, and survival based on the different perspectives on Jewish temporality invoked by each one of these terms. It should be stressed that these categories are ideal types and can be mixed in practice, as demonstrated in Nila Ginger Hofman’s ethnography of Jewish Croatia ([Hofman 2006](#); see also [Magid 2022](#); [Waligórska 2020](#)).

*Survival* addresses a state of emergency, always in the traumatic present, which calls for the physical survival of the Jewish people and the communal salvage of Jewish heritage and material culture (e.g., the reconstruction of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues in extinct European communities).

*Revival* refers to a commitment to tradition and continuity, predicated on a past-oriented temporality (e.g., the Chabad and Breslov Orthodox revival movements).

*Renewal* emphasizes present- and future-oriented temporalities, where the past provides an adaptable inspiration source prone to radical creative alterations without the shadow of hegemonic tradition (e.g., New Age movements, secular yeshivas, and urban individualistic initiatives).

Against the ideology of survival and a preoccupation with continuity, blood, and kinship, the categories of revival and renewal manifest the Janus face of Jewish life between

the past and future. “For many generations”, write Amos Oz and his daughter Fania Oz-Salzberg, “Jews stood in the river of time with their faces to the past and their back to the future, until the modern age arrived, shook them and turned them in the opposite direction. Oftentimes it was the condition for their survival” (Oz and Oz-Salzberger 2012, p. 148). Indeed, such a sweeping assertion naturalizes a highly contingent linear temporality. Yet, the historicization of Jewish revival in relation to modernity also shows that past, present, and future orientations are always mutually implicated in such projects.

Throughout Jewish modernity (Traverso 2016), the idea of a Jewish revival shaped, motivated, and gave meaning to disparate calls for the reawakening of Jewish culture, faith, nationhood, community, and identity. For modern Judaism, the ideas of revival, renewal, and renaissance have fired powerful and enduring imaginations—“fantasies”, however, “that cannot be reduced to nostalgia or the naïve longing” for a “golden past”, but should be viewed as a “moral task” (Biemann 2001). Historically, a systematic reflection on Jewish revival was first introduced by the German philosopher Martin Buber (1901) in essay “Jüdische Renaissance”. According to Biemann, the notion called for Jewish revival, which Buber saw as more than a mere call for national reawakening. It called for a comprehensive self-transformation of Jewish culture and existence firmly rooted in romanticist, modernist, and thoroughly aestheticizing sensibilities. It was aimed at “restoring a positive and unified sense of Jewishness *outside* the traditional tenets of Judaism” (Biemann 2001, p. 60). What Buber expected for the new renaissance of Judaism was akin to what he believed the “old” Renaissance had mastered for its own age: A “return” that spelled radical innovation; spontaneous “rebirth” to a “new life” that promised freedom from decline and inward decay. In this respect, the Jewish renaissance echoed and expanded the call for *techiya* (rebirth) that had come from the Hebrew renaissance in Eastern Europe; and it echoed no less the development of cultural or spiritual Zionism, as whose cousin—and corrective—it often posed. But it also resonated with a broader longing for a “new renaissance” that was common among European intellectuals at the fin de siècle and during the three decades to follow (Biemann 2009, p. 2).

World War II, the Holocaust, and the near demise of European Jewry pushed many communities to the defensive mode of survival, and some have remained in such a state of existential emergency to this day (notably in Europe). The founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and the waves of emigration that followed left most of the residual Jewish communities in the Middle East and North Africa dwindling and vulnerable (Levy 2015; Baussant 2011). At the same time, the experience of displacement and trauma also endowed the concepts of rebirth and revival with new meanings: the actual physical rebuilding of Jewish life. Consequently, the idea of revival functioned as a powerful *figura* of thought to interpret an event as final and irreparably destructive as the Holocaust as both radical break and continuity—not mere and effortless continuance but *conscious* continuity. Jewish life after the Shoah did not just “go on”, writes Biemann, it was “reborn”, “restored”, and made anew.

Concurrently, in the United States, Jewish discourse reflected an ongoing anxiety about the physical survival of the Jewish people, that is, a projected fear of annihilation through assimilation that resonated with the Holocaust, the plight of Soviet Jews, and the Six Day War. It heralded what Magid calls Jewish survivalism, the so-called American Jewish obsession with demography and continuity. Survivalism has constituted a “culture of enumeration” that has become the ideology of American Jewish leadership (Krauel-Tovi and Dash Moore 2016). Yet, among many young American Jews in the 1960s and 1970s, a complementary move reformulated a renewed Jewish identity that was as much about renewing Judaism as it was about the survival of the Jewish people (Dollinger 2000; Staub 2020; Prell 1989). According to Magid, although Jewish revival in its survivalist sense is intent on the preservation of the *Jewish* people, Jewish renewal in its non-Orthodox, liberal sense focuses on the transformation of *Judaism* from a state of atrophy to a state of vitality.

