This chapter aims to examine the relationship between Jewish ethnic awareness and the political attitude towards the State of Israel, as expressed in three leading intellectual periodicals in the United States—Tikkun, Commentary, and The Forward, during the past twenty years. The research presented here complements my two earlier books, The State of Israel in Jewish Public Thought: The Quest for Collective Identity (Gorny, 1994) and Between Auschwitz and Jerusalem (Gorny, 2003; particularly Chapter 5, 196–219), both of which were published in Hebrew and English.

These books explore the political and conceptual discourse of statesmen and intellectuals—Zionists as well as non-Zionists—regarding the existential essence of Klal Yisrael (All of Israel) in light of the historic change it underwent following the tragedy of the Holocaust on the one hand and the founding of the Jewish state on the other. These discussions, that began in the mid-twentieth century and continued until almost the close of that century, examined the relations among three forms of Jewish existence: official national existence in the State of Israel, religious and ethnic existence in countries around the world, and civil and ethnic existence in Western countries.

Prominent Zionist leaders in Israel and the Diaspora participated in this discourse, including David Ben-Gurion and Abba Hillel Silver, as well as the philosopher Nathan Rotenstreich from Israel, the historian Ben Halpern, and the religious philosopher Mordecai Kaplan from the United States. Other past participants in this discourse included newspaper editors Azriel Carlebach and Gershom Schocken, and present participants include the editors of the periodicals discussed in this chapter.

The three periodicals discussed here differ in terms of their essential raison d’être as well as the ethnic, political, Jewish-American thinking that they have presented in the past and still maintain today. The Forward, the oldest of the three, was founded in 1897 as a daily Yiddish-language newspaper under the leadership of its charismatic and authoritative editor, Abraham Cahan, who oversaw this publication for fifty years, until 1946. Commentary was
founded by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in 1945 under the leadership of its first editor, Elliot Cohen, and after his retirement in 1959 due to illness, he was replaced by Norman Podhoretz, who served as chief editor for thirty-five years, until 1995. *Tikkun* was first published in 1986 under the initiative of Michael Lerner, with the financial support of his wife. Its financial sponsors have changed a number of times since then, and as of 2012 it has been a regular publication of Duke University in North Carolina.

Since their founding, each one of these three periodicals has adopted its own unique conceptual and political approach, that has been subject to change over the years. *The Forward* carried on the social and conceptual tradition of the socialist-liberal spirit that correlated with the politics of American trade unions. Beginning in the mid-1920s, the chief editor's ethnic Jewish perspective fostered an affinity between the newspaper and the Zionist enterprise in the Land of Israel, subsequently resulting in consistent support for the State of Israel from the time of its establishment to this day, despite inter-generational editorial changeover. *Commentary* was founded with the aim of bringing young Jewish intellectuals with liberal and radical leftist perspectives closer to the democratic, pluralistic values of American culture. Norman Podhoretz, who replaced Elliot Cohen, maintained this approach throughout most of the 1960s. Towards the end of the decade Podhoretz's worldview underwent a transformation, as did the focus of the magazine, that then became a salient mouthpiece for a group of primarily Jewish intellectuals who identified themselves as “neo-conservatives.” Salient Jewish neo-conservatives included Irving Kristol, who was considered their founder, alongside *Commentary*’s editor, Norman Podhoretz. Their political and moral worldview was based on principles that included the sanctification of the ideals of a free American society, refutation of the totalitarian communist regime in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, and fierce opposition to imperialist Soviet policy wherever in the world it was being promoted. This political perspective assigned a special status to the State of Israel, as a Jewish state with values and political interests akin to those of the United States. The gist of this relationship was encapsulated not only in its political nature but also in the inseparability of the distinctly ethnic Jewish essence of the Jewish Diaspora from that of the State of Israel. Podhoretz has uncompromisingly adhered to this position from the Six Day War of 1967 to this day. In 2007 the relationship between *Commentary* and the AJC came to an end, and the magazine became independent. Its new editor is John Podhoretz, the son of Norman Podhoretz.

The political viewpoint of *Tikkun* has its origins in radical leftist critiques of US society and world democracy, from which it derives its attitude towards