

SOME GERMAN JEWISH ORTHODOX ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

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German Orthodoxy in the Wilhelmine and Weimar periods presents an interesting case study in Jewish attitudes toward Israel and the diaspora. The German Orthodox minority, no more than ten to twenty percent of German Jewry after World War I, participated with the majority of German Jews in a whole-hearted affirmation of German culture (in German Zionist parlance: Galutbejahung). As with all German Jews, German culture had become definitive of their very identity as Jews. Despite their commitment to Jewish observance, the German Orthodox had more in common with their less observant or non-observant brethren than with the historic Jewish traditional culture of Eastern Europe. Yet for all that, the Orthodox, as followers of traditional Jewish behavior patterns and their corresponding value commitments, affirmed their Jewish identities in a more full-orbed way than their Reform-oriented co-religionists. They validated German culture no less than other Jews, but did so with their own inertia, accents and qualifications. Like the Zionists they believed in and demonstrated a connectedness to a larger Jewish people and to the Land

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of Israel. Such connections were declared and spiritually reenacted every day in prayer and at table. This tension between, as Jehuda Reinhartz put it, "fatherland and promised land" was thus heightened by and within Orthodoxy. The following pages give an account of two selective but representative Orthodox attitudes — those of Samson Raphael Hirsch and Jacob Rosenheim — toward Jewish nationality, the Land of Israel and, in Rosenheim's case, the Zionist movement. These attitudes are explored against the background of German-Jewish identity and history as such.

The Framework for Modern German Jewish Identity: *Bildung* and *Konfession*

The uniquely hybridized German-Jewish identity which both Orthodox and Reform Jews shared was a product of the social and cultural transformation of both the German and the Jewish societies in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the end of the eighteenth century, the German states went through a process of modernization which included increasing rationalization of administration and economy, industrialization, urbanization and the emergence of an educated bourgeoisie (*Bildungsbürgertum*) to staff the expanding state bureaucracies. The educated bourgeoisie, although essentially created by the monarchy and aristocracies of the German states to aid in the consolidation of their power, eventually came to challenge their control of politics in the name of liberalism.

A key component of the German version of liberalism was the Enlightenment concept of *Bildung*.¹ *Bildung* referred to a process of autonomous self-formation under the guidance of practical, i.e., moral, reason. Although rooted in religious categories of Lutheran pietism, Enlightenment *Bildung* was a secular ideal. Its root category was the individual as a locus of moral cultivation and development. Each individual was capable of achieving an harmonious, ethically and aesthetically developed personality. The process was initiated and advanced through education. The role of the state was to insure that individuals possessed enough freedom to pursue their ontological-moral destiny and to offer them the kind of humanistic education by which they could perfect it. In German thought, the state became

the guarantor of freedom and the tutor for the moral self-development of the citizen. *Bildung* and paternalistic absolutism were highly compatible in the German Enlightenment.

Bildung was more than the concern of an intellectual elite. It became the ideology of the rising middle classes in the Enlightenment period, reflecting, at the level of *Weltanschauung*, their struggle for a more open, meritocratic society as against the ancient claims of estates, guilds and monarchy. Against this background, one can understand the interest of the educated bourgeoisie in the Emancipation of the Jews. Given their stated commitment to the possibility of the moral improvement of the individual, whatever his background or religion, the *Gebildeten* saw in Jewish emancipation the test case for their theory of a new society.

The German version of the Emancipation offered Jews rights in exchange for their moral self-development, indeed, transformation. While the French demanded that the Jews become Frenchmen, the German sponsors of emancipation demanded that the Jews become educated. German Jews responded with programs for personal and cultural transformation: *Haskalah* in the first phase of the Emancipation and *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the second. As is clear in Moses Mendelssohn and the *Haskalah* writers, German Jews, desirous of achieving equality in German society, emphasized *Bildung* as their "passport to European civilization." In this way, an Enlightenment philosophical ideal compounded with a political ideology of liberalism became an enduring component of German-Jewish self-definition.

According to George Mosse, "the centrality of the ideal of *Bildung* in German-Jewish consciousness must be understood from the very beginning — it was...fundamental to the search for a new Jewish identity after emancipation. The concept of *Bildung* became for many Jews synonymous with their Jewishness, especially after the end of the nineteenth century, when most Germans themselves had distorted the original concept beyond recognition."² The Jews' modern identity thus depended upon an Enlightenment synthesis emphasizing rationality, education, middle-class mannerliness and liberal politics. As Germany came to abandon many of these ideals under pressure from exclusivistic nationalism, anti-Semitism and irrationalism, Jews became the principal bearers of the Enlightenment tradition.

Jews continued to believe that forming themselves under the imprint of German classical culture and holding that culture as a sacred part of their own deepest consciousness and character (*deutsche Gesinnung*) would insure their acceptance as full-fledged members of the German Volk. They could not abandon *Bildung* without abandoning themselves. The Germans, however, progressively abandoned the Enlightenment and its liberal, *Bildung*-contingent concept of social equality in favor of more deeply rooted tribalistic and eventually racial criteria of social acceptability. German Jews, by contrast, clung to the Enlightenment until the end, thinking themselves thereby the last true Germans. In 1933 as the Nazis excluded Jews from German cultural life, the newly formed *Jüdische Kulturbund* chose Lessing's classic depiction of *Bildung*, Nathan the Wise, as its first production.³

Another aspect of the Emancipation era transformation of Judaism and the Jews was confessionalization: the marginalization of Jewish nationality and its transformation into a purely religious phenomenon. Beginning with the nascent Reform movement, Jews radically deemphasized Jewish nationality and presented Judaism as a confessional variant on the pan-human Enlightenment "religion of reason." Gabriel Riesser (1806–1863), the leading Jewish proponent of emancipation in the Vormärz and the second vice-president of the Frankfurt Assembly in the 1848 revolution, maintained that the attribution of separate nationality to Jews was a "fable." A nation required: "land, language, a constitution, political power, and independence; or the struggle for these requirements. These elements are the precondition of a nation; where all of them were lacking, as in the case of the Jews, the foundation for a nation was non-existent."⁴ Similarly, Moritz Lazarus, another leading Jewish spokesman of the nineteenth century, made nationality contingent on subjectivity, to feel oneself a German is to be a German: "My people are those whom I recognize as my people, those whom I call mine, those to whom I am tied forever....We are German, nothing but Germans, when we talk about the concept of nationality we belong to only one nation, the German one."⁵ With the self-imposed elimination of Jewish nationality, Judaism narrows to a tenuously contingent religious reality. Hermann Cohen, a leading German-Jewish philosopher who argued for

the spiritual identity of Judaism and Germanness, regretted that Jews did not yet have Germanic physical features. He urged the Germans to "Have patience!"⁶

Samson Raphael Hirsch: Nineteenth Century Orthodox Jewry and German Identity

Orthodox Jews operated with this self-definitional framework no less than did liberal Jews. As to the first criterion, the affirmation of *Bildung*, one need only consider the articulation of neo-Orthodox identity accomplished by Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888) and Esriel Hildesheimer (1820–1899) in the nineteenth century. Both embraced the emancipation, affirmed *deutsche Kultur* and modernized Jewish primary, secondary and rabbinical education. Hirschian concepts of *Torah im derekh eretz* and *Mensch-Yisroel* are components of a *Bildungsideologie* that facilitated the maintenance of a peculiarly German Orthodox identity well into the twentieth century. Similarly, Hildesheimer's creation of a modern, yet Orthodox, rabbinical seminary illustrates both the importance of *gebildete* rabbis for German Orthodoxy and the underlying Mendelssohnian optimism that modern learning and traditional faith are fully compatible.

The second criterion, confessionalization, presents a more complex picture. German Orthodox Jews were a largely middle-class, successfully assimilated, patriotic group. They affirmed and consumed (although did not produce) German culture to the same degree as Reform Jews. Orthodox Jews did not go as far as Reform Jews however in either the denial of Jewish nationality or in the rhetoric of German-Jewish spiritual identity.⁷ An analysis of a sermon by Samson Raphael Hirsch reveals both the overlap and the exceptionalism of the Orthodox vis-a-vis the German Jewish majority.

Hirsch's 1855 sermon for Tisha b'Av takes its point of departure in a critique of a proposal by a radical Reform rabbi of the previous generation that the fast ought to be abolished insofar as mourning for Jerusalem implied "treason and enmity towards the State and Fatherland. He called on his dismayed congregation," Hirsch continued, "to show by means of a festal celebration their repudiation of the out-of-date yearning for Palestine,

and to give proof of their patriotic attachment to the Fatherland in which they lived and worked."⁸ Hirsch expresses his undisguised contempt for this position and then proceeds to argue why real mourning is still necessary.

In Hirsch's view, it is no less a duty of the emancipated Jew to remember and mourn for Zion than for the enslaved and oppressed Jew. A Jew has eternally binding duties regardless of his historical circumstances. If emancipated Jews do not mourn for Zion, then they mock all the martyred Jews of the past who have done so. Such an appeal to sacred memory is not surprising. What is surprising is the rhetorical twist Hirsch puts to the theme of Jewish martyrdom:

The heavier the oppression, the blinder the hatred, the greater appeared to them to be the *mitzvah*, the more brilliant the *kiddush hashem*, when the opportunity was afforded to them of sanctifying God's name by promoting the welfare of the stepmotherly state. With heartfelt and genuine affection they clung to the soil on which their cradles had been rocked, on which they had greeted the first laughter of their children, which, however grim and forbidding without, had kept intact for them the homes where they could enjoy their sweet and God-fearing life. Only with a struggle, only under the stress of extreme need, did they bring themselves to wander away to a strange country; with deep and strong love they clung to the land of their birth and of the graves of their ancestors; but they looked with equally strong and deep yearning towards Palestine.⁹

Hirsch thus argues that in earlier epochs of persecution, Jews were nonetheless enthusiastic patriots of their native lands. This praise of loyalty to fatherland, conjoined with love of Zion, must be taken more as an attestation of Hirsch's own Prussian patriotism than as an historical description of pre-modern Jewish attitudes. Hirsch's extraordinary devotion to Prussia and later to the Kaiserreich were graced with the status of *mitzvah* in his 1837 code, *Horeb*.¹⁰ The elevation of love of *Vaterland* to a "duty of the heart" shows the extent to which an interiorized Germanness (*deutsche Gesinnung*) was crucial for Hirsch. Yet this Germanness is evidently to co-exist with love for Zion.

Hirsch argues that modern Jews are prepared to shed their love and mourning for Zion because they conceive of Zion simply as a political phenomenon, that is, as a place where Jews were independent and free. If the political paradigm were truly apt, "then indeed such a mourning and such a yearning would have had meaning and justification only during the dark centuries of the Middle Ages. Then the modern Jewish view would be perfectly right, that in the century of hopes of emancipation this old mourning and this old yearning should grow ever fainter, and that they should at last completely disappear when these hopes should be realised and the children of Israel should have found on European soil equality of civil rights and a homeland which should secure to them along with the rest of mankind a solid footing and equal opportunities for treading the path to sustenance, to office and dignity."¹¹

Hirsch rejects this modern construction of Zion, yet what he constructs in its place also bears distinctly modern traits. In Hirsch's view, Jews mourn not for a lost sovereignty, but for the lost sovereignty of the Torah. "This old Jewish mourning and Jewish yearning — for whose sake is it, what is its meaning and object? It is for the Temple, for the sanctuary of the Torah, for the seat of God and of the Divine word that this mourning and this sorrow is observed."¹²

The Temple, which indicates the instrumentalization of the sovereignty of Torah, constitutes the center. Both the ancient Jewish polity and the land *per se* are at the periphery. "The land belongs to the sanctuary. The whole of this land was a mountain of God on the summit of which shone the sanctuary of the Torah and round which the tribes of Israel dwelt."¹³ The land, state and society become a function of the Torah. Consequently, what is really lost and what is really mourned is the sovereignty of Torah: "Not for his own Galuth, but for the Galuth of the Torah does the Jew mourn. And must this mourning die away, must this sorrow disappear, must these tears dry up if the nations become more humane and just, if they loosen the chains on the hands and feet of Galuth-weary Israel, and an emancipated Israel steps into the company of non-Jewish states as a fully privileged member? Will the Torah be any the less in exile for this?"¹⁴

While affirming the obligation to love and remember Zion, Hirsch narrows the entire theme to a strictly religious, that is to say, confessionalized phenomenon. This is particularly evident in the last phase of his argument. What mourning for Zion really entails, Hirsch believes, is hope for a universal salvation. When the Jews mourn and pray for their Zion, they are hastening the coming of the messianic age in which all nations shall experience felicity. Jewish observance is service to humanity. Love of Zion is the most patriotic gift the Jew can give to the Fatherland for what he intends thereby is the Fatherland's ultimate fulfillment. For reasons such as these, Hirsch thought, only Orthodox, observant Jews could truly be patriotic Germans.

While not rejecting, as Reform Jews did, the status of a separate Jewish nationality connected with land and state, Hirsch qualifies these concepts in order to accord with the modern framework of German-Jewish identity. Hirsch believes that Jews are a nation, but a *Religionsnation*: a nation of a wholly unique, in fact, divine type. Providence has scattered this unique "nation" among the peoples in order to mix with them in freedom (an intention the nations have at last acknowledged), imbibe their cultures and sanctify them before God. Jews transform the human to the holy: *Mensch-Yisroel* indicates this process of sacral transformation. By living among the nations and assimilating their *derekh eretz*, Israel becomes a conduit for relating the merely human to the Torah. The Jew is rooted in the human (the *Mensch* aspect of his being) and proceeds toward the holy (the *Yisroel* aspect). This mission on behalf of the world is accomplished through the harmonious perfecting, under the aegis of a divine education, of both the individual Jew and of the nation. The life of *mitzvot* is a life of divinely guided *Bildung* for the sake of the world. As to the full-orbed concept of nationhood within the tradition, this awaits the messianic age for its expression. Until that time, Orthodox Jews are secure in saying "We are Germans." Hirsch thus validates Jewish nationality and its tie to the Land of Israel within the heavily qualified framework of *Bildungsideologie* and *Konfession*.

Anti-Semitism and the Growth of German Jewish Organizations

As the German states drove toward unification, culminating in the Prussian dominated Empire of 1871, strong centripetal pressures also played upon the Jewish communities to develop a supra-local organization. In 1869, a federation of communities (*Deutsch-Israelitische Gemeindebund*) came into existence, followed by an organization of largely liberal rabbis (*Allgemeiner Rabbiner Verband*).

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, this centralizing, rationalizing tendency increased as German Jewish life experienced a fundamental reorientation. Insofar as the movement of political liberalism had promoted and, by 1869, achieved the statutory emancipation of the Jews, Jews were strongly indebted to liberalism and wedded to its political platform, indeed, to its vision of the world. They believed that with emancipation their Jewish, i.e., confessional, identity became strictly irrelevant to public life. Discrimination against Jews was seen as a problem affecting individuals and could be remedied by insistence on equal treatment under the law (i.e., by holding the society to the liberal conception of the *Rechtsstaat*). So considered, there was no longer a "Jewish question." Liberal deputies and jurists could be counted on to remedy whatever instances of illegal discrimination continued to occur.

The problem was that liberals could not be counted on to do any such thing. The appeal of classical liberalism had declined and the liberal parties, governing with Bismarck, became narrowly nationalistic. The "Jewish question" not only continued to exist, but took on a more vehement, politically salient form. The last two decades of the century saw the emergence of modern political anti-Semitism and its infiltration into the German liberal tradition. The political movement to which Jews were wedded proved both unwilling and unable to fight anti-Semitism and the systematic exclusion of Jews from important sectors of the German state and society. The anti-Semitic movement redefined the terms of Jewishness for Jews and German alike, constructing the Jews as a racially foreign, inherently inassimilable element.

The majority Jewish response to these trends was to trust that liberal principles would eventually prevail among Jews' traditional allies. The minority response was to develop a new style of Jewish communal organization that could defend Jewish interests in the public sphere in the absence of effective non-Jewish representation. These organizations, either deliberately or inadvertently, promoted new concepts of Jewishness. The most important organizations stemming from the decade of the 1890s were the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (CV-1893) and the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* (ZVfD-1897).

Although entirely different in platform and *Weltanschauung*, both organizations shared a common premise, namely, that Jews must organize as a group and defend themselves. This was a dramatic break with liberal theory which rejected a corporate role for Jews in either society or politics. Nonetheless, the CV and the ZVfD constructed the premise of Jewish group interests, indeed, of Jewish group reality in quite different ways.

Although the CV became *the* mainstream Jewish organization in the twentieth century, its formation in 1893 was greeted with suspicion by the majority of German Jews and perceived as a radical act. The idea that there was a specifically Jewish public (as opposed to private, i.e., religious) agenda implied that there was a specifically Jewish *people*, rather than Germans of the Mosaic persuasion. The CV, as its name, *The Central Union of German Citizens of Jewish Faith*, indicates, was cautiously, if not to say inconsistently, equivocal about the existence of a Jewish people. It arose to defend Jewish honor — its founders belonged to German duelling fraternities and battled anti-Semites in their student days — within the basic framework of liberal ideology. Until its demise under the Nazis, it continued to stress German consciousness, patriotism, *Bildung*, and Judaism as a religious heritage.

The ZVfD went much farther than the CV in constructing a Jewish national identity, yet even this must be qualified. Its founders came from the same background, class and generation as those of the CV. For the most part they had the same feelings of love for the Fatherland and of Germanness as did the founders of the CV. The early ZVfD leaders, however, followed Herzlian political Zionism and saw Palestine as the solution for the Jewish

problem of the *Eastern European Jews*. While going uncomfortably farther than the CV was willing to go in its postulation of Jewish peoplehood and its fascination with the political possibilities of Palestine, the ZVfD did not intend to compromise its Germanness.

This situation changed in 1912, when the second generation of ZVfD leadership repudiated the assimilationism and arms-length political Zionism of the first generation. The second generation insisted on aliyah as a personal imperative for all Zionists and steered the organization toward a cultural orientation, under the influence of Ahad Ha-am and Martin Buber, and toward intensive practical activity, under the influence of Chaim Weizmann. Whereas the CV's purpose remained to fight anti-Semitism in Germany and the ZVfD's purpose had been to solve anti-Semitism in Russia, after 1912 the ZVfD accepted anti-Semitism as an ineradicable part of diaspora life and took the radical step of ideological negation of the diaspora (*Galutvern-einung*). These ideological and institutional developments find a parallel on the Orthodox side.

Jacob Rosenheim: A Twentieth Century Orthodox Perspective on the Land of Israel and the Zionist Movement

The growth of supra-local defense and Zionist organizations at the end of the nineteenth century occurred among the Orthodox as well. As the precursors of groups like the CV and the ZVfD first began to appear, Samson Raphael Hirsch inaugurated the *Freie Vereinigung für die Interessen des Orthodoxen Judentums* (1885). The FV was a network of Orthodox *Gemeinden* and individuals. The goals of the FV were to bring coordination to religious institutions and practices (slaughter, *milah*, *mezzuzot*, etc.), financial support of small communities, and political representation before the state authorities.¹⁵

The FV was reorganized and revitalized in 1906 under the stewardship of Jacob Rosenheim (1870-1965), the leading statesman of German Orthodoxy. This period, symbolized by the rise of the CV, was one of centralization and coordination within Jewish life on the scale of the entire Reich for the sake of self-defense. Rosenheim set out to unify all of north German Ortho-

doxy, creating a single public front against Reform-oriented institutions such as the CV, the *Allgemeiner Rabbiner Verband* and the *Deutsche-Israelitische Gemeindebund*. The effort to create a pan-Orthodox organization foundered, however, on the separatist principles of the Frankfurt community. Nonetheless, a strong, if limited organization emerged, combining, for its Orthodox clientele, the functions of the CV, the ZVfD, the *Gemeindebund* and the *Rabbiner Verband*.

One of the central tasks of the FV under Rosenheim's direction was upbuilding the Land of Israel (*Erez Jisroel Arbeit*). Rosenheim and his colleagues were particularly concerned about the growth of secular, Zionist-oriented colonial activity and established a Palestine Committee within the FV to protect and promote their interests in Palestine. They were concerned to plan and fund religious schools in the new Jewish colonies.¹⁶ Rosenheim also set out to modernize and rationalize the distribution of Western charitable funds (*halukkah*) to the Old Yishuv, a group with whom German Orthodoxy had long-standing ties.

The FV's Israel activity developed out of German Orthodoxy's charitable work in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1809, a family of Orthodox Dutch bankers, the Lehren's, established a society of "*Pekidim* and *Amarkalim* for the Holy Land" to coordinate fundraising activities in northern Europe. The organization was based in Amsterdam, but drew heavily on German funds. Rabbis of several German cities, along with Dutch Jews, constituted its ad hoc board. The recipients of the funds in Jerusalem were known as the *Kolel Hod* [=Holand v'Deutschland]. By 1906, the Germans, convinced that there was insufficient oversight and direction, refused to endorse the traditional procedures of distributing funds through emissaries. Rosenheim, at the behest of the German rabbis, convened a conference at which the FV took over the entire operation and initiated a modern, policy-driven welfare system with a full-time employee in Jerusalem.¹⁷

Throughout his autobiography and voluminous other writings, Rosenheim credits German Orthodox *Erez Jisroel Arbeit* with preparing the base upon which subsequent — and, to him unwelcome — Zionist activity built. He was convinced that the Orthodox, alone among German Jews, kept alive a sense of connection with the Land of Israel. While this might be true at

the level of institutions, it appears, at least on the basis of Hirsch's writings, to be an overstatement.

The FV, unlike the *Gemeindebund* or CV, was actively involved, like the ZVfD, in Israel-oriented work. Unlike the ZVfD, the FV and, after 1912, Agudath Israel repudiated Zionism as the ideological basis for its activity. Rosenheim and other leading figures of both FV and Agudah rejected Zionism as a system of thought, while functionally agreeing with Zionist goals. Rosenheim was thus faced with working out an ideological justification for Israel-activity. He could not accept Zionism insofar as it redefined Jewish nationhood as a strictly secular phenomenon. On the other hand, he could not simply rely on tradition insofar as he was deeply involved in the modernization of Orthodox institutions.

One attempt to develop a compelling Orthodox ideology in a modernist mode was that of Mizrachi, the religious Zionist movement. Orthodox ideologues such as Rosenheim rejected Mizrachi since it seemed to capitulate to Zionism at a key juncture: by working with secular Zionists, Mizrachists were in effect saying that religion is a private matter. The nation, Zionistically conceived, is primary; faith in Torah is optional. For Rosenheim and other Frankfurt ideologues, the Torah was a public, objectively-binding constitutional law. The privatization of the Torah's authority meant its relativization. Given the generally confessional cast of religious life in Germany, however, these proclamations amounted to little more than a refusal to cooperate with non-Orthodox Jews on ground of principle. Mizrachi, which counted many leading members of the Frankfurt separatist community among its membership, seemed to violate this principle.¹⁸

Mizrachi was able to argue against this implication by stressing the practical rather than ideological nature of Herzlian Zionism. These grounds failed in 1911, when the Tenth Zionist Congress adopted a post-Herzlian plank of *Gegenwartsarbeit*: cultural and educational work in the diaspora. Some Mizrachi members, threatened by the unmistakable predominance of the secular, nationalistically-oriented trend, dropped out of the WZO and, together with German and Eastern European Orthodox Jews, formed Agudath Israel. Thus Rosenheim's efforts must be seen as an attempt to validate certain elements of

Zionism, as Mizrahi did, while repudiating others, all from a standpoint that allegedly preserved the independence and dominance of Torah.

Rosenheim raised these issues as early as 1904 in an article entitled, "Criticism, Trust or Action?" Taking a stand virtually unthinkable for mainstream Reform Jews, he announced that Orthodoxy and Zionism agree in their concrete goals, but differ in the spiritual content they assign to these goals. They agree on the reawakening of national consciousness, on settlement of the holy land, on the revival of Jewish character and custom, as well as of the Hebrew language and culture.¹⁹ For the Zionists, the intention for the pursuit of these goals is the creation of a secular national culture. For the Orthodox, the intention can be no other than *kiyyum mitzvot*: in this case, the *mitzvah* of *yishuv ha-arets*. Rosenheim criticizes Orthodox Jews who do not perceive this signal difference at the level of intentionality. There is another subjective difference as well. Zionism — in the cultural form advocated by Ahad Ha-am and Martin Buber — functions as a surrogate Judaism for its adherents. Rosenheim was particularly intrigued by Buber's *Reden* to the Bar Kokhba group in Prague. He affirmed the fact that this form of Zionism could redeem Jews from utter assimilation in the name of the Jewish spirit. Yet, from the point of view of the Orthodox, who have not, by definition, lost their Jewish essence, this spirit only leads astray. He criticized Buber in particular for substituting an ideology of blood and race for God and Torah.²⁰

The difference between Zionism and Orthodoxy, therefore, is less at the level of action than at the levels of intention and attribution of value to concepts. This stress on intentionality, although not at all lacking in Jewish tradition, derives unmistakably from the Kantian accent on the German ethical tradition, where the quality of the will determines the value of the action. The will that has been educated by proper maxims wills correctly. In terms of Rosenheim's *Bildungsideologie*, the will that has been educated by Torah alone can will correctly. Similarly, the meaning that one attributes to concepts like Jewish nationhood or law alone determines their value. This idealistic orientation, at the farthest possible remove from pragmatism, severely delimits the possibilities of dialogue and meta-ideological cooperation.

Rosenheim, as publisher of the Frankfurt Orthodox weekly, *Israelit*, wrote many pieces on Israel and Zionism. His 1920 address, "Fundamental Traits of the Eretz Israel Policy of Agudath Israel," is among the most systematic.²¹ The address was prepared for the first postwar international meeting of Agudath Israel. Its main objective is to make sense of the Balfour Declaration and the new possibilities opened up by the British Mandate.²²

Rosenheim argues that, in general, the task of "Torah true" politics is to secure the physical, economic, spiritual and ethical existence of the Jewish people as a whole and of Jewish individuals. This general imperative, coupled with the special status of the Land of Israel in the Jewish tradition and the *mitzvah* of *yishuv ha-aretz*, provides the framework for Agudah's Israel policy. Agudah cannot accept the Zionist view that a national home in Israel is the only solution to the problem of the Jews, for even on its own terms it is flawed: Jews are in physical danger in Palestine no less than in Europe. Agudah must be involved in diplomatic negotiations with both Britain and the Arabs to enhance the security of Jews in Palestine.

The perspective of Jewish security is not, however, the only one worth considering. Agudah agrees fundamentally with Zionism that every Jewish settler who comes to Palestine represents a strengthening of the Jewish economy. For this reason, the settlement of all Jews must be facilitated and encouraged. Another area of agreement is that emigration to Palestine diminishes the threat of assimilation in the diaspora. Unlike the European diaspora environment, the Palestinian Arab culture hardly invites Jewish participation. Nonetheless, now that Great Britain has mandatory authority over the country, modernizing tendencies will assert themselves with greater force. (Throughout the war, Rosenheim hoped that the Turks would retain control over Palestine. He believed that their regime would be more favorable to the maintenance and the development of new centers of traditional Jewish life and less open to Zionist secularism than a Western power.²³ In fact, in the summer of 1918, before the end of the war, Rosenheim led a delegation of Orthodox Jews to Constantinople and presented a plan to Talaat Pasha for a Jewish national home in Palestine under Torah law. While well received, nothing came of the plan for obvious reasons.)²⁴

Rosenheim asserts that Jewish security is only possible when Torah, proclaimed by rabbinic sages, governs every aspect of life in the holy land. Rosenheim evidently has in mind an autonomous communal structure (not a sovereign state) where Torah is the official constitution of the community. Yet as far as one can determine, Rosenheim did not intend a Torah-dominated police state. He states explicitly that no one will be forced to believe in any dogmas: there will be freedom of conscience. What a Torah foundation provides is a continuity of legal development across the generations, a framework for a minimal consensus on the character of the Jewish community. This is, in fact, the fulfillment, he notes with irony, of the Zionist construction of Jews as an "historical people."²⁵

Rosenheim believes that the Jewish people is God's tool for the attainment of the moral ends of the historical process. The Land of Israel is God's territorial tool, distinguished by the fact that God revealed himself there through prophecy. His *shekhina* will return to Israel when the Jewish people consummates its institutionalization of Torah there. Israel is not, therefore, holy in only a poetic sense: the ground of Israel is holy in, as it were, a concrete sense. The goal of Israel policy must be to secure those material and legal conditions under which Jews can respond to the implicit holiness of the soil. Furthermore, policy ought to discourage the potential for committing unholy acts on the soil, which — Rosenheim adds in a messianic allusion — will delay the end of the Galut. None of this, however, aims to discourage the emigration of secular Jews to the country, both because of the possibility of their *teshuvah*, and because of the benefit they confer on the economy.

Rosenheim is convinced that *halakhah* provides detailed guidance for Agudah's policy and simultaneously frees that policy from the shifting fortunes of geo-politics. Relying apparently on the compendium, *Pe'at Ha-Shulchan*, Rosenheim reviews the main duties connected with *mitzvat yishuv ha-aretz* and the circumstances which mitigate them. Many *mitzvot* which are binding on individuals, he argues, can only be achieved with communal organization and support. Agudah's role must be conceived then as providing the collective political will which individuals require in order to do their *halakhic* duty. Agudath Israel must therefore: a) deal with the great powers in the name

of the historical Jewish people, and b) orient its entire program to increasing Israel-diaspora ties and support. Agudath Israel should not shrink from dealing with the great powers, nor from highly defined areas of cooperation with the Zionist movement when the fulfillment of mitzvot is at stake.

From this brief precis of Rosenheim's address, it is clear that he experienced an acute tension between the historical novelty and pull of the Zionist movement and that of the more traditional framework for Israel-oriented thought and action. The latter framework was traditional in two senses: both Jewish and German-Jewish. Despite Rosenheim's nod in the direction of *kibbutz ha-galuyot*, his primary loyalty seems to be a Hirschian *Bildungs*-interpretation of the commandments at the level of individual ethics and conscience. Politics, the collective enterprise of the historical Jewish people, is reduced to an amanuensis for the individual's sense of duty. On the other hand, Rosenheim gives ample evidence in his other writings of a more grandiose conception of politics as an incipiently messianic collective praxis.

Thus it is clear that the energies and aspirations unleashed by Zionism destabilized the traditional German-Jewish framework of *Bildung* and *Konfession*, for the Orthodox no less than for Reform Jews. The Orthodox were, I have argued, more predisposed and open to this influence, however, as their German identities were less stable in the first place. Traditional Orthodox ties, both institutional and spiritual to the holy land, potentiated by a sense of their own exceptionalism, oriented the German Orthodox to an affirmation of Israel-oriented activism and awareness. This consciousness exceeded that of their non-Zionist brethren and rivalled that of the Zionists themselves.

Notes

1. This discussion follows that of David Sorkin in *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780-1840* (New York: Oxford, 1987), ch. 1.
2. George Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press and Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), p. 4.
3. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism*, p. 16.

4. Quoted in Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German-Jew, 1893-1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), p. 72.
5. Quoted in Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*, pp. 73-74.
6. Quoted in Reinharz, *ibid.*, p. 75.
7. Cf. the discussion in Mordechai Breuer, *Jüdische Orthodoxie im Deutschen Reich, 1871-1918* (Frankfurt/M: Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenäum, 1986), pp. 272-279.
8. The sermon is translated and reprinted in Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Judaism Eternal*, I. Grunfeld, ed. and trans. (London: Soncino Press, 1956), p. 126.
9. Hirsch, *Judaism Eternal*, p. 129.
10. After summarizing various duties to the state, he adds: "But this outward obedience to the laws must be joined by an inner obedience: i.e. to be loyal to the State with heart and mind, loyal to the kings, to guard the honour of the State with love and pride, to strive with enthusiasm wherever and whenever you can so that the nation's institutions shall prosper, so that every aim which your country has set as its national goal shall be achieved and furthered....And this duty is an unconditional duty and not dependent upon whether the State is kindly intentioned towards you or harsh. Even should they deny your right to be a human being and to develop a lawful human life upon the soil which bore you — *you shall not neglect your duty.*" Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observances*, I. Grunfeld, ed. and trans. (London: Soncino, 1962), p. 462.
11. Hirsch, *Horeb*, p. 130.
12. Hirsch, *ibid.*, p. 135.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 137. Cf. Mordechai Breuer's discussion of Hirsch's attenuated concept of nationhood in Breuer, *Jüdische Orthodoxie*, p. 258.
15. Breuer, *ibid.*, pp. 248-249.
16. Jacob Rosenheim, *Erinnerungen: 1870-1920* (Frankfurt/Main: Waldemar Kramer, 1970), pp. 88-93.
17. It is significant that Rosenheim credits the Palestine Committee of the FV with being the "birthplace" of Agudath Israel, the world Orthodox organization he helped to found in 1912. Rosenheim, *Erinnerungen*, p. 90.
18. For the extent of Orthodox, including separatist Orthodox, membership in Zionist groups, cf. Breuer, *Jüdische Orthodoxie*, p. 329.

19. Jacob Rosenheim, "Kritik, Vertrauensseligkeit oder Tat?" in *Ohale Yaakov: Ausgewählte Aufsätze und Ansprachen*, vol. II (Frankfurt/Main: J. Kaufmann Verlag, 1930), pp. 79-88, (hereafter cited as AAA).
20. "Martin Buber und sein Kreis," (1917) in AAA I, pp. 53-67.
21. "Grundzüge einer Erez Yisroel Politik der Agudas Yisroel," in AAA II, pp. 209-216.
22. Rosenheim gives the background for the address in *Erinnerungen*, p. 158.
23. Cf. his 1917 essay, "Um Jerusalem," in AAA II, p. 326.
24. *Erinnerungen*, pp. 152-155.
25. These precautions are developed in "Der Zionismus am Scheidewege," AAA II, p. 331.