In the last few decades, new Jewish venues have embraced gender diversity, with synagogues and community centers opening their gates to LGBTQ members (Shokeid

2002).<sup>8</sup> The heated debate on race in America (Itzkovitz 2005) now calls to include Jews of color—a pan-ethnic term that is used to identify Jews whose family origins are in African, Asian, or Latin American countries—into Jewish communal space.<sup>9</sup> Together with the controversy on intermarriage (Sarna 2007) and the place of Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews in Jewish history, these debates animate the field of Jewish revival by bringing global Jewish trajectories, colonialism, and migration into the conversation.

In Israel the economic neoliberalization and deregulation of the 1980s and the concurrent decline of the hegemonic Zionist narrative and its social carriers—the veteran, socialist, secular, and Ashkenazi elites—gave rise to new identity politics, which triggered ethnic and religious revival movements (Ram 2013; Leon 2023). In this new cultural regime, Shas (the Mizrahi ultra-Orthodox party that calls to “return the crown to its former glory”) and non-Orthodox secularized Jewish renewal projects (such as the Alma College for Hebrew Culture and Beit Midrash Elul) reclaimed Jewish practice heretofore monopolized by the (Ashkenazi) rabbinic establishment (Lehmann and Siebzehner 2006; Azulay and Tabor 2008). While allegedly a local phenomenon, the secular renewal projects are often financed by North American philanthropic foundations who wish to promote pluralistic forms of Judaism in Israel. Significantly, the claims for the return of Jewish life are not immune to nationalist connotations and the “negation of the diaspora”, as demonstrated by the urban settler movement in Jaffa, Israel, operating under the banner of a “re-jew-venated Torani community”. Featuring the figure of Rabbi Kook, one of the founders of religious Zionism and the rabbi of Jaffa in 1904–1916, the movement calls for ridding ethnically mixed towns of their Arab legacy and restoring Jewish dominance (Monterescu and Shmaryahu-Yeshurun 2021). These different formations exemplify the social political context of the debate between homeland and diaspora. We now turn to in-depth ethnographic studies of our two cases of Jewish revival: In Budapest and in Israel.

### 5. Case I. Diasporic by Choice: Judapest or the Revival of Jewish Budapest

In this section, we follow the different strategies and practices that Jewish NGOs, informal groups, and individuals in Hungary use to create and improvise new communal frameworks to define ways of being Jewish. In the 2000s, key ethnic entrepreneurs led the alternative revival movement in Budapest and carved out new spaces of Jewish relevance. The social actors who led these movements became agents of change by creatively reappropriating Jewishness in the city. The biographies of the people attest to the incongruence between the existing institutional structure of Jewish life and the aspirations of younger generations. These community leaders used the resources and networks they developed in Hungary and abroad. Sharing a constitutive experience outside Hungary (in Israel, the United States, and France), they brought home a positive Jewish experience and could introduce a different model of Jewish identity removed from the common self-victimizing attitude. While Budapest displays a variety of modalities of revival (such as the powerful yet contested Chabad, notorious for its dubious relations with the Orban government), the following focuses on a case of identity renewal.

Responding to Wasserstein’s fears of a vanishing diaspora, the case Moishe House exemplifies the principle of religious pluralism. Moishe House Budapest was established in September 2009 following the successful model of the Moishe House London. The founding team applied for funding on the Moishe House website and were accepted. In general, Moishe House seeks “young adults to connect with their own Jewish identities, their friends, and their wider communities” in exchange for “perks and benefits”.<sup>10</sup> When we interviewed Anna Bálint (b. 1983), Moishe House co-founder, who featured at the Sukka vignette in the introduction of this paper, she started off by invoking her constitutive experience as a young Jew in postsocialist Budapest:

My story is at once very typical and very unique. All four of my grandparents’ families were touched by the Holocaust, and they stepped away from religion after that. Following the initial Soviet suppression, something awoke and got stirring in my parents. I was a small child by then and they sent me to Kazinczy

street's Jewish kindergarten as early as 1989. That was a pretty big shock, of course, I almost learnt Hebrew earlier than Hungarian. Lauder school for the next twelve years was just a lengthy exit from the trauma. There, one really gets to feel that horrible herd spirit. Maybe there are some positive values to feeling part of a group, but then for the group to identify itself in a way that is only negative when looking at it from the outside, that's problematic. Although in the very beginning, at the dawn of the system change it was really a sense of liberation, a communal feeling: parents, kids, teachers, everyone was very happy the school had been founded.

Bálint studied art history in France and returned to Budapest after a long stay in Israel. Anna herself was raised in a secular family, and her goal was to found an organization to popularize Jewish traditions for Jews and non-Jews alike: "I used to live a more traditional observant religious life, but realized my Jewishness has to come from elsewhere, from the inside" (Czene 2011). In addition to Moishe House Budapest, she cofounded the alternative prayer group Dor Hadash.

Bálint remarks: "The most beautiful thing about Moishe House is to see the young people arriving on Friday evening, without any outside pressure, because of their own intentions. Some earlier, some later, some with wine, some without, some by bike, some by car, so as not to forget about the question of keeping the Sabbath. It's good to see how a lot of people, who have not found their place elsewhere or hadn't even looked for it, because it never occurred to them, can be a part of this Friday evening community. They're here, they sing and feel good. This all has to do with the current Hungarian situation as people need a community especially now".

