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*Dekel Peretz*

# ZIONISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

FRANZ OPPENHEIMER AND THE DREAM OF  
A JEWISH FUTURE IN GERMANY AND PALESTINE



EUROPEAN-JEWISH STUDIES  
CONTRIBUTIONS

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Dekel Peretz

**Zionism and Cosmopolitanism**

**Europäisch-jüdische Studien**  
**Beiträge**  
European-Jewish Studies  
Contributions

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Dekel Peretz

# Zionism and Cosmopolitanism



Franz Oppenheimer and the Dream of a Jewish Future  
in Germany and Palestine

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This book originated as a doctoral thesis completed in the year 2020 at the University of Potsdam under the supervision of Prof. Julius H. Schoeps and Prof. Derek J. Penslar.

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To Nina and Ronja



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# List of Abbreviations

CEEP	Komitee zur wirtschaftlichen Erforschung Palästinas [Committee for the Economic Exploration of Palestine]
CEP	Kommission zur Erforschung Palästinas [Commission for the Exploration of Palestine]
DGS	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie [German Sociological Society]
DPV	Deutsche Palästina-Verein [German Palestine Association]
ITO	Jewish Territorial Organization for the Settlement of the Jews within the British Empire
JCA	Jewish Colonization Association
JNF	Jewish National Fund
JOCG	Jüdische Orient Colonisations Gesellschaft [Jewish Orient Colonization Society]
KfdO	Komitee für den Osten [Committee for the East]
ZO	Zionist Organization
ZVfD	Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland [Zionist Federation of Germany]



# Introduction

If we want to win Palestine or another territory with political means or secure it through a slow “infiltration pacifique”; if we hope to find protection by public law as staunch nationalists in a sovereign Jewish state or as cosmopolitans in an English crown colony; if we have more capitalist or more socialist ideas; if we yearn for or abhor the strict practice of ritual law; our next goal, our intermediate goal, always remains the same – in this alone is the factual and nonetheless still existent unity of our movement rooted despite all “disagreements.”<sup>1</sup>

These lines written by Franz Oppenheimer were published in the Zionist organ *Die Welt* on June 23, 1905. The issue began with a report of the Zionist commission dispatched to British East Africa – also referred to as Uganda – to explore the possibility of settling Jews in the British colony under the auspices of Zionism. It was a time of major transition for the young movement, still in the process of forming its program, ideology and very soon settlement practice. The founder of the Zionist Organization (ZO), Theodor Herzl, had passed away the year beforehand, leaving many issues unresolved. In his text, Oppenheimer addressed these open questions while striving to keep a sense of unity within the movement. He did not proclaim his own position, which generally leaned to the second choice in each case. Instead, he focused on what he considered a consensual primary goal: proving to Jews and non-Jews alike that Jews are physically and mentally capable of colonization and nation-building.

According to Oppenheimer, Zionism’s monumental project would require the support and cooperation of vast strata of world Jewry. Jewish success in colonization and nation-building would not only serve as a secular means of strengthening Jewish pride and identity, but also improve the perception of Jewish civic aptitude among European nations. This was the essence of Oppenheimer’s conjunction of Zionism and cosmopolitanism, which attempted to traverse the seemingly unbridgeable gap between the striving for national and cultural autonomy and the wish to be a part of a broader cosmopolitan, albeit primarily European, context.<sup>2</sup> Traversing this gap required a dynamic reinterpretation of Jewish tradition on the one hand as well as intervention in national – in this case German – discourses constructing Jewish belonging or otherness.

This book explores these mechanisms in the work of Franz Oppenheimer and his primarily compatriot Zionist networks, focusing on their intervention

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1 Franz Oppenheimer, “Das zionistische Ansiedlungswerk und der Bezalel,” *Die Welt*, June 23, 1905, 7. All translations from German are my own unless an English secondary work is cited.

2 Franz Oppenheimer, “Zionismus und Kosmopolitismus,” *Die Welt*, December 18, 1903, 2.

within the racial and colonial discourses in Germany. Its research spans an era from the last decade of the nineteenth century until the end of the First World War, in which Zionist dogma was gradually solidifying and Germany was still perceived as a potential partner in the colonization of Palestine. During most of this era, Germany was the headquarters of the ZO – located at first in Cologne after Herzl's death and later in Berlin since Otto Warburg assumed the presidency of the movement in 1911. The Balfour Declaration and Germany's defeat in the First World War put an end to the hopes and aspirations these German Zionists pinned on Germany.

## Franz Oppenheimer's Jewishness in German Historiography

The cover picture taken in 1913 at Merhavia in the Jezreel Valley depicts the workers of the first Zionist agricultural cooperative during a visit of the cooperative's founder Franz Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer stands out in the front row wearing a striking three-piece white suit while holding a Panama hat in his hand. To his right, also with hat in his hands, stands his travel companion and political backer Shlomo Kaplansky. Standing sideways to his left, indistinguishable from the rest of the workforce, is his disciple Salomon Dyk, the cooperative's director. Huddled around them are the cooperative's workers, men and women wearing their best attire and sporting a wonderful array of working-class European headwear. In the back row, hovering, almost looming above the rest, stand two young men at a distance from each other wearing an Egyptian *jellabiya* and an Ottoman *fez*. The caption reads in Hebrew: "The residents of Merhavia with Professor Oppenheimer."

At this point in time Oppenheimer was at the zenith of his Zionist career, if this term can even be used for a man who was never a full-fledged Zionist functionary. Oppenheimer's engagement with Zionism started in 1901 and continued until the mid-1930s, although at a lesser intensity after the First World War when Merhavia ceased to exist as a cooperative. Agricultural cooperatives were Oppenheimer's passion. During the interwar period, he helped establish two cooperatives in the Berlin countryside. His academic career, for which he is far more famous in Germany than his Zionist one, culminated in his appointment to the first German professorship for sociology in Frankfurt in 1919.

Oppenheimer biographies written in German usually focus on the influence of his utopian vision of "liberal socialism" or the "third path" between capital-

ism and communism on post-war German economics.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Oppenheimer's most prominent Frankfurt student, Ludwig Erhard, became the first minister of economic affairs for the Federal Republic of Germany and the republic's second chancellor. Erhard's extreme importance for the establishment of the German *soziale Marktwirtschaft* [social market economy] – in which state intervention aims at creating an equilibrium between social justice and free markets – warranted investigations into the impact of Oppenheimer's thinking on the republic's economic system.<sup>4</sup>

Generally, historians tend to downplay the role of Oppenheimer's theories in the actual implementation by Erhard.<sup>5</sup> Erhard, however, publicly recognized Oppenheimer as a guiding intellectual force not only in his economic program but also as a visionary of a peaceful, democratic and federalist European Union. In a speech held in honor of Oppenheimer's birthday centennial Erhard said: "I recently found out how much Oppenheimer is alive in me as I said in an extempore speech about Europe: what I envision is a Europe of the 'free and equal.' And then as I picked up his [autobiographical] book ... I read and was almost startled to see him write about 'a society of the free and equal.'"<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the jubilee speech, Erhard announced that the Federal Post Office would include a stamp bearing Oppenheimer's portrait in the series "important Germans," adding that Oppenheimer would have certainly approved.<sup>7</sup> Er-

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3 These are the German language Oppenheimer biographies in chronological order: Dieter Haselbach, *Franz Oppenheimer: Soziologie, Geschichtsphilosophie und Politik des "Liberalen Sozialismus"* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1985); Volker Kruse, *Soziologie und "Gegenwartskrise": Die Zeitdiagnosen Franz Oppenheimers und Alfred Webers ein Beitrag zur historischen Soziologie der Weimarer Republik* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts Verlag, 1990); Werner Kruck, *Franz Oppenheimer: Vordenker der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft und Selbsthilfegesellschaft* (Berlin: Berlin-Verlag Spitz, 1997); Bernhard Vogt, *Franz Oppenheimer: Wissenschaft und Ethik der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft* (Bodenheim: Philo, 1997); Volker Caspari and Klaus Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer: Ökonom und Soziologe der ersten Stunde* (Frankfurt a. M.: Societäts-Verlag, 2014); The most recent biography by Claudia Willms is an exception. It too attempts to bridge the gap in the depiction of Oppenheimer's Jewishness, albeit with a different approach. However, due to its publication during the final editing phase of this dissertation it is not referenced here.

4 The Moses Mendelssohn Center for European Jewish Studies in Potsdam published an anthology based on a conference held in 1998 dedicated to the theme; see Elke-Vera Kotowski, Julius H. Schoeps and Bernhard Vogt, eds., *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Franz Oppenheimer und die Grundlegung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft* (Berlin: Philo, 1999).

5 Vogt, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 282–293.

6 Ludwig Erhard, "Franz Oppenheimer, dem Lehrer und Freund: Rede zu Oppenheimers 100. Geburtstag in der Freien Universität Berlin," in *Gedanken aus fünf Jahrzehnten: Reden und Schriften*, ed. Karl Hohmann (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1988), 863.

7 Erhard was very involved in this initiative, Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 173.



hard recalled his farewell from Oppenheimer as he fled Nazi Germany, emphasizing Oppenheimer's Germanness: "He had tears in his eyes as he said: 'I must leave my fatherland now.' Because he felt German. He personified in the purest and noblest sense German spirit and German culture."<sup>8</sup>

There is no doubt that Erhard was right in claiming Oppenheimer would have cherished this recognition of his Germanness, considering how he compensated for the growing antisemitism he experienced during his lifetime by emphasizing his roots in Berlin and Germany. Even after the Nazi ascendancy, Oppenheimer still appeared "infatuated with blondeness" to his friend Albert Einstein who was repulsed by the glut of *Deutschtümelei* [exaggerated Germanness] in his utopian novel *Sprung über ein Jahrhundert* [Leap over a century] published under a pseudonym in 1934.<sup>9</sup> In his autobiography, Oppenheimer wrote: "I truly felt German, but I could never understand why my Jewish tribal consciousness could not be compatible with my German national and cultural consciousness. Therefore, I was never an assimilationist."<sup>10</sup> Oppenheimer purposely emphasized the congruity between different aspects of his identity. In his opinion, this made him neither German nor Jewish but a nonexclusive hybrid of both, as did further aspects of his mosaic identity, like being a born and raised Berliner.

However, post-Holocaust German historians had difficulties bridging Oppenheimer's mosaic identity as an enthusiastic European, a patriotic German romantic, and an ethnically proud Zionist. Their perception was shaped by the collective trauma, responsibility and guilt for the Holocaust. Wishing to free themselves from the grasp of the racial and colonial discourses that reached a horrible low point in the Nazi era, they became entangled in a pitfall of "anticolonialism," which "is dependent on its opponent, colonial discourse, from which it borrows binary structures and the imaginary of absolute separations ... The ideological imperatives of anticolonialism prevent it from recognizing the hybrid realities of colonialism."<sup>11</sup>

Oppenheimer's relentless fidelity to Germanness made the mix even harder to swallow. As a form of *Wiedergutmachung* [atonement], German historiography strived to reclaim Oppenheimer and other German Jews into the German cultural

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8 Erhard, "Franz Oppenheimer" 863–864.

9 Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 157. Oppenheimer defended himself by claiming it was an act of "camouflage through Nordic deviousness."

10 Franz Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes: Lebenserinnerungen*, ed. L. Y. Oppenheimer (Düsseldorf: Joseph Melzer, 1964), 211–212.

11 Russell A. Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 219.

heritage from which the Nazis expelled them. As a result, in the predominantly German scholarship on Oppenheimer, his Zionist and otherwise overt Jewish engagement is often featured as an excursion from his main activity as a social economic theoretician and agricultural reformer.<sup>12</sup> Or worse, it is portrayed as an insignificant deviation from his staunch Germanness.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, for the most part, German Jews did not perceive their Germanness and Jewishness in a diametrical opposition. This was true of Oppenheimer and his generation of German Zionists, and to a somewhat lesser extent even of succeeding generations of German Zionists, who pleaded for a more radical separation between the two identities. Oppenheimer contributed to understanding this symbiosis by introducing an extremely modular sociological model of ethnic and civic identity, which influenced some of the most vocal leaders of German Jewry before the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>14</sup>

This book is not meant to be a comprehensive biography of Franz Oppenheimer. Although there are no full Oppenheimer biographies in English, several great ones have been written in German and can be easily translated into English.<sup>15</sup> The aim of this book is to remedy the shortcoming of these biographies in grasping Oppenheimer's German-Jewish identity. Instead of trying to fit Oppenheimer in presupposed religious and cultural categories, this book contextualizes Oppenheimer's relationship to Jewishness (as opposed to Judaism) in the shifting dynamics of fin-de-siècle Germany. Lisa Silverman suggested "using 'Jewishness' as an analytical *category* ... since, unlike the overloaded term 'Jewish identity,' it might refer only to the analytical framework – that is, the relationship between the constructed ideals of the 'Jewish' as opposed to the 'not-Jewish' – rather than any fixed notions of religion, ethnicity or culture."<sup>16</sup>

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**12** Vogt uses the caption "Exkurs," meaning digression, for the section dealing with Oppenheimer's Zionist activity. Additionally, the whole section is visually distinguishable from the rest of the book by a vertical line; Vogt, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 162–188. Haselbach deals with Oppenheimer's Zionist activity in only 8 out of 185 pages, Haselbach, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 133–141. Kruck did not dedicate any section to Oppenheimer's Zionist activity. In a few pages he shortly summarized Oppenheimer's contribution to communist and cooperative agricultural settlements; Kruck, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 319–321.

**13** E.g., Bernhard Vogt, "Die Utopie als Tatsache: Judentum und Europa bei Franz Oppenheimer," in *Menora: Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, ed. Julius H. Schoeps et al. (Munich: Piper, 1994), 126–127.

**14** Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Self-Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 157–158.

**15** See footnote 3 for a complete list of Oppenheimer biographies written in German.

**16** Lisa Silverman, "Reconsidering the Margins: Jewishness as an Analytical Framework," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 8 (2009): 109.

Although notions of Jewish religion, ethnicity and culture will be discussed throughout this thesis, they are not viewed as predetermined categories. Rather, the emphasis is on how these categories were shaped and altered by Oppenheimer and his social and intellectual circles. Further, these categories are outweighed by an analysis of cultural and social aspects resulting from Oppenheimer's position as a Berlin Jew from the latter half of the nineteenth century until the end of the First World War. Of exceptional interest is Oppenheimer's Jewishness framed within German society's racial and colonial discourses. For this reason, this book focuses on two main spheres in Oppenheimer's life and work: his experience with antisemitism including his scientific grappling with the rising popularity of race science, as well as the practical Zionist intellectual networks he associated with and especially the journal *Altneuland*, which he coedited.

## **Zionism for the Diaspora: Bridging the Gap between German and Zionist Historical Narratives**

Focusing on how Oppenheimer and his Zionist networks shaped an approach to race and colonization that could serve as an interface between Germanness and Jewishness offers not only new insights into German-Jewish identity at the beginning of the nineteenth century but also a new approach to German Zionist historiography in the imperial era. This approach encourages historians to transcend the borders between two national narratives: the narrative of Germany and its colonial history and that of the inception of Zionism.

An important step towards interlinking these narratives is to contextualize Oppenheimer and like-minded Zionists in a period when Germany's colonial and imperial aspirations were peaking. It seems to go without saying that historical research needs to consider contemporaneous geographical, political and intellectual conditions. Yet this basic staple of the historian has been often neglected by researchers of German colonialism and of German Zionism in respect to the correlation between these two coetaneous affairs. It is not the purpose of this book to examine the causes of this neglect. Nevertheless, I would like to make some hypothetical suggestions.

First, Germany did not have a long-established colonial apparatus of the size and quality of France and England. There were certainly fewer Jews active within the German colonial service and, apart from a few prominent protagonists mentioned in this book, research into this matter is sparse. However, the lack of active service within the colonial bureaucracy alone is not indicative of the level of enthusiasm and advocacy of German colonial ambitions among German Jewry.

There were other spheres in which support for colonial undertakings could manifest themselves.

Second, due to the racialist and outright racist aspects of colonialism as well as the ultimate devastation that German colonial and imperial ambitions brought on the Jews during the Second World War and the Holocaust, it retroactively seems unfathomable that Jews could have ever been involved in any way with German colonialism.

Third, the Zionist narrative is shaped by a teleological perspective. The focus of Zionist historiography on the contributions made to building the state of Israel, together with the ideology of diaspora negation<sup>17</sup> – preaching total separation and distancing from Europe – blurred out conceptions of Zionism in which the establishment of Jewish sovereignty did not contradict a continued Jewish life in Europe or even envisioned realizing this sovereignty in places other than Palestine. During the First World War, Oppenheimer and his Zionist contemporaries proposed the establishment of Jewish cultural sovereignty or autonomy within (Eastern) Europe, in remarkable affinity with the anti-Zionist Bundism prevalent in Eastern Europe, revealing the diversity of opinions within early German Zionism. Furthermore, the Balfour Declaration and the subsequent British endorsement of Zionism overshadowed earlier attempts by German Zionists to integrate Zionism into a broader German colonial scheme.

Fourth, further clouding the vision is the tension in Zionist historiography between the depiction of the intellectual origins of the Zionist movement within the context of European nationalism on the one hand, and the conceptualizing of Zionism as an anomaly of nationalism with independent roots in the ethnic, messianic character of Judaism on the other. The international nature of the movement makes it from the start a difficult object for comprehensive study.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, and probably most importantly, the negative association of colonialism with violent subjugation, foreign transgression, and unjustifiable occupation made it an unlikely candidate for integration by a Zionist historiography charged with constructing the national narrative of a Jewish state in a long-running conflict with indigenous and neighboring populations.

Nevertheless, research into commonalities between Zionist approaches to colonization and European and specifically to German colonialism increased as it found proponents within Israeli academic institutions during the 1980s

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<sup>17</sup> For an extensive discussion of the negation of the diaspora and its implications for Zionist ideology, see Amnon Raz-Korkotzkin, “Galut betokh ribonut: le-bikoret ‘shelilat ha-galut’ ba-tarbut ha-yisraelit,” *Teoryah u-vikoret* 4 and 5 (1993 and 1994).

<sup>18</sup> Hagit Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe: The Distinctive Path of German Zionism*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 254.

and 1990s, resulting in what is known as the “historians’ dispute.”<sup>19</sup> Ground-breaking work by historian Derek Penslar helped change the perspective on Oppenheimer and the network of practical Zionists dealt with in this book. Oppenheimer was now viewed as a Zionist technocrat transplanting methods and modes of thinking developed for German “inner colonization,” which were interlinked with German imperialism in its Eastern European provinces, to Zionist settlement of Palestine.<sup>20</sup> Elements of “inner colonization” such as creating farmers out of city dwellers with no prior farming experience, or the use of agricultural settlements as a tool for gaining influence in areas of ethnic conflict, seemed to bear potential for Zionist colonization.

Colonization was the contemporary term often used by Zionist organizations and settlers to describe their enterprise. This was also the preferred term during the postcolonial turn within Zionist historiography. It seemed more palatable than the term “colonialism” with its condemning subtext and the resulting association of Zionism with European exploitations. Furthermore, Zionist historiography sought to circumvent association with European colonialism because such contextualizing seemed to undermine the narrative of a supposed singularity of the Zionist nation-building project.<sup>21</sup> In a sense, mainstream Zionist historiography depicted both the Holocaust and the founding of the state of Israel as interlinked historical anomalies resulting from a third anomaly: antisemitism.

The focus on colonization or settlement practice retained the teleological nation-building narrative of Zionist historiography. Additionally, in juxtaposing German and Zionist colonization, historians assumed a unilateral mimicry of the former by the latter.<sup>22</sup> Since their scope of inquiry was primarily Palestine

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**19** Derek J. Penslar, “Zionism, Colonialism and Postcolonialism,” *Journal of Israeli History* 20 (2001): 84; Stefan Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen: Der deutsche Zionismus im Feld des Nationalismus in Deutschland, 1890–1933* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016), 114–115.

**20** “Inner colonization” aimed at training and settling German farmers in territories annexed by Prussia in the three partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century; see Derek J. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 94–98.

**21** Both aspects were best demonstrated by Ran Aharonson’s attempted mediation denoting the distinctiveness of Zionist settlement as “colonization without colonialism.” See Ran Aaronson, “Settlement in Eretz Israel – A Colonialist Enterprise? ‘Critical’ Scholarship and Historical Geography,” *Israel Studies* 1 (1996): 217–218.

**22** E.g., Gideon Shimoni, “Postcolonial Theory and the History of Zionism,” *Israel Affairs* 13 (2007): 860; For more on the implementation of the concept of mimicry from postcolonial theory in the history of German Jewry and Zionism, see Eva Lezzi, “Kolonialfantasien in der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur um 1900,” in *Dialog der Disziplinen: Jüdische Studien und Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Eva Lezzi and Dorothea M. Salzer (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2009), 449–452.

and not Europe, they missed that Zionists were not only bearers of European colonial ideas into the Middle East, a bridge between West and East as it was described by the orientalist romantics of the time. They were also active participants in the colonial discourse in Germany – with some also active in (non-Zionist) German colonial enterprises – with the purpose of actively shaping it to alter the way Jews were perceived and perceived themselves.

This was perhaps another manifestation of the Zionist creed of the negation of the diaspora conjoined with a negative bias against Europe, which affected not only classical Zionist historiography but also the work of the “new historians,” who were interested in how negative colonialist mindsets as well as practices from Europe shaped Jewish-Arab relationships. They were neither concerned with Zionism as “an attempt by Jews to redefine Judaism’s place within European modernity”<sup>23</sup> nor were they attentive to considerations of how Zionism could benefit continued life in the diaspora. Indeed, shortly before the First World War – and only at the end of the period under examination in this book – German Zionists adopted a dogmatic approach obligating an intention to emigrate as well as active disassociation from German culture and politics of all its members. Yet despite the ideological shift, even in the interwar period until Nazi seizure of power only a small minority of German Zionists immigrated to Palestine.<sup>24</sup> The center of their life remained in Germany.

