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A large, white, cursive signature of Simon Dubnow, written in a fluid, flowing style, positioned centrally on the cover.

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Dan Diner, Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts

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Editorial

Wie in jeder Ausgabe sucht das Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts einem doppelten Auftrag gerecht zu werden. Zum einen bietet es Autorinnen und Autoren aus dem Bereich der jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur national wie international ein Forum der Darbietung ihrer Forschungen; und zum anderen gibt es den Mitarbeitern des Dubnow-Instituts und Akademikern seines Umfeldes Gelegenheit, dem interessierten Publikum Aspekte ihrer im Entstehen begriffenen oder gerade abgeschlossenen Untersuchungen vorzustellen. So präsentiert das Jahrbuch neue Forschungsergebnisse und weist zugleich auf Kommendes hin.

Der *Allgemeine Teil* der vorliegenden Ausgabe umfasst vier Beiträge. Während die beiden ersten einen ideengeschichtlichen Gegenstand zum Inhalt haben, thematisieren die beiden anderen sowohl aus einer politikgeschichtlichen als auch aus einer historiografiegeschichtlichen Perspektive Gegenstände, die sich mit Fragen der jüdischen Katastrophe befassen. *Martina Urban* (Nashville, Tenn.) beschäftigt sich in ihrem Beitrag mit einem Transformationsphänomen des liberalen deutschen Judentums im 19. Jahrhundert. Es geht um Fragen der soziologischen und kulturellen Konstruktion von Zugehörigkeit, wobei Elemente der Universalisierung, beruhend auf einem ausgesprochen religiösen Selbstverständnis, und stärker partikular orientierte Vorstellungen einer jüdischen Kulturnation miteinander zu harmonisieren waren. *Vivian Liska* (Antwerpen) diskutiert in einem ebenso erhellenden wie prononcierten Beitrag Versuche vornehmlich der zeitgenössischen französischen Philosophie, durch einen übersteigerten, gleichsam antijüdisch sich aufladenden Universalismus die jüdische Tradition als Ausdruck einer partikularen Verschließung zurückzuweisen. Paradoxerweise geschieht dies wiederum durch eine verkehrende Adaption jüdischen Denkens und jüdischer Denker. *Gil Rubin* (New York) verhandelt den historischen Umschlagpunkt, an dem der wohl führende Vertreter der jüdischen Minderheitenpolitik der Zwischenkriegszeit, der Jurist Jacob Robinson, angesichts des Holocaust zu einer Revision seiner vormaligen Vorstellungen gelangt und sich von der jüdischen »Gegenwartsarbeit« verabschiedet. Diese Konstellation beleuchtet neben den von Robinson durchlaufenen Veränderungen auch das Phänomen der Verwandlung jüdischer politischer Vorstellungen in Richtung einer zunehmenden Territorialisierung. *Elisabeth Gallas* (Wien, vormals Leipzig) konzentriert sich in ihrem Beitrag auf die Tätigkeit der späteren Historikerin des Holocaust, Lucy Dawidowicz, am Offenbacher Depot. Im Zentrum steht Dawidowicz Anteil an der Rekonstruktion von jüdischen geraubten Kulturgütern, vornehmlich von Bibliotheken – im Be-

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sonderen der Bibliothek des YIVO – in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit. Dabei geht es der Autorin vorrangig darum, einen Zusammenhang sichtbar zu machen zwischen der materialen Arbeit der Sichtung und Sicherung der Bücher und dem historiografischen Moment, der zu den späteren Darstellungen führte.

Wie üblich werden die thematischen Schwerpunkte von den jeweiligen Mitherausgebern im Textkorpus gesondert vorgestellt. Dies gilt für den von *Jörg Deventer* (Leipzig) betreuten zentralen Schwerpunkt dieses Jahrbuches zu Gustav Mahler, der aus der Jahreskonferenz des Dubnow-Instituts 2011 hervorgegangen ist, und für den Schwerpunkt zur frühen jüdischen Holocaustforschung von *Klaus Kempster* (Heidelberg, vormals Leipzig).

