H-Diplo Review Essay 279

15 October 2020

Samuel Goldman. ***God's Country: Christian Zionism in America.*** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780812250039 (cloth, $34.95).

Walter L. Hixson. ***Israel's Armor: The Israel Lobby and the First Generation of the Palestine Conflict.*** New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. ISBN: 9781108705325 (paperback, $29.99).

Daniel G. Hummel. ***Covenant Brothers: Evangelicals, Jews, and U.S.-Israeli Relations.*** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780812251401 (cloth, $49.95).

https://hdiplo.org/to/E279
Editor: Diane Labrosse | Commissioning Editor: | Production Editor: George Fujii

Review by Lauren Turek, Trinity University

On December 6, 2017, President Donald Trump made the controversial announcement that the United States would officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.[1] The White House insisted that the decision did not imply a change in U.S. policy vis-à-vis Israel's borders or Israeli-Palestinian relations. Even so, the March 2019 merger of the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem—the long-standing de facto diplomatic mission to the Palestinians—with the relocated U.S. embassy suggested to some observers that the United States intended to downgrade its relations with the Palestinians and that it might be moving away from efforts to seek a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[2] Many Jewish Zionist organizations that had advocated for the move, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), celebrated the president's decision. So, too, did Christian Zionist organizations such as Christians United for Israel (CUFI), which greeted Vice President Mike Pence's rapturous speech about the U.S.-Israeli relationship and the relocation of the embassy with extended applause.[3]

For decades now, Christian and Jewish and Zionist lobbying organizations have marshalled tremendous political power through their steadfast activism, and have used that influence to push U.S. leaders to pursue policies that they believe would benefit Israel. Historians, who are eager to understand the origins, nature, and efficacy of this activism, have generated a considerable body of research on the pro-Israel lobby in the United States and its evangelical and politically-conservative

[1] A White House statement referenced the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, which recommended these changes, and the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine in its justification for the decision. Donald J. Trump, "Presidential Proclamation Recognizing Jerusalem as the Capital of the State of Israel and Relocating the United States Embassy to Israel to Jerusalem," (6 December 2017), https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-proclamation-recognizing-jerusalem-capital-state-israel-relocating-united-states-embassy-israel-jerusalem/; Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, Public Law 104-45 (8 November 1995),https://www.congress.gov/104/plaws/publ45/PLAW-104publ45.pdf.

[2] Noga Tarnopolsky, "U.S. Closes Consulate in Jerusalem that Served as the De Facto Embassy to Palestinians," *Los Angeles Times* (4 March 2019).

[3] Mike Pence, "Remarks by Vice President Pence at Christians United for Israel Annual D.C. Summit," (8 July 2019), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-christians-united-israel-annual-d-c-summit/.

Christian allies.[4] The enduring influence of these lobbies into the present moment—as evidenced by the Trump administration's policies towards Israel, explicitly Zionist (indeed, often Christian Zionist) rhetoric about the United States' special relationship with Israel, and strong embrace of Israel's current leadership—ensures that this scholarly attention will continue. Three recent books, Samuel Goldman's *God's Country: Christian Zionism in America*, Daniel Hummel's *Covenant Brothers: Evangelicals, Jews, and U.S.-Israeli Relations*, and Walter Hixson's *Israel's Armor: The Israel Lobby and the First Generation of the Palestine Conflict*, offer deeply-researched (and at times quite provocative) insights into this complex and often thorny topic in U.S. politics and foreign policy.