Today's Moishe House inhabitants are part of the iGeneration, and growing up Jewish or in a Jewish style in Hungary over the last twenty years or so has not been a journey of question marks. Thanks to the Jewish millennials, there are many ways to explore one's Judaism. Being Jewish or the Jewish style for them is an unproblematic identity element, one of many: One can be a student of art history, a vegan, a Jew, and an animal rights activist. Although previously the question of one's identity was played carefully—What summer camps did you go to? Where do your grandparents live?—and then one felt one's way around the other person's answers, today's young adults can meet up in a Jewish location and one can say to the other, "Huh, you're Jewish. I didn't know... ", and the other will say, "You too, eh? Nice".

It seems that, with the continued abnormality of illiberal Hungarian politics (Kallius et al. 2016), the identity revolution of young Jewry continues on its path. As Chabad continues to secure its special relationship with Prime Minister Orbán and expands its institutional network, new ethnic entrepreneurs are standing out among the millennials and current university students are finding their voice in the urban Jewish landscape, creating multilayered, open community spaces at Auróra and in restored synagogues. The urban scene of Jewish revival remains a highly contested field.

Many of the Jewish revival activists in Budapest are diasporic by choice and their transnational connections are crucial to the viability of the Jewish revival. In fact, there is arguably no Hungarian Jewish renaissance without transnational actors and independent of "foreign" funding, such as the Joint Distribution Committee or the Rothschild Foundation. Most of the key players spent their formative years beyond the borders of Hungary in other cities with well-defined Jewish identities: Tel Aviv, Paris, and New York. They returned to Budapest with what were, for the locals, novel, cool concepts, and models of action, which to them were a means to self-identify as who they are: hip, urban Jews. For many, the blogosphere, social media, and the Jewish global village are key reference points; initiatives from London, such as Moishe House, are easy to follow and then emulate, and trends are intertwined, linked, and circulating freely. Clearly benefiting from globalization and European mobility trends, the young, Jewish, urban middle class challenges conservative structures as it looks for its place in a post-secular Europe. By doing so, they creatively renew Jewish European identity.

## 6. Case II. Jewish Spirituality: From the Diaspora to the Authentic Homeland and Back

Our second case study addresses the diaspora–homeland relations as they manifested in the New Age Judaism (NAJ) phenomenon that developed in Israel at the end of the 90s, under the influence of North American Jewish spirituality and the secular Jewish renewal movement. The case exemplifies the creative frontiers of Jewish expressivity and points to the intricate dynamics of cultural translation (Gal 2015; Levitt et al. 2012) as ideas regarding spirituality, locality, and authenticity move between the two centers of Jewish life. As such, it reveals the dialectic relation between the alleged homeland (Israel) and diaspora (North America) and varying perceptions on authentic Jewish life.

The Israeli Jewish spiritual renewal initiative aspires for a subjective unmediated religious experience and fuses New Age spirituality with Jewish mysticism. Emerging from the Israeli New Age culture and the Jewish secular renewal movement, its roots lie in the North American Jewish Renewal movement (Ruah Midbar and Klin Oron 2010; Werczberger and Azulay 2011).

Under the Zionist principle of the “negation of the diaspora”, North American Judaism, especially in its liberal non-Orthodox form, was largely rejected by Israelis. Progressive Judaism was perceived both by Israeli Orthodox leaders and secular Zionists as an assimilated, distorted, and hence un-authentic form of Judaism (Abu and Waldocks 2020). Of late, however, the popularity of North American Jewish lifestyle has grown, due in part to the intervention of major philanthropic foundations, such as the Jewish Federations. These efforts concentrate mostly on the so-called Jewish seculars who constitute around 40% of the Jewish population in Israel (Pew Research Center 2016). The slow dissemination of American interpretations of Jewishness is gradually transforming the Jewish Israeli religious field. Emerging from the flourishing local New Age scene of the late 1990s, and under the influence of the North American Jewish Renewal movement, Jewish spiritual renewal in Israel is a collective, loosely organized movement. The first community to open its doors in 2000 was Hamakom, under the leadership of Rabbi Ohad Ezrahi. This community, which started out under the name Yeshiva-Ashram, settled in the northern Judean Desert. Shortly after the founding of Hamakom, Rabbi Mordechai (Marc) Gafni established Bayit Chadash as a prayer urban community in the city of Jaffa. Both communities attracted the typical participants of New Age culture in Israel: upper-middle class, of Ashkenazi origin and non-Orthodox—the characteristics of Israel’s veteran elites (Kaplan and Werczberger 2017). Although both communities were relatively successful among Israeli New Agers, similar to many other New Age groups, and led by charismatic rabbis, neither stood the test of time and both fell apart after only six years of activity.<sup>11</sup> Yet, despite the failure of several local initiatives, it can be argued that the broader Jewish renewal project continues till this day by evolving into the institutionalized “Israeli Judaism” movement.<sup>12</sup>

