

## S.M. DUBNOV'S IDEOLOGICAL CHALLENGE IN EMIGRATION: AUTONOMISM AND ZIONISM, EUROPE AND PALESTINE

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**Abstract:** In this paper author explores Semyon Dubnov's position on Zionism and Diaspora Autonomism in the years after he left Soviet Russia in 1921. In particular Horowitz asserts that Dubnov must have been aware of the fact that his ideas were receiving their broadest application not in Eastern Europe, as he hoped, but in Palestine. The paper treats Dubnov's reaction to this ideological challenge.

The purpose of this essay is to examine Semyon Dubnov's attitude toward Jewish nationalism in the period when he was in emigration after leaving Soviet Russia in 1921.<sup>1</sup> My conclusion is that Dubnov was surprised to find that his ideas were not applied in Eastern Europe or the United States—where he expected—but in Palestine, the Jewish outpost under British mandate still only sparsely populated by Jews. The admiration for Dubnov's conceptions of Jewish autonomy in the Yishuv was a challenge: how would he respond? Did he modify his negative attitude to Zionism? The answer is yes and no. Yes, in the sense that he expressed sympathy with the aims of the growing Yishuv; but, no, he did not extol the idea of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael that would dominate the diaspora.

To begin, I will summarize Dubnov's ideas on Jewish nationalism, then turn to the situation in Eastern Europe in the 1920s and his attitude toward the Yishuv in pre-state Palestine. At the end I will speculate about why Dubnov remained in Europe, although he was invited to come to the US before the outbreak of World War II. This research illuminates unanswered questions about Dubnov's self-presentation and his ideological position in the last years of his life.

The extent of Dubnov's fame precludes the need for a long introduction. He was born in Mistislav, today's Belarus, then the Russian Empire, in 1860. More than just a historian, he was also a political theorist, literary critic, and politician. His accomplishments are many; most notably he wrote *Letters on Old and New Judaism (Pis'ma o starom i novom evreistve)* (1907), published the Pinkasim of the Lithuanian Jewish community (1928), and completed his magnum opus, *World History of the Jewish People (Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes)*, in Berlin in 1929. He also penned a memoir, *Book of Life*,

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<sup>1</sup> See Rabinovitch 2007; Kel'ner 2008; Veidlinger 2010: 71-86; Gechtman 2011: 98-124.

*Reminiscences and Memoirs: Materials for a History of My Time*, vols 1-2 (1934-1935), vol. 3 (1957), one of the most important testaments about Jewish politics in tsarist Russia.<sup>2</sup> He died in Riga, killed by a Nazi collaborator in 1941.<sup>3</sup>

Dubnov differs from other thinkers who have sought a metaphysical purpose for Jews in diaspora in that he was agitated first and foremost by assimilation.<sup>4</sup> He declared, “Assimilation is not so much a doctrine as a fact of life, unavoidable under the present circumstances against which nationalism struggles. *It is the direct practical result of the rejection of the national idea.* If you are not a Jewish nationalist, you inevitably will become assimilated, if not in the first, then in the second generation. And that is why we have a full moral right to call those who reject Jewry’s national evolution facilitators of assimilation, whether they are conscious of it or not.”<sup>5</sup> He was convinced that, unless one battled against it, assimilation would inevitably succeed in destroying the Jews as a distinct people. Thus, Jews needed autonomous institutions: schools, theaters, newspapers, lectures, and civil courts, as well as political institutions, such as a Jewish parliament to manage the people’s internal life. Dubnov imagined that these institutions would contribute to the development of an autonomous Jewish sphere and protect it against the tide of assimilation.

Because above all else he strove for the Jewish nation, he had to define what he meant by “nation”. In his *Letters on Old and New Judaism* (1897-1904), he claimed that there were three conditions of nationhood corresponding to levels of moral progress. The first stage consisted of primitive social formations such as tribes that joined for practical purposes like defense or hunting. The second and higher stage of national identity was based on material factors, such as geography, language, and a specific way of life, while the last category was spiritually the highest, because it was founded on features independent of material life, such as shared culture, historical memories, and emotional attachment across many lands and epochs. According to Dubnov, the Jews were the only people who deserved the appellation “spiritual nation.” He writes in *Letters on Old and New Judaism*:

But there is still another difficult test of national maturity: when a nation loses not only its political independence, but also its own territory, when, because of history, it is divorced from its physical land, dispersed among foreign countries and gradually loses even its single language. If in the course of many centuries the nation nonetheless exists and creates in its own way, revealing a stubborn struggle for further autonomous development, despite a break occurring in the external national chain, then such a people has reached the highest degree of cultural-historical individuality, and even if it encounters further strain of its national will, it

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<sup>2</sup> S. Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni, vospominaniia i razmyshleniia: materialy dlia istorii moego vremeni*, vols 1-2, Vilna, 1934-1935; vol. 3, New York, 1957. There are several republications in Russian. Benjamin Nathans is preparing a translation of the memoir, which will soon be out from Wisconsin University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Scholars such as the great Jonathan Frankel, Mark Yudel and Viktor Kel’ner follow Dubnov’s own conception as he described it in *The Book of Life* according to which his career can be divided into three parts, thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. Thesis stands for the religious Jew divorced from secular culture, antithesis is the opposite (secular knowledge without Jewish learning), while synthesis is the unity of the two, secular and Jewish knowledge. Jonathan Frankel is right when he notes that Dubnov went through two major intellectual transformations. For a discussion, see Frankel 2009: 240-241.

<sup>4</sup> Allan Arkush (2009: 326-350) discusses two recent pro-diaspora theories that are based on multiculturalism and acculturation.

<sup>5</sup> Dubnov 1901b: 74-75.

can be considered invincible. History gives many examples of the disappearance of nations because of the loss of territory and dispersion among other peoples, but it knows of only one example of the preservation of a landless and dispersed nation. This unique example in history is the Jewish people.<sup>6</sup>

The Jews of Eastern Europe are a living ideal for Dubnov. They are the nation that has lost its territory, its language, but still struggles for autonomous development.

However, Dubnov thought the best chances for the spiritual nation's preservation occurred in a liberal democracy and not a politically repressive state like the Tsarist Empire.<sup>7</sup> Liberal democracies offered the ideal conditions for a multi ethnic states, because they provided at once full civic rights for the individual and collective rights for minority nations. Dubnov explains, "A Jewish nationalist says, 'As a citizen of the country, I participate in its political and civic life in accordance with the rights given to me. But as a member of the Jewish spiritual nation, beyond those rights I have my own internal national interests, and in this sphere consider myself autonomous to the degree that autonomy is permitted for political dependent nationalities in the state and in the realm of interests.'"<sup>8</sup>

Although encouraged by the experience of national parties in Austria-Hungary, he was also inspired by the Council of the Four Lands, the self-regulating institution of political administration among the Jews of seventeenth-century Poland. In his *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, Dubnov describes the virtues of the Council. "This firmly-knit organization of communal self-government could not but foster among the Jews of Poland a spirit of discipline and obedience to the law. It had an educational effect on the Jewish populace, who were left by the government to themselves and had no share in the common life of the country. It provided the stateless nation with a substitute for national and political self-expression, keeping public spirit and civic virtue alive in it, and upholding and unfolding its genuine culture."<sup>9</sup> In the early-modern period the autonomous Jewish community preserved the cohesion of diaspora Jewry and lent it the characteristic of a modern nation.

In order to make the ideas of Jewish autonomy relevant for modern times, Dubnov had to make two modifications: he needed to democratize and modernize it. Democratizing the Jewish community meant the introduction of the ballot box as the way of selecting leaders.<sup>10</sup> Dubnov insisted on one vote per person regardless of a voter's economic status; he also demanded suffrage for women. Modernization involved a new position on who was a Jew. Arguing that anyone who declared himself a Jew was one, Dubnov took a position that sidelined religion. Membership was not entirely voluntary since all Jews were included in the community until they renounced their Jewish affiliation. In Dubnov's scheme the government would provide funding from taxes collected from all citizens and allocate according to the percentage of each national group.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Dubnov 1907a: 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Ezra Mendelsohn (1993: 38) noticed that Jews expressed group identity most boldly under governments that discriminated against Jews.

<sup>8</sup> Dubnov 1907a: 13.

<sup>9</sup> Dubnov 1916, 1: 113.

<sup>10</sup> Dubnov 1907b: 12.

<sup>11</sup> Dubnov 1907b: 12.

During the 1905 Revolution and in post-1905 Russia, Dubnov attempted to win political power in order to implement his ideas.<sup>12</sup> He played an integral role in the establishment of the so-called Achievers (Dostizhniki, i.e. Soiuz dlia dostizheniia polnopraviia sredi evreev v Rossii), an umbrella political grouping that consisted of Jewish politicians from different parties who united to fight for Jewish equality. In 1906, he helped establish the Folkspartay, an independent political party that ran candidates in elections to the State Duma. The Folkspartay's program emphasized Jewish autonomy, embodying many of Dubnov's central ideas.<sup>13</sup>

In the years before World War I, Dubnov refined the concept of autonomy, harnessing it to immigration (which was a major feature of the times—two million Jews left Eastern Europe from 1881-1924). Instead of characterizing Jewish communities solely by their autonomous institutions, now Dubnov highlighted an evolutionary trajectory. During the course of history, diaspora Jews had created “national hegemonies” or institutions of communal autonomy that were mobile. Jews set up communities in Babylonia, Rome, in the Germanic lands, the Iberian Peninsula, Ottoman Turkey, Poland, Russia, and the United States. From the earliest days to the present, Jews built homes, cemeteries, and synagogues. More importantly, they created political institutions of self-government—the autonomous community—a kind of state within a state. In early times it was the Sanhendrin, later the Exilarch and the Gaonim, community representatives in Spain, the local Kehillas and the Council of the Four Lands in Poland and Lithuania. Dubnov writes, “National hegemony passes from center to center, from Spain to France and Germany, from there to Poland and Russia. In and around each center Jewish nationality fights for its individual character.”<sup>14</sup>

Although it was impossible for Dubnov to realize his ideas in Tsarist Russia, he hoped that the Provisional Government in February 1917 would enact legislation to give minority nations collective rights in addition to individual civic rights. Unfortunately, the Bolsheviks took power shortly thereafter and scuttled the plans. However, the newly independent Poland and Baltic states seemed to offer possibilities for the realization of Jewish autonomy.

Although the Soviet government gave Dubnov an exit visa in response to a request of the Lithuanian government, Dubnov moved to Berlin rather than Vilnius (Vilna).<sup>15</sup> Berlin offered good libraries to complete his magnum opus, *World History of the Jewish People*, and his translator, Aron Shteinberg, with whom Dubnov attempted to bring out new German editions of his works, lived there.<sup>16</sup> In the late-1920s, he was invited to take up a position as a professor of Jewish history in Kaunas in Lithuania, but ultimately the invitation was rescinded due to opposition among the faculty.<sup>17</sup>

Although scholars have debated about why Dubnov turned down offers to come to Lithuania to try to advance ideas of Jewish autonomy, it is clear that he was not confident about the experiments taking place in Eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup> The signatory nations at the

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<sup>12</sup> Rabinovitch 2007: 66.

<sup>13</sup> Rabinovitch 2007: 98-100.

<sup>14</sup> Dubnov 1970: 330.

<sup>15</sup> Rabinovich 2005: 273-274.

<sup>16</sup> Rabinovich 2005: 273-274.

<sup>17</sup> Rabinovich 2005: 274.

<sup>18</sup> Kuznitz 2000: 68-70.

Paris Peace Conference, including Poland and Romania, impressed Dubnov with their promise to respect the rights of the national minorities and especially Jews for collective nation life. However, over time it became clear that promises were not kept. While Lithuanian and Polish Jews had internal Jewish political organizations, political parties, schools, and newspapers, cultural associations, and libraries, the governments only provided rare and sporadic support. In fact, the renaissance of Jewish cultural autonomy in Eastern Europe was concentrated in the first years after World War I (1918-1921).

By the mid-1920s, the institutions of an independent Jewish community lost much of their power as brokers before the central government. Social and state antisemitism grew during the period. At the same time Jews were objects of discrimination and forced from good positions in the economy and kept from political power.<sup>19</sup> Their ability to stave off destruction was compromised even before the German army arrived in 1939.<sup>20</sup>

The two essential parts of Dubnov's conception, liberalism and state cooperation, were missing from Jewish autonomy in Eastern Europe. In North America, secular Jewish autonomous institutions, in particular the schools of Tsibo and Tarbut lasted at most two generations before petering out. Similarly, experiments in Western Europe, England, and South Africa did not succeed for lack of interest.