Die inzwischen zur Tradition gewordenen Rubriken *Gelehrtenporträt*, *Dubnowiana* und *Aus der Forschung*, die Einblicke in Arbeitsweisen erlauben, ohne dass Forschungsbeiträge abschließenden Charakters präsentiert werden, und das als *Literaturbericht* ausgewiesene Textgenre, das ein größeres Vorhaben begleitet, erhöhen den akademischen Gebrauchswert des Jahrbuches. Die Rubrik *Gelehrtenporträt* wird in dieser Ausgabe von *Ann-Kathrin Pollmann* (Leipzig) bestritten. Gegenstand ist der Philosoph Günther Anders, genauer: dessen Niederschriften im Gefolge seiner Rückkehr aus dem amerikanischen Exil nach Europa. Dabei zieht die Verfasserin insbesondere seine Tagebücher als Quelle heran, um die innere Spannung zwischen historischem und posthistorischem Denken in Anders' Werk zu dokumentieren, die sich auf seine Sicht einer prospektiven nuklearen Katastrophe einerseits und den Holocaust andererseits systematisch überträgt. Die Rubrik *Dubnowiana* wird in diesem Jahrgang in besonderer Weise berücksichtigt. Es handelt sich um einen Beitrag des im Jahr 2010 verstorbenen Literaturwissenschaftlers *Shmuel Werses* (Jerusalem) zur Sprachverwendung Simon Dubnows. Dabei wird deutlich, dass der Autonomist Dubnow nur in geringerem Maße als kultureller Jiddischist zu verstehen ist. Vielmehr war er ein ausgesprochener Vertreter der jüdischen Mehrsprachigkeit, die sowohl das Russische – Dubnows intellektuelle Sprache –, das Hebräische – das von ihm als nationale Sprache der Juden gewürdigte Medium – und das Jiddische, dem er sich in späteren Jahren als Volkssprache der Juden erneut zuwandte, einschloss. Werses' Beitrag erschien zuerst 2010 in hebräischer Sprache und wurde nun für diese Ausgabe des Jahrbuches übersetzt und durch Einfügung deutsch- beziehungsweise englischsprachiger Quellenzitate erweitert. In der Rubrik *Aus der Forschung* präsentiert *Natasha Gordinsky* (Leipzig) einen Aspekt ihrer gegenwärtigen, größeren komparatistischen Untersuchung zum Diskurs der Nostalgie in den Literaturwissenschaften. Sie vergleicht je ein Werk der hebräischen Schriftsteller Shmuel Yosef Agnon und Lea Goldberg und folgt dabei der Überlegung, dass das Moment des Nostalgischen hier weniger als individuelle oder kollektive psychische Reaktion auf vergangene

oder verlorene Lebenswelten zu verstehen ist, sondern als ein literarischer Zugriff ästhetischer wie politischer Art. Den *Literaturbericht* hat diesmal *Carolin Kosuch* (Leipzig) gestaltet. Die Verfasserin rückt die Rolle Erich Mühsams und Gustav Landauers während der kurzlebigen Münchner Räterepublik ins Zentrum. Die Darstellung der dokumentarischen wie der Forschungsliteratur folgt einer spezifischen, der Gesamtuntersuchung der Autorin entsprechenden Fragestellung: der Bedeutung der Herkunft der Protagonisten sowohl für das anarchistische Motiv der Aktion als auch für die tiefer zugrundeliegenden Motive von Lebensgefühl und Generationskonflikt.

Am Ende dieses Vorwortes steht die Einsicht, das dieser Band das Ergebnis vielfältiger Zusammenarbeit darstellt. Zu danken ist dabei an erster Stelle den Autorinnen und Autoren ebenso wie den Mitherausgebern der beiden Schwerpunkte. Mit großer Sorgfalt, Umsicht und viel Engagement haben Monika Heinker als Lektorin und Petra Klara Gamke-Breitschopf als wissenschaftliche Redakteurin diese Ausgabe betreut und die einzelnen Beiträge zu einem Gesamtwerk zusammenwachsen lassen. Hierbei wurden sie von Jana Duman und Lina Bosbach redaktionell tatkräftig unterstützt. William Templer, David Ajchenrand und Jeremiah M. Riemer oblagen die für diese Ausgabe unabdingbaren Übersetzungen. Allen Genannten gilt der besondere Dank des Herausgebers.

Dan Diner

Leipzig/Jerusalem, Herbst 2012

Allgemeiner Teil

Martina Urban

Covenant and *Kulturnation*: The Quest for First-Order Definitions of Judaism

In his now classical study on the idea of nationalism, the Zionist intellectual Hans Kohn (1891–1971) observed that nationality and nation are both historical latecomers. They are modern constructs, not primordial absolutes or a priori givens.¹ It is the “power of an idea,” Kohn writes, “not the call of blood, that has constituted and molded nationalities.”² Consequently, “it is not the possession of definite traits which defines a people, but the tendency to accentuate them.”³ Kohn’s reflections beget yet another issue attendant to the concept of nation, namely what the historian of nationalism and ethnicity, Anthony D. Smith, calls “alternative forms of nation.” Smith criticizes modernist historians for whom nationalism is only important insofar as it is linked to the state, whether supporting or challenging it, noting that “the concept of the nation signifies both a category of collective cultural identity and a historical form of (imagined, but also felt and willed) *community*” which renders nationalism “far more dynamic, inclusive, and purposive, as well as more richly varied” than is generally conceived.⁴

Kulturnation was one such alternative model of nationhood. In the first decades of the twentieth century this concept entered the German Jewish discourse on identity and allowed for unexplored perspectives, namely that of the humanistic ideal of a nation which defines itself preeminently on the basis of its cultural heritage and values. This novel ideational construct marks an attempt to overcome what was perceived to be the limitations of the political-territorial configurations of collective identity. When employed by Jewish intellectuals it also indicated a revision of German Jewish self-representation. Nineteenth-century German Jews had endeavored to formulate definitions of Judaism that would accommodate the desire for cultural integration into their host society and the eclipse of traditional religious practices. But while addressing new Jewish realities, these definitions tended to be above all apologetic exercises, prompted by a perceived need to respond to the prevail-

- 1 Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism. A Study in its Origins and Background*, New York 1944, 13.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 4 Anthony David Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations. Hierarchy, Covenant, and Republic*, Malden, Mass., 2008, 118.

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ing negative perception of Judaism and the impulse to conform to the Protestant conception of religion as a confession.⁵ The resulting essentialist discourse, primed by second-order definitions of Judaism which were imposed from outside, obstructed a self-characterization or what Jonathan Zittell Smith calls “first-order definition.”⁶

Towards Non-Essentialist First-Order Definitions of Judaism

Reflecting a change in the social and cultural climate of fin-de-siècle Germany, attendant to the rise of neo-Romantic *volkism* and the resurgence of anti-Semitism, ever increasing calls were voiced by Zionists and Liberal Jews alike to overcome the constrictive second-order definitions of Judaism. On the theoretical level the demand was for an articulation of Jewish identity that incorporates non-essentialist first-order self-definitions of Judaism. The concept of *Kulturnation* met this twofold objective: First, by acknowledging that Judaism was not a religion in the confessional Protestant mode, but a comprehensive way of life with a pronounced ethnic component. And second, by defining Judaism broadly as a culture that is anchored in religious values, ideas, and attitudes. These components constitute a shared ethos that endows normative actions with a distinctive inner motivational and existential quality. Ethos captures the life of a social group in its dynamic developmental processes. From a sociological perspective, ethos is a concept that complements

- 5 Ludwig Fuld articulates the widely held doctrinal position of the CV (*Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* – Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith), voiced even more forcefully in the wake of the first Zionist Congress in 1897 “that one is equally unauthorized to speak of a Jewish nationality, as of a Protestant, Catholic or Buddhist nationality.” Idem, *Der Nationaljude als Staatsbürger*, in: *Im deutschen Reich. Zeitschrift des Centralvereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* 3 (1897), no. 11, 529–538, here 531. But not all Jewish liberals endorsed the definition of Judaism as purely a *Religionsgemeinschaft*. Some still upheld the notion that the Jews were also a nationality whose distinctive ethnic characteristics are the cumulative effect of their millennial historical experience. See Arno Herzig, *Jüdische Geschichte in Deutschland*, Munich 1997, 16.
- 6 Jonathan Zittell Smith, *Religion, Religions, Religious*, in: Mark C. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Chicago, Ill., 1998, 269–284, here 269. See also Michael L. Satlow, *Defining Judaism. Accounting for “Religions” in the Study of Religion*, in: *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74 (2006), no. 4, 837–860, here 842. As Christian Wiese has noted, the Protestant discourse on Judaism and social integration of the Jews in Germany perpetuated the “othering.” It was “[largely] aimed at silencing Jewish identity by connecting the promise of emancipation with the demand of complete assimilation and by imposing a Christian perspective on Jewish tradition.” Idem, *Challenging Colonial Discourse. Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany*, Leiden 2005, 437.

Émile Durkheim's interpretation of religion as a "collective representation" of society.

The growing awareness of a shared mentality led to the increasing philosophical significance of ethos, attested by the fact that it gradually gained wide currency.⁷ This concept enhanced the discourse on identity through facilitation of a broadly inclusive definition of membership, regardless of differences in religious practice and commitment. Jewish intellectuals challenged German society to adopt a pluralistic view of community and to foster a truly tolerant, multiethnic and culturally diverse civil society. It will be argued in this essay that the rhetoric of the nation and that of religion converged in the Jewish constructions of *Kultur*nation which not only allowed for the affirmation of difference but also served to counter essentialist constructions of otherness. The resulting re-conceptualization of the relationship between the periphery (the Jews) and the center (governed according to the Jewish perception by Liberal Protestants) will be analyzed as an instance of discursive re-positioning. This articulation of a "new" Jewish self-understanding also demanded a redefinition of the category of religion to render it amenable to a first-order definition of Judaism. The quest for a new model of Jewish identity will largely be traced through the work of the Russian-born German Jewish social philosopher David Koigen (1879–1933) and his principal interlocutors. His vision of a *Kultur*nation reflects more of an East European approach in that it seeks an unapologetic affirmation of Jewish ethnicity (peoplehood). Unencumbered by the constraints of the German Jewish Liberal discourse, Koigen offered historiosophical reflections on the construct of *Kultur*nation which can also be read as a critical comment on some of the most significant cultural and academic debates at the time. The article concludes by pointing out some methodological implications that the concept of *Kultur*nation has for interdisciplinary theories on German Jewish identity.

Judaism, Buddhism, and the World Religion Discourse

It was perhaps not fortuitous that the twofold demand for a revision of the definition of Judaism and the category of religion coincided with the establishment of the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* (Religious Studies), formally inaugurated in 1912 with the founding of the Religionswissenschaftliche Institut (Institute for Religious Studies) in Leipzig. The process of defining the constituents of a "world religion" and membership in this canon

7 Friedrich Thieberger, Ein Wort zu den Erwägungen über Religion, in: *Der Jude* 3 (1918/19), no. 2, 68–79, here 69.

was in fact already in full swing. The classification roulette started in the mid-nineteenth century, as Tomoko Masuzawa has shown, with the rise of new language theories and the attendant remapping of religions and their typological classification.⁸ As a result, linguistic ethnography and the science of religion overlapped, often generating dubious ethnic constructions.

At this juncture, Jewish thinkers propounded the notion of a cultural nation on the anvil of comparative religion. To this end they employed a counter-discursive strategy, which was initially signaled by the evocation of Buddhism as a typological referent. The ensuing discourse perpetuated essentialist second-order classifications of the respective world religions according to which Buddhism was portrayed as a form of “retreat from the world” (*Weltflucht*) and ergo a threat to the Liberal religious ethics of social engagement. In light of this assessment,⁹ Liberal Jews appealed to Liberal Protestants to join them in a concerted effort to curb the growing fascination with Buddhism in Germany. Concurrently, the desired alliance between Jewry and Liberal Christianity proved increasingly elusive as became palpably evident with the publication of Adolf von Harnack’s lectures on the *Essence of Christianity* at the turn of the century and its deprecatory representation of Judaism. Echoing regnant Liberal Protestant opinion, Harnack pitted his essentialist interpretation of a pristine Christianity, which he identified with the timeless ethical precepts of the synoptic Gospels and the exemplary “ethical” personality of Jesus, against the putatively spiritually desiccated legalism of rabbinic Judaism.¹⁰ As is well known, Joseph Eschelbacher and Leo Baeck, among other Liberal rabbis, responded by reasserting their own essentialist position that the core of Judaism is ethical monotheism. In spite of their divergent theological positions, Jewish and Christian Liberals were in fundamental accord regarding the essence of religion. Nevertheless, many Jews felt that Liberal Protestants had lost their resolve to counter the inroads that “forms of negation” had made into German culture. This concern grew deeper in the wake of World War I when a growing number of Christians turned to Buddhism, withdrawing from the socio-political sphere, thus, in effect, surrendering their commitment to forging a liberal civil society. Writing in the *Neue*

8 Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions. Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, Chicago, Ill., 2005.

9 On the image of Buddhism in German academic discourse, see Heinrich Dumoulin, *Buddhism and Nineteenth-Century German Philosophy*, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (1981), no. 3, 457–470.

10 Arnold von Harnack conceded that the Gospels lack a sense of culture and social progress (*Das Wesen des Christentums*, Leipzig 1902, 75). Hence, the Gospels cannot provide the theoretical underpinnings for the modern ideal of *Kulturarbeit*. Culture as time-bound does not lend itself to an identification with the Church. The Gospels teach the “true work” of humanity. To honor the message of the Gospels cannot mean to “entrench oneself” within “kümmerliche ‘Kulturarbeit’ (wretched cultural work).” *Ibid.*, 78.

jüdische Monatshefte, Samuel Krauss ponders whether the “negation of the will that Buddhism and Schopenhauer teach” is a legitimate way of dealing with the pervasive suffering wrought up by the war. That more and more Christians (and also not a few Jews) were drawn to East Asian religions for their non-doctrinal teachings and spiritual wisdom is not an occasion for Jewish *Schadenfreude*, Kraus candidly notes, let alone reason for Jews to discontinue their support of the irenic “inter-confessional *Burgfrieden*” (literally, fortress peace).¹¹ He asks polemically what this new “mass phenomenon,” the popular espousal of a Buddhist *Weltanschauung*, comes to say about Harnack’s attributing to Christianity alone the label of a “true,” that is, a universal religion.¹²

Referencing Buddhism as a trope of negation was in fact a rhetorical strategy to prod Liberal Protestants to recall that theirs too is an ethical religion that must seek realization in the arena of culture and assume a resolute commitment to a progressive social and political agenda. The “hidden agenda” informing this rhetorical strategy of evoking the “threat” of Buddhism may be discerned by Ludwig Stein (1859–1930), professor of philosophy at the University of Bern, in his analysis of the cultural pessimism that afflicted German society. In 1903, the social philosopher called upon Liberal Christians and Jews to join forces and to “throw into the fire everything in Judaism and Christianity that would still remind one of Buddhist elements!” The pessimism of a Schopenhauer, whom Stein dubs the “philosophical Buddhist *par excellence*,” should no longer “paralyze our future-oriented creativity.” For Stein, asceticism and withdrawal from the world are “pathological degenerations, hypochondriac excesses of an overwrought nervous system.” Therefore, he summons Jews and Christians to “rid the historical religions from everything that is hostile to life and pathological.”¹³ Similar to second-order constructions of comparative dichotomies, Stein aligns Judaism and Christianity as optimistic religions as opposed to religions that sponsor a pessimistic ethos. Judaism’s corresponding messianic impulse and teleological future-orientation implies for Stein movement, ascent, and transformation, while Buddhism cultivates an ideal of inertia (or as in Leo Baeck’s words, Buddhism is the “religion of inertia”¹⁴) in stark contrast to biblical monotheism’s

11 Samuel Krauss, Ein Wort zur buddhistischen Bewegung, in: *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte* 1 (1916/17), no. 14, 418–420, here 419. Krauss (1866–1948) was a liberal rabbi ordained in Budapest and professor at the liberal rabbinic seminary just there and in Vienna, where he served as president of the Verein für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur.

12 *Ibid.*, 420.

13 Ludwig Stein, *Die soziale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie. Vorlesungen über Soziologie und ihre Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1897, 512.

14 Leo Baeck, *The Essence of Judaism*, New York 1948, 223 (This rendition by Irving Howe is based on the translation from the German by Victor Grubenwieser and Leonard Pearl).

commitment to continuous development and renewal. These rigid demarcations juxtapose a set of dynamic tropes against static ones, which was typical of a colonial discourse that Baeck nolens volens buys into. We may interpret this rhetorical move as a form of discursive displacement with the aim to induce Liberal Christians to engage with them in self-critical reflection. Stein's typological differentiation between a biblical-monotheistic and a Buddhistic worldview is to be read in light of Nietzsche's valorization of Buddhism contra the "Jewish-Christian ethics of pity." This critique posed a more concrete threat to liberal culture than Schopenhauer's flirtation with the doctrine of nirvana,¹⁵ because it aims at the ethical-religious foundation of Western civilization and by implication that of the German nation. This state of affairs required an immediate and concerted response by both Jews and Christians regardless of their theological differences.

Koigen on the Idea of a *Kulturnation*

Stein's student, David Koigen was even more adamant in his rejection of Buddhism and the atheistic nihilism of contemporary culture. In elaborating his ideas of a philosophy of culture, he takes issue with Buddhism's determined "annulment of reality" (*Wegdekretierung der Wirklichkeit*),¹⁶ which is diametrically opposed to the social idealism of Judaism. In his opinion the new "European, Christian neo-Buddhism" calls for a theodicy of culture, for Buddhism and its modern cultural variants do not acknowledge the theistic idea of a creator God as the ontological warrant to affirm the meaningfulness of reality.¹⁷ This defiantly monotheistic opposition to the neo-Buddhist trend is, however, not to be confused with an argument against religious pluralism. Koigen makes an explicit statement to the contrary: "religion [allows] for an infinite variety of religious attitudes and practices as well as a plurality of religious truths."¹⁸ As so many of his contemporaries, Koigen failed to overcome thinking in binary dichotomies. These opposing two types of religious consciousness informed his interpretation of a *Kulturnation*. Koigen wedded his vision of Judaism as a paradigmatic cultural nation to a given conception

15 Ludwig Stein, *Nietzsches Weltanschauung und ihre Gefahren*. Ein Essay, Berlin 1893, 80.

16 David Koigen, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Kultur*. Der Kulturakt, Munich/Leipzig 1910, 339.

17 *Ibid.*, 117.

18 Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem (henceforth CAHJP), Nachlass David Koigen, box P 196, Koigen's description of his book *Der moralische Gott. Eine Abhandlung über die Beziehungen zwischen Kultur und Religion*, Berlin 1922, 3 (written as a précis for the publisher).

of religion. He redefines Judaism as a weave of three interlinked variables: ethos, ethics, and ethnos. The inclusion of ethnos among the defining characteristics of the Jews as a cultural nation marked a decisive departure from the assumption of an essential parity between Liberal Judaism and Liberal Christianity, understood to be religious confessions based preeminently on the ethical teachings of the biblical prophets.

The term “*Kultur*nation” obtained political and cultural significance in the German discourse with Friedrich Meinecke’s *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat. Studien zur Genesis des deutschen Nationalstaates* (1908).¹⁹ Differentiating between a cultural nation and a political nation Meinecke regarded the two in dialectic relation. The dual-legacy of Bismarck and Goethe, power and spirit, are equally necessary to sustain the German nation, ensuring that in the pursuit of its political interests it would not be severed from the supranational community of humanity. The Jewish participants in the discourse agreed that cosmopolitanism is the ultimate objective of a cultural nation, though they disputed that there is a necessary relation between it and the nation state. Similarly, they would debate Meinecke’s stipulation that “the first prerequisite for the development of nation is the acquisition of a firm territorial base, a ‘fatherland.’” Meinecke doubted whether a trans-territorial people could “acquire and maintain a rich substance and firm coherence.” He thus concluded that in addition to possessing “a permanent residential seat,” a cultural nation is held together by “a common language, a common literature, and common religion.”²⁰ Although these latter three conditions would apply to East European Jewry, their applicability to Central and West European Jews was problematic. Whereas the vast majority of East European Jews at the time still spoke Yiddish, this was surely no longer true of Jewry that dwelt beyond the western border of Poland and Russia. The various definitions of the Jews as a *sprachbestimmte Kultur*nation – of a cultural nation grounded in either Yiddish or Hebrew – that abounded in East Europe did not address the socio-cultural reality of German-speaking Jews.²¹ As Natan Sznajder has recently noted in a study of the cosmopolitan sensibilities of pre-World War II German Jewish writers, not only Hebrew and Yiddish were for them “foreign languages,” but they were also in some basic sense aware

19 Meinecke credits Friedrich Neumark for coining the term “*Kultur*nation” in his volume of 1888 *Volk und Nation*. He also notes his indebtedness to the works of Adolf Kirchhoff, among them: idem, *Zur Verständigung über die Begriffe Nation und Nationalität*, Halle/Saale 1905. Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State. Studies in the Beginning of the German Nation-States*, trans. by Robert B. Kimber, Princeton, N.J., 1970, 10, fn. 1.

20 *Ibid.*, 10.

21 See Arndt Kremer, *Deutsche Juden – deutsche Sprache. Jüdische und judenfeindliche Sprachkonzepte und -konflikte 1893–1933*, Berlin 2007, 404–414.

that German was an acquired language. The Jewish cultural identity these writers held “did not need a unified language (as it did not need a unified territory).” Accordingly, they sought a “hidden Jewish tradition,” lodged in Jewish cultural sensibilities, which although shaped by religion are given a secular expression.²²

The nation was, then, to be viewed primarily as a community defined by its cultural assets, organized around values, beliefs, and the consciousness of a shared history. Conceived above all as a cultural category the nation never ceases to be an “imagined, willed, and felt community.”²³ Therefore, the concept of *Kulturnation* tends to find itself in tension with the “Western civic-territorial form of the modern nation” and its “inherent ethnocentrism.”²⁴ Even secular Zionism reflected this tension in its relativizing of ethnos through a utopian idealism; as the neo-Orthodox rabbi Isaac Breuer acerbically remarked in his defense of halakhic Judaism, “Zionism affirms and negates the nation at the same time.”²⁵ This dialectical paradox was also captured by the non-Zionist (and former doctoral student of Meinecke) Franz Rosenzweig who pithily exclaimed that “to the eternal people, home is never home in the sense of land.”²⁶ That the Jews are a nation *sui generis*, a nation that is meant to transcend itself, found poignant expression in the words of the romantic socialist Gustav Landauer: “to be a nation is to have a task” (“Nation sein heißt ein Amt haben”).²⁷ This secularized religious sensibility corresponds to the first-order self-definition of nationhood that the Liberal architects of a *Kulturnation* sought to secure, departing from Meinecke who limited religion to the sociological function of fostering national cohesion.²⁸ We may assume

22 Natan Sznajder, *Jewish Memory and the Cosmopolitan Order*, Cambridge 2011, 26.

23 Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations*, 23.

24 *Ibid.*, 16.

25 Isaac Breuer, *Lehre, Gesetz und Nation. Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchung über das Wesen des Judentums*, Frankfurt a. M. 1900, 38. – Breuer equated national Judaism with halakhic Judaism: “Infidelity to the Law is betrayal to the Jewish nation, is high treason.” *Ibid.*, 25.

26 Franz Rosenzweig, *His Life and Thought*, ed. by Nahum Norbert Glatzer, Indianapolis, Ind./Cambridge³ 1998, 295.

27 Gustav Landauer, *Sind das Ketzergedanken?*, in: *Vom Judentum. Ein Sammelband*, ed. by the Verein jüdischer Hochschüler Bar Kochba in Prag, Leipzig 1913, 250–257, here 253. A similar emphasis on “nation as task” is expressed by Felix Weltsch, who, critical of modern nationalism, including Jewish nationalism, regarded it as insufficient to present a nation as a natural fact. He thought it was more important to reflect upon “what a nation ought to be” rather than to define “what a nation is.” *Idem*, *Judentum und Nationalismus*, Berlin 1920, 13. Rejecting the idea of being chosen, which drives nationalism, he argued that nation is an “ethical concept” centered on responsibility and “service-to-others”; its goal is, therefore, preeminently “cultural.” *Ibid.*, 27.

28 Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, 11.

that this is what Moritz Goldstein had in mind when he declared that for a Jew “to be European means [...] to transcend Europe.”²⁹

Within the archive of German Jewish thought, one can identify several post-Kantian and post-Hegelian theories that would lend themselves to a phenomenological understanding of Jewish identity. Undoubtedly the most productive perspective for twentieth-century Jewish thought was that of the nineteenth-century founder of *Völkerpsychologie*, Moritz Lazarus. He probed the term “*Volksgeist*” through a deconstruction of the conventional markers of the nation (territory, citizenship, heredity, religion, language) as the presumed bearers of national unity.³⁰ For Lazarus, the true location of a *Volk* lies “in the subjective perception of its members which view themselves as a people.”³¹ Rather than a static entity, the *Volk* is constantly created and re-imagined by its individual members: “the decisive point in every nation is the subjective, free act of conceiving of themselves as a *whole* and as a *Volk*.”³² Lazarus’ adumbration of a phenomenology of corporate identity anticipated the later conscription of the social sciences by some Jewish thinkers to proffer definitions of the Jews as a *Kulturnation* or alternatively a *Kulturvolk* based on subjective first-order, non-subaltern self-definitions.

Lazarus’ approach to Judaism acknowledges a corporate self-understanding as a separate ethnos but denies that the Jews are a nation in the political sense.³³ The hesitant but gradual affirmation of ethnicity by Liberal Jews signaled a change in Jewish self-perceptions. Even such a stalwart of classical Jewish Liberalism as Hermann Cohen ultimately conceded that the Jews were a “nationality,” a distinct ethnos that the German state would have to accommodate among other resident nationalities; the Jews, however, are not a “nation,” that is a political unit either in fact or *in potentia*.³⁴ With respect to

29 Moritz Goldstein, *Wir und Europa*, in: *Vom Judentum*, 195–209, here 204 f.

30 Moritz Lazarus, *Was heisst national? Ein Vortrag von Moritz Lazarus*, Berlin 1925, esp. 23 f. Lazarus delivered this lecture in 1879 at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums. See also Bernard Schmid, “*Volksgeist*”. Individuum und Kollektiv bei Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903), <http://cipp.unibas.ch/publications/downloads/?no_cache=1&file=701&uid=5128> (1 June 2012).

31 Lazarus, *Was heisst national?*, 24.

32 *Ibid.*, 25. For a criticism of Lazarus’ romantic interpretation of ethics as an ethnic sensibility, see Hermann Cohen, *Das Problem der jüdischen Sittenlehre. Eine Kritik von Lazarus’ Ethik des Judentums*, in: *Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften*, ed. by Bruno Strauss, 3 vols., Berlin 1924, here vol. 3: *Zur jüdischen Religionsphilosophie und ihrer Geschichte*, 1–35.

33 The mainstream Zionist approach was articulated by Isaak Mirkin: “die ‘religiöse Sanktionierung des Nationalen’ kann nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, daß man sich ihr gegenüber indifferent verhalten kann, was beweist, dass der ‘jüdisch-nationale Lebensinhalt’ die jüdische Identität begründet.” *Idem*, *Das Wesen der jüdischen Nationalität*, in: *Die Welt* (1903), no. 4, 2–4, here 3.

34 Cohen, *Religion und Zionismus*, in: *Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften*, vol. 2: *Zur*

a first-order definition, Cohen argues, Jews understand their ethnicity as a mere anthropological means to attest to universal religious teachings.³⁵ There can be no Judaism, he stressed, other “than that of Jewish religion.”³⁶ Koigen came to a similar conclusion. An “utterly secularized Judaism,” he averred, would be a “contradiction in itself.”³⁷ However, he could not accept Cohen’s hard and fast distinction between nationality and nation: Jews are to remain a spiritual community unencumbered by aspirations to be a sovereign political nation. Given his East European provenance, he was well aware that the Jewish masses were drawn to Zionism. He himself was close to Cultural Zionism, although he did not share its program of a secular transvaluation of Jewish culture: Regardless of the transformation of Judaism over time, Jewish culture resists total secularization. Cohen for his part undergirded his vision with a philosophical exposition of Judaism as a paradigmatic religion of reason and ethical monotheism – a position that was undercut in the eyes of many by his unflagging German patriotism.

Kulturnation between the Subjective and the Objective

The younger generation of German Jews was increasingly unable to share Cohen’s uncritical embrace of German nationalism. The jingoism and carnage, not to speak of xenophobic anti-Semitism unleashed by the World War disabused them of patriotic attachment to Germany and strengthened transitional, cosmopolitan sentiments. In an essay penned in the wake of the war and the ensuing political chaos, the Zionist Hans Kohn adopted Meinecke’s distinction between *Kulturnation* and *Staatsnation*. He traced the evolution of the nation state and its “senseless consequences.” The realization that “the myth of nationalism as the ultimate ordering principle of history is dead,” has charged the postwar generation, especially Jewish youth, to lead Europe out of its “morass” and to point to the possibility of replacing “the territorial and

jüdischen Zeitgeschichte, 319–327, here 322. See also Hartwig Wiedebach, *Die Bedeutung der Nationalität für Hermann Cohen*, Hildesheim/New York 1997, 9f.; see also idem, *The National Element in Hermann Cohen’s Philosophy and Religion* (forthcoming).

35 Hermann Cohen, *An Argument against Zionism. A Reply to Martin Buber’s open letter to Hermann Cohen*, in: idem, *Reason and Hope. Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen*, ed. by Eva Jospe, Cincinnati, Oh., 1993, 164–170, here 165.

36 Cohen, *Eine Pflicht zur Selbstachtung*, in: *Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften*, vol. 2, 172.

37 CAHJP, *Nachlass David Koigen*, box P 196, David Koigen’s unpublished lecture “Ethos in Judaism” 1923 (reference to this text is hereafter abbreviated as “Ethos”). For a full text of this lecture, see Martina Urban, *Theodicy of Culture and the Jewish Ethos. David Koigen’s Contribution to the Sociology of Religion*, Berlin 2012, 187–260.

economic policies” of nation states with “the freedom and personal responsibility within the structures of national traditions and life forms.” In a word, “the concept of the nation as a state, which binds the nation politically and imperiously to the external principle of territory” was passé.³⁸ The *Kulturturnation* is the only viable alternative.

Liberal German Jews sponsored a similar position. In an article published just after the signing of the armistice that brought the war to a close, the literary critic Rudolf Kayser (1889–1964) called upon his fellow Jews to renew the biblical covenant and to reassert themselves as a spiritual community. What he means by a spiritual community is not quite how the older generation of Liberal German Jews understood the term, for he acknowledges that the Jews are a distinct people. Although he did not employ the notion, Kayser, in effect, suggests that the Jews are a *Kulturturnation*.

He couches his appeal in a homiletic trope drawn from the prophet Jeremiah’s vision of a “new covenant” (Jer 31,31–34) born of the transformation of the nomistic covenant of Moses into a purely spiritual ethos. The affirmation of the covenantal ethos takes on particular urgency in light of the need to challenge the “nationalistic fervor”³⁹ and the cult of power politics that have gripped Europe consequently to World War I. It would therefore be inconsistent for Jews to endorse the Zionist project of reconstituting Jewry as a political community. This view echoes the “mission” theory of Liberal Judaism,⁴⁰ but with a significant twist. Unlike the votaries of the latter and the official ideology of the *Centralverein*, Kayser explicitly refers to the Jews as a distinct people whose loyalty is not restricted to Germany, indeed he indicatively prefers to speak of Western Jewry, and embraces the ideal of *Europäertum*, of a Europe bonded by a shared culture that transcends national borders and allegiances.⁴¹ The Jews in the West are in a unique position to realize this vocation, for unlike its East European brethren, Western Jewry is no longer separated physically, socially and culturally from other peoples. Western Jewry’s role is to be the flag-bearer of “internationalism.”⁴²

38 Hans Kohn, Nationalismus, in: idem, Nationalismus. Über die Bedeutung des Nationalismus im Judentum und in der Gegenwart, Vienna/Leipzig 1922, 110–128, here 114 f., and 125–128. The date given for this essay is “1919–1922.”

39 Rudolf Kayser, Der Neue Bund, in: Der Jude 3 (1918/19), no. 11, 523–529, here 527.

40 See “When people, like the [Liberal Jews of nineteenth century Germany] no longer consider themselves members of a nation, but bearers of an idea, guardians of pure reason, protagonists of morality and above all progress, they perforce become missionaries. One cannot be in possession of the whole truth, which would render mankind happy, without wishing to share it.” Max Wiener, The Conception of Mission in Traditional and Modern Judaism, in: YIVO Annual of Jewish Science, 2–3 (1947/48), 9–24, here 16.

41 See “Der Staatsgedanke ist unjüdisch.” Kayser, Der Neue Bund, 524.

42 Ibid., 528.

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In einem Schwerpunkt des Jahrbuchs werden zum 100. Todestag von Gustav Mahler Leben, Werk und Nachleben des Musikers jüdischer Herkunft im Kontext kultureller und gesellschaftspolitischer Konstellationen beleuchtet. Einen weiteren Schwerpunkt bildet die frühe jüdische Holocaustforschung, deren Bild sich in den letzten Jahren grundlegend gewandelt hat. Diese Themenfelder werden erweitert durch Beiträge zu Fragen der politischen sowie der Rechtsgeschichte, der Kulturrestauration und der Kritik der postmodernen Philosophie. Die wiederkehrenden Rubriken befassen sich mit dem Werk von Günther Anders, Shmuel Josef Agnon und Lea Goldberg sowie der Sprachenfrage bei Simon Dubnow und der Beteiligung jüdischer Anarchisten an der Bayerischen Räterepublik von 1919.

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