The marked differences between the two communities notwithstanding, both shared the same overarching ambition: to bring about a Jewish spiritual renewal in the face of what they perceived as the decline of Judaism under the protracted watch of state Rabbinate. In order to renew Judaism, they integrated between various elements drawn from the Jewish tradition, especially Jewish mysticism—i.e., Kabbalah and Hasidism -- and New Age spirituality. Their practices involved the hybridization of Jewish rites, namely a synthesis between traditional Jewish elements and New Age practices that were gleaned from Far-Eastern religions, indigenous cultures, therapeutic discourse, the Human Potential Movement, and the like.<sup>13</sup>

Like other contemporary modalities of religious renewal, the NAJ project of renewal articulated its mission using the discourse of authenticity. Their members fused the personal and highly subjective search for their authentic expressive self with the quest for an authentic form of Judaism and Jewish spirituality. In NAJ, the subjective turn inward and the ambition to be true to one’s self were entwined with a desire to be true to one’s origin, thus creating a new Jewish mode of sociality that drew on Jewish tradition and simultaneously accommodated and transformed it, pointing to the thin line that separates



“the desire for individual authenticity and the calling to convince others of the correctness of a particular rendering or localizing of the authentic” (Bendix 2009, p. 20).

NAJ religious authenticity was often diaspora-mediated and involved liberating oneself from conventional Israeli secular–religious dichotomies. A member of the Hamakom community described his transition from Orthodoxy to NAJ as a process of “returning to myself”. Nadav (35 years old) was raised in an Orthodox family and educated in Yeshiva institutions, and left the fold when he joined the community. “I say that I am a hozer be’tshuva [...] because what, in short, is hazarah be’tshuva? It is to return to yourself. . . Rabbi Kook talks about how a person returns to himself and returns to God. . . and this is so accurate”. A significant moment of discovery took place when he traveled to North America to meet with members of Jewish Renewal communities. He told us that these encounters opened his eyes to “different Jewish forms of life and interpretations”. He was astounded not only by his initiation into novel communal forms and Jewish ritualizing, but also by the mere personalization of the Jewish tradition.

The NAJ claim of an authentic Jewish spirituality was based on an assertion of a continuation of a particular tradition from the past, namely, of two time periods in Jewish history: the Hasidic movement of the late-eighteenth century and the Hebrew pre-exilic antiquity. While the first is similar to the temporality offered by the North American NAJ, the second is decidedly local and Israeli. Unlike North American renewal in which the physical space is devoid of any theological meanings, by turning to the historical times of kings and prophets, Israeli Jewish Renewal temporality allocates a spiritual dimension to both time and space. The Land is perceived as a site of direct contact with nature and thus with spirituality. By doing so, it subverts the Zionist and Israeli discourse regarding the land and “The place” (Ben-Ari and Bilu 1997; Gurevitch and Aran 1991). The land is disconnected from its messianic or nationalist context and perceived as a site of direct link to universal spiritual forces. In this spiritual creed, the return to the land allowed the return to the alleged un-institutionalized charismatic spirituality of ancient times. Thus, the reciprocal relation between the diasporic North American Jewish spirituality and the Israeli one came full circle.

## 7. Analysis of Modalities of Revival: Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism

As the abovementioned cases demonstrate, the ideas of Jewish revival and renewal have come to denote multiple and often contradictory social-historical processes, meanings, and motivations: from the physical national revival of the Jewish people in the nation-state of Israel and the reconstruction of Jewish communal and cultural life in Eastern Europe to the philanthropy-based identity projects and individualized forms of Jewish spirituality in North America and Israel described above.

These revival projects are predicated on four modular building blocks: temporality (past, present, and future), subjectivity (the scope of the historical subject), institutionalization (the degree of organizational structure), and spatiality (local, national, regional, and global). The relational arrangement of these foundations produces a mosaic of modalities, movements, and initiatives, and offers different frame alignments (Snow and Benford 1988) for Jewish action and social mobilization.

### 7.1. Temporality

As a cultural idiom, the term *revival* reflects a sense of crisis and discontent with the present state of Judaism (often deemed “stagnant”) and a wish to rectify and transform it. It marks a turning point and rupture, “a symbolic template of collective self-recognition at the moment of turning between old and new” (Geertz 1973, p. 219). We identify two temporal articulations of the present with the past and the future: past-oriented and future-oriented. In terms of the past, movements of renewal use the past as “an infinite and plastic symbolic resource, wholly susceptible to contemporary purposes” (Appadurai 1981, p. 201). Thus, although some Orthodox revival tends to submit the past to strict discursive and ritual constraints, other strands of Orthodox traditionalism are New Age or messianic, hence

future oriented. Similarly, some Reform and Reconstructionist trends of Judaism are very much oriented toward the past (Werczberger 2011).

While Orthodox revival projects, such as Chabad, offer a temporality that is primarily backward looking (“traditional Judaism”), the notion of renewal applied by the transdenominational Jewish Renewal movement embraces a forward-looking perspective, one that is bent on transformation of the present for the sake of the future. Here, the past is framed as an adaptable source of inspiration, prone to radical creative changes and modification without the constraints of hegemonic rabbinic tradition. Similarly, in postsocialist Europe at the turn of the twenty-first century, online initiatives, such as “Judapest” (a reclaiming of the historical antisemitic labeling of “Jewish Budapest”) rebelled against the outmoded official institutions (the Hungarian state-endorsed Mazsihisz) and focused on the “here and now” of young liberal urbanites: “a wholly homegrown and grassroots online and offline community aiming to uncover the Stimulating, the Relevant and the Cool in the Hungarian Jewish experience”.

