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TRENDS IN MODERN JEWISH HISTORICAL THOUGHT

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DIGEST

In Leviticus 19:15 we read: "You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your neighbor fairly." Commenting on that verse, the Tosefta (Sanhedrin, Chapter 6, Halacha 2) applies its standards of fairness to all facets of the judicial process, including the behavior and dress of witnesses. Thus it declares in regard to the court's procedures for using rich and poor witnesses:

משום ר' ישמעאל אמרו אומרין לו לבוש כדרך
שהוא לבוש או הלבישהו כדרך שאתה לבוש.

The egalitarian concern of the Tosefta for the equalization of resources to be made available to every individual, is a concern central to Jewish-socialist historical thought. Jewish-socialist historical thought is given special emphasis in this thesis and is placed within the general context of modern historiosophy. A number of questions considered by various trends of general and Jewish modern historical thought are, therefore, examined, among them being the following: What are the major factors which motivate history? How does the

individual perceive historical processes? What is the role of the individual, and specifically the Jew, in history? Together these questions comprise the larger question: What <u>is</u> history?

The responses of the historiosophy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to those questions provides the specific framework in which Jewish-socialist historical thought is examined. Much was, and is, at stake for those who seek to gain some understanding from the analyses offerred by these trends of historical thought. For the realm of Jewish-socialist historical thought is not the realm of intellectual endeavor alone; it is also the realm of human need.

This letter, written to the executive committee of a European Kehillah (as cited by Raphael Mahler) well indicates how poignant that need could be:

> We warn you to stop collecting taxes from the poor; we do not even have enough bread to eat, and know this, that if you will not cease to inflict these taxes on us, we shall be forced to set fire to the entire Jewish quarter.

While this thesis explores and deals directly with abstractions of modern trends of historical thought, the flesh and blood wants of those poor Jews, and their counterparts in every society, is this thesis' ultimate, if often obscure, point of reference.

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INTRODUCTION

A General Perspective

This is an age, particularly in the West and especially in America, in which the dynamics of change have wrought tremendous upheaval and turmoil. In many instances these dynamics have produced transformations that are literally incredible to all but a very few. While this phenomenon is not unique in our generation, every generation gives ample testimony to the workings of change, the rapidity with which significantly different patterns of looking at things confront us is of a singular nature.

This is most apparent in the vast sea of technology. Here generations of computers are spawned within far less than twenty years, and designs of science fiction become indistinguishable from machines whose names we have barely enough time to learn, and whose workings remain mysteriously incomprehensible. Things are getting out of hand. That built for our mastery is becoming our master. The impact of this technological onslaught is far-reaching. In a physical world incessantly demanding new perspectives and criteria of evaluation, where little is accorded

permanency and even less sanctity, non-material values are subject to similar flux. Certainty is become a high risk proposition and few are prepared to invest their selves in its offerings. The far greater number of humankind are given to a physics of rootlessness and a metaphysics of non-commitment.

The Jew is also given over to these influences. His world has been the subject, and the author, of constant change. Within the past forty years alone, the Jew has encountered the Shoah and its dismemberment of sinew and soul, and the creation of an independent State of Israel and its attempts to join body with belief. Both these occurrences were shocks which jolted the Jew at his very center of existence. Nothing could now be taken for granted. No assumption was safe. For many in the Jewish world, these testimonies to uncertainty were joined to a rejection of a system of belief and observance which in the past provided the standards by which millions assessed, or even laid claim to, their Judaism.

So humankind, including its Jews, cut free from its stabilizing lines, now drifts aimlessly, experiencing the anguish of having no secure port of call. Its Master can assert no command for the mutineers are grown powerful and numerous.

Given this dilemma, two opposing courses of behavior seem plausible. One is a willingness to normalize

instability and abandon any hope of reasserting control over those many areas of action and thought once considered the legitimate domain of humankind. Many have opted for this course. The alternative is to seek the reassertion of that control by first determining when, how and why it was lost. By utilizing those determinations, an attempt may then be made to restructure existent situations.

Topics of This Thesis

Those who choose to attempt a restructuring of existent realities, of necessity have recourse to history. This is somewhat paradoxical in that while the need to establish a sense of rootedness presupposes a knowledge of the roots, and how others have grown them, the significance of the past seems to diminish in periods of constant change. Relative permanence is, after all, one criterion of significance. In a time when increasingly fewer things or approaches enjoy durability, it becomes difficult to justify taking them too seriously. On the other hand, precisely because the past affords examples of durability, it becomes more attractive in an age of structured obsolescence.

A. The study of Jewish history as it integrates into general history provides the general context of this thesis. That probably connotes a variety of intentions

because "history" means many different things. Thus, one concern of this thesis is to indicate a number of ways in which history may be understood.

B. This concern may be termed historiosophy, or the knowledge and bases of that learning attained by inquiry into the past. Historiosophy is preferred here to "historiography" because the former indicates a grappling with first questions of how events are perceived, while the latter speaks more of a charting or description of narratives of events. At its best, the study of history overcomes the dichotomy indicated by Nordau: "History aims at the description of events. The philosophy of history claims to understand their causal connection and their meaning."[1]

C. A further attempt is made to deal with the question: does the study of historiosophy, and of history, make a difference? One way in which the study of history may be of pragmatic consequence is in its construction of models which may be emulated or rejected by the students of those models. Karl Popper, emphasizing this pragmatic approach, bluntly declares that "history has no meaning" except to the extent that "we can give it meaning" by using it to achieve the goals we set for ourselves.[2] On the other hand, there are many who deny that history can play such a role. They point out that while scientific

research has profound impact on humankind, historical research seems to have little effect on altering human behavior.[3]

D. Trends in Jewish historical thought is a further consideration of this thesis. The basic question inherent in this consideration is the extent to which Jewish history and historical thought are shaped by factors and perceptions separate, and or, unique, to the Jewish historical experience.

E. Finally, the greatest emphasis of the thesis is given to Marxist-Engelsian historiosophy and to Jewish-socialist historical thought. There are two basic hypotheses to be critically examined as part of the emphasis granted this trend of historical thought. The first is that the degree to which economic factors are significantly determinative of human behavior is very great. The potential human dimensions of this hypothesis are tragically evident in this report titled by Morris Schappes, "The short and simple annal of a Jewish worker:"

> News Item, The Sun, N.Y., 7 May 1849: The body of a German named Marcus Cohen was found in a remote part of Greenwood Cemetery on Friday last. It seems that on Wednesday last, in a fit of desperation on account of pecuniary embarrassment he with a hair trigger pistol terminated his existence. He was a carpenter by trade and boarded at No. 74 Greenwich Street, N.Y.[4]

The second hypothesis to be evaluated maintains that to the extent that humankind is able to equalize, or at least more

fairly apportion its material resources, the dignity of humanity is enhanced. Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) is a forerunner of this contention on the most rudimentary level:

> ...in the first formation of society, the wealth must accumulate before the knowledge can begin. As long as every man is engaged in collecting the materials necessary for his own subsistence, there will be neither leisure nor taste for higher pursuits.[5]

There is one additional reason for the emphasis granted Jewish Marxist-socialist historical approaches. As the American Jew continues to regain an interest in his Jewish identity, he will continue to look for historical models that speak to his situation. He ought to look to Jewish socialism as one such model, a model which decries his situation in which "the economic machinery of our society necessarily [gives] to competition a priority it [denies] to social service and social cooperation."[6]

Throughout the main body of the thesis which now follows, an attempt is made to combine material example with ideational structure. It is hoped that thereby the reading will be more concretely instructive, and as least as crucial, more interesting.

CHAPTER ONE

What Does History Mean? Some Questions Posed By General Historiosophy

Three concerns fundamental to any historiosophy[6a] are the identification of the factors which motivate history, the direction in which those factors lead the historical process, and the way in which historical factors are perceived by the mind and reflected in such cognitive categories as substance, accident, time, etc. The nineteenth century historian, Thomas Buckle, conceived history to be comprised of human actions which are governed by three basic "sets of laws," mental, physical and natural.[7] The interaction of the individual's physical and psychical manifestations with the forces of natural science is subject to careful measurement.[8] Indeed the mark of "advancing civilization" is its "tendency...to strengthen our belief in the universality of order, of method, and of law."[9] Buckle's historiosophy (which, incidentally, provided the foundation of the Jewish historical-bibliographical writings of Moritz Steinschneider) thus resolves into an attempt to delineate the precise extent to which human and natural phenomena have impact upon human activity. The presupposition is that there are laws of historical causation discernible to the intellect.

That presupposition, analyzed and elaborated upon for a century, is carried to its ultimate limit by such thinking

as that represented by Ellis Rivkin:

> If variety and differentiation are explained by some simple principle in the world of atoms and in the world of biological beings, why should one not look for an equivalently simple source of the variety and differentiations and unique happenings in the history of man?[10]

That question ought not be asked rhetorically. For it seems apparent that human beings are in part constituted of elements which are <u>not</u> reducible to atomic numbers and weights and which are far more complex than the most complex biological entity, including the human brain. Who, for example, is prepared to claim an ability to measure and chart the workings and mysteries of the human will. Even those who deny the existence of any such things, present us with no principles adequate to predetermining human courses of behavior. Those who erect philosophies, psychologies and historiosophies based on such principles provide us, at best, with partial insights. No one has done better than that and there is much comfort, as well as much pain, which derives from humankind's defiance of theories which would reduce its freedom and spontaneity to laboratory studies of cause and effect.

"To attempt to master historical matters exclusively with causal means...does violence to the stuff of history..."[11] Thus, while Friedrich Meinecke concedes that the "search for causalities" is one of the two main components of history,

he considers history to consist equally of a "comprehension and exposition of values."[12] In as much as values are neither scientific nor objective, Meinecke's analysis lends weight to the arguments brought against positivism and its conception of a "value neutral, purely causal history."[13] Meinecke's formulations, by investing much in the individual's search for values, imply that ultimately historiosophy is given to finding meaning in history. For it is only that which one finds meaningful to which one is able to ascribe value.

Contrary to Meinecke, Max Nordau[13a] is unwilling to concede that there is any meaning inherent in history.[14] For Nordau, "...we find the real meaning of history to be the manifestation of the life force in mankind... Any other meaning is not deduced from history, but introduced into it."[15] Nordau, obviously drawing from the thought of social Darwinism sees

> ...the whole cause of history [as] the expression of one underlying fact — the will of man and of mankind to live and to make every exertion to maintain life in the midst of hostile nature.[16]

The final goal of historical progress is not improvement but self-preservation.[17] Nordau arrives at that conclusion on the basis of his contention that objective truth is entirely inaccessible.[18] Without a claim to objective truth, the historian can hardly assess progress and surely cannot speak of a science of history.[19] This is not

troubling to Nordau for whom that which is great and vital in history, "the drama of the human soul, is completely hidden from direct observation."[20]

The historical approach of George Unwin (1870-1925) and John Clapham (1873-1946) also grants a position of prominence to the human soul. For them the

> ...central and ultimate subject of history lies in the development of the inward possessions of men,... above all through the deepening and widening of ordinary social communications.[21]

The primary factor influencing social communication, according to Unwin and Clapham, is the economic situation of the individual.[22] In terms of our forthcoming concern with Marxist approaches, this combination of material condition and non-material consequence is of particular interest. It points to one way, perhaps learned from Marx and Engels, in which the realm of historical materialism may be bound to considerations of "inward" human will and striving.

A number of conflicting perspectives are evident in the above survey of a few approaches to the question of what is history. (In due part, the sources chosen for consideration are selected on the basis of their differences of approach. In that way, an attempt is made to provide some kind of "representative" sampling of themes of post-eighteenth century historical thought.) Disagreement is

found in regard to the role of causality, to the positing of a final goal of history, and to the inclusion of meaning or value in history. These differences of approach are also manifest in considerations of how the individual perceives, or ought to perceive, the historical process.

Consistent with his aforementioned notion of progress as the increasing applicability of universal laws to particular events, Thomas Buckle faults the emphasis given to the separate parts of history. A far more worthy endeavor, he maintains, is the attempt to perceive the causal laws which provide for the combination of those separate parts into the whole we call history.[23]

Primary responsibility for the discovery of such laws of causality lies with the historian, according to Barthold Niehbuhr. While any individual is capable of perceiving those things we might designate "historical findings," Niehbuhr maintains that scholarly consensus is necessary to establish which of those findings will be accepted as historical "facts."[24] Besides the intellectual snobbism of which this attitude speaks, Niehbuhr also commits the error of blurring the distinction between the historical event and the affirmation made about that event. The latter, properly called an "historical statement," can be no more than the symbol of the events which it describes,[25] and no amount of scholarly consensus can transform that statement into the "facts," the events, of history.

The issue of the relationship between an historical occurrence and its perception is crucial to our effort to define history and to relate what history is to the workings of the human intellect. As a point of departure in our consideration of this issue, let us examine the historiosophy of the Idealist school as represented by R. G. Collingwood.

Collingwood conceives of history not as a recording of events, but as the ascertaining of the thought which stimulated and produced those events — the idea, that is to say, behind those events. This conception is based upon his understanding that the human mind is reflective and thinks about its own thoughts, in addition to thinking about objects and events.[26] Without that reflection, there can be no history. For the basic substance of history consists of the mind's grasping of the thought process attendant to <u>what</u> happened and thus its comprehension of <u>why</u> it happened. The main task of the historian, then, is to attempt to recreate the act of thought which originally produced the circumstance he wishes to investigate.[27] Collingwood believes this task to be within the historian's capability and emphasizes that the great significance of this re-thinking lies in the inevitable, critical, evaluative subjectivity the historian's mind brings to the thought contemplated. In other words, as Carl Becker puts

it, "...the historical fact is in someone's mind or it is nowhere."[28]

Having established that it is the idea which is history, Collingwood goes on to claim that "scientific" history, the critical history of ideas and their consequences, is as exact as any science. The conclusions of scientific history are therefore compelling rather than permissive, certain rather than probable.[29] Collingwood bases this claim for scientific history on a philosophic idealism which maintains that historical reconstruction employs the "'a priori' imagination," a faculty possessed by every individual which facilitates human communication and provides for the continuity of the historical narrative.[30] Thus, historical knowledge is possible because of the universality of an individual's thoughts, because that individual's thoughts are potentially everyone's.[31]

This claim for "scientific history" is problematic on two accounts. First, it relies on the dubious assumption that everyone possesses equal sensitivity to, and receptivity of, the workings of the "'a priori' imagination." This may well not be the case and to claim otherwise leads one, as it does Collingwood, to make unnecessarily sharp, categorical distinctions between the rational, irrational and physical elements which constitute the basis for human actions.[32] One such distinction made by Collingwood is his insistence that history's concern is rational thought,

while human impulse and instinct are the respective concerns of the sciences of physiology and psychology.[33] And second, given that the foundation of this historical construction relies heavily on human subjectivity, pretensions to a knowledge of systematic laws of historical causality which would render history "scientific" are only that, unfounded pretensions.

Other problems posed by an historiosophy which considers history equivalent to the ideas of history as they are re-thought, are noted by Nathan Rotenstreich. Rotenstreich points out that

> Collingwood thought that the past exists only insofar as it lives in the present; it does not exist in itself. But if we distinguish between the past as possessing a relation to the present and the past as possessing a meaning of its own, we cannot accept the sharp distinction between real and ideal existence applied to the dimensions of time.[34]

This critique is valid to the extent that it insists that the past enjoys an integrity and existence independent of its present re-thinkings. But an independent existence does not accord the past "a meaning of its own." On the contrary, that which has no impact and about which there is no thought, no reflection, can not be described as possessing meaning. Therefore, the past may be understood as possessing meaning only "in potentia." When a past thought is re-thought, its meaning is activated, and at that point, the past becomes part

of the present. We can thus speak of the past as possessing meaning only when it participates in the present.

A few words of caution are in order here in regard to understandings of "impact," "thought" and "reflection" which would too narrowly construe those terms and thus unnecessarily limit the possibility of the past's meaning emerging "ex potentia." Our knowledge, or at least our theories, about the workings of the subconscious and unconscious, present one example of influences that affect and effect our ideas but are not, by definition, thought or reflection. Similarly, socio-political and genetic factors of significant consequence for our thought processes may go entirely unnoticed, or are not reflected upon during the duration of an individual's life. These recognitions lead us to an awareness that the totality of the past is potentially meaningful, to the extent that it may have impact, however remote, upon any facet of existence which might influence the ideas shaped by the mind.

If we are then to agree with Collingwood that history is equivalent to the dieas which are thought by humankind, and that the past is viable only as it participates in present acts of thinking, we must also acknowledge that our ability to discern the ideas, the symbols of history is very limited. We must, therefore, assume that many of those symbols, those ideas, do participate in our present

thinking to an extent beyond that which we are able to contemplate, or even begin to measure.

History as a source for human progress is thus far richer than we can imagine it to be. Progress is here defined as the capacity of humankind to deal with those situations which engender anguish or pain.[35] This definition focuses on anguish and pain because of their universality, because of the great energies expended avoiding the experience of them, and because that experience often restrains men and women from reaching beyond themselves to realize new objectives and visions. By virtue of the link made above between history and idea, history may be seen as constitutive of progress, as it requires the individual's use of "historical imagination" to re-enact the past in his own mind.[36] By so doing, the individual can critically evaluate past historical experience, assess its efficacy in solving its problems and formulate new types of actions better able to cope with his or her own dilemmas. The possible scope of such formulations is no more limited than the mind's reach into the realm of ideas.

A historiosophy which conceives of the stuff of history as being the product of the workings of the human mind suggests certain additional questions. What, for instance, is the relation between the individual who knows, or thinks, history, and that which he knows or about which he thinks?

Rotenstreich clearly outlines the question and indicates its resistance to definite answer or resolution:

> The power and the shortcomings of history are to be found in the fundamental fact that knowing history becomes a part of history itself, and hence there is...no ultimate and irreducible status of the knower in history. The relationship between the subject and object...gets blurred...in history.[37]

The blurriness of that relationship leads some to the conclusion that "history is bunk in the sense that it is an imaginative reconstruction which can never be verified."[38] If, indeed, historical verifiability is considered to be subject to the same standards demanded of postulates of mathematics, then it may be reasonable to claim that

> [t]he only difference between the historian and the novelist is that the invention of the former is limited in regard to the facts of which a recorded version is current.[39]

But that is not a trivial distinction. As Lovejoy indicates,

> It is...possible to recognize— without ever "empirically verifying"— the basic general postuates which as implicit in and indispensable for the belief in the possibility of any factual knowledge...[40]

The study of history also requires such basic postulates, for without them, there could be no historical thought beyond the ceaseless challenging of every statement as being the mere figment of the reporter's imagination. And while we readily concede the necessity for, and the benefit of, rigorous challenges to historical assumptions, it is also

conceded that at a certain point the study of history must ask why and how something occurred and assume that it did happen. Such an assumption may not satisfy the demands of a scientific logic, but it certainly does satisfy the demands of human communication and historical progress as that term is understood above.

It is, of course, a risky business to accept those human reconstructions of events, that which we call history, as if they were true. I say "as if," because by now it should be evident that

> ...there can be no history of the past as it actually did happen; there can only be historical interpretations, and none of them final; and every generation [and individual] has a right to frame its [and his or her] own.[41]

Still, though we recognize that what we assume is true is subject to constant re-evaluation, we must make that assumption and act on it. To perpetually suspend judgment and action because we can know nothing for sure about history, seems far more fraught with danger than to act on the basis of less than absolutely certain perceptions. As long as we keep in mind the tenuous nature of our assumptions, the "as if" basis of our actions, we can ill afford to refuse to claim a knowledge of history even though such a claim as well as

> ...all our thinking about the past is an anguish, because it is a perpetual manipulation of uncertainties.[42]

What we specifically choose to think about, or think about subconsciously, is often related to those things affecting us more intensely than other things. In other words, "[h]istory is an account of the things that mattered most in the past..."[43] This formulation allows for the fullest range of subjectivity, (which leads Carl Becker to write of "everyman his own historian") a subjectivity given its full due by Lovejoy's "common sense" historiosophy. Lovejoy claims that the criterion by which an historian selects events for retellings is their interestingness, "either to the historian's own period, or to the period in which the event took place.[44]

CHAPTER TWO

Some General Trends of Jewish Historical Thought

The construction of Jewish history and historical thought from the ideas of Jewish historians presupposes that there are historical concerns of greater interest and import to Jews than to humankind in general. (One example of such a concern revolves around the historic identity which the Jew might feel as a member of a cultural-national group, or as a member of a faith community, or as a member of both. In other words, the question of religious-national identity and the tensions which arise from it, seem particularly, if not singularly, important for the Jews and their history). These concerns are then selected for retelling and re-evaluation, and an area of thought, in part distinct from others, is formed. The question now naturally suggests itself: what are these specific concerns which comprise the bases of a consideration of Jewish historical thought?

Before indicating some of the historical approaches which have been created in response to that question, two preliminary matters warrant our attention. First, the reader will note that the terminology, Jewish "historical thought" is used rather than Jewish "historiosophy." This is the case because all of the sources to which reference is made here do not deal with <u>how</u> Jewish history is

perceived, but rather, with what is perceived. Admittedly, that distinction can be a fragile one. What it intends to connote is that the writers of Jewish history to be considered here do not devote their writings to questions of epistemology as did Collingwood, or Rotenstreich. The one exception to this generalization, Max Nordau, chooses to separate his writings on historiosophy, structurally if not conceptually, from his writings on Jewish history. This seems to imply that a knowledge of the history of the Jew, as a being fully sharing in the nature of humankind, rests ultimately on the same "first principles" of apperception as does the knowledge of history in general.

This brings us to the second preliminary point. What follows below seeks to explicitly test the hypothesis that there are some things about Jewish history, in addition to the identity of the individuals involved, which allows it to be recognized as being both fully participant in the history of all humankind, and as being a conception discernibly different from other conceptions of history. If for a moment we assume the correctness of this hypothesis, it would seem that the tension between these universal and specific natures of Jewish history would animate much of the thinking done about Jewish history.

We turn now to a consideration of some of the forms which that thinking assumes. The previously noted search

for laws of historic causality is also found among Jewish historians:

> The central problem is to unfold the meaning of Jewish history,...to state the universal laws and philosophic inferences deducible from the peculiar course of its events.[45]

The uncovering of such laws, Moses Hess believed, would provide not only for an understanding of historical processes, but would also allow for the eradication of antagonism directed towards the Jew. This latter benefit would accrue following an awareness that "[n]ature and humanity are subordinate to the same divine law,"[46] which presumably precluded the possibility of anti-Semitic outrages.

Another major leitmotif of Jewish history founds itself on the belief that God is the prime mover of history. This understanding, which merges theology and history, is not restricted, as many claim, only to the Biblical era, or even only to the pre-Enlightenment period. Rather, it is an understanding of what motivates historical development to which many continue to adhere until the present. However, those thinkers whose historical approaches we will consider have rejected the notion that a theology can adequately explain the directions taken by Jewish history. This does not distinguish them as Jewish, "secular" historians, if we juxtapose

"secular" with "religious." For, many of them give full expression to religious values in their approaches to Jewish history. They are, then, properly deemed secularists as opposed to theists. This is intended to denote that they look primarily to the universe itself for insight into Jewish history, and not first to a God to whom they may, or may not, ascribe a position of importance in that universe.

Emphasis on economic factors stands as the foundation of some trends of Jewish historical thought. Levi Herzfeld, for one, looked to economic conditions, and particularly Jewish commercial endeavors, as the dominant element in Jewish history. His interpretation of the role to be played by the Jew in response to economic determinants led him to generally support those politics aimed at preserving a quiet status-quo not immediately threatening to Jewish security. In a much different way, Ellis Rivkin also grants a pre-eminent status to the influence of economic factors on Jewish history.

> The most difficult problems confronting the unity principle were those created by economic situations.[47]

The complex "unity concept" to which he refers is seen as "the <u>essential</u> differentiating feature of Jewish history."[48] Unlike Herzfeld, however, Rivkin maintains that adequate response to new economic situations, by creative application

of the unity concept, requires a break with past modes of operation and the structuring of new systems of politics, religion and thought.

A third school of Jewish historical thought to recognize economic questions as the principle motivating force of history is the Marxist-socialist school, whose teachings will be considered in detail in Chapters Three and Four.

Simon Dubnow's historical perspective represented a different trend of thought, and a breakthrough in terms of its criteria of approach to Jewish history. Dubnow sought to get beyond the simplistic understandings which had dominated the traditional analyses of Jewish history.[48a] This traditional simplicity, also noted by Yitzhak Baer, severely limited the Jewish historian's historic peripheral vision. Baer, characterizing such simplicity, asserted:

> No complex historiography could develop out of this system, [of the traditional approach to Jewish history and its main themes of messianic redemption and divine miracle], for at bottom it is always a repetition of the same ideas applied to the changing materials of history.[49]

Dubnow broke with this perspective and emphasized that Jewish history was marked by a "development [which] proceed [ed] from the material to the spiritual." To study that development was to engage in an analysis of the sociological factors and their cultural consequences which affected and typified Jewish life.[50] Dubnow first

utilized this mode of analysis in dealing with the phenomenon of Chasidism, which he sought to explain in terms of its social foundations.[51] This marked the beginning of his rebellion "against the historiography that viewed Jewish history as primarily the history of literature and martyrdom."[52] In place of this view, he posited a theory of "autonomism" which maintained that the differences found in the Jewish people, differences which were "historical-cultural in character," enabled the Jew to establish identifiably separate and independent communities.[53] Dubnow's approach, which he termed "sociological-realistic,"[54] had great impact on his successors, many of whom constructed their own historical approaches on the foundation of his perspective.

Salo Baron, who may be said to stand in the general continuum of approach begun by Dubnow, seeks to place ultimate emphasis on social factors as the guide to comprehending the complexities of Jewish history. In criticizing the "idealistic" type of historiography which he feels has dominated Jewish historical writing, he contends that

> [t]here is really no vital distinction between the ancient theistic view of history and some of the modern idealistic approaches...Even the positivists among the Jewish thinkers, such as Ahad Ha-am and Dubnow, essentially accepted the primacy of such "inner" factors.[55]

Baron while acknowledging Dubnow as the founder of the sociological approach to Jewish history, further faults his "hegemony centers" and his over-emphasis on "autonomism."[56]

Baron's own emphasis on "social orientation" recognizes four fundamental factors of consequence to Jewish history: "biology and population developments;" "normative-factual" factors (i.e., the viewing of legal and ethical sources in contrast with the real conditions of Jewish social economic and cultural life); "communal" factors (i.e., the variations of Jewish life as manifest in different environments); and "socio-religious" factors.[57] In assessing the perspective gained from his approach, and perhaps in responding to the challenge of Jewish Marxism, Baron observes that "[t]here was...an inherent solidarity in the life of a struggling minority which transcended the class differences" to which it was given.[58] He, therefore, unequivocally states that Jewish history

> will most stubbornly resist any full explanation which may be advanced for it exclusively on the basis of the progressive changes in the means of production or of any other economic transformation.[59]

"Exclusively" is the key word here, for Baron does see the rapid development of capitalism, which he divides into early, 1750-1914, and late, 1914- present, stages, helping the Jew to gain access to new fields of endeavor. In part,

he attributes this beneficial consequence of capitalist development to the fact that money became the mainstay of material security rather than land, the ownership of which was often prohibited to the Jew.[60]

Rivkin, in contrast to Baron, appears not to qualify the determinative influence of economic factors. Indeed, he holds that ideational factors are of significance only when turmoil results from a breakdown in the economic system. When that occurs, the individual's attention is diverted away from that which threatens him most,

> the inadequacy of economic systems to produce and distribute enough goods and services to sustain his right to pursue a freely chosen life style.[61]

Rivkin considers the widely disparate treatment experienced by Jews during different periods, or in different locations during the same time period, as resultant from previously inevitable shifts from economic growth, to economic stagnation, to exploitation of ideological differences.[62] This, of course, does not in itself really explain why the Jew should so often be the victim of this ideological terrorism Rivkin seems sensitive to this criticism and, issuing a disclaimer of sorts, declares that "[e]conomic change raises the problem but it does not determine the response..."[63]

What is it then that does determine the historical response of the Jew to his situation and of others to the

Jew? Thus far, we have noted Jewish historical approaches that emphasize the external, material, influences bearing impact upon that question. In as much as our major concern is an analysis of Jewish Marxism-socialism, such influences enjoy prior concern. But Jewish history, and approaches to its understanding, do not subsist on bread alone. The general historical methodology Ranke advocates, in which

> [h]istory...must also try to penetrate the deepest and most secret motivations of life which is lived by the human kind,[64]

also points a way for Jewish historical thought. The direction in which it points reveals what Ranke terms the "values" of history, the meaning which humankind ascribes to, and derives from, history. In oversimplified terms, the attempt of Jewish historical thought to ascertain the meaning, as well as the process of Jewish history, involves a consideration of the spiritual, as well as the material elements of that history.

But this dichotomy, this distinction between spiritual and material, seems awkward and contrived. And indeed it is, when seen in the context of a religious and social history which has continually sought to integrate the spiritual with the material. Some go so far as to claim for Judaism, and implicitly for Jewish history, a uniqueness resting essentially on two

bases. The first is a determination to recognize the potential spiritual dimensions of material existence. The second is an insistent preoccupation with the fairness of the manner in which the material world is appropriated by the demands of the spirit. There are sufficient grounds to legitimately deny the arguments advanced that this is an orientation unique to Jewish history. This should not, however, impinge upon our acknowledgment of the special emphasis and prominence conferred upon that orientation, in thought and deed, throughout Jewish history. What such an acknowledgment demands of our attempt to delineate the motivating forces of Jewish history by certain Jewish historians, is an appreciation of the factors of meaning and spirit and their relation to material phenomena. Three brief examples will indicate how subtle this relationship is and how difficult it is to accurately label Jewish historical influences as either material, or spiritual in nature. (The distinction between "material" and "spiritual" indicates a distinction between physical-material factors, the events they influence, and the meaning derived from those factors and events. The more common differentiation made between "material" and "ideational" is difficult here because of what has been said above in regard to history being the equivalent of

the ideas of history or the conception of history. "Spiritual" is thus to be understood in the broadest possible terms as inclusive of matters of heart, soul and mind.)

Arthur Hertzberg has written extensively about the interaction of modern European historical developments with Jewish history. In summarizing the influence of nineteenth-century trends he wrote:

> The nineteenth-century age of revolution had announced the end of the pre-eminence of the nobility and the clergy within European society as a whole; the Jewish counterpart of this event was a rebellion against the old elite headed by the scholars of the synagogue.[65]

The power held by this scholarly elite was for the most part not a consequence of their wealth. Rather, many of the rabbinic figures who dominated their communities enjoyed authority by virtue of the deference shown piety and the knowledge of texts containing the codes of behavior by which many led their lives.

To what motivation then, on the basis of Hertzberg's understanding, should we ascribe this nineteenth-century rebellion? A material motivation is certainly present, as Hertzberg claims that the dethronement of the scholarly elite permitted the communities' men of wealth to gain positions of power and authority.[66] On the other hand, since many of those who supported this change stood to

gain little in terms of economic advantage, a motivation of spiritual dimension, which sought fulfillment and meaning in a general egalitarianism, also seems to be in evidence.

A second example illustrating the difficulty of rigidly determining many phenomena of Jewish history to be either material or spiritual in origin may be seen in attempts made to explore the roots of anti-Semitism. Few would deny the significance of anti-Semitism as a factor motivating many courses assumed by Jewish history. There are equally few who share a common analysis of the causes of anti-Semitism, of the forms it assumes, or of the periods of its forces' active emergence or relative inactivity. Some see anti-Semitism as exclusively the product of economic conditions; others ascribe it to specifically religious, or more general philosophical and spiritual aberrations, including psycho-social disorder. Still others have combined some of these factors to produce an explanation of the roots of anti-Semitism. Such was the case with Baer:

> Antisemitism is the inevitable consequence of the Jews' exalted consciousness of religious superiority...in a nation totally without power.[67]

Baer's thesis is interesting not only because it clearly combines considerations of the spiritual and material

realms, but also because it inverts a more common understanding of the dynamics of anti-Semitism. That is, he points first to the Jews' extremely positive sense of self-esteem as the chief irritant engendering anti-Semitic response rather than to the hostile resentor guilt manifest in response to the Jew's moral consciousness.

The third example indicative of the interplay of the material and spiritual dimensions inherent in a Jewish historical development is found in some modern conceptions of Jewish nationalism. Dubnow considered nationalism paramount within the context of Jewish history: "...the social principle."[68] He applied that understanding consistently, writing of the 1917 Russian Revolution that "[w]e will support the position that the class principle must be subordinated to the national principle."[69] To realize the potential of that national principle, to authenticate the national identity of the Jew, became the cornerstone of a number of approaches to Jewish history. For Baer, the "denationalization of religion" represented nothing less than the debasement of Judaism.[70] In as much as the Jew was forced to endure "galut," one of the forms this debasement assumed was "political servitude."[71] National debasement of the Jew was understood in other terms. A. D. Gordon's "religion of labor" was

a call for the reunification of the Jews' bodies with their heads.[72] For Gordon, the Jews' inability to work their own land reduced the scope of their humanity and separated them from the common nature shared by all humankind. The question of Jewish nationalism was thus not a question of material consequence alone. Zionism, the major force which grew out of Jewish nationalism, was not only an attempt to gain material, territorial stability for the Jew, it was also

> the most radical attempt in Jewish history to break out of the parochial molds of Jewish life in order to become part of the general history of man in the modern world.[73]

There was much that pertained to the spirit in that attempt, a sense of sharing human wholeness and authenticity as well as a sense of physical security. Zionism was thus characterized as much by the yearning "v'techezenah ainainu b'shuvcha l'tziyon" as by the flight from Kishinev.

While Zionism became virtually synonomous with Jewish nationalism, the significance of the diaspora was not ignored in Jewish historical thought. Dubnow considered it so significant that he never left the diaspora, preferring to write a sociologically oriented history of its Eastern European communities. Baron also saw the "galut" as being a crucially important force of

Jewish history:

> One wonders whether the Jew could have...survived the medieval persecutions without the philosophy of history which emphasized the temporary as well as purifying character of the Exile, and its ultimate disappearance in the messianic age.[74]

By virtue of the Jewish presence among many, if not most, of the nations of the world, there developed what J. L. Talmon refers to as a Jewish "component" in world history.[76] That component has two facets which symbolize the tension between the universal and specific natures of Jewish history which we noted earlier. The first facet reveals a tendency toward a world-view and concept of nationhood based upon Jewish cohesiveness and union. This tendency (which seems similar to what Rivkin's "unity principle" seeks to delineate and amplify) was often given expression in Jewish self-assertions of concepts and behavior patterns considered unique in their own time by the surrounding cultures in which the Jew lived. The second facet of the Jewish component in world history as seen by Talmon is the considerable extent to which the Jews became the "touchstone and measuring stick" by which surrounding societies evaluated their own attitudes and actions. Thus, by seeking to make the Jewish way of life distinguishable and separate from other life styles, the Jew, willingly or involuntarily, invited majority cultures to perceive the Jew as a standard

for comparison. This dual process of Jewish self-assertive differentiation and the subsequent comparitive evaluation of that differentiation made by the non-Jewish world, has largely defined the place of Jewish history as a component of world history. It has also resulted in both tragedy and exaltation for the Jew.

Having outlined certain approaches to Jewish historical thought in terms of the factors motivating Jewish history, we now briefly turn our attention to the role of the individual in history. Erich Frank sees that role as an active one, in both material and spiritual terms:

> Man's whole life is a struggle to gain true existence, an effort to achieve substantiality so that he may not have lived in vain and vanish like a shadow.[76]

Frank wrote that with reference to all humankind. It seems particularly applicable to the Jew, who so often faced the possibility of sudden extinction, and perhaps for that reason, among others, granted overwhelming emphasis to the affairs of this world. This is not to say that the Jew surrendered the vision of a role in history ultimately leading to messianic fulfillment. He, and she, did not surrender that vision, even while devoting their greatest energies to wrestling with the present realities affecting their existence.

There was an especially poignant tension for the Jew in the grappling with the present. We have mentioned it

previously, but it warrants reiteration:

> A Jew might feel in his bones a continuing alienation from society, yet affirm the content of its modern thought as the necessary values of the existence which he must live in apartness.[77]

The Jew was compelled, self-compelled, I think, to make that apartness equivalent to something "better." This led so some rather indefensible assertions on the part of Jewish historians. So we read that

> [o]ur place in the world is not to be measured by the measure of this world. Our history follows its own laws...[78]

For Dubnow, those unique laws guaranteed the intellectual and moral superiority of the Jewish people, a people who "deserves to be called the most historical,' because it is the least barbarous and primitive of all peoples.[79] Thus, for Ahad Ha-am the Nietzschean superman was transformed into the "tzadik," the paradigm of a people devoted to moral and social justice.[80]

Apartness, distinctiveness of identity, was in itself a goal to be reckoned with by configurations of the Jew's role in the historical process. Syrkin, for example, bitterly criticized the socialist Jews who failed to acknowledge that their opposition to a society based on class divisions was rooted in their Judaism: "They robbed the protest of its Jewish character...and thus

became merely another variety of Jewish assimilationist."[81] Dubnow maintained that a specific, Jewish identity could emerge out of a dialectical process producing a

> national synthesis which would merge the best elements of the old thesis and the new antithesis—the Jewish and the universally human values, the national and the humanistic.[82]

A new, and expanded, role in history was also promised the Jew owing to the repudiation of

> lachrymose conception of Jewish history [which] has served as an eminent means of social control from the days of the ancient rabbis...[83]

Along with that repudiation of "rule by tears," a variety of eighteenth and nineteenth-century emancipation movements, economic, social, intellectual and political in nature, contributed to "a complete disintegration of Jewish communal control."[84]

The role of the individual was granted new significance by these emancipations. With few exceptions, emancipation was hailed by the Jew. But, it was also met with a wariness born of the realization noted by Nordau, that emancipation came to the Jews not out of humanitarianism, "but for the sake of the abstractions, reason and natural law."[85] The Jew was thus in a bind, no less cruel than that of Isaac. For, while it was apparent that victorious movements of emancipation and revolution almost inevitably came to

terms with previous values still holding some power, the Jew

> could operate only by accepting the new ideas and political experiments at their face value, for the old order had a long history of anti-Semitism.[86]

Acceptance of these new directions, even in the face of forthcoming reaction, prompted a certain pioneering spirit among, and role for, Jews. That role became "a major keynote of all Jewish history," in as much as

> i t was natural for a permanent minority entering any new area to find that all normal positions in the economy and social structure of that area had already been occupied.[87]

If we understand "area" to refer to all facets of life and not to geography alone, the role of the Jew in the historical process is granted much added consequence and substantiality.

CHAPTER THREE

Some Elements Of The Historiosophy Of Marx And Engels[88]

"Dialectical materialism" is the most common categorization given the thought of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and properly so. For rarely does the naming of a body of thought so adequately identify its most essential elements. Our particular interest here is to consider the way in which those two elements, materialism and dialecticism, are woven into the texture of the historiosophy of Marx and Engels.

The overwhelming, but not exclusive, concern of Marx and Engels is with the material dimensions of existence. To a significant extent, their philosophic materialism separated them from the mainstream of the philosophic thought with which they were contemporary. Marx and Engels were cognizant of the gulf which yawned between the dominant schools of European thought and their own thinking:

> In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven.[89]

Earth and its materiality is thus the starting point for the Marxist-Engelsian understanding of history. History, for Marx and Engels, fundamentally consists of two elements: the relations of individuals to one another, and the concomitant material results of those relations.[90]

The most important basis of human relations, what Marx and Engels term "the first historical fact," consists of the productivity in which humankind engages to satisfy its life-needs.[91] As Engels understands it,

> [t]materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life...is the basis of all social structure.[92]

Everything, then, is subordinate to the workings and interactions of the means of production -- including all workings of the mind, which are mere "sublimates" of the "material life-process."[93]

Marxist-Engelsian materialism consistently seeks the "sublimation" of the ideal to the material, and thereby constitutes a fundamental challenge to Hegelian thought. If for Hegel the Ideal was kind and reason his chief advisor, then Engels could do no less than advocate a palace revolution designed to overthrow the "kingdom of reason."[94] For, it is reason, Engels contends, that leads humanity to refuse to work for the emancipation of a single class by insisting upon the absurdly distant hope of liberating all humankind.[95]

Though thought holds a position of far less consequence than matter, its role is not altogether ignored in the Marxist-Engelsian conception.

> One cannot separate the thought from matter which thinks. Matter is the subject of all changes... Since only what is material is perceptible, knowable, nothing is known of the existence of God.[96]

Marx and Engels here choose the claim for the knowledge of the existence of God to implicitly raise the issue of what Engels called "false consciousness." What false consciousness entails is a belief in, or claim to knowledge of, something immaterial. The question for Marx and Engels is how such consciousness arises.

Engels' answer to this question summarizes the juxtaposition of materialism to idealism as the latter is manifest in ideological terms:

> Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously ...but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process.[97]

These "real motive forces" are clearly identified by Marx, who uniquivocally establishes a hierarchy of the forces which motivate humankind's actions:

> It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.[98]

Ultimately, Marx and Engels seem to see social-economic factors as being of singular significance for every human situation. Thus, Engels considers "the economic movement

by far the strongest, most primordial, most decisive" of all causal factors influencing the behavior of humankind.[99] Further, Marxist ethics are founded on the supposition that

> [r]ight can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development conditioned by it.[100]

Against this background, it is not surprising that for the Marxist-Engelsian understanding, all hope for the emancipation of oppressed classes rests finally "on the question of economic emancipation."[101]

In terms of the examples presented above, the reader may well be led to the conclusion that for Marxist-Engelsian thought, material factors are the sole determinants of historical processes. Though many, both adherents and critics of the analysis of dialectical materialism, have come to that conclusion, the case is otherwise. Engels himself best clarifies the distinction to be properly made between the predominance and the exclusivity of material factors as causal agents of historical events:

> According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is ultimately the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase.[102]

We turn now to a consideration of the dialectical dynamic of Marxist-Engelsian thought. The origins of their dialectical approach are found in Hegel, and Marx and Engels acknowledge their debt to the German Idealist as being two-fold. On the one hand, they recognize that "Hegel had freed history from metaphysics — he had made it dialectic."[103] Secondly, they regard Hegel's most important contribution to be his comprehension of the world as a "complex of processes" rather than as a "complex of ready-made things."[104] The understanding which Marx and Engels finally derive from Hegel is that

> ...nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution."[105]

However much their thought was rooted in Hegel's conceptions, Marx and Engels were not hesitant to depart from the Hegelian analysis at some major junctions. For instance, Engels conceived of his approach to history primarily as "a guide to study" rather than as an Hegelian "lever for construction."[106] More crucially, Engels rejected the Hegelian notion that there could be "a system of natural and historical knowledge, embracing everything, and final for all time."[107] Engels believed that ascribing such finality to any system of thought constituted "a

contradiction to the fundamental law of dialectical reasoning,"[108] in as much as for dialectical philosophy," nothing is final, absolute or sacred."[109]

Such conceptions as these are not the stuff of which utopianism is made. Yet there are many who see utopian tendencies in Marxist-Engelsian thought. Among them is Martin Buber, who thus evaluated Marx's utopianism:

> ...what...connects Marx with "utopian" socialism is the will to supersede the political principle by the social principle, and what divides him from it [is] his opinion that this supersession can be effected by exclusively political means...[110]

Buber's reference to the "social principle" as a founding-stone of utopianism is also alluded to by Engels, though there is nothing in the writings of Engels cited here which would clearly identify his thought as utopian. Engels wrote:

> Men make history themselves, but not as yet with a collective will according to a collective plan... Their aspirations clash, and for that very reason all such societies are governed by <u>necessity</u>, the complement and form of...which is <u>accident</u>.[111]

Thus, Engels holds out the hope that one day humankind will be able to order their existence in consonance with a common will. On that day, the history of humankind will no longer be subject to the forces of compulsion and chance which are the products of human divisiveness.

This passage from Engels' writings is notable on another account, the significance it invests in the common individual, in the great masses of humanity. For, without their cooperation and mutual assent to a "collective plan," history will never be freed of rule by necessity and accident. This is perhaps the most appealing and stirring element of Marxist-Engelsian thought: its attempt to lift the common man and woman out of their faceless anonymity and to secure their rightful place as fully active participants in, and creators of, the courses of history. That attempt is born of the recognition that

> [h]istory is made by the many, whose individual deeds are seldom recorded and who are never known outside their own small circle of friends and acquaintances. It is merely represented by the "great figures," who are symbols, reflectors of the history being made by the mass.[112]

Having established that Marx and Engels conceive of the role of the individual as being of primary significance in the historical process, let us now examine more closely what that role is to be.

The first responsibility of the individual, according to Marx and Engels, is that he or she come to an understanding of what provides for authentic existence.

> [T]he empirical world must be arranged so that in it man experiences and gets used to

> what is really human and [so] that he becomes aware of himself as man.[113]

That sounds almost classically religious in tone. But it is not, for Marx and Engels believe that humans are distinguishable from the rest of the animal world "as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence."[114] Marxist-Engelsian "humanism" (the term designates that for their historiosophy, Marx and Engels use humankind and its existence as their foundation and point of departure) thus immediately identifies itself with a materialist perspective. It is out of that perspective that Marx asserts that the "human essence" is comprised of "the ensemble of the social relations" experienced by the individual.[115]

A major task of the individual as participant in history is to rearrange the order of those social relations which provide for the oppression of the proletariat, the producer class. It is not sufficient to merely criticize that oppression; action is required of the individual. So, Marx declared:

> The philosophers have only <u>interpreted</u> the world in various ways; the point, however, is to <u>change</u> it.[116]

To change the world, for Marx and Engels, is, in large part, to emancipate humankind from those self-perceptions which lead them to envision their social powers as being separate from their individual powers.[117] Such perceptions

are the inevitable products of a "society based upon the production of commodities [in which] the producers have lost control over their own social interrelations."[118] Having lost control over his or her modes and patterns of social intercourse, the individual then begins to see a contradiction between personal self-interest and the communal interest of all individuals. This contradiction is institutionalized and heightened by the division of labor which is a hallmark of modern, technological, industrial production.[119] Ultimately, the state then becomes the embodiment of the imagined communal interest as opposed to the real interests of the individual, according to Marx and Engels.[120]

The individual is therefore expected to bear the burden of revolutionary activity designed to overthrow the rule of the state which bases itself on repression of the rights of the proletariat. Note that it is the rights of the <u>proletariat</u> and not of the individual that are at stake here. In the Marxist-Engelsian conception, the rights of the individual (such as control and ownership of the means of production) seem to be finally subsumed by the rights of the proletariat.[121] Therefore, Engels is able to contend that in an automated situation, even where such a situation is under the aegis of socialist principle, the need for organization demands certain

subordination of the individual to authority.[122] The very achievement of a socialist organization of the means of production necessitates a prior subordination of the individual will:

> A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets, and cannon...[123]

As the chief agent responsible for the emancipating revolution which will bring liberation to the proletariat and finally to all humankind, the individual must adopt a new consciousness, the consciousness of class. Such consciousness enables the individual to conceive of society, in simplest terms, as basically constituted of two hostile classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.[124] Successful proletarian opposition to the rule of the bourgeois interests is brought about not only by victories on the barricades, but also by acceptance of a self-imposed asceticism. This asceticism is necessary in order to confront the ruling classes with a "Spartan equality" capable of transforming the behavior of society's lowest strata," by stripping them of everything that could reconcile them to the existing social system."[125] So, we see once more that the role of the individual in history, which is the starting point for the historiosophy of

Marx and Engels, is integrally related to the material existence which that individual experiences.

Two random notes conclude this consideration of the role in history ascribed to humanity by Marx and Engels. The first is particularly of present-day interest. In discussing the issues raised by the call for emancipation of the proletariat, and finally of all humanity, Engels indicates his agreement with Fourier's contention "that in any given society the degree of woman's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation."[126] And second, much of the appeal of Marxist-Engelsian historiosophy is rooted in its attempts to deal with the whole human being. While the greatest emphasis is paid to the human's material function and condition, as should be evident above, Marx and Engels do not lose sight of the wholeness of the human. Contrary to what much of the criticism of Marxist-Engelsian thought maintains, Engels' acceptance of Feuerbach's thesis that " an historical movement is fundamental only when it is rooted in the hearts of men;"[127] clearly bespeaks an inclination to consider individuals and their history in more than material terms alone.

In considering the totality that is the individual being, Marx and Engels also deal with the question, raised in the prior chapters, of how history is perceived. That

this is not merely an academic question for Marxist-Engelsian thought is apparent in this statement of Engels:

> ...[W]e simply cannot get away from the fact that everything that sets men acting must find its way through their brain...[128]

However, there is a most critical distinction to be made between the thought which leads to action, and the ultimate ground of being which produces that thought. Engels writes of this distinction:

> ...[A]s all action is mediated by thought it appears to him (the individual) to be ultimately based upon thought.[129]

But the reality is otherwise, and the implications of that reality are indeed serious.

> That the material life conditions of the persons inside whose heads this thought process goes on in the last resort determines the course of this process remains of necessity unknown to these persons, for otherwise there would be an end to all ideology.[130]

In these terms, Marx and Engels welcome the end to ideology, which, to the extent that it isolates thought from practice, is a question of purely scholastic interest.[131] To their understanding, the futility of separating thought from action is underscored by the recognition that no individual can grasp absolute truth,

because, being dialectical, truth is always relative and evolving.[132]

Once this understanding is attained, the individual gains the awareness that reason and thought are not sufficient to the task of solving the social problems which beset humanity. In fact, previous reliance on "the splendid promises of philosophers" had only resulted in the formation of social and political institutions which were "bitterly disappointing caricatures" of those promises held out by the "triumph of reason."[133] The individual must, therefore, perceive history in material terms and not reduce its processes to inadequate intellectual formulations. Such perception is possible, for

> [c]onsciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process.[134]

This understanding of what makes up consciousness allows Engels to categorically declare that "as far as the individual <u>knows</u> anything, he is a materialist."[135]

Thus far, we have discussed selected elements of Marxist-Engelsian historiosophy in rather abstract terms. In conclusion of this discussion, let us consider the application of some of those elements to be roles of religion and the Jew in history as understood by Marx and Engels.

Marx maintains that "[t]he religious world is but the reflex of the real world."[136] And, that reflex is in the nature of "an abstract confession of a special personal perversity."[137] Marx's polemical tone obscures the real insight of his critique of religion and it is left to Engels to clarify the message of that critique. This he does most ably:

> All religion...is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces.[138]

The most fantastic of all religious reflections is, of course, the image of God. Marx and Engels have no use for that image. As the latter sarcastically declares:

> ...[T]he only service that can be rendered to God today is to declare atheism a compulsory article of faith...[139]

This conception of religion and its God(s) is largely borrowed from the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach, who chose to define religion, in Engels' paraphrase, as the bonds existent between any two people.[140] Though Engels, and Marx, certainly share Feuerbach's anthropocentric view of the universe, they do not share his definition of "religion." As Engels comments, this is largely due to the fact that the bonds between individuals, their social relationships, are poisoned by class antagonisms and are,

therefore, unworthy of being termed a "religion."[141] It is surprising to find Engels using that rationale, given his otherwise negative attitude toward "religion." In face, his aversion toward "religion" makes doubtful that he would ever use the term, even to describe a set of social relationships almost totally free of class enmity.

In dealing with the historical phenomenon of the existence of Jews and Judaism, Marx and Engels confront a dilemma which is of consequence for any historiosophy concerned with Jewish history. That dilemma is whether the Jew is to be considered as the adherent of a religious tradition, a member of a nation-people, or both. Marx and Engels never resolve that dilemma in absolute terms; neither do most historians and students of Jewish history.

On the one hand, Marxist-Engelsian thought saw the Jews as a people, with a particular culture and sense of primitive nationhood. Their particularity was, however, born of the same general condition which enveloped the geographical area of their earliest origins:

> The absence of property in land is indeed the key to the whole of the East. Herein lies its political and religious history.[142]

A particular Jewish identity emerged out of this environment, because while

> the Jews themselves were nothing more than a small Bedouin tribe, just like the rest, eventually local conditions, agriculture, and so forth placed [them] in

> opposition to the other Bedouins.[143]

In this same line of thinking, Engels considered "the so-called sacred writings of the Jews [as] nothing more than the record of the old Arabian religious and tribal tradition."[144]

It is noteworthy that Engels here combines "religious" and national ("tribal") categories in assessing the beginnings of the Jews. Also of note is the emphasis he grants the material factor (land and property) as an influence affecting the development of the Jew. Marx's writings reveal these same two central aspects of approach in regard to "the Jewish question:"

> The contradiction between the state and a certain religion, Judaism for example, we humanize into the contradiction between the state and certain material elements...[145]

For Marx, contradictions between the state and Judaism were to a significant degree the products of "the practical real Judaism...commerce and money."[146] The task of the proletarian revolution was to free society of those interests benefiting from profits made of surplus value. By definition, Judaism ("commerce and money") was one such interest.

At this point, Marx's reasoning could easily have degenerated into racist anti-Semtism. But it did not, because Marx was careful to distinguish Jews, a nation-

people, from Judaism, their religion. Thus he could write that "the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of humanity from Judaism."[147] By emancipating the Jew from Judaism and its rejection of socialist principles and modes of production, the Jew could once again become participant in the processes of history. For, as long as Jews

> abstain[ed] on principle from taking part in historical development, and wait[ed] for a future which has nothing in common with the general future of humanity[,][148]

they would be isolated from the inexorable workings of the dynamics of dialectical materialism and its ultimate promises of socialist equality.

Wherever the Jew was so isolated, a "Jewish problem" resulted, as it did in Germany. Marx equivocated in tracing the origins of that "problem." To the extent that he treated Judaism as a religion, and stated that "in the Christian-German state religion is an economic affair,"[149] the "Jewish problem" would seem to be exclusively the result of material factors. But Marx explicitly contradicted himself and declared that "[i]n Germany...the Jewish problem is purely theological."[150] (We are forced to reiterate: let the student of Marx and Engels who sees materialism lurking behind their <u>every</u> statement and analysis beware, for his path is one of unjustified rigidity.)

A brief examination of the personal sentiments expressed by Friedrich Engels about Jews concludes this

chapter, Edmund Silberner divides Engels' attitudes about Jews into two periods, pre- and post-1878. In the first period, largely under the influence of Marx, Engels wrote of the Jew in terms appropriate mainly for the polemics of an anti-Semite. Thus, he used the terms "Jew," "speculator" and "financier" as interchangeable synonyms.[151] But in 1878, in reaction to Eugen Duhring's attack on Marx in which he accused Marx of being a Jew, Engels bitterly denounced Duhring's anti-Semitism, and drastically re-shaped his own attitudinal response to the Jews.[152] Part of this reshaping was engendered by an interview Engels had with Abraham Cahan (which was carried out by both parties in Yiddish),[153] and by the deep affection Engels felt for Marx's daughter, "Tussy," who devoted many years of service to British, Jewish, socialist movements.[154]

CHAPTER FOUR

Some Elements of Jewish-Socialist Historical Thought

The dialectical-material historiosophy of Marx and Engels stands as the point of departure for the historians who comprise the Jewish-socialist school of historical thought. Many, therefore, designate those individuals as "Jewish-Marxist" historians and historiosophers. Such an appellation is inappropriate, however. For one, it denigrates the importance of Engels by ignoring him altogether. Furthermore, much of Jewish-socialist historical thought, while sharing a great deal in common with the analyses of Marx and Engels, also deviates from those analyses in regard to some very crucial questions. Thus, the terminology "Jewish-socialist" historical thought seems preferable, as long as it is understood that "socialist" refers to a basis in Marxist-Engelsian dialectical-materialism.

Marxist-Engelsian Themes In Jewish-Socialist Historical Thought

Central to the conceptions of Jewish-socialist historical thought is the acceptance of the principle that the "economic aspect of life is the basis of the national and social development of the Jewish people, as of all other people in the world."[155] (Note again that economic factors are considered the basis, and not the

sole determinant, of national and social processes.) As with Marx and Engels, social development is viewed in the context of the ultimate emancipation of the working class, which is achieved through the efforts and struggles of the proletariat itself.[156] Those struggles, contrary to what much of philosophy and religion have asserted, are "waged not for 'spiritual' things, but for certain economic advantages in social life."[157] Ber Borochov's understanding of the pressures which lead to class struggle and social upheaval is also shared directly with Marx and Engels:

> The class struggle assumes the character of a social problem whereover the development of the forces of production disturbs the constitution of the relations of production... to the point where production becomes impossible .[158]

Two brief examples indicate the way in which Marxist-Engelsian analysis is applied to developments in Jewish history. Raphael Mahler maintains that the origins of both Chasidism and the Haskala can be found in class antagonisms which erupted in European Jewish life in the eighteenth century. For Mahler, Chasidism is seen as a call which urged the "Jewish masses to revolt against the outmoded, repressive Kehillah regime and the primacy of the rabbis."[159] As such, it stands as

> the first time in the long history of the Diaspora that a general democratic movement had arisen to dispute the rule of the social elite...[160]

But, this main objective of Chasidism is never realized, because Chasidism "lacked a solid social class...capable of undertaking the struggle from a clearly defined social and economic platform."[161] It is interesting to note that many scholars agree with Mahler that Chasidism did not grow out of the workings of any signle, "solid," social class. While this leads them to look to other relationships to explain Chasidism's emergence, Mahler persists in relating that movement's birth to class rivalry.

As with Chasidism, Mahler also looks to social class rivalry to explore the roots of the Haskala. To his understanding, the Haskala's birth and growth in Central Europe was largely an expression of the Jewish middle class which sought increased economic power and social status.[162] To partially support this contention, Mahler cites the example of Alsace-Lorraine in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, where the protagonists of enlightenment came from the "Jewish bourgeois class."[163]

A Jewish-Socialist Analysis of Anti-Semitism

One of the particular concerns, which by virtue of the emphasis given it by Jewish historians emerges as a focal point of Jewish historical thought, is an analysis of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism. Jewish-socialist historical thought views that phenomenon in terms of social-class hostility. Morris Schappes thus contends that

> ...in any society so class-structured that a minority economically exploits...the majority, the usefulness of anti-Semitism in all its forms...is assured and endless because it helps keep that minority in power...[164]

This is a familiar approach which holds that anti-Semitism is used by exploitative ruling classes to distract the masses from the real source of their oppression.

There are other dimensions of the Jewish-socialist analysis of anti-Semitism. For example, George Lichtheim points to the congruence of anti-capitalist and anti-Semitic themes which responded to the workings of the French Revolution. These themes share a common resistance to the economic benefits the Jew gained from the liberalism of a Revolution which guaranteed advantages to manipulators of the market economy, as well as to the rich.[165]

The Jew then emerged as an effective competitor in the economic sector. Nachman Syrkin asserted that it was the middle class in general, and the small businessman in particular, who suffered most from Jewish competition.[166] The most significant consequence of Jewish entree into the economic arena was the shifting of social-class relations it entailed. As Syrkin noted:

> The more the various classes of society are disrupted, the more unstable life becomes, the greater the danger to the middle

> class and the fear of
> proletarian revelution—
> ...the higher the wave of
> anti-Semitism will rise.[167]

Borochov also saw the fluorishing of anti-Semitism as a consequence of competition, "competition between the Jewish and non-Jewish petit bourgeosie and between the Jewish and non-Jewish proletarized and unemployed masses."[168] Mahler, concentrating on Jewish-non-Jewish relations in Central Europe, similarly emphasized the competitive economic factor. He, therefore, considered Central European anti-Semitism as

> motivated [for] the express purpose
> of shielding the impoverished lower
> middle class gentile from Jewish
> competition in commerce and the
> crafts.[169]

A slight variation on this theme of competition is found in the analysis of anti-Semitism accepted by the Polish, Jewish Bund. The Bund maintained that "Polish anti-Semitism was economic in origin, a result of the country's class structure."[170] The Jewish place in that economic structure, according to the Bund, was to function as Poland's "commercial class," a role the Jew had occupied since medieval times.[171] Acting as the merchant of Poland had earned for the Jew the anti-Semitic enmity of both producer and consumer. The theoretical response of the Bund, as late the 1930's, was to call for the liberation of all humankind from

social oppression and thus assure the liberation of the Jew from anti-Semitism.[172]

Nationalism And Jewish-Socialism

The appeal to universal emancipation from the tyranny of bourgeois rule was not the only response of Jewish socialism to anti-Semitism. Syrkin outlined a much different approach to the problems encountered by the Jew:

> The class struggle does not exhaust all the expressions of social life. When a people is endangered, all parties unite to fight the outside enemy, though in normal times the classes fight each other.[173]

The conclusion Syrkin drew from this reasoning and applied to the Jewish situation was that socialism was not antagonistic to Zionism.[174] Syrkin is not alone among Jewish socialists in supporting that position. Bernard Lazare, for instance, declared: "I find nothing in nationalism which would be contrary to socialist orthodoxy."[175] Borochov argued similarly: "Genuine nationalism in no way obscures class consciousness,"[176] for it is a "progressive nationalism" which is but the "healthy urge for self preservation."[177] Borochov's "genuine nationalism," and its recognition of class struggle, stood in contradistinction to the "nationalistic" nationalism of the ruling classes which

sought to obscure class antagonisms.[178] By making this distinction, Borochov attempted to combine his fervent devotion to Jewish nationalism and his claim to stand within the limits of "scientific" Marxist-Engelsian thought.

In reality, Borochov attempted the impossible. For, orthodox Marxist-Engelsian thought plainly resisted any accommodation with nationalism. Even apart from the incompatibility of Zionism with the theorizations of Marx and Engels, the issue of Jewish nationalism in any form separated Jewish-socialists from the mainstream of socialist thought and organization. The Bund, for example, found itself isolated from the other socialist parties in Poland precisely when it decided to insist on the legitimacy of sustaining some recognizable form of Jewish, national, (perhaps more properly, "cultural") socialist endeavor.[179] In its earlier years, the Bund declined to take up the issue of national rights, and preferred, rather, to consider only questions of more universal scope.[180] For that reason, the Bund was a bitter rival of the Poalei Tziyon, which sought the support of the Jewish working class on the basis of its appeal for the establishment of a Jewish, national homeland. The Poalei Tziyon contended that only in a Jewish homeland could the dilemmas of Jewish existence be resolved.[181]

An interesting insight into the relationship of Jewish nationalism to capitalism, and to anti-Semitism, is offered by A. Leon, the most doctrinaire Marxist among the group of Jewish socialists noted here. Leon suggests:

> On the one hand, capitalism favored the economic assimilation of Judaism and consequently its cultural assimilation; on the other hand, by uprooting the Jewish masses, concentrating them in cities, provoking the rise of anti-Semitism, it stimulated the development of Jewish nationalism.[182]

To Leon's thinking, Jewish nationalism was not a positive phenomenon, but an unnecessary particularism resultant from the decadence of capitalist organization of the means of production.

Unnecessary or otherwise, however, the cataclysm that was World War I pointed up the emptiness of the socialist credo of international proletarian unity when challenged by the forces of patriotism. Zionism was, thereafter treated with kinder consideration by some sectors of Jewish-socialist thought, though many still opposed Jewish, territorial nationalism to the bitter end. And the end was indeed tragic for many of those Jewish socialists — Leon among them — swept away by the onslaught of the Nazi terror. The impact of the Shoah upon Jewish and non-Jewish and "non-Jewish Jewish"

(to use Isaac Deutscher's term) socialists was profound. Deutscher wrote, for example about the conflict between Marxism and Zionism:

> If instead of arguing against Zionism in the 1920's and 1930's I had urged European Jews to go to Palestine, I might have helped to save some of the lives that were later extenguished in Hitler's gas chambers.[183]

Marcuse, apparently eager to avoid the error Deutscher recognized too late, stated:

> I am happy to be able to be in agreement...with Jean-Paul Sartre who said: "The only thing that we must prevent at any cost is a new war of extermination against Israel.[184]

The importance of a Jewish homeland for many Jewish-socialist thinkers was not measured only in "external" terms. That is to say, the pressures of a hostile environment were not the only negative consequences of concern to the diaspora Jew who envisaged establishing socialist modes of production as the basis for Jewish social relations.

According to Borochov, [t]he most vital of the material conditions of production is...territory."[185] Therefore, unless one was in possession of territory, all hope of revolutionizing the conditions of production was futile. And the Jew was not in possession of territory. Therefore, for Borochov, Zionism represented the

> state-building preamble necessary to the creation of the arena in which the Jewish sector of the international class struggle is to take place.[186]

If, as Marx maintained, "The Land is the mother, and labor is the father of wealth," then the diaspora Jew was motherless, vulnerable, and without dignity.[187]

We see, then, that Zionism for Jewish-socialism was as crucial a factor for the "internal" development of the Jew as it was a response to external force. Borochov put it plainly: without territory, without "a place in which to work," there could be no class struggle and thus no emancipation of the Jewish proletariat.[188]

Syrkin had the same priorities in mind:

> A classless society and national sovereignty are the only means of solving the Jewish problem completely. The Jew must, therefore, join the ranks of the proletariat...[189]

Syrkin's advocacy of a socialist organization of material resources for a Jewish state rested on technical, as well as theoretical considerations. It was his conviction that it would be impossible to mechanize agriculture and create industrial facilities within the limits of the small capital that would be available to the founders of a Jewish state.[190] Thus, socialist cooperation would be necessary to compensate for the lack of investible capital. In point of fact,

the organization of the kibbutz presented on example of the correctness of Syrkin's thinking.

Leon opposed this entire approach, and was particularly critical of Borochov. Borochov had emphasized that Jewish labor, being strictly urban in character, could not become part of a revolutionary proletarian movement until it became more diversified in its own land.[191] Conversely, Leon insisted that the inverted pyramid of Jewish occupation could not be altered until the pyramid of other peoples was also radically altered — even if the Jews had their own land.[192]

The Bund: Orthodox Heretics

The Bund presents an interesting study of a Jewish-socialist movement which vacillated between strict adherence to Marxist-Engelsian analysis, and deviation from that approach to historical processes. Vladimir Medem, a Bund leader, once responded as follows to the Mensheviks, who maintained, in accord with Marxist-Engelsian principle, that Russia needed more capitalist development before revolution could succeed:

> ...[F]ormal logic... has a way of falling before the hard facts of history. The class struggle was at hand, brought on by economic and political facts of life: hunger, inflation, unemployment, and military collapse.[193]

Medem also rejected the idea that socialism could be created by a minority, rather than by the majority of a given society.[194] With the exception of the Bund's left wing, the Bund remained true to Medem's democratic principles and thereby owed a never acknowledged debt to the thought of Eduard Bernstein, who revised Marxist-Engelsian theory so as to preclude its compatibility with any form of dictatorship.[195]

On the other hand, the Bund bitterly rebuked the Bolsheviks for acting as if political rule and physical power, rather than economic factors, were to be the main forces dominating society. In other words, the Bund accused the Bolsheviks of abandoning their Marxist-Engelsian roots,[196] a "crime" of which the Bund itself was often "guilty."

How Does The Jew Perceive Jewish Historical Processes

Jewish-socialist historical thought, in common with the various trends of historiosophy considered above, dealt with the question of how the individual perceived the courses of Jewish history. The primary basis of all such perceptions, according to the approach assumed by Jewish socialism, was a cognizance of the fact that "there was no Jewish life without Jews making a living."[197] How Jews made their livings, and correspondingly, how they ordered the internal lives of the Jewish communities in

which they lived, thus had a great deal to say about how they perceived the dynamics of Jewish history.

Arthur Hertzberg, who is not a socialist but accepts much of Jewish-socialist analysis, maintains that the history of the Jewish ghetto experience is essentially the history of a "too little studied class war."[198] The major antagonists in that war were the Jewish masses and the dominant, minority class, comprised of the rich and of the upper echelon scholars.[199] For the former, the regimen of daily life was viewed as a regimen of oppression; for the latter, stabilized social relations in the ghetto meant security and well-being, both in terms of the Jewish community itself, and in terms of the lack of attention the hostile non-Jewish authorities paid to the ghetto's quiet status-quo.

With the coming of emancipation, new issues emerged in the context of Jewish class relations, chief among them, perhaps, being the issue of assimilation. Hertzberg contends that the Jewish upper classes were the most assimilationist, while the petit bourgeosie, among the last to gain any benefit from emancipation, clung steadfastly to the values which had dominated the Jewish past.[200] Morris Schappes supports this contention by pointing out that the first impulses for nineteenth-century Reform Judaism, which he maintains were wholly

assimilationist in intention and form, came from the Jews of the rising middle class.[201] In other words, to upper and middle class Jews, entrance into the arenas of economic power to which they aspired seemed dependent upon their assimilation of the values and behavior patterns of those (non-Jews) who could extend or deny access to those arenas.

Emancipation engendered other class-related responses among Jews. Among the early, socialist Saint-Simonians, were a number of Jews "for whom the new socialist faith became a vehicle of spiritual emancipation from religious orthodoxy."[202] It is important to note, that for the perspective of much of Jewish-socialist historical thought, socialism entailed a spiritual, as well as material, dimension of analysis. The observation of Leon, for example, that, "[f]irst the tool is an appendage to man, then man becomes an appendage to the tool,"[203] clearly had significance for the spirit, and body, of man and woman. Syrkin similarly paid heed to the "spiritual" dimensions of Jewish-socialist thought:

> ...Jewish socialism should be placed on the same level with proletarian socialism, because both have a common source in the oppression of human beings and the unjust distribution of power.[204]

This emphasis on socialism's spiritual significance led many, including Hertzberg, to separate Syrkin from the

category of "Marxist" socialists. While such a distinction at first appears tenable, (note Engels' Scientific And Utopian Socialism) it does not make adequate allowance for the moral (or "spiritual," or at the very least "intangible") foundations of Marxist-Engelsian thought. Marx and Engels, were, after all, dedicated to securing justice and dignity and freedom for the proletariat and finally for all society. Those are terms they employ themselves, and they are terms of spirit at least as much as they are rooted in matter.

Finally, a note is in order here about the manner in which the American Jew perceives his role in the course of United States Jewish history. A 1969 study made at the Universities of Michigan and Chicago, and cited by Schappes, indicates that sixty-seven per cent of the Jews in the United States earn less than $7,500 per year, and that thirty-nine per cent of U.S. Jewry are workers (including non-owning professional and technical workers).[205] Schappes, utilizing these statistics, thus concludes that "there are many more Jewish workers than there are Jewish landlords in slum areas."[206] That may be stretching the definition of "slum" too far. But Schappes draws another conclusion which seems incontestable, namely, that

> ...it is obvious that the working class...among the Jewish population is larger, much larger, than the bourgeois stereotype jargon of "middle class" would assume.[207]

So indeed, the U.S. does know of the phenomenon of a Jewish proletariat (albeit a largely white-collar "proletariat"). The problem is that the Jew him- or herself does not normally acknowledge that phenomenon, and thus remains resistant to the insights gained from socialist analysis. It is a problem, because the forces which operate to isolate Jewish laborers from control of the means and products of their production, still act as a leash around their necks, even though their necks are covered by white collars. There is some basis for hope that the consciousness of such workers will yet be aroused as voiced in the recent rumblings being heard about neglect of the Jewish poor in the United States. (In New York, for example, making $7,500 per year still leaves one poor, or at best, able to borrow enough to be constantly in debt.) It is to be hoped that the degeneracy of the arrangements by which Jewish "philanthropy" becomes the key to economic survival of the Jewish poor will be exposed, and that more equitable, equalitarian arrangements will be achieved.

The Role Of The Jew In History

Jewish-socialist historical thought is almost univocal in its assessment of the need for a process of consciousness — raising and revolution which would radically alter the role played by the Jew in history. And, it is also in agreement about the inability of the

Jew, in his traditional situation, to expect a better future outside of the context of a proletarian revolution. Syrkin, for one, wrote:

> The "lumpen-proletariat," which embraces the greater part of the Jewish workers...is incapable of class struggle or socialist activities.[208]

A. Leon fully agreed. He saw the traditional economic role of the Jew as that of merchant and trader, a role learned in ancient Palestine, an important commercial crossroads of the East and West.[209] Leon contended that having learned that role and having assumed it, the Jew had never abandoned it. Thus,

> [a]bove all the Jews constitute historically a social group with a specific economic function. They are a class, or more precisely, a people-class.[210]

That economic function, according to Leon, was identical with the interests of the "precapitalist mercantile class."[211] Where the Jews did infrequently assume a different economic role, as in North Africa, where they became farmers, they rapidly assimilated, for they "ceased to constitute a separate class."[212]

Borochov also saw disaster for the Jew inextricably related to his economic role. The Jew, he noted, had

> been removed for centuries from the basic branch of production upon which the economic structure depends. The Jews are concentrated in the final

> levels of production—those branches which are far from the core of our economic structure.[213]

The only solution Borochov saw for this situation was for the Jew to escape the economic role assigned him in Galut and establish his own socialist homeland.

Thus far, we have concentrated on the economic role of the Jew vis-a-vis his relations with the general community. The major contribution of Raphael Mahler is to draw attention to the manifestations of that role within the Jewish community itself. Mahler depicts the post-emancipation situation in the European Jewish communities as one typified by the more or less active rebellion of the Jewish masses against "the obsolete feudal regime which prevailed in the Jewish autonomous organizations and institutions as well as in the State."[214] And, as Baron indicates, there was plenty to rebel against. For, in both medieval Europe and in the Islamic countries, it had become the custom of the Jewish community leaders to charge heavy interest on loans made to non-Jews and Jews alike.[215] Further, Baron notes that "[i]n almost all [Jewish] communities,...non-taxpaying members were excluded from the exercise of electoral rights."[216]

Mahler cites numerous examples in support of this critique of the Jewish leadership. Throughout Europe, he notes, the Kehillah administration was monopolized by the

heads of the communities' wealthiest families.[217] In Germany, at Frankfurt-on-Main, in 1722 the Kehillah registered one-third of its membership as "well-to-do" while classifying one-fourth of that same membership as poor and dependent on the dole.[218] But Mahler saves his severest criticism for the Polish Kehillot, whose taxation system, he points out, "was based on unrestricted exploitation of the lower class masses."[219]

For these Jewish-socialist historians, (Baron does not fit in that category) liberation of the masses of Jews from the economic roles and the conditions which oppressed them, depended upon their ownership and control of the means of production. Only revolutionary socialism offerred the hope for establishing that control, they believed.

A Final Note: Rivkin's Philo-Capitalism

All of this, according to Ellis Rivkin is sheer nonsense. The redemption of the Jew, he maintains, lies in the successful growth of the very enemy of Jewish socialism, capitalism. Rivkin's explicit criticism of Marxist-Engelsian thought, and his implicit critique of Jewish socialism, rests primarily on this understanding:

> Its [Marxism] essential metaphysic was class oriented. No status was accorded to the individual, transcending class interests or class needs.[220]

Because it accorded no status to the individual, socialism did not allow the Jew to gain a real measure of security or freedom, but treated all Jews as a special class, and usually in detrimental fashion. For Rivkin, then, "[c]apitalism and capitalism alone emancipated Jews," because in its "developing," as opposed to "stagnant" forms, it thrives on the freedom of thought and initiative it must guarantee to every individual, the Jew included.[221] Specifically, Rivkin maintains that

> [t]he existence of the State of Israel and the freedom Jews enjoy throughout the West can both be attributed to the rise and spread since 1945 of a new form of social revolutionary capitalism.[222]

Let us concede that liberal capitalism has brought a certain measure of political and religious freedom to the Jews in those countries where its influence is dominant. But, as Salo Baron declares, that freedom has been brought at a terrible cost. "Capitalism," claims Baron, "began to threaten the very survival of the Jewish people...more than the antagonism and large-scale exclusion of the previous feudal system."[223] This was the case for three reasons:[224] (1) Capitalism's emphasis on individualism was opposed to the maintenance of Jewish group identity. (2) Leadership of the Jewish community shifted exclusively to the moneyed classes — (and we must surely, by now, be aware of what that entails). (3) And

finally, freedom and progress came to be recognized in material terms alone.

Thus, the promise of Rivkin's capitalism is not the promise of Jewish survival, nor the promise of Jewish equalitarianism, nor the underpinning of the Jew's sense of self-meaning and worth. It is the promise of equal Jewish participation in the mad pursuit of material acquisition, a pursuit still founded on the exploitation of the less powerful members of American and world society. Here we must resist measuring exploitation in economic terms alone, as does Rivkin. Rather, we must consider exploitation as the unnecessary denial of equal opportunity to every individual to control his own destiny. That too is exploitation, of a spiritual, as well as material sort. And it is that exploitation to which Jewish-socialist historical thought ultimately speaks, and which it ultimately seeks to negate.

FOOTNOTES

1 Max Nordau, The Interpretation Of History, p. 16.

2 Hans Meyerhoff (Ed.), The Philosophy of History In Our Time, pp. 304, 310.

3 Ibid., p. 356, from Carl Becker.

4 Morris U. Schappes, A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654-1875, p. 287 (author's emphasis).

5 Fritz Stern (Ed.), The Varieties of History, p. 130.

6 Schappes, Op. Cit., p. VI.

6a The term "historiosophy" is employed, among others, by Joseph Klausner in describing the historical thought of Rabbi Nahman Krochmal. It is also used by Nathan Rotenstreich. (see Klausner, הסטוריה של הספרות העברית החדשה, הוצאת הספרים אחיאסף, י-ם, תשי"ב, עמ' 174.

7 Stern, Op. Cit., pp. 121-2.

8 Ibid., p. 128.

9 Ibid., P. 125.

10 Ellis Rivkin, The Shaping of Jewish History, p. 15.

11 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 270.

12 Ibid., p. 268.

13 Ibid., p. 275.

13a The most extensive bibliographical compilation of works by, and about, Max Nordau has been produced by Meir Ben-Horin. Reference to Ben-Horin's bibliography would be most helpful to any student of Nordau's historical thought.

14 Nordau, Op. Cit., p. 355.

15 Ibid., p. 371.

16 Ibid., p. 358.

17 Ibid., p. 307.

18 Ibid., pp. 10-1 (emphasis added).

19 Ibid., p. 6.

20 Ibid., p. 8.

21 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 306.

22 Ibid., p. 305.

23 Ibid., pp. 123-4.

24 Ibid., p. 48.

25 Meyerhoff, Op. Cit., p. 124, from Carl Becker.

26 R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p. 1.

27 Ibid., p. 288.

28 Meyerhoff, Op. Cit., p. 125.

29 Collingwood, Op. Cit., pp. 262-3.

30 Ibid., pp. 241, 248.

31 Ibid., p. 303.

32 Ibid., p. 231.

33 Ibid., p. 216.

34 Nathan Rotenstreich, p. 112.

35 Collingwood, p. 324.

36 Ibid., pp. 242, 282.

37 Rotenstreich, Op. Cit., p. 321.

38 John Weightman, "Battle of the Century - Sartre vs. Flaubert," p. 10.

39 Nordau, Op. Cit., p. 6.

40 Meyerhoff, Op. Cit., p. 185.

41 Ibid., p. 303, from Karl Popper.

42 Weightman, Op. Cit., p. 10.

43 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 305, from George Unwin and John Clapham.

44 Meyerhoff, pp. 175, 179.

45 Simon Dubnow, Nationalism And History, p. 271.

46 Arthur Hertzberg (Ed.), The Zionist Idea, pp. 129, 131.

47 Rivkin, Op. Cit., p. XXI.

48 Ibid., p. XX (author's emphasis).

48a Generally, these traditional analyses emphasized the responses of Jewish history to two factors: the role of God in history, and the martyrdom suffered by the Jews because of their continued belief in that God.

49 Yitzhak F. Baer, Galut, p. 110.

50 Dubnow, Op. Cit., p. 76.

51 Ibid., p. 15, from Koppel Pinson.

52 Ibid., p. 3, from Koppel Pinson.

53 Ibid., p. 3, from Koppel Pinson; p. 76, from Dubnow.

54 Raphael Mahler, A History Of Modern Jewry 1780-1815, p. XI.

55 Salo W. Baron, "Emphases In Jewish History," pp. 25, 27.

56 Ibid., p. 28.

57 Ibid., pp. 29-35.

58 Ibid., p. 34.

59 Ibid., p. 25.

60 Salo W. Baron, History And Jewish Historians, pp. 49, 51.

61 Rivkin, Op. Cit., pp. XXIV, 140.

62 Ibid., pp. 137-8.

63 Ibid., p. XXV.

64 Baron, Op. Cit., p. 270.

65 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 59.

66 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

67 Baer, Op. Cit., pp. 9-10.

68 Dubnow, Op. Cit., p. 97.

69 Ibid., p. 26.

70 Baer, Op. Cit., p. 114.

71 Ibid., p. 118.

72 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 370, from Arthur Hertzberg.

73 Ibid., p. 20, from Arthur Hertzberg.

74 Baron, "Emphases In Jewish History," p. 37.

75 J. L. Talmon, "The Jewish Component in World History."

76 Erich Frank, Philosophical Understanding And Religious Truth, p. 116.

77 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., pp. 76-7, from Arthur Hertzberg.

78 Baer, Op. Cit., p. 122.

79 Dubnow, Op. Cit., pp. 257, 259, 268.

80 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 55, from Arthur Hertzberg.

81 Ibid., p. 341.

82 Dubnow, Op. Cit., p. 13.

83 Baron, Op. Cit., p. 37.

84 Ibid., p. 38.

85 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 28, from Arthur Hertzberg.

86 Ibid., pp. 31-2, from Arthur Hertzberg.

87 Baron, History And Jewish Historians, p. 31.

88 For the purposes of this thesis, the thinking of Marx and Engels will be considered as a unitary whole, unless otherwise noted. The enormity of Marx's influence upon Engels, and their constant collaboration, justifies this common treatment. Still, I am aware that considerable scholarship exists which isolates their complementary efforts and identifies areas of thought in which they held divergent opinions.

89 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 149, from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

90 Ibid., p. 156, from Marx and Engels.

91 Ibid., p. 150, from Marx and Engels.

92 Lewis S. Feuer (Ed.), Marx and Engels Basic Writings On Politics and Philosophy, p. 90.

93 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 149, from Marx and Engels.

94 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 71.

95 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

96 Reinhold Niebuhr (Intro.), Marx and Engels On Religion, p. 65, from Marx and Engels (author's emphasis).

97 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 408.

98 Ibid., p. 43.

99 Ibid., p. 407.

100 Ibid., p. 119

101 Niebuhr, p. 259, from Engels (author's emphasis).

102 George Plekhanov, Essays In Historical Materialism, p. 7.

103 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 89.

104 Niebuhr, Op. Cit., p. 250, from Engels.

105 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 85, from Engels.

106 Ibid., p. 396.

107 Ibid., p. 87.

108 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

109 Niebuhr, p. 218.

110 Martin Buber, Paths In Utopia, p. 83.

111 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 114 (author's emphasis).

112 Eric Foner and Naomi Foner, "Is This History Necessary?," p. 41.

113 Niebuhr, Op. Cit., p. 67.

114 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 147, from Marx and Engels.

115 Niebuhr, Op. Cit., p. 71.

116 Ibid., p. 72.

117 Karl Marx, On The Jewish Question, p. 33.

118 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 95, from Engels.

119 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 154, from Marx and Engels.

120 Ibid., p. 155.

121 There are, however, conflicting opinions expressed in the writings of Engels and Marx about this question -- as well as about many others. This should alert the student of Marxist-Engelsian thought to the realization that absolute consistency of approach is not to be found in the writings of Marx and Engels. Those who claim otherwise are usually the most superficial critics, or the least worthy proponents, of the Marxist-Engelsian approach.

122 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 483.

123 Ibid., p. 485, from Engels.

124 Ibid., p. 8, from Marx.

125 Ibid., p. 432, from Engels.

126 Ibid., p. 76.

127 Niebuhr, Op. Cit., p. 238.

128 Ibid., p. 236.

129 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 408 (author's emphasis).

130 Niebuhr, Op. Cit., p. 263, from Engels.

131 Ibid., p. 70.

132 Ibid., p. 222.

133 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 72, from Engels.

134 Stern, Op. Cit., p. 149, from Marx and Engels.

135 Feuer, Op. Cit., p. 53.

136 Niebuhr, Op. Cit., p. 135.

137 Marx, Op. Cit., p. 13.

138 Niebuhr, Op. Cit., p. 147.

139 Ibid., p. 143.

140 Ibid., p. 239.

141 Ibid., p. 240.

142 Ibid., p. 124, from Engels.

143 Ibid., p. 119, from Engels.

144 Edmund Silberner, "Friedrich Engels And The Jews," p. 331.

145 Marx, Op. Cit., p. 9 (author's emphasis).

146 Ibid., p. 36.

147 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

148 Ibid., p. 2.

149 Ibid., p. 17.

150 Ibid., p. 7.

151 Silberner, Op. Cit., p. 325.

152 Ibid., p. 332.

153 Ibid., p. 337.

154 Ibid., pp. 339-40.

155 Mahler, Op. Cit., p. XII.

156 Ber Borochov, Nationalism and Class Struggle, p. 55.

157 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 356, from Ber Borochov.

158 Borochov, Op. Cit., p. 11 (author's emphasis).

159 Mahler, Op. Cit., p. XVIII.

160 Ibid., p. 298.

161 Ibid., p. 448.

162 Ibid., p. XVIII.

163 Ibid., p. 22.

164 Schappes, Op. Cit., p. VII.

165 George Lichtheim, "Socialism and the Jews," p. 316.

166 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 339.

167 Ibid., p. 340.

168 Ibid., p. 361.

169 Mahler, Op. Cit., p. XVI.

170 Bernard K. Johnpoll, The Politics of Futility, p. 45.

171 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

172 Ibid., p. 218.

173 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 348.

174 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

175 Ibid., p. 476.

176 Ibid., p. 359.

177 Borochov, Op. Cit., p. 43.

178 Ibid., pp. 21-2.

179 Johnpoll, Op. Cit., p. 4.

180 Ibid., p. 27.

181 Ibid., pp. 15-6.

182 A. Leon, The Jewish Question, A Marxist Interpretation, p. 183.

183 Schappes, "The Jewish Question And The Left - Old And New," p. 16.

184 Ibid., p. 17.

185 Borochov, Op. Cit., p. 16.

186 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 19, from Hertzberg.

187 Borochov, Op. Cit., pp. 69-71, Marx quotes William Petty.

188 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 358 (author's emphasis).

189 Ibid., p. 340.

190 Ibid., p. 349.

191 Ibid., p. 360.

192 Leon, Op. Cit., p. 15, from E. Germain.

193 Johnpoll, Op. Cit., p. 63.

194 Ibid., pp. 64-5.

195 Ibid., p. 6.

196 Ibid., p. 66.

197 Schappes, A Documentary History Of The Jews In The United States 1654-1875, p. VIII.

198 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 59.

199 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

200 Ibid., p. 31.

201 Schappes, Op. Cit., p. 171.

202 Lichtheim, Op. Cit., p. 318.

203 Leon, Op. Cit., p. 168.

204 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 344.

205 Schappes, "The Jewish Question And The Left - Old And New," p. 20.

206 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

207 Ibid., Loc. Cit.

208 Hertzberg, Op. Cit., p. 345.

209 Leon, Op. Cit., p. 57.

210 Ibid., p. 36.

211 Ibid., p. 38.

212 Ibid., p. 42.

213 Borochov, Op. Cit., p. 68.

214 Mahler, Op. Cit., p. XII.

215 Baron, Op. Cit., p. 24.

216 Ibid., p. 34.

217 Mahler, Op. Cit., p. 110.

218 Ibid., p. 139.

219 Ibid., p. 292.

220 Rivkin, Op. Cit., p. 205.

221 Ibid., pp. 159, 162.

222 Ibid., P. XXI.

223 Baron, History And Jewish Historians, p. 53.

224 Ibid., pp. 53-5.

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