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Introduction

Thoughts on Jewish Radicalism as a Phenomenon of Global Modernity

Some people are just radical, according to their contemporaries. Radicalism, of course, can be expressed in many ways, e. g. politically, religiously, socially, but whether it is perceived as radical depends largely on how such acts are evaluated according to existent norms. Therefore, it is almost not surprising that what Merriam-Webster defines as "the quality or state of being radical" or "the doctrines and principles of radicals"[1] does not suffice in explaining the phenomenon. Furthermore, it is not easy to define radicalism because different and often overlapping forms of it, with varying levels of radical intensity, can exist at the same time. For example, as Italian sociologist Massimo Rosati (1969 – 2014) has shown in his discussion of Émile Durkheim's (1858 – 1917) radicalism, social radicalism "does not [only] consist in escaping social norms [or] roles. It does not consist in an affected opposition to every norm rule, or simply in criticizing their repressive and coercive role, but in being able to dance on the razor's edge between the two poles."[2] What is constituted as radical is consequently, as has been said before, usually based on accepted norms in the societies in which said radicals live.

In 2016, we discussed the idea of editing a volume on something we initially called "Jewish radicalism", which was not too specific at that time. However, a quick survey of the literature containing "Jewish" and "radicalism" in its titles highlighted two main problems: 1) they usually draw an implicit (and sometimes explicit) connection between being "radical" and being "leftist" (in any variation of its meaning) in the context of Jewish radicalism, and 2) there is far less explicit literature on this issue than expected, especially those that count as part of the research on "radicalism". To approach this topic's primary issues, as well as to display the vast body of research discussing it, we decided to edit a volume on Jewish radicalism as a phenomenon in global modernity.

It is important to understand that Jewish radicalism was not only a phenomenon that many Jews were a part of, but also that it was the backbone of many

1 "Radicalism," in *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, accessed February 15 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/radicalism.

2 Massimo Rosati, "Forms of Radicalism: Theoretical and Social Radicalism in Durkheim," *Durkheimian Studies*, New Series 10 (2004): 13.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110545753-001

left-wing organizations on both sides of the Atlantic.[3] However, this does not mean that the radicals' Jewishness was a precondition for their political radicalism.[4] Jewish radicalism is also not limited to the political arena or to left-wing individuals. There are different forms of Jewish radicalism, and these forms will be highlighted in the present volume.

When we call it a phenomenon of global modernity, we seek to emphasize that Jewish radicalism can often not be understood as a local phenomenon; it must be considered in a broader context. While Jewish communities live in a global diaspora, they remain in close contact with each other. This is why radicalization stemmed from places besides Eastern Europe's *shtetls* where Jews were often victims of pogroms, but also took place in urban centers of the modern world, such as Berlin, London, New York, Paris, Rome, etc.[5] As such, the evolution of Jewish radicalism is global and relevant to modernity, which is considered the time after the French Revolution of 1789. Following Benedict Anderson's (1936 – 2015) claim that print capitalism stimulated the formation of imagined communities,[6] it was the availability of transnationally read newspapers and journals, as well as their "global" distribution, that allowed Jewish radicals to establish a broad communication network in which ideas, radical or not, could be exchanged.[7] Another aspect that makes Jewish radicalism a modern global phenomenon is the transnational mobility of its actors, who very often could look back on different lives in different places. Their radicalism was therefore the product of a multi-spatial global modernity, as the actors of Jewish radicalism were not locally radicalized, but radicalized according to their transnational experiences.[8] Many Jews left Eastern Europe between the 1880s and 1920s to find new homes abroad, where they would either become radicalized

3 Jack Jacobs, "Introduction," in *Jews and Leftist Politics: Judaism, Israel, Antisemitism, and Gender*, ed. Jack Jacobs (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1. For Eastern Europe, see Alain Brossat and Sylvia Klingsberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History of Jewish Radicalism*, trans. David Fernbach (London/New York: Verso, 2016).

4 Frank Jacob will discuss this issue in more detail in his chapter within the present volume.

5 One example of such a transnational perspective is discussed in Philip Mendes, "From the Shtetl to the Monash Soviet: An Overview of Jewish Radicalism in Australia," *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 14 (2000): 54 – 77.

6 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

7 One relevant case study on this transnational network of communication and print capitalism is Tony Michels, "Exporting Yiddish Socialism: New York's Role in the Russian Jewish Workers' Movement," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* n.s. 16, no. 1 (2009): 1 – 26.

8 With regard to the relation between Jews and Anarchism see Amedero Bertolo, ed. *Juifs et anarchistes: Histoire d'une rencontre* (Paris: Eclat, 2008).

by the local preconditions or spread radical ideas they had acquired prior to emigrating.[9] Consequently, the global nature of their transportation and communication not only created modernity, but also a possibility for transnational radicalism on a global scale.[10]

Because different forms of Jewish radicalism post-1789 have been global phenomena, we have chosen to provide a panorama of case studies that showcase the scope of this volume and its contributions. This will not only provide critical insight into current academic discourse, research, and various topics from multiple fields, but also highlight the diversity of Jewish radicalism. However, discussions about Jewish radicalism are not limited to the topics in the present volume. They should be further investigated from their local, national, and global perspectives. We hope that the discussions of the topics as they appear in the present volume will stimulate further research in the field. Comparing Jewish radicalism and its developments in different national contexts would also be helpful. However, since it is, as we tried to highlight before, not always clear what the term "Jewish radicalism" refers to, we will discuss it further here.

Jewish Radicalism

Over the last forty years, books have been written about Jewish radicalism and Jewish radicals. Most of these published works draw an implicit connection between being radical, being leftist, and being Jewish. For many authors, a right-wing radical could obviously not be Jewish, or a right-wing Jew radical. In 1973, Jack Porter and Peter Dreier edited the volume *Jewish Radicalism: A Select-*

9 S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman, "Jewish Ethnicity and Radical Culture: A Social Psychological Study of Political Activists," *Political Psychology* 3, no. 1/2 (1981/1982): 118; Kenyon Zimmer, "Saul Yanovsky and Yiddish Anarchism on the Lower East Side," in *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street*, ed. Tom Goyens (Urbana/Chicago/Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 34–35.

10 Emily S. Rosenberg, *A World Connecting, 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2012) provides a detailed analysis of the advances that "shortened" distances and made the movement of large numbers of people possible. For further discussions of these developments, see Peter Puntis, Candrika Kaul, and Jürgen Wilke, eds., *International Communication and Global News Networks: Historical Perspectives* (New York: Hampton Press, 2011); Richard Tames, *The Transport Revolution in the 19th Century: A Documentary Approach* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); Dwayne Winseck and Robert M. Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets, and Globalization, 1860–1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

ed Anthology.[11] In their introduction, they make it clear what their volume is about: the Jewish left as a "movement of dissent."[12] The two scholars explicitly focus their anthology on the Jewish left during the 1960s, which they identify as a radical movement. In addition, Porter and Dreier trace this current movement back in time: "The early part of this century saw the simultaneous rise of two mass movements among Jews – a Jewish labor movement and a Jewish radical political movement."[13] Although Porter and Dreier dedicated their anthology to a Jewish radical leftist movement, they also observed another "mainstream" movement on the rise – they added an interview and discussion about the *Jewish Defense League* and the ideas of Meir Kahane (1932–1990), but in doing so, the editors excluded Kahane and his disciples as radicals:

> Yet we should not overlook a decidedly nonradical approach which has attracted growing numbers of young Jews, particularly in working-class areas of New York. This is the other side of the ideological coin, the right-wing Zionism of the Jewish Defense League and Betar, and their own hero, Zev [sic] Jabotinsky [...] The Jewish Left is ambivalent toward Rabbi Meir Kahane and his followers. Most radical Jews are critical of the J.D.L.'s strategy [...][14]

Although Porter and Dreier included Kahane in their book, they did not recognize him as a radical. This means they viewed Jewish radicalism as a category to be attributed exclusively to the political left and to the Jews who identified as such. Consequently, the editors drew an implicit but strong connection between being radical and belonging to the Jewish left, which is also connected to the self-perception of Jewish leftists as radicals.

This connection is also observed in Percy S. Cohen's study *Jewish Radicals and Radical Jews* (1980), in which the British scholar traces the historical connection of being Jewish and being radical, focusing solely on the political left. He states that:

> The term radical, as used throughout this book, means 'left-wing radical'; the existence of right-wing radicalism is neither denied nor even questioned. Thus when certain forms of radicalism are characterized or explained, these characterizations and explanations are directed to left-wing radicalism (or radicals) or to Jewish left-wing radicals or radicalism.[15]

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11 Jack N. Porter and Peter Dreier, eds., *Jewish Radicalism: A Selected Anthology* (New York: Grove Press, 1973).

12 Ibid., xlv.

13 Ibid., xvii.

14 Ibid., xxxii.

15 Percy S. Cohen, *Jewish Radicals and Radical Jews* (London/New York: Academic Press 1980), 11.

While Cohen recognizes that there are more possible connections beyond being radical and being left-wing, he concentrates on Jewish left-wing radicalism; forms of right-wing radicalism are thus invisible in his work. Nevertheless, Cohen also highlighted that one must distinguish between Jewish radicals and radical Jews, and these categories are based on the "Jewishness" of the radical identity in question.[16]

A decade later, Jaff Schatz published *The Generation: The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communist of Poland* (1991)[17] in which he frames the Jewish communist as the role model of Jewish radicalism. He writes about "Polish-Jewish radicals"[18] and adds that "[i]n modern times, radical Jews caught the attention of the world," even though "compared to their peers, [they were] the most radical of all radical Jews."[19] At the same time, "it is important to keep in mind that extreme radicals formed but a tiny minority among Jews as a whole."[20] Schatz writes a great deal about Jewish radicals and has equated being a Jewish radical with being active in the political left, particularly in communist organizations. The association between being radical and left-wing has also been demonstrated in more recent studies by different authors, such as Gerben Zaagsma in 2010: "I use the word 'radicals' as a catch all phrase for those of Jewish descent who were active in the socialist and communist movements of the time and not to denote the existence of something called 'Jewish radicalism'."[21] Tony Michels and Philip Mendes are two other examples. The former edited a volume on Jewish radicals in 2012 and focused mainly on Jewish-American socialist history, outlining his approach to radicalism in the book's introduction: "Our discussion of Jews and radicalism has, so far, focused on immigrants, but the story does not end with them. Socialism also held strong appeal for second-generation American born and raised Jews [...]."[22]

Mendes' approach was different. He did not study Jewish radicals, but rather the connection between Jews and left-wingers. His 2014 study *Jews and the Left: The Rise and Fall of a Political Alliance* does not examine connections between

16 Ibid., 9.

17 Jaff Schatz, *The Generation: The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communist of Poland* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

18 Ibid., 11.

19 Ibid., 12.

20 Ibid., 13.

21 Gerben Zaagsma, "Transnational Networks of Jewish Migrant Radicals–The Case of Berlin," in *Transit und Transformation: Osteuropäisch-jüdische Migranten in Berlin 1918 – 1939*, ed. Verena Dohrn and Gertrud Pickhahn (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010), 218, note 1.

22 Tony Michels, "Introduction: The Jewish-Socialist Nexus," in *Jewish Radicals: A Documentary History*, ed. Tony Michels (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 11.

being radical and being left-wing, but makes connections between Judaism and the political left. However, even Mendes uses the phrase "Jewish radical," and in doing so, he equates these concepts. He admits though that "the phenomenon of Jewish radicalism seems to have been seriously under-researched by both general study of sociology and history, and Jewish studies specialists."[23] However, his own approach does not offer different insights on past works. In the context of his introduction, Mendes also connects the concept of being radical with the idea of being leftist.

In sum, the majority of the relevant research purports that there is a connection between being radical and being left-wing in the context of Jewish radicals. Some of the mentioned authors tried to explain this connection; there are several explanations, such as the Jews' marginal position in society, antisemitism, Messianism, self-hatred, other psychological reasons, and urbanism.[24] The key problem is that most studies do not define Jewish radicalism or properly indicate what they mean by it. Statements usually refer to left-wing radicalism, but a proper definition of radicalism is rarely found in studies dealing with Jewish radicalism.

For example, Zaagsma refers to radicals as people – in our case, Jews – who were active in socialist or communist movements of their time.[25] The same is true for Tony Michels' approach, who writes about the Jews' inclination toward socialist and communist movements in general, such as Jewish involvement in the history of the American socialist movements, without defining certain terms.[26] Philip Mendes maintains that his title *Jews and the Left* does not define radicalism; he uses the expression as a synonym for someone he positions on the left.

Taking everything into account, the only concrete definition of radicalism so far is a political stance that seeks to achieve fundamental change within society. However, this implies that anyone interested in change, specifically political change following left-wing ideas, would be considered radical. If this radical is a Jew, he or she would then qualify as a Jewish radical. Obviously, such a definition is rather shortsighted. In the cases presented by previous research, the

23 Philip Mendes, *Jews and the Left: Rise and Fall of a Political Alliance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2.

24 Among others, these explanations are presented by Schatz, *The Generation*, 13–18; Mendes, *Jews and the Left*, 5–17.

25 Zaagsma, "Transnational Networks," 218, note 1.

26 Michels, "Introduction," 1–3.

changes demanded by radicals are for a more equal society.[27] However, we should also examine the other side of the political spectrum; there is also a radical Jewish right, even though the literature on this subject is minimal. One exception is Eran Kaplan, who uses the term "radical" in the title of his book about revisionist Zionists and their apparently radical view of Jewish history.[28] Moreover, the radical Jewish right also desires fundamental societal change, as the Kahanists, the extremist followers of Rabbi Kahane, did.

Jewish radicalism is not easily defined. To obtain a proper definition, two things should be explained: first, we need to clarify what "Jewishness" or "Jewish identity" means to us. The traditional religious definition is that someone is a Jew if born to a Jewish mother or if they have converted to Judaism properly (what "properly" means is up for debate in the Jewish community). However, to properly observe the phenomenon in all its possible manifestations, we have decided to apply a broad definition of who is considered as Jewish, especially to address the changes within Judaism after the Enlightenment and within modernity.[29] Therefore, we also decided to go along with Philip Mendes' definition of being Jewish: "the principal criteria used to define a person as Jewish will be: 1) Self-definition; 2) Definition by significant others such as political peers whether friendly or hostile; 3) Having one or both parents who define themselves as Jewish."[30] This definition allows us to include several figures in our study without judging how "Jewish" they are. It also gives the contributors of this volume the freedom to apply their own definitions and categories and thereby to provide different and more pluralistic perspectives on Jewish radicalism.

As a second step, levels of radicalism must be explained. That said, the definition of radicalism itself seems to have changed. In 1906, James Shea wrote that "radicalism is characterized less by its principles than by the manner of their application. Its political doctrine is that of democracy, and as a general thing liberal men will approve of it."[31] He then defines what radicalism means

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27 E. g. Mendes, *Jews and the Left*, 4; in our understanding, by scrutinizing different explanations of the possible connection between Jews and radicalism, Schatz implies that radicalism aims at fundamentally altering society, especially to fight inequality. Schatz, *The Generation*, 11–19.

28 Eran Kaplan, *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionist Zionism and Its Ideological Legacy* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

29 For a discussion of Jewish "identity," see David Harry Ellenson, *Tradition in Transition: Orthodoxy, Halakhah, and the Boundaries of Modern Jewish Identity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989).

30 Mendes, *Jews and the Left*, 3.

31 James E. Shea, "Radicalism and Reform," *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association* 3 (1906): 161.

to him: "Radicalism, speaking loosely, is hatred of class privilege. It is a sentiment which is fanned by discontent."[32] For Shea, "radical views are dangerous because they nurture a spirit of discontent, of morbid excitement, of restlessness and change."[33]

Today, radicalism also seems to be connected with being anti-democratic and with being right-wing. A recent study by Domonkos Sik, called *Radicalism and Indifference*, states that "radicalism is inseparable from modernity [...] In this sense, emancipation and radicalism have been opposing potentials of modernization throughout the history of European countries."[34] Sik introduces radicalism in contrast to emancipation and, as such, to democracy. In his study on Eastern European right-wing politics, he raised the question of the "preconditions of the emergence of an antidemocratic political culture."[35] In his study, he also equates radicalism with being anti-democratic and with being right-wing. This shows us how the discourse on radicalism, as well as its meaning, has changed over time. Moreover, Sik refers implicitly to the religious roots of modern radicalism as presented by Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, who wrote on this subject (e. g. in his article "Religious Origins of Modern Radicalism").

Eisenstadt also determined that the French Revolution, regardless of its common perception, was not free from religion: "Modernity, modern civilization, the cultural and political programs of modernity, have often seen as epitomizing a break from religion... It is the major argument of this essay that the roots of modern Jacobinism in their different manifestations are to be found in the transformation of the visions with strong Gnostic component and which sought to bring the Kingdom of God to earth."[36] He then mentions America as well as the French Revolution. This religious notion within secularized politics produces "Jacobinism";[37] he does not equate this with radicalism, but he identifies such totalistic tendencies with radicalism. That said, he never concretely defines the term – he simply discusses its meaning at length.

Therefore, radicalism means nothing more than belief in a totalistic, i. e. close-minded, view of the world.

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32 Ibid., 165.

33 Ibid., 168.

34 Domonkos Sik, *Radicalism and Indifference: Memory Transmission, Political Formation and Modernization in Hungary and Europe* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2016), 7.

35 Ibid., 271.

36 Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, "Religious Origins of Modern Radicalism," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 106 (2005): *Fundamentalism, Authority and Globalization:* 51.

37 Ibid.

Regarding the discussion above, one might think there would be a more proper definition of Jewish radicalism. However, Jaff Schatz is right when he writes that it is a question of "concrete people involved in the concrete, complex, and changing circumstances of their time and society." This is why for Schatz, "there exists no particular 'Jewish radicalism' and, consequently, that a category of 'Jewish radicals,' which it implies, is a chimera."[38] Radicalism develops within specific space-time continua and is expressed by specific people who live within them. Due to this precondition, specific instances of radicalism can be related to political, social, or religious aspects of Jewish modernity. That is another reason why we only present a working definition of Jewish radicalism and approach the topic pluralistically, since such radicals existed in various temporal and geographical contexts.

Our working definition suggests that Jewish radicalism is an approach by those who, according to our definition above, either identify as Jewish or could be considered Jewish and wish to achieve one of the following goals:

1) Answer fundamental questions raised by modernity, such as the question of identity.
2) Fundamentally change their contemporary society.
3) Approach societal issues without compromise and with a totalistic worldview (in the sense of Eisenstadt).
4) Address social problems and solve them at their roots (radicalism can be traced back to the Latin *radix* which means root).
5) Consider their own religious, political, or social opinion as the *ultima ratio* for society's protection and/or advancement.

Our goal is not to offer a coherent and fixed definition of Jewish radicalism; instead, we want to stimulate a discussion about this topic. We think that with this volume we can open up a discourse again, that seems to be necessary in these times, in which we do speak of radicals, radicalism, fundamentalism, and so on rather vaguely. We need to engage in a debate to clarify what this phenomenon is or could be. We want to be as open as possible, even though we have criticized others for being unspecific. However, our aim is to question the current ideas of Jewish radicalisms.

A common denominator or a common element in the cases in our volume is also the idea of a utopia or dystopia that is related to all forms of radicalisms as they are discussed in the present volume. As well as a critique of their current societies, all Jewish radicals discussed a specific utopian element of their

38 Schatz, *The Generation*, 19.

thoughts. The etymological origin of utopia stems from the Greek words '*ou*' and '*topos*', which mean 'no-place' or 'anywhere'; however, as Thomas Schölderle points out, this composition is wrong, as '*ou*' is used to negate sentences, not adjectives or nouns. For Thomas Morus (1478 – 1535), who first coined the term, '*ou*' was homophonic to the Greek '*eu*', which means good. So, one can read utopia as 'no-place' or as 'good place'.[39] In the research on utopian ideas we find the assumption that this is a "rational fiction of human societies, which are juxtaposed with a critical intention to current grievances."[40] We do agree on the critique on social grievances, however it is not clear why the alternatives have to be rational fiction. Richard Saage reads utopian ideas as phenomena of resonance which react to grievances of their specific era; therefore, it is a historical phenomenon and a social construct.[41] The ideas of dystopia, by contrast, as Saage states, keep the utopian intention implicitly in their critique of society or their exaggeration of current grievances into a dominant factor of the portrait of society.[42] Schölderle draws on Saage and states that a '*Utopie*' needs critique, resonance, and a sociopolitical alternative. He writes that "the critique on historical circumstances, is not only crucial for the prototype by Morus, but also has to be constitutive for all utopias."[43] At the same time, they are also phenomena of resonance of social crises and the imagined (better) world, which is implicitly or explicitly drawn as an alternative means for a relativization of the status quo.[44] For the Jewish radical, criticism of the existent world is consequently based on a utopian idea as a *sine qua non* for his actions and radical beliefs.

We do, however, need to make a differentiation here. It is important to emphasize that utopias were space related until the eighteenth century and only

39 Thomas Schölderle, *Geschichte der Utopie* (History of Utopia), 2nd edition (Vienna/Cologne: Böhlau, 2017), 10 – 11. In his dissertation Schölderle not only gives an historical account on Utopia; he also explains the current state of research in this field. See Thomas Schölderle, *Utopia und Utopie. Thomas Morus, die Geschichte der Utopie und die Kontroverse um ihren Begriff* (Utopia and Utopie. Thomas Morus, the History of Utopia and the Controversy of the Term) (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011). For utopia as a field of research see also the works of Richard Saage.

40 Schölderle, *Geschichte der Utopie*, 17 ((Als Utopien gelten fortan) "rationale Fiktionen menschlicher Gemeinwesen, die in kritischer Absicht den herrschenden Missständen gegenüber gestellt sind.", own translation).

41 Richard Saage, *Utopische Horizonte. Zwischen historischer Entwicklung und aktuellem Geltungsanspruch* (Utopian Horizons. Between Historical Development and Contemporary Claim of Validity) (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2010), 18.

42 Ibid., 28.

43 Schölderle, *Utopia und Utopie*, 31 ("Die Kritik an den realhistorischen Verhältnissen etwa, ist nicht nur für Morus' Prototyp grundlegend, sondern muss auch für jede weitere Utopie als konstitutiv gelten," own translation).

44 Ibid.

later did time move in as a factor. That means utopias do not exist now in a remote place, but maybe at a time in the future and will therefore become the aim of Jewish radicalism.[45] That is important, because, as Kurt Lenk pointed out, myths are looking for a "compensation of meaning in a long gone, usually imagined past, which should be awakened."[46] Lenk refers to the ideas of a "golden age" which should be recreated in the present. For him, these are myths and not a utopia, which can be understood as crucial to differentiate between positive or even emancipatory utopias (which will exist in the future) and a society which relies on an oppressive system. However, it is not clear why this, which seems to be a dystopia, should be qualified as a myth. It is probably because the term is not clear and fixed, but also because, implicitly it seems, a utopia should indeed have an emancipatory element in itself. At the intersection of myth and utopia there is another element of interest: the messianic idea. Although a utopia inevitably does not have a religious notion, it is a messianic concept and therefore shares some common ground with the latter.

Gershom Scholem, for instance, creates a theoretical framework for what he calls the messianic idea. Within rabbinic Judaism he sees three main powers in place: a conservative one, which tries to keep the status quo; a restorative one, which tries to restore an imagined "golden past"; and finally, a utopian element, which strives for an unknown (but better) future. These forces are seen by Scholem to be in place around the problem of Messianism in historical Judaism.[47] This is interesting because it gives us the opportunity to think about the idea of a more open and more complex utopia.[48] According to Scholem, the restorative and utopian elements are the only ones that bring about the messianic idea, which consequently also contributes to Jewish radicalism in the sense that there is some kind of messianic utopian belief involved in its formation: "Both tendencies are intertwined and yet at the same time of a contradictionary nature; the

45 Schölderle, *Geschichte der Utopie*, 11.

46 Kurt Lenk, "Utopie und Mythos – Zur Differenzierung ihrer Begrifflichkeit," (Utopias and Myth – A Differentiation of Terms) in *Dimensionen der Politik: Aufklärung – Utopie – Demokratie: Festschrift für Richard Saage zum 65. Geburtstag* (Dimensions of Politics: Enlightenment – Utopia – Democracy. Commemorative Publication for Richard Saages' 65th Birthday), ed. Axel Rüdiger et al. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006), 363.

47 Gershom Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Gershom Scholem (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 3.

48 Of course, this idea seems to be very similar to what research calls intentional or socio-psychological utopia, but with Scholem the connection also to Judaism is stressed and, so, he marries two strands of thought. For intentional utopia see e. g. Thomas Schölderle, *Utopia und Utopie*.

Messianic idea crystallizes only out of the two of them together."[49] Both the '*Restauration*' and the '*Utopie*' bear within them elements of each other. Scholem writes that "even the restorative force has a utopian factor, and in utopianism restorative factors are at work."[50] Utopia, Scholem clarifies,

> can take on the radical form of the vision of a new content which is to be realized in a future that will in fact be nothing other than the restoration of what is ancient, bringing back that which has been lost; the ideal content of the past at the same time delivers the basis for the vision of the future. However, knowingly or unknowingly, certain elements creep into such a restoratively oriented utopianism which are not in the least restorative and which derive from the vision of a completely new state of the Messianic world.[51]

So, there is a strand of argument which connects a vision of the future with the past.

In conclusion, we can connect the classical research on utopia with Scholem's ideas on messianism. That means utopias are criticizing the current society and implicitly or explicitly developing an alternative society, which should come in the future and have elements of long gone imagined "golden eras" as well as elements which have never been seen before. Of course, our contributors may disagree with us, but this is also part of the discussion we are aiming for. It is also clear that not every critique of society is to be labeled radical; however, every radical must be considered a utopian critic. In the discussed cases, the critique is usually related to the protagonist's arguments or actions, which are crucial enough to see them as radical.

All in all, we would like to open the discussion to develop an idea of what Jewish radicalism can be. We argue for an openness, which has its downsides; however, the positive sides outweigh these for us, as we can trace different possibilities of critique. That means criticizing the status quo and implicitly or explicitly developing an idea of what a better society can look like is a radical approach, especially if it deals with fundamental questions of the time, whether it be the question of killing non-Jews, an emancipatory pedagogy to fuel social change, or a psychedelic Judaism in order to overcome the economical and ecological challenges we face as mankind.

Why do we draw this conclusion? It will hopefully become clearer when we exemplify this using some cases from our volume as proof of the concept. Afterwards, we are open and very happy to engage in a discussion. In her chapter on

49 Scholem, *Messianic Idea*, 3.
50 Ibid., 4.
51 Ibid.

religious radicalism, Ofira Gruweis-Kovalsky presents the perspective of ultra-orthodox members of the Jewish society in Mandatory Palestine to the creation of the State of Israel. The fundamental critique her protagonists have on their society is that they reject the "modern" phenomena (possible after religious enlightenment and legal emancipation) of what they see as a desecration of Shabbat and the sexual relationship between Jews and non-Jews. These are crucial threats to their community and to their idea of a utopian good society. They aim at a Jewish society in their image of a utopia; therefore, they act as "watchdogs of religion and religious observance in the pre-state Jewish community."[52]

A somewhat different approach can be seen in the idea of the emancipatory education of Janusz Korczak. Anne Klein writes in her chapter on Jewish community action in Warsaw that Korczak's pedagogy plays a crucial role, because he wants to educate the youth to become critical and engage "citizens" – he wanted to empower young Jews to fight for social justice. It is clear that if someone educated youngsters in that way, the educator and the educated are excluded from social justice and political participation. His critique is obvious in his education. Korczak sees education as a tool to democratically change society into a better version; he dreamed of a utopia in which Jews have the opportunity to participate in society and politics.

Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's idea of psychedelic Judaism is presented by Morgan Shipley. Schachter-Shalomi wants to heal the world for a better future with the help of a joyous Judaism. He criticized consumption in modern capitalist societies as well as its destructive tendencies. Schachter-Shalomi imagined a renewed world, where mankind is oriented towards a sustainable lifestyle; his critique is fundamental as well as his idea of a society and a Judaism which "seeks egalitarianism and all this demands economically, culturally, and a level of identity; that works toward environmental justice, seeing nature as manifesting the divine and Divine responsibility; and that understands all of this at the expression of faith, both their own, and of all peoples (believer and non-believers alike)."[53]

Next to the political, educational and religious sphere, we included the idea of a cultural radicalism in this volume. Peter S. Lederer analyzes *The Producers* (1968) by Mel Brooks as a form of subversive cabaret. Brooks' film is presented as a critique of authority and of the taboos of a specific community within American society. Brooks takes a minority, to which he himself belongs, and reflects on

52 See chapter by Gruweis-Kovalsky in this volume.

53 See chapter by Morgan Shipley in this volume.

authority within society and states the idea of free individualism as well as its creation of an image of freedom by subverting all forms of tyranny.

Very different is the argument of the text *The King's Torah*, which is scrutinized by Federico Dal Bo. The text in question explores, in an apparently "classical" way of rabbinical reasoning, the possibility of justifying the killings of non-Jews. It aims at establishing new cultural and ethical values, where Israel is above all other states, peoples, and religions. It draws "an extreme right-wing vision of Israeli society and therefore mobilized against Jewish liberalism."[54] It displays a dystopian idea of a future for everyone outside the "proper" community; however, it is a vision of a new future, but in a non-liberal state with obviously non-liberal politics.

In contrast to this exclusionary utopia, Hannah Peaceman asks if radical diversity is a form of Jewish radicalism. By analyzing articles from the nineteenth century newspaper *Sulamith*, she is able to show that the critique was aimed at anti-emancipatory, anti-Jewish elements of the Enlightenment. Her protagonists showed the contradictions which bourgeois society inherently bears and that Jews were excluded from their ideals of freedom and equality. This critique tended to transcend their society and envisioned a future where not only freedom and equality apply universally to Jews and everyone else, but also where universalism achieved a new quality in that there could be a universalism as a reconciliation of differences.

We could go on to cite every chapter, but these examples should prove our idea; we see the fundamental critique as well as the implicit or explicit formulation of a (utopian) better future as essential factors for Jewish radicalism. This is the connecting element which binds the chapters together. Of course, there is room for debate, which we would like to encourage. From the presented cases it also becomes clear that Jewish radicalism is a relational term, as we mentioned earlier, as it is dependent in its context in time and space. However, we think it is a flexible category and if it is analyzed in its specific historical and sociological contexts, one can shed light on globally connected phenomena.

These phenomena present themselves in different aspects or perspectives. As we have preliminarily identified three fields in which our cases can be placed, that means all of them are aimed at criticizing the status quo of society and wish to change it to a fundamentally different one. The path of their change is either political, through direct actions or institutions; cultural, through education, film, and literature; or, finally, through religion by altering the belief system of Juda-

54 See chapter by Federico Dal Bo in this volume.

ism or deploying new terms or values through religious argument and settings. These three fields also structure our volume.

The Contributions

The first section on political radicalism is opened by Roman Vater, who traces the intellectual origins of post-Zionism to the thinking of Revisionist Zionism founder Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880 – 1940). By analyzing several post-Zionist organizations created by Jabotinsky's disciples during the 1940s-1950s, Vater's chapter asserts that "first-generation" post-Zionism must be understood as a realization of Jabotinsky's "monism" principle and is therefore a manifestation of secular right-wing liberalism in Israeli public life. Peter Bergamin also emphasizes that right-wing radicalism should be closely examined in the context of Jewish radicalism, and he examines the degree to which Aba Ahimeir (1897 – 1962) understood, utilized, and embraced the concepts of fascism and revolution from 1924 – 1934, the period in which he was most politically (and notoriously) active. Jan Rybak then highlights the interconnections between Zionism and Jewish class consciousness, providing a detailed discussion on the Poale Zion in the years of the Russian Revolution (1917 – 1920). Amir Locker-Biletzki offers a different approach, discussing the role of nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism in Moshe Sneh's (1909 – 1972) and Emil Touma's (1919 – 1985) ideologies. Since the 1920s, Jewish and Palestinian communists have radically negated Western imperialism and Zionist colonialism in Palestine/Israel. Frank Jacob's chapter analyzes the radical trinity of being an anarchist, a Jew, and a New Yorker at the beginning of the twentieth century. The case of Isidore Wisotsky (1895 – 1970), a young Jewish immigrant who was radicalized in New York City, is discussed to highlight the American perspective on Jewish radicalism and to what extent an anarchist individual's radicalization in the US metropolis is related to Jewishness. Tal Elmaliach completes the section on political radicalism with his study on the youth organization haShomer haTza'ir and its maneuvering between Zionism and the Jewish New Left between 1967 and 1973.

The second section deals with religious case studies of Jewish radicalism. Morgan Shipley analyzes the role of psychedelic Judaism in post-war America. He therefore focuses on Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (1924 – 2014), one of the most important representatives of the Jewish renewal movement in the United States, and his role in a "Radical Religiosity of LSD Consciousness". Federico Dal Bo and Hayyim Katsman deal with contemporary Jewish radicalism. The former provides insight on nihilism and extremist religious radicalism in contemporary Israel by focusing on the Torat haMelkh, while Katsman highlights the role

of religious Zionism as it is represented in contemporary Israel by people like Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburg. Ofira Gruweis-Kovalsky completes the discussion by providing a detailed insight regarding the Zionist right and the ultra-orthodox community, particularly with regard to its role during the establishment of the State of Israel.

The final section deals with cultural Jewish radicalism. After Anne Klein's discussion of the radical pedagogy of Janusz Korczak (1878 – 1942), Peter Lederer provides a study of "Mel Brooks' Subversive Cabaret" when he analyzes *The Producers* (1968) for its elements of Jewish radicalism. Sebastian Kunze then discusses what it means to be a Jewish radical and provides a case study of the famous anarchist Gustav Landauer (1870 – 1919) to show how radicalism and Jewishness were interrelated. Hannah Peaceman concludes the volume with her analysis of the connection between the "Jewish question" of emancipation in the nineteenth century in relation to the evolution of Jewish radical ideas in this period.

All these contributions are case studies of Jewish radicalism. They demonstrate that there are numerous forms of radicalism that deserve to be included in a broader study of the subject. They also show that the phenomenon is not limited to a specific geographical area and applies on a global scale. As such, to conclude this introduction, Jewish radicalism can and should only be understood as a phenomenon of a global modernity.

Transliteration

Sometimes it is hard to determine whether a common transliteration should be used or if there should be a special one. We tried in this volume to find a balance between the established "English" transliteration of Hebrew and a different way to reproduce the sound of Hebrew words. Looking back, it was a problematic experiment; however, we could not ask our contributors to change everything, which is why we decided to reproduce our Hebrew transliteration style sheet in this volume. This will enable the reader to understand the transliterations. Some terms are so common in English that they were not transliterated by all of the contributors, which was a compromise that we made. In the end, we are convinced that the transliterations are readable and coherent; therefore, it should not be overly problematic to identify the Hebrew words.

Stylesheet for Hebrew transliteration

English	Hebrew
According to the vowel or disregarded	א
b, v	ב, בּ
g	ג
d	ד
h	ה
w	ו, וו
z	ז
ch	ח
dt	ט
y	י
k, kh	כ, כּ
l	ל
m	מ
n	נ
s	ס

English	Hebrew
’	ע
p, f	פ, פּ
tz	צ, ץ
q	ק
r	ר
sh	שׁ
s	שׂ
t, t	ת, תּ
a	◌ַ, ◌ָ, ◌ֲ
e	◌ֵ, ◌ֱ (-mobile)
i	◌ִ
o	◌ֹ, ◌ֺ, ◌ֳ
u	◌ֻ, ◌ּ

For indicating the definite article or a definite prefix, please use the following formula:

haBayit, baAretz

Ayn: ’ with vowel
haShomer haTza’ir

Shwa mobile
leMashal

Dugmot

גברים מזרחיים	Gevarim Mizrachiyim
צָהֳרַיִים	Tzohorayim
אֵיזֶה	Eyzeh

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