

## *Discussion*



## *The Future of German-Jewish Studies*

### NEW DIRECTIONS IN FUTURE RESEARCH

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Among historians of German Jewry, a refrain heard with increasing regularity is, “What is there of consequence left to say?”. Few who till this intellectual field believe that all that has to be said has been addressed. There is, of course, always something left to add. But the issue of consequence, of substance, is another matter. And even addressing this issue in the current Year Book so soon after the previous attention paid to it indicates that the issue is far from solved and that this exercise before us is microcosmic of the larger question posed by the excellent contributions that appeared in LBI Year Book 45 in 2000 on ‘Future Research’. Resolution has not yet arrived.

The future, however, need not look barren. One reason has to do with the historians themselves. The means of production of German-Jewish historiography, while not undergoing revolutionary change is, nonetheless, experiencing an evolutionary development that is both natural and simultaneously, to be welcomed. After the war, the writing of German-Jewish history was dominated by either émigrés from Germany or their children. Nowadays, however, increasingly fewer people writing German-Jewish history have any family connection to German Jewry and many researchers, especially those in Germany, are not Jewish at all. On the other hand, with the relatively recent emergence of Jewish Studies programs in Germany, a new generation of historians of German Jewry born in Germany are undertaking cutting-edge research conditioned by their own particular social experiences of having come of age in Germany. In all, the contribution of Jewish historians without personal attachment to Germany, younger Jewish historians in contemporary Germany, and non-Jewish historians all promise to open up new avenues of research while building on the remarkable achievements of the first postwar generation historians of the Jewish experience in Germany.

While this change represents the passing of an era it also opens up countless opportunities for reading German Jewish history in new ways. The varied background of German Jewry’s “New Historians” is likely to lead to a greater emphasis on comparative or transnational history. While modern German Jewry defined itself by its radical break with the larger culture of Ashkenazic Jewry (Eastern Europe), forming a new model of Ashkenazic identity, much stands to be gained by

looking at German Jewry in relation to, rather than merely apart from, its neighbours to the West, in France, but especially to the East, in Poland.

This in turn should force us to reconsider the issue of historical periodisation. If, as I have argued elsewhere, that until the eighteenth century, we can consider the experience of German and Eastern European Jews to have been part of a larger pan-Ashkenazic civilization, then there is much to be gained by pushing back the time frame usually encompassed by students of German Jewish history and beginning say, around 1650, with the conclusion of the Thirty Years War, rather than 1750 and the early Haskalah.<sup>1</sup> Expanding the temporal boundaries will afford greater perspective on the radical divergence of German Jewish culture from the greater Ashkenazic whole that began most demonstrably in the eighteenth century.

One area of German Jewish historiography that cries out for more attention and one that can be invigorated not so much by comparative history (although that is not out of the question) but by drawing on trends now apparent in Eastern European Jewish history, is to study popular culture. Intellectual history has been a dominant trend in German Jewish history and while much work remains to be done in this area, little attention has been paid to the quotidian character of German Jewish life and especially in the recreational habits of the community. One exception has been the attention paid to late-nineteenth century Jewish sports clubs but much more remains to be done. And this too must span the early-modern and modern periods. It is time to continue the work that was begun by scholars such as Azriel Shohet, Herman Pollack, and Christoph Daxelmüller. What would be of enormous value would be to carry such ethnographic work into the modern era. A step in this direction has begun with the important recent works of Marline Otte, who has studied Jewish popular entertainment from 1890–1933 and most recently, Mirjam Triendl-Zadoff's book on annual Jewish visitations to the popular spa resort of Marienbad.<sup>2</sup> Addressing popular culture, it is hoped, would also allow for the

<sup>1</sup> See John Efron, *et al.*, *The Jews: A History*, Upper Saddle River, NJ 2008, p. 260. For Shmuel Feiner, the historical and intellectual developments in the eighteenth century saw “the uniformity and totality of the traditional world, smashed from without and within”. See Shmuel Feiner, *The Haskalah*, Philadelphia 2002. For a contrary view, see Elisheva Carlebach, ‘Early Modern Ashkenaz in the Writings of Jacob Katz’, in Jay M. Harris, (ed.), *The Pride of Jacob: Essays on Jacob Katz and His Work*, Cambridge, MA 2002, pp. 65–83.

<sup>2</sup> Azriel Shohet, *Im hilufe tekufot: reshit ha-Haskalah be-Yehadut Germaniyah*, Jerusalem 1960; Herman Pollack, *Jewish Folkways in Germanic Lands (1648–1806): Studies in Aspects of Daily Life*, Cambridge, MA 1971; R. Po-chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann (eds.), *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*, Cambridge – New York 1995; Christoph Daxelmüller, ‘Assimilation vor der Assimilation: Säkularer Lebensstil und Religiosität in der jüdischen Gesellschaft des 17. Jahrhunderts’, in Hartmut Lehmann and Anne-Charlott Trepp (eds.), *In Zeichen der Krise: Religiosität im Europa des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 1999, pp. 265–294; Marline Otte, *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890–1933*, Cambridge – New York 2006; and Mirjam Triendl-Zadoff, *Nächstes Jahr in Marienbad: Gegenwelten jüdischer Kulturen der Moderne*, Göttingen 2007.

greater incorporation into the overall story of women's and family history. In a similar vein, marginal and disadvantaged Jewish groups have largely been left out of a picture that is to a great extent one of solidly middle-class, successful Jews. Even if that was what the majority of German Jews were, it does not account for everyone and studies of groups such as the Jewish poor, the disadvantaged and the disabled is a major desideratum.<sup>3</sup>

While the historiographical trend for German Jewish history continues to be dominated by either a cultural or intellectual approach, we are sorely lacking, for other periods, synthetic social-history accounts similar to Steven Lowenstein's path-breaking work on Enlightenment-era Berlin.<sup>4</sup> For example, there is no single monograph that deals with the social and economic history of the Jews of either the Kaiserreich or the Weimar Republic. Such volumes would go quite some way to rounding out a picture that was begun by Avraham Barkai.<sup>5</sup> In the realm of religious history, German Reform and Orthodoxy have been widely studied but the centrist position of Zacharias Frankel and the institutionalisation of Positive-Historical Judaism still offers great potential for historical research.<sup>6</sup> It is to be expected that sustained work on German Judaism's centrist position will also illuminate in new ways the religious history of Jewish religious practice at either end of the spectrum.

Finally, much interest and energy is now being devoted towards the postwar period. It is to be hoped that this interest will lead to work on the small Jewish population of the GDR. The focus on postwar Jewish life in Germany is of recent vintage and is a direct consequence of both the revitalisation of Jewish life in contemporary Germany and the emergence of the "New Historians" of German Jewry, whose interests, both professional and in some cases, once again, personal, are leaving their mark on new approaches to the German-Jewish past. To return to where we began, there is much of consequence left to say about the German-Jewish experience and with an expanded time-frame and different methods the historiographical future appears both challenging and bright.

<sup>3</sup> Claudia Prestel's study of underprivileged Jewish youth in Germany is an exception to general historiographical concerns. See her *Jugend in Not: Fürsorgeerziehung in deutsch-jüdischer Gesellschaft, 1901–1933*, Vienna 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770–1830*, New York 1994.

<sup>5</sup> See his contribution in Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* vol. 4, New York 1996, pp. 30–126.

<sup>6</sup> Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, New York 1988; and Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity Within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*, New York 1992.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS; PAST CONFLICTS — WHY IS THERE A  
FIELD CALLED “JEWISH STUDIES” AND WHAT MIGHT IT  
BECOME?

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The formation of an academic discipline is usually reactive: physics angrily carves itself from philosophy; linguistics departs in a crisis from philology; and Jewish Studies. . . . The field of Jewish Studies was both academically reactive to “theology” where it formed the basis from the training of Christian theologians as well as from a range of traditional humanistic and social science disciplines — history, anthropology, literary studies, art history, musicology, and so on, where things Jewish may have been rarely studied but never as “Jewish”. (I purposely avoid defining what is Jewish and who are Jews, a bone of contention for everyone in the field, but in the past you knew it by its absence.) Ironically, the greater the antagonism of the field in acknowledging a Jewish presence, pace Margaret Olin’s study of Jews and art history, the more it seemed that such fields eventually “became Jewish”.

Where was “Jewish art” as many of the key art historians (of the generation of E. H. Gombrich dominated the field) were Jews? Rarely then was there actual space in the canon for things Jewish as self-consciously Jewish. Even when, as in Germanic Studies, a sole (in the 1960s often an émigré) Jew taught a seminar on Heine or Kafka or Celan, it was taught often without mentioning their Jewish identities. When in the 1980s I had the temerity to suggest that “perhaps” things Jewish actually did belong in Germanic Studies a colleague at a prestigious Ivy League institution condemned me for transforming German Studies into Jewish Studies and another, at an equally prestigious Ivy League university, attacked me in print as an antisemite for demanding attention to German-Jewish writers’ often conflicted Jewish identity.

Ancient history: by the end of the twentieth century courses in Jewish Studies managed to ameliorate the resentment of academic disciplines and teach things Jewish across a number of fields from religion to literature, and even to a lesser extent infiltrated academic departments with chairs of Jewish studies, if only by soliciting external funding for them. . . . In the twenty-first century courses as well as departments of Jewish Studies now proliferate.

Where are we now: better than we were in the 1960s and yet still very much on the edge. Jewish Studies now incorporates Jewish Cultural Studies as well as the study of religion and belief systems in departments from anthropology to . . . well perhaps not zoology. The expansion of Israel Studies has made this a contentious field in the social sciences (but less in the humanities). Donors have made this possible but recently academic institutions have come to recognise that things Jewish belong in the standard curriculum as part of ethnic studies or identity politics or literary studies or medical ethics or post-Shoah history. Universities are now beginning to

carry the expenses for Jewish Studies. Part of this has certainly been driven by the fact that the children and grandchildren of traditional donors now are more interested in funding “general” rather than “Jewish” projects. Things Jewish may be now seen as established or still too parochial.

Will the passage of time erode the presence of the field or will it simply see it as one of the more established arenas of scholarship, uncontested except from within? Sigmund Freud, in writing about what made him a original thinker, wrote of the fact that being Jewish meant being marginal in turn-of-the-century Vienna and that being marginal meant that one could (or did) oppose the pedestrian, the given, the uncontroversial. “Because I was a Jew I found myself free from many prejudices which restricted others in the use of their intellect; and as a Jew I was prepared to join the Opposition and to do without agreement with the ‘compact majority.’” Is it possible that Jewish Studies in the twenty-first century will become a discipline like others within an academy and therefore not very Jewish at all. Normalisation, as in the words attributed to Chaim Weizman about policemen and prostitutes on the streets of Tel Aviv, means becoming like everyone else and therefore, in the case of Jewish Studies, becoming a discipline or part of established disciplines. But becoming normal, if Freud is right, entails the fear of becoming commonplace, conventional, content — like other academic disciplines and fields. So maybe being marginal does have some value. But acknowledging that being accepted is a difficult task is one that confronts Jewish Studies over the next decade.

## NO FUTURE? IDENTITY, POLITICS AND GERMAN-JEWISH HISTORY

BY PROF STEFANIE SCHÜLER-SPRINGORUM

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In May 2009 the Jewish Museum Berlin hosted a major international conference. Colleagues from Israel, the USA, Great Britain and Germany engaged with the topic “German Jewish Thinking between Faith and Power”; in other words, the extent to which confronting early twentieth century German-Jewish intellectual political philosophy can lend an “old” new perspective to one of the core debates surrounding Israeli-Jewish identity – the relationship between state and religion. This ambitious conference concluded with a panel discussion on the ultimate question: “Is German-Jewish History at its final curve, dying with the generation that helped to shape it?”

In more ways than one, the youthful ruthlessness exhibited by the conveners of the conference theme is cause for optimism. To question, in such radical terms, the future value of one’s own area of research at the beginning of one’s academic career demonstrates an impressive degree of reflexion both about the academic breadth of one’s own work as well as its possible political implications. If the future of our field

of study is represented by the planners and participants of this conference then we need have no concerns; we can sit back and call a halt to thinking or writing about the issue here. Our field can be left to the generation now coming of age, educated mainly in Israel and/or fostered and influenced by the various courses held in recent years, the LBI doctoral colloquia in association with a variety of German foundations, who are more international, multi-lingual and perhaps also – so the Berlin conference programme certainly implies – more political than their predecessors. Many of their research projects are of an impressively high level.

And yet despite all the cosmopolitanism, there are still obvious differences. For young Germans, local and regional history, biography and corporate history remain the favoured gateway to the Jewish periods of their history. In contrast, it seems to me that Israel and the Anglophone world are seeing a return to intellectual history with the familiar all-embracing social history going out of fashion. Equally, a number of fascinating and thought-provoking approaches have been adopted by colleagues specialising in the Early Modern period, a period in which the LBI, at the very least, felt less at home until more recently.

These obvious differences in choice of topic beg the question: who, these days, is actually engaged in the study of German-Jewish history and why? A glance at participant lists of conferences and doctoral colloquia shows that the majority of academics still originate from the four countries where, clearly separated by intervals, the centres of German-Jewish historiography developed after the war: Israel, the USA, Great Britain and Germany. Expressed in simple terms: German-Jewish history is the province mainly of Jews and non-Jewish Germans regardless of where the global employment market may have scattered them.

This may not be a revolutionary discovery, but in my view, we have given insufficient thought to its implications for our motivation and manner of dealing with this fact. Even if it is politically incorrect to say so, we are not all equal even though we are essentially concerned with the same issue: one's own identity, whether national, political or religious. In the USA, and to a lesser extent in Great Britain, it is about positioning oneself in a tapestry of competing minorities, which not only structures the access to cultural and political resources but can also have a considerable influence on individual lives. In contrast, things are very different in Germany, that is for non-Jewish Germans, not surprisingly given their nation's – and family's – murderous past. For most of us non-Jewish Germans, the interest in Jewish history began because we wanted to understand how "it" could have happened. So it is no coincidence that the focus of so many studies is precisely in this area: the history of the German-Jewish relationship, integration, exclusion, antisemitism and the Jewish responses. And despite all the gloomy prognoses to the contrary, young Israelis regard German-Jewish history as an interesting part of an alternative history, an intellectual pre-history with clear political implications for their own times.

I would guess that no other subject brings with it the baggage of so many identity issues: how many Dutchmen study Spanish history as a result of a biographical guilt complex, how many Danes study Danish history to find models for the future



of Scandinavia? It is the specific nature of Jewish history, formed by the Diaspora, the Holocaust and the foundation of a new State, which has created this constellation; what is extraordinary is its persistence over more than fifty years. But now it is high time that the writing of German-Jewish history should reflect this critically. Or to put it another way: German-Jewish historians too should embrace the challenge of modern cultural history and be clear about their subject position as academics: their own biographical background, their motivation and the resulting choice of subject and methodology.

By doing so, we might somewhat dissolve the uneasy feeling that has inspired, I assume, this “stock taking” for the LBI Yearbook. The recent increase in general overviews, encyclopaedias, source collections and reprints of “classics” appears to indicate that, with the exception of the post-1945 era, the stock of grand and exciting research questions of nineteenth and twentieth century German-Jewish history has been exhausted. Of course this uneasiness about one’s own academic culture rests on a grain of truth. The grand narrative, formative for us all, has been available for more than ten years now: the LBI’s four volume overview. Of course it will be amended here and there and extended, it is susceptible to criticism and modification but it still provides a fundamentally comprehensive and complete examination of German-Jewish history which is unlikely to be bettered in this form. Not for nothing did David Myers call this work the “émigré synthesis”, a grand narrative of an era whose history was written by those – Jews and a handful of non-Jewish Germans – with their biographical roots still in it. But not only has the era of the grand narrative passed, the biographical connections of the actors are less clear, they have become more open, diverse and subject to change as have their motivations and the questions asked of this history. In my view this is where the great opportunities for future research lie since in this way Jewish history could become more open and diverse, with stronger links to other histories, other areas of research and theoretical concepts. This absolutely does not imply a demand, expressed in the last twenty or thirty years, for “integration into general history”. This neat phrase has always had unilateral support and will probably continue to do so. It would be trite to complain; what is more to the point is to grasp the initiative, individually and assertively, and introduce German-Jewish historical perspectives into general debates and research events. And because Jewish history has always *per se* been “transnational” and by nature “global”, it is unnecessary to hide or be reticent about knocking at the door of new trends; on the contrary, one can become involved in the discussion with increased self-confidence.

To give a concrete example: In the near future a fairly big research project will trace the interconnectivity and the representations of gender and race in twentieth century sport making comparative use of African, North American and German-Jewish-Israeli case studies. Were this method to be applied in every conceivable area of history, “the” German-Jewish history would probably become fragmented and less identifiable. However there is little danger of its dissolving completely provided we deal with this development assertively in two respects: firstly, by making our hidden agendas transparent, be they personal or political, and secondly in

relation to the strengths and specific expertise of our subject. At the same time, however, we should, however, take care not to overestimate the significance of our academic interests and research to the study of world history.

## THE NEW FACE OF GERMAN-JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY: COMPARATIVE, TRANS-NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL

BY DEREK J. PENSLAR

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At universities throughout the western world, national history is falling out of fashion, and comparative and thematic histories are on the rise. Since the 1980s, cultural studies has eroded the previously privileged position of the nation and state as prime shapers of identity in favour of race, class and gender. The postcolonial theory that flourished in the 1990s all but eliminated the state as an analytical category in favour of empire and anti-colonial movements. More recently, economic and cultural globalisation has inspired scholars to re-conceive human collectives in terms of ethnicities and diasporas rather than distinct, bounded nations. Revulsion against the aggressive excesses of state power, and the recent proliferation of NGO's as alternatives to states, have inspired scholars to explore the history of international organisation and the discourse of human rights. In some cases, a national history (for example, France) remains visible only via its colonial penumbra, which justifies the subject as part of a global history of empire.

International history - the study of international organisation - is a sub-set of transnational history, the study of movements and exchanges of people, ideas and institutions across political borders. In turn, transnational history is closely related to comparative history, which examines phenomena in two or more distinct geographic spaces (usually, but not always, in different states) in order to highlight both commonalities and differences of experience. All three of these approaches - international, transnational and comparative - strive to expand the historian's focus beyond the state, yet in fact all are dependent upon it. The state is the building block of international organisation, the maker of the border whose crossing or transgressing transforms the historical subject, the source of the situations by which comparisons may be made.

It should be obvious that the modern history of the Jews, a people scattered throughout the globe, should be studied in an international, transnational, and comparative context. Over the past three centuries Jews have had a rich history of international organisation, their economic, cultural and institutional life has been the product of constant movement across borders, and their experience in various lands has had undeniable common elements despite the distinct characteristics of the states and societies in which they lived. Until about a decade ago, however, few modern Jewish historians dared venture outside of the framework of a single state. (The exceptions were almost entirely early modernists, who had no choice but to

follow the often peripatetic Jews in their wanderings throughout the expanses of eastern Europe or the global Sephardi diaspora.) During the first half of the twentieth century, in North America and western Europe modern Jewish history was often written with an overt apologetic intent, an attempt to inscribe the Jews into the history of the lands in which they lived. YIVO's scholarship was more nationalist in its orientation, but precisely for that reason it focused on Russo-Polish Jewry, the putative bastion of Jewish nationhood. In the 1960s, the ideological impetus behind the writing of modern Jewish history began to weaken, and in the following decade the subject became increasingly professionalised, as academic posts in Jewish history were created in universities, primarily in North America. Yet these processes did little to dislodge Jewish historiography from the framework of the state.

German-Jewish historiography followed these general trends, but its case was complicated by the lack of firm or constant parameters German statehood and the divergence between German politics, *grossdeutsch* German nationhood, and the even more expansive German cultural realm (*Kulturbereich*) in Central Europe. The very definition of "German Jew" was thus, from the start of the Leo Baeck Institute's publications in the 1956, open to interpretation. From the 1960s through 1990s, intellectual and cultural historians of German Jewry tended towards a more *grossdeutsch* approach, which, although crossing political borders, was not necessarily comparative if the Austro-German landscape was presented as a continuous whole. Social and political historians were even less likely to hazard a genuinely comparative approach, and they operated mainly within the borders of the Second Reich. Over this same period, historians of East European, not German Jewry, pioneered the study of international Jewish political activity and the transnational exchange of political ideologies and activists.

The past decade has witnessed a rapid transformation of German-Jewish historiography, which has increasingly embraced comparative, transnational and international approaches. The comparative dimension is most obvious in the realm of intellectual history. David Sorkin, who began his career with an outstanding work on the interaction between social and cultural forces in the shaping of German Jewry (*The Transformation of German Jewry*, 1987), moved on to present the Berlin Haskalah as but one variety of religious enlightenment in eighteenth-century Europe. This vast project, many years in the making, culminated in *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews and Catholics from London to Vienna* (2008). A similar approach characterises Jonathan Karp's magisterial *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe, 1638–1848* (2008). Karp focuses on writers in Germany because, on the cusp of late modernity, they were the most likely to produce reflections on the relationship between political economy and Jewish meliorability. But as Karp shows, they were not alone; English and Italian figures offered powerful interventions as well. Meanwhile, Shmuel Feiner has re-conceptualised the German Haskalah in a different way by placing it in a European Jewish context that ranges from Alsace to Poland

(*The Jewish Enlightenment*, 2003). Many scholars before Feiner challenged old Germano-centric approaches that presented the encounter between Jews, state and society in the German lands as paradigmatic for modernity as a whole. But they did so by presenting the distinctiveness of Jewish experiences in various lands, not by demonstrating an overarching yet multi-faceted Jewish cultural project.

In social history the comparative approach has yet to become widespread, but it has been pushed forward admirably by a number of scholars. Rainer Liedtke's 1998 book *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester c. 1850–1914* transgressed the national paradigm not only by comparing developments in two countries but by focusing on cities (here, Germany's and the United Kingdom's "second cities") rather than states. Liedtke and other scholars pushed the comparative impetus further in two co-edited volumes in 1999: *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective* (with Michael Brenner and David Rechter) and *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants: Minorities and the Nation State in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (with Stephan Wendehorst). In 2003, Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron and Uri Kaufmann continued to develop this new wave in their co-edited volume *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*. Comparative studies are likely to flourish in the years to come, in part because of increasing influence of thematic as opposed to nationally delimited fields of study on younger scholars (for example, Sarah Wobick, an advanced doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin, now completing an ambitious dissertation comparing the Jewish public sphere in Berlin, Paris and St. Petersburg). These approaches are also facilitated by the growing number of scholars of Jewish Studies raised and trained in Germany and Eastern Europe, where Jewish modernity is usually studied within the context of European legal, political and institutional history. This is especially true for early modernists, as shown in the 2007 volume, edited by Wendehorst and Andreas Gotzmann, on *Juden im Recht: neue Zugänge zur Rechtsgeschichte der Juden im Alten Reich*.

For historians of modern German Jewry, perhaps the most obvious application of a comparative perspective is immigration. For the German-Jewish emigration of the 1930s, the ongoing research of Hagit Lavsky compares the demographic and socio-economic profile of German-Jewish immigrants to Palestine, the United Kingdom and the United States. Lavsky's work is in conversation with other scholars of comparative Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe and to many parts of the globe. This body of work brings to light the common elements and departs from the focus of previous research on the reception Jews encountered and the sub-cultures they created in their new lands of residence. In this literature, the lines between comparative and transnational history are often, and appropriately blurred. For example, although there is a vast literature on the Central European Jewish migration to the United States in the mid nineteenth century, we have not sufficiently explored the ties that bound immigrants to the old country, the exchanges (cultural, economic and familial) back and forth, in short, the extent to which the Jewish immigrants in North America constituted a diaspora from

a Central European homeland.<sup>7</sup> Tobias Brinkmann has devoted attention to this subject in an important book from 2002, *Von der Gemeinde zur "Community: jüdischer Einwanderer in Chicago 1840–1900* and in a number of subsequent articles.

Jewish international history is essentially that of nationally based Jewish philanthropic organisations that had a global reach and that regularly interacted with their counterparts in other lands. My book *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (2001), analysed the role of German Jewish institutions such as the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* in international Jewish efforts to regulate *fin de siècle* mass immigration from eastern Europe. Eli Bar-Chen has treated this subject in greater depth in a number of articles as well as his monograph *Weder Asiaten noch Orientalen. Internationale jüdische Organisationen und die Europäisierung "rückständiger" Juden* (2005). (This subject also forms an important component of Tobias Brinkmann's ongoing research into comparative Jewish immigration in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.)

From the start, international Jewish philanthropy featured a prominent political dimension, as demonstrated by Jonathan Frankel in his masterful study of the Damascus Affair (1997) and Abigail Green's forthcoming biography of Moses Montefiore. The German dimensions of this story emerge from Frankel's analysis of the crucial role of the German-Jewish press in mobilising international Jewish attention to the plight of Damascus Jewry and, in Green's work, the centrality of Louis (Eliezer) Loewe, Montefiore's German-Jewish secretary, in many aspects of the great philanthropist's life as well as the tailoring of his image for posterity. Although the period of the century of Montefiore's life and beyond up through World War I has been well covered, there is still much work to be done on the international dimensions of Jewish philanthropic and political life in Weimar Germany.

German-Jewish historiography can only gain by embracing the comparative, transnational and international turns that the historical profession has taken in the past decade. It is not a question of simply following a fad but of embracing approaches that work particularly well for the study of Jewish civilization. Moreover, in recent years, modern Jewish historiography has become a truly global enterprise. The opening up of eastern European archives has pushed many of the best and brightest young researchers into the study of what before the Holocaust was the world's largest centre of Jewish civilization. American Jewish history, long considered the stepchild of Jewish Studies, has come into its own, and even before the comparative and transnational turns scholars were exploring bi-directional exchanges between the old eastern European Ashkenazi heartland and its North American legatee.<sup>8</sup> Middle Eastern, North African and Balkan

<sup>7</sup>The notion of a long-established Jewish diaspora community as homeland, and of émigrés as forming a new diaspora, was central to the medieval Iberian Jewish experience. Its applications to Jewish modernity are nicely developed in Rebecca Kobrin's forthcoming comparative study of twentieth-century Jewish immigrants from Bialystock in New York, Tel Aviv, Buenos Aires and Australia.

<sup>8</sup>For example, the late Jonathan Frankel's classic *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (1982).

Jewry have at long last been fully integrated into the study of modern Jewish civilization, and these communities' interactions with the rest of the Jewish world are the subject of ongoing research. German Jewry was a vital component of world Jewry, shaping and in turn shaped by the Jewish world as well as its immediate environment. German Jewry's future study will best be furthered by integrating it into the global-historical approaches that are increasingly influencing historiography across the board.

## FROM GERMAN JEWS TO THE GERMAN JEW

BY MICHAEL BRENNER

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In the past decade the meaning of German-Jewish historiography has expanded in terms of time and space. This is reflected in the activities and publications initiated by the various LBI institutes. Initially, German-Jewish history, as understood by the founders of the LBI comprised the period between the Haskalah and the Weimar Republic, between the integration of German Jews into German society and their forced exclusion. Later, this time-period was extended to integrate life and death under Nazi rule. This period was still the main focus of the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, published just over a decade ago, notwithstanding a long prologue on the period before the eighteenth century and a short epilogue on the German-Jewish emigrés after 1945.

As German-Jewish historiography has grown, the importance of the early modern period in German-Jewish history has further developed. Studies on Jewish converts, the impact of messianic movements, western Yiddish, and on Jewish-Christian co-existence in rural communities have expanded our knowledge of the roots of modern German-Jewish life. At the same time, the number of publications and projects in the making on Jewish life in post-war Germany is increasing by the year. Today, as the post-war period spans more than sixty years and numerous archives have opened, scholars have produced important insights to the renewal of Jewish life in Germany. This led the Leo Baeck Institute to its decision to publish a follow-up volume to the *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, concentrating entirely on Jews in post-war Germany.

German-Jewish historiography has also expanded in terms of space in the last decade. This includes comparative studies between German and English, and between German and French Jewish communities. Just as studies on the west have grown, there has been an increase in the scholarship looking towards the east. Recent historical research includes important studies on areas now in Poland and Russia, and it broadened our understanding of the complex Czech scene before and after the First World War.

Just as time and space no longer pose barriers to the research on German-Jewish history, recent research has shown new thematic and methodological venues.

Everyday history and gender issues were the topics of major publications over the last decade. Now, with all these achievements, have we reached the end of German-Jewish historiography? Of course not. First of all, we do not always need new questions. There is nothing problematic about asking old questions again and again. Historians will always find new answers to old questions, perhaps answers better suited to their own time.

Second, there are still significant gaps in the research of German Jewry. When asked a decade ago on the future direction of research on German-Jewish historiography, Michael Meyer pointed to the need for biographies of its most important actors. Surprisingly enough, this need still exists. Sure, a few biographies have been written in the last years. Meyer himself wrote on Joachim Prinz, others on Zacharias Frankel and Heinrich Graetz, quite a few works have been added to round up our picture of Moses Mendelssohn. But there is still no modern biography of Leopold Zunz, no definitive study of Leo Baeck, and we still await a major biography of Franz Rosenzweig. These are only examples from the realm of Jewish thought and religion, other areas could be added.

There is a third point we might mention. We now possess a library of thousands of volumes on German Jews, their local histories, their religious behaviour, their integration into German society, the rejection they faced, their economic structure, their everyday life, and many other aspects. We can read a four-volume history on German-Jewish life in modern times and a long collected volume on the everyday life of German Jews. Since so much has been written on German Jews we might ask ourselves which generalisations we can draw from all these details in order to see the forest and not just the trees. In other words, was there something like a German-Jewish mentality, a pattern of behaviour among the majority of German Jews that differed from the majority of non-Jewish Germans but also of non-German Jews at a given time? What was particular about the German Jew?

In the late nineteenth century two German Jews, Moritz Lazarus and Heymann Steinthal, created a new field of research under the term “*Völkerpsychologie*”. Today, no one would simply adopt their methods or speak of a *Volksgeist*, but there is much modern research on characteristics of collective entities. We might turn to France to find some new inspirations for a German-Jewish history which has been carried out mainly in English-speaking countries and in Germany. The history of mentality can contribute to such an endeavour. The history of collective memories, quite fashionable in the last two decades, has produced large volumes on *lieux de mémoire*, places of memory. Maybe this would be a good starting point to answer the question of a collective mentality among German Jews. What were their *lieux de mémoire*? How have they changed over time?

Scholarship over the last few decades has stressed the diversity of German Jews. Part of it may have to do with the racial stereotype of *the Jew* which led to unprecedented disaster. And part of it is of course based in reality. There were Reform and Orthodox, assimilationists and Zionists, rural Jews and urban dwellers, Franconian and East Prussian Jews, industrialists and peddlers. No one would ever deny that they were a diverse group. However, as there is a field of study called

German-Jewish history it is also the task of its practitioners to think what bound them together, what made them alike not just in their enemies' minds but in their own. The outcome of such a study will not be a reflection of whatever reality there might have existed but rather a reflection of what German Jews imagined to be themselves.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the question on future research on German Jewry must be answered in different layers. While there is still much need to turn to traditional studies, such as biographies of its best known representatives, one must also ask new questions and look for new directions of scholarship. In another decade or so, we might then ask if there is still a field of research called German-Jewish history, or if in an age of increasing transnational and interdisciplinary research, this field might have lost its distinctive character altogether. And who of us would dare to say if this is good or bad for German Jews.

## GERMAN-JEWISH STUDIES: A REVIEW

BY ANDREAS GOTZMANN

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It is impossible to review the state of German-Jewish studies today in the space of a few pages. Whilst scholarly research topics in all disciplines, from history to history of art, were fairly limited in the 1980s, this was mirrored both in the number of researchers and in the topics and periods being researched. In contrast, for the current – third – generation of scholars, the wealth of research is such that it is difficult enough to keep track in the central field of history alone.

The traditional areas of research are certainly still in evidence. The same is true for the differing approaches adopted according to academic background, emanating either from the – particular – Jewish historical tradition or from general history, a plurality which is repeated in the major centres of scholarship in Germany and America, as well as Israel and Great Britain. The diverse approaches to German-Jewish culture remain relevant although, nowadays, differences appear less evident; this is the case whether the perspective is that of an emigrant scholar from a Jewish background or of a colleague from a non-Jewish family background (the latter mostly German scholars, the majority of whom still seem to approach the field via Holocaust studies). This change is certainly true of the new generation of researchers, the explanation being a stronger international connection between academics and their work and, possibly, the increased accessibility to the field nowadays. Thus, the paradigms which characterised research ten years ago – an internal Jewish historical perspective versus an external one, like the differentiation between an interest in inner-Jewish matters versus a focus on Christian-Jewish relations – now appear less explicit and clear cut. Surprisingly, on the other hand, these different approaches whether from Jewish or from general history do not appear to have created decisive differences. Both retain the predominant concepts of the field



some of which can even be traced back to the beginnings of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

Unlike in German scholarship, where social history remains the predominant field of research, in America and to a lesser extent in Israel the field still is very much influenced by the tradition of Jewish Studies and its central approach of intellectual history. This is true even though its once specific methods and topics, especially from a German point of view, have undoubtedly been broadened. But although such changes are attributable to the growing influence of cultural studies, scholars of Jewish history have been rather reluctant when it comes to integrating the fundamental theoretical reorientations that define the so-called “cultural turn”. In German-Jewish history overall, neither the general approach to the writing of history, nor the perception of history as such nor the specific paradigms and narratives have really changed. This certainly also applies to the study of history in general, while the study of Jewish history seems to have remained increasingly conservative due to its hidden but still powerful attributes of minority history that work towards integration and inclusion on various levels.

Yet, here also, one positive outcome of the ostensible reorientation of historical research in general is that the time for exclusive research programmes and singular master narratives is over. This general trend will certainly promote an overall interest in Jewish history, a history that had to conform to historical narratives and paradigms set by the majority to gain social recognition for the cultural achievements of Jewish cultures. If one could wish for changes other than rewriting Jewish history as minority history (for example that general historians should acknowledge its achievements or that research should be geared to the predominant debates in general history), it is that this recent openness to different approaches should also be employed to discuss new perspectives on how to construct a narrative for Jewish history: German-Jewish history after all has always been characterised by complexity and connectivity in numerous ways, from scholarly concepts for a modern Jewish history to the much discussed multilayered Jewish identities, a specific heritage that should be recognised. The central challenge will then be to appreciate the reorientation advanced by the cognitive theory of cultural studies that focuses on the possibilities of perception, recognising relatedness and perspectivity rather as central productive forces and not as obstacles to our approaches. Not only would Jewish history gain new perspectives on old battles; it could lead to new ideas about how to narrate German-Jewish history. All this can only be achieved if we are not constricted by the mostly unconsidered paradigms of our research traditions.

One example: until now, little has been written about the modern period which has not, explicitly or implicitly, employed the paradigm of assimilation or acculturation, the latter being little more than the little sister of the, implied, cultural loss. Apart from defining the approaches for almost two centuries, assimilation is unsuited as an analytical paradigm as it always relies on a pre-set, unhistorical perception of what defines Jewishness. Its essentialist character renders it irrelevant to a scientific approach that is defined as a meta-perspective on cultural forms of

self-reflection, implying other norms than those employed by the cultural discourse being analysed. The concept of assimilation necessarily leads to predictable, but sometimes even paradoxical results. Whilst - in the face of the negative perception of German-Jewish culture in the post-Holocaust period - the LBI in particular has always argued for the acknowledgement of German-Jewish history and for safeguarding the rich cultural tradition of German Judaism, the research that has been fostered has remained closely associated with the idea of assimilation, implying that German-Jewish culture has been defined by a significant loss of what it means to be Jewish. Whilst most contemporary scholars agree that regardless of the known difficulties and, even, deficiencies, the economic and social history of Jews in Germany appears to be a success story especially when compared to other social minorities such as women or ethnic groups such as the Roma, there may have been a softening of the general critique that this was at the price of a necessary or even a voluntary loss of uniqueness. Yet it still prevails in all books and articles dealing with social and religious changes in modern time. This seems very strange because what is disqualified as assimilation from the standpoint of cultural theory constitutes nothing less than the positive core of this tradition, the enormous capacity of German Judaism to redefine its self-perception and cultural models in self-referential ways, the persistence in its claims for recognition and empowerment, down to its rather liberal political and social outlook. In contrast to other minorities, even to other Jewish cultures, we do not find any fundamentalism as a result of the difficult process of modernisation. The vast majority of quests for normativity have remained cautious and rather modest. On the other hand, German Judaism's new models of religious life - certainly on the Reform side but to quite an extent even inside the orthodox camp - still remain decisive for the western Jewish world, as do its ethnic concepts of Jewish lineage (*Jüdischer Stamm*) or even of national identity. Although the segregationalist concepts integrated mainly hostile models of self-empowerment - such as nationalism which was initially directed against the Jewish population - the new scholarly interest in the comparatively liberal concepts of German Zionism is due to its attempt to define a Jewish nationalism that would still live up to the liberal ethics of the middle class, seeking a kind of 'tamed' nationalism, while today others, especially the so-called revisionist strand of Zionist politics, appear to be disqualified. The strong pluralist and ethical impact of German Judaism helped to transcend their own experience and led to attempts to restrict the dynamics of nationalist ideology. None of this can be dismissed as "assimilation".

Even the perception of the pre-modern period in German-Jewish history remains closely bound to the negative assimilationist perception of the process of modernisation. It is still defined by a romanticism about the past which was designed by Jewish historians as a counterpart for their critical visions of modern life. Understanding the roots of such perceptions in German Jewish history permits crucial reorientations: it allows us to see the complexity the early modern tradition - far from being monolithic - already demonstrated. German Jews took part in the pre-modern secularisation having for many years defined models of social organisation that, for example, accorded theology and rabbinic authority a decisive moral,

yet anything but a determined, social role. Predominant notions supported by the assimilationist perspective, for instance that the German rabbinate of the 19th century suffered a swift and drastic loss of social and religious relevance, are therefore certainly misplaced. This vision is marred by the integration of such historical cultural claims in the scholarly discourse and their transmission through the generations of researchers. In the main, especially in the crucial period of the Emancipation it was the rabbis who defined the new models of cultural discourse and led the social and political debates and – in contrast to most of their early-modern colleagues – some were even able to create movements and found institutions which are still relevant today.

This single example of the deconstruction of a well known research paradigm shows the possibilities that lie in the acknowledgment of the theories of cultural studies, especially for Jewish history. With the exception of those historians who, by virtue of their background, identity and cultural status, are confident of their field and in their approach, the writing of Jewish history has always been a much more complex enterprise. With this in mind, a new approach to the history of German Jews should reach beyond the hierarchism of social claims for relevance, identity, and power that define history. Other than the always relevant calls for synthesis or comparison of perspectives, strengthening structural aspects of Jewish historiography from a theoretical perspective – for example its significance as a colonial counter-discourse, which could be employed to transcend the frame of cultural self-reflection – the theoretical reassessment of our work would have a positive and direct impact on all possible approaches to the models of cultural perception that constitute the German-Jewish heritage, whatever their significance for social, religious, intellectual, economic, or political history.

## THE FUTURE OF GERMAN-JEWISH-STUDIES

BY ANTHONY KAUDERS

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Nine years ago, thirteen eminent scholars envisaged the future of our discipline.<sup>9</sup> They addressed five key areas, all of which required redirection, augmentation, or special emphasis. These areas included periodisation, geographical range, everyday life, religious practice, and gender. The historians' appeals did not go unheeded: an ever larger group of scholars is examining the early modern period; interest in Central European Jewry, especially Bohemia and Hungary, is growing steadily; and more and more volumes on the gendering of Jewish existence are being published.

Individual temperament informs much of our work, and what follows is an idiosyncratic rather than a birds-eye view of the subject. It proceeds from the premise

<sup>9</sup> See 'Future Research', *LBI Year Book 45* (2000), pp. 207–229.

that Jewish history be as inclusive as possible, evincing an “agnostic” approach to content and leaving it to the people of the past to identify themselves as Jews or not.<sup>10</sup> Rather than submit alternative periodisations or dwell on unknown landscapes, I would like to take up the aforementioned concerns with everyday life and practice. In doing so, I suggest that a turn to *emotion* and *power* may complement previous concerns with *Alltag* and practice.

Some of the most interesting work in the field of Jewish history has emanated from scholars of ancient and medieval Jewry. David Biale, Israel Yuval, and Marina Rustow, to name but a few, have focused on power and psychology in their accounts of the more distant past.<sup>11</sup> Biale and Rustow have accentuated hegemony *within* Jewish communities, where elites sought to retain control and where the construction of “orthodoxy” and “heresy” proved quite efficacious. Biale and Yuval have used psychoanalytic categories to highlight the interplay between fears and fantasies in the Christian-Jewish encounter. The import of these studies is twofold: first, while asymmetrical power relations between weak Jews and strong Gentiles remain important, power relations amongst Jews themselves need to be re-examined; and second, while theological difference and ongoing persecution have affected Jews throughout time, the psychological interdependence between Jews and Christians needs to be reassessed. More broadly speaking, revisionist work of this nature sanctions a less formulaic approach to Jewish history, replacing an undercurrent of apologetics with the recognition of a messy past.

What follows from this for German-Jewish history? Taking “practice” and the “everyday” as our starting points, earlier work on *Alltagsgeschichte* might be supplemented with questions related to feelings and affections, authority and force. To begin with the former dyad: recent studies on the history of emotions have underscored the intimate connection between emotions and goals. The “assessment of what is valuable or harmful”, writes Barbara Rosenwein, “has everything to do with what individuals, groups, and societies want for themselves.”<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, references to emotions figure as instances of what men and women deem important, sacrosanct, or dangerous. Talk about emotions, then, allows us to infer objectives common to a specific group or period. Conversely, talk about values, duties, or traditions allows us to trace emotional norms. To take two examples: Jews who discovered Zionism in the late nineteenth century did so not merely as a means to reject assimilation, return to history, or surmount antisemitism. There were specific emotions implicated in the enterprise, emotions that were tied to existing norms or that invoked future ones. The emotions included anger, disappointment,

<sup>10</sup> Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish is Jewish History?*, Oxford 2007, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> David Biale, *Blood and Belief. The Circulation of a Symbol between Jews and Christians*, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London 2007; Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb. Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London 2006; Marina Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community. The Jews of the Fatimid Caliphate*, Ithaca–London 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, Ithaca–London 2006, p. 14. See also Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge 2001, p. 27; and William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions*, Cambridge 2001, p. 21.

hatred, longing. The norms comprised self-mastery, self-overcoming, and self-esteem. Some emotions and some emotional norms belonged to a wider culture, others were more specific to Jewish concerns. Reconstructing emotional communities in this instance would disclose the everyday force of feelings that led some Jews to embrace Zionism and others to uphold older (emotional) paradigms.<sup>13</sup> Needless to say, such reconstructions would not displace intellectual, social, or political explanations of the German-Jewish past.

This also holds true for the second example, post-1945 “German” Jewry. The Jewish predicament at the time was psychologically over-determined. Norms prevailing throughout the Jewish world demanded hostility to Germans and Germany alike. These norms coincided with the sentiments of many Jews living in the country. Norms on the one hand, and feelings on the other, gave rise to a bad conscience that was unique to the West German-Jewish community. Yet further rules and feelings were involved. Jews in Germany may have resented their continued presence in the “land of the perpetrators”, but their contempt for things German was curtailed by norms prohibiting sustained expressions of hatred. Dependence on Germans in public life as well as love of Germans in the private sphere added to this ambivalent situation, as did indignation towards those who sought to ostracise them from “world Jewry”.

Moving on to authority and force, it seems to me that a shift away from Jewish-Gentile power relations to issues of “domestic” concern may be a promising avenue for future research. Let me touch on one aspect of power that could be applied to the Jewish case, amongst others. Rodney Barker has argued that habitual legitimacy, as the “acceptance of unquestioned right”, is the most important form of legitimacy. By contrast, “articulation of legitimacy” implies that a set of governing relationships is under threat.<sup>14</sup> Steven Lukes says similar things, only from a much more critical standpoint: the “most effective and insidious use of power”, he contends, is to prevent conflict from arising in the first place.<sup>15</sup> Whether conservative or Gramscian, both men are preoccupied with legitimacy and representation.

German Jewry faced numerous religious and intellectual conflicts, yet we know little about the processes by which legitimacy was maintained, overturned, or reasserted. Two ways of addressing this question come to mind. One is to analyse the rhetoric employed—religious, historical, and otherwise—to justify a specific stance, allowing us to locate influences being translated into the German-Jewish setting.<sup>16</sup> The other is to study the people who were doing the resisting and the contesting—their social networks, institutional backing, and intellectual standing.

Once again two instances. Compared to earlier periods, the Weimar Republic was a level playing field for different Jewish politics. Even so, the Liberals held on

<sup>13</sup> The term “emotional community” was first introduced by Barbara E. Rosenwein. ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’, in *American Historical Review* Vol. 107 (2006), p. 842.

<sup>14</sup> Rodney Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State*, Oxford 1990, p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Steven Lukes, *Power. A Radical View*, London 2005, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> See especially James Clifford, *Routes. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, MA 1997.

to power for the longest time, not the least because of the force of their own convictions. But we need to delve more deeply into the way in which Jewish *Honoratioren*, confronted with a growing Zionist opposition, resorted to conventional measures of power politics: coalition building, cooperation with the authorities, and straightforward manipulation. Alternatively, where the *Volkspartei* gained ground, the mechanisms and channels exploited against Liberal hegemony require special scrutiny.<sup>17</sup> Weimar's Jewish elites, Lukes would insist, had trouble preventing conflict in the first place—and were therefore losing power. Yet how exactly this turn of fate came about remains to be seen.

The Federal Republic offers another case in point. Here we detect a parallel with the C.V. of old: the *Zentralrat* represented a majority because its *raison d'être* was accepted by most. Whereas the C.V. lost some of its allure, however, the *Zentralrat* remained firmly in control. Aside from the obvious reasons, including the reality of a diminished and traumatised community barely integrated into West German society, the *Zentralrat's* rule is a fascinating example of uninterrupted power, making it difficult to determine where “habitual legitimacy” ended and “invisible” hegemony began. The way in which the men heading this organisation managed to keep disputes out of the public eye; the way in which they managed to portray rivals in a stereotyped, ritualistic vein; the way in which they managed to co-opt young “Bakhtinian” blasphemers in later years: all this awaits future historians.<sup>18</sup>

## COMMENTS ON CURRENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN GERMAN-JEWISH STUDIES

BY MIRIAM RÜRUP

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### Beyond Borders: Crossing the borders of Jewish history!

For some years now, days to commemorate the abolition of slavery have been introduced in countries whose wealth and power depended on slavery and which now confess to this burdening inheritance with the greatest publicity possible. And in the countries of origin of the majority of the former slaves, the tourism industry attempts to upgrade this part of the country's history to promote tourism. This coincides with the need many Afro-Americans feel to go in search of their “roots”. What, however, one could now ask, does the “roots movement” of Afro-Americans have to do with Jewish history? A great deal. If a generous (black) U.S. sponsor intends to build a luxurious hotel in Africa including a theme park on the history of slavery of

<sup>17</sup> It remains a seminal study today, Rudy Koshar, *Social Life, Local Politics and Nazism: Marburg, 1880–1935*, Chapel Hill 1987.

<sup>18</sup> These themes form the core of James C. Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven–London 1990.

his “ancestors”, this is inspired – both in historical and analytical terms – by similar motives such as the trips to the formerly “Jewish Frankfurt” or, taken to extremes, the “march of the living” tours that are organised from Israel every year for school classes visiting Poland.

Both forms of “heritage tours” move in the interface of persecution narrative and transfiguration discourse. Both the learning and remembrance locations that deal with Jewish history and culture are situated between romanticisation and nostalgia on the one hand, which Ruth Gruber has also described as “virtually Jewish”, and, on the other, they are marked by the need for coming to terms with the past or the search for a legacy of the lost Jewry. Both of these endeavors are based on a search motivated by identity policy.

### The new paradigm: Jewish history as general history

The revival of Jewish life here and now entails a specific form of niche formation. While the history of German Jews assumed an outstanding place in general history, at the same time it increasingly disappeared in a Jewish niche. Sooner or later, this was bound to lead to the call for Jewish history to be increasingly embedded in general history once again.

As a reflex to the now frequently lamented “ghettoisation” of the Jews in historiography, it has by now become almost customary to refer to the “general” or even “paradigmatic” character of Jewish history.<sup>19</sup> And yet it is still worth staying with this train of thought for a little while and to develop proposals for some change of perspectives or even broadening of views. What follows is not so much about German-Jewish historiography but instead about the specifically German situation of Jewish studies.

Particularly today, when the range of issues in German-Jewish historiography is very wide and much has been achieved, the opportunity presents itself to reconsider well-worn paths. To describe Jewish history as European or even as world history is common usage in more recent works – the fact that this has also arrived in general history in the meantime shows not least that research into transnational history can no longer ignore Jewish historiography.<sup>20</sup>

And this is what is interesting: If we assume that general history can only be understood if we grasp that Jewish history is one of its integral parts then the influences should be considered here in their interaction. For example, not only the classical categories of social history such as gender, class, etc. should play a role in Jewish studies, but the train of thought should also work in reverse. Thus the question as to what gain in knowledge Jewish history contributes to general history

<sup>19</sup> Dan Diner, ‘Geschichte der Juden – ein Paradigma einer europäischen Historie’, in *Annäherungen an eine europäische Geschichtsschreibung*, Vienna 2002, pp. 85–104.

<sup>20</sup> See for example the article by Shulamit Volkov, ‘Jewish History. The Nationalism of Transnationalism’, in *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Göttingen 2006, pp. 190–201.

could be asked much more frequently. Just as the category of gender for example has more recently been increasingly introduced into Jewish studies, Jewish studies should also become more frequently integrated into gender studies. After all, the history of the German national movement cannot be written without taking into account its masculine character. Naturally, the specific features of this masculine mold only become clear when one devotes more interest to the marginalised masculinities, in this case particularly the Jewish variety. The methodological approaches of gender history could also be productive for the investigation of Jewish history – for example the concept of “performativity”, according to which Jewish identity can be analysed as constructed analogously to female or male identity and generated by “performance”.

#### Topoi of Jewish historiography – from homogeneity to heterogeneity

Jewish historical research still largely revolves around questions of identity and, in so doing, pursues a policy of identity.<sup>21</sup> Quite a few studies – not least my own – deal with constructions of identity or identities that arise in interaction from “outside” (general social discourse) and “inside” (the question of the conception of oneself as a Jew). This is in no way to be regarded as out-dated, although remaining stuck in the Jewish “ghetto” – and the refusal to see this identity search not as a paradigm of the modern times and the search for the self per se – reveals a narrow perception of German-Jewish historical research. In this sense, one could call for the premise of Jewish uniqueness to be removed.

It is nevertheless productive to inquire about specific features of historical phenomena, each of which appears to be something special. The central motive of Jewish history is constant movement: Both in the spatial sense of migration and of everyday communicative movement between the “cultures”; between one’s own Jewish culture and the particular hegemonic, Christian or Muslim cultures.

Since the Jewish “life-worlds” are each embedded in different contexts, both in terms of space and time, and these contexts are, on the one hand, (co)determined by the non-Jewish surroundings, but at the same time run counter to the time and space concepts perceived as hegemonic, it becomes clear that Jewish history cannot be investigated in isolation. Neither can the history of the East European Jews for example be considered in the Budapest of the 1920s without perceiving the migration of Budapest Jews to Berlin – nor can the history of Jewish contingent refugees in Germany or of Russian immigrants into Israel be explained without the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., for the major narratives of Jewish historiography, the summarising essay by Michael Brenner, ‘Von einer jüdischen Geschichte zu vielen jüdischen Geschichten’, in Michael Brenner / David Myers, *Jüdische Geschichtsschreibung heute. Themen, Positionen, Kontroversen*, Munich 2002, pp. 17–35, esp. pp. 18–23.



Studies on Jewish history have long dealt with the questions of inside and outside – in other words the question of how the Jewish community has dealt with the non-Jewish environment.

This approach involves two problems: On the one hand, it is characterised by the narrative of exclusion history and thus assumes schematic and supposedly homogeneous entities – both in the Jewish communities and in the non-Jewish environment.

This is a major problem of minority history: In talking about a minority, we always assume an existing majority. We should however – and this applies to the whole of the science of history – question the existence of a majority in general. *The* history does not exist and therefore, in the final consequence, nor does general history, into which Jewish history could be embedded. Or, more bluntly put: There is no history of minorities because there is no history of majorities. And German-Jewish history is a perfect example of this.

Jewish history has hitherto to a great extent been written as the history of an addition of exclusion practices – or, particularly with regard to the history of the German-Jewish bourgeoisie, was measured in terms of the increasing success of Jewish emancipation and was thus considered as a history of advancement commencing with the age of emancipation and reaching its climax in the golden twenties. The view of the possible interaction<sup>22</sup> between “the excluded” and “persecutors” – to remain with this image – was thus obstructed by an imagined and also factual power gradient; similarly and particularly, not much attention was paid to inner-Jewish diversity and the various affiliations that were not limited merely to the existence as “the persecuted” and “the suppressed”.

The fact that Jewish history has always been determined either by exclusion or by integration is an *a priori* of Jewish Studies and is rightly considered to be the basic principle of Jewish experience. And nevertheless the blunt question could be asked: is that not an anthropological basic constant of any human existence?

### Deconstructions

For some years now, research has been endeavoring to question critically central concepts that have been essential for the master narrative of the subject – examples would be analytical terms such as acculturation and assimilation or empirical ones such as the term ghetto. Jewish historiography has thus entered the stage of self-historisation.

This area also includes a reflection on the category “Jewish”: How is this term used? It is frequently more third-party ascriptions than self-ascriptions that

<sup>22</sup>On the interaction in everyday life, see Marion Kaplan (ed.), *Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland. Vom 7. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Munich 2003.

are involved – one of the continuing challenges here is making a sharper distinction between an analytical category relating to Jews as subjects of study such as “Jewish science”<sup>23</sup> on the one hand and the questions of Jewish identity and self-description(s) on the other.

Using the pluralised term “Jewries” could remedy the matter, since this would express recognition of Jewish diversity in the various, disparate European areas, ages and milieus. It appears to be particularly suitable because it counteracts the concept of a homogeneous unit of “the Jews”.

Searching for new narratives – from minority studies to postcolonial studies:  
provincialise Germany!

A “new generation” of German-Jewish studies, as of Jewish studies as a whole, should take advantage of the opportunity to bid farewell to beloved topoi of previous historiography: German “*Betroffenheit*” may have made just as much a contribution to this as the Zionist striving for legitimation: Jews are still largely seen as victims; whether it is as victims of antisemitic persecution, or whether it is as heroic martyrs. In both these cases with their greatly different motivations, we should dare break down inner-Jewish and Zionist taboos just as much as German contrition-related ones.

Why not take up old questions anew? After all it is not a question of throwing all old approaches overboard but of taking a new look at them in the light of the new theoretical approaches as a result of the many cultural turns.

Jewish history is always a history of marginalisations and persecutions as well, though it should not be limited to the history of exclusion; Salo W. Baron called for this as early as the 1920s. It is also a history of overcoming the diverse marginalisations, of the attempt to become part of many parts of society or to itself become hegemonic in various (sub)cultures. If we detach ourselves from the view burdened by the Nazis, we can see that the history of the Jews as a minority history is simply *one* comparative history among many, of *one* minority among many. This detachment from great narratives can be spurred on by stimuli from other areas of the science of history and thus contribute to overcoming the disassociation of Jewish history as well.

The fact that historical migration research also uses terms to be found in Jewish historiography such as those of acculturation and assimilation could encourage

<sup>23</sup> See most recently the volume by Ulrich Charpa / Ute Deichmann, *Jews and Sciences in German Contexts. Case Studies from the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 72), or the very circumspect and comprehensive introductory chapter by Reinhard Rürup, in *idem* with the collaboration of Michael Schüring, *Schicksale und Karrieren. Gedenkbuch für die von den Nationalsozialisten aus der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft vertriebenen Forscherinnen und Forscher Schicksale und Karrieren* (Geschichte der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus, 14), esp. pp. 92–143.

one to open up more in terms of discipline, theory and methodology. Taking into account the before-mentioned fact that it is precisely Jewish history being a classic example of the permanence of the migration phenomenon in human history, it is surprising that German-Jewish history and migration research, for example, for a long time trod substantially separate paths of research.

And a look at fashionable key words of the past turns also causes one to think time and time again of the specific elements of Jewish historical experience – thus Jewish history is entangled history par excellence; it is transnational anyway; the fact that imagined communities are involved has also already been pointed out.

And thus the boundaries between the various hyphenated studies will have to be crossed regularly in the future. A good example of this is the diaspora studies. Used up to now in parallel in separate research contexts, the diaspora-concepts based in Afro-American studies more recently have been linked to an expanded Jewish understanding of diaspora. For example, Simon Dubnow's deliberations on diaspora-nationalism can be relevant for studies on multicultural, multiethnic, multireligious – per se heterogeneous human societies.<sup>24</sup> The comparison polemically used at the beginning – between the “roots movement” of the Afro-Americans and Jewish nostalgia tourism to the cradle of “authentic Judaism” in Eastern Europe – has its source in these considerations.

Carrying out research on German-Jewish history beyond these discipline boundaries means crossing borders several times: it implies both shifting the geographical angle while simultaneously reconsidering time breaks.

New research on contemporary Jewish history will see the focus less and less on Germany, Europe and Eastern Europe; instead, the former centres of historical research as well as of historical experience will increasingly form the periphery to what has developed equally, on the one hand in the United States, and on the other in the Middle East to a new location/centre of Jewish life and research/science. Perhaps it will even be Israeli and U.S. research on the history of the Jews in Germany or Europe that will first bring the actual extension of perspectives – from an angle that is at least not primarily burdened by the Nazi past and might succeed in asking questions quite differently.

Defining boundaries of epochs differently has been pointed out frequently as a necessity of Jewish historiography – for example, when the age of emancipation constitutes a break in Jewish history that was of little or of a quite different significance to non-Jewish history. To critically question general boundaries of epochs in the sense of the postcolonial studies is one of the challenges for the research on Jewish history and could set quite different landmarks for the history of the Jewish “world citizens”.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the forthcoming essay by Grit Jilek, ‘Zukunft Diaspora. Simon Dubnows Vision von einer a-staatlichen jüdischen Moderne’, in Miriam Rürup (ed.), ‘*Fremd im eigenen Land*’: *Diasporic cultures – diasporic mentalities?*, forthcoming Göttingen Autumn 2009 (Veröffentlichungen des Zeitgeschichtlichen Arbeitskreises Niedersachsen, 25).

The opportunity behind these reflections consists in writing Jewish history as a kind of “counter-history”, which reflects the supposedly “general” history like a microcosm.<sup>25</sup>

Where will it lead?

Proletarianise Jewish history!

Obviously, the choice of sources significantly influences the questions of any research work. Because of the diasporic and transnational character of Jewish history, its research is faced with a very special problem – or challenge: the linguistic diversity of its sources. Scarcely any other research topic is so crucially molded by the language skills of the researcher. For example, a history of the Jewish communities of the early Federal Republic of Germany could be written from completely different angles, and this not only because one’s own approaches are inherent in any research, but because the line of vision is clearly directed by the language of the sources – someone who reads Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian or only German will in each case convey a different picture of these early community foundations. A mere glance at journals of Jewish communities in today’s Germany shows for example that, without a knowledge of Russian, only limited information can be obtained about Jewish life in the supposedly limited field of German-Jewish history in unified Germany.

The diversity of topics will presumably expand in the future and research will probably no longer focus on organisation and community histories. What would be desirable is an “individualisation” of the German-Jewish recording of history that detaches itself just as much from the narrative of the elite and success history as from the history of exclusion and persecution. It is precisely *not* the Zionistic “heroes and martyrs” nor is it the emancipated Schockens or Liebermanns, but the individuals in whom the disruptions in history can be illustrated that make Jewish history so exciting. This is why what I would call for is: Let us turn toward a proletarianisation of Jewish history. Very much in the sense of Ben Gurion’s statement that, only when there were Jewish scoundrels and prostitutes in Tel Aviv would Israel be a normal state, German-Jewish historiography should also increasingly devote its attention to Jewish deviance and apostasy – albeit the challenge this implies, especially considering the lack of obvious sources. But then the challenge is to maybe read “old” sources in a different way to explore new questions and topics. In this way we will quite incidentally move away from the Jewish niche and help to write a modern, multifaceted history of right and wrongs, communisation and individualisation, society and state and much more.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. on the concept of Jewish history as counter history in its original shaping (according to which the science of Jewishness arose as the counter history to the Christian science tradition), Susannah Heschel, ‘Jewish Studies as Counterhistory’, in David Biale / Michael Galchinsky / Susannah Heschel (eds.), *Insider – Outsider. American Jews and Multiculturalism*, Berkeley 1998, pp. 102–115.

BUYING FUTURES

BY LILIANE WEISSBERG

Christopher H. Browne, Distinguished Professor in Arts and Science, University of Pennsylvania

When the Leo Baeck Institutes were founded in New York, London, and Jerusalem after World War II, they set out to further German-Jewish Studies under a dual proposition. First, they defined their subject, German-Jewish life and culture, as one of the past, and one that had been irrevocably lost and destroyed. The pre-eminent field for German-Jewish Studies was history, just as its subject had become historical. The LBI institutes with their libraries, archives, and publications were monuments to this past, and material testimonies of loss. Secondly, the new locations of print and archival material taken from German synagogues, Jewish communities, or German-Jewish collections, and transferred to England, Israel, but predominantly to the United States, paralleled the emigration points of many Holocaust survivors, those German Jews and their descendants who looked at the archives as a new intellectual home of sorts, as well as treasure trove of genealogical information. The LBI was founded in and as a place of exile, a safe house for displaced records, and for the traces of former Jewish lives in Germany, Austria, and elsewhere. The institutes were supposed to instigate research on German Jews in these new places, and thus study a now distant geography as well as an increasingly distant time.

But since the founding of the LBI in 1955, scholars have turned these safe houses of memory into places as of activity whose agenda has evolved with the change of the field of research. In the past couple of decades, moreover, scholars in Germany entered the field in larger numbers, and provided for a partial re-emigration of the field. Today, copies of the holdings of the New York LBI are available on microfilm and otherwise at an LBI site in Berlin's Jewish Museum, a symbolic but also practical move by which the material followed the place of residence of many of its researchers.

At the time of the founding of the LBI institutes, Hannah Arendt, an early, if short-timed, member of the New York branch, had insisted on the historical aspect of its work, and wrote in the preface of her biography of Rahel Varnhagen, published by the LBI in 1958: "it must not be forgotten that the subject matter is altogether historical, and that nowadays not only the history of the German Jews, but also their specific complex of problems, are a matter of the past."<sup>26</sup> Today, however, the Jewish community in Germany is generally thought to be the fastest growing one in Europe. The post-1989 immigration from the former Soviet Union and other Eastern European states provides Germany with a quite distinct Jewish population with its own new set of defining characteristics and problems, Jews and people of Jewish descent in Germany, are still alive and well—whether they could be called German Jews

<sup>26</sup> Hannah Arendt, Introduction to *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, London 1958, p. xiii.

or not.<sup>27</sup> Diana Pinto, in a report for the European Union, even singled out this new German-Jewish population as the avant-garde in terms of a new definition of European Jewry at large.<sup>28</sup> Such optimism may be misplaced, as the demographic figures are grim, the rate of Jewish emigration from Germany high, as well as the numbers of those who leave the official communities or more informal structures. But the landscape has clearly been shifting. How, then, are we supposed to adjust the field of German-Jewish Studies to this new situation?

In terms of historical emphasis, German-Jewish Studies has largely concentrated on the perceived periods of “triumph,” and “tragedy” of the more recent past. The late eighteenth century has been the traditional focus for the study of early writings by Jews in German, and thanks to major scholarly work by David Sorkin, Shmuel Feiner, and Christoph Schulte’s efforts with Feiner to put the major texts on line, the Berlin Haskalah has become a period well researched in its religious and philosophical aspects. Steven Lowenstein’s social histories of this period have added further texture, as have the historiographical implications by Adam Sutcliffe or Jonathan Hess, just to name a few authors of major works.<sup>29</sup>

If the struggle for emancipation, and the integration into the European Enlightenment movement at large, provides one area of much recent research, the Weimar Republic can be singled out as another popular field. Here, scholars meet to consider both the possible success of German and Jewish integration, and the foreshadowing of future discrimination. Sander Gilman’s studies on the history and pre-history of racial definitions begin earlier, but focus often on the period between 1918 and 1933, for example.<sup>30</sup> Further work has been done by the historians like Michael Brenner,<sup>31</sup> as well as many critics who have studied individual authors like Else Lasker-Schüler, critics like Walter Benjamin (both are currently receiving new critical editions), or politicians like Walther Rathenau; in Austria, research has largely focused on the early twentieth century as well, with work on Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler, or (more recently, due to his anniversary this year) Joseph Roth.

<sup>27</sup> Y. Michal Bodemann (ed.), *The New German Jewry and the European Context: The Return of the European Jewish Diaspora*, Houndsmills 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Diana Pinto, ‘The Jewish Challenges in the New Europe’, in *Challenging Ethnic Citizenship: German and Israeli Perspectives on Immigration*, ed. by Daniel Levy and Yfaat Weiss, New York 2002, pp. 250–251.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, David Sorkin, *Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, Detroit 1999, Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, transl. by Chaya Naor and Sondra Silverston, Oxford 2002; Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, transl. by Chaya Naor, Philadelphia 2004; Feiner and Sorkin (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, London 2001; Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770–1830*, New York–Oxford 1994; Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews, and the Claims of Modernity*, New Haven, CT 2002; Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, Cambridge, NY 2003. See also Christoph Schulte, *Die jüdische Aufklärung: Philosophie, Religion, Geschichte*, Munich 2002. The digitalisation of publications relating to the Haskalah movement was made possible by an Israeli grant, and co-sponsored by the F.U. Berlin.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Sander Gilman, *Jewish Frontiers, Essays on Bodies, Histories, and Identities*, New York 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, New Haven, CT 1996.

While the study of the Holocaust has remained a central focus for many scholars in German-Jewish Studies, its place has shifted in recent years. In addition to historical considerations, the study of the Holocaust and its survivors has in turn become paradigmatic for the study of trauma in psychoanalytic and cultural theory. “Memory Studies” with its conception of “collective,” “cultural,” and even “post-memory” are often eager to choose examples from the tragic experience of German Jewry, while discussions relating to new Holocaust memorials or Jewish Museum buildings in Germany promote new considerations of a culture of commemoration.

In terms of German-Jewish Studies, however, it will be necessary to move beyond the moments of potential celebration and all-too-certain tragedy. Marion Kaplan’s social history is a sober step in this direction,<sup>32</sup> as well as recent work by Deborah Hertz on Jewish assimilation and conversion, and Hess’s study on popular literature,<sup>33</sup> but much more work needs to be done by historians, literary, and cultural critics on German Jewry and its cultural production in the nineteenth century. We do not know enough of the literature of this period, of the struggles of the emergent reform and orthodox communities, of pedagogical models, new encounters with city life, or Jewish immigration. Reflection is needed that would build on, but also go beyond, models developed by political theory, and a general cultural theory reliant on class, race, and gender.

Atina Grossmann’s book on post-war DP camps or the recent exhibition on *Raub und Restitution* at the Jewish Museum in Berlin offer glimpses into the immediate post-war history,<sup>34</sup> but again, much more work will be needed here—and has to be extended to the present. There are only few studies focusing on Jewish academics, politicians, writers, artists, returning to Germany after the Second World War. What kind of impact did they have on post-war West Germany? What kind of impact did they have on the newly founded GDR? Can we learn more about the structure and support networks of the East German Jewish communities, and of the lives of Jews in the former GDR? Can we learn more about post-war Vienna, as place for returning Austrian Jews, as well as Eastern Jewish immigration, and an exit point for the route to Palestine and later Israel? And why do historians or literary critics of German-speaking Jewry so often exclude the study of Swiss Jews?

German-Jewish Studies has to be interdisciplinary, and in addition to temporal and geographical gaps, there are whole areas of intellectual enquiry that will need further attention. Bodemann has already added sociology in moving German-Jewish Studies to the present day,<sup>35</sup> and a research project at the *Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum* at the Potsdam University focused on post-1989 Russian immigration,<sup>36</sup> as

<sup>32</sup> Marion Kaplan (ed.), *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945*, Oxford 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Deborah Hertz, *How Jews Became Germans: The History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin*, New Haven 2007; Hess’s study of nineteenth-century German-Jewish literature will be forthcoming from Stanford University Press next year.

<sup>34</sup> Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*, Princeton 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Bodemann, *A Jewish Family in Germany Today: An Intimate Portrait*, Durham 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Julius Schoeps, Willi Jasper, Bernhard Vogt (eds.), *Ein neues Judentum in Deutschland? Fremd- und Eigenbilder der russisch-jüdischen Einwanderer*, Potsdam 1999.

will an exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt, planned for 2010. Michael Brocke at the University of Düsseldorf is one of several scholars who had spear-headed the regional studies of former Jewish population centres and Jewish cemeteries, and within this context, they have also been descriptions of existent or former synagogue structures.<sup>37</sup> Apart from these architectural descriptions and histories, very limited work has been done in the history of art. This relates to Jewish religious art and artifacts in general as well as to the history of Jewish artists and collectors. We do not know enough about the lives and work of Jewish musicians, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

History of Science seems to be a much neglected area of concern in German-Jewish studies, although Gideon Freudenthal's work has clearly provided evidence for its fruitful integration.<sup>38</sup> And increasingly, and in the face of Germany's present-day Turkish immigrants and their descendents, German-Jewish scholars will have to consider the relationship of their subjects to other cultural and religious minorities. Susannah Heschel's current research has begun to do so historically, by considering early twentieth century Jewish scholars' interest in the study of Islam.

Most importantly, perhaps, it may finally be time to move more fervently beyond a gathering of documents and data in a stronger effort to theorise about the field, to reflect on the relationship between religion and "secularisation", questions of identity, of gender, of group versus class structure, local and transnational bonds, and concepts of multicultural production. But in developing a stronger framework for the field and clearer theoretical perspectives, there is also a need to reconsider earlier efforts in defining Judaism and its religious, geographical, communal contexts. Situated in an uneasy space between continental philosophy and religious studies, it may just be time to reconsider Jewish philosophy, a reconsideration that has, after all, tradition within German thought as well. Are we able to speak of a German-Jewish philosophy after Moses Mendelssohn? Do current concerns about ethics lead to a rereading of work by Hermann Cohen or Franz Rosenzweig? Eric Santner and Peter Fenves, for example, have shown—albeit in quite different ways—how productive a reading of such texts can be.<sup>39</sup> Moving to the future may, perhaps, also mean to go back to the roots of modern German-Jewish study of Judaism and Jewish concerns. What has really been the impact of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* for philosophical as well as historical thought? And has Critical

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, *Synagogues in Germany: A Virtual Reconstruction*, ed. by Darmstadt University of Technology, Department CAD in Architecture, Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations; catalogue texts and bibliography by Marc Grellert *et al.*, translation of catalogue texts, Helga Grellert, Helga Schier, Basel 2004.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Gideon Freudenthal (ed.), *Salomon Maimon: Rational Dogmatist, Empirical Skeptic: Critical Assessments*, Dordrecht 2003. A newly established visiting professorship in German-Jewish studies and history of science at the ETH Zurich may, indeed, promote further work in this direction.

<sup>39</sup> Eric Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig*, Chicago 2001; Peter Fenves, *Arresting Language: From Leibniz To Benjamin*, Stanford 2001.



Theory (and the research of the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, for example) any roots in such a German-Jewish intellectual tradition?<sup>40</sup>

Scholars working in earlier periods will certainly be able to point at other areas of concern, of which the study of early book production may be just one. But clearly, German-Jewish Studies has already moved from a largely historical field into a more interdisciplinary one, focusing on less prominent examples and increasingly on everyday life and popular culture, adding more theoretical reflection, and shifting its subject into the present. And just like its subject, it may perhaps not only have a past to study, but also a future to focus on.

STUDYING PRINT CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE:  
SOME THOUGHTS ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN  
GERMAN-JEWISH STUDIES

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Almost ten years ago, the contributors to the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book's* forum on future directions in research on German Jewry made several remarkably prescient observations. They noted that the academic study of German-Jewish history was embarking on a course of paying considerable attention to the early modern period. They predicted that gender would finally be integrated into the scholarly mainstream as a crucial critical category of historical analysis for German-Jewish Studies. And last but not least, they called for increased attention to comparative studies, anticipating in many ways the transnational turn that humanities scholarship has taken in the last decade. In my contribution to this year's forum, I would like to reflect on one of the most dramatic transformations of the last ten years, and one few of us would have anticipated at the turn of the millennium, when most of us still hooked up to the internet using dial-up connections, and when the Leo Baeck Institute's library catalogue had not yet even been mounted online.

Over the course of the last decade, digital technology has radically altered the material conditions of scholarly research. Scholars and students across the globe now have easy, direct and free access to sources—particularly print materials—that just a decade ago were available only to those fortunate enough to be able to secure funding for expensive and extensive research trips. Web-based databases such as compact memory ([www.compactmemory.com](http://www.compactmemory.com)), an online portal to more than 100 different German-Jewish periodicals published between 1806 and 1938, give today's students of German-Jewish history and culture an unprecedented level of access to materials that previous generations of scholars never imagined they

<sup>40</sup> Raphael Gross at the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt will, for the first time, hold an exhibition on the history of the Frankfurt School and the return of many of its proponents to post-war Germany; this may, indeed, further a discussion.

would be able to access—and print out for personal use—from their home computers. Initiatives such as Google books ([books.google.com](http://books.google.com)) may lack any particular institutional commitments to German-Jewish Studies. In their seeming entropy, however, such digitization projects have the potential to alter the field radically, placing thousands of relevant titles into an easily accessible and searchable public domain. These digital resources obviously do not make archives and libraries obsolete. But they enable beginning graduate students to have sources at their fingertips in a way that most of their faculty mentors never would have dreamed about.

My point here is not just to sing the praises of technology in a manner that will inevitably appear quaint a decade from now. The sheer amount of print material that students of German-Jewish Studies are faced with today is important because of the new types of scholarship it makes possible, because of the new sets of questions it should enable us to pose. In his seminal study *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson argued for the tremendous power of print capitalism in shaping new forms of community in the nineteenth century, forms of collective belonging mediated by leaps of faith where individuals came to identify in unprecedented ways with others whom they neither met nor would ever meet face to face.<sup>41</sup> For Anderson, it was the newspaper and the novel that most facilitated the construction of such imagined communities. Anderson's book is subtitled *Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, and his analysis makes the emergence of nationalism contingent on the rapid expansion of print culture in the nineteenth century. Students and scholars of the German-Jewish experience know all too well, of course, that the powers of print in the nineteenth century did not just promote forms of national identification. Print culture also helped launch distinct yet often highly permeable subcultures, both within the nation and across national boundaries, enabling a new sense of collective belonging for Jews in the German lands and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe where German either functioned as a lingua franca or as one language among others in which Jews might develop literacy. By the 1860s, German-Jewish print media had mushroomed from modest beginnings with David Fränkel's and Joseph Wolf's journal *Sulamith* (1806–1848) into a diverse menu of options including newspapers, journals, yearbooks, book series and other new venues for the dissemination of news, scholarship and belles lettres. And today, in the age of digital media, scholars have access to vast amounts of this material in ways the founders of the Leo Beack Institute would never have thought possible.

During the nineteenth century, we know, German Jews experienced an unprecedented level of social, geographical and economic mobility. Surrounded by new opportunities, Jews began attending German-language schools, abandoning traditionally Jewish professions such as peddling and petty trading, and adopting the mores and behavioral norms of bourgeois culture. As Jews moved into new worlds and fashioned new identities for themselves as Germans, as Europeans,

<sup>41</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition, London 1991.

as members of the middle class and as Jews, they encountered a rapidly expanding German-language book market, a dizzying world of lending libraries and book-traders supplying a quickly growing reading public with a seemingly constant source of newspapers, journals, novels, plays and serialised fiction. Exactly how Jews both encountered this world of print culture in the German vernacular and created their own world of German-language Jewish print media to supplement it, however, is an area whose contours we have barely begun to sketch.<sup>42</sup> We know plenty about nineteenth-century literary elites such as Rahel Varnhagen, Fanny Lewald or Heinrich Heine, none of whom maintained meaningful connections to Jewish institutional life. We are, similarly, also familiar with the enthusiasm that memoirs written by the educated elite routinely voice for the works of Goethe, Schiller and Lessing. But a broad-based history of German-Jewish reading culture remains a *desideratum*.

As a seminal text I regularly teach to my undergraduates such as Solomon Maimon's 1792 *Lebensgeschichte* makes clear, it was often through print that Jews in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came into contact with secular culture. Just as significantly, as the scores of periodicals in the compact memory project demonstrate so dramatically, it was the modern print media that so many budding Jewish publicists turned to as a newfangled venue that might be put to use to create and secure a place for Judaism and Jewish culture in the modern world. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, to cite just one telling example, rabbis in smaller orthodox synagogues did not just use lead articles of Marcus Lehmann's newspaper *Der Israelit* as the basis for their sermons. In orthodox communities without rabbis, these articles—typically printed in installments, set against the backdrop of both news items and heavy doses of serialised fiction—were often read out loud verbatim in place of a sermon.<sup>43</sup> Exactly what this means about the nature of modern Jewish culture has yet to be fully investigated.

Obviously, Jewish men and women read widely before the modern era. But print media played an enormous role in transforming Jewish culture in modernity, and the fact that the era of print belongs perhaps more clearly to the past than it did a decade ago makes this a phenomenon that we are in a better position to appreciate and investigate than ever before. Jews in the nineteenth-century German-speaking world did not just create an alternative German-language public sphere geared toward Jewish interests and deeply invested in Jewish continuity. They invested modern print culture with the power to promote Jewish identity. This process transformed Judaism in turn into a form of both selfhood and collective belonging that

<sup>42</sup> For a review of some of the seminal scholarship that has emerged in this field, see the introduction to Jonathan M. Hess, *Middlebrow Literature and the Making of German-Jewish Identity*, Stanford, CA forthcoming.

<sup>43</sup> Jon Lehmann, *Dr Markus Lehmann*, Frankfurt am Main 1910, p. 77. For background on Marcus Lehmann, see Hess, 'Fiction and the Making of Modern Orthodoxy, 1857–1890: Orthodoxy and the Quest for the German-Jewish Novel' *LBI Year Book* 52 (2007), pp. 49–86.

was forged not just in the synagogue, the home, the school or the expanding networks of Jewish associational life but through encounters with the mass-produced medium of print. In the nineteenth century, in other words, Judaism became an imagined identity in a radically new way, the product of acts of newspaper and journal reading and the consumption of the novel forms of belles lettres produced through Jewish print media.

Claiming that print culture enabled the construction of a new form of imagined Jewish identity, of course, does not mean that this form of identity was not real. Nor does this entail claiming a privileged significance for print that would set it apart from the numerous other important ways in which Jewish identity was produced and transformed in the nineteenth-century German-speaking world. Indeed, studying German-Jewish print culture is important because it enables us to see connections between so many facets of both Jewish and non-Jewish life in this period. In terms of method, it allows us to articulate the local with both the national and the transnational, while forcing us to integrate the tools of literary criticism, social- and intellectual history and media history as well. Historians, of course, have long since turned to the German-Jewish press as source material. Now seems, however, to be a particularly auspicious moment for considering German-Jewish print culture not just as an historical resource for our reconstruction of the past but as one of the major venues through which modern German-Jewish culture began to imagine itself into existence.

## THE CONTRADICTION LEGACIES OF GERMAN JEWRY

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Hannah Arendt's reply to Karl Jaspers' invitation to write for his new journal, *Die Wandlung* is a revealing document of the identity dilemmas facing German Jews after the Holocaust. "I know you will not misunderstand me when I say that it is not an easy thing for me to contribute to a German journal", she wrote, while also expressing her unhappiness about the "desperate resolve" of Jews to leave Europe for Palestine. Her ambivalence about the place of Jews in Europe was captured in a new axiom: "If Jews are to be able to stay in Europe, then they cannot stay as Germans or Frenchmen, etc., as if nothing had happened . . . We can return only if we are welcome as Jews."<sup>44</sup> This axiom has been heeded by all "sides" ever since. Germans and Jews are invariably juxtaposed as if they do not mix, like oil and water, although Germany is home for tens of thousands of Jews for whom German is their mother tongue. Children of Holocaust survivors like Eva Hoffman insist that no reconciliation or accommodation is possible between Germans and Jews,

<sup>44</sup>Hannah Arendt to Karl Jaspers, 29 January 1945, in *Hannah Arendt/Karl Jaspers Correspondence, 1926–1969*, ed. by Lotte Kohler and Hans Sanier, transl. by Robert and Rita Kimber, New York, 1992, pp. 31–32.

the perpetrators and the victims.<sup>45</sup> And even writers sympathetic to the humanistic legacy of the supposed “German-Jewish symbiosis”, like Shulamit Volkov and Liliane Weissberg, seem to posit Germans and Jews as ontologically distinct categories. The humanistic dimension is the hope that people from different backgrounds can live “together in a democracy that is capable of providing the range of prerequisites for a genuine cooperation among them”.<sup>46</sup>

The field of German-Jewish history, then, is still informed by what Pierre Bourdieu called “our primary inclination to think the social world in a substantialist manner”<sup>47</sup>: ethnic relations are regarded as a zero-sum game of interaction in which a cultural adaptation, layered or co-mingled identity is coded as a loss or gain for a minority or majority, an intuitive and understandable framing of the human imaginary for anyone who, like Volkov, was raised in the shadow of the Holocaust and formed by a “Zionism that felt unable to openly discuss doubts”.<sup>48</sup> This subconscious division of the world into Jews and non-Jews—with nothing in between—subtends understandings of Jewish emancipation in Germany as amounting to “utter Jewish assimilation” and the decline of autonomous Jewish strength and vitality. This is a remarkable view in light of David Sorkin’s well-known argument that German Jews developed their own sub-culture that transcended such stark dichotomies.<sup>49</sup> That this interpretive tendency persists in serious scholarship is also surprising after Sam Moyn’s complaint in these pages thirteen years ago about the baleful consequences of “ethnic absolutism” and the negative teleology of the Holocaust on the historiography of German Jewry.<sup>50</sup>

There are significant implications of what Gil Hochberg, in reference to the Arab-Jewish imbrication, calls the “separatist imagination”.<sup>51</sup> What is the *Heimat* of Jews who live in Germany? Whether (other) Germans really consider them as co-nationals is revealed occasionally when gormless local politicians ask German Jews if their homeland is actually Israel. The German-Jewish relationship has become triangular because a state exists, Israel, which claims to represent the ancestral and authentic homeland of Jews everywhere—and particularly those who

<sup>45</sup> Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, New York 2004, p. 111: “The gulf – moral, political, affective – between the victim and the perpetrator is almost absolute.”

<sup>46</sup> Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 297; Liliane Weissberg, ‘Reflecting on the Past, Envisioning the Future: Perspectives for German-Jewish Studies’, *German Historical Association Bulletin*, no. 35 (2004), pp. 11–32.

<sup>47</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago 1992, p. 228.

<sup>48</sup> Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites*, p. ix. An alternative to this zero-sum game imaginary is Michael Rothberg’s concept of “multidirectional memory”; see his *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Stanford 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Weissberg, ‘Reflecting on the Past, Envisioning the Future’, p. 21; Moshe Zimmerman, *Die Deutsche Juden, 1914–1945*, Munich 1997; David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, Oxford–New York 1987. As a student of George L. Mosse, it is perhaps no surprise that Sorkin was sensitive to the complexities of cultural interaction.

<sup>50</sup> Sam Moyn, ‘German Jewry and the Question of Identity Historiography and Theory’, *LBI Year Book*, XLI (1996), pp. 291–308.

<sup>51</sup> Gil Hochberg, *In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs, and the Limits of Separatist Imagination*, Princeton 2007.

inexplicably live in the land of the perpetrators.<sup>52</sup> Why does the German-Jewish leadership feel compelled to defend Israeli military action, however excessive it may be, against the criticism of non-Jewish Germans who, in turn, expect it to represent the Jewish-Israeli (these categories are significantly conflated) perspective for (other) Germans? The assumption that Jews are not really German nationals is reinforced by both “sides”.

Who or what, then, are the Jews of Germany and how does one write historically about this cultural formation? Can we transcend the separatist imagination? Over the past fifteen years, scholars of literature have turned to the tools of postcolonial theory to answer these questions. Diaspora theory, in particular, partly inspired by Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin, has yielded a caché of writing about hybrid identities, an approach that readily maps on to the well-worn “symbiosis” trope.<sup>53</sup> Implicitly a- or post-Zionist, this trend has culminated in Jeffrey Peck’s *Being Jewish in the New Germany* (2006), which has taken the anti-essentialism of postmodernism to its logical conclusion; jettisoning authenticity and core-periphery spatial metaphors in the discourse of Jewish identity, Peck writes about Jewish life in contemporary Germany as vibrant, viable—and legitimate. He is interested in variegated praxes and performances rather than the vain search for elusive essences.<sup>54</sup> Other scholars, like Leslie Adelson and Yasemin Yildiz, are likewise exploring the complexities of language-use and the interaction of Turkish-Jewish metaphors and frames in the “new Germany”.<sup>55</sup> The German-Jewish-Israeli nexus is now difficult to imagine without the Turkish one.

Although this approach of the “decentered subject”—Jewishness, Turkishness and Germanness as fluid containers of identity—has moved beyond the separatist imagination, it needs to be supplemented for historical research as opposed to literary research. The reason why becomes clear when we consider Edward Said’s claim in an Israeli newspaper interview that he was the “last Jewish Intellectual”, indeed “a Jewish Palestinian”. He was mourning the tradition of Jewish universalism that he associated with T.W. Adorno, to whom he felt an affinity, and which he

<sup>52</sup> Anthony Kauders, *Unmögliche Heimat: Eine deutsch-jüdische Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, Munich 2007. See Micha Brumlik, ‘Das ist mein Land’, *Jüdische Allgemeine*, 23 December 2004.

<sup>53</sup> Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, ‘Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity’, in Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (eds.), *Theorizing Diaspora*, Malden, MA 2006, pp. 85–118; Moyn, ‘German Jewry and the Question of Identity Historiography and Theory’, Y. Michael Bodemann (ed.), *The New German Jewry and the European Context: The Return of the European Jewish Diaspora*, New York 2008; Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes (ed.), *Unlikely History: The Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis, 1945–2000*, New York 2002; Todd Herzog, ‘Germans and Jews After the Fall of the Wall: The Promises and Problems of Hybridity’, in Adrian Del Caro and Janet Ward (eds.), *German Studies in the Post-Holocaust Age: The Politics of Memory, Identity, and Ethnicity*, Boulder, CO 2000, pp. 93–102; idem, ‘Hybrids and Mischlinge: Translating Anglo-American Cultural Theory in German’, *German Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 1 (1997), pp. 1–17.

<sup>54</sup> Jeffrey M. Peck, *Being Jewish in the New Germany*, New Brunswick–London 2006.

<sup>55</sup> Leslie Adelson, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Towards a New Critical Grammar of Migration*, New York 2005; Yasemin Yildiz, ‘Immer noch keine Adresse in Deutschland? Adressierung als politische Strategie’, in Gabriele Dietze, Claudia Brunner, and Edith Wenzel (eds.), *Kritik des Okzidentalismus: Transdisziplinäre Beiträge zu (Neo)Orientalismus und Geschlecht*, Bielefeld 2009.

championed, in his own way, in his work.<sup>56</sup> This now celebrated quotation has often been interpreted as an attack on Zionism and the associated marginalisation of non-national identities and subjectivities in the Jewish world.<sup>57</sup> But we also know that Said appreciated that nationalism appealed to many, if not himself, and that, at least for a period of his career, he supported the so-called “two state solution” to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Historical agency was not an inexplicable notion. His advocacy for a bi-national Palestinian-Jewish state was thus tempered by concern for and uncertainty about the fate of Jews there, as well as for Palestinians. As he said in the same interview: “I worry about that. The history of minorities in the Middle East has not been as bad as in Europe, but I wonder what would happen. It worries me a great deal. The question of what is going to be the fate of the Jews is a very difficult for me. I really don’t know. It worries me.”<sup>58</sup>

These kinds of dilemmas are not going to be solved by a literature that mournfully recalls previous coexistences and hybridities—whether between Germans and Jews or Arabs and Jews—before the “fall” of nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nor is the current almost singular focus on the legacy of the Holocaust likely to unlock the processes historians need to examine. Gershom Scholem’s conversion to Zionism occurred well before the Nazi persecution, after all. Its significance is his admission that he reclaimed—or constructed—his Jewishness *against* his German past.<sup>59</sup> The nationalising project of Zionism preceded the Holocaust by half a century. Its psychic attractions need to be investigated.

Processes of nationalisation have been interesting historians of Germany since the constructivist turn in nationalism studies. Alon Confino’s study of the relationship between regional and incipient national identity in Imperial Germany is a classic in this genre.<sup>60</sup> Studying these processes not only links personal identity projects to transnational trends; it also necessarily places those projects in imperial contexts in which the elites of subject peoples developed national consciousness—with the associated link between national self-assertion and decolonisation.<sup>61</sup> And this frame raises the question once more of *Heimat*, imaginary and imagined homelands, and authentic belonging, but this time on a much broader canvass.

In doing so, it is insufficient to note that German was an imperial language in the Austro-Hungarian empire, and that Jews were its imperial people who were bound

<sup>56</sup> Said in Ari Shavit, ‘My Right of Return’, *Ha’aretz*, 18 August 2000. Reprinted in *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward Said*, ed. by Gauri Viswanathan, New York 2001, p. 458; Cf. Alon Confino, ‘Remembering Talbiyah: On Edward Said’s Out of Place’, *Israel Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2000), pp. 182–198.

<sup>57</sup> For example, Ephraim Nimni, ‘Wada’an to a Jewish Palestinian’, *Theory and Event*, vol 7, no. 2 (2004).

<sup>58</sup> Said, ‘My Right of Return’.

<sup>59</sup> Weissberg, ‘Reflecting on the Past, Envisioning the Future’, p. 18, David Biale, ‘Gershom Scholem Between German and Jewish Nationalism’, in Klaus L. Berghahn (ed.), *The German-Jewish Dialogue Reconsidered*, New York 1996, pp. 177–188.

<sup>60</sup> Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918*, Chapel Hill, NC 1997.

<sup>61</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: a Derivative Discourse?*, London 1986.

to be crushed by the wheels of separatist nationalisms in the second half of the nineteenth century. Such a perspective is still indented to the “separatist imagination” and the implicit logic of ethnic struggle and survival whose outcome is Zionism and the importation of this logic to the fragile tangled skein of Palestine.<sup>62</sup> Historians would do better to examine how the repertoire of images associated with Jews in Germany expands the German-Jewish-Israeli triangular relationship to a quadrangular one with an Arab, indeed “Asiatic”; “player”. For the fact is that, as Jonathan Hess has pointed out, the emancipation debates of the late eighteenth century imagined Jews as a “Semitic”; “eastern” people; Arabs and Jews as related. And those debates were the functional equivalent of later imperial discussions about granting equal rights to colonial subjects. The German states of the Enlightenment, then, were engaging in an internal colonial debate.<sup>63</sup> Once this move is made, it is possible to creatively invoke postcolonial thinkers like Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon to analyse the psychic dramas of German Jews, as Yfaat Weiss has for Jean Améry, and Michael Rothberg for Ruth Klüger.<sup>64</sup>

But to argue on these grounds, as Susannah Heschel and Derek Penslar have, that Jews were an oppressed colonial minority in Germany, does not sufficiently distance the analysis from the constructions that are transpiring in the material they are investigating. Turning Zionism into an anti-colonial liberation movement, as Penslar does, to rebut scholars who denounce Zionism as a form of settler-colonialism (in which Palestinian Arabs are the oppressed indigenous people), ultimately participates in identity politics rather than analysis—as much as proposition he is contesting.<sup>65</sup> A more consequent perspectivalism can disrupt the fixed ascriptions of belonging and reveal how exclusivist fantasies of *Heimat* can nationalise and denationalise people in complex ways.<sup>66</sup> Thus while many Germans (and Europeans generally) regarded Jews as Oriental and thus not German, Palestinian Arabs viewed Zionist colonists as European and not Oriental. Zionist claims to indigenous status in Erez Israel was preposterous to them, although figures like Martin Buber thought that European Jews were both European and Oriental and

<sup>62</sup> Dan Diner, ‘Residues of Empire: The Paradigmatic Meaning of Jewish Trans-Territorial Experience for an Integrated European History’, in Bodemann, *The New German Jewry and the European Context*, pp. 33–49.

<sup>63</sup> Jonathan M. Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*, New Haven, CN 2002.

<sup>64</sup> Yfaat Weiss, ‘Jean Améry Reads Frantz Fanon: The Post-Colonial Jew’, in Moshe Zimmerann (ed.), *On Germans and Jews Under the Nazi Regime*, Jerusalem 2006, pp. 161–176; Michael Rothberg, ‘In the Nazi Cinema: Race, Visuality and Identification in Fanon and Klüger’, *Wasafiri*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2009), pp. 12–20. Of course, Memmi himself is a fascinating case of nationalisation, transforming himself into an ardent Zionist after beginning with critical anti-colonial writing.

<sup>65</sup> Susannah Heschel, ‘Revolt of the Colonized: Abraham Geiger’s *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a Challenge to Christian Hegemony in the Academy’, in *New German Critique*, no. 77 (1999), pp. 61–85; Derek Penslar, *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective*, Abdingon 2006, chap. 5.

<sup>66</sup> Exemplary is Thomas Kaplan-Pegelow, *The Language of Nazi Genocide*, Cambridge 2009; idem, ‘Determining “People of German Blood”, “Jews”, and “Mischlinge”: The Reich Kinship Office and the Competing Discourses and Powers of Nazism, 1941–1943’, *Contemporary European History*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2006), pp. 43–65.



were therefore uniquely placed to mediate between East and West, while Eugen Hoeflich proposed “Pan-Asianism” as an ideal encompassing Jews and many non-European people.<sup>67</sup>

And yet most Zionists, especially German ones, were proudly *bürgerlich*, as uncomfortable with immigrating eastern Jews to Germany as they were about, say, the Yemenite Jews they encountered in Palestine. Walter Laqueur’s viscerally negative reaction to Jerusalem’s “Oriental” character resembled those of previous Zionists leaders, as he notes in his memoirs. Parts of the city were like “a mixture of a Eastern Poland and deepest Anatolia... a medieval ghetto; and the Oriental Jewish markets and residential quarters ... at best, fashioned out of a fascinating ugliness”.<sup>68</sup> For Theodore Herzl, Jews were both natives and colonisers, the local Arab Jews as much natives as the Arabs. Their path to redemption lay in Europeanisation by expunging the Arab dimension.<sup>69</sup> This paradox was reflected as well in the campaign of Herzl to hitch the horse of Jewish national liberation to the cart of imperial capital and power, securing a land grant somewhere, presumably without natives who might resist the colonisation.<sup>70</sup>

Given the constant presence of the “Orient” both in German and Ottoman Palestinian sites of German Jewish activity, it impossible to discuss the “German-Jewish” question without mentioning the Arab dimension, nor the Arab-Jewish sub-dimension. The intrinsic connection is illuminated in many ways. Nineteenth-century German Jewish scholars like the historian Heinrich Graetz and the theologian Abraham Geiger idealised the “renaissance of Jewish culture in the Muslim lands of the East and South as a prism through which to criticise Christian disparagement of the Jews as a race forsaken by history, and to offer an at times radical and decentred version of Jewish history, allowing for a multiplicity of Jewish subject positions”.<sup>71</sup> Later, German Zionists participated in the civilising rhetoric of European colonialism generally in their plans to convert Arab Palestine into the Jewish homeland by uplifting the embarrassing Arab Jews, just as Christian Germans joined them in thinking Zionism would solve the “Jewish question” by repatriating Jews to their putative ancestral homeland. After the Holocaust, as Martin Braach-Maksvytis argues, West Germans could continue with this fantasy

<sup>67</sup> Generally, see Hoeflich’s critique of Zionist attempts to recreate a Europe in Palestine: *Die Pforte des Ostens (Das arabisch-jüdische Palaestina vom panasiatischen Standpunkt aus)*, Berlin–Vienna 1923; idem, *Tagebücher 1915 bis 1927*, Vienna 1999.

<sup>68</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Dying for Jerusalem: The Past, Present and Future of the Holiest City*, Naperville, IL 2006, p. 202.

<sup>69</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley 1997, p. 303.

<sup>70</sup> Mark Levene, ‘Herzl, the Scramble, and a Meeting that Never Happened: Revisiting the Notion of an African Zion’, in Eitan Bar-Yosef and Nadia Valman (eds), *“The Jew” in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between East End and East Africa*, Houndmills 2009, pp. 201–220.

<sup>71</sup> Ned Curthoys, ‘Diasporic Visions, Taboo Memories: Al-Andalus in the German Jewish Imaginary’, *Arena Journal*, no. 30 (2009).

by regarding Israel as a European outpost making a good fist of German-style colonial modernisation.<sup>72</sup>

We know that such colonial fantasies and practices circulated transitionally. In our case, it is no accident that one of the most prominent early Zionists, the German Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), consciously invoked Prussian colonisation policies on its Polish border as a model for achieving the Jewish demographic majority over the Arab population.<sup>73</sup> Equally significant was Ruppin's commitment to racial hygiene and his association with the Nazi eugenicist Eugen Fischer. Even if some commentators go too far in denouncing Ruppin as a fascist—a strong streak of liberalism tempered the authoritarian potential of his racial hygienic political imaginary—his belief that intermarriage between Jews and German Jews and non-Jews represented a greater threat than the Nazi Nuremberg laws is at once jarring and sobering.<sup>74</sup> The significance lies in the project of nationalist modernisation pursued in Europe and now in the Middle East with the same fateful—and fatal—consequence for complex, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic communities. The German connection with the region persisted into the 1950s with the application of Walter Christaller's "Central Place Theory", which he had applied as a Nazi planner in the 1940s, in Israeli regional planning from the 1950s.<sup>75</sup> It is now also possible to examine the impact of German *völkisch* thinkers on German Zionists without violating taboos.<sup>76</sup>

As readers of this Year Book are well aware, however, German Jews left another legacy in Palestine, and later Israel; the humanistic nationalism of *Brit Shalom* (Covenant of Peace). Not for nothing has this legacy—supposedly institutionalised at the Hebrew University—been denounced by establishment academics for corroding the Zionist "soul" of Israel.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Christian Wiese's and Steven E. Aschheim's portraits of the group depict an ethically rigorous and highly-reflective assessment of Zionism-in-practice in the 1920s and 1930s, though they did not relinquish their hope that their version of Zionism might prevail. Hans Kohn eventually did leave the group, though, issuing dark warnings about chauvinism and colonial rule over the Palestinian Arabs. Derided as politically naïve and removed from the

<sup>72</sup> Martin Braach-Maksvytis, 'Germany, Palestine, Israel and the (Post-) Colonial Imagination' in Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds.), *Colonial (Dis)-Continuities: Race, Holocaust, and Postwar Germany*, New York forthcoming 2010.

<sup>73</sup> Shalom Reichman and Shlomo Hasson, 'A Cross-Cultural Diffusion of Colonization: From Posen to Palestine', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 74, no. 1 (1984), pp. 57–70.

<sup>74</sup> Etan Bloom, 'What "The Father" Had in Mind? Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), Cultural Identity, *Weltanschauung* and Action', *History of European Ideas*, vol. 33, no. 3 (2007), pp. 330–349; Amos Morris-Reich, 'Ruppin and the Peculiarities of Race: A Response to Etan Bloom', *History of European Ideas*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2008), pp. 116–119; Morris-Reich, 'Arthur Ruppin's Concept of Race', *Israel Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2006), pp. 1–30.

<sup>75</sup> Arnon Golan, 'Israeli Historical Geography and the Holocaust: Reconsidering the Research Agenda', *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2002), p. 560.

<sup>76</sup> Francis R. Nicosia, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany*, Cambridge 2008; Yotam Hotam, for instance, shows that Ludwig Klages influenced Zionist thinkers such as Jakob Klatzkin and Theodor Lessing, see Hotam, *Moderne Gnosis und Zionismus: Kulturkrise, Lebensphilosophie und Nationaljüdisches Denken*, Göttingen and Leipzig forthcoming 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul*, New York 2000.

Jewish masses, these thinkers have been largely forgotten until recently, when their binationalism and critique of Zionist answers to the “Arab Question” appears intellectually interesting and politically prescient.<sup>78</sup>

What, then, are the legacies of German Jewry and why are they worth studying? In a famous letter to Franz Rosenzweig in 1926, Sholem wrote that more threatening to Zionism than “the Arabs” was the Zionist enterprise itself. Modernising Hebrew to fashion a secular culture could not remove the “apocalyptic sting” and “explosive meaning” from the sacred language.<sup>79</sup> Sholem did not elaborate what he feared the sting and explosion might be, but he was not alone in predicting the worst. Writing twenty years later to Jaspers, Arendt portended “further catastrophes” for Jewish immigrants to Palestine, “given the behaviour of other governments and our own suicidal tendencies in politics”.<sup>80</sup> Is it possible that, despite their well-known differences, Sholem and Arendt shared a particular German-Jewish sensibility about the danger of theopolitics? Answering this question and setting it against the alternative tradition of Zionists like Ruppin highlights the influential and contradictory legacies of Jews from Germany—the modernist project of nationalisation that has gripped the world generally, as well as those who have resisted or softened it in the name of cosmopolitan futures. It is to understand both legacies, rather than to prove or disprove the disputed German-Jewish “symbiosis”, that makes the study of German-Jewish history as fascinating—indeed imperative—as ever.

## THE GERMAN-JEWISH ‘ECONOMIC TURN’

BY GIDEON REUVENI

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Exactly eighty years ago, in the first issue of the revived *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (1929) historian Raphael Strauss called for a renewal of German-Jewish historiography by acknowledging all aspects of Jewish history in Germany (“*allseitige Geschichte*”).<sup>81</sup> His plan for a more comprehensive German-Jewish history was based on the observation that scholarship in this field was divided

<sup>78</sup> Christian Wiese, ‘The Janus Face of Nationalism: The Ambivalence of Zionist Identity in Robert Weltsch and Hans Kohn’, *LBI Year Book*, vol. 51 (2006), pp. 103–130; Steven E. Aschheim, ‘Bildung in Palestine: Zionism, Binationalism and the Strains of German-Jewish Humanism’, in Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad*, Princeton 2007, pp. 6–45; George L. Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism*, Hanover–London 1993. For a Palestinian correlate, see [www.wasatia.info/](http://www.wasatia.info/).

<sup>79</sup> Cited in Stefan Moses, ‘Gershom Scholem, On Our Language: A Confession’, *History and Memory*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1990), pp. 97–100; Christoph Schmidt, *Der häretische Imperativ: Überlegungen zur theologischen Dialektik der Kulturwissenschaft in Deutschland*, Tübingen 2000, p. 86; Cf. Yotam Hotam, ‘Nationalized Judaism and Diasporic Existence: Jakob Klatzkin and Hans Jonas’, *Behemoth. A Journal on Civilisation*, vol. 2 (2008), pp. 67–78.

<sup>80</sup> Arendt to Jaspers, 29 January 1945, in *Hannah Arendt/Karl Jaspers Correspondence, 1926–1969*, p. 31.

<sup>81</sup> Raphael Strauss, ‘Zur Forschungsmethode der jüdischen Geschichte’, *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* 1 (1929), pp. 4–12.

between two main groups of scholars each driven by different interests and methods of research. While the first group, according to Strauss, was comprised of Jewish scholars who were predominately interested in intellectual history, or *Geistesgeschichte*, in the other group he included mainly non-Jewish scholars dealing with social and economic aspects of Jewish life in the past. Strauss' concept of a comprehensive German-Jewish historiography thus was designed to bring closer together different groups of scholars, converging their diverse methods and research interests in order to create what Leopold Zunz already referred to as an all-encompassing science of Judaism.

Almost thirty years later in the first volume of the newly founded *LBI Year Book* (1956) Bernard W. Weinryb published his own ideas on the prospects of German-Jewish history confirming many of Strauss's contentions.<sup>82</sup> Yet while Weinryb accepted Strauss' basic observation regarding the division of research between two groups of scholars, he attacked the narrow approach of both Jewish and non-Jewish scholars that focuses predominately on the question of the Jews' place within their German host society. For Weinryb, the general tendency of German-Jewish historiography to overstress Jewish/non-Jewish relations had with the Second World War come to a final close. "Today," he wrote, "the return to internal Jewish history and thus 'to clear figures' and 'non-illusionistic' pictures seems to be a logical result of the new situation."<sup>83</sup> Based on this observation, Weinryb moves away from Strauss' notion of a comprehensive history, or to be more precise the idea of "connecting" histories. He proposed instead that German-Jewish history should deal with Jewish life in Germany within the confines of their own space or "social field". Shifting the centre of gravity of the German-Jewish back to the Jewish sphere was supposed to undermine the overemphasis on Jewish/non-Jewish relations and to diverge research once and for all from the so-called "contribution" approach to German-Jewish relations, and for that matter from the "symbiosis" paradigm as well. Moreover, as opposed to the so-called *Kleinarbeit* (micro-history) approach to Jewish history of the period between the World Wars, Weinryb now suggested placing German-Jewish history within "a large-scale synthetic narrative of Jewish history" that would underpin general trends and parallels in the history of the Jews in different places.<sup>84</sup>

Today more than a half a century after these programmatic outlines were designed, research on German-Jewish history has become a more diverse and sophisticated field of study than it was at the beginning of the last century. The "contribution" as well as the "symbiosis" conceptualisation of German-Jewish history are by now a matter of the past. A more carefully nuanced and refined approach to the interplay between Jews and other Germans dominates scholarship today. This revision is no doubt linked to the emergence of a new so-called post-émigré

<sup>82</sup> Bernard D. Weinryb, 'Prolegomena to an Economic History of the Jews in Germany in Modern Times', *LBI Year Book* vol. 1 (1956), pp. 279–306.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 285.

generation of Jewish and non-Jewish scholars working in the field.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, up until very recently the study of the German-Jewish past was still informed by the assumption that German-Jewish history came to a close with the Second World War if not before.<sup>86</sup> For most historians of the émigré generation German-Jewish history became somewhat similar to the history of Jews in Spain up to the expulsion. Today we are faced with a very different reality in which the Jewish community in Germany is the fastest growing in Europe. To what extent the renewal of Jewish life in Germany can serve as a connecting link between the present and the past of the German-Jewish experience is still an open question that research will have to examine more carefully in the near future. Currently most studies in German on Jews in Germany after 1945 incline to depict the reality of Jewish life in Germany after the War as a wholly “new beginning”. This approach implies, only a feeble relationship, if at all, between the pre-war Jewish community and Jewish life in the post-war Germanies. Pondering over similar questions of continuity and change in the more general German context, historians Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer offer a reading of modern German history as a constant interplay between destruction and reconstruction of community.<sup>87</sup> We might consider applying a similar framework to the Jewish context, thus not only situating the reconstruction of the Jewish community after 1945 within a wider historical setting, but also linking it to the *longue durée* of German-Jewish history.

This last point brings me back to Weinryb’s 1956 programmatic article and to his call for a more transnational or comparative approach to German-Jewish history. Here again it seems that a revision of the Germano-centric approach of what Sorkin referred to as the “émigré synthesis” could open up new venues for the study of the German-Jewish experience. By that I do not only mean extending the comparison with other Jewish histories, but also examining the German-Jewish experience itself, including of those who left Germany, in a comparative framework.

But it is Weinryb’s emphasis on economic history that is most pertinent to scholars working in the field of German-Jewish studies at the end of the first decade of the new millennium. Indeed since the Second World War interest in economic topics has been steadily declining, and despite the intensive research over the last half century inquiries into economic topics are by now a *desideratum* in German-Jewish studies.<sup>88</sup> Thus, for example, a simple comparison between the first volumes of *The LBI Year Book* and the last issues of the yearbook published since the year 2000 attest to this downturn of interest in economic matters. It should be noted, however,

<sup>85</sup> David Sorkin, ‘The Immigration Synthesis on the German-Jewish History’, *Central European History* Vol. 34 Issue 4 (2001), pp. 531–559; as well as his ‘Beyond the Émigré Synthesis’, *LBI Year Book* vol. 44 (2000), pp. 209–210.

<sup>86</sup> for a stimulating attempt to depart from this approach see, Moshe Zimmermann, *Deutsche gegen Deutsche: Das Schicksal der Juden 1938–1945*, Berlin 2008.

<sup>87</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*, Princeton 2003.

<sup>88</sup> The important work of Werner Mosse, and Avraham Barkei could serve as an inspiration for new studies in the field. For an informative account on possible sources and potential topics, some of them are still not fully addressed today, see also Weinryb, pp. 286–306.

that this decline is not exclusive to the German-Jewish context, but reflects similar inclinations in Jewish studies as a whole. This is not the place to reflect on the reasons for the marginalisation of the economy in Jewish studies, or the occasion to try and outline possible topics and available sources for such research. The turn to the economic, in my view, is not merely about “filling” gaps. It is informed by the notion that the economy is a culturally charged field by which the coherence and the ability of the economy to function depends very much on the aptitude of people to interact, to allocate values and norms, and on their willingness to share mutual representations. The potential of such a “cultural economy” approach in the context of German-Jewish history is evident.<sup>89</sup> Let us take as an example the issue of trust, no doubt one of the basic forms of social life and indeed a vital presupposition for the success of activities in the economic realm. Was it simply utilitarian economic parameters or were confessional and particular ethnic affiliations definitive for the trusting interactions between business people of the same or different confessions and backgrounds? This question is to a large degree still unaddressed by historians of German-Jewish experience. Thus advancing and improving our knowledge of the economic activities of Jews as forms of cultural practice will provide valuable new insights into the complex issue of the relation between culture, religion, and the economy in the German speaking context and beyond. Such an approach will also have to involve a shift from the preoccupation with Jews as money-makers—and our fascination with the German-Jewish Parnassus—to a more careful examination of Jews as money-spenders. Introducing a so-called “consumerist” perspective on German-Jewish experience will be instrumental in freeing the discourse on Jews and the economy from the long shadow of Werner Sombart’s notorious book. This is an essential step that could open up new ways to explore both the anxiety-ridden question of the role Jews played in the economy, as well as the more neglected realm of the place of the economy within Jewish life.

## WHAT’S NEXT IN MODERN GERMAN JEWISH HISTORY?

BY PROFESSOR ROBIN JUDD

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For over half a century, the Leo Baeck Institute – and its Year Book – has helped cultivate new trends and developments in the study of Central European German-speaking Jews. A decade ago it reaffirmed its seminal role in the field when it published short essays by members of its Advisory Board concerning future research agendas in German-Jewish history. Influenced by the historiographical trends of the 1990s and the specific scholarly interests of the respondents, the papers questioned whether the study of Central European Jews had reached its peak.

<sup>89</sup> On the notion of “cultural economy” see, for example, Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke (eds.), *Cultural Economy: Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life*. London 2002; as well as the newly founded *Journal of Cultural Economy*.

Recognizing that considerable changes had taken place within the field and within the various cohorts that trained students in German-Jewish studies, respondents forcefully argued for the field's fruitful and nuanced longevity. They called for students of German-Jewish history to reconsider dominant narratives of German-Jewish periodization, incorporate new scholarly trends, and consider ways to integrate Holocaust studies into German-Jewish historical scholarship.

I was a graduate student when I first read the essays, and many of the authors posed questions that shaped the work of my cohort and me. Now, a decade later, I am honored that the Year Book editors have asked me to contribute to a similar volume. Like many of the previous respondents, I am optimistic about the future of German-Jewish studies and its capacity to incorporate new methodologies and question extant assumptions. Many of the possible agendas for future research share strong commonalities with those raised by the contributors ten years ago. Of the contemporary trends in German-Jewish studies, I find three particularly salient.

In recent years, a number of scholars of the modern German-Jewish experience have been influenced by the "religious turn" in historical studies. Arguing that the path from traditional to modern communities was not accompanied by the abandonment or the absence of Jewish ritual and behaviour, these scholars have turned to religious discourses and/or behavior to re-examine traditional narratives of acculturation, political growth, and identity construction. Their studies build upon cultural anthropology, literary theory, ritual studies, and earlier historical research on religious reform. Relying on beliefs and practices to investigate questions of power and intricacies of meaning, they examine the dynamic relationship among embourgeoisement and the modernization of Judaism; the relationship of a changing Orthodox Judaism to a growing non-observant population; blood-centered discourses; and debates over religious rites such as circumcision and kosher butchering.<sup>90</sup>

This trend has resulted in several nuanced, robust, and interdisciplinary narratives. Yet there is much work to be done. Much of the extant work falls in one of two categories: intellectual/cultural studies that focus on discourses and social histories that consider evolving practices and local cases. Ideally, future works will merge these scholarly trends. In addition, scholars have tended to downplay or overlook several rites and practices, such as the place of the *mikvah* in German-Jewish discourses and in German antisemitic formulations. Finally, for obvious reasons, much of the scholarship concerning German-Jewish religious practice and behavior begins in the mid-eighteenth century and ceases its exploration in 1933 or 1939. The relatively unexplored history of mid- and late twentieth-century Jewish religious

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Benjamin Maria Baader, *Gender, Judaism, and Bourgeois Culture in Germany, 1800–1870*, Bloomington 2006; David Biale, *Blood And Belief: The Circulation Of A Symbol Between Jews And Christians*, Berkeley, CA 2007; Adam S. Ferziger, *Exclusion and Hierarchy: Orthodoxy, Nonobservance, and the Emergence of Modern Jewish Identity*, Philadelphia 2005; Robin Judd, *Contested Rituals: Circumcision, Kosher Butchering, and Jewish Political Life in Germany, 1843–1933*, Ithaca 2007; Marion Kaplan, 'Redefining Judaism in Imperial Germany: Practices, Mentalities, and Community', *Jewish Social Studies* 9.1 (2002), pp. 1–33.

debates and practices in West and East Germany offers several exciting possibilities for new research, including fruitful comparisons of debates over Jewish and Muslim forms of animal slaughter and circumcision, synagogue/mosque construction, and religious school instruction.

The growing interest in the postwar period among historians of German speaking Jews is palpable. At the Association for Jewish Studies conference in 2008, several papers on modern German Jewry concerned the postwar period. A similar trend could be observed at the German Studies Association conference that same year. Influenced by Atina Grossman, Michael Berkowitz, Michael Brenner, and others, scholars interested in German-speaking Jews increasingly have looked beyond the years bracketed by the tragedy of the War and the Holocaust.<sup>91</sup> New studies have engaged with the multiplicity of relationships that Jews and non-Jews held in postwar East and West Germany and examined Jewish hybridity.<sup>92</sup> Their work leaves open room for future studies of, among other things, the diversity of Jewish experiences in East and West Germany; the transnational relationships of German-speaking Jews, and the role of gender in community building, identity construction, and postwar hierarchies.

Recent work in gender history has made significant inroads in the study of power and identity in German-Jewish studies. These studies use gender to uncover the dynamic relationship among developments in German history, the modernization of Judaism, and the transformation of the gender order. Some also look to masculinity and femininity as useful categories of analysis because of their ongoing interplay with the construction of hierarchies. Scholarship on modern Jewish masculinities and femininities have established antisemitism's critique of the Jewish body and manner and analyzed the wide-ranging Jewish responses to paradoxical presentations of Jewish gender roles.<sup>93</sup>

Yet, several challenges remain. Scholars who work in gender history imagine themselves as writing narratives of German Jewish history; ideally, scholars of German Jewish history ought to similarly envision their task as writing gender history. Moreover, gender as a category of analysis can allow for scholars to move

<sup>91</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, Berkeley, CA 2007; Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: rebuilding Jewish lives in postwar Germany*, translated by Barbara Harshav, Princeton 1997; Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*, Princeton 2007; Laura Hilton, 'Prisoners of Peace: rebuilding community, identity and nationality in displaced persons camps in Germany, 1945–1952', Phd Dissertation, The Ohio State University 2001.

<sup>92</sup> See, for example, Avinoam Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, Detroit forthcoming; Kierra Crago-Schneider, 'Meeting at Möhlstraße: Relations formed between Jews, Germans and Americans through their involvement in the Postwar Economy in Munich', Phd forthcoming, UCLA; Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes, *Unlikely history: the changing German-Jewish symbiosis, 1945–2000*, New York 2002.

<sup>93</sup> See, for example, Benjamin Maria Baader, 'Jews, Women, and Germans: Jewish and German Historiographies in a Transatlantic Perspective', in *Gendering modern German history: themes, debates, revisions*, ed. by Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert, New York 2007, pp. 169–189; Marion A. Kaplan, *Between dignity and despair: Jewish life in Nazi Germany*, New York 1998.



beyond the traditional binaries of “German” and “Jewish” when examining the identity construction and community building of German-speaking Jews. There is much more work to be done on both the histories of femininities and masculinities and the study of the intersections of gender, sexuality, and every day life. In addition, gender and religion allow us to think comparatively and across national borders, a trend that seems to be increasingly influencing work on German-Jewish historical scholarship.

Historians of German speaking Jews increasingly have moved away from a Germanocentric approach to modern Jewish history. Two decades ago, German-Jewish history tended to dominate the literature on the modern Jewish experience; today, other national and comparative narratives have challenged notions of German-Jewish uniqueness and hegemony. As we continue to use comparative history as a way to understand the place of German Jewish history in European Jewish history and the continuities and discontinuities across European Jewish life, historians of German-Jewry might look more frequently to transnational history. Transnational history has the potential to significantly influence German-Jewish studies. Historians of transnationalism look beyond “society” and the “state” by examining transnational streams of culture, ideas, and people. German-Jewish experiences can similarly be understood. German Jews not only participated in diverse transnational communities, but we also witness, across time and place, the flow of German speaking Jews, culture, property, and ideologies.<sup>94</sup> Transnational narratives of the German-Jewish experience, then, allows us insight into social differences and power and sheds light on the relationship of the German-Jewish experience with the histories of other minorities.

The field of German-Jewish history – and the academics who research it – has changed considerably since I completed my graduate studies. Yet despite the shifts that have occurred, several key questions remain the same. Scholars of the German-Jewish experience continue to investigate the uniqueness of German-Jewry and of the German historical context. Often interested in the *Kaiserreich*, interwar, and Nazi years, they attempt to locate moments of change and analyze the history of acculturation, integration, and identity construction. Students of German-Jewish history remain curious about the appropriate relationship of German studies and Jewish studies. At conferences, in edited volumes, and in monographs, they ask how best to integrate the methodologies and traditions of each field. As German-Jewish studies continues to evolve, the Leo Baeck Institute and its yearbook will maintain its influence on those scholars and the field.

<sup>94</sup> Consider, for example, the interesting approach exemplified in Sander L. Gilman, “Becoming a Jew by Becoming a German: The Newest Jewish Writing from the ‘East’,” *Shofar* 25.1 (September 2006), pp. 16–32.

SEVEN EPISTEMOLOGICAL THESES CONCERNING  
SCIENCE AND JUDAISM

more geometrico

BY ANDREAS KILCHER

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Preliminary note: The purpose of what follows is to draw attention to a category which, to date, has been marginal to the research into Jewish history but which deserves to be considered: knowledge and the sciences<sup>95</sup>. The starting point is the observation that Jewish history is not only a question of political events, social relationships, mundane customs, religious observance or cultural and artistic creations. Jewish history goes beyond this; it is also a history of intellectual and scientific cultures. The following thoughts expressed in the compressed form of theses suggest how this field of research should generally be described and what concrete issues may arise from it.

1. The development of the culture and history of European and German Jewry is based not only on its social, political, theological and cultural conditions but also on its history of ideas and its scientific practice. Science is an integral part of Jewish history and Jewish culture.
  1. From a systematic viewpoint, on the one hand sensitivity to knowledge in Jewish history could be aligned with theoretical knowledge (intellectual, academic, scientific), that is the knowledge of the sciences.
  2. On the other hand it may refer to the “cultures” of knowledge in a variety of societal structures (political, social, institutional, cultural).
  3. An analysis both of Judaism’s theoretical knowledge *concepts* and the practice-based knowledge *culture* must flow systematically from an historical as well as a synchronic perspective namely as an analysis of Judaism’s scientific cultures in differing historical and social contexts.
2. An examination of knowledge in Jewish history throws new light on secularisation theory: in other words, the relationship between knowledge and religion becomes dialectical.
  1. From an historical point of view, the knowledge perspective suggests a focus on the modern era to the extent that here, knowledge distances itself increasingly from a narrow religious paradigm of Judaism and asserts itself as a positive factor of the intellectual Jewish self-image (a Haskalah autobiography such as that of Salomon Maimon is an example).
  2. An antagonistic rendering of knowledge and religion is nevertheless a perspective of the Haskalah itself; the historian needs to get aware also of the pre-Modern or Early Modern terminology which has been possible to integrate affirmatively or even dialectically into the Jewish faith (such as cosmology and the philosophy of

<sup>95</sup> Cf., *inter alia*, publications by David Ruderman, Gideon Freudenthal, Gad Freudenthal, Ulrich Charpa, Ute Deichmann.

- nature in the Kabbalah, law in the rabbinical use of traditional texts). Neither is the opening up to so-called secular questions of science by a Judaism informed by the authority of text and tradition linear and homogenous, but it is rather a dialectical and heterogeneous modernisation process. Thus, on the one hand scientific models are developed in religious paradigms, on the other, religion can itself be elevated to an object of scientific study (for example biblical critique after Spinoza).
3. Depending on the perspective adopted, this might lead either to the theory of the irreconcilability of Judaism with the sciences (cf. Neusner “Why no Science in Judaism?”) or to precisely the opposite theory of compatibility (cf. Patai: “The Jewish Mind”). More appropriate is however an intermediate position: there may be no “Jewish” science per se (“Jewish” physics, “Jewish” mathematics, “Jewish” linguistics etc.) but Jews participate socially, culturally and intellectually be it in a religion-based scientific community in antiquity or the Middle Ages or in the increasingly cosmopolitan and secular scientific community of the Modern Era.
3. The participation of the Jews in the European scientific community as well as their integration in and perception of it, is illustrated in the synchronistic analyses of the complex processes of transfer, transformation, integration, exclusion and so on in the transcultural relationships between the theologically conducted Jewish culture of knowledge and that of modern European culture.
    1. On the one hand this includes the manifold adaptation and transformation of Jewish models of knowledge in the process of differentiating the modern sciences of the Modern Era (such as natural science, mathematics, law, history, language, philology, literature amongst others).
    2. No less manifold are the complementary adaptations and transformations of scientific models in modern Judaism both in the natural sciences (from the Aristotelian and Platonic to Darwinism) and in philosophy (for example philology, Kantianism/Idealism, Nietzscheism, Marxism, Neo-Kantianism, psychoanalysis amongst others).
    3. In parallel with the exchanges in the academic sciences are the transfer processes in the so-called esoteric or “para-sciences”. One example is the transcultural disposition of the gnosis between Judaism, Christianity and Hermeneutics in antiquity. Another example is the important role of Kabbalah in the history of European Esotericism, from the Early Modern *magia naturalis* and alchemy via the Rosicrucians and freemasons to occultism and theosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
  4. From a systematic-epistemological viewpoint Judaism is either the subject (actor) or object (object) of knowledge, or both.
    1. The study of Judaism *qua* the *subject* of knowledge directs the attention to the objects or content to which European and German Jewry turned from the Middle Ages and increasingly since the early Modern Era. It ranged from the theoretical natural sciences such as cosmology, via the practical or applied natural science such as medicine to the social sciences such as law and the historical-philological sciences such as linguistics and bible critique.
    2. The study of Judaism *qua* the *object* of knowledge directs the attention to how, since the Early Modern Era, Judaism itself became the object of scientific research. Where Judaism itself is the exclusive object of knowledge and not the subject as well, this indicates an external perspective for example as to how it guided Christian study of Judaism in the Early Modern Era (for example, Reuchlin,

- Buxtorf, Wagenseil), as well as the Protestant and Catholic theology in the nineteenth century and last but not least the so-called “examination of the Jewish Question” in relevant National Socialist institutes.
3. The study of Judaism as both subject *and* object denotes the Jewish scientific self-realisation, in other words a study of Judaism with the help of the modern tools and categories of European natural science and philosophy. A prime example of this is the science of Judaism (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) in the nineteenth century after Leopold Zunz.
  5. The study of Judaism as subject (actor) of knowledge requires analysis which draws both on socio-political history and the history of ideas and culture.
    1. Sociological and political analysis direct the attention to the external, structural and societal conditions in which knowledge is generated and distributed, namely to the social, political and economic conditions within which knowledge was accessible and communicable for the Jews. More specifically this means the conditions for intellectual and academic integration, as well as appointment and employment of Jews to academies, universities, libraries, publishing houses and so on.
    2. Analysis of ideas and cultural history directs the attention to the epistemological forms and functions of knowledge.
    3. The transnational and transcultural position of Jews in European history plays a particular role vis-à-vis the political and cultural conditions of knowledge. It enables the dissemination of knowledge (for example by the means of translation).
  6. The study of Judaism *qua* the object of knowledge requires a theological-political analysis on the one hand and an epistemological analysis on the other.
    1. Political-theological dimensions become particularly relevant from the outside, insofar as Judaistic research is independent neither of value nor interest but instead is subject to the influence of various theological and political tendencies and ideologies, from the philosemitic Baroque study of Judaism to the antisemitic National Socialist “research” into Jewishness and on to the scientific cognition of Judaism in Communist countries such as the GDR or the Soviet Union.
    2. Epistemological analyses point to scientific methods and content in the course of representing and interpreting Judaism as a religious, historical and cultural phenomenon.
    3. Thus the subject of analysis is the treatment in European scientific discourses as to what might qualify as Jewish religion, Jewish philosophy, Jewish art and Jewish literature.
  7. Equally, the analysis of the forms and functions of the Jewish science of Judaism must distinguish between the theological, the political and the epistemological.
    1. The theological dimension of research into Judaism is to illuminate the productive and, at the same time, conflict-laden relationship between Jewish theology and the sciences. The relationship is productive where knowledge has a basis in Jewish theology and can be communicated in it (from Early Modern cosmology and medicine to – say – Hermann Cohen’s *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*). The level of conflict increases in particular where a traditionalist or orthodox Judaism (for example Hassidism) opposes modernisation through the sciences (for example Darwinism). An intermediate stance is the equal footing

- given to traditionalist Judaism and modern science (for example in neo-orthodoxy and its *tora im derech erez* principle).
2. A political perspective points to the question: how did science in Jewish history variously become a means to integration and modernisation on the one hand and to dissimulation on the other. This can be seen on the one hand in the science of Judaism which, in a liberal environment, raised integration, acculturation and assimilation to a more or less explicit manifesto. It can also be seen in the Zionist reinterpretation of the science of Judaism which demanded a nationalisation of science (Bialik, Loewe, Scholem and the Israeli culture of science since 1947). It is also necessary to analyse the political implications of the YIVO's (Institute for Jewish Research) Yiddish science of Judaism which is partly based on socialist and internationalist premises.
  3. The plurality of interpretations of what Jewish theology, Jewish philosophy, Jewish history, Jewish literature etc might be can be found not only in theological and political premises but also in epistemological premises. In this context it is necessary to examine in particular the complex interweaving of general European scientific paradigms and methods (such as philosophy, philology, historiography) with specifically Jewish scientific paradigms and methods such as rabbinical erudition.

## REVISION? – NOT AGAIN

### New Directions in German-Jewish History?

BY MOSHE ZIMMERMANN

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Historiography is, like so many other occupations, a matter of fashion. We historians either abide by the rules of an existing fashion (usually called a paradigm) or – on very rare occasions – introduce a new one. In order to attempt a viable prognosis of future developments in German-Jewish historiography, one therefore need only take a glance at the general trends and fashions in the broader research environment, while at the same time taking into account the politics and the political framework of historical research in this specific area, as we have done in the past.

In the discussions of future German-Jewish historiography in the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Books* of 1996 and 2000, such an attempt was made. The four articles that debated German-Jewish historiography in the 1996 Year Book basically arrived at the following observation: The focus of research will remain on Jewish-Gentile relations and will continue to run along three lines dividing historiographic tradition and revision: 1. Jewish-liberal vs. Jewish-national interpretations; 2. “Holocaust-conditioned” vs. “reading forward” approaches; and 3. a general German vs. a general Jewish context for German-Jewish history. The contributors to the 1996 volume pleaded for, rather than prophesied, the following trends: a more balanced relationship within each of these three alternatives, and even a re-orientation in favour of the liberal approach (Friesel), the

non-Holocaust-conditioned approach (Sorkin), and the general-Jewish framework (Volkov). The lofty word “revisionist” was repeatedly used in the 1996 discussion to justify the proposed preferences, but it was already clear that the call for revision ignored the fact that the trends described as “revisionist” were either those that had held sway before the currently-prevailing fashion became dominant or, conversely, had already become a legitimate component of the prevailing fashion.

These three approaches to German-Jewish history – 1. the non-Zionist approach which does not relate to this history as just a big mistake; 2. the history written from a perspective other than that of the Holocaust; and, no less importantly, 3. viewing German-Jewish history as one (not necessarily central) component of *general* Jewish history – were already held before 1996; that this has not changed in the years since, and that it is going to remain so in the near future, is no surprise. After all, using German-Jewish experience as a justification for the existence of Israel and for the validity of a Zionist interpretation of history has exhausted itself, especially since the Holocaust of the Jewish people (and not only of the small German-Jewish group) has become the central argument in Israel’s interpretation of history, and since the second pillar of Jewish existence – that is, American Jewry – seems assured of its way of solving the “Jewish problem”, and no longer needs to justify itself vis-à-vis Israel.

The participants in the “future research” discussion in the 2000 Leo Baeck Yearbook seem to agree with the contention that the above-mentioned revisions have either been accomplished or have been made irrelevant, and to have concluded that the thrust of their expectations/proposals should be in the following direction: going beyond apologetics (i.e. the “Émigré synthesis”) (Sorkin); viewing German-Jewish history from within (Barkai); focusing more on early modern history (Sorkin, Jersch-Wenzel, Liberles) or, again, on the decades before 1933 (Friesel); gender history (Marion Kaplan); *Alltagsgeschichte*, exile, emigration and biography (Michael Meyer); and, last but not least, looking at the European context and taking a comparative approach.

Again, the expectations of 2000 were in fact an expression of already existing, ongoing trends in research. Concerning methodology, *Alltagsgeschichte*, gender history and cultural history became so fashionable among historians years ago, that historians of the German-Jewish chapter have eventually had to adapt to them, and so are expected in 2009, as in 2000, to continue to practise these methods of research.

As Jewish-Gentile relations remain the hard core of this research, the one hundred years before 1933 will keep attracting much historiographic attention; they may be presented in an innovative manner through cooperation with these up-to-date trends and use of the appropriate vocabulary, which revolves around concepts like *Buergerlichkeit*, cultural capital, gender and so on. This is typically demonstrated by Till van Rahden, Simone Laessig, Stefanie Schueler-Springorum, Jacob Borut, Barbara Hahn and Benjamin Baader, to name only a few of the historians who have published their work in the past decade or so.

Since the apologetic and Holocaust-conditioned approach has lost much of its grip on professional historians of German-Jewish history, in the U.S.A. as well as in Germany, Israel and elsewhere, and since general Jewish history that is based on comparative research has indeed become the practical frame of reference, the result has been not only reinterpretation of the century that led to the “*Untergang*”, but also a reinterpretation of the turn of the eighteenth century (heralded twenty years ago by David Sorkin), and a growing interest in the early modern period (a chapter that has also become fashionable in so-called general history during the past generation). As there is no lack of documentation which can be used by cultural historians, but many little “black holes” on the German-Jewish map, this trend is expected to continue. By the way: We are also still waiting for a breakthrough in the revision of German-Jewish history during the early middle ages.

On the other end of the chronological scale – that is, post-1945 history – more and more research is being done, and is expected to grow in volume. If 1933, 1938 or 1945 are not the end, then the history of Jews in Germany after 1945 (Michael Brenner, Juliane Wetzel, Atina Grossman, and so on), the history of restitution and *Wiedergutmachung* – another form of Gentile-Jewish relations – (Goschler, Frei, Brunner, amongst others), and the history of German-Jewish exiles – that is, of German Jews outside Germany – has a bright prospect.

Historians have also discovered or intensified their research of neglected or peripheral areas, including the history of German Jews between 1938 and 1945 (Rolf Grunner, Beate Meyer, *et al.*); they have rediscovered the value of the biography; explored the story of converts (before and after 1933) (for example Jana Leichsenring); and have written many local German-Jewish histories. As long as students of German history, whether in Germany, Israel or in the Anglo-Saxon world, find this history special and receive support (also financially) for their work from institutions dedicated to this area of study, a slowdown is not to be expected. And yet, since the special profile of German-Jewish history – compared, for instance, to Tunisian-Jewish or Italian-Jewish history – is closely connected to the crisis of 1933, no matter whether we use the term “emancipation”, “assimilation”, “integration”, “inclusion” or “symbiosis”, this period and this crisis will continue to be the revolving door through which new historians and innovative approaches enter. Historians are intrigued by riddles, and the contrast between alleged symbiosis and its absolute end is a big riddle if ever there was one.

Two of the discussants in the 2000 Year Book were asked to relate to the historiography of the Holocaust, under the incorrect assumption that since the Holocaust was organised by the Third Reich, the whole story of the Holocaust is to be considered a chapter in German-Jewish history. What we should be aiming at, what is relevant for us, is the relationship between Jews and non-Jews *in* Germany; this means that only the history of antisemitism in Germany and the history of the German Jews during the Third Reich ought to be on the programme of historians dealing with the history of German Jewry - without, of course, excluding the comparative approach. What will surely continue to be intensively researched in the coming years is the story of the Holocaust of the German Jews 1938–1945 which, as noted

above, was relatively neglected until about a decade ago. Maybe the time will also come for biographies of prominent German Jews who were active during the Third Reich.

But what about new trends, ground-breaking theses? If one consults the programme of the 2009 international seminar for research students of the Leo Baeck Institute as an indicator of future developments, it is hard to guess where a breakthrough will come from.

One of the dissertations, which deals with antisemitism in post-war *Heimatfilme*, may indicate a potentially fruitful perspective: The “visual turn” can and should enter the realm of German-Jewish history, too. To write the history of the nineteenth and twentieth century without relating to photography and film is clearly outmoded. Moreover, much material awaits the historian: Tim Gidal’s *Die Juden in Deutschland* of twenty years ago should have started this trend long ago.

Another methodological fashion that might begin to be used in German-Jewish history is transnational research. This method, when used to study Jews in any state, including German Jews, seems most intriguing, since we are talking about a segment of a nation or people as an element of transnational research. If we relate to the definition of the Jews as nation as a hypothesis, the interrelation between Jews and the gentile environment in each country (in our case, Germany) could be researched in accordance with this method. At the same time, the above-mentioned intra-Jewish, but universal, comparative approach might also be translated into terms of transnational research. In other words, intra-Jewish problems within different Jewish societies might also be dealt with as transnational problems.

I would like to conclude with yet another trend, which is the outcome of the ascent of cultural history and the devaluation of so-called “high culture”: that is, the enquiry into a very special kind of “history from below”, the history of sports. Like cinema, sports are essentially a product of the twentieth century (with a German prologue called “*Turnen*”, which has existed since the nineteenth century), and are therefore a modern social and cultural phenomenon. The history of German-Jewish sports is now the subject of several ongoing projects, which will surely bring a new angle to the study of the history of the German Jews. Gottfried Fuchs, the man who shot ten goals wearing the German national tricot, may compete in the future with Moses Mendelssohn, Gabriel Riesser, Hermann Cohen and their ilk for the attention of the readers of the history of the German Jews.