### 7.2. *The Subjectivity of Revival*

The scope of the historical subject defines the contours of projects of revival, ranging from the abstract to the concrete, from the collective to the individual, and from the plural to the singular. As Ruth Ellen Gruber (2002) shows, the different inflections, punctuations, and permutations of Jewishness entail radically different intentionalities and ambitions. Although Orthodox projects of revival often claim to speak for Judaism or for Jewish tradition, alternative movements opt for more inclusive plurality (Jews and Jewishness). Some stress the physical continuity of the collective (the Jewish people), as a national or ethnic imagined community, whereas others focus on an individualistic reframing of Jewish identity.

The scope of revival movements attests to varying degrees of cultural essentialism and competing claims for authenticity. Thus, in her ethnography of the Jewish scene in Krakow, Erica Lehrer uses the concept of “vicarious identity” to come to terms with Christian Poles who identify with or pass as Jewish: “The Jewish-identified Poles I met in Kazimierz do not identify themselves *as* Jewish in conventional terms. But they clearly identify *with* Jewishness in a variety of ways that deserve attention. These Jewish-identified Poles, in the confusion and consternation they create (whether actively or passively), also function as a form of cultural education and cultural critique” (Lehrer 2007, p. 95). In this context, Jewish music and the klezmer revival of the 1970s open up a space of engagement that Waligórska (2020) describes as the “dynamics of encounter”.

Questions of race and ethnicity also expand the field of revival. Although much of Jewish studies reproduces the divide between Ashkenazi and Sephardic cultures (Bilu and Mark 2012), movements of revival can be equally observed among Mizrahi and Sephardic communities in the United States, Europe, and Israel. Thus, Breslov and Chabad, originally Ashkenazi factions, now turn to secular and Sephardic publics and position themselves as bottom-up popular movements (Cahaner and Leon 2013; Baumgarten 2012). One strategy used by Chabad in public events is the use of Arabic and Mizrahi music remixed and rendered with Jewish content. Thus, the hit “Hashem Melech” (God is King) by Gad Elbaz and Beni Elbaz draws on Algerian Cheb Khaled’s blockbuster “C’est la Vie”.<sup>14</sup> More recently, Gad Elbaz joined forces with African American Hasidic rapper Nissim Black, taking to the streets of New York City to perform a new rendition of “Hashem Melech”. Likewise, Israel saw the ongoing hybridization of what was traditionally deemed Mizrahi or Ashkenazic religiosity with movements such as Breslov Hasidism and Shas, crossing Litvak and Hasidic practices for Mizrahi practitioners (Bilu and Mark 2012).

### 7.3. *Institutionalization*

Complicating their differences in temporal orientations and subject positions, initiatives of revival display variable scales of institutionalization, ranging from loose and improvised ad hoc local initiatives to highly structured state-sponsored or philanthropic

projects on a regional or global scale. Grassroots bottom-up initiatives run by urban “ethnic entrepreneurs” (Gitelman et al. 2003) and “professional Jews” often reject defunct institutional structures and strive for diversity, relevance, and inclusiveness. The offline and online transnational exchanges of ideas and organizational models between activists from all walks of Jewish life are crucial for establishing a local Jewish scene and an active sense of Jewishness. For instance, Budapest’s “non-official Jewish urban space”, described above, and the Masorti Jewish community center offer young urbanites a European sense of Jewishness—diasporic by choice, cosmopolitan, yet endowed with a local grassroots agenda. Sensitive to the trends imported from Berlin, London, or New York, these loosely knit communities are built on the concept of cool and happens to be Jewish. Such initiatives blend together a mission to “re-interpret Jewish cultural heritage” with liberal values, such as multiculturalism, gender equality, and environmentalism.<sup>15</sup> These modes of action, like much of the popular culture in late modernity, mobilize social media as part of what Campbell (2015) has termed digital Judaism. For Nathan Abrams and colleagues, “Social networking sites, such as Facebook, offer the ideal opportunity in twenty-first century Jewish life to explore and experiment with religious self-definition, meaning, congregation and even being itself, insofar as in Facebook one’s being can be literally reinvented in way without ‘stifling’ religiosity by forcing it to conform” (Abrams et al. 2013, p. 143).

#### 7.4. Spatiality

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, historian Diana Pinto put forth the term *Jewish space* to describe social and cultural sites of Jewish life in reviving post-1989 Europe: “There is now a new cultural and social phenomenon: the creation of a ‘Jewish space’ inside each European nation with a significant history of Jewish life. The first is the gradual integration of the Holocaust into each country’s understanding of its national history and into twentieth-century history in general. And the second is the revival of ‘positive Judaism’” (Pinto 1996, p. 6). Almost a decade later, Gruber (2002) showed how non-Jews “fill” Europe’s so-called Jewish space. She coined the term *virtually Jewish* to describe how non-Jews adopt, enact, and transform elements of Jewish culture, and how they use Jewish culture at times to create, fashion, or trace their own identities. Other scholars have extended Pinto and Gruber’s conceptualizations to describe Jewish space as a spatial environment in which “things Jewish happen” and “Jewish activities are performed” (Brauch et al. 2008; Gantner and Oppenheim 2014).

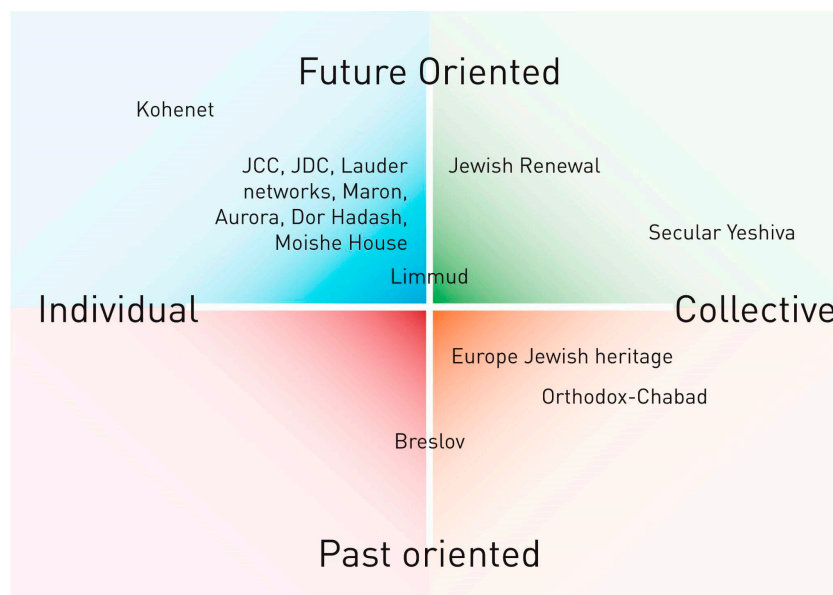
Since the 1990s, Jewish spaces have multiplied exponentially, both in form and content, and are now if anything global. By crossing national boundaries far beyond “the three poles of Judaism” (Pinto 1996), Jewish spaces bridge the conventional geographies in the Old and New World and reconfigure notions of homeland and diaspora. Notably, Chabad houses emerged in India, China, and South America, catering to mostly Israeli tourists and local Jews who want to rediscover their roots (Maoz and Bekerman 2010). At the same time, local projects of revival operate on a microscale in many cities, reflecting different cultural, physical, communal, and religious concerns.

Thus, in postsocialist Europe, Monterescu and Zorandy identify (2021) what they call the Jewish triangle—Budapest, Berlin, and Krakow—which displays three different modalities of revival: endogenous, exogenous and virtual. Berlin was first, witnessing some of the fastest growth of Jewish demographics in Europe (from 10,000 in the 1970s to 30,000 today); next was Budapest, which remains the largest residential center of Jews in continental Europe (circa 100,000)<sup>16</sup>; and finally Krakow emerged, a city with no substantial Jewish community to speak of but that hosts one of the largest festivals of Jewish culture in the world (which some have described as a Jewish Woodstock). The community in Berlin after reunification consists mainly of ex-Soviet immigrants and, more recently, young Israeli migrants; Budapest draws on native Jewish Hungarians who recast their identity, and Krakow hosts a bustling scene of heritage tourism. These cities form a field of exchange and connectivity, as demonstrated by projects such as BBLU Salon (Budapestberlinsalon), which brought together Jewish activists in Budapest and Berlin to “display the multicoloured and

diverse nature of the city". As one artist in the German fusion band Jewdyssee poignantly remarked, "Jew is the feeling of metropolitan people who come from everywhere".

The redefinition of Jewish spaces deepens the intersection of Jewish identity with the body and the self. This emerging front of Jewish performativity explores the creative cutting edge of Jewish renewal, from New Age Jewish spirituality through alternative modes of learning to feminist forms of Jewish shamanism. In Tel Aviv, students in BINA secular yeshiva interpret, adapt, and negotiate the canonical Jewish texts, working out varied and sometimes contradictory values: pluralism, Zionism, secularization, and humanism (Guzmen-Carmeli 2022). Other renditions of Jewish renewal bring the body into conversation with contemporary trends—feminism, shamanism, esotericism, or the therapeutic discourse. Cara Rock-Singer's ethnography of the Kohenet Hebrew Priestess Institute explores a radical form of individualized Jewish renewal which combines elements of earth-based spirituality, neo-Hasidism, and feminist neopaganism. Kohenet's spiritual leadership training program crafts an authentic tradition that integrates traditional practice with new forms of textuality, prayer, and ritual serves as a window into the gendered politics of Jewish authenticity and, by extension, to the gendered limits and possibilities of Jewish revivals (Rock-Singer 2020). Rejecting both the state-sponsored Jewish establishment and institutionalized Jewish organizations, these movements point to the ways in which the turn to the past in service of the present engenders new Jewish authenticities that align with consumer capitalism and postmodern ideologies. The global currency of concepts, such as hybridity, ritual, and introspection, highlights the fruitful exchange between "secular" public culture and renewed Jewish identities.

The following figure visualizes heuristically some of the modes of Jewish revivals across a temporal and a social axis (Figure 1). A fuller understanding of the positionality of Jewish revival actors would also include additional dimensions, such as spatial and degrees of institutionalization.



**Figure 1.** The field of Jewish revival across temporal and social axes.

## 8. Conclusions: Revival as a Cultural Bricolage

This article explores the global transformations of contemporary Jewishness, which give renewed meaning to identity, tradition, and politics in our post-secular world in two different sociopolitical contexts. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research, we interrogate the relations between "diaspora" and "homeland" by analyzing two case studies: the Jewish revival movement in Budapest, Hungary, and the Jewish renewal initiatives in Israel. While the first instantiates a diasporic movement anchored in a post-denominational

and post-secular attempt to reclaim Jewish tradition for a new generation of Jew-llennials (Millennial Jews), the second group operates within the “homeland” against the Orthodox hegemony of the institutional Rabbinate. By proposing new cultural repertoires, these movements highlight the dialectic exchange between the so-called center and periphery.

Our case studies examine two scenes of revival in Europe and Israel. The first case looks at the emergence of a particular kind of Jewish civil society in Budapest since 1989. Home to the largest surviving Jewish community in continental Europe after World War II, Budapest presents a case of endogenous revival, which draws on native Hungarians who recast their Jewish identity. Against a history of strategic invisibility of the Jews in Hungary, we investigate patterns of community formation and identity discourses, which produce unique cultural institutions, religious claims, and grassroots activities that are vastly different from traditional structures and assimilative ones alike. In calls to reinvent tradition, initiatives, such as Moische House, distance themselves from Orthodox, Neolog, or Reform institutions and promote a cultural project of lifestyle Judaism.

The second case study followed the front of Jewish performativity and New Age spirituality in Israel. Jewish New Age communities were highly active in Israel at the turn of the millennium. Undergirded by their critique of mainstream Zionist and Orthodox appropriation of the notion of place. The ethnography decenters the Israeli Orthodoxy as “the homeland” and positions the diaspora at the core of a network of cultural creativity and renewal, while remaining in constant dialog with Israel and other diasporic communities. These communities attempted to renew Jewish life through ritual creativity and religious eclecticism and by fusing various traditional elements with New Age practices. This hybrid discourse fuses the personal and highly subjective search for the authentic self with the quest for an authentic form of Jewish spirituality. In both case studies, diaspora–homeland relations take pride of place in terms of funding, networking, institutional practices, and sources of inspiration.

Whereas scholars argue for “a weakening of collective, communal claims on individual Jews and a concomitant trend toward individualism and making choices about which aspects of Jewish tradition to preserve in one’s own life” (Gitelman et al. 2003, p. 3; Cohen and Eisen 2000), we show how new associative *bunde* and elective “tribes” emerge to answer the changing needs of Jews in Israel and the European diaspora. Framed as a form of collective bricolage (understood as the pragmatic re-articulation of available resources to solve new problems)<sup>17</sup>, we show that Jewish cultural improvisation is nevertheless bound by a discursive tradition and its rules of interpretation, albeit loosely defined. Anthropologists have long drawn on the concept of bricolage to describe coping strategies of dealing with identitarian and cultural crises. Lévi-Strauss (1966, p. 24) defines bricolage as a mode of thinking that “expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited”. In our case, Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Judaism, operates as an adaptive bricolage responding to exigent circumstances. Dialectically positioned between structural constraints and the individuality, subjectivity, and contingencies of local projects, Jewish revival is a multidimensional concept that transcends the collectivist/individualistic divisions.

Moreover, as a patently urban phenomenon, the specific configuration of Jewish claim-making should be scrutinized as part of the neoliberal landscape of urban restructuring whereby “Jewish quarters” are turning into spaces of consumption, tourist attractions, and hot spots for gentrification.

Projects of place-making from Europe to Asia rescale the transnational field of Jewish revival from the individual experience to communal initiatives, national projects, and global scales of action. The strategies and practices by which different social movements, NGOs, informal groups, and individuals take the liberty to create and often improvise new communal frameworks, reveal the predicament of religious minorities and fears of assimilation alongside the intense desire to transform Judaism and enhance its spiritual relevance for contemporary Jews.

The anthropology of Jewish revival documents emerging networks as paradoxical states of becoming. Our multi-sited ethnography allows us to disentangle religious ideologies and binary divisions by grounding practices and discourses in historically situated contexts between shifting homelands and diasporas. We reveal how the inner grammar of our cases is predicated on the transnational negotiations and exchange of ideas, funds, and human resources across the multiple centers of contemporary Judaism. We thus expose the Jewish revival field as a global multifocal network of networks that disrupts the homeland–diaspora analytic divide.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Sukkot is a major Jewish festival held in autumn to commemorate the sheltering of the Israelites in the wilderness after they were freed from slavery in Egypt. Fieldwork in Budapest was part of a larger research conducted with Sara Zorandy.
- <sup>2</sup> Moishe House is a US-based global leader in peer-led Jewish, young, adult engagement and residential communities. See <https://www.moishehouse.org/about-us/our-story/> (accessed on 7 October 2024).
- <sup>3</sup> The world's core Jewish population was estimated at 14,707,400 in 2019. In Europe, out of a population of 827 million, Jews numbered 1,340,000 or 0.16% of the total population (DellaPergola 2020). Two countries, the United States (39% of the world total) and Israel (45%), including the West Bank (2%), account for 84% of those recognized as Jews or of sufficient Jewish ancestry to be eligible for citizenship in Israel under its Law of Return. Nine percent lived in Europe (predominantly in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Hungary), 5% in other North American and Latin American countries (Canada, Argentina, and Brazil), and 2% in the former USSR and other continents (DellaPergola 2020). While Jewish revival movements target only a small fraction of this demography, it remains a highly visible, evocative, and dynamic social phenomenon.
- <sup>4</sup> The questions of homeland/diaspora, transnationalism, center/periphery, multicentered, and competing configurations for Jews in the world have been discussed in a large number of recent works, notably by Waligórska (2020), McDonald (2021), Arkin (2013), Dekel et al. (2020), and Korbel (2024).
- <sup>5</sup> See [https://www.chabadsa.com/templates/articlecco\\_cdo/aid/4013109/jewish/What-Is.htm](https://www.chabadsa.com/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/4013109/jewish/What-Is.htm) (accessed on 25 February 2024).
- <sup>6</sup> See Rock-Singer (2020) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HRovbSp4BM> (accessed on 2 July 2024).
- <sup>7</sup> For the sake of simplicity, we use the term Jewish revival as an umbrella concept for a range of projects, including those defined as a Jewish renewal or renaissance by their actors.
- <sup>8</sup> In *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, editors Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini explain, “While there are no simple equations between Jewish and queer identities, Jewishness and queerness are bound up with one another in particularly resonant ways. This crossover also extends to the modern discourses of antisemitism and homophobia, with stereotypes of the Jew frequently underwriting pop cultural and scientific notions of the homosexual. And vice versa” (Boyarin et al. 2003, p. 1).
- <sup>9</sup> A recent politicized discourse that self-identifies as the BIJOCSM Network (Black Indigenous Jews of Color, Sephardim, Mizrahim) engages the question of Palestine through the lens of race and ethnicity. See <https://act.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/a/2021-05-palestinian-liberation-black-lens> (accessed on 7 October 2024).
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.moishehouse.org/about-us/our-story/> (accessed on 17 March 2024).
- <sup>11</sup> While the reasons and perceptions for the dissolution of the communities vary, it is clear that the charismatic and contentious leadership of the two leaders played a significant role in these processes.
- <sup>12</sup> Israeli Judaism is a novel religious form that has emerged in Israel over the past two decades. Stemming from the secular Jewish Renewal movement, Israeli Judaism is an umbrella term for a wide variety of organizations active in the fields of Jewish Israeli pluralistic education, culture, and community (see Azulay and Tabory 2008, and <https://avichai.org.il/he/node/135>, accessed on 7 October 2024).
- <sup>13</sup> Another notable form of Jewish spirituality is the fusion of Judaism with Buddhist thought and practice, especially in the form of Jewish mindfulness (Niculescu 2015; Sigalow 2019).

- <sup>14</sup> See the two versions at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dWeeUIZFgA&index=1&list=RDRvK19xgAxSU> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Y\\_5brDUSM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Y_5brDUSM) (accessed on 7 October 2024).
- <sup>15</sup> See <https://marom.hu/> (accessed on 7 October 2024). The 2015 “refugee crisis” in Europe forged new connections between Jewish activists and migrant support associations (Kallius et al. 2016).
- <sup>16</sup> The number 100,000 Jews refers to the “Enlarged Jewish population of Hungary” provided by the JPR—Institute for Jewish Policy Research. According to their definition, this figure includes the sum of (a) the “core” Jewish population of a certain country; (b) all people with Jewish parents who do not self-identify as Jews today; and (c) all their non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.). We chose the higher number rather than the core number because many Hungarian Jews have mixed families but are still somewhat affiliated with a Jewish community and cannot be excluded from our analysis of Jewish revival. See <https://www.jpr.org.uk/countries/how-many-jews-in-hungary> (accessed on 5 October 2024).
- <sup>17</sup> Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss defines *bricolage* as the process of creating something, not as a matter of a calculated choice and use of whatever materials are technically best adapted to a clearly predetermined purpose, but as a “dialogue with the materials and means of execution” (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 29). In such a dialog, the materials, which are at hand, might “suggest” adaptive courses of action, and the initial aim may be modified. Consequently, such acts of creation are not purely instrumental: “the bricoleur ‘speaks’ not only with things, but also through the medium of things” (21). Liu (2024, p. 1) aptly characterizes bricolage as “a generative principle of regulated improvisation responding to restrictive or limited conditions”.

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