Goldman's *God's Country* is the most sweeping of the three in terms of its chronological scope and stated goals, as it sets out to provide an intellectual history of Christian Zionism from the seventeenth century to the present day. By chronicling the influence of Christian Zionism on politics and political thought across five centuries, Goldman hopes to show "that belief in a unique connection between [the Israeli and American people] and their states is deeply embedded in the American imagination," and to use that knowledge to foster "religious literacy" and therefore "civil discussion" in our society (10-11). Given this aim, the book draws on and synthesizes scholarship across a range of fields, including history, theology, and political theory. Although it seeks to provide a digestible overview of Christian Zionism for a broad audience, *God's Country* also aims to persuade scholars that Christian Zionism, as a phenomenon, is an example of political theology, or "a way of thinking about the order and purpose of politics oriented by God's will" (12). Goldman reminds readers that, despite its decline among scholars, political theology still thrives in current public thought and discourse, and he sees the contemporary political power that Christian Zionists hold as an example of the persistence of this mode of thinking in the United States—and thus its continued salience for academic study.

In the first part of *God's Country*, Goldman explores Christian Zionist thought through the writings and sermons of New England Puritans in the seventeenth century, members of the Revolutionary generation in the late eighteenth century, and followers of Mormon leader Joseph Smith in the early Republic. He is careful not to suggest that all Christians shared the same beliefs about the role of Israel in Biblical prophecy or about the meaning of the covenant between God and the Jewish people as it related to Christians in the Americas. Indeed, Goldman acknowledges the vast differences in eschatology that existed over Christian history and within and between denominations. Nonetheless, in looking at Puritan colonists such as Increase Mather and Jonathan Edwards, he finds that many identified themselves with the biblical Hebrews and believed they had a providential mission to fulfill. Yet Goldman adds nuance and complexity to the typical rendering of the Puritan "errand into the wilderness" and its goal of creating a model Christian society. He reminds us that despite their sense that New England was "*like* Israel in important ways," the Puritans did not necessarily believe that they occupied a new Zion or that they had replaced the Jewish people as God's chosen ones—their covenant with God had not nullified God's covenant with Abraham (33). Rather, according to Goldman, Mather and those of his ilk believed that "part of New England's vocation was to promote the fulfillment of God's promise to the Jews," which is to say that their providential role was to help restore the Jews to Israel through prayer, missions, and conversions (15, 39).

[4] See, for example, Shalom Goldman, *Zeal for Zion: Jews, Christians, and the Idea of the Promised Land* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Allon Gal and Alfred Gottschalk, eds., *Beyond Survival and Philanthropy: American Jewry and Israel* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 2000); Michelle Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Moshe Davis, *America and the Holy Land* (Westport: Praeger, 1995); Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1975); Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983); Lawrence Davidson, "The State Department and Zionism, 1917-1945: A Reevaluation," *Middle East Policy* 7 (October 1999): 21-37; Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism and Zionism, 1865–1945* (New York: Carlson, 1991); Yaakov Ariel, *An Unusual Relationship: Evangelical Christian and Jews* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); Caitlin Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Goran Gunner and Robert O. Smith, eds., *Comprehending Christian Zionism: Perspectives in Comparison* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014); Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

The Puritans' perception of the Biblical Israel and of their spiritual mission blended with their eschatology. Goldman explores how Mather and other Puritans reckoned with St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans as well as the Book of Revelation, with its prediction that "in the last days the Jews would convert to Christianity and be restored to the Holy Land" before the second coming of Jesus Christ (37). Mathers, Edwards, and others may not have believed that New England was a new Zion, but they did believe that New England had a key role to play in God's plan for the end times. By highlighting the Puritan colonists' millennial beliefs, Goldman "challenges the assumption that Christian Zionism is derived from premillennial dispensationalism," a much more recent theological development[5] (15). He also brings in similar views from thinkers of the Revolutionary generation, such as theologian, minister, and president of Yale Ezra Stiles, Presbyterian minister David Austin, and delegate to the Continental Congress Elias Boudinot, to highlight how the earlier idea that New England had a special place in God's plan expanded in the eighteenth century to encompass the entire nascent United States. Rather than seeing the republic as a new Zion, Stiles believed it "was a refuge for true religion and righteous politics," and Boudinot contended that America's millennial mission was to act "as an agent of Jewish redemption" (49, 55). These beliefs bestowed a sense of purpose on the young nation, and connected it with the people and place of Israel. Goldman is wise not to neglect Mormon thinkers of the early Republic. He finds important overlap between the ideas of the Revolutionary generation and those of Joseph Smith, who likewise saw the republic as a bastion of religious freedom and thus a haven for Jews, whom Christians could then seek to convert in preparation for their restoration to Israel. Though Smith's theology diverged in other areas, Goldman makes clear that such notions about America's role in fulfilling millennial prophecies regarding Israel had wide circulation in the colonies and early Republic.

The second part of the book traces the process by which these religious beliefs about the restoration of the Jews became a political goal rather than just a spiritual one. Goldman highlights the story of Mordecai Manuel Noah, who served as a Consul to Tunis briefly between 1813 and 1815, and who devised several plans for hastening Jewish restoration to the Holy Land. In addition to Ararat, a proposed Jewish reservation in the United States, Noah shared his proto-Zionist ideas in his writings and lectures from 1825 through the 1840s, offering audiences a synthesis of "American origin myths, millenarian theology, and republican politics" and arguing "that Christians had a responsibility to promote Jewish restoration, but also that they were upholding their own national calling by doing so" (81). Although Noah did not make much headway with his Ararat proposal, his ideas proved influential for at least some Christians. Goldman also explores the ideas and influence of Warder Cresson, who converted to Judaism while serving as U.S. Consul to Jerusalem, John Nelson Darby, an evangelical leader and an important force in popularizing premillennial dispensationalism, and William Eugene Blackstone, a Christian Zionist who petitioned President Benjamin Harrison to restore Israel to the Jewish people. Having laid the groundwork for understanding Christian Zionism as a political project by discussing the development of key ideological, theological, and political currents, Goldman then moves into the early twentieth century. Here, he traces the influence of religious scholars and leaders Harry Emerson Fosdick, Judah L. Magnes, John Haynes Holmes, and Reinhold Niebuhr on liberal Protestant thought about Zionism, as well as on public opinion about the desirability of recognizing Israel and partitioning Palestine in the late 1940s.

In the final part of the book, which covers Christian Zionism since 1948, Goldman traces a shift in orientation that occurred in the movement. Whereas for much of the twentieth century, Christian supporters of Israel hailed mostly from liberal Protestant denominations, more recently Christian Zionists have tended to come from politically conservative Christian denominations, especially evangelical ones. Goldman suggests that there was surprising continuity between the liberal Christian Zionists of the earlier twentieth century and their evangelical successors. Despite the emergence of "dispensationalist themes" and the "moralized and militarized vision of Judeo-Christian civilization" that evangelicals embraced, Goldman argues that their brand of Zionism "emerged from Cold War-era attempts to find the meaning of

[5] While millennial (and chiliastic) beliefs—including premillennialist ideas that assert that Jesus Christ will return to earth before his thousand year reign of peace as prophesied in Revelation 20—date back to the first century of the Christian church, dispensational premillennialism did not emerge until the nineteenth century. Dispensationalists believe that God has divided time into defined periods that govern his relations with mankind and his plans for the church. Dispensational Premillennialism began spreading in the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and became popularized after the publication and widespread distribution of the Scofield Reference Bible. Many evangelicals, including Pentecostals and charismatics, embraced dispensationalist beliefs; mainline Protestants tended not to.

American power in the travails of the people and land of Israel—a project that had been blessed by theological liberals before it was taken up by conservatives." (124).

He pinpoints the Six-Day War in 1967 as a key moment: mainline Protestants had by then largely drifted away from Zionism and many conservative Christians, particularly those who saw prophetic implications in those events, rallied to the cause. After examining the apocalyptic literature of Hal Lindsey and the support that Christian Right stalwarts such as Jerry Falwell lent to Israel, Goldman suggests that conservative views about the Cold War joined with prophetic beliefs to provide the basis for Christian Zionism during the 1980s. He concludes that while more recent Christian Zionists attracted considerable media attention, he does not believe that they exerted nearly as much foreign policy influence as pundits feared. More significantly, he suggests that "the specific form of Christian Zionism that emerged in the 1970s seems to be waning." (176). He does not present sufficient specific evidence to fully support either of these suppositions, evocative though they are.

Needless to say, covering five centuries of Christian Zionist thought over the course of just 180 pages means that Goldman must leave out a considerable amount of detail. With each chapter focusing on a handful of thinkers, he picks out common ideas across long swaths of time, but of course cannot discuss all relevant thinkers or devote extensive time to counter-trends, though he makes an effort to allude to their existence. The brevity of the chapters and the length of time covered in each tends to give the impression that the important intellectual trends and theological developments he chronicles were more coterminous and seamlessly interconnected than they may have actually been. Furthermore, some of the men whom Goldman highlights—and they are almost all men—had more significant and enduring influence than others, and an assessment of the relative weight of their influence does not come through clearly in the text. This is not to downplay the importance of lesser-known thinkers or ideas in terms of their contribution to Christian Zionism, merely to trouble what might otherwise seem like too flattened a narrative. Zooming out to capture the broad sweep of U.S. Christian Zionism since the seventeenth century puts the more recent and well-known phase into context and helpfully tempers overexuberant declarations about the movement. Yet the bird's-eye view also potentially minimizes the distinctive aspects and influence of recent conservative Christian Zionism in U.S. politics. Again, given the brevity of the text, Goldman obviously had to make choices about what and whom to cover, and he makes no claims to be presenting an exhaustive account; it is a broad synthetic survey and provides an accessible, useful introduction to Christian Zionism. A more granular exploration of Christian Zionism over the past forty years might have added evidential weight to his conclusions, however.

Daniel Hummel's *Covenant Brothers* provides a much needed reexamination of the emergence of evangelical Christian Zionism as an organized and effective political movement. Hummel takes 1948 as his starting point and seeks to move beyond explanations of the movement that focus solely on the apocalyptic beliefs or missionary objectives of U.S. evangelicals. He argues instead that an evolving "range of political, historical, and theological arguments in favor of the state of Israel based on mutual and covenantal solidarity" were at play, emphasizing Christian-Jewish cooperation in the political project of building U.S. support for Israel. (3). Unlike most other books on U.S. Christian Zionism, Hummel roots a significant part of his narrative in Israel rather than in the United States, even as he attends mostly to U.S. historical actors. He begins with a rereading of post-World War II missions to Israel, examining how evangelical understandings of their relationship with Israel and the Jewish people shifted as they immersed themselves in Israeli society. Hummel notes that their experiences in Israel led these "missionaries to develop language that took seriously Jewish identity, racial antisemitism and the Holocaust, and the long history of Christian anti-Judaism," which had the effect of familiarizing them "with the concepts of interreligious reconciliation that later fueled a sense of political obligation to Israel" (20). He details how the flourishing field of biblical archaeology fed into the framework of "Judeo-Christianity" that emerged in the 1950s, and links this framework to dispensational interpretations of scripture that elevated "the covenantal language of Genesis 12:3, a passage that commanded all people to 'bless' Israel" to receive God's blessing in return (58). Hummel argues that these key theological, cultural, and intellectual developments, coupled with the establishment of the American Institute of Holy Land Studies by G. Douglas Young in 1956, formed the foundation of the modern evangelical Christian Zionist movement.

Young's educational institute, located in Jerusalem, tied together the new evangelical missionary thinking about Israel, the Judeo-Christian framework, and Biblical archaeology as it advanced his larger mission of fostering U.S. support for the state of Israel. Initially, Israeli leaders treated the institute with suspicion, assuming that it was some sort of "secret missionary

operation," even though Young "denounced Jewish missions work in Israel" and "disavowed evangelistic goals of any kind" (70-71). Yet Hummel argues that the Institute, which brought prominent evangelicals to Israel as teachers and had a curriculum that "emphasized Jewish-Christian solidarity and shared religious history" as well as Israeli contributions to biblical scholarship, played a key role in redefining Christian Zionism and Judeo-Christianity in the late 1960s (72). Young's institute promoted Jewish-Christian cooperation and "practical and political action focused on advancing Israeli interests," goals which rippled out into broader evangelical thought and coincided with the desires of the Israeli government to gain Christian allies that would help "legitimate…a Jewish state" (76, 80).

Like Goldman, Hummel pinpoints the 1967 war as a key turning point in this redefinition of U.S. Christian Zionism. As mainline Protestants and Catholics in the United States grew more critical of Israel after 1967, Israel's leaders reached out to build new relationships with evangelical and fundamentalist Christians. According to Hummel, the outreach program that the Israeli government pursued put "Jewish self-understanding in terms of peoplehood and land" at the heart of their dialogue with potential Christian allies, in an effort to "build consensus around the political obligations of Jew and Christian alike." (84). In this context, Israeli officials came to see Young and the American Institute of Holy Land Studies as exemplars of this desired interreligious collaboration. This story—the story of Young, of his institution building in Israel, and of the interreligious relationships that developed out of that institution building—rarely figure into histories of Christian Zionism. In highlighting Young and the Institute, Hummel adds considerable nuance to our understanding of how evangelicals and Israeli leaders viewed each other and their mutual political and spiritual projects in the 1960s and 1970s. There is simply so much more to Christian Zionist beliefs than just dispensational theology, and Hummel is very effective at teasing out the intellectual, theological, and organizational developments that shaped the movement. Furthermore, given that U.S. evangelicals were generally very focused on missionary work and what they viewed as their evangelistic duty to spread the Gospel worldwide in this era, the fact that Young, Billy Graham, and other evangelical leaders advocated for their brethren to pull back from evangelizing in Israel and focus instead on the importance of Jewish identity and continuity there is significant and unexpected. Hummel makes a compelling case that even though they could not enforce an injunction against evangelism, U.S. evangelicals' debates about the nature of their involvement in Israel and their responsibility to Israeli Jews did signal an important shift in evangelical identity vis-à-vis Israel that falls outside of more common dispensational interpretations.

After discussing the rise in Holy Land tourism that followed the 1967 war and explaining how it both sacralized the modern state of Israel for evangelicals and made it a core part of their Judeo-Christian identity, Hummel delves into the 1973 Arab-Israeli War as another turning point in Christian Zionist development. Evangelicals supported Israel during the war, yet two strands of U.S. evangelical thought about Israel emerged in the aftermath: one a fascination rooted in apocalyptic prophecies and the other focused on reconciliation and Christian-Jewish dialogue. Hummel argues that while Hal Lindsey, John Walvoord, and the other famous dispensational prophecy writers of the era certainly "helped popularize dispensational language that overlapped with Christian Zionism," they were more focused on selling books than on forging relationships with existing Christian Zionists (let alone Israeli leaders) (144). Hummel sees much greater significance in those individuals, like Young, who committed to the project of Christian-Jewish reconciliation. He details a 1975 conference that Young organized with the American Jewish Committee and Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum wherein the evangelicals who attended sought to clarify their theology in light of the Holocaust and establishment of Israel, and committed to avoiding anti-Semitic language and interpretations of scripture. These efforts, coupled with their pledge to support "human rights" and the Soviet Jewry, formed a basis for greater political mobilization on behalf of Israel after 1976, according to Hummel.

Having provided this rich history of Christian Zionism between 1948 and 1976, Hummel uses the final part of the book to examine and explain the rise of the more familiar Christian right Zionism of the 1980s. He makes the case that during the Carter administration and the first term of the Reagan administration, Christian right Zionism became "an integral part of the political dimension to America's 'special relationship with Israel," forging an ever more organized pro-Israel lobby and cementing Zionism as a defining cause of the Christian right (161). This transition grew out of political developments in Israel, including the establishment of the Likud party, changes within U.S. evangelical denominations, including the "Fundamentalist Takeover" of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Young's death in 1980. (166). In the 1980s, the fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell and Israeli leader Menachem Begin cultivated a close and politically powerful relationship, as Falwell and the Christian right lent unstinting support to Israel and Begin's policies. Despite the fact that

Falwell had not been part of the interreligious dialogue and activism of the 1970s, Hummel sees important continuity between the Christian right's Zionism of the 1980s and the Christian Zionism of the preceding decades. He argues that "even with the Christian right's freighted domestic agenda...and entanglement in GOP politics it remained animated by the goal of reconciliation and committed to the security of Israel," a commitment that knitted Christian right Zionists together closely with their allies in Israel (161). The final chapters of the book provide a fascinating discussion of the complex relationship between American and Israeli Jews after the 1982 Lebanon War and the First Intifada in 1987 as well as of the Pentecostal preacher John Hagee, who redefined Christian Zionism again in the late 1980s and 1990s. Radical Christian Zionists—"Spirit-centered" Zionists—who were steeped in dispensational theology, "believed Jerusalem would be the seat of authority for the coming millennial kingdom," and focused on countries beyond Israel, emerged in this era as another branch alongside Christian right Zionists. (190). In his discussion of Hagee, Hummel shows the fractures within the movement and explains how current Spirit-centered Zionism is distinctive from earlier Christian Zionist factions.

As should be clear, Hummel has an extremely keen grasp on the theology here. This allows him to depict Christian Zionism as a dynamic movement, responsive to political change and interreligious dialogue in Israel as well as the United States. It also enables him to illuminate the considerable evolution in evangelical beliefs about Israel that occurred in the decades after 1948, revealing the presence of multiple competing visions for Christian Zionism that coexisted and interacted in generative ways at a range of given moments. The book is thus incredibly useful in dispelling simplistic analyses of Christian Zionism that offer a static depiction of the movement or fixate solely on prophecy and apocalyptic expectation. The book does not dismiss dispensationalism of course, but it contextualizes it effectively and adds needed complexity to our understanding of just how varied dispensational theology was in terms of its influence on evangelical policy lobbying and U.S. foreign relations. Hummel's deep knowledge of evangelicalism, coupled with his expert use of Israeli archival material, stands out and makes this book a tremendously valuable contribution to the scholarship on Christian Zionism.

Where Goldman and Hummel explore *Christian* Zionism, Walter Hixson expands the focus to the whole Pro-Israel lobby in the United States. *Israel's Armor: The Israel Lobby and the First Generation of the Palestine Conflict* covers the shortest chronological period of the three books under review, as the narrative focuses primarily on the years between 1942 and 1967, yet it offers exceedingly rich detail on the individuals and institutions that built the Israel lobby and advances the most provocative argument. One of Hixson's key contentions is that the Israel lobby has been exceptionally adept at "shaping the pro-Israeli American foreign policy," but that we cannot fully understand *why* it has been so successful without disentangling the cultural and religious forces that made U.S. leaders so responsive to its ideas and tactics (9). Hixson asserts that "without a cultural foundation rooted in American religious affinity and settler colonization, among other factors, the lobby could not have been as effective as it has been and remains today" (9). In the book, he sets out to show how these intersecting factors came together to influence Congress and presidents to align U.S. foreign policy with Israel's policies despite the efforts of some State Department officials to forge a more balanced approach to U.S. relations in the Middle East.

After a brief prologue that traces the foundations of the Zionist movement internationally and in the United States, Jewish settlement in the holy land after the Balfour Declaration, and conflict with the Palestinians that lived there, Hixson delves into the origins of the Israel lobby in the United States. He pinpoints a May 1942 meeting at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City, which hundreds of Zionists from the United States and abroad attended, as the birthplace of the lobby. With the horrifying realities of the unfolding Nazi genocide against the Jews of Europe in sharp focus, Zionist leaders appealed to President Franklin Roosevelt to aid the victims of the Holocaust and establish a Jewish state. When Roosevelt failed to mount an adequate and speedy response, these Jewish leaders began to mobilize politically. Hixson profiles some of these men, including Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, who chaired the American Zionist Emergency Council (AZEC), and Isaiah Leo Kenen, a prominent activist in that organization. Kenen in particular coordinated a massive lobbying campaign in 1944 aimed at pushing Congress and the president to take action. He managed to secure "the endorsement of both major political parties in the 1944 presidential election," as well as supportive planks in both parties' platforms (36). Hixson notes that Roosevelt planned to put off dealing with the issues that the lobby raised until after the war; when he died and Harry Truman took over, the lobby cultivated his support and eventually won his backing, even though doing so "alienated professional diplomats, the Arabs, and the British" (37). Although the State Department pushed back against American Zionist aims—playing on concerns about U.S. access to strategic resources in the Middle Eastern as well as the threat that

U.S. support for Israel might drive Middle Eastern countries to ally themselves with the Soviet Union—Hixson details how members of AZEC used political pressure and relationships with White House insiders to continue to push Truman to support their goals.

Hixson's discussion of the influence the Jewish lobby had on the Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson administrations drives the narrative, revealing much about the strategic priorities as well as personal sentiments of each president. He depicts Truman as a grudging ally and makes the case that U.S. support for partition and statehood during his presidency emerged from a range of factors, including "residual guilt over lack of response to the Nazi genocide; empathy for the Jewish refugees, and Orientalist perceptions of the Arabs whereas the European Jews were viewed as forces of modernity and settler progress; and not least the growing clout of the Israel lobby in an election year" (54). He also suggests that Truman's devout Christian beliefs compelled him to boost the Zionist cause, and attributes broad U.S. public enthusiasm for Israeli statehood to premillennial dispensationalism. Although he notes that such beliefs are exactly the sort of "'cultural disposition'" that he sees as central to understanding the power of the Israel lobby, his discussion of dispensationalism and Christian Zionism is superficial, particularly in light of the much more nuanced picture that Hummel provides in *Covenant Brothers* (54). Likewise, he asserts that Johnson's "conviction that the Jews belonged in the Promised Land…provided a foundation for his attitudes and actions in the Middle East conflict," yet provides very little analysis of Johnson's faith beyond that (184).

Many of the chapters also lack detail on the nature of the Israel lobby's political pressure. Hixson describes the means by which the lobby pressured the White House—"telephone calls, telegrams, and public criticism" about Truman withholding part of a loan in response to Israel's resistance to negotiating on issues related to refugees and border settlements in 1949, or a "nationwide publicity campaign" to secure support for Israel from the Johnson administration during the crisis with Egypt in 1967—but does not always provide enough insight into the substance of that pressure (70, 173). He shows the leaders of the lobby, such as Kenen, coordinating public campaigns that brought in a deluge of constituent letters to the White House or to Congress, but does not reveal much about the content of those communications. As such, readers do not get a clear sense of the shared language, rhetorical themes, or global concerns in those letters, telephone calls, and media pieces that might allow Hixson to bolster his argument that deep cultural foundations and religious affinities made the Israel lobby so powerful. This is frustrating in part because Hixson treats every other aspect of the story with such granularity, and makes a very convincing argument that Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson feared the lobby and what it might do, and made decisions (or altered their desired policies) accordingly. Drawing out more of this detail might have helped demonstrate the cultural and religious dynamics at play in the relationships between U.S. officials, the members of the Israel lobby, Israeli leaders, and the U.S. public. It would also underscore why the presidents perceived the lobby as a significant enough electoral threat to disregard the advice and concerns of the State Department and overlook Israeli positions that were aggressive or inflexible.

These issues mostly relate to the historiographical contribution that Hixson promises at the outset in terms of culture and religion (but does not quite deliver on), and it is important to stress that the book is a thoroughly engrossing and detailed read on U.S.-Israeli relations and the Israel lobby. Hixson's chapter on the Eisenhower administration is a particular standout that offers an incisive, powerful, and comprehensive investigation of the major foreign policy challenges that Eisenhower and Dulles confronted in the Middle East and at home vis-à-vis Israel. He details the efforts of the administration to reorient its policies in the Middle East, particularly in light of Israeli actions such as the attack on Qibya in 1953 that heightened tensions with its Arab neighbors. Hixson notes that when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles withheld Mutual Security aid in order to "confront the Israelis over their aggression and defiance of international law" after they diverted the Jordan River, the U.S. Israel lobby swung into action and "subjected the nation's top diplomat to a withering assault that left him 'feeling terribly pressured and misrepresented'" (92, 93). Two days after meeting with Jewish leaders, he "restored funds earmarked for assistance in return for Israel's pledge to end the unilateral diversion of the Jordan Rivers" in an agreement that "averted an immediate crisis, but failed to resolve the long-term conflict" (93). The chapter discusses organizational changes within the Israel lobby before turning to U.S. and Israeli relations with Egypt, which Hixson explores in compelling depth. He is very effective in this chapter in illustrating the causal links between challenging events in the Middle East, U.S. policy responses, the mobilization of the Israel lobby, and the adjustments that U.S. policymakers made in turn. He treats U.S.-Israeli relations in the lead-up to the 1967 war with similar attention to detail in terms of the policy decisions of the Johnson administration, and its reactions to Israeli moves.

In his conclusion, Hixson returns briefly to Christian Zionism and dispensational theology, but given the limited treatment of these themes in the book, the connections he draws are not as strong as they might otherwise be. He more aptly captures the chief (and charged) argument of the book when he reiterates that "throughout the first generation of its existence Israel and the domestic lobby worked in tandem to circumvent the federal bureaucracy whose mission was to conduct U.S. foreign policy in the national interest" (236). Hixson also asserts that "Israel was more often than not the aggressor, one that when given a choice typically chose force over diplomacy," but benefited from an effective U.S. lobby (aided by "a steady supply of reckless statements [from the Arab nations] promising to drive the Jews from Palestine") that nonetheless ensured ongoing U.S. support. (239). Hixson might bring in more analysis of the existential threat that Israel perceived from those statements of neighboring nations to contextualize its decisions and add nuance to his assessment. He closes with an expression of hope for a future resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Taken together, these three books provide ample insight into why the U.S. public has such an enduring interest in Israel and in supporting the country in its contentious relations with its neighbors. All three are exciting and deeply researched, and each sheds important light on the power of domestic interest groups to shape U.S. foreign policy and public opinion, as well as to function effectively as non-state actors that have independent relationships with foreign governments. Goldman, Hummel, and Hixson also, to varying degrees, demonstrate the benefits of examining the role that religious beliefs and ideas play in motivating domestic foreign policy activism. Merging intellectual, religious, organizational/bureaucratic, and diplomatic history opens new avenues for understanding why U.S. policies with Israel and the Middle East evolved as they did, and should hopefully inspire future work on the history of Zionism in the United States.

Lauren Turek is an assistant professor of history and the director of museum studies at Trinity University in San Antonio, TX, where she teaches courses on modern United States history, U.S. foreign relations, and public history. Her articles on religion in American politics and foreign policy have appeared in *Diplomatic History*, the *Journal of American Studies*, and *Religions*. Her first book, *To Bring the Good News to All Nations: Evangelical Influence on Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations*, was published by Cornell University Press in May 2020.