## New Perspectives: Zionist Entanglement in Imperial Germany’s Racial and Colonial Discourses

In this book, Oppenheimer and his German Zionist network serve as a case study to better our understanding of how the entanglement of German Jews in Imperial Germany’s racial and colonial discourses contributed to the shaping of German-Jewish identity before the First World War. The use of the term “entanglement” is inspired by the image of an “Orientalist web” evoked by historian Steven Aschheim to depict how certain discourses encompass and shape Jewish identity in

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<sup>23</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 115.

<sup>24</sup> Between 1921 and the end of 1932, official membership of the ZO averaged 17,480 shekel payers. In years in which a Zionist congress was held it averaged 21,300. In the same years, a total of 3,306 Jews emigrated from Germany to Palestine with some returning to Germany after a short stint in the country. Emigration to Palestine made up only 8.3 percent of total Jewish emigration from Germany. Inflation and other economic motives both in Germany and Palestine played an important role in the decision to emigrate; Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*, 103–105 and tables on p. 34 and p. 104.

the modern era and how through subtle means they “could be transformed, mediated, undermined or resisted.”<sup>25</sup> Reading Oppenheimer’s autobiographical accounts, sociological treatise and Zionist positions within the racial and colonial discourses of his time helps to unravel the seeming paradoxes of German-Jewish identity molded by those who sought to escape their marginalization through integration in the society that had marginalized them. This is the guiding thread of this book, which is composed of two main parts.

The first part of this book focuses on Oppenheimer’s experience and scientific analysis of antisemitism as well as his position within the racial discourse as an expression of Jewishness. While research into Jewish engagement with anthropology and racial theories has gained popularity, Oppenheimer’s relationship to race science has not yet received worthy attention. By contrast, studies on the entanglement of Jews in the colonial discourse in Germany remain wanting. For this reason, in the second part of this book the analysis shifts from the racial discourse to a wider Zionist entanglement in German colonial discourse. This part begins by examining Oppenheimer’s Zionist views in the tension between political and practical Zionism, palestinocentricism and territorialism, German colonial ambitions and particular Jewish interests. The scope of examination is then broadened to focus on other Zionists with whom Oppenheimer cooperated to provide more context and insights for the analysis in the final chapter of Oppenheimer’s mediation between his Germanness and Jewishness, which is missing in most Oppenheimer biographies.

Because the term “discourse” is understood in so many different ways, it is necessary to take a moment and define the way it is being used here. This book understands Jewish participation in discourses of civil society as a means of acculturation. This follows from Donald Davidson’s understanding of “discursive formations as ensembles of assumptions acquired by those involved when learning a language.”<sup>26</sup> To learn a language is to appropriate the outlooks, worldviews and beliefs behind its expressions, all of which enables successful communication. In the case at hand, this refers not only to German as a shared language

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**25** Aschheim focused on Jewish entanglement in the “Orientalist” and “Occidental” discourses with which the racial and colonial discourses were inherently connected, Steven E. Aschheim, “The Modern Jewish Experience and the Entangled Web of Orientalism,” in *Internal Outsiders – Imagined Orientals? Antisemitism, Colonialism and Modern Constructions of Jewish Identity*, ed. Ulrike Brunotte, Jürgen Mohn and Christina Späti (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2017), 12.

**26** Rüdiger Graf, “Diskursanalyse und radikale Interpretation: Davidsonianische Überlegungen zu Grenzen und Transformationen historischer Diskurse,” in *Historische Diskursanalysen: Genealogie, Theorie, Anwendungen*, ed. Franz X. Eder (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2006), 80.

between Jews and non-Jews but also to the communication within scientific communities and specific social groups.<sup>27</sup>

According to Davidson, discourse should be understood not as an autonomous and predetermined set of rules regulating what can, should or should not be said, but as a broad acceptance of various assumptions about the world which, although seemingly fixed, are constantly exposed to transformative pressures. The process of transforming the intricate network of perceived truths that compose the discourse does not question its entirety – which would destroy the common language enabling communication – but rather targets specific aspects of the discourse. These areas of dissent are the focal points of this analysis because they highlight the discursive transformation that German Jews tried to effectuate.<sup>28</sup>

Since the eighteenth century, Jews actively attempted to influence discourses relating to their civic emancipation. The evidence and arguments brought forth to support Jewish emancipation constantly changed as political ideas and tastes shifted. However, the method of challenging adversaries of emancipation and propagators of Jewish resentment within the confines of the everchanging, dominant discourses remained somewhat consistent. Through participation in these discourses, Jews and non-Jewish advocates of emancipation aspired to favorably influence the perception and acceptance of Jews with the intention of bringing about significant, tententiously liberal political changes.

By the late nineteenth century, the racial and colonial discourses were gaining ground, especially when it came to scrutinizing Jewish emancipation. German Zionists were particularly involved in race science in their quest to restore Jewish national pride and positively reframe the position of Jews among European nations. In the words of John Efron:

Jewish scientists, like their German counterparts, used the language and methodology of race science to craft their own explanations for the distinctions between s and Jews. But race science also provided them with a liberating discourse. In the wake of the perceived failures of emancipation and assimilation, anthropology became an ideological tool to

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<sup>27</sup> Rüdiger Graf, “Diskursanalyse und radikale Interpretation,” 80–86.

<sup>28</sup> Rüdiger Graf, “Diskursanalyse und radikale Interpretation,” 83–84. There are many other conceptions of the term “discourse.” For an example of discourse as a system of rules, see Andreas Frings and Johannes Marx, “Wenn Diskurse baden gehen: Eine handlungstheoretische Fundierung der Diskursanalyse,” in *Historische Diskursanalysen: Genealogie, Theorie, Anwendungen*, ed. Franz X. Eder (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2006), 91–112.



free Jews from the humiliation brought on by the loss of Jewish identity. Race science was, in this context, race-affirmation.<sup>29</sup>

Examining Oppenheimer's treatise on issues of race is extremely important to understand how Jews grappled with their own acculturated identity and belonging to a fin-de-siècle Germany, in which the political discourse was shifting away from the nineteenth century liberal foundations of nationalism to the *völkisch* and racialist mindset of the twentieth century. Oppenheimer attempted to occupy a mediating position between these two worldviews distinguishing him from other, mostly younger Zionists involved with race science.

Oppenheimer's vocal dissent within the racial discourse is of special interest due to his role as one of the founders of academic German sociology. In this initial period, potential members of this new scientific community hailing from diverse academic backgrounds negotiated the common language and premises for this pioneer field. Oppenheimer stood out as one of the most outspoken opponents of the inclusion of race science in the nascent discipline. His training as a physician and economist – two major scientific fields in which antisemitic doctrine was claiming authority – was important for his credibility.

As stated above, achieving discursive transformation prohibits the questioning of the entire discourse and especially its fundamental conviction, such as the existence of the category of race. Accordingly, Oppenheimer did not reject the concept of race or even of a contemporary Jewish racial degeneration but rather positioned himself on the side of those claiming that social causes had a greater influence on race or races than biological ones. He embraced the rise of eugenics or *Rassenhygiene*, as it was called in German, claiming that positive transformations of peoples and races could be achieved within the span of just a generation. He regarded agricultural settlement cooperatives, his field of specialty, as a vehicle for Zionism to achieve the racial transformation or better yet racial restoration of the Jews to biblical glory.

It cannot be emphasized enough that Oppenheimer and his contemporaries did not perceive themselves as total outsiders when participating in the racial and colonial discourses. This generation was reared in German schools and German-speaking homes, was shaped by German literature, culture, media and *Bildung*, and as a result generally thought and acted within German discourses. In the context of the colonial discourse, this meant that German Jews and non-Jews shared images and ideas transmitted inconspicuously through an ever-growing

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<sup>29</sup> John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-siècle Europe* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1994), 29.

corpus of novels, magazines, scientific essays and travel reports dealing with colonial experience and fantasies.

In the latter half of this book, I argue that one of these German colonial magazines was the Zionist paper *Altneuland*. The monthly journal was published in Berlin between 1904 and 1906 and edited by Oppenheimer, Otto Warburg and Selig Soskin. Warburg and Soskin were among the few Zionists considerably engaged in the German colonial service. The underlying thesis of the comprehensive analysis of *Altneuland* is that the magazine's editors consciously designed it as a discursive interface between German colonialism and German Zionism, or even more accurately German Jewry. The journal published essays by Jewish and non-Jewish experts on colonization. It was an expression of the contributors' ambition to gain acceptance in a scientific community geared towards participation in the German colonial service as well as a means of galvanizing support among German Jews for both German colonialism and Zionism. The analysis of *Altneuland* seeks to uncover the shared suppositions between German colonialism and German Zionism. Even more important than the convergences are points of dissent in which the *Altneuland* circle openly contested the paradigms of the discourse with intent to change it.

The network of Jewish colonization experts to which Oppenheimer belonged was highly fragmented and conflicted. They presented a broad array of suggestions for Zionist colonization in Palestine and its neighboring countries. They held diverging opinions on the potential benefits of colonization for the areas of settlement as well as for their perceived motherland Germany. Yet this book argues that in embracing Germany as their motherland, they shared another important objective: namely, that increasing support for Zionist colonization – starting with liberal-minded German procolonial circles – could help redefine the racial and colonial discourses in a way that would facilitate the recognition and inclusion of Jews as an ethnic minority in Germany and Europe. To them, this did not seem like a contradiction of the central Zionist precept of creating Jewish sovereignty, i. e., a Jewish fatherland, because the bulk of Zionist settlers were to hail from Eastern Europe, not Germany. For the most part they never imagined themselves as the future citizens of this new country in the first place. They planned on remaining German citizens and Zionism was geared at strengthening their position as such.

## Zionism and German Colonial Fantasies

This book deliberately focuses not on colonization itself but on the discursive subtext enabling contemporary conversation about Jews as colonizers. To do

so it utilizes the concept of colonial fantasies from German postcolonial studies. German literature precluding colonization helped lay out colonization's technical groundwork. Yet it also laid out the psychological groundwork through colonial fantasies shaping public opinion in the period leading up to actual colonization and in encounters with colonial realities. Colonial fantasies provided a confidence-boosting narrative for those who felt left out. The growing corpus of research on German colonial fantasies demonstrates "how a sense of exclusivity and moral superiority was constructed ... to form part of Germany's colonial imagination and its national-colonialist ideology."<sup>30</sup>

In the era prior to Imperial Germany's colonial undertakings, colonial fantasies offered German writers an opportunity to define and represent themselves not only in comparison with colonized populations but also with other European colonial nations. In the words of Susanne Zantop, whose scholarly works exposed the link between German identity and colonial fantasies:

Above all, by imagining colonial scenarios that allowed for an identification with the role of conqueror or colonizer, Germans could create a colonial universe of their own, and insert themselves into it. Their writings did not just produce "the rest of the world" (Mary Louise Pratt) like those of other West Europeans, but a world with a specific place for the German colonizer in it.<sup>31</sup>

Research into the links between German Jews and German colonialism have until now ignored the important aspect of colonial fantasy in German colonial literature.<sup>32</sup> German Jews were receptive to German colonial fantasy not only due to their Germanness but also due to their Jewishness. The yearning for recognition by other (West) European nations as equals, at the very least, was perceived as a shared historical situation and ambition. After all, by the time the Zionist movement was established, Germany had already achieved political and economic unity. Yet a national inferiority complex continued to manifest itself in German colonial discourse through a sense of anxiety and fear of missing out on the parceling out of what seemed to be the last territories still available for

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<sup>30</sup> Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 8.

<sup>31</sup> Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 6–7.

<sup>32</sup> One exception is Eva Lezzi's groundbreaking foray into the transfer of methods from postcolonial and gender studies such as colonial fantasies to study the unique in-between position Jews occupied in the colonial discourse; see Lezzi, "Kolonialfantasien." This book extends the investigation to a broader group of German Zionists, utilizing the concept of colonial fantasies more literally to uncover situational commonalities, coalitions and convergences between German Zionism and German colonialism.

colonization. Zionists could deploy this inferiority complex to gain sympathy with supporters of German colonialism by portraying Zionists, too, as colonial latecomers. Furthermore, they could utilize the resulting intimacy to depict Zionist colonization as an extension of German colonialism. Being a Zionist could thus be rendered as an expression of both German and Jewish patriotism, opening support for Zionist colonization to broader hitherto non-Zionist circles of German Jewry.

Another aspect lost when looking at history from the teleological perspective is that Oppenheimer and his contemporaries did not know how the story would play out. Until the Balfour Declaration and the ensuing Allied victory in the First World War, it was still unresolved which European power would facilitate Zionism the most. Also, it was not clear whether the Ottomans would ever allow large-scale Jewish settlement in Palestine, what the exact geographic extent of Palestine was, and whether Zionist settlement should be palestinocentric, that is, limited solely to Palestine. When shifting colonial interests provided a favorable opportunity elsewhere, such as in British East Africa, the Uganda plan became a matter of discussion and dissent within the Zionist movement. And this is just one example of how the Zionist movement acted within a broader European colonial framework, an important point of reference when it came to political opportunities as well as settlement methods and mindsets. Although Germany might have considerably lagged behind France and Britain in global influence, it was not unlikely that it would assume the position of Zionism's main benefactor. On the contrary, it was exactly this lack of colonial dominions that made it the preferable candidate in the eyes of Oppenheimer and his contemporaries. They hoped to capitalize on Germany's diplomatic and economic links to the Ottoman Empire and increasing appetite for colonial significance.

As German middle-class academics of their generation, Oppenheimer and his compatriots were extremely susceptible to the allures of participating in German colonial endeavors. For them, it opened a new realm of opportunities to prove that Jews were worthy of citizenship and to demonstrate that there was no contradiction between their German patriotism and their allegiance to their Jewish heritage. German Jews have been striving to substantiate this proposition since the Enlightenment and the establishment of modern nation-states. Around the time of Zionism's inception, questions of national belonging had become entangled with the racial and colonial discourses. As a new national movement, Zionism sought relevancy and legitimacy through engagement in this influential contemporary discourses. Zionism was in a sense a step-child – a subaltern man-

ifestation – of European and German nationalism.<sup>33</sup> German Zionists' sense of alterity was derived and shaped to a considerable extent by the tension between their self-perception of national belonging to Germany and their rejection by their supposed social equals. This tension greatly influenced the complexity and range of positions they occupied within the racial, colonial and nationalist discourses of their time.

Zionist colonial fantasies created a triangular prism through which Jews could carve for themselves an imagined place between Europeans and the peoples of the Middle East. This triangular prism could be understood as what Mary Louise Pratt has called “contact zones”:

By using the term “contact,” I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A “contact” perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and “travelees,” not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.<sup>34</sup>

Underlying the concept of “contact zone” is the wish for a nuanced approach to the dynamics of identity within colonial history. Stefan Vogt, who has published extensively on the entanglement of German Zionism and German nationalism, warned against an oversimplified equation of Zionism with ideologies of domination, racial superiority and national chauvinism that were widespread within the context of European and German colonialism.<sup>35</sup> His caution cannot be emphasized enough in view of the lightness with which catch phrases become utilized in this politically charged matter. This intellectual investigation into how German Zionists acted and reacted within the historical context of the age of New Imperialism should not be misunderstood as either an accusation of complicity or as a defense of the involvement of German Zionists with contemporary political trends and mindsets. Further, this study acknowledges the huge discrepancy between the positive self-perceptions even self-aggrandizement propagated through colonial fantasies and the brutality of colonial realities. However, it does not focus on colonial realities but rather on the level of discursive entanglements. Due to their in-betweenness, many first-generation German Zionists at-

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<sup>33</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 20; Shimoni, “Postcolonial Theory,” 860–861.

<sup>34</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, reprint (London: Routledge, 2003), 7.

<sup>35</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 19–20.

tempted the impossible task of reconciling their liberal outlooks – shaped in the “long century” since the Enlightenment and French Revolution and the meandering process of civil emancipation that ensued and gradually lost favor in general society – with up and coming *völkish* ideas. The latter were a great influence on the following generations of German Zionists.<sup>36</sup>

In their participation in colonial discourse, German Zionists joined with non-Jewish allies to promote an imaginary liberal form of imperialism that would help transform Germany from a parochial nation-state to a liberal, heterogenous colonial empire. It is important to emphasize that this attempted coalition was in no way representative of general attitudes and goals of German colonialism, which was all the more reason for its attempts at discursive interventions. Oppenheimer and other Zionist of his generation continued to act on their hopes for a liberal German Empire as it was expanding eastwards during the First World War. The empire’s demise and the founding of the Weimar Republic brought an end to Oppenheimer’s activities in spheres of potential colonial expansion. Yet even as he concentrated his efforts on academic activity in Frankfurt, he still advanced agricultural cooperative settlements within the framework of “inner colonization” as a means of democratically transforming Germany.

## The Triangular Prism: Challenging the Zionist Narrative

The approach taken in analyzing the journal *Altneuland* is innovative since it implements methods borrowed from German postcolonial studies that have not yet been used in a German Zionist context. Due to this book’s aim of understanding Oppenheimer’s Jewishness in his contemporary context, the comprehensive media analyses in the second part of the book are limited to the journals which he coedited: *Altneuland* and *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*. It would be of great benefit to take the analytical approach initiated here and widen the scope of inquiry to other Zionist and German Jewish journals. The analysis of the latter journal, which was edited by Zionists and non-Zionists, demonstrates how discursive figures propagated in *Altneuland* were later used in a general German Jewish framework. This analysis is a part of the final chapter which further broadens the perspective by examining additional Zionist networks in which Oppenheimer acted such as the Austrian Poalei Zion, with whom Oppenheimer shared an ethnocentric socialist ideology, as well as members of what would later become Brit Shalom. Like Oppenheimer, Brit Shalom members desired a

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<sup>36</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 17–18.

Zionist colonization characterized by harmony and mutual benefit between the Jewish settlers and indigenous populations and promoted binational political constructs.

Dmitry Shumsky illuminated the important role of the multiethnic reality and national conflicts in Prague during the final period of the Habsburg empire in shaping Zionist binational conceptions.<sup>37</sup> Yet, while the prominent members of Brit Shalom originated from Prague, the vast majority of supporters were based in Germany. In fact, apart from Palestine, Germany was the only country with an active Brit Shalom association.<sup>38</sup> As Hagit Lavsky demonstrated, Brit Shalom's ideology was an important expression of German Zionism's unique moral, social and cultural self-perception.<sup>39</sup> Multiethnic realities were certainly taken into consideration by Austrian and German Zionists. Yet this book supplements the theses of Shumsky and Lavsky by revealing a new path of exploration, namely that the adaptation of German colonial fantasies was a further source for the exceptional popularity of binationalism among German Zionists. The involvement of many German speaking Jews in Brit Shalom and other frameworks aspiring for a peaceful Jewish colonization considerate of indigenous populations can be regarded on the one hand as a criticism of their own inequality in Germany and on the other as a point of convergence with the German colonial fantasy of self-idealization as a benevolent conqueror.<sup>40</sup> This thesis illustrates the potential of the postcolonial reading devised in this book to better our understanding of German Zionism.

Critically contemplating Zionism's entanglement in the "Orientalist web" or the triangular prism consisting of Europeans, Jews and Arabs helps shed light on blind spots of traditional Zionist narratives. This are evident in the only monography on Oppenheimer not written in German, which was published in Hebrew by Gezel Kressel in 1972 and spotlights his Zionist activity.<sup>41</sup> As mentioned above, Zionism and Jewishness have played a liminal role in German scholarship on Oppenheimer. Non-German scholarship on Oppenheimer has been scarce, though since the "historians' dispute," he has received increased attention in English-

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<sup>37</sup> Dmitry Shumsky, *Ben Prag li-Yerushalayim: Tsiyonut Prag ve-ra'ayon ha-medinah ha-du-le'umit be-Erets-Yiara'el* (Yerushalayim: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*, 260–261.

<sup>39</sup> Hagit Lavsky, "German Zionists and the Emergence of Brit Shalom," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 667.

<sup>40</sup> Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 26–27.

<sup>41</sup> Gezel Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer: Poalo ha-zioni ve-merchavia ha-ko'aperazia be-yemi ha-aliya ha-shniya* (Tel-Aviv: Yavneh, 1972).

language works on Zionism. Like other contemporary works of Zionist historiography, Kressel's book followed a teleological narrative, culminating in the founding of the state of Israel. Zionism was not an ongoing triangular relationship but an arrow shot from Europe into the heart of the Middle East. Kressel emphasized that Oppenheimer's main contributions to Zionism consisted in persuading Herzl to endorse prompt Zionist settlement and the infusion of universal social ideals into Zionist agricultural colonization. In Kressel's work, Oppenheimer's Jewish identity was not a footnote. His conception of being Jewish in terms of being a social revolutionary was the premise for his involvement with Zionism.<sup>42</sup>

Writing in a period where Zionist dogmas had become solidified and the Arab-Israeli conflict entrenched, Kressel scoffed at two important aspects of Oppenheimer's universal approach to Zionism. The first was that Zionism should mobilize broader circles of sympathizers who did not intend to immigrate to Palestine themselves. The second was Oppenheimer's conviction that Arabs must be included in the emerging Jewish society. Kressel downplayed Oppenheimer's commitment to Arab integration by claiming that Oppenheimer emphasized this only in retrospective, in his memoirs. In line with the Zionist credo of negating the diaspora, Kressel viewed the Holocaust as a rebuttal of Oppenheimer's optimism that a Zionist could strive for Jewish integration in "the homeland-illusion called Germany."<sup>43</sup>

As this book shows, Oppenheimer was not living in an illusion but had a nuanced perception of the legal and social frameworks for Jewish life in Germany. He did not consider Germany to be a full homeland for Jews the way Western countries such as the United States, England and even France might have been. Yet German Jews enjoyed far-reaching civil liberties compared to their brethren in the Russian Empire and Romania. Oppenheimer was aware of the challenges facing full Jewish equality in Germany. He experienced them firsthand throughout his life. It is not for nothing that antisemitism became an object of his scientific inquiry as a sociologist. Nevertheless, he strongly believed in the power of economic and social reform to remedy Germany's political ills. In this sense his whole life work as a scientist and social utopian could be understood as his striving for a future for Jews in Germany.

Oppenheimer's optimism was not immediately stifled with the Nazi rise to power. In a letter to Einstein from 1935 he wrote that he was incapable "of feeling hate against Germany and the Germans for the current consternation."<sup>44</sup> Eventu-

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<sup>42</sup> Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 10.

<sup>43</sup> Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 61–62.

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 157–158.



ally Oppenheimer, too, became a victim of the Nazi rejection of Jewish emancipation and ultimately Jewish existence. His German citizenship was rescinded, and he was forced to emigrate together with his youngest daughter from his second marriage Renata. The exodus led them to Japan and Shanghai, after which they ultimately joined his sister Elise and her husband Georg Steindorff in Los Angeles, where Oppenheimer passed away in 1943. His sons Ludwig and Heinz as well as his first wife Martha had immigrated earlier to Palestine.

This book seeks to amend anachronistic perceptions, such as Kressel's, of German-Jewish identities as well as Kressel's skepticism that Oppenheimer could have strived to preempt the bloodshed before it seriously erupted during the British Mandate. Just because the teleological narrative retrospectively deems a position unfeasible does not mean that it was inconceivable in its historical context. Archival material demonstrates that Oppenheimer was committed to the idea of Jewish and Arab integration during and after the existence of Merhavia, not only in retrospective. The period of Merhavia's existence coincides with the emergence of Zionist adherence to the principal of Jewish labor. Merhavia was one of the first Zionist agricultural enterprises and thus one of the main battlegrounds for enforcing this principal. As the theoretical mastermind behind the cooperative, Oppenheimer could not have avoided taking a position on the inclusion of Arab labor. Hence this is the focus of the section of this book dealing with Merhavia, and not Oppenheimer's extensive involvement in its founding and operation, which can be found in teleological accounts of the contributions of German Zionism to the foundation of the state of Israel.<sup>45</sup>

Oppenheimer was startled by the shattering of the colonial fantasies upon impact with the grueling colonial realities. Nevertheless, he never sufficiently addressed the inherent inconsistencies in the synthesis between universal and national goals that he was preaching. His hopes that Arabs would welcome and even assimilate into a new Hebrew culture echoed the German-Jewish dilemma that he and German Zionists wanted to solve through their Zionist engagement. Abandoning the teleological narrative gives voice to contemporaneous ambitions to use Zionism as a vehicle for strengthening Jewish belonging to Germany. It reveals the complexity of German Zionism's construction of a Jewish colonial and racial identity through which it can renegotiate and communicate a Jewish aspiration for a respectable place among European nations.

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<sup>45</sup> For the most comprehensive account, see Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 68–153.

## Overview of Chapters and Sources

This book strives to improve our understanding of Jewishness in fin-de-siècle Germany through a study of the entanglement of Oppenheimer and his contemporaries in the racial and colonial discourses in Germany. It is divided into two parts. The first focuses on Oppenheimer's engagement with the racial discourse and the second on a broader entanglement of Zionism with the colonial and racial discourses.

The first part is composed of chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 discusses Oppenheimer's professional transition from a practicing physician to becoming a professor of economy and sociology. While the influence of Oppenheimer's medical training on his sociology has already been discussed by his biographers and historians of sociology, his scientific examinations of racial theories and Darwinism have been largely ignored.<sup>46</sup> In his transition period, Oppenheimer supplemented his livelihood by working as a journalist. He published various scientific works developing his practically oriented, social-utopian settlement cooperative and other socioeconomic theories as well as many feuilleton articles, among them several dealing with racial theories and *Rassenhygiene* from a medical and sociological perspective. The latter have hardly received due attention until now.

Chapter 2 continues the analysis of Oppenheimer's contestation of racial theory and antisemitism as one of the founding members of German sociology. Oppenheimer prominently challenged those endorsing the interlinking of sociology with racial theory. In contrast to other Jewish sociologists of the interwar period, his objections voiced before the First World War were heeded and debated not only by a Jewish audience but also by his scientific colleagues. Remaining within the boundaries of the discourse, Oppenheimer did not totally refute the potential of racial theories. Instead, he developed his own conceptions of a racial anthropology oriented towards social class. His arguments that race was dynamic and malleable in the medium-term aimed at imbuing the concept of race with a social utopian horizon. The importance Oppenheimer ascribed to social engineers and technocrats in steering the transformation process prepared the

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<sup>46</sup> Haselbach expounds on contemporary reception of social Darwinist elements of Oppenheimer's sociological theory; see Haselbach, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 31. Stölting also dealt with social Darwinist and organicist influence on Oppenheimer's theory; see Erhard Stölting, "Medizinisches und soziologisches Denken bei Franz Oppenheimer," in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Franz Oppenheimer und die Grundlegung der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*, ed. Elke-Vera Kotowski, Julius H. Schoeps and Bernhard Vogt (Berlin: Philo, 1999), 57. However, neither examined Oppenheimer's grappling with the concept of race and racial theories.

ground for his affiliation with Zionism and its endeavor to transform the Jewish people.

The primary sources utilized in the first section of this book include autobiographical material; articles and reviews published in popular and professional newspapers and journals in which Oppenheimer expounds on Darwinism, population policy, cultural pessimism, Jewish racial composition and other matters related to racial theory; minutes of the meetings of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie [German Sociological Society] (DGS); articles and essays related to Oppenheimer's debate with the sociologist Werner Sombart and Wilhelm Schallmayer, a prominent figure in the founding of German *Rassenhygiene*.

The second part of this book deals with the entanglement of Oppenheimer and his Zionist networks in German colonial discourse. It begins with chapter 3, which traces the events leading up to Oppenheimer joining the Zionist movement and his debut as a keynote speaker at the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903. As a protégé of Herzl, Oppenheimer was often portrayed as a loyal political Zionist.<sup>47</sup> However the correspondence between the two reveals a deep rift on the necessity for securing a charter from the great powers and the importance of small-scale settlement and scientific explorations in preparing the ground for mass immigration. In addition, Oppenheimer's cooperation with proponents of practical Zionism – some were Herzl's fiercest rivals within the movement – further aggravated their relationship. The timing and intended effect of Oppenheimer's presentation at the congress, in which Herzl proposed the settlement of British East Africa, as well as the fact that the practical Zionists with whom Oppenheimer collaborated promoted the immediate settlement of Cyprus instead of Palestine, raises the question of the relationship of Oppenheimer and vast parts of Berlin's practical Zionist scene to territorialism as well as to potential patrons from among the great powers. This relationship is further explored in the next chapters.

The following primary sources are used in chapter 3: the correspondence between Herzl and Oppenheimer, articles from Zionist newspapers concerning the circumstances of Oppenheimer's joining of the movement, other archival material concerning Oppenheimer's involvement in Die juedische Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft, as well as a close reading of the minutes of the Sixth Zionist Congress in which Oppenheimer debuted and was appointed to the board of the Kommission zur Erforschung Palästinas [Commission for the Exploration of Palestine] (CEP) together with Otto Warburg and Selig Soskin.

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<sup>47</sup> E. g., Alex Bein, "Franz Oppenheimer als Mensch und Zionist," *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 7 (1964): 8–9.

In focusing on the period after Oppenheimer joined the Zionist movement, the scope of this investigation widens to include the network of contributors to the Zionist journal *Altneuland*, which Oppenheimer coedited in his capacity as a CEP board member between 1904 and 1906. The methodological approach to *Altneuland* in chapters 4 and 5 is novel. The underlying hypothesis is that *Altneuland* was a German colonial journal. This means that it could and should be analyzed with methods borrowed from German postcolonial studies – more specifically by unearthing underlying colonial fantasies. Although edited by Jews, much of the material included in the journal was written by non-Jewish authors or reprinted from non-Jewish publications, creating a carefully blended composition. On the one hand, the journal sought to introduce the Jewish public to the German colonial discourse; and on the other hand it sought to formulate a distinct German-Jewish (and not only Zionist) approach to this discourse. In addition, *Altneuland* aimed to reframe Zionism as a synthesis of German and Jewish patriotism to enlist the assistance and goodwill of broader circles of German Jewish society for Zionist settlement, and to establish Zionism as an important pillar of a secular Jewish identity. Finally, this book argues that *Altneuland* served as a networking platform for an alliance of liberally minded Jewish and non-Jewish colonial advocates seeking to reform German domestic policy towards Jews through colonial expansion.

After focusing on the *Altneuland* circle, the sixth and final chapter concentrates again on Oppenheimer. Using insights from the investigation of *Altneuland*, this chapter revisits important milestones in Oppenheimer's Zionist engagement. It also deals with other Zionist networks in which he was involved. One of these networks was the Austrian Poalei Zion. Oppenheimer owed his standing in the Zionist movement to his scientific prestige and charisma, but most importantly Herzl's support. After Herzl's death, Oppenheimer either lacked support from a political fraction within German Zionism or was ideologically closer to the Austrian Poalei Zion who included him in their delegation to the Ninth Zionist Congress in 1909. During the congress, they helped him gain endorsement for the founding of an agricultural cooperative in Palestine based on his blueprints: Merhavia. This chapter explores ideological convergences and discrepancies between Oppenheimer and leading members of Poalei Zion such as Shlomo Kaplansky on issues that included Zionism and cosmopolitanism; socialism and nationalism; and the relationship between ethnicities in a multinational political entity and more specifically the ideal relationship between Jewish settlers and the Arab inhabitants of Palestine.

Chapter 6 also deals with Oppenheimer's conflicts and alliances within German Zionism in the context of the rapidly growing intergenerational rift in the years leading to the First World War. The analysis of *Altneuland* in the previous

chapters shows how first-generation German Zionists wanted to win the support of broad parts of German Jewry for Zionist settlement by reframing it as a German colonial enterprise. In contrast, second-generation German Zionists enforced more rigorous ideological convictions, including detachment from German affairs, alienating Oppenheimer and other first-generation Zionists from the movement, not to mention non-Zionists. Once the war broke out, Oppenheimer and other Zionists of his generation seized the opportunity to reclaim their authority and establish a broader alliance of German Jews called the *Komitee für den Osten*. The committee hoped to mediate between German military authorities and Jews in occupied territories in the East. Oppenheimer was one of the editors of the committee's journal, *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*. An examination of his contributions to the journal aims at finding continuities to ideas promoted in *Altneuland* linking Jewish national aspirations with German patriotism. This was most evident in the committee's vision of creating a Jewish autonomy in Poland.

Once Palestine was conquered by the British and Germany lost the war, it became clear that the dream of interlinking Zionism with German imperial aspirations was no longer viable. At the request of Martin Buber – with whom Oppenheimer was often at odds especially, when it came to Zionism – Oppenheimer joined forces with a younger intellectual circle of Central European Zionists for a final intellectual stand against the impending establishment of British colonial rule. Many in this circle would later go on to establish *Brit Shalom*. This final context could form the beginning of a new investigation into the roots of the binational outlook, endorsed by *Brit Shalom*, in the German colonial fantasy of being an anticolonial colonizer.

Primary sources used in chapter 6 are Zionist newspapers in which Oppenheimer explored the tension between universal and ethnocentric approaches to nationalism as well as his socialist utopia; archival and autobiographical material on Merhavia and Oppenheimer's visits to Palestine; essays in *Der Jude* in the wake of the German defeat in the First World War and the end of aspirations to a German hegemony in Eastern Europe and the Middle East; and Oppenheimer's articles in *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*.

# Chapter 1

## The Young Oppenheimer's Utopian Horizon: Socialism, Darwinism and *Rassenhygiene*

### Race, Antisemitism and Jewishness

Until these final chapters [of Oppenheimer's autobiography], one cannot say that this formerly active fraternity member is carrying something like the cross of his Jewishness with him – but then he is carrying it after all.<sup>1</sup>

Franz Oppenheimer was born on March 30, 1864, in Berlin's Spandauer Vorstadt, the city's old Jewish Quarter. Like many of his generation, he grew up in an acculturated German Jewish home. His birth house on Krausnick Street was just around the corner from the grand New Synagogue, which would open its portals two and a half years after his birth. Oppenheimer's father, Julius, was a reform rabbi serving in the Johannis Street Synagogue, Berlin's first reform temple. Hence, the logical starting point for an inquiry into Oppenheimer's Jewishness would be his upbringing in reform Judaism and its ingrained social message.

In his autobiography Oppenheimer framed his major career turning points in the ethical core of his upbringing, which included scorn for "Mammonism" widespread among educated Jewish middle class families like Oppenheimer's.<sup>2</sup> This was a guiding principle both in his initial decision to pursue a career in medicine following in the footsteps of his maternal grandfather, and in his later transition to academic sociology and social reform.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, biographers commonly explained Oppenheimer's Jewish identity by reference to *tikkun olam*, which literally means "to repair the world," and is a central precept of Liberal Judaism calling for positive action to improve the lot of the socially deprived.<sup>4</sup>

Following Oppenheimer's self-proclamations would not be necessarily wrong, but it could be misleading in reference to the centrality reform Judaism played for him. As will be seen in the discussion of Oppenheimer's Zionist inclinations, he was certainly influenced by the universal message of the prophets of Israel, an important staple of reform Judaism. Yet all too often Oppenheimer downplayed the influence of Judaism on his thinking, as in this example:

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Panter, "Auf dem Nachttisch," *Die Weltbühne*, March 1, 1932, 333. Peter Panter was one of Kurt Tucholsky's pseudonyms.

<sup>2</sup> Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 17–18.

<sup>3</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 44 and 69.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Vogt, "Die Utopie als Tatsache," 124–127.

“When I look inwards, I find ninety-nine percent Kant and Goethe and only one percent Old Testament, and even that is considerably mediated by Spinoza and Luther’s Bible.”<sup>5</sup> The fact that his father was a reform Rabbi could have actually had an adverse effect on his Jewish knowledge, according to Franz Rosenzweig who once described Oppenheimer as “this impressive hot-headed person who is so ignorant in Jewish matters as only a rabbi’s son can be.”<sup>6</sup>

In his memoirs, Oppenheimer recounted further sources for his interest in society’s woes. He attributed his political and ethical awakening to philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Leonard Nelson, as well as to encounters with prominent figures in Berlin’s bohemian scene such as SPD politician and anarchist Bruno Wille.<sup>7</sup> Together with his sister Paula and his friend and brother-in-law Richard Dehmel, Oppenheimer frequented bohemian and naturalist circles such as the Friedrichshagener Dichterkreis, also trying his luck with poetry. Like a true naturalist writer, he focused his gaze on the suffering of society’s poor and downtrodden, especially those affected negatively by industrialization and urbanization. His adherence to the methodology of the natural sciences in his sociological undertakings could also be interpreted as an expression of his intellectual proximity to naturalism in a formative period.<sup>8</sup>

Lisa Silverman has expounded on the problem of using rigid preconceptions of Judaism or “trying to fit individuals and events into the predetermined boundaries of a grander scheme,” suggesting instead an analytical approach that “takes into account concerns of contingency, agency and often completely over-

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5 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 211–212.

6 Rosenzweig was a critic of Oppenheimer’s Zionist activity, especially his cooperation during the First World War with liberal Jewish leaders Hermann Cohen and Eugen Fuchs in the journal *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*. After the war Oppenheimer invited to give an introductory lecture at the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus in Frankfurt, founded by Rosenzweig and Buber, for a series taught by his student Fritz Sternberg. The lecture attracted a large paying audience, and Rosenzweig regarded Oppenheimer as a magnet for students. Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Mensch und sein Werk: Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, vol. 2, 1918–1929, ed. Rachel Rosenzweig and Edith Rosenzweig-Scheinmann, with the participation of Bernhard Casper (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1979), 262, 512, 859 and 881.

7 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 125–129. Oppenheimer was close to the poets Detlev von Liliencorn and Richard Dehmel as well as many other artists and intellectuals in Berlin’s bohemian scenes. He was especially involved with naturalist circles such as Die Freie Bühne and the Friedrichshagener Dichterkreis. The latter was based in the Berlin suburb Friedrichshagen. The house of Oppenheimer’s sister Paula, an author of children poems and fables who was married to Richard Dehmel, served for a while as the Berlin meeting point for the Friedrichshagener Dichterkreis.

8 Oppenheimer approached social suffering as a poet, a writer and an urban physician; see Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 100–103 and 121–129.

looked, unconventional or marginal issues – elements that can perhaps better address those unarticulated aspects of ‘Jewish experience’ that may not feature traces of explicit ‘Jewish content.’” Silverman also advised against using the term “Jewish identity,” which she considered to be conceptually overloaded; she suggests instead the use of “‘Jewishness’ as an analytical *category* ... that is, the relationship between the constructed ideals of the ‘Jewish’ as opposed to the ‘non-Jewish’ – rather than any fixed notions of religion, ethnicity or culture.” Such an approach focuses on exploring the perceived boundaries between “Jewish” and “non-Jewish,” enriching our understanding of the Jewish experience within dynamic cultural frameworks.<sup>9</sup>

The prevalence of Jews in medical professions at the turn of the century is a prime example of the German Jewish experience woven into German cultural and social life.<sup>10</sup> Medicine seemed to promise safe and stable earnings, as well as social esteem. However, this was also a time of crisis for the medical profession. The introduction of statutory health insurance and the excess supply of doctors increased competition for more lucrative private patients, aggravating the frustration and resentment of non-Jewish colleagues at Jewish physicians. Since pursuing an academic career for nonbaptized Jewish doctors was all but impossible, many of them turned to clinical specializations that enabled them to set up private practices.<sup>11</sup> Oppenheimer specialized in otolaryngology. He established a private practice, yet he struggled to attract patients. His public appointment as a general practitioner in a nearby first aid post helped. Insufficient earnings – along with his frontline experience treating a woeful Berlin underclass beset by a city undergoing rapid urbanization and industrialization – led him to close his practice in 1896 and follow a new calling as a social economist.

The discipline of sociology was deeply rooted in social medicine. Oppenheimer’s medical background was not lost in the transition but, on the contrary, shaped his sociological stance. The convergence of sociology and medicine in Oppenheimer’s methodology and organicist thinking has already been adequately discussed in the literature.<sup>12</sup> Yet his Jewish perspective in this development has been widely ignored. His special interest in matters of race and the relationship between biology and sociology – as well as his dedication to combating academic racism and antisemitism – bear witness to such a relationship.

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<sup>9</sup> Silverman, “Reconsidering the Margins,” 109–110.

<sup>10</sup> While Jews comprised less than 1 percent of the population in Germany, they accounted for 10 to 16 percent of medical students between 1891 and 1911; 16 percent of physicians in Germany were Jewish in 1900; see Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 30–31.

<sup>11</sup> Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 30–32.

<sup>12</sup> E.g., Stölting, “Medizinisches und soziologisches Denken,” 46–48.



Antisemitism was a formative experience for Oppenheimer. Contrary to Kurt Tucholsky's critic quoted at the outset of this chapter, Oppenheimer's autobiography, completed two years before Hitler's rise to power, is full of references to personal experiences and internalization, refutations of racial stereotypes, and expressions of Jewish pride – albeit not aimed specifically at combating the Nazi party.<sup>13</sup> Tucholsky's recognition of Jewishness solely in the final chapters of Oppenheimer's autobiography, describing his explicit activity during the First World War for the relief of Jews in occupied Eastern Europe and in combating institutional antisemitism within the German military, can be perceived as a further manifestation of the problem of identifying Jewishness with Jewish content described by Silverman. Yet Tucholsky took a more sophisticated position in line with Silverman's approach. In his short review of Oppenheimer's autobiography, he mainly criticized Oppenheimer's apparent vanity. As the “cross of Jewishness” Tucholsky singled out Oppenheimer's relish in his mingling with Germany's military elite and royalty and denounced it as subservience peeking out from beneath the cloak of conceitedness.<sup>14</sup>

Putting Tucholsky's particular definition of the “cross of Jewishness” aside, a sense of its burden is omnipresent in Oppenheimer's autobiography, which can be read as an apologetic defense against antisemitic slander, and at times as a proud manifest of Jewish belonging to Germany. The autobiography commenced with the following words: “I certainly can't claim that I was ‘baptized’ [Oppenheimer used here the Berlin dialect *jedooft*] with Spree water’; but I am an authentic Berliner, even a ‘fully authentic’ one [here, too, Oppenheimer wrote in Berlin dialect *janz echter*].” Oppenheimer played on the tension between not being baptized yet being totally immersed in the local dialect. He hypothesized that real Berliners were not high society in fine neighborhoods, but the social others, the proletariat, at Berlin's furthest outskirts, in the Jewish quarter, and in other less well-to-do neighborhoods. In Berlin dialect these were labeled “Berlin j. d.” an acronym for *janz draußen* [way out] or “Berlin V” meaning *Viehhof*

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**13** Oppenheimer failed to recognize the danger emanating from the rapid rise of the Nazi party and of fascism in general. In early 1933 he considered the emergence of an “anticapitalist majority” of Communists, Social Democrats, and National Socialists as a positive sign. Due to their anticapitalist disposition, he considered supporters of the Nazi party as potential followers of his “liberal socialism” if only they would shake the yoke of the agrarian lobby and big industry. Shortly after the Nazi seizure of power, he tried to win over the masses in his book *Weder so – noch so: Der Dritte Weg!* The book was withdrawn from print soon after. Vogt, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 211–216. Other books by Oppenheimer such as *Der Staat*, *Die soziale Frage* and *Das Grundgesetz der marxistischen Gesellschaft* were banned and burned by the National Socialist German Student Union in mid-1933.

**14** Panter, “Auf dem Nachttisch,” 332–333.

[stockyard] – a play both on the supposedly wild nature of these social outcasts, as well as the nickname for the Jewish quarter’s *Scheunenviertel* [Barn Quarter].<sup>15</sup>

Oppenheimer was famous for utilizing the Berliner dialect in his extremely popular lectures and public talks. The dialect amplified Oppenheimer’s wit, humor and charisma. On occasion of Oppenheimer’s seventieth birthday a contemporary recalled:

My earliest Zionist memories show me an unforgettable picture of Franz Oppenheimer on the podium in front of an overfilled hall promoting with almost fanatical enthusiasm the “Oppenheimerian Utopia” ... “Jeben Sie mir doch endlich das lumpige Jeld!” [“give me at last the paltry money” in Berlin dialect] he called at the end and stormed out. The phrase lived on in our circle as a saying ... it revealed the whole man: the Berliner as well as the Jew.<sup>16</sup>

Besides the dialect’s entertainment bonus, it was a conscious expression of Oppenheimer’s feeling of deep rootedness and belonging in Germany and Berlin, as well as the liberal conception that a shared tongue forms the foundation for belonging. Oppenheimer traced his maternal family’s settlement in Berlin to the seventeenth century and emphasized that his paternal side was part of an old dynasty mainly from lower Saxony and along the Rhine where Jews lived “before the first Germanics glimpsed the stream.” His father’s side supposedly also had Sephardic origins carrying the family name Ben Ari, meaning “lion’s son.” The lion was a part of the insignia of the tribe of Juda and implied the family’s noble descent from the house of David, according to Oppenheimer: “I will not deny that it is not an unpleasant consciousness to be aware of genealogical roots so deep in the soils of historical heroic epochs and to feel an offspring of Goliath’s slayer. Who can still boast such old nobility?”<sup>17</sup> Oppenheimer’s claim to Sephardic lineage was not uncommon among German Jewry and especially Jewish anthropologists who in the time of the rise of race science came to view the Sephardi “as the equivalent of the Jewish ‘Aryan,’ a glorious figure, characterized by his nobility, breeding and poise. He was portrayed as the physical counterpoint to the ignoble Jew of Central and Eastern Europe.”<sup>18</sup>

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15 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 15.

16 Lokman, “Franz Oppenheimer: der Jude,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, March 28, 1934, 17. Oppenheimer’s academic lectures were just as popular, drawing at times an audience of over one thousand people; see Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 80.

17 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 35–38.

18 John M. Efron, “Scientific Racism and the Mystique of Sephardic Racial Superiority,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 38 (1993): 76–77.

Oppenheimer's interest in physical anthropology and racial theories permeated his autobiography. The supposed ignobility of the mixed breed manifested itself in the stereotypical Jewish racial features that Oppenheimer ascribed to himself. He internalized Enlightenment conceptions presupposing racial theory connecting aesthetics and morality, epitomized by notions of classical beauty that idealized facial features above all others.<sup>19</sup> Oppenheimer felt he could never satisfy these ideals due to the inalterability of his nose. He described his ugliness as a baby with large eyes and an oversized nose,<sup>20</sup> adding that even though his complexion gradually improved, he could never attain "classical beauty" since the "famous 'Hittite nose' remained and branded me as a member of a race which was generally viewed and treated with a traditional – and somewhat benign – enmity by the blonde Berliner."<sup>21</sup> As a sociologist and patriotic Berliner, he distinguished between traditional resentment utilized for differentiation between social groups living in close proximity, and the hate and enmity of "subsequent, quasi scientifically founded antisemitism of the upper classes."<sup>22</sup> According to Oppenheimer, scientific antisemitism did far more to question Jewish belonging to Germany than the mockery of Jews by commoners.

While Oppenheimer transitioned from medicine to sociology, he worked as a freelance journalist. He was proud of the diverse subjects covered in his articles, joyfully recalling a remark by Maximilian Harden, editor of *Die Zukunft*, that Oppenheimer shoots at every hare that crosses his path.<sup>23</sup> As a first step on the way to understanding Oppenheimer's Jewishness, this chapter focuses on the diverse issues Oppenheimer dealt with during this transition period – which was also a transition into the folds of the Zionist movement – and how they flowed into his social utopian thinking. An important focus of this inquiry into Oppenheimer's intellectual biography is themes connected with the racial discourse that recurs often in Oppenheimer's articles, because of their importance as an expression of Oppenheimer's Jewishness. Furthermore, his numerous journal and newspaper contributions on the matter, as well as his input at the founding conventions of academic sociology in Germany, have often been ignored in prior research.

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19 George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 10 – 11.

20 While the stereotype of the Jewish nose is widely known, Oppenheimer's depiction of large eyes as characteristic of Jews was not that common. He referred to this stereotype again when talking about Galician Jews, e. g., Franz Oppenheimer, "Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation im Dienste der osteuropäischen Juden," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, May 31, 1901, 258.

21 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 15 – 16.

22 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 16.

23 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 180.

They are, however, crucial to understanding his exceptional position among Jews and Zionists who dealt with racial issues. According to John Efron, “the most vocal and influential Jewish race scientists were German Zionists.” Many of them came from the medical profession.<sup>24</sup> Since Oppenheimer filled both these criteria, an inquiry into his position seems overdue. Oppenheimer began dealing with racial issues as a physician and used this experience to transform himself into a sociologist for whom researching antisemitism was “unfortunately, a part of my [Oppenheimer’s] scientific business.”<sup>25</sup>

Race science, anthropology and medicine were practically synonymous from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Physical anthropologists were physicians who either autodidactically acquired the methods of racial theory or learned it from racial scientists with a medical background. They published their findings on the racial determination of certain diseases and pathological conditions in medical journals. In a sense “the medical profession echoed in the language of science the German’s concerns about the anomalous position of the Jews.”<sup>26</sup> As an expert physician, Oppenheimer dealt with the scientific expression of these concerns in articles and reviews published in popular newspapers, as well as in professional journals. As a Jew marginalized through racial theory, he attempted to fight back through intervention in racial discourse. His subtle repudiations of some of the main tropes of scientific antisemitism – such as Jewish susceptibility to mental illness, sexual deviousness and physical degeneracy – should be considered an expression of his Jewishness.

## From Medicine to Sociology: An Organicist Approach to Utopia

Since the mid-nineteenth century, anthropology has aimed to empirically establish the place of human beings in nature. The assumption was that harmony between natural man and the universe is paralleled by harmony between body and soul, expressed in a manner that can be empirically determined. This led to the founding of phrenology and physiognomy as methods of supposedly determining the personality of an individual or group by analyzing the shape and size of the skull or facial traits, respectively.<sup>27</sup> Even in his earliest articles in popular newspapers, Oppenheimer dealt with these purported scientific developments.

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<sup>24</sup> Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 124.

<sup>25</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 34.

<sup>26</sup> Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 17.

<sup>27</sup> Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 2.

Whereas Oppenheimer was dismissive of phrenology – going through great lengths to prove the inconsistency of its advocates' arguments – he supported physiognomy and the supposition of a connection between bodily appearance and personality. Oppenheimer nevertheless argued that the possibility of inferring from one to the other did not necessarily entail the conclusion that physique and personality were unalterable. On the contrary, he argued that empirical findings demonstrated that even the supposedly inalterable and racially predetermined skull could be shaped at will at a young age.<sup>28</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, both body and personality could be shaped by human effort. Either one could be the starting point for the alteration process, with psychology being the link between these two spheres. It was important for him that this link would not be attributed to a physical location, either in the nervous system or any other body part. Consciousness was the connection between body and character, which made it a term of crucial importance to Oppenheimer's sociological construction of identity and belonging. Ideas introduced into the consciousness through the senses or memory could have immediate physical responses. In a review of the psychosocial aspects of Max Hirsch's medical manual about suggestion and hypnosis, Oppenheimer wrote that consciousness was prone to suggestibility, allowing it to be influenced and shaped by other people's ideas, subsequently affecting even the body. He believed the physician, for example, could apply suggestion therapy, especially when functional disorders of the nervous system had no anatomic sources, to facilitate the body's healing process by strengthening the patient's belief in his own healing power. This concept also formed a fundamental principle in Oppenheimer's cooperative principle of mutual aid. Beyond its advantages for physical health, suggestion therapy was for him fundamental for the formation and separation of social groups and the creation of a shared consciousness transforming individuals into organic society: "Suggestion is one of the most powerful formative forces in the works of human life. It is everywhere the ultimate cause of mass movement in state and society ... Through powerful, inherited beliefs, it transforms youths into to useful citizens ... mellow citizens into blood thirsty beasts. ... it connects people in close blood ties and separates them as lurking foes." <sup>29</sup>

Oppenheimer regarded his medical-social approach as part of a long tradition of physicians-turned-sociologists and -economists starting with Bernard

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<sup>28</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," in *Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Soziologentages*, ed. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag Sauer & Auvermann KG, 1969), 104–108.

<sup>29</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, "Suggestion und Hypnose," *Vossische Zeitung*, January 7, 1894. There are no page numbers in the Sunday supplement.

de Mandeville and François Quesnay.<sup>30</sup> As physicians, they observed how bodily organs acting in their own interest nevertheless provided for natural harmony and furthered the well-being of the whole organism. As liberal social thinkers they viewed society as an organism whose health depended on a stable harmonic equilibrium between all classes pursuing their own interests. This had a couple of implications for Oppenheimer. First, egoistic action was not to be admonished as immoral and corrosive to social cohesion. On the contrary, it was to be fostered as the bonding agent of society. Hence, a harmonic state of society was not characterized by an absence of conflicted interests, but by their natural balance. Second, an organicist perspective endorsed an economy founded on division of labor, since cohesion, growth and complexity of an organism depended on the ability of social groups to adapt and specialize in specific tasks, thereby metaphorically forming different organs in the body. Third, society has regenerative powers just like an organism. A social diagnosis must consider the balance and harmony of organic society as a whole, as opposed to focusing on the condition of any particular social group, class or organ as a point of reference.<sup>31</sup>

Oppenheimer, who especially in his early works was a “flaming supporter of organicism,” was well aware of the intellectual pitfalls of this philosophy. He emphasized that an organicist approach to society was only a metaphor enabling a heuristic investigation of society.<sup>32</sup> It did not imply that societies go through the

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**30** Franz Oppenheimer, “Physiologie und Pathologie des sozialen Körpers,” in *Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 1, *Wege zur Gemeinschaft* (Munich: Verlag der Hochschulbuchhandlung Max Hueber, 1924), 30. Since this speech was given to a medical audience, Oppenheimer emphasized the connection between medicine and sociology. Organicist and medical thinking were nevertheless the foundations of Oppenheimer’s sociological system. Stölting regarded Oppenheimer’s self-portrayal in a medical-sociological tradition as arbitrary, since he could just as well have named many other nonphysicians agriculturally oriented thinkers as his predecessors; see Stölting, “Medizinisches und soziologisches Denken,” 50.

**31** Oppenheimer, “Physiologie und Pathologie,” 30–31.

**32** According to Erhard Stölting, organicist thought always expressed a conservative tendency. However, Stölting regarded Oppenheimer as “anything but conservative” and as free of racist or social Darwinist tendencies. He claimed that Oppenheimer had always distanced himself from organicist analogies despite being influenced by biological-medical thought. Stölting, “Medizinisches und soziologisches Denken,” 43–44. However, Oppenheimer’s relationship to organicist thought was more complex. His dissociation from organicism was certainly not clear cut. Haselbach showed where especially the young Oppenheimer criticized, but also adopted, organicism. Organicism was a too narrow foundation for Oppenheimer’s goal of establishing sociology as an exact quantitative science. He limited organicism’s role in sociology to qualitative conclusions about society, while distancing himself from other organicist theorists. At any rate, his *System of Sociology* bears obvious affinity to organicism. His group theory, in particular, was derived

life cycle of an organism, with a period of youth leading to maturity until old age and decay [*Untergang*] kick in, and every society ultimately dying. He argued that societies have indeed risen and fallen in history but never due to decay. Their eventual demise was caused by external threats or internal pressures. An organicist understanding of society was therefore not necessarily conducive to cultural pessimism. On the contrary, organicism's positive reassessment of the human ego planted the seed to a utopian optimism centered on individual freedom in the economic, religious and political spheres.<sup>33</sup>

In Oppenheimer's utopian vision, the organism metaphor replaced the need for a fixed model of the perfect society. It postulated a natural, primordial and healthy condition of society that could be reached organically. An analysis of the symptoms of society's supposed sickness would discover the source and point the way towards the necessary intervention. The source of society's woes would most probably be external since organic systems usually lose their natural balance through external influences. Once found, the social physician could remove the malign foreign influence like he would in the human organism, thus facilitating society's regeneration to its healthy condition. In Oppenheimer's opinion, the main task of the sociologist was not to postulate the form of the perfect society but to remove obstructions to society's free and natural development. Oppenheimer regarded state institutions as the main culprit of society's woes. The healing of society would require the removal or reformation of those state institutions contaminating society under the auspices of the "tutelary custodianship" of the social physician acting as an "enlightened despot."<sup>34</sup>

Yet the absence of an existing healthy society, of a utopian prototype, impeded the ability of the social physician to determine the normative state of society and judge which state institutions were the cause of the sickness. To solve this problem, Oppenheimer turned to Greek philosophy. He argued that the perfect society needed to be imagined as an ideal primal society founded on natural law or a social contract, as a tool for deducing its makeup and as a normative point of comparison. Yet in accordance with the temporal turn in utopian thinking since the end of the eighteenth century, utopian constructs ceased to be perceived as an unreachable island but instead became a subjective dream of a better future attainable through a transformative "social process."<sup>35</sup>

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from organicist thought and Herbert Spencer's evolutionist sociology. Haselbach, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 36–38.

<sup>33</sup> Oppenheimer, "Physiologie und Pathologie," 32–33.

<sup>34</sup> Oppenheimer, "Physiologie und Pathologie," 34 and 43–44.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Saage, "Merciers 'Das Jahr 2440' und die 'kopernikanische Wende' des utopischen Denkens," *UTOPIE kreativ* 101 (March 1999): 59–60.



According to Oppenheimer, modern liberal and mythical thought followed organicist tradition. Yet these two approaches differed greatly in the ability to accept change and add a dynamic dimension to their utopian society. Mythical thinking was pessimistic. It imagined the growth and diversification of society as inevitably endangering a supposed natural and original community, ultimately leading to its degeneration. Liberal thought was optimistic in imagining the growth of society and political entities within a dynamic “social process” with positive utopian horizons. Oppenheimer viewed Adam Smith as the pioneer of a liberal utopian imagination whose premise was that a small society could grow and develop while maintaining its ideals, if spared from the political violence of the state.<sup>36</sup>

Another difference between mythical and liberal expressions of organicism was that the former portrayed societies or nations as having a unique soul and innate national characteristics. By contrast, liberal organicism traced the sources of national character to political and economic distinctions and not in-born racial constitutions.<sup>37</sup> When Oppenheimer referred to a *Volksseele* [people’s soul], it was in an illustrative manner, attempting to “carefully circumvent the edge of the crater that can drag one down into abysmal mysticism.”<sup>38</sup> When he referred to the saying that a healthy soul resides in a healthy body to describe society, he ascribed to society a normative ideal of health that could be restored through social reform.<sup>39</sup>

Oppenheimer’s organicism was geared towards a utopian regeneration of society. Yet it brought him into the racial discourse of his time in which an aestheticized medical science served as the yardstick to measure races, with superior races (and individuals) considered healthy and inferior ones sick, infectious and degenerate. “The continuous transition from science to aesthetics is a cardinal feature of modern racism,” wrote George Mosse. “Human nature came to be defined in aesthetic terms, with significant stress on the outward physical signs of inner rationality and harmony.”<sup>40</sup> Anthropology and especially the medical fields of forensics, sexology and psychiatry composed the area of transition de-

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<sup>36</sup> Oppenheimer, “Physiologie und Pathologie,” 36. A major difference between utopian and mythical thinking was the former’s criticism of existing institutions; see Richard Saage, *Utopische Profile*, vol. 4, *Widersprüche und Synthesen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: LIT, 2006), 6.

<sup>37</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Nationalökonomie, Soziologie, Anthropologie,” *Zeitschrift für Socialwissenschaft* 3 (1900): 485 and 628–631.

<sup>38</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Unsittlichkeit und Erziehung,” *Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 6 (1895): 596.

<sup>39</sup> E. g., Franz Oppenheimer, “Sport,” *Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 12 (1901): 343.

<sup>40</sup> Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 2.



termining behavioral norms and legitimizing “the distinction between normality and abnormality.” The purpose here was to provide scientific legitimacy for pre-existing conceptions of society’s outsider. “Racism sought to perpetuate medical notions which were based on prejudice, rather than science, at a time when these were slowly changing.”<sup>41</sup>

## Countering Cultural Pessimism and Concepts of Degeneration

Romanticism of nature – and its disruption through rationalism, industrialism and urbanization – was popular in Germany during the fin-de-siècle. It gave rise to the dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* [community and society] fundamental to German sociology in its early stages, which differentiated it from English-language and French sociology, with its fundamental dichotomy of state and society, and imbued it with an anticapitalist overtone.<sup>42</sup> Romanticism of nature also underpinned theories of degeneration and decay which became popular among the educated classes as a means of rejecting progress, liberalism and cosmopolitanism. Instead, they promoted a *völkish* ideology, including a return to imagined national roots and a life lived closer to nature.<sup>43</sup> Although Oppenheimer endorsed the romantic ideals of a return to nature – both as a social economist and as a physician – he also vehemently fought the pessimism and antiliberalism that accompanied degeneration theories. Especially in his early writings he participated in this discourse from a medical perspective.

In a scientific book review for a popular newspaper, Oppenheimer was clearly supportive of William Hirsch’s undertaking to counteract attempts by Moreau

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<sup>41</sup> Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, xiv–xviii.

<sup>42</sup> According to Georg Lukács, the distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* was the foundation of the “new school of German sociology”; see Dirk Käsler, *Die frühe deutsche Soziologie 1909 bis 1934 und ihre Entstehungs-Milieus: Eine wissenschaftssoziologische Untersuchung* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984), 177–178. Käsler brought further opinions on German sociology’s distinguishing characteristics. René König was critical of the influence of this terminological polarity on German sociology; see René König, *Soziologie in Deutschland: Begründer, Verächter, Verfechter* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1987), 86–87. The term *Gemeinschaft* gained on popularity in the Weimar Republic as a counterimage of bourgeois society; see Erhard Stölting, *Akademische Soziologie in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1986), 346–348.

<sup>43</sup> For more on conceptions of degeneration, decadence and decay [*Untergang*] and their effects on Zionist thought, see Stefan Vogt, “Between Decay and Doom: Zionist Discourses of ‘Untergang’ in Germany, 1890 to 1933,” in *The German-Jewish Experience Revisited*, ed. Steven E. Aschheim and Vivian Liska (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).

de Tours and Cesare Lombroso to radically confine the spectrum of mental health to unremarkable mediocrity by equating genius with insanity. Hirsch questioned the capability of science to draw up a catalog of symptoms providing a clear dividing line between mental health and illness. Oppenheimer quoted him, saying “there is nothing more erroneous and unscientific than to assume a so-called normal person and to classify everything deviating from it as ill.”<sup>44</sup> In Oppenheimer’s opinion, this was valid for mental illness, as well as for attempts to infer physical illness from irregular physical traits alone. No individual traits or symptoms could form the basis of valid psychological diagnosis. Rather, one must conduct a systematic analysis referring only to the individual, their complex symptoms and history of psychic prolapses. “Furthermore,” Oppenheimer added, “a very personal taste that may subjectively be the supreme judge in aesthetic questions cannot possibly be considered as an objective supreme judge in psychiatric questions.”<sup>45</sup>

Hirsch continued to deride this obsession with sickness and degeneration as the reflection of an enfeebled mental health community. As a case in point, Oppenheimer highlighted Hirsch’s criticism of the writings of Max Nordau, a neurologist, cultural critic and Zionist leader who believed the modern era to be plagued with hysteria and degeneration, and who viewed metropolises as “sorrowful hospitals.” According to Hirsch there was nothing unusual about the modern age. Collective hysteria expressed in the then fashionable diagnosis of neurasthenia (nervous exhaustion) and superstition has always been a part of human history and was a motor for change. The exaggerated use of the term “degeneration” thus needed to be curbed, Hirsch argued, as there was no statistical evidence supporting the cultural pessimist claim that the modern age was more afflicted by degeneration and hysteria than any before.<sup>46</sup>

Although Oppenheimer shared with Nordau both an organicist approach to society, which advocated the healing power of sport and the creation of a “muscular Judaism,” as well as the wish to protect liberalism and rationalism, he disagreed with Nordau’s diagnosis of society as degenerate.<sup>47</sup> This balancing act was typical of German Zionists who retained a liberal, emancipatory worldview

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<sup>44</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Genie und Entartung,” *Vossische Zeitung*, December 9, 1894. There are no page numbers in the Sunday supplement.

<sup>45</sup> Oppenheimer, “Genie und Entartung.”

<sup>46</sup> Oppenheimer, “Genie und Entartung.”

<sup>47</sup> For an overview of Nordau’s writing on race and degeneration, see Melanie A. Murphy, *Max Nordau’s Fin-de-siècle Romance of Race* (New York: P. Lang, 2007). For more on Nordau’s unique contribution to the degeneration discourse and its influence on Zionism, see Vogt, “Between Decay and Doom,” 80–81

being abandoned in the society around them, and made futile attempts to reconcile them with up and coming *völkisch* conceptions.<sup>48</sup> However, their attempts to renegotiate these irreconcilable ideological differences enabled Oppenheimer and Nordau to remain relevant within the framework of contemporary racial-scientific discourse in which medicine and society were interlinked.

Oppenheimer questioned the hypothesis that the increased frequency of mental illness resulted from a corrupting influence of culture. In an article published in a medical journal in 1900, he claimed that statistics demonstrating an increase offered no clue as to the causes or solutions of this complex phenomena. Yet he conceded that mental illness might, indeed, be one of many victims in “the war of civilization against barbarism.” In the civilizing process, he argued, traditional law was replaced with one founded on reason and technology. Such a vast process was beneficial overall but not without shortcomings and victims. For example, it brought suffering to the colonized indigenous peoples and hunger to craftsmen competing against modern industry.<sup>49</sup>

Oppenheimer argued that when focusing on the psychological effects of the civilizing process, both positive and negative effects need to be weighed out against each other. He presented such a balance drawn up by renowned psychiatrist and neurologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing, one of the main advocates of diagnosing neurasthenia in Germany. Krafft-Ebing clearly blamed modern civilization for the rising frequency of mental illness and degeneration. Nevertheless, he considered this a small price to pay for the tremendous contribution of civilization towards the evolution of humankind. Oppenheimer emphasized Krafft-Ebing's opinion that the most devastating result of modern civilization was the creation of metropolises, as well as the obsession with wealth and luxury resulting in cut-throat capitalist competition. Yet he disagreed with Krafft-Ebing's pessimist prognosis that the symptoms will only be aggravated in the future. Oppenheimer argued that metropolises were not a unique phenomenon of modern times. They already existed in antiquity, built on the backs of slaves. Modern industrial slavery has led to their contemporary recurrence. The inexistence of metropolises between antiquity and the modern era gave Oppenheimer cause for cultural optimism. It seemed to him that they were not caused by linear cultural accumulation but were rather symptoms of a temporary phase or crisis.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 17–18.

<sup>49</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Kultur und Geisteskrankheit,” *Die medicinische Woche*, September 24, October 1, October 8, October 15, 1900, 381.

<sup>50</sup> Oppenheimer, “Kultur und Geisteskrankheit,” 381.

Crisis, another term out of the medical lexicon,<sup>51</sup> was not all negative for Oppenheimer. He saw it as nature's way of calling the physician's attention to the source of the problem. The social physician Oppenheimer located the crisis in modern industrial slavery, which aligned him with Marxist influenced socialists of his time. Yet Oppenheimer critically differed in focusing not on the urban proletariat but on a rural one whose migration to cities fueled the growth of the urban proletariat. The migration of rural workers was mainly caused by the obstruction of land through large manor holdings which he called *Bodensperre* [land enclosure]. Once this economic protectionism favoring gentry manor holders – enforced by the brute political power of the state – was removed, a natural healing process would begin, and the flow of migration would be reversed. The urban proletariat would return to the countryside as free farmers toiling on their own lands.

In his view, tealing society would thus not require a revolution or even political reform. The main tool facilitating this process would be the creation of cooperative agricultural settlements, which Oppenheimer called *Siedlungsgenossenschaften* [settlement cooperatives]. Not only would these assist in reversing migration from the cities to the countryside; they would also start a snowball reaction by attracting farmers from the large manors through higher wages and the promise of independence. They would further aggravate the shortage of labor on large manors, eroding their profitability and resulting in the eventual downfall of this “remainder of the old feudalism.” The anarcho-capitalist leaning, liberal-socialist Oppenheimer believed that with the abolishment of land enclosure the last hurdle to the creation of a truly free market would be lifted. The class of large manor holders, which Oppenheimer considered the most dangerous foreign element to the social organism, would be “social-hygienically extruded.” With the victory of the rural proletarian class the last stages in the regeneration of society could unfold, culminating in a social utopia in which it would not be necessary to choose between freedom and equality, or between liberalism and socialism.<sup>52</sup>

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51 Stölting, “Medizinisches und soziologisches Denken,” 44.

52 Oppenheimer, “Kultur und Geisteskrankheit,” 391–397.

## Interpreting Darwinist Evolution between Socialism and *Rassenhygiene*

Oppenheimer's reference to hygiene quoted at the end of the last section contextualized his position within an area of convergence of various threads of utopian and scientific thought at the closing years of the nineteenth century. The hygienic discourse shaped Oppenheimer's transition from medicine to sociology, as well as to utopian socialism. He wrote, "hygiene is a sociological discipline and, as such, closely related to national economy." Public and private hygiene presented a technocratic administrative task requiring cooperation between various experts: physicians, engineers, architects and administrators.<sup>53</sup> For Oppenheimer the career of Rudolph Virchow – who set out as a pathologist to research typhus in Silesia and Bavaria and returned as a politician demanding urgent social reforms – embodied the political imperatives of the hygienic discourse.

Oppenheimer was fascinated with Virchow for a variety of reasons. First, he regarded Virchow's cell research as groundbreaking and fundamental for organicist thought. Second, Virchow fulfilled Oppenheimer's definition of scientific genius, due to his ability to fuse different fields of science together into a new "higher" field. This was an enormous contribution to what Oppenheimer perceived as the ultimate goal of science: the integration of all its disciplines into one system. In order to advance this goal Oppenheimer focused on synthesizing biology with sociology. Finally, due to his experience as urban physician Oppenheimer shared Virchow's conviction that social conditions facilitated the spread of many epidemics such as tuberculosis. Oppenheimer argued that a physician's task must be broadened from the focus on healing individuals to the healing of society.<sup>54</sup> For this purpose, Virchow founded social medicine with hygiene as its main tool, striving "to ensure the best possible development of already existing traits ... by creating a highly favorable environment or living conditions for a given population."<sup>55</sup> Oppenheimer called hygiene "the art of the 'medical statesman'" or, in other words, practical sociology.<sup>56</sup>

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53 Franz Oppenheimer, "Buchbesprechung von Dr. A. Gottstein, Geschichte der Hygiene im 19. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Socialwissenschaft* 4 (1901): 763–764.

54 Franz Oppenheimer, "Rudolph Virchow," in *Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 2, *Soziologische Streifzüge* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1927), 327–329 and 334–338.

55 Sheila Faith Weiss, *Race Hygiene and National Efficiency: The Eugenics of Wilhelm Schallmayer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 121. By the 1890s, Virchow's comprehensive understanding of social hygiene was replaced by a narrower focus on bacteriology. This ensued from Robert Koch's astounding discovery of tuberculosis and cholera bacilli in 1882 and 1883, respectively. See Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 17–18.

Social medicine's sudden popularity at the end of the nineteenth century gave rise to new disciplines such as *Sozialhygiene*, a precursor to public health, and *Rassenhygiene*, the German terms for eugenics. Oppenheimer was at first positively inclined towards *Rassenhygiene*. He was full of praise for Alfred Ploetz who coined the name *Rassenhygiene*, though he felt Ploetz was overzealous in the centrality attributed to the new theory.<sup>57</sup> In contrast to English eugenics, German *Rassenhygiene* was a discourse in which the participation of physicians was predominant. It was then a developing and increasingly specializing field of medicine, and one which presented a source of self-criticism on the possibly adverse role that medicine played in evolution by supporting the sick and weak.<sup>58</sup>

Oppenheimer did not rule out social Darwinist arguments concerning the negative effects of medical intervention, of *Sozialhygiene*, on "biological fitness." In fact, he admitted that – besides its clear benefits for the working class – medical progress may have encumbered the advances of *Rassenhygiene* by decreasing infant mortality rates, thus allowing many "inferior" elements of society to reach a reproductive age. According to Oppenheimer, one of the most important contributions of *Rassenhygiene* to medicine was the positive connotation it gave some diseases, due to their eugenic "sociological" benefits.<sup>59</sup> With this newfound appreciation for disease, Oppenheimer tapped into an important common denominator between neurologists and psychiatrists, on one side, and eugenicists on the other. To put it another way, the theory of the hereditary origin of neurasthenia and degeneration helped relieve physicians of performance pressures, as the medical establishment had, to that point, lacked any therapeutic success with "Imperial Germany's nonproductive or otherwise dangerous elements: the insane, the criminal, the feeble-minded, the homosexual and the alcoholic." Consequently, these groups were collectively labeled as degenerates whose treat-

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56 Franz Oppenheimer, "Rudolph Virchow," 335 and 338.

57 Oppenheimer, "Kultur und Geisteskrankheit," 382. Oppenheimer was referring to Alfred Ploetz's *Die Tüchtigkeit unsrer Rasse und der Schutz der Schwachen*, Berlin 1895. Oppenheimer misquoted the title as *Die Züchtung unserer Rassen*, using the plural form "races" and replacing the word "efficiency" with the word "breeding," which fit in better with his argumentation. It is important to note that Oppenheimer advocated for *Rassenhygiene* at a time when Ploetz's book had not yet received much attention. Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 178, footnote 1.

58 Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll and Kurt Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene: Geschichte der Eugenik und Rassenhygiene in Deutschland* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), 36–38.

59 E. g., Oppenheimer, "Kultur und Geisteskrankheit," 382–384; Oppenheimer, "Buchbesprechung von Dr. A. Gottstein," 764.

ment was agglomerated under the “social question,” as it was called, together with others uprooted and pauperized as a result of the industrial revolution.<sup>60</sup>

Oppenheimer did however criticize the lack of empirical evidence concerning hereditary transmission of mental illness. He distanced himself from the negative approach of *Rassenhygiene* advocates who, by extending the hygienic principle to the political sphere, tended to focus on the reduction of offspring from people with supposedly inferior genetics. Oppenheimer preferred the positive approach of English eugenics, whose founder, Francis Galton, aimed to increase the production of offspring from people with supposedly superior genetics, and assist in the development of presumed superior mental capacities.<sup>61</sup> With this approach to *Rassenhygiene*, Oppenheimer attempted to rebut Krafft-Ebing's cultural pessimism. He argued that human mental capacities were not strained, but rather advanced by industrialization and civilization. However, he also thought that the shift in urban life from physical to mental labor disturbed the balance between the steadily advancing mind and the neglected body, causing a rise in mental illnesses. In places like factories where physical labor remained strong, machines and the division of labor made work monotonous and repetitive: the body as a whole was not activated, only the mind or specific body parts. Oppenheimer endorsed gymnastics and noncompetitive sport as a remedy to the side effect of physical degeneration. In the Jewish context, gymnastics were the key for balancing Jewish lopsided intellectualism, especially in Eastern Europe. This connected Oppenheimer with other Zionist thinkers such as Max Nordau who called for the creation of “muscular Judaism.” Yet this was crucial for the entire urban proletariat to which most Eastern European Jews belonged. He considered the growing popularity of physical training in the industrial era as proof of nature's organic healing powers and natural striving for equilibrium and harmony.<sup>62</sup>

Oppenheimer also criticized eugenic schemes of human breeding. In his opinion, the goal of *Rassenhygiene* was not to restore an “Aryan” body idealized in the presumed gigantic dimensions of Teutonic antiquity, but rather to support the ultimate evolutionary goal of mind development by strengthening the body. Human breeding programs were bound to fail, due to their misjudged focus on what they defined as desirable traits, thus neglecting a holistic breeding approach. A successful endeavor should be attentive to nature's balancing power

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<sup>60</sup> Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 21–22. For an in-depth theoretical and statistical study of the social question with special focus on Oppenheimer, see Kruck, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 36–67.

<sup>61</sup> Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*, 38–39; Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 80.

<sup>62</sup> Oppenheimer, “Kultur und Geisteskrankheit,” 382–384.



disclosed by nature's tendencies, as well as the complex heredity and social influences on the breeding process.<sup>63</sup>

At its inception some of the main adherents of *Rassenhygiene* were not necessarily openly antisemitic. For example, in his early writings Ploetz objected to the association of *Rassenhygiene* with antisemitism. He ascribed a positive role to Jews and miscegenation. With his turn towards racial purity, he revised this view. In 1911, Ploetz cofounded a secret "Nordic Ring" within the German society for *Rassenhygiene* and other pro-Aryan and antisemitic *völkisch* organizations. Wilhelm Schallmayer, cofounder of *Rassenhygiene*, also opposed racist interpretations of *Rassenhygiene* and support from within its ranks for Aryan supremacy. In his opinion, class differences made more of an impact than racial ones.<sup>64</sup> Both Schallmayer and Ploetz linked *Rassenhygiene* with socialism, regarding capitalism and class privilege as detrimental to sexual selection. Oppenheimer and other leaders of German socialism shared with the main proponents of *Rassenhygiene* the faith in progress that natural sciences would provide a better future for the working class and further the scientific foundation for dismantling class privilege.<sup>65</sup>

Some time earlier, in 1877, Ernst Haeckel, one of the main Darwinist apostles in Germany, sought to drive a wedge between Darwinists and Social Democrats by publicly rejecting this association in a public debate with Virchow. In 1900, the industrialist Friedrich Alfred Krupp initiated and sponsored a competition that to prove socialism and Darwinism were incompatible, and that Darwinism was not a threat to the state but, on the contrary, crucial to its preservation in being applied in population management. Haeckel agreed to preside over this competition, which was won by Schallmayer with his book *Vererbung und Auslese* [Heredity and selection]. Haeckel's endorsement of Schallmayer endowed *Rassenhygiene* with the aura of being the official representative of social Darwinism in Germany.<sup>66</sup>

Oppenheimer's medical and socialist background informed his view of Darwin's scientific acumen. He admired Darwin and opposed what he perceived as a misappropriation of his writings.<sup>67</sup> Oppenheimer caught on to the conservative bias of the Krupp competition and joined the chorus of critics of Schallmayer's winning treatise, which later became, in a revised edition, the standard eugenic

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63 Oppenheimer, "Kultur und Geisteskrankheit," 382–384.

64 Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*, 91–102; Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 148–149.

65 Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*, 103–112.

66 Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*, 113–120; Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 64–89.

67 Franz Oppenheimer, *Freiland in Deutschland* (Berlin: W. F. Fontane, 1895), 35.



textbook in Germany.<sup>68</sup> The competition required all participants to take an interdisciplinary approach linking politics, biology, sociology and other disciplines. The critics, including Oppenheimer, who published not one but two reviews in popular newspapers, repudiated this encroachment into their fields and the subsequent intellectual superficiality it allegedly produced. Oppenheimer emphasized that Schallmayer underestimated the cultural and material influences of socioeconomic conditions in racial evolution such as nutrition, housing and treatment, thus failing in his attempts to distance himself from racial theorists.<sup>69</sup>

Schallmayer responded that his subject matter was social biology and the problem of degeneration, and not socioeconomic themes. He rejected Oppenheimer's allegation that this was due to a lack of exposure to socioeconomic literature on land reform. After all, he dedicated a part of his work to an analysis of land reform in China. He simply did not concur with Oppenheimer's view that once all people are sufficiently nourished and free the problems of selection will become superfluous. Oppenheimer's contention only reinforced his conviction that the founding of the new discipline *Rassenhygiene* was necessary.<sup>70</sup> This new discipline needed to be distinguishable from social anthropology, public hygiene and social theory. Most of Schallmayer's critics came from these fields. In order to distinguish *Rassenhygiene* from social anthropology, a term used at the time for racial theorists working "to provide a scientific legitimation for ideologies of Aryan supremacy," Schallmayer preferred Germans use the term "Eugenik" or at least "Rassehygiene" with race in the singular, instead of plural, form. This was, however, futile since the term "Rassenhygiene," coined by Ploetz, was already in circulation.<sup>71</sup>

While openly distancing himself from racial theorists, Schallmayer wished for cooperation between eugenicists and public hygienists. Initially, the main conflict was over the accusation that public hygienists promote counterselection through their success at decreasing infant mortality, thus harming the overall strength and vitality of the nation. Schallmayer emphasized that no eugenicist was calling for an end to public hygiene. Rather, a delineation of the methods, scope and focus of the two fields – and the recognition of the two fields as in-

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<sup>68</sup> Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 74 and 90–125 for a full account of the critics.

<sup>69</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, "Darwinistische Soziologie," *Die Zeit (Wien)*, December 24, 1903, 8; Franz Oppenheimer, "Vererbung und Auslese," *Der Tag*, December 12, 1903, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Wilhelm Schallmayer, *Beiträge zu einer Nationalbiologie: Nebst einer Kritik der methodologischen Einwände und einem Anhang über wissenschaftliches Kritikerwesen* (Jena: Hermann Costenoble, 1905), 226 and 233–238.

<sup>71</sup> Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 92–104.

dependent disciplines at an even status level – would be the most beneficial for the necessary cooperation “in a larger overarching ‘biological policy’ or ‘national biology’ – a systematic program to upgrade the biological fitness of the nation.” Yet the goal, according to Schallmayer, should be determined by *Rassenhygiene*.<sup>72</sup>

The strategy of cooperation through separation was also employed by Ploetz to deal with conflicts between social and eugenic policy. Like Schallmayer, Ploetz was an opponent of liberal free market capitalism and Darwinist interpretations that supported it, preferring a scientifically founded state socialism. According to Ploetz, the solution to this conflict of interests was to recognize the primacy of the biological over the economic perspective. Once heredity laws were understood and acted upon, the struggle for existence in the form of capitalist selection would not be necessary at all. Social policy could be enacted without the risk of long-term damage to the biological constitution of the nation through overproportionate support for the innately “unfit.”<sup>73</sup> In his reply to Oppenheimer, Schallmayer quoted the zoologist Heinrich Ernst Ziegler, who was one of the three judges in the Krupp competition, to vouch for his “tendency to a socialism corresponding to the inclination of our time” and focusing on individual dispositions, instead of on a “socialism soliciting the favor of the masses.”<sup>74</sup>

Schallmayer called for a fusion of social sciences with natural sciences, whereby biology would be the foundation.<sup>75</sup> Oppenheimer, who also proposed connecting biology and sociology with the goal of uniting all science, accused Schallmayer of arbitrarily picking and choosing biological theories of descent. Oppenheimer took especially strong umbrage at Schallmayer’s rejection of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics and at the adaptation of August Weismann’s emphasis on selection and limitation of evolution to variations in hereditary substance. He accused Schallmayer of being driven by ideology, since he lacked biological expertise beyond his medical training.<sup>76</sup> Oppenheimer was greatly influenced by neo-Lamarckism, which was at its climax in popularity. Lamarck’s inheritance theory was crucial for Op-

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72 Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 114–125, citation on p. 123.

73 Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 104–114.

74 Schallmayer, *Beiträge zu einer Nationalbiologie*, 235.

75 Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 84 and 104–114.

76 Oppenheimer, “Darwinistische Soziologie,” 8; Oppenheimer, “Vererbung und Auslese,” 2. The rules of the competition practically required the participants to choose between Lamarckism and Weismannism. See Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 69 and 77.

penheimer's understanding of race as dynamic and malleable within the span of one or two generations, which he called "plasticity of race."<sup>77</sup>

Like Schallmayer, Oppenheimer believed in the importance of the struggle for existence in a moderate climate for an optimal evolution of a people through Darwinist "adaptation." Yet Oppenheimer's arguments for the advantages of a moderate climate were of a technological nature, whereas, as a proponent of Weismann, Schallmayer was concerned about extreme weather damaging the germ-plasm containing the hereditary substance.<sup>78</sup> Oppenheimer considered climate to be the educator of humanity and the sole adversary of the struggle for existence. In his opinion, all humans descended from a common forefather in a tropical land full of apes. This forefather was not the biblical creation but a man with very limited reason. Human evolution was first and foremost an evolution of the mind. Consequently, Oppenheimer understood civilization in a technical sense. The human being was, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, a "tool-making animal."<sup>79</sup>

Oppenheimer's perspective on evolution and civilization was fundamentally Eurocentric. The balance between creativity and motivation to work was best when climate-induced hardship and volatility existed in a moderate form. Most regions of the world were either too fruitful, making hard work superfluous, or too harsh, making hard work unrewarding. Europe was exceptional in its optimal balance. The young Oppenheimer recognized early technological accomplishments such as fire making, weapons and canoes originating outside of Europe. Yet it did not deter him from asserting European evolutionary supremacy. He was a socialist utopian protecting the underprivileged, and yet his defense of "primitives" facing an overpowering "tropical nature that still today often mocks the domination power of the white man" was not without a patronizing note.<sup>80</sup> Further, Oppenheimer argued that extreme weather and diets had made Eskimos and Africans into "'passive' rather than 'active races,' whose history is world history" deprived of "candidacy for something better."<sup>81</sup> Oppenheimer propagated the idea that belonging to a historical people meant being colonial, an important convergence of the racial and colonial discourses.<sup>82</sup>

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77 For more on Oppenheimer's concept of "plasticity of race," see chapter 2.

78 For more on Weismann's influence on Schallmayer's theories, see Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 115–120.

79 Franz Oppenheimer, "Der Einfluss des Klimas auf den Menschen," *Reclams Universum*, April 20, 1899, 1822.

80 Oppenheimer, "Der Einfluss des Klimas," 1823–1824

81 Oppenheimer, "Der Einfluss des Klimas," 1827.

82 Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 113.

Oppenheimer explained that climate changes forced Europe's forefathers out of tropical regions to Asia where new civilizations, technologies and organizational systems, with slavery being the most important, were created. New waves of immigrations of their former kinsmen – now disparaged as barbarian invasions – paved the path to Europe. This was “a new step in the development of the human race, until now the largest and most important.” The moderate climate of Europe “hardens the human being but does not annihilate it.” Europe's soil “demands hard work but is also worthwhile.” The most unique development brought forth by the settlement of Europe was “for the first time a powerful separation into distinct tribes, who have never lost the consciousness of being sons of a people.” The competition between these tribes prevented the creation of a central power with its tendency to exploitation and slavery.<sup>83</sup>

Oppenheimer's early evolutionary treatises already contained the foundation of his identity theory, which elucidated the tension between a “tribal” or national consciousness of origin on the one side, and European cohesion, on the other, as well as his faith in a decentralized Europe proud of its regional idiosyncrasies. Oppenheimer's Germanophile vein was also revealed here in the claim that humanity has reached its highest point with the Teutons. Yet Oppenheimer made another identity-revealing remark regarding waves of Eastern European immigration, especially of Jews fleeing pogroms that were taking place at the time he was writing. He posited that Slavs were different – because they were not formed by a (Western) European climate, but by one similar to the Asian steppe – and therefore that their barbaric invasions no longer posed a threat. Western European culture was simply too strong to be overrun. On the contrary, Western European culture could progress when

[t]hat, which the wild natural selection of nature in the struggle for survival began is continued by deliberate natural selection of man ... so high can the race someday stand that evolves beyond itself through deliberate natural selection of man: Germanic warrior strength and Hellenic beauty, Gallic spirit and German profundity. That is the “*Übermensch*” of which we dream.<sup>84</sup>

It is important to note that Oppenheimer's “deliberate natural selection” did not aim to protect Teutonic blood from invaders and sanctify race as a glorious past; rather, it sought to understand Darwinism as a continuous and positive process of evolution and miscegeny merging supposed positive characteristics of different (European) peoples, with race as a promise for a common European future.

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<sup>83</sup> Oppenheimer, “Der Einfluss des Klimas,” 1825–1827.

<sup>84</sup> Oppenheimer, “Der Einfluss des Klimas,” 1828.

## Population Policy and Oppenheimer's Settlement Cooperative

Comparisons between the birthrates of one's own *Volk* with adjacent, competing ones was another important theme of cultural pessimism and the degeneration discourse conjoined with racial theories. Both decreasing and increasing birthrates could be, and were, interpreted as foreshadowing an imminent extinction.<sup>85</sup> Thus population policy became a contested field for technocratic intervention. Oppenheimer grappled not only with social Darwinists, but also with Malthusian and neo-Malthusianism theory in his attempt to correct the prevalent German interpretation of Darwin's struggle for existence. In his population theory, Thomas Robert Malthus postulated that while population grows exponentially, the growth in sustenance remains linear, resulting in catastrophic cyclic corrections. Oppenheimer regarded this theory as a wrong turn towards misunderstanding evolution, and criticized it in his book *Das Bevölkerungsgesetz des T.R. Malthus und der neueren Nationalökonomie: Darstellung und Kritik* [The Population law of T. R. Malthus and recent theories in national economics: exposition and critique].

From its inception in 1871 until the beginning of the First World War, the population of the German Empire increased by 50 percent. After a few decades of population growth stemming from industrialization, the statistics revealed a slight decrease in birth rates. Nevertheless, since the 1880s fear of overpopulation was in vogue. It accompanied the social question resulting from the woes of rapid urbanization. In a pre-First World War atmosphere tainted by racial overtones of colonial population politics, class hierarchy was transformed by racial concerns, with the Nordic race on top and the supposedly Asiatic masses on the bottom. Thus, the gap between rising population and decreasing birth rates was given a qualitative explanation. While birthrates among supposedly educated Nordic classes were decreasing, fertile Slavic hordes were allegedly threatening to corrode German society and culture from within. Since eugenics "was a political strategy denoting some sort of social control over reproduction,"<sup>86</sup> advocates of *Rassenhygiene* sought to increase birth rates among the educated classes, while reducing it among the uneducated through (voluntary) marriage prohibitions. For this reason, racial hygienists pointed to neo-Malthusianism, promoted in Germany since 1889 by various organizations encouraging rational family planning and birth control, as the main culprit. While the movement might have found proponents among the educated, it was hardly noticed by

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<sup>85</sup> Vogt, "Between Decay and Doom," 79.

<sup>86</sup> Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 1.

its main target group – the working class – and had almost no advocates in government or administration.<sup>87</sup>

By publishing his criticism of neo-Malthusianism in a medical journal, Oppenheimer aimed to amend the understanding of Malthus among physicians working as public hygienists.<sup>88</sup> Malthus hypothesized that any social reform providing more nourishment for the underprivileged would lead to overpopulation and subsequent starvation. Oppenheimer approved of this hypothesis for the animal world. Yet he argued that Malthus forgot that humans have arms and not only mouths.<sup>89</sup> The creativity and innovation of the human being, the “tool making animal,” would be able to sufficiently increase agricultural production, and thus support a stable increase in population. He based his thesis on statistics since the mid-nineteenth century showing increased production and an improved distribution of wealth through implementation of machinery in agricultural production. In his own opinion, Oppenheimer shared his economic and technological optimism with leading socialists such as Julius Wolf and Eduard Bernstein. Progress, innovation and a new cooperative-oriented organization of the economy was the key to realizing Oppenheimer's utopian socialism – not through reform or revolution, but through avantgarde agricultural cooperatives. The adversaries of his technocratic aspirations were reform oriented *Kathedersozialisten* [academic socialists] and other socialists who disparaged agricultural machines as instruments of capitalism causing displacement and poverty.<sup>90</sup>

Oppenheimer retained his allegiance to the Enlightenment's optimist faith in the unlimited progress of the human mind and the ideal of a rational transformation of the world so typical for Western utopian thinking.<sup>91</sup> He disparaged the pessimism fueling the popularity of Malthus's population theory and the fear that insufficient employment for the growing population would lead to dissatisfaction and uprisings of the proletarian masses. Oppenheimer dubbed this apocalyptic reading “prophetic Malthusianism,” which derived, in his opinion, from a misunderstanding of Malthus's use of the term tendency “as some kind of vague future threat in the sense of saying: ‘He has the tendency to become

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**87** Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*, 129–137; Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 127–134.

**88** Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Bevölkerungsgesetz des T. R. Malthus,” *Die medicinische Woche*, June 4, June 11, and June 18, 1900.

**89** Franz Oppenheimer, *Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation in Palästina* (Vienna: Selbstverlage des Vereins, 1907), 11.

**90** Franz Oppenheimer, “Buchbesprechung von R. E. May, Die Wirtschaft in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft,” *Zeitschrift für Socialwissenschaft* 4 (1901): 66–68.

**91** Ferdinand Seibt, “Utopie als Funktion abendländischen Denkens,” in *Utopieforschung*, ed. Wilhelm Voßkamp (Stuttgart: Suhrkamp, 1985), 258.

a good-for-nothing.”<sup>92</sup> With this example Oppenheimer drew a bridge from neo-Malthusianism to racial theories advancing the claim that science can determine the character and value of an individual through a supposed tendency ascribed to them. Oppenheimer warned against these perverted moral implications: “The Malthusian proposition ... means nothing other than that by force of unyielding natural law a multitude of people must be continually ousted into the abyss of extinction through sustenance deprivation.”<sup>93</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, Malthus's appropriation by social Darwinists in support of reactionary ideology limited the utopian horizon of socialism by claiming “murderous” competition to be inherent to social life.<sup>94</sup> Darwin himself expressed reservations about the negative, martial connotations of the German translation for struggle for existence into *Kampf ums Dasein*.<sup>95</sup> Oppenheimer was not innately averse to competition. On the contrary, he viewed competition and hardship as an important evolutionary force, as long as it was free from political arbitrariness and control. His utopian settlement cooperative aimed at breaking monopolies, beginning with the concentration of land in the hand of the state and the privileged, in order to enable equal competition in which talent will prevail.

Oppenheimer adopted Peter Kropotkin's position that Darwin's struggle for existence described man's struggle against nature, and not a struggle between social groups or races.<sup>96</sup> There was an inverse relationship between these two struggles. The more formidable and excruciating the struggle with nature became, the more people needed to cooperate for survival. Kropotkin's Darwinist principle of mutual aid became a foundational tenet for Oppenheimer's utopian cooperative model as a method of a peaceful transformation of society.<sup>97</sup> The veneration for the anarchocommunist Kropotkin connected Oppenheimer for a

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92 Oppenheimer, “Die Bevölkerungsgesetz,” 217.

93 Oppenheimer, “Die Bevölkerungsgesetz,” 217.

94 Oppenheimer, “Die Bevölkerungsgesetz,” 198.

95 Julia Voss, *Charles Darwin zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2008), 123. In a letter to Thierry William Preyer from March 29, 1869, Darwin wrote: “About the term ‘Struggle for Existence’ I have always felt some doubts ... I suspect that the German term Kampf &c. does not give quite the same idea – The words ‘Struggle for Existence’ express, I think, exactly what concurrency does – It is correct to say in English that two men struggle for existence who may be hunting for the same food during a famine, and likewise when a single man is hunting for food.” A transliteration of the letter can be viewed online in the Darwin Correspondence Project: <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-6687>.

96 Voss, *Charles Darwin*, 134–135.

97 Franz Oppenheimer, “Fürst Kropotkin und der Anarchismus,” in *Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 2, *Soziologische Streifzüge* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1927).

time with other advocates of social anarchism and cooperative models, such as Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber.<sup>98</sup>

Oppenheimer did however share with neo-Malthusians the negative view of charity and philanthropy as counterproductive to moral reform. He established his settlement cooperative model on low-interest loans and other profit-oriented fundraising instruments. In his opinion, the task of the technocratic social engineer was to develop new social conditions and institutions that would appeal to the inalterable human ego. In the settlement cooperative everyone would be working for their own personal advancement in a manner that advances the whole group, instead of pitting members against each other. Through the cooperative structure the weak would not be deprived of sustenance by the strong, but rather supported and encouraged by them in the adaptation process. The threat of cut-throat competition would be removed in the settlement cooperative so that unskilled city dwellers could learn from adept farmers and agronomists to be self-sufficient.

An important constituency of neo-Malthusianism was German feminists of the middle and upper classes who endorsed neo-Malthusianism's revision of the negative Malthusian view on late marriages and self-restraint. This facilitated their agenda of promoting women's academic education and participation in the professional workforce. One of the women's movement's major issues was sexual reform, which also included a "new morality" for nonconservative elements in the movement. "The new morality defended the right of women to become self-conscious, free individuals able to lead productive and intellectually meaningful lives."<sup>99</sup>

Oppenheimer was also involved in the debate on sexual reform. He clearly rejected the sexual intervention programs of *Rassenhygiene*, classifying groups as unfit for procreation and enforcing the selection through marriage prohibitions and sterilization, even if they were voluntary. He also disagreed with the main premises at the core of neo-Malthusian family planning—that it was better to have fewer children in whose education more can be invested, than to have many children; and that having a larger family would mean that more children would die young. Oppenheimer disagreed that infant mortality was an inevitable

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<sup>98</sup> For more on Oppenheimer's falling out with Landauer, see Dekel Peretz, "'Utopia as a Fact': Franz Oppenheimer's Paths in Utopia between Science, Fiction and Race," in *Yearbook for European Jewish Literature Studies*, vol. 3, *European Jewish Utopias*, ed. Alfred Bodenheimer, Vivian Liska, and Caspar Battagay (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 73–74.

<sup>99</sup> Weiss, *Race Hygiene*, 130–132, citation on p. 131; Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*, 129 and 138.



result, because he believed that a reform of the economic order could create better hygienic conditions for their survival, in addition to increasing educational facilities.<sup>100</sup> In general, economic transformation would render obsolete many of the demands of *Rassenhygiene* and feminism, making it easier to focus on their remaining issues.<sup>101</sup> He also believed that the settlement cooperative, his main instrument of economic reform, would have a positive effect on sexual morals by eliminating the economic compulsions leading to prostitution and restoring love to the institution of marriage. In the cooperative, women would not be dependent on their husbands' salaries. They would have equal status and rights. All marriages would be founded on love, as other incentives like wealth and status would lose their pull. If love ceased to exist, both sides could file for divorce more easily, since communal institutions would provide for the children and for new living arrangements for the divorcees.<sup>102</sup>

There were eugenicists like Schallmayer who shared Oppenheimer's resentment for social and economic privileges in partner selection, promoting meritocracy and love marriages instead. In his reply to Oppenheimer, Schallmayer emphasized his rejection of neo-Malthusianism's objective to limit population growth.<sup>103</sup> Oppenheimer also opposed the neo-Malthusian focus on moral education, because he was skeptical that it could succeed in curbing population growth, neither among the educated nor uneducated masses.<sup>104</sup> The focus on moral education and birth control were a mere diversion from issues of social injustice. Oppenheimer argued that moral educators were misguided in their efforts to educate individuals. The masses were like an organism affected by the mechanics of suggestion overriding individual moral judgement. Malthusian natural catastrophes caused by overpopulation could only be averted through technocratic solutions. Besides, he also considered preaching morality to be condescending. In reference to Ferdinand Lasalle, Oppenheimer stated that morality was not objective but a historical and situational category whose modifications were a revelation of nature's regenerative reactions.<sup>105</sup>

While birth control was the preferred neo-Malthusian tool of population control, population policy was intrinsically connected with control of migration as a

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**100** Oppenheimer, "Rezension von Havelock Ellis, Rassenhygiene und Volksgesundheit," CZA A161-47, 3-8.

**101** Oppenheimer, "Rezension von Havelock Ellis," 3-8.

**102** Franz Oppenheimer, "Ein Frauenparadies," *Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 7 (1896): 1133-1135.

**103** Schallmayer, *Beiträge zu einer Nationalbiologie*, 236.

**104** Oppenheimer, "Die Bevölkerungsgesetz," 199.

**105** Oppenheimer, "Unsittlichkeit und Erziehung," 594-595.

source and outlet of overpopulation. A negative view of immigration was anchored in the arsenal of the degeneration discourse. Considered especially “physically and intellectually primitive,” in the words of Max Weber, were migrants from Eastern Europe, who were perceived as a threatening source of national degeneration.<sup>106</sup> The connection between social pressures and mass migration was of special interest to Oppenheimer, the prospective sociologist and former physician. According to him, individual action could be independent from class consciousness. However, collective human action was an expression of a natural predicament and could be described through natural law. These natural laws formed the foundation of his sociological undertakings. In 1893, Theodor von Goltz, a conservative agricultural policymaker, formulated such a natural law to describe migration waves. Goltz hypothesized that an increase in large estate holdings, or a decrease in smaller farming parcels, would cause an increase in rural migration. This led Oppenheimer to identify land enclosure as the main source of urbanization and root of the social question. The shift of focus from the industrial proletariat to an agricultural one was in his opinion his main break with Marxism. In a sense he felt he was even a truer Marxist, since he took Marx at his word that the improvement of society should start with the lowest class, the farmers that even Marx neglected.<sup>107</sup>

Oppenheimer's theory of human action was at least partially formed by his perception of man as a *homo economicus* who is not good or evil, but rather follows the path of minimal resistance.<sup>108</sup> From this followed Oppenheimer's technocratic focus on changing societal conditions to govern human action. He further applied the law of minimal resistance to migration to determine its destination, postulating that human groups “flow from the plane of higher economic and social pressure to that of lower pressure along the line of least resistance.”<sup>109</sup> This was one of the most important principles of history since “all of world history is in its core a *history of migration*.”<sup>110</sup> According to Oppenheimer, world history began with the creation of the state and ensuing subjugation. Migration and conquest were the initial impetus of state formation and have continued to play that role ever since. Waves of migration were “immense forces

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**106** Vogt, “Between Decay and Doom,” 75.

**107** Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 91 and 145.

**108** Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 106.

**109** Franz Oppenheimer, *The State: Its History and Development Viewed Sociologically*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vanguard Press, 1926), 93–94.

**110** Franz Oppenheimer, “Skizze der sozial-ökonomischen Geschichtsauffassung,” in *Franz Oppenheimer, Schriften zur Soziologie*, ed. Klaus Lichtblau (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2015), 28.

shaping and changing, uniting and tearing apart, states while time after time enormously transforming the internal constitution and structure in the process.”<sup>111</sup> As an advocate of historical materialism, Oppenheimer regarded collective groups and masses as the main agents of history. He dismissed traditional heroic narratives of history as disregarding sociological-historical perspectives. Nevertheless, he established a new historical hero: the social engineer. The technocratic ability to control and guide migration was the key to shaping history.

To conclude, already in Oppenheimer's early writings, during his transition from medicine towards economy and sociology, Oppenheimer adapted discursive positions that prepared him to become a social engineer in the service of Zionism, Oppenheimer's most explicit Jewish engagement, which we will expound on in the second part of the book starting from chapter 3. These included his romantic beliefs in the healing power of nature, sport and farming, his contemplation of broader issues of population, migration and settlement policy as well as over antisemitism and the relationship between race, heredity and social environment. Yet these concurrencies did not clear away fundamental discords that Oppenheimer had with other Zionist physicians who participated in racial discourse. Oppenheimer remained an optimistic liberal who shunned notions of natural decay, degeneration and imminent doom, innate racial differences between Jews and other European peoples, and the infeasibility of Jewish integration in German and Western European society. The next chapter will show how Oppenheimer mediated between his progressive socialist ideals and the rising importance of the racial discourse in his conception of race in general and Jews in particular. It will also demonstrate how, armed with liberal convictions and a class-oriented concept of race, Oppenheimer fought off attempts to introduce racial theory into the emerging academic discipline of sociology of which he was a founding father in Germany.

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<sup>111</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Wanderung: vorwiegend vom univerralhistorischen und ökonomischen Gesichtspunkten,” in *Verhandlung der Sechsten Deutschen Soziologentag*, ed. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1929), 149.

## Chapter 2

# Biology, Sociology and the Jews

My life is not that cheerful when I read in the writings of racial fanatics about the “Semitic psychic” – it is sadly a part of my scientific business – while thinking about my dear old man who was the most German of all Germans, as Fichte’s expression was still valid that German is the one who serves his cause exclusively.<sup>1</sup>

There is a tendency to juxtapose the origin of antisemitism research with the horrendous experience of the Holocaust and the resulting comprehension of the dimensions and consequences antisemitism may have. The year 1944 is often considered the starting point of antisemitism research. In this pivotal year, Jean-Paul Sartre as well as Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno shifted the narrative focal point for explaining antisemitism from observing Jews to observing antisemites.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, researchers questioning this genealogy have extended the investigative scope in search of lost connections and continuities, to pre-Holocaust reflections on antisemitism in Germany.<sup>3</sup>

The awareness that Oppenheimer played a role in antisemitism research is not new. Researchers have often emphasized his role in rebutting the *Judenzählung*, the 1916 military survey that collected data to support narratives of Jewish draft dodging. The findings of the survey were never officially published but found their way as antisemitic accusations into public discourse and unofficial publications. Oppenheimer heavily criticized – with all his scientific authority – the statistical methodology and antisemitic tendencies of the *Judenzählung* revealed in the unofficial publications.<sup>4</sup>

In contemporary research, Bodo Kahmann listed Oppenheimer together with other interwar era sociologists – who also all happened to be Zionists, such as Norbert Elias, Arnold Zweig and Fritz (Peretz) Bernstein, and published their antisemitism research in the 1920s. According to Kahmann, these Jewish sociolo-

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1 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 34.

2 Hans-Joachim Hahn and Olaf Kistenmacher, “Zur Genealogie der Antisemitismustheorie vor 1944,” in *Beschreibungsversuche der Judenfeindschaft: Zur Geschichte der Antisemitismusforschung vor 1944*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hahn and Olaf Kistenmacher (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015), 1.

3 E. g., Hans-Joachim Hahn and Olaf Kistenmacher, eds., *Beschreibungsversuche der Judenfeindschaft: Zur Geschichte der Antisemitismusforschung vor 1944* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015).

4 Oppenheimer, Franz. *Die Judenstatistik des preußischen Kriegsministeriums* (Munich: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1922); Bein, “Franz Oppenheimer,” 2.

gists published solely in Jewish periodicals, thus failing to reach the scientific audience they hoped for.<sup>5</sup> However, pigeonholing Oppenheimer into this time-frame is misleading. It was in the years before the First World War that Oppenheimer's sociological contemplations about antisemitism had their greatest influence on his academic peers. As early as the last decade of the nineteenth century, Oppenheimer was already writing about the social-psychological origin of racial theories and publishing on the matter in both Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers and journals.<sup>6</sup>

In his legitimate skepticism about the influence of Jewish antisemitism research in the interwar era, Kahnmann only cited Oppenheimer's essay *Antisemitismus im Licht der Soziologie* [Antisemitism in the light of sociology] published in 1925 in the Jewish periodical *Der Morgen*. In her analysis of Oppenheimer's discussion of antisemitism as a part of his sociological approach to group theory, Franziska Krah extended the scope of the investigation to an earlier essay that he published in a Jewish periodical towards the end of the First World War.<sup>7</sup> Yet the main ideas concerning Jewish idiosyncrasy and antisemitism that Oppenheimer presented were already expressed and ardently debated in 1912, during the second Soziologentag, the biannual conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie founded in 1909. The aforementioned essay included only minor adjustments resulting from the experience of the First World War and its aftermath, such as the emphasis of the Jewish revolutionary character and the scapegoat function that Jews played for aristocratic elite responsible for the military and political disaster.<sup>8</sup> Hence, Oppenheimer's sociological observations of antisemitism were not limited to a Jewish audience but reached the scientific community for which were intended: the founders of academic German sociology.

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5 Bodo Kahmann, "Norbert Elias' Soziologie des deutschen Antisemitismus: Eine Frühschrift der sozialwissenschaftlichen Antisemitismusforschung," in *Beschreibungsversuche der Judenfeindschaft: Zur Geschichte der Antisemitismusforschung vor 1944*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hahn and Olaf Kistenmacher (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg 2015), 388–389 and 400.

6 Some examples of Oppenheimer's articles in non-Jewish papers are Franz Oppenheimer, "Das Gesetz der Zyklischen Katastrophen," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, *Politische Schriften*, ed. Julius H. Schoeps, Alphons Silbermann, and Hans Süßmuth (Berlin: De Gruyter Akademie Verlag, 1996); Franz Oppenheimer, "Rassentheoretisches," *Die Zeit (Wien)*, July 4, 1903.

7 Krah included "Die Ideologie des polnischen Antisemitismus" that will be discussed in chapter 6. Franziska Krah, "Franz Oppenheimers Analyse des Antisemitismus in der Weimarer Republik," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 69 (2017): 74–82.

8 E.g., Franz Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," in *Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 2, *Soziologische Streifzüge* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1927), 246–247.

Oppenheimer was a founding member and part of the inner core of the DGS.<sup>9</sup> In 1919, he was invested with the first chair of sociology established on the university of Frankfurt.<sup>10</sup> Among early Germany sociologists, Oppenheimer was arguably the most outspoken against the influence of racial theories and biology on sociology. However, he was not alone in this battle. With the endorsement of other founding fathers of German sociology, such as Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber and George Simmel, race science was officially barred from academic sociology before the First World War.<sup>11</sup> This chapter will portray Oppenheimer's crucial role in this debate and his three approaches to undermine the legitimacy of the category of race for sociological investigations. The first was a direct confrontation with the scientific undertakings of racial theorists and the concept of race. The second was to normalize Jewish history, which was viewed by early German sociologists, most notably Weber and Werner Sombart, as aberrant yet exemplary for the development of modern capitalism. The third subversively shifted the focus of the emerging discipline of sociology from supposed Semites towards antisemites.

## Oppenheimer in the Context of Early German Sociology

Early German sociology has traditionally been defined as the period between the founding of the DGS in 1909 until the *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) of the organization with the Nazi party in 1934.<sup>12</sup> The historiographical gap between theoretical sociology, pre-1934, and its empirical restart after the Second World War has generally been taken to suggest the incongruousness of German sociology with Nazism. This approach has been revised by contemporary researchers who exposed the complicity of DGS members in the *Gleichschaltung* and thereafter in the service of the Nazi regime. These researchers have established continuities between early German sociology, academic sociology during the Nazi, and sociology in the postwar era. The overlaps in this new periodization, how-

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<sup>9</sup> Käsler, *Die frühe deutsche Soziologie*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> For more on the process leading to the creation of the Chair of Sociology and Economy in Frankfurt, see Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 95–107.

<sup>11</sup> Amos Morris-Reich, “From Assimilationist Antiracism to Zionist Anti-antisemitism: Georg Simmel, Franz Boas, and Arthur Ruppin,” in *Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology*, ed. Marcel Stoetzler (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 162.

<sup>12</sup> Some classical works on the roots of German sociology are Käsler, *Die frühe deutsche Soziologie*; Stölting, *Akademische Soziologie*; König, *Soziologie in Deutschland*.

ever, give rise to additional questions concerning the intellectual entanglement of early German sociology with antisemitism and notions of racial superiority.<sup>13</sup>

The DGS was created to promote the establishment of sociology as a distinct field in the academic landscape of Imperial and later Weimar Germany. Sociology's objectives and methodology were heavily debated during the foundation period. A scientific aloofness from social philosophy and socialism was also desirable since the similarity in names seemed to imply a normative horizon or an ideological agenda, as opposed to scientific objectivity. For this purpose, Max Weber demanded strict adherence to *Werturteilfreiheit* [lack of value judgement] in the nascent field.<sup>14</sup> However, his efforts to banish political inclinations from sociological theories were futile. His constant interventions to uphold the principle of *Werturteilfreiheit* at the gatherings of the DGS were barely heeded by the participants. In 1924, the paragraph demanding strict freedom from value judgement was erased from the society's founding bylaws.

Oppenheimer's adherence to scientific objectivity did not deter him from taking a positivist approach to deriving practical implication from theory. He distinguished between subjective value judgements, which he called "social-psychological determination" – and which he thought should be forbidden in a scientific debate because they were derived from personal and class oriented world views – and value judgements based on scientific observation of causality.<sup>15</sup> After all, encounters with socialists and utopian thinkers in the bohemian scene of late nineteenth century Berlin were the impetus for his pursuit of a scientific career and his engagement for social reform. Oppenheimer's first sociological treatise dealt with social and political transformation within the framework of "inner colonization," the parceling of noble estates in the Eastern provinces of Prussia and their distribution to independent farmers and cooperatives. That Oppenheimer's theories had immediate economic implications was one of the reasons for his appointment in Frankfurt.<sup>16</sup> After the collapse of the

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13 E. g., Silke van Dyk and Alexandra Schauer, "... *daß die offizielle Soziologie versagt hat*": *Zur Soziologie im Nationalsozialismus, der Geschichte ihrer Aufarbeitung und der Rolle der DGS* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2010). One example of the continuity of ideas and terminologies of German sociology into the Nazi area can be observed in the term *Gemeinschaft*, which was adopted and transformed by the Nazis into the *Volksgemeinschaft*; see Stölting, *Akademische Soziologie*, 346–350.

14 Klaus Lichtblau, "Franz Oppenheimer's 'System der Soziologie': (1922–1935)," in *Zyklus 1: Jahrbuch für Theorie und Geschichte der Soziologie*, ed. Klaus Lichtblau (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014), 99.

15 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, ed., *Verhandlung des Fünften Deutschen Soziologentages* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Sauer & Auvermann KG, 1969), 74–75.

16 Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 98–100.

German Empire, the young republic promoted sociology at German universities in the hope that it would contribute to the democratization of Germany.<sup>17</sup>

From the start of his scientific career Oppenheimer aspired to something quite ambitious: the creation of a “system of sociology” published in four volumes between 1922 and 1935. Orienting himself on the holistic and positivistic approach of August Comte, who coined the term “sociology,” Oppenheimer intended sociology to be a universal science founded on the methodology of natural science.<sup>18</sup> Here too he was inspired by organicism and more specifically by Herbert Spencer’s concept of disintegration and integration as crucial to progress of all organic life. Oppenheimer’s sociology was an attempt to dissolve and deconstruct the borders between individual scientific disciplines, with the goal of ultimately synthesizing the humanities and natural sciences under the overarching label of anthropology. Since Spencer’s concept was created in order to describe evolution in the natural world – and not in the realm of science – Oppenheimer explained his apparent misappropriation through a metaphorical description of science as an organ of organic society evolving to facilitate society’s adaptation to its environment.<sup>19</sup> Oppenheimer took recourse to Kant and Simmel’s definition of the term “organic society” to mean the parts of the whole relating to each other more closely than they do to external things. From the social-historic perspective, organic society preceded any individual person belonging to it.<sup>20</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, after a century of differentiation and specialization, the natural sciences had already demonstrated how to go about creating scientific synthesis. Natural laws that were deduced in individual disciplines, and could be utilized by other disciplines, would be given priority over laws that were relevant only in one discipline. Particularism was thus subordinate to universality. The transferal of a natural law from one scientific discipline to another was a trademark of Oppenheimer’s interdisciplinary project. Scientific geniuses of the likes of Virchow, Copernicus, Darwin and others were the ones working not within clearly defined disciplines but along interdisciplinary borders fusing disciplines and raising new research questions.<sup>21</sup>

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17 van Dyk and Schauer, “... daß die offizielle Soziologie versagt hat,” 20.

18 Lichtblau, “Franz Oppenheimer’s ‘System der Soziologie,’” 96–105. For more on Comte’s neologism “sociology,” see König, *Soziologie in Deutschland*, 97–99.

19 E. g., Oppenheimer, “Nationalökonomie, Soziologie, Anthropologie,” 485.

20 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, *Verhandlung des Fünften Deutschen Soziologentages*, 140.

21 Oppenheimer, “Rudolph Virchow,” 329.



Virchow's social medicine was an example of a new interdisciplinary field created by interlinking medicine, biology and chemistry. Oppenheimer considered it to be a sort of practical sociology, which led him from medicine to what he considered the main domains of activity of a sociologist: economics and history.<sup>22</sup> What medicine, biology and psychology had accomplished in unison for natural science, in its dealing with individual life, was sociology's task for collective life. This meant "including knowledge on the development and adaptation (anatomy and physiology) of social forms and knowledge of their progress through the choice of the most fitting in the struggle of social existence, their development history."<sup>23</sup> The synthetic capability of sociology was to be demonstrated through the merger of economics with history to reveal the mechanisms of the "social process." Oppenheimer assumed that an analysis of the social-psychological mechanisms leading to human economic action would enable the drafting of universal and unchanging laws and the prediction of collective human action. Historical analysis should focus on mass action and provide case studies to prove these laws and trace their dynamic.

According to Oppenheimer, since man is a social animal, sociology should be founded on social-psychological analysis that starts with the individual—not the abstract individual of liberal philosophy but one embedded in and domesticated through society: a "social-psychologically determined" individual.<sup>24</sup> Drawing on the contemporary understanding of psychology as a positivistic-evolutionary study of human drives and instincts, Oppenheimer classified drives according to their ultimate effect on human action for use in sociological research. His doctrine of action merged elements of Enlightenment rationality with biological evolutionism. He considered it to be his main contribution to social-psychology.<sup>25</sup>

This also led Oppenheimer to his critique of Marx's historical materialism as rooting society solely in the economic order. Amassing wealth and other economic activities were not independent drives and goals, he argued, but only means for achieving social prestige, which he considered to be the main motivation for social action.<sup>26</sup> Comprehending the importance Oppenheimer attributed to the striving for prestige as a means of social differentiation is a key to understanding not only his efforts on behalf of Zionism and Jewish pride, but his gen-

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<sup>22</sup> Oppenheimer, "Rudolph Virchow," 338–340.

<sup>23</sup> Oppenheimer, "Nationalökonomie, Soziologie, Anthropologie," 488.

<sup>24</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, *Verhandlung des Fünften Deutschen Soziologentages*, 138–139.

<sup>25</sup> Haselbach, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 23–24.

<sup>26</sup> Vogt, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 99–101; Haselbach, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 25–27.

eral attempt to reconcile particularism and universalism. Fostering individuation was perceived as an important step on the way to social integration of groups or “organs” into one larger organism.

Yet Oppenheimer clearly distinguished between the social-psychological foundation of sociology and sociology itself. The foundations still belonged to the field of psychology, not sociology. According to Oppenheimer, social-psychologists and sociologists like Leopold von Wiese, who wanted to make the study of human relations [*Beziehungslehre*] the focus of the budding field were observing society from the inside, while sociologists should be viewing it from the outside, focusing on the long-term institutions that make up society. The influence of existing society, into which individuals were born or adopted, was stronger than the influence of individuals on society itself. Individual action was determined by values and norms considered prestigious in their specific society. For Oppenheimer, integration into a perpetual society was thus the driving force of history, and historical-sociological analysis should uncover the dynamics of society and its institutions: “Sociology [is] the theoretical science of the social process, i. e., the development of society and its institutions understood as physical realities.”<sup>27</sup>

One of these realities was that social groups and societies might have opposing values. Oppenheimer believed that shared values facilitate the natural extension of solidarity to other group members, while opposing values prohibit this solidarity being extended to all of humanity, and even instill hostility to members of other groups. This “primitive cooperative spirit” described by Friedrich Naumann was further developed by Max Weber to explain double morals in relating to group insiders versus outsiders. Double morals, which were often a theme of antisemitic slurs, were not a unique Jewish phenomena, according to Weber, but one shared by all ancient societies.<sup>28</sup> According to Oppenheimer, these definitions of belonging and these exclusions set the whole “social process” in motion.<sup>29</sup> The utopian aim of Oppenheimer’s practical sociology was to facilitate the extension of solidarity, of the cooperative spirit, to outsiders for the establishment of a new European – and even global – brotherhood.

Oppenheimer was not alone in the attempt to synthesize biology, sociology and, ultimately, all scientific disciplines. The example of Schallmayer and *Rassenhygiene* was already discussed in the last chapter. Indeed, the unification

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<sup>27</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, *Verhandlung des Fünften Deutschen Soziologentages*, 139–140.

<sup>28</sup> Hans Liebeschütz, “Max Weber’s Historical Interpretation of Judaism,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 9 (1964): 53.

<sup>29</sup> Oppenheimer, “Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie,” 244–245.

of all science was strongly promoted by Haeckel and emphasized in the Krupp competition won by Schallmayer. Despite the respect that Oppenheimer had for Schallmayer's attempts, he was full of contempt for racial theorists whose pinning of the whole of history, psychology, economics etc. on biological factors seemed to him to be a ridiculous simplification of the unifying project.<sup>30</sup> However, Oppenheimer's ambition to place a positivist-historical sociology at the crown of the scientific hierarchy was a minority position not shared by his DGS colleagues, who promoted scientific specialization and distinction. Besides methodological considerations they also had strategic reasons to be wary of upsetting representatives of long-established disciplines, such as history, economics and law, who could foil sociology's march into German academia.<sup>31</sup>

## A Race of Bastards

Although Oppenheimer dealt with individual drives, he was not interested in atomized individuals but in group action, since groups composed the smallest component of differentiation in society. For the sake of abstraction, groups were therefore imagined as islands of peace, with conflict existing primarily with outsiders. Influenced by Herbert Spencer's and Ludwig Gumplowicz's writings on group conflict, Oppenheimer claimed that the sole purpose of the group was to facilitate the individual's rational striving for optimal use and acquisition of resources. For this reason, some of his contemporaries dubbed him as an adherent of social Darwinism. He was, however, at odds with social Darwinists' conservative attempts to "scientifically" legitimize the status and political control of the existing ruling class through natural selection.<sup>32</sup> Oppenheimer became an outspoken adversary of attempts to marshal antisemitic resentment by extending ideals of blue-bloodedness to nationalism and excluding purported racial outsiders. According to him, historically it was the ruling class and especially landed gentry who were the dangerous interlopers.<sup>33</sup>

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30 Oppenheimer, "Darwinistische Soziologie," 8.

31 Stölting, *Akademische Soziologie*, 117.

32 Haselbach, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 31 and 51, footnote 22.

33 E.g., Oppenheimer, "Kultur und Geisteskrankheit," 394. Oppenheimer attempted a discursive transvaluation by deeming large manor holders – and not Jews – as the real "strangers," i.e., the dangerous foreign element, due to their monopoly on land, which aggravated urbanization. Using metaphors from the arsenal of antisemites, he derided landed gentry as malign tumors who should be removed via social hygiene.

Oppenheimer believed that the progress of natural science coincided with the development of philosophy. The synthesis of medicine, biology, chemistry and physics exposed the intimate bond between the organic and the inorganic and led to the postulation of evolutionary theories that gradually chipped away at the theological dogma of divinely created human being, as well as idealizations of natural human beings and rationality that had been dominant since Rousseau. He wrote: “The history of natural science is ... simultaneously the history of the liberal citizen spirit, its emancipation from dogmas and church, its liberation from ‘old values.’” Humanity’s “master instinct” turned every step on the way to progress into a bitter fight because it threatened religion, the main core of organized society.<sup>34</sup> He saw the main challenge to the process of emancipation as racial theories claiming to restore order to the world by the very same means corroding it: science. In the words of George Mosse, racism “was a product of the preoccupation with a rational universe, nature and aesthetics, as well as with the emphasis upon the eternal force of religious emotion and man’s soul. It was part, too, of the drive to define man’s place in nature and of the hope for an ordered, healthy and happy world.” The scientific pursuit for man’s place in the “great chain of being” presupposed an unbroken hierarchy of all of creation from animal species to human races.<sup>35</sup>

Oppenheimer did not totally deny the existence and influence of race: “On the contrary: race ... continues to have an effect long after the environmental conditions that brought it about disappear. We can see that clearly. But, I turn with all scorn against the crude way in which one slogan attempts to solve all mysteries of history.”<sup>36</sup> Oppenheimer was so inconsistent with his use of the term “race” that in one essay he could write about the “human race” as well as about “races of different colors,” sometimes using quotation marks for the word race but more often not.<sup>37</sup> Incoherency in the use of “race” was, however, typical for the racial discourse at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Like many other Zionists, Oppenheimer understood race as a dynamic, ongoing process of formation, and not a mythological invariant source created by god or nature that

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<sup>34</sup> Oppenheimer, “Rudolph Virchow,” 330.

<sup>35</sup> Racial theories usually linked the animal and human world by the ape on one side and the African on the other; see Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, 3–4.

<sup>36</sup> Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 139.

<sup>37</sup> E. g., Oppenheimer, “Der Einfluss des Klimas.”

<sup>38</sup> Jan Weyand, *Historische Wissenssoziologie des modernen Antisemitismus: Genese und Typologie einer Wissensformation am Beispiel des deutschsprachigen Diskurses* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016), 264–266.

required protection from corruption and degeneration. Races were, and remained, in flux, adapting to social, natural and historical conditions.<sup>39</sup>

Oppenheimer was outraged that despite Darwin's discoveries the notion of race as divine creation, with consistent physical and spiritual characteristics, was still seriously advocated. He argued that anthropometric research failed to prove the existence of any consistent racial features such as noses or skulls. In accordance with Darwinist notions of progress and evolution, race should, he argued, instead be regarded as malleable and hence as a source of hope for the future. In fact, he argued that the "plasticity of race" allowed its physical and psychological composition to be altered within the span of just a few generations.<sup>40</sup>

Although Oppenheimer disparaged human stud farm schemes, he did not principally dismiss engineering the future race through eugenic breeding programs, endorsing sterilization and marriage prohibitions. His objection was that they were almost impossible to implement and mistaken in their focus.<sup>41</sup> To illustrate this, Oppenheimer argued that animal breeders focused on copulation because social conditions such as housing, nourishment and treatment were held constant, whereas in the historical evolution of human races they were extremely variable. Social conditions must therefore be stabilized before scientific inquiry could ascertain a possible inherent influence of race and the necessity of eugenic measures.<sup>42</sup>

This argumentation is a great example for utopian proximity between eugenicists and socialists in the late nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup> In the nature versus nurture debate popular at the time, Oppenheimer strongly advocated for the latter. In fact, many Jewish intellectuals dealing with race considered Ghetto life to be the source of alleged Jewish degeneration.<sup>44</sup> In Oppenheimer's opinion, any current hierarchy of races was temporal and prejudicially supported by the Eurocentric construct of world history. In fact, in his view it was not a fixed racial hierarchy at all, but a dynamic one of culture, which, he understood in a technical manner as concerning the progress in the organization of (food) production. With technical progress in mind, Oppenheimer argued that the influence of culture on race outweighed, by far, that of race on culture.<sup>45</sup>

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39 See Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 126.

40 Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," 120.

41 Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," 100–101 and 112.

42 Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," 120.

43 Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*, 114.

44 Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 29–30; Vogt, "Between Decay and Doom," 81–82.

45 Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," 99 and 124–128.

Attempting to establish conceptual clarity, Oppenheimer cautioned against confusing peoples and nations with races. He demonstrated this difference in a review of *Volkstum und Weltmacht* [Folkdom and global power] by fellow sociologist and racial theorist Albrecht Wirth. Heralding it as a book “of praiseworthy achievement,” Oppenheimer enthusiastically recommended that “every educated German should incorporate it into their reference library, even if they don’t agree with the main viewpoint of the author.”<sup>46</sup> Oppenheimer appreciated the historical and ethnological scope of the analysis and that it also dealt with non-European history. Wirth argued that the concept of pure primordial races [Urrassen] was scientifically dubious, suggesting, instead, the term “subrace” [Unterrasse]: a “through migration and possibly cross-breeding separated part of the Urrasse.” The formation of a people required the *Unterrasse* to be “firmly rooted in the land through settlement.” However, the newly created people do not remain equitable with the original *Unterrasse*, since in the course of settlement and eventual state formation other groups may join the people. In Wirth’s racial theory, not common ancestry but the liberal staple of shared language, history, beliefs and citizenship form the core of peoplehood.<sup>47</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, the foundation of a state was the most important milestone in the formation of a people. Citing Paul von Lilienfeld, a prominent proponent of organicist sociology, Oppenheimer argued that the state as a complex organism cannot be racially pure:

All higher beings propagate sexually ... *The state ... comes into being through sexual propagation.* All bisexual propagation is accomplished by the following process: the male element, a small, very active, mobile, vibrating cell – the spermatozoön – searches out a large inactive cell without mobility of its own – the ovum, or female principle – enters and fuses with it. Immense growth results from this process; that is to say, a wonderful differentiation with simultaneous integration.<sup>48</sup>

Oppenheimer essentially viewed the state as an expansionist instrument of class subjugation. The process of sexual reproduction was a gendered analogy of the domination of a masculinized minority, usually of wandering nomads over the feminized majority of lethargic farmers in the state, which was always comprised of classes. On the one hand, the gendered classes remain segregated, yet on the other hand, out of real sexual contact between the classes, a “race of bastards

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<sup>46</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Rassentheorie der Weltgeschichte,” *Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 12 (1901): 999.

<sup>47</sup> Oppenheimer, “Die Rassentheorie der Weltgeschichte,” 999–1000.

<sup>48</sup> Oppenheimer, *The State*, 87–88.

thus develops, sometimes taken into the ruling class, sometimes rejected, and then because of the blood of the masters in their veins, becoming the born leaders of the subject race.”<sup>49</sup> In contrast to Arthur de Gobineau and other racial theorists, Oppenheimer argued that master virtues were passed on to the hybrid offspring. Thus miscegenation endangered primarily the state, and not race, which in Oppenheimer’s opinion was constantly in flux. This hybrid third sex or class would be the main agent of class and, consequently, state disintegration and transformation.

Oppenheimer’s use of organicism as a heuristic metaphor to apprehend the social process seems to suggest here that a perceived in-betweenness or hybridity is a necessary attribute for revolutionary leadership. In a sense, it resembles Benedict Anderson’s description of the multilingualism and hybridity of leaders of modern national movements.<sup>50</sup> In Oppenheimer’s imagination, Jews were born into this hybrid role. In his argument with Werner Sombart during the second Soziologentag on the origin of Jewish character, Oppenheimer depicted this in-betweenness as the tension between the historical and contemporary social position of Jews. He hypothesized that this was the main source of Jewish national idiosyncrasy: “The racial character allegedly formed through desert wanderings is the typical character of a multilingual, urbanized former master class.”<sup>51</sup> Despite some social mobility, Jews remain between past and present, activity and passivity, with class and racial influence becoming interrelated and even blurred.

Oppenheimer’s “plasticity of race” and his adherence to Lamarckian inheritance of acquired characteristics underscored his belief that a people’s future physique and character could be altered in the present. Nevertheless, there were some long lasting, seemingly constant influences, symbolized by (masters’) blood, which enabled not only a discussion about races, but also a class hierarchy in which mobility is biologically limited. For example, Oppenheimer argued that there was no hope for Africans to achieve the same cultural level as Europeans because they biologically mature earlier. Although they still have equal natural endowments, they have less time to develop.<sup>52</sup> This contradicted Oppenheimer’s focus on adult education, after maturity, through sport. Even though Oppenheimer challenged the strong influence of Eurocentrism and racism, he was himself entangled in the discourse.

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<sup>49</sup> Oppenheimer, *The State*, 81.

<sup>50</sup> Shumsky, *Ben Prag li-Yerushalayim*, 134.

<sup>51</sup> Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 129.

<sup>52</sup> Oppenheimer, “Der Einfluss des Klimas,” 1828.

Oppenheimer sympathized with Germanophile racial theories. He considered them to be affirmed by the swift rise of the German Empire, and by unceasing colonial conquests of a “world race of north Germanics” composed of Germans and – with a dose of colonial fantasy comparing British colonial conquests with yet unfulfilled colonial conquests by the German Empire – Anglo-Saxons, who “in a short time will grow so much in numbers and power that dominion over all other races and even over the other Aryan nations must drop in their laps without further effort.”<sup>53</sup> Oppenheimer actually ascribed a potential to transcend national boundaries in search of a European identity to his contemporaries’ use of a dynamic concept of race, e.g., Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s broadening of the term “Aryan” into a *homo europaeus*. However, Oppenheimer deplored Chamberlain’s lapse into rants of antisemitism and national chauvinism.<sup>54</sup> He would have liked to have seen the Jews included in this pan-Europeanism, and maybe even in the Aryan race.

In contrast to the prominent Zionist racial dogmas of his contemporaries,<sup>55</sup> Oppenheimer did not regard Jews as racially purer than other races. He drew support from Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s supposition that Jews were a mix of “real Semites, Hittites, and maybe ‘Aryans.’” The same was also valid for Aryans whom he considered to be a mixed breed between Slavs, Celts and Germanics, at the very least.<sup>56</sup> As far as he was concerned Jews might have also contributed to the mix. In his autobiography, Oppenheimer was obsessed with affirming and often transvaluating ascribed racial features. Right at the outset he humorously comments on his “Hittite nose” and how it made him immediately recognizable to blonde Berliners.<sup>57</sup> Later in the book he explains that, although it was not known where the Hittites came from, their language was distantly related to Indo-Germanic.<sup>58</sup> Oppenheimer thus insinuated that his supposedly Jewish nose actually belied a racial kinship to Aryans, which shed new light on why it sparked such antagonism; it generated fear of the bastard brother’s claim for a share of European privilege.

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53 Oppenheimer, “Die Rassentheorie der Weltgeschichte,” 999.

54 Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 113–114 and 118–119.

55 Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 126.

56 Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 102–103.

57 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 16.

58 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 210.



## Race and the Jewish Question in the German Sociological Society before the First World War

Observations on race and, indirectly on Jews, were already a part of the discussion between German sociologists at the first Soziologentag of the German Sociological Society held in Frankfurt in 1910. The subject was introduced by Alfred Ploetz, a member of the first managing committee of the DGS, in his talk titled *Die Begriffe Rasse und Gesellschaft und einige damit zusammenhängende Probleme* [The terms “race” and “society” and some related problems]. Ploetz’s use of biology and race for the examination of society was met with great reservations. Critics emphasized the importance of class and milieu; the impossibility of talking about race without prejudice, thus violating society’s *Werturteilsfreiheit*; and the lack of clarity of the term “race” itself.

Ploetz argued that eugenics were inherently conflicted with social betterment schemes society because the latter encouraged mutual aid also for the weak. This claim incited resistance from both the society’s president, Ferdinand Tönnies, and the founder of the Austrian Society for Sociology, Robert Goldscheid. Goldscheid questioned Ploetz’s ability to use science to objectively differentiate between positive and negative hereditary influences and his disregard for the effects of social and environmental conditions on social degeneration.<sup>59</sup> Tönnies added that physical weakness and lack of lineage were not necessarily detrimental to evolution. To demonstrate this, Tönnies presented Moses Mendelssohn as an example. Whereas none of his ancestors achieved fame and renown, the “deformed cripple” Mendelssohn produced a dynasty of geniuses, including the composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Goldscheid reinforced the argument by pointedly asking Ploetz: “Would society have been better off if Moses Mendelssohn had been selected out?”<sup>60</sup>

The mention of Mendelssohn alluded to an important undercurrent of the debate: the place of Jews in modern society. As the sociologist and expert on German Jewry Michal Bodemann pointed out, in the discussion following Ploetz’s talk almost none of the obvious “others” in Germany were mentioned, be they defined in ethnic terms or as members of the lower classes. Instead, the discussion focused on the United States or Greek and Roman antiquity. Only the rapid reproduction of Poles was specifically mentioned as a threat to Germany, while other ethnic minorities in the north and west, as well as the influx of Eastern Eu-

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<sup>59</sup> Ploetz, “Die Begriffe Rasse und Gesellschaft und einige damit zusammenhängende Probleme,” in *Verhandlungen des Ersten Deutschen Soziologentages*, ed. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Sauer & Auvermann KG, 1969), 141–143.

<sup>60</sup> Ploetz, “Die Begriffe Rasse und Gesellschaft,” 148–150 and 160.

ropean Jews, often derogatorily labeled as Ostjuden, were ignored.<sup>61</sup> Max Weber rejected the factuality of Ploetz's claims concerning the Polish danger and that African Americans were intellectually and morally inferior. For Weber, the interesting question was why these claims were so popular. The supposed biological truths behind them were not worthy of investigation. Ultimately, it was Werner Sombart who attempted to redeem the term "race" for use in sociology. In his concluding words Sombart argued that although the scientific foundations of racial theories were still lacking, the conversation between sociology and racial biology had just begun. Weber concurred.<sup>62</sup>

Oppenheimer was not present at the first Soziologentag, but his conception of the state as organized exploitation of one class by another was cited by the social policy expert and liberal Reichstag deputy Heinz Potthoff to correct what he regarded as a simplistic understanding of society by Ploetz.<sup>63</sup> This objection exposed what the introduction of race into sociological discourse was trying to divert from: Marxism and class theory.<sup>64</sup> This reference to Oppenheimer foreshadowed the proceedings at the second Soziologentag in which Oppenheimer openly pitted class against race.

The second Soziologentag, held in Berlin in 1912, was devoted to the "concepts of people and nation in relation to race, the state and language."<sup>65</sup> Sombart, who in the meantime had become an ardent advocate of the Zionist movement, emphasized the importance of clarifying the concepts of nations and peoples in support of Zionism. He asked: "how else should we take a position regarding, after all, the most important nationalities question today – the Jewish one?" Sombart asserted that, in contrast to the first Soziologentag, the Jewish question should now be made explicit. "We would skirt the issue if we did not admit into discussion in some form the question, so burning for millions of Jews: Are we a people, are we a nation – and do we have the right to act

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61 Y. Michal Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew: Werner Sombart and Classical German Sociology on Nationalism and Race," in *Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology*, ed. Marcel Stoetzler (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 115–116. It can, of course, be argued that the discussion about the Polish influx referred to Ostjuden.

62 Ploetz, "Die Begriffe Rasse und Gesellschaft," 151–165. At the founding of the DGS, Weber and Sombart recommended appointing Ploetz to the society's board of directors. Despite his objections to Ploetz's talk and reservations against a deference of sociology to racial theories, that very same evening Weber tried to convince Ploetz in a board meeting to assist in the founding of a social-biological section of the DGS; see Friedrich Lenger, *Werner Sombart, 1863–1941: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed. (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1995), 202–203.

63 Alfred Ploetz, "Die Begriffe Rasse und Gesellschaft," 146.

64 Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 119–120.

65 Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 119.

as one?”<sup>66</sup> Weber agreed with Sombart that sociologists needed to deal with the Jewish question.<sup>67</sup> Tönnies and Simmel opposed Sombart’s proposition, the latter perhaps in precognition of the connection that might be made between his Jewish heritage and his position on race<sup>68</sup> – accusations that Oppenheimer faced at the convention as a Jew openly challenging racial theorists.

In fact, in his lecture on *Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie* [The racial theoretical philosophy of history] Oppenheimer was the only speaker at the second Soziologentag to take up the issue of race. The reaction of the founders of German sociology was immediate. According to the *Jüdische Rundschau*, Oppenheimer “quite spitefully” attacked leading antisemitic thinker Houston Stewart Chamberlain in his lecture, upon which some of Chamberlain’s followers left the hall in protest.<sup>69</sup> The article described how, during the discussion, “the attacker was turned into the attacked.” The counterattack was spearheaded by Werner Sombart. “During the second German Sociologists’ Convention ... there was ... quite a severe clash between Dr. Franz Oppenheimer and Prof. Werner Sombart – not on the Jewish question, but on its underlying sociological problem, the racial question.” It was clear to the audience that talking about the racial question in Germany was another way of talking about the Jewish question: “Of course, when arguing about ‘race and milieu’ the Jewish question lurks not too far in the background. Had the discussion at the Soziologentag only lasted for another hour it would have turned into the most beautiful debate on Jews.”<sup>70</sup>

Max Weber was again elaborately outspoken against the implementation of sketchy racial theories lacking empirical foundations in historical analysis, repeating arguments he made against Ploetz’s lecture at the first Soziologentag.<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that the opposition to Oppenheimer’s rejection of the benefit or racial theories for sociology, as reflected in the minutes, was not nearly of the same intensity and length as the ones to Ploetz’s talk at the prior Soziologentag. This might, however, have been the result of the discussion being held after three different talks, with the respondents addressing all three. The *Jüdische Run-*

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<sup>66</sup> Bodemann, “Coldly Admiring the Jew,” 120.

<sup>67</sup> Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 204; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie, ed., *Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Soziologentages* (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag Sauer & Auvermann KG, 1969), 49.

<sup>68</sup> Bodemann, “Coldly Admiring the Jew,” 120–121. Simmel had already faced antisemitic attacks hindering his academic career; see Morris-Reich, “From Assimilationist Antiracism,” 161.

<sup>69</sup> This incident was mentioned in the Zionist coverage of the second Soziologentag but not in the official protocol; see “Sombart wider Oppenheimer,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, November 1, 1912, 420.

<sup>70</sup> “Sombart wider Oppenheimer,” 420.

<sup>71</sup> Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 185–192; Ploetz, “Die Begriffe Rasse und Gesellschaft,” 153–160.

*dschau* conveyed the heated atmosphere and protests. Additionally, the fact that most respondents focused on Oppenheimer's talk and the question of race, instead of the other two lectures about nation and nationalism, indicated where the hearts really were. Bodemann surmised: "In sum, then, one gains the impression that the discussion of nation, ethnos and race, was the idea of the sociological triumvirate Weber, Tönnies and Sombart – but with the exception of race – of virtually no interest to the rank and file of German sociology at the time."<sup>72</sup>

## Oppenheimer versus Sombart: On Jews and the Spirit of Capitalism

It was not a coincidence that the *Jüdische Rundschau*, the organ of the Zionist Federation of Germany, chose the title "Oppenheimer versus Sombart" for their coverage of the second Soziologentag. It was virtually a dispute between two of their own at a time when Oppenheimer was falling out of favor with young German Zionists. The Jewish press had been furious since Sombart had published his immensely popular, though scholarly deficient, book *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (*The Jews and Modern Capitalism*) in 1911. The book was followed by a series of lectures published in the following year in a pamphlet titled *Die Zukunft der Juden* [The future of the Jews] in which Sombart, whose successful book catapulted him to a position as an expert on Jewish affairs, aired his personal opinion on the future of Jews in Germany. His philosemitic theses on Jewish contribution to the founding of a global economy,<sup>73</sup> as well as his touting of Jews as a separate species or race (a word he used only

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<sup>72</sup> Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 122.

<sup>73</sup> According to Abraham Barkai, Sombart's apologetic admirers were mistaken in understanding his recognition of the Jewish contribution to capitalism as a compliment. Sombart's condemnation of capitalism's harmfulness for Germany was very clear in his later works; see Avraham Barkai, "Judentum, Juden und Kapitalismus: Ökonomische Vorstellungen von Max Weber und Werner Sombart," in *Menora: Jahrbuch für deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, ed. Julius H. Schoeps et al. (Munich: Piper, 1994), 31–32. For a short English discussion of Weber and Sombart's views on capitalism, see Colin Loader, "Werner Sombart's 'The Jews and Modern Capitalism,'" in *Society* 6 (2001): 72–73; Mendes-Flohr, "Werner Sombart's," 96–97. In an attempt to appease the Nazi regime, Sombart took a hard stand against the Jewish capitalist spirit, despite refusing to wholeheartedly endorse biological racism; see Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 127–128. A detailed study of Sombart's activity in the Nazi era can be found in Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 358–387.

in quotation marks<sup>74</sup>) with a distinct psychology, were at the center of debate between Zionists and the German Jewish establishment.

Sombart's public speeches on the future of the Jews were very popular. Over 1,500 pricy tickets were sold to his Berlin lecture which was also attended by non-Zionist Jews. The extent of Sombart's popularity was considered by Zionists a gauge of their success in preparing the groundwork for Jewish acceptance of Sombart's assertion of biological differences between Jews and their host nations.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, Sombart was denounced as an antisemite by Liberal, as well as Orthodox Jews, who because of his popularity could not simply ignore his treatises. Sombart's open support for Zionist ideology was a boon for German Zionism; his lectures received broad coverage by liberal Jewish-owned newspapers, breaking a fifteen-year-long hush up of the movement.<sup>76</sup>

Oppenheimer also contributed to the media coverage of Sombart. He was commissioned by *Die Welt*, the main organ of the ZO, to write a review of *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*<sup>77</sup> in which he inverted the causality of Sombart's argument. Sombart claimed that "Israel passes over Europe like the sun; at its coming, new life bursts forth; at its going, all falls into decay."<sup>78</sup> Oppenheimer argued that the Jews were not the source of capitalist abundance, but rather the political system – democracy – which attracted them in the first place. Subsequently, when the "Junker-clerical reactionaries" strangled democracy and commercial-industrial life, an exodus of Jews and economic decline ensued.<sup>79</sup>

Oppenheimer agreed with Sombart's portrayal of Jews as important agents of a globalized colonial trade network. The diaspora of Jews, connected through a common religion and language, facilitated this process. He also conceded that Jews have a certain unique characteristic or psychological race which he de-

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74 Moshe Zimmerman, "Locating Jews in Capitalism: From Ludolf Holst to Werner Sombart," in *National Economies: Volks-Wirtschaft, Racism and Economy in Europe between the Wars (1918–1939/45)*, ed. Christoph Kreutzmüller (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 45.

75 Christian Dietrich, *Verweigerte Anerkennung: Selbstbestimmungsdebatten im 'Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens' vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2014), 92–95. For more on the debate on Sombart between Zionists and the C.V. newspaper *Im Deutschen Reich*, see *ibid.*, 90–101. Interestingly, Sombart's pamphlet *Die Zukunft der Juden* was translated into Hebrew by David Ben Gurion, Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 127.

76 Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893–1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 190–193.

77 NLI Archives Schwad 01 01 163 Franz Oppenheimer.

78 Cited in Loader, "Werner Sombart's," 73.

79 Franz Oppenheimer, "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben," *Die Welt*, June 9, 1911, 535–536.

scribed as a unilaterally developed intellect resulting in Jewish purposefulness, mobility and adaptability.<sup>80</sup> Oppenheimer interpreted Sombart's description of Jews as "strangers"<sup>81</sup> in a social-psychological sense. As a result of living in their own segregated merchant quarters, Jews had no roots, developing a "colonist psychology" characterized by entrepreneurship. This was not typical to Jews alone but to all merchant people who generally assume a position of "strangers" in their places of residence.<sup>82</sup> The differences between Jews and their neighbors resulted in group conflicts which Oppenheimer accepted as ontological givens.<sup>83</sup> Yet Oppenheimer challenged Sombart's assertion that these objective conditions sufficed to protect Jews from complete assimilation, promptly recognizing that Sombart's opposition to assimilation informed his racial bias already expressed in *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*.<sup>84</sup>

In an apologetic manner typical of the nineteenth century, Oppenheimer attempted to engage Sombart's arguments, and those of other antisemites, by reframing the origin of Jewish idiosyncrasies.<sup>85</sup> Sombart hypothesized that these were the racial characteristics of a nomadic people formed in the desert heat, hence the exact opposite characteristics of the "clammy and wet forest people" in the north among which the Jews were now living. After his usual disclaimer on reverting to racial theories before exhausting all social and environmental explanations, Oppenheimer suggested a sociological as opposed to an historical counterargument, namely that Jewish multilingualism was the source of distinction. According to Oppenheimer, most Jews spoke at least three languages: Yiddish or Ladino, depending on their origin, Hebrew, and local vernacular. Oppenheimer hypothesized that a social-psychological analysis would show that polyglots develop a more abstract and free approach than monolinguals.<sup>86</sup> While many historians adopted a binary, dichotomic approach attributing the Jew's affiliation with one culture or another, Oppenheimer and other contemporary Zionist thinkers such as Max Brod regarded polyglots as an independent category. According

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**80** Oppenheimer, "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben," *Die Welt*, 535–536.

**81** For more on Sombart's phenomenology of Jews as "strangers," see Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 117–118.

**82** Oppenheimer, "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben," *Die Welt*, 535–536.

**83** For a typology of antisemitism theories and the difference between real conflict theories and constructivist theories, see Klaus Holz and Jan Weyand, "Von der Judenfrage zur Antisemitenfrage: Frühe Erklärungsmodelle von Antisemitismus," in *Beschreibungsversuche der Judenfeindschaft: Zur Geschichte der Antisemitismusforschung vor 1944*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hahn and Olaf Kistenmacher (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015), 179–180.

**84** Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 215.

**85** See Klaus Holz and Jan Weyand, "Von der Judenfrage zur Antisemitenfrage," 183.

**86** Oppenheimer, "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben," *Die Welt*, 537.

to Brod, the polyglot experience even strengthened Jewish nationalism and Zionism by slowing assimilation and preserving an independent Jewish identity.<sup>87</sup>

Oppenheimer had already expounded on the connection between Jews and capitalism almost a decade earlier, in an article called “Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus” [The beginnings of Jewish capitalism], which was published in the journal *Ost und West* in the same year in which Sombart published his first major work *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*. In his opinion, Sombart’s book reinforced his ideas of land enclosure being the origin of capitalism, as laid out in his 1898 book *Großgrundbesitz und soziale Frage* [Large estates and the social question]. Oppenheimer even accused Sombart of plagiarizing his work.<sup>88</sup> In his book *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*, Sombart did not yet attribute to Jews a major role in the formation of capitalism, though he did dedicate a chapter to the matter.<sup>89</sup> On the contrary, Sombart stated that capitalism “grew ... from deep down in the innermost European soul.”<sup>90</sup> While the predominant contemporary view was that capitalism began with the Reformation and the conquest of America, Sombart traced the advent of capitalism to the colonization of the East and the sacking of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade which began in 1202:

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**87** Shumsky, *Ben Prag li-Yerushalayim*, 81.

**88** Oppenheimer was upset that Sombart only mentioned his theory of the origin of capitalism once in the entire work, dismissing his argument with no further explanation besides the positivistic methodology. Further, he claimed Sombart plagiarized his thoughts and findings on some of his main theories, such as on conflicts of interest and the cooperative spirit; see Franz Oppenheimer, “Sombarts ‘moderner Kapitalismus,’” in *Die Kultur, Halbmonatsschrift* 1 (1903): 1076, 1151 and 1215–1216. Sombart’s reaction to Oppenheimer’s accusations was “half perturbed, half amused”; see Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 428, footnote 67. In the second edition of *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*, Oppenheimer was not mentioned at all. Kruse attempted to explain Sombart’s brief dismissal of Oppenheimer’s thesis by analyzing their different approaches to capitalism. His conclusion was that they did not share the same premises. Oppenheimer was aware of this problem, accusing Sombart of failing to supply a sociological explanation of the origin of capitalism. Oppenheimer’s axiom was that individuals are social-psychologically determined in their actions by group interests. Sombart, on the other hand, doubted the capability of sociology to determine the interaction between environmental influences and inner motivation. Due to this methodological concern, Sombart suggested that sociology focus solely on internal motivation and, in this case, on the capitalistic spirit; see Kruse, *Soziologie und “Gegenwartskrise,”* 119–136.

**89** Bodemann, “Coldly Admiring the Jew,” 124–125. This was also reflected in Oppenheimer’s review of Sombart’s work. The contribution of Jews to the development of a capitalist spirit was only mentioned once as the essential Other, the “stranger to the tribe”; see Oppenheimer, “Sombarts ‘moderner Kapitalismus,’” 1080.

**90** Cited in Kruse, *Soziologie und “Gegenwartskrise,”* 121.



“In this year begins the age of appropriation of the Orient by Western Europeans.”<sup>91</sup>

In “The Beginnings of Jewish Capitalism,” Oppenheimer referred to some of Sombart’s tropes, albeit with a different tenor: e. g., Jews were shaped by the desert turning them into noble nomads;<sup>92</sup> or the fact that Jews possessed full civil rights in some places.<sup>93</sup> In Oppenheimer’s narrative Jews were initially biblical shepherds not merchants, and subsequently farmers and mercenaries. Oppenheimer pursued a strategy of normalizing Jewish history by depicting it as undergoing the same historical-social processes as any other people, as described in his anthropological work *The State*. Hence, the Jewish capitalist turn was no different than that of any other nation originating in land accumulation and the creation of a class state where Jews exploited other Jews. Oppenheimer reminded Jewish readers that class division still existed among Jews, with Jewish capitalists exploiting Jewish proletarians in the sweat shops of New York and London, and in the factories of Poland and Russia. The words of the prophets served as a reminder of this state of affairs and of the early division between men of spirit and men of worldly power. Oppenheimer saw the conflict between these two groups as the motor of progress for Israel and other nations.<sup>94</sup>

With the normalization of Jewish history, Oppenheimer attempted to counter what the antisemitism expert Klaus Holz has deemed the “figure of the third.” In this aspect of antisemitism, Oppenheