

From Pre-Modern Corporation to Post-Modern Pluralism – Diasporic Cultures and Institutions of the Jews between Empire and National State

International Conference of the Simon Dubnow Institute
22–24 May 2004

Outline for the Conference

In their *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno characterized the Jews as the pioneers of modernity. There is much evidence to support that assertion. The 19th century in particular is replete with proofs. Jews indeed appear in many places to have some link with the attributes of modernity. This is true for finance, journalism, the sciences and niches in other worlds caught up in ever more rapid secularization. Jews emerged to an unusual degree as pacesetters, indeed as pioneers of an ever more accelerating age. In any event, they are its visible envoys.

Nonetheless, a few provisos are in order regarding such a perception, today almost universally acknowledged as valid. These are not meant to downplay the important role Jews played as trailblazers of modernism. Rather, our attention is directed by such provisos to a quite relevant and largely neglected aspect: though it is arguable that Jews as individuals and as an assemblage of many individuals certainly did occupy that social role in the advancement of modernity—as a collective they tended more to be agents of decidedly pre-modern forms of modernity. This is somewhat paradoxical.

Sharpening that observation, we may put forward the cautious thesis that in the case of the Jews qua Jews, in the phase of full-blown modernity, they represent a pre-modern corporation. In any event, they are inscribed with what might be called trace elements of a corporative constitution. If we sharpen that perception even further, it is possible to view the Jews, by dint of their collective autonomous organization, as an early modern natio extending itself down into modernity. Of course, the early modern forms undergo transformations in each case, in keeping with the tenor of the times. They can appear in the kehillot (incorporated communities), in associations or other vessels of autonomous organization which adapt to modernity in the interstices that open up between state and society. If this is true, it would mean that the Jews qua Jews are potentially of substantial epistemic importance in the investigation of modernity. From this vantage point, the history of the Jews could be employed more generally as an illuminating lens through which to describe the crisis-ridden course of modernity on a broader canvas. After all, the rationalizations accompanying modernity tend to homogenize the various states as they evolve. In the 19th century and the inter-war period, such a homogeneity is linked with a demonstrable deepening affinity between territoriality and ethnicity, or what is commonly understood as the consolidation of the nation-state.

Even the French Revolution tied the emancipation of the Jews it had spurred to their individuality. To Jews as individuals, the state might grant everything, i.e. civil equality, but to the Jews as a nation nothing. This conditional factor in the emancipation of the Jews was later perceived by those more desirous of a Jewish emancipation as an inappropriate restriction on a possible emergent national collective. But this interpretation had itself sprung from a later largely post-assimilatory and essentially national Jewish identity. The revolutionary determinate character of the emancipation of the Jews from within their particular era was oriented far more to what the French Revolution was eager to destroy: the prior corpus of privileges of the old order. Seen from that perspective, the argument that there was no valid Jewish claim to collectivity was bound up with the notion of Jews as members of a pre-modern natio. Now, individual equality was to replace what shortly before had been regulated by privilege and status.

The civil equality of the Jews, touted as the legal equality of the Jews as citizens and the transformation of their traditional religion into a private denomination, was largely in keeping with developments in Western Europe or the respective process of acculturation of the Jews to their respective nation-states. In the multinational empires, their situation was different. Despite the manifold differences between Czarist Russia, the Habsburg monarchy and the European territories of the Ottoman Empire, on the basis of legal and social structures and demography, the common situation prevailing there differed from that in Western Europe. There too, it is possible to find forms of acculturation suited to Western development, and regionally conditioned as well. Yet a major hallmark of developments in the 'East' was the salience, still palpable, of autonomous organization along corporative lines. This would seem to confirm the suspicion that in imperial contexts, pre-modern and transnational, transterritorial forms of social life retain their validity if compared with the basic pattern of the modern organization of polities. These transnational and transterritorial organizational forms are more in keeping with a diasporic culture like that of the Jews than the patterns predominant in nation-states, oriented as they are to homogeneity.

Problem Foci

Proceeding from the assumption that Jews, as members of a collective, possessed distinctive elements of a pre-modern corporation as the organized expression of their group attachment, it is necessary in imperial contexts to explore the forms of organization and integration which grant *collective rights* along with civil rights for the individual. In imperial contexts, such collective rights can only be accorded beyond certain perimeters of territoriality, due to the internal potential threat they pose to the Empire. A look at the Jewish (and non-Jewish) history of this experience points to various phenomena connected with the theme of the conference, associated in turn with the following questions for possible inquiry: first, the political program pursued by Simon Dubnow in his vision of Jewish autonomy in the Russian Empire. One useful tack would be to better explore Dubnow's autonomy concepts in terms of their traditional origins. That would require a new look at pre-modern Jewish traditions as manifested, for example, in the Council of Four Lands, the *vaad arba arazot*, as well as in the constitutions of the *kehillot* and their contemporary recognition by the respective powers and authorities.

A second intriguing question for the Habsburg monarchy is the trans-territorial principle of personal autonomy or the 'personality principle' as developed by Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. Although this principle, as fleshed out in its concrete configuration by the two authors, did not conceptualize the Jews as a nationality, its conditions of genesis are of systematic importance for the perpetuation of pre-modern and corporative forms into modernity. This holds more broadly, not just for the more or less transformed reception of these ideas among the transnationally oriented movements and partisan groupings, such as the Jewish Bund in Poland and Lithuania. In the realm of the philosophy of the state, which inter alia tried to react to the manifestations of decay in the Empire and sought to sublimate the ethnic diversity of the monarchy in a highly formalized and abstract unity of the law, as manifested for example in the universalistically oriented „pure theory of law“ of Hans Kelsen, is part of this context.

In the conflict-ridden transition from empire to nation-states, stipulations were laid down in the law on minorities for those states which contained a large number of minorities on their territory in addition to the dominant national group, in particular at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919. Jewish organizations, especially from within imperial topographies, were keen to have guarantees written into law for the Jews resident in these countries, and for other minorities as well. An intriguing question: to what extent were the minority treaties themselves akin to a modern transformation of pre-modern corporative privileges? Most particularly when a distinction is made between historical groups which also had enjoyed corporative rights in the past, and those who had awoken one morning to find themselves in the situation of a demographic minority simply because some border had been (re)drawn. A distinction between historical minorities and 'situative' minorities can perhaps serve to highlight the genuine corporative and thus transterritorial traditions of the one in contrast with the manifestly *territorialized* traditions of the other.

In this connection, the United States can also be conceived as an imperial state – one in which despite or precisely because of its exceptional modernity, a pluralistic practice has crystallized which increasingly is reminiscent, at least in its consequences, of trace elements of a kind of corporative law à la américain, where religious pluralism transforms into ethnic pluralism. In its post-modern significance for Jews, the conception of a non-territorial ethnic and cultural pluralism points back to pre-modern imperial experiences. It was first developed in the U.S. in the 1920s, counterposed to the notion of ‘melting pot,’ at a time when Horace Kallen began to elaborate concepts of multiculturalism *avant la lettre*. It is a distinctive feature of American polity and society that would appear to amalgamate the two: generalizing structures of modernity on the one hand, along with a possible preservation of pre-modern aspects on the other. This combination of a public ‘generality’ and a privatizable and culturalizable ‘particularity’ points in post-modern guise backward to the nexus of empire and diaspora. Both forms of organization precede the nation-state, even as they appear, in a kind of temporal leapfrog, to succeed it as well. To that extent, the history of the Jews can stand as emblematic of the change in forms from an empire to a nation-state, just as much as that history is also able to illuminate the pre-modern and post-modern significance of diaspora.

Aim

The conference will attempt to examine the elements of empire and diaspora, territoriality and transterritoriality by reference to the history of Jewish institutions, politics and diplomacy. This will involve tracing transformations of pre-modern into post-modern forms, or what are conceived as ‘corporative’ forms, by looking at individuals such as Simon Dubnow, Otto Bauer, Horace Kallen and others, as well as at a Jewish history of institutions from the early modern period and extending on into fuller-blown modernity. It will also involve the task of making connections between these forms and their associated or conjoint political and cultural programs in the context of macro-concepts such as empire and diaspora. We welcome proposals for presentations on facets of this complex of questions from researchers in the field of Jewish and ‘general’ history interested in participating in the conference.

Dan Diner

Program

WELCOME

Eckart Hien President, *Bundesverwaltungsgericht*

INTRODUCTION

Dan Diner Simon Dubnow Institute

I. PRE-MODERN SETTINGS – TRANSFORMED

Chair: **Yvonne Kleinmann** Simon Dubnow Institute

Israel Bartal *Jerusalem Between Corporation and Nation. Eastern European Jews in Transition 1772–1881*

Lois Dubin Northampton „*Suddita Nazione*“. *Jews in 18th and Early 19th Century Italy*

John Klier London

Abolishing the Kahal. Corporative Jewish Rights in the Russian Empire

II. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MODERNITY

Chair: **Nicolas Berg** Simon Dubnow Institute

François Guesnet Leipzig / Berlin

„Il faut refuser tout aux Juifs comme Nation“. De-Corporating the Jews of Europe

Bart Wallet Amsterdam

Napoleon's Legacy. National Government and Jewish Community in Western Europe

Stephan Wendehorst Leipzig

Academic Autonomy and Scientific Innovation. Paradoxes of Modern Jewish Encounters with Pre-Modernity

Lionel Kochan Oxford

Jewish Institutions and Imperial Spaces. Their Intersection in France and England 1806–1890

III. ABOVE AND BEYOND THE NATION STATE

Chair: **Frank Neseemann** Simon Dubnow Institute

Vladimir Levin Jerusalem

Transitory Institutionalization. The Russian Empire's Rabbinic Conference

Anke Hilbrenner Bonn

The Kahal – Re-Invented? Simon Dubnow's Concept of Autonomy Reconsidered

Gertrud Pickhan Berlin

Multiculturalism – avant la lettre. The „Bundist“ Minority Concept

Larissa Douglass Oxford

Representation by Other Means. The Jewish Club in the Austrian Reichsrat 1907/08

IV. DIASPORIC AND IMPERIAL MILIEUS – RECONSIDERED

Chair: **Markus Kirchhoff** Simon Dubnow Institute

Menahem Blondheim Jerusalem

„One People, Scattered“. Rabbi Gershom of Mainz' Vision of a Jewish Europe

Gabriel Sheffer Jerusalem

Diaspora, Transformed. The Jewish Experience in Late 19th, Early 20th Century

Yuri Slezkine Berkeley

Most Soviet – and Most Soviet in Reverse. Russian Jews and the Ambiguities of Success

David Hollinger Berkeley

Diaspora in Success. Mystification and Counter-Mystification of Jews in America

V. THE NEW WORLD'S SPACES OF PLURALITY

Chair: **Susanne Zepp** Simon Dubnow Institute

Denis Lacorne Paris

Horace Kallen vs. Israel Zangwill. Debating Cultural Pluralism and Republican Homogeneity

Daniel Greene Chicago

Pluralism and Distinctiveness. Horace Kallen and the Jewish-American Experience

Michael Werz Hannover

Volatile Traditions. Horace Kallen and the Conversion of Religion and Nationality in America

Tobias Brinkmann (Leipzig)

Ethnicization and Americanization. On the Dialectics of „In Pluribus Unum“

Jacques Picard Basel

„American Symphony with Jewish Klez?“ Pluralism, Secularism in an Unfinished Country

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Conference Report

The international conference in 2004 at the Simon Dubnow Institute focused on different relationships between pre-modern forms of Jewish self-organization, in particular within imperial contexts on the one hand, and 20th-century and contemporary concepts of pluralistic societies on the other. Twenty presenters from the United States, Canada, Israel, Britain, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany convened in late May 2004 in Leipzig. The conference was generously supported by a grant from the German Research Council (DFG).

The participants of the conference were welcomed by *Eckhart Hien*, the President of the German Federal Supreme Administrative Court (*Bundesverwaltungsgericht*), who opened the conference in the plenary hall of the former German Reichsgericht (Imperial Court). In his introductory remarks, following Hien's welcoming address, Dan Diner outlined the guiding concept and the research foci of the conference. Although as individuals or group of individuals Jews could be considered, from a historical perspective, as the harbingers and pacesetters of modernity, as a collective they seem to bear characteristics of an early modern natio within modernity, Diner said. This paradox found its expression in elements of the Jews' former corporative constitution, which had been transformed into various forms and principles of social organization, political programs, social theories and ideologies that could be found in modern history. In the course of the emancipation process in Western Europe, Jews lost their traditional forms of collective social organization by and large, when the principle of individual equality replaced what had formerly been regulated by corporative group—or 'estate'—rights and privileges. However, in the multinational empires—above all in Czarist Russia and the Habsburg monarchy—the situation of the Jews was entirely different. In spite of several forms of acculturation, corresponding to Western developments, it was first and foremost the continuity of autonomous organization along corporative lines that determined the situation of the Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe. The transnational and trans-territorial forms of social organization, characteristic to multinational empires, were much more corresponding to Jewish diasporic culture with its distinctive forms of corporative autonomy than the homogeneity-oriented pattern that the modern nation-state had created. To further explore this nexus of empire and diaspora and to trace elements of pre-modern constitutional and organizational principles in the modern history of the Jews was one of the main objectives of the international conference.

In this context Diner pointed to a variety of subjects for further investigation. The political program pursued by Simon Dubnow with regard to Jewish autonomy in the Russian Empire clearly referred to the patterns of autonomous political organization and social life that the Jews had once been granted in the former Polish-Lithuanian Empire. Another expression of former corporative structures could be seen in the trans-territorial principle of personal autonomy that was developed by Karl Renner and Otto Bauer with regard to the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire. Although their theory did not explicitly define the Jews as a nationality, it was clearly a concept that aimed at certain collective group rights along with civil rights being granted for the individual, thus corresponding to the specific needs that 'imperial Jewries' felt in order to maintain their traditional, diasporic and trans-territorial form of social organization. Thus, it is not surprising at all, Diner said, that such a transnationally oriented movement as the Jewish Socialist Workers' Bund adopted Renner's and Bauer's concept of personal autonomy for its own political agenda. Diner then pointed to another political expression in the field of diplomacy—the treaties on minority protection that were concluded for a number of East Central and South-eastern European states after World War I. They, too, should be considered—at least to some extent—in the context of pre-modern corporative privileges being transformed into political modernity. It was not by chance, Diner stressed, that Jewish organizations with their specific imperial, diasporic and trans-territorial experience contributed to establishing a system of protection for the sake of collective national minority groups in the course of the Paris Peace Conference. Finally, Diner pointed to the United States and the significance for American Jewry of the conception of a non-territorial ethnic and cultural pluralism. In this context, Diner mentioned the concept of a multicultural society that was developed in the 1920s by the philosopher Horace Kallen as an alternative to the Melting Pot ideology.

After the objectives and main topics of the conference had been outlined by Dan Diner, the first panel, entitled „Pre-modern settings transformed,“ started with a paper given by *Israel Bartal* (Jerusalem). His talk dealt with those Jews of the former Polish-Lithuanian Empire who became subjects of the Russian Czars from 1772 on. Bartal stressed the crucial impact that the emergence of centralized absolutist statehood in Central and Eastern Europe had on the traditional forms of Jewish autonomy. Bartal described how pre-modern institutions of Jewish autonomy were first incorporated into the centralist Russian state system and abolished later on after the first half of the 19th century, when the absolutist government no longer considered them useful. It was on these grounds that new forms of Jewish self-

organization evolved. Above all, Bartal stressed, it was through the three different channels of either Haskala, religious orthodoxy or non-religious modern nationalism that certain corporative features survived in the era of absolutist government and centralized state administration. *Lois Dubin* (Northampton/Massachusetts) supplemented this mainly Eastern European perspective by her paper. She paid special attention to the Habsburg Monarchy as well as to the state structures in the time of the French Revolution and Napoleonic occupation. In contrast with the usual model for the civil integration of Jews in modern Europe—i.e. legal equality as individuals, but not as a corporate body (a „nation”)—she focused on a different type of Jewish legal inclusion: the so-called *suddite nazioni* („subject-nations” or „subject-communities”) of 18th century Livorno and Trieste. In both cities, which were free ports, the local communities of Jewish merchants were accorded recognition as subjects of the realm. This legal status constituted a significant way-station between mere residence and full citizenship and marked a very specific form of coexistence between corporate, collective privileges and the increasing civil opportunities for Jewish individuals at the end of the 18th century. John Klier (London) dealt with Russian-Jewish matters again, focusing on the history of the traditional *kahal* as the main institution of Jewish administrative and religious autonomy in the Czarist Empire. Exploring the rights and privileges exercised by Jewish communities in Imperial Russia until 1844, when the *kahal* was formally abolished, Klier explained why the Czarist state had failed to do this earlier. He examined what finally led to the formal abolition of the *kahal* in 1844, questioning and challenging some of the usual assumptions in this regard. According to Klier, Russian officials began to consider the *kahal* to be superfluous mainly because of the degree of modernization the state administration had reached by that time, and not because they were primarily motivated by any anti-Semitic ideology. In fact, it was rather functionalist thinking on the part of the Czarist government that promoted the abolition of the *kahal*. The Russian system of financial administration had been substantially modernized during the decades following the partitions of Poland, which had converted the Jews into subjects of the empire. It was on these grounds that the Czarist government finally stopped regarding Jewish administrative autonomy as useful for the state.

The second panel of the conference was entitled „Advantages and Disadvantages of Modernity.” The paper of *François Guesnet* (Berlin) dealt with the process of Jewish de-corporation in the course and in the aftermath of the French Revolution. He described how autonomous Jewish legislation and jurisdiction had ceased following this main event in the transition from pre-modern corporate society to the modern nation-state. Guesnet showed how this agenda of abolishing traditional corporate Jewish autonomy became an objective of administrative reform in most European states between 1789 and 1844. Only very few Jewish communities actively supported this agenda: most of them rather tried to maintain as many forms of their traditional autonomy as possible. They were thus confronted with the paradoxical situation of having to adapt to the changing political settings around them simply in order to preserve elements of their former pre-modern administrative independence. The following paper was presented by *Bart Wallet* (Amsterdam). Talking about the political steps of Jewish emancipation that were taken in Western and Central European countries in Napoleon’s time and in the post-Napoleonic era, Wallet focused on the organizational structures of the Jewish communities and on the role of the respective state governments in the course of this process of emancipation. After presenting the representative institutions of the Jewish communities in France, the Napoleonic Kingdom of Westfalen, the Grand Duchy of Baden, the Kingdom of Württemberg, the Netherlands and Britain, Wallet compared the kinds of relationships these organizations had with their respective national governments. All in all, he stressed, the Jewish organizations set up in those areas that had previously been parts of the Napoleonic empire were official governmental bodies: outside those countries, central Jewish bodies did not have any official political authorization. *Stephan Wendehorst* (Leipzig) examined the role of the university as an autonomous institution and as a corporate association of individuals in the creation of Jewish spaces for action and scientific innovation. The utilization of clines of difference resulting from the tension between university autonomy and the State and Nation on the one hand, and the confrontation between Jewish particularism and state and social unity on the other, was seen as a driving factor generating and shaping the spaces for emancipation and innovation arising from the encounter between the university and Jewish students. This was explored by using four examples. First, the Jewish university student in

the early modern period; second, the importance of academic credentials (*Bildungspatente*) for the process of embourgeoisement; third, the crisis in the principle of academic freedom of movement in the so-called clinicians' dispute; fourth, the university as a springboard for emigration before National Socialism and the massive transfer of knowledge into the Anglo-American world. *Lionel Kochan* (Oxford) focused on the process in which certain classes of Jews, above all the wealthy, identified themselves with the fate of their respective countries in peace and war. This development had its roots in the Seven Years' War, but it was rather insignificant until the establishment of Napoleon's Consistoire system, used as an instrument of French rule in Italy and Germany. However, it was above all in Britain that such an association began to flourish. In this context, Kochan focused on the centralization of the British Chief Ashkenazi rabbinate and its exclusive role in the emergent Board of Deputies. This organization was dominated by the wealthy „cousinhood,“ many members of which were in turn very close to British governing circles. Both the lay leaders and the rabbinate worked together in reinforcing British rule in several colonies, securing facilities for Jewish worship from the British Parliament and sending out British-trained rabbis.

The third panel, entitled „Above and Beyond the Nation State,“ focused on forms of autonomy and political representation developed by Jewish groups in Eastern and Central Europe from the end of the 19th century down to the interwar period. *Vladimir Levin* (Jerusalem) presented a paper on the Russian Empire's Rabbinic Conference. In the context of the manifold attempts to achieve internal reform of Jewish institutions in the Russian Empire after the second *duma* had been disbanded in 1907, the Rabbinic Conference of 1910 was a decisive landmark. Originally convened by the Czarist government, it became a major forum for Jewish political thinking and more-or-less autonomous Jewish political organization. At the Conference, nearly all important political sympathies among the Jewish society of the Russian Empire were represented. Thus, strictly orthodox rabbis as well as more „progressive“ rabbis took part in the meeting, and it was also attended by liberal and democratic Jewish politicians. Furthermore, the different branches of the Zionist movement were also present, as well as non-Zionist secular autonomists and nationalists. Although none of the decisions of the Conference was ever implemented by the Russian government, it certainly marked a highly important step in the course of Jewish self-organization in the final years of the Czarist Empire. The following paper by *Anke Hilbrenner* (Bonn) focused on Simon Dubnow's concept of how the pre-modern *kahal* could be democratized and made the basis for future Jewish autonomous life within the framework of the multinational Russian Empire. Dubnow's concept was not confined to claiming collective rights for the regions of the empire with a large Jewish population, but it was also meant to comprise a certain degree of individual autonomy for Jews throughout the whole empire. To some extent, Dubnow's theory of Jewish national autonomy resembled the concept of „personal autonomy of minorities“ developed by Otto Bauer and Karl Renner with regard to the Habsburg Empire. However, after the breakdown of the multinational empires in Central and Eastern Europe, Dubnow came to recognize the need for a new framework of Jewish autonomous life in the newly formed nation-states. In that connection he stressed the importance of Jews being in close contact with other national minorities and their constant reference to the minority rights they had been granted in the course of the Paris peace settlement. The paper by *Gertrud Pickhan* (Berlin) also focused on political programmes of minority rights and national autonomy. Pickhan stressed the importance of *Bundist* minority thinking in interwar Poland. At the peace conference following World War I, a system of minority protection concerning several East Central and Southeastern European states—among others Poland— had been established. Nevertheless, the Jewish Bund had to face Polish government policies that were, as a rule, hostile to minority claims throughout the whole interwar period. It was within these special conditions of a newly created nation-state, which was not very well-disposed toward any notions of linguistic, religious or cultural pluralism, that the Bundist minority concept developed in the 1920s and 1930s. Being opposed to Zionism and defining a kind of leftist „*yidishkeyt*“ instead, the *Bundist* minority concept finally aimed at a programme embodying the political implementation of broad national-cultural autonomy. The Habsburg Monarchy was the focus of the final paper of the third panel. In examining the first Jewish nationalist members of the Austrian Imperial Parliament ever elected after universal suffrage was introduced in 1907, *Larissa Douglass* (Oxford)

sought to trace their attempts to act as advocates for the Jewish population across the Habsburg Empire. This tactic sprang primarily from the thin imperial distribution of Jewish communities: only in Galicia was the Jewish population concentrated enough to make electoral victories possible. The Jewish club in the Austrian *Reichsrat* (Imperial Council) thus spoke as an imperial representative for the entire Jewish population in the Habsburg Monarchy, despite the fact that some of its members were staunch Zionists in outlook. In fact, Zionist and non-Zionist Jewish club members came together in a common understanding of Jewish national and imperial communal identity.

The fourth panel of the conference was entitled „Diasporic and Imperial Milieus Reconsidered.“ The contributions here significantly expanded the perspective beyond specific case studies to general themes, in particular the diaspora concept, which is associated with and transcends the Jewish experience. *Menahem Blondheim* (Jerusalem) focused in his paper on the aspect of communication and diaspora. He presented several of the famous *takkanot* (ordinances) attributed to Rabbi Gershom of Mainz (c. 960–1028) that regulated daily life for travelling Jews or the sphere of relations with non-Jews. The ordinances and their presumed legislator have been the subject of extensive study, mainly in the tradition of Jewish legal studies, yet little attention has been directed to the corpus of ordinances as a whole—to their organizing principle, to common denominators between the several ordinances, and consequently, to the overall significance of their legislation. In this context, the *takkanot* illustrate increasing communication and interaction between Jews and Jewish communities within the emerging new diaspora. Rabbi Gershom himself emerges from this construction as a great communication regulator and social engineer. Gershom’s project was innovative in viewing the isolated European communities as an organic although dispersed unit. The following paper by *Gabriel Sheffer* (Jerusalem) was based largely on his recent book *Diaspora Politics. At Home Abroad* (Cambridge 2003). Like most cultural-social-political formations, ethno-national-religious diasporas are not static entities. They change over time. To understand their current structures and behavioral patterns, it is important, as Sheffer stressed, to examine critical transitions and transformations in their historical development. These general theoretical observations also apply to the Jewish Diaspora. It experienced a critical transformation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when worsening social, political and economic conditions in Eastern and Central Europe encouraged Jews, like other ethnic groups, to emigrate to the West. This migration substantially increased two Jewish communities—in the United States and Britain. That transformation had some far-reaching implications which fundamentally influenced the diaspora’s position, structure and behavior during the rest of the 20th century. The presentation by *Yuri Slezkine* (Berkeley) was based in part on his book *The Jewish Century* (Princeton 2004). In late Imperial Russia, Jews were a confessional community and an occupationally specialized descent group. After the 1917 October Revolution, Jews became by far the most successful Soviet nationality, according to most official measures of success; the most Soviet of all Soviet nationalities, as measured by Party membership and an apparent willingness to shed „national form“; and, eventually, the most suspect and the most-anti-Soviet of all-Soviet nationalities. Even then, Slezkine stressed, they were the most successful nationality and once again, in a sense, a caste. In post-Soviet Russia, defined as both a multinational federation and a nation state, Jews combine conspicuous economic and professional success with an undefined collective status. Signs of assimilation coexist with those suggesting continued cultural and occupational particularism. In the following paper, *David Hollinger* (Berkeley) argued that success in politics, business, and culture has been central to the Jewish Diaspora in the United States. The challenge for historians of American Jewry is to engage and explain success in relation to the destinies of other descent-defined segments of the national population. Hollinger discussed the demographic over-representation of Americans of Jewish ancestry in a great variety of enterprises, including science, scholarship, the service professions, the corporate sector, the arts, entertainment and politics. Since public policy discussions in the United States for the last forty years have been driven by concerns over the under-representation of other descent-defined groups in exactly the arenas of life in which Jews flourish, and since over-representation and under-representation form a logical syndrome, explanations for the over-representation of some groups, Hollinger stressed, should be methodologically consistent with explanations for the under-representation of other groups. Yet

somewhat ironically, the two discourses exist in virtual isolation from one another: there is one about Jewish Nobel Prize winners and another discourse about African-Americans who are over-represented in prisons and under-represented in higher education. The failure to actually explain the differential destinies of descent-groups fosters the mystification of Jews and the covertly racist dismissal of non-Jewish descent groups as inherently inferior.

The fifth section of the conference, „The New World’s Spaces of Plurality”, dealt exclusively with the American case. The United States can indeed be conceived as an imperial state, a state with a society where despite, or precisely because of its exceptional modernity, a pluralistic practice has developed. *Denis Lacorne* (Paris) opened the section with a paper dealing with Horace Kallen and Israel Zangwill. In 1924, philosophy professor Horace M. Kallen coined the term „cultural pluralism,” challenging contemporary understandings of America as a melting pot in which ethnic particularity would disappear as immigrants and their children assimilated to American society. He envisioned America not as a melting pot but as a „federation of nationalities.” Lacorne stressed the impact of the early writings of Horace Kallen, who may be regarded as the founding father of American multiculturalism. The talk focused in particular on Kallen’s criticism of Israel Zangwill’s famous play *The Melting Pot* and of American popular culture. Based on his thorough research of Zangwill’s and Kallen’s works, Lacorne offered several new insights. For instance, he pointed out that Zangwill was connected with the „Galveston Plan” conceived by leading Jewish philanthropists in New York to disperse Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe west of the Mississippi. In the following talk, *Daniel Greene* (Chicago) argued that Kallen’s pluralist ideology grew out of an already well-developed concern for Jewish continuity in the United States. His theory of democratic cultural pluralism, however, seemingly contradicted the Jews’ belief that they were a chosen people. Even as Kallen claimed that American ideals depended largely on Jewish traditions, Kallen had to reform a crucial component of Judaism’s ideology to make this case. Kallen would solve the dilemma of pluralism and chosenness in two ways: first, he advocated maintaining Jewish particularity in America on the basis of Jewish distinctiveness rather than on the basis of Jewish superiority. Second, Kallen periodically attacked chosenness in an effort to recast Jewish identity for the American scene. All in all, Kallen’s thoughts regarding pluralism and chosenness ultimately demonstrate that debates about Jewish identity and Jewish cultural particularity profoundly influenced and were in turn influenced by understandings of ethnic, racial, and religious difference within American democracy. As *Michael Werz* (Hannover) showed in his paper, the United States of America is one of the very few Western nations founded upon non-national principles; and its history during the short 20th century should be considered in terms of the European experience of incomplete secularization, failed emancipation and genocidal wars. In the United States, an emancipatory form of nationhood prevailed because Americans proved capable of successfully incorporating and neutralizing substantial differences. „Ethnicity” is the cultural term for these differences, and, as a concept, ethnicity constitutes an important ingredient for the realization of both political freedom and individual liberties. Horace Kallen developed his theoretical approach within the Jewish-German-American force-field and emphasized more precisely than many others the artificial character of traditional categories of belonging, of race, nation and ethnicity. His substantial insights into the variability of collective affiliations reflect the emancipatory side of the American experience. *Tobias Brinkmann* (Leipzig) discussed the shift of the official motto of the United States of America, „E Pluribus Unum,” from the guiding principle of a federal state to that of a „nation of immigrants.” Brinkmann chose the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jewish settlement in North America in 1905 at New York’s Carnegie Hall which was organized by leading American Jews as a case study to illustrate the unique relationship between Jewishness and America *in* America. The formal programme of the ceremony symbolically fused Jewish with American themes. The „special relationship” between Jews and America explains why Jews constantly negotiated their position between the *plures* and the *unum* within the group over issues like the limits of Reform or Zionism—and outside the group in regard to social discrimination against Jews and others or the situation of Jews abroad. American Jews, Brinkmann concluded, might be regarded as the paradigmatic white ethnic group, because they consciously inscribed the unum into their very particularity and vice versa. Discussing Horace Kallen’s concept of cultural pluralism, *Jacques Picard* (Basel) raised Kallen’s metaphor of an orchestra composed

by the many instruments of different timbre and tonality and argued that his orchestra metaphor should be seen as a way to harmonize both a cosmopolitan culture ideal with the many cultures of particular groups. Picard then drew a comparison to the situation in Europe. In Europe, the Jews were included but often their „Klez“ culture was excluded and then destroyed. Democratic participation, equality before the law, and protection from arbitrary violence did depend on varying geometries of powers until it was totally paralyzed.

Tobias Brinkmann / Philipp Graf / Frank Neemann