In this context Dubnov's rejection of the many offers to devote himself to build autonomous institutions makes sense.<sup>21</sup> He undoubtedly weighed the concrete benefits of collective activity against his own desires to finish his research projects.<sup>22</sup> Just as in the past, once again he left collective activity to concentrate on his own projects.<sup>23</sup>

In the early 1930s, Dubnov left Berlin with the majority of other Russian immigrants, fleeing high inflation, increased street violence and anti-foreigner feeling as well as anti-semitism. He moved to Riga, Latvia, where he hoped to enjoy his final years in peace in order to finish his research projects. Nonetheless, he did political ideal.

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Dubnov's theories gained traction precisely where Dubnov least of all expected it, in pre-state Palestine in the 1920s. There were political institutions—the Jewish Agency, World Jewish Congress, the Histadrut—and political parties (Achdut Ha'avoda, Revisionists, Agudat Israel), Jewish cultural associations— theater, music, art, libraries—and Jews had civil rights under (British) law and collective rights as a Jewish community. Although only a small community in the early 1920s, it was growing quickly, becoming a factor in modern Jewish life as a cultural center and potential haven for Jewish immigrants worldwide especially after the appearance of stringent limitations on immigration to the United States in 1924.<sup>24</sup>

Often scholars presume that Dubnov was indifferent to Jewish cultural activities in Palestine because he had expressed doubts about Zionism.<sup>25</sup> However, Professor Dimi-

<sup>19</sup> Mendelsohn 1989: 16.

<sup>20</sup> Piotr Wróbel, talk at the University of Jena, May 7, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Rabinovich 2005: 282.

<sup>22</sup> Kuznitz 2000: 69.

<sup>23</sup> Viktor Kel'ner (2008: 497) discusses this flight from politics in his biography.

<sup>24</sup> Sacher 1996.

<sup>25</sup> Dubnov expressed his doubts about the prospects in Palestine in many places, but also in his Letters on *Old and New Judaism* in the chapter entitled, "Autonomism kak osnova natsional'noi programmy" (1901).

try Shumsky makes convincing arguments that it is anachronistic to consider Dubnov hostile to Zionism came from an earlier time and in the 1920s.<sup>26</sup> According to Shumsky, one should realize that Dubnov's comments about Zionism were connected primarily with Ahad-Ha'am and his ideas of cultural Zionism.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, the Yishuv at the beginning of the twentieth century consisted of small agricultural settlements that had little in common with the community that developed later. Although he hadn't recinded his view expressed in his polemic with Ahad-Ha'am that Palestine even in the most optimistic estimate could hold only a small portion of the Jewish people, Dubnov was enthusiastic about practical immigration to Palestine. In addition, he conceded Ahad-Ha'am's point that a Jewish Palestine would inspire diaspora Jews thanks to the renewal of Hebraic culture.<sup>28</sup> But he insisted that the real solution to the "Jewish problem" was elsewhere because the opportunities for accommodating Jewish immigrants in Palestine were small in comparison with the size and strength of the United States or Western Europe.

Dubnov, however, was not slow to realize that many of his ideas found application in Palestine. In a chapter in his *World History* (1925-1929) he starts by describing new facts on the ground: "The strengthening of Jewish positions in Palestine—this is how the catchword sounds. Once under the unfavorable policies of the Turkish regime, now the program of Zionism in its newest phase consists of the possible gradual enlargement of the Jewish population in the cities and countryside, the purchase of land, attraction of capital for the development of industry, and the expansion of the net of financial, social and cultural institutions."<sup>29</sup>

Turning to the national meaning of these changes, he writes, "At the same time in the [Jewish agricultural] colonies the Arab day-laborer is being replaced by Jewish workers in increasing numbers which is lending the settlements a stark national character."<sup>30</sup> And he continues, seemingly with pride, to announce the establishment of schools with instruction in Hebrew, such as the so-called Herzl Gymnasium in Tel Aviv, and the Technion in Haifa.<sup>31</sup> It is worth recalling that Dubnov had called for schools in the national language, Hebrew, and later Yiddish, but had been rebuffed earlier by fellow Jews, members of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment in Odessa in 1902.<sup>32</sup>

If these successes weren't enough, Dubnov could hardly have failed to notice that the thinking of Zionist immigrants in Palestine closely resembled his own. Comparing Yiddish and Hebrew, the Yishuv and the diaspora, he writes, "In the same way that 'Yiddishism' is the banner of the democratic class in the diaspora, the young [Jewish] Palestinians are inspired by 'Hebraism.' In both cases the same motivation is decisive; the knowledge that the smaller the chances for the Jewish nation to gain a solid territorial basis, the more emphasis has to be placed on strengthening Jewish culture, and for one, it is care of the old national language, while for the other it is the cultivation of the colloquial language of the folk masses that serves as the primary means for this."<sup>33</sup> Dubnov realized that

<sup>26</sup> Shumsky 2012: 380-382.

<sup>27</sup> Ahad-Ha'am, "avar ve atid" (1891), in: Ahad-Ha'am 1954; see also Goldstein 2010: 115-126.

<sup>28</sup> Goldstein 2010: 118-119.

<sup>29</sup> Dubnov 1925/29, 10: 483.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Dubnov 1925/29, 10: 487.

<sup>32</sup> Horowitz 2009: 174-176.

<sup>33</sup> Dubnov 1925/29, 10: 486-487.

the Jews of Palestine had made common goal: to strengthen Jewish culture and identity through communal institutions, although he was likely wrong that the members of the Yishuv had given up their dream of attaining a “solid territorial basis.”

Concretely, among cultural activities that he applauded, Dubnov aggressively pursued the translation of his works into Hebrew.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps he understood that if he wanted to play a role—even if only to defend the diaspora—he would have to write for a Palestine audience in *Loshn-kodesh*. In this context it is interesting that he carried through a decision to write his three-volume updated monograph on Hasidism in Hebrew (finishing in 1929) rather than leaving it to translators.<sup>35</sup> In the introduction to the book he explains his motivations. Because of its importance, I am quoting this passage at length:

Until recent times I wrote all my books and most of my studies exclusively in Russian, the language by means of which the generation to which I belonged played an honorable role in the largest Eastern Jewish center since modern times. (I only wrote Hebrew as well as Yiddish in isolated instances). But the reason why I refrained from using our old national language was not that I did not value it highly enough (after all it was my written language before I became a writer). Rather, it was because I followed the ordinary literary career of the time when even the Hebrew national poet, Jehuda Leib Gordon, had abandoned it with the doubtful cry, ‘For whom do I Toil?’ My perspective was directed far away, and for my contemporaries inspired by progress, this language, although intelligible, could not serve to express the vast part of the newly minted concepts and nuances of thought. The Hebrew writer of the time, in so far as he was incapable of not distorting content because of form, was weighed down by a double obligation to create content and form anew, the new science itself as well as its means of expression. In creating my historical edifice, I had to use all my strength to shape the content, it would have been impossible at the same time to form the language anew.

He continues, focusing directly on *History of Hasidism*...

Now that I stand before the task that in its first contained version I had barely finished, I decided to write the whole book in Hebrew and for the following two reasons. First, because almost all of the material that I used comes from Hebrew sources, and it seemed therefore to make no sense to translate the original texts into another language, and second of all, because for a long time I felt the need to write at least one book in our national language in which I could show my debt to the first literary impressions of my childhood. To these two reasons I add a third one: shortly before his demise, I promised my friend, Ahad-Ha’am, who constantly reproached me for writing in a foreign language, that I would write the work on Hasidism in its new version in Hebrew from beginning to end. I hereby keep my promise.<sup>36</sup>

This statement contains a few simple confessional elements and a discussion of Hebrew in the late 1870s in Russia. Depicting the condition of Hebrew at the time of his youth, he unwittingly makes clear the distance Hebrew had traveled. Not only was he fully capable of writing a book in Hebrew from start to finish without having to invent the language anew in order to produce content, but an audience in Palestine eagerly awaited the book. By writing in Hebrew, Dubnov acknowledged the obvious: Judah Leib Gordon was not the last Hebrew writer, as Gordon had feared.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Verses 2010: 93.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Dubnov 1931, 1: 14-15.

<sup>37</sup> See Stanislawski 1988: 4.

But Dubnov is silent on a serious point. Hebrew was the language of the Bible and religion. In the 1870s, people like him ran from it, from the religious authorities and religious life. He was eager to blend into Russian culture, and it was only Russian society's rejection that awakened him to the need to remain within the Jewish world. In other words, his embrace of secularism and Jewish culture was typical of many Jews, including many who became Zionists. In fact, the project of studying the history of Hasidism from a secular perspective but through the Hebrew language would have been unimaginable in 1929 in Germany, were it not for the Zionists who had resurrected Hebrew as a living language.

Despite his support for Hebrew, Dubnov continued to reproach Zionist ideology.<sup>38</sup> He was quick with *Schadenfreude* to draw conclusions regarding the feasibility of the Yishuv in the shadow of Arab violence in 1929: "The conflict sharpens more and more, and its consequences are hard to foresee. In the midst of the triumph of the Zionist idea, such a dark shadow emerges, calling to mind that even at the threshold of its historical homeland, wandering Israel's tragedy has not yet come to an end, and that even an inner 'Galut,' an 'Arab Galut,' is present."<sup>39</sup> In other words, because the return to Zion has not ended pogroms even in Palestine, the Yishuv has no advantage. In fact, one should view Zion as merely one of several potential emigration destinations.

On Zionism Dubnov took the position of a fellow traveler.<sup>40</sup> In an article written in 1924, he took issue with Zionist "extremists," such as Vladimir Jabotinsky, who were uncompromising on the idea of a sovereign state. In contrast, Dubnov suggested that Zionism as a political movement should serve as a broad tent open to individuals of diverse commitment and political attitudes. He supported Chaim Weizmann's ideas about enlisting non-Zionists, especially American plutocrats, who were eager and capable of contributing financially to the improvement of Jewish life in Palestine.<sup>41</sup> But he did not fail to note (in the early 1920s) that emigration to Palestine had stalled and, despite all the efforts, the Jewish population was still only one sixth as large as the Arabs. Dubnov writes, "Zion is more important than Zionism, and its true 'home'—although it is not large—is to make room for only a small part of the people, which is more important than all the utopian castles of 'Altneuland.' All those who want to build should enter the 'Jewish Agency' no matter how they portray it, a large home or a modest house."<sup>42</sup>

It is impossible to escape the feeling that Dubnov felt an ambivalence toward the Yishuv and wished that Zionism repudiate the plank that it "negates the diaspora." In the introduction to the Hebrew edition of his *Letters on Old and New Judaism* (1937), Dubnov states that, "In all the severity of my criticism of political Zionism, I was not in opposition to the positive and practical side, to those who came to build the land, but to the negative side, the negation of the Galut."<sup>43</sup> In tsarist times Dubnov had already articulated similar arguments and he did not change. In 1903, he maintained that "according to the nature of things it (the Zionist organization) will be pulled into a wider national-

<sup>38</sup> Dubnov-Erlich 1991: 245.

<sup>39</sup> Dubnov 1925/29, 10: 550, quoted in Rabinovitch 2005: 284.

<sup>40</sup> Viktor Kel'ner (2008: 381) also notices a sympathetic attitude toward Zionism on Dubnov's part.

<sup>41</sup> Reinharz 1985: 376.

<sup>42</sup> Dubnov 1925: 100.

<sup>43</sup> Dubnov 1927: 4; quoted in Rabinovich 2005: 284.



cultural organization that will have as its goal the internal renaissance of Jews in all the places that history has scattered them.”<sup>44</sup>

Near the end of his life Dubnov was offered sanctuary in the United States, invited by the Jewish National Workers Alliance in New York.<sup>45</sup> His daughter, Sophie Dubnov-Erlich encouraged him to come as she had recently arrived with her two sons.<sup>46</sup> Dubnov, already a widower, did not budge from his decision to stay in Riga. As we now know, a Latvian guard who was serving German orders to round up Jews who had been called upon to gather in June 1941 shot Dubnov. The soldier apparently did not know who the old man was.<sup>47</sup>

Nonetheless his decision to remain in Europe is pregnant with meaning. It echoes the fact that Dubnov lived by his ideas and was willing to die for them. His sacrifice would not have had the same resonance if he had died in the U.S. or Palestine. At the same time one cannot help seeing a deep historical justice in the fact that he died at the hands of antisemites. His whole life long he had battled with Amalek in the form of the tsar, the right-wing politicians, and pogromists. It rings true to the tragedy of the situation that Dubnov would have his life end as one individual of the diaspora among his people in his native land, the Eastern European Jewish diaspora.

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<sup>44</sup> Dubnov 1901a: 40.

<sup>45</sup> Dubnov-Erlich 1991: 239.

<sup>46</sup> Dubnov-Erlich 1991: 239.

<sup>47</sup> Greenbaum 1998; also Kayzer 1988: 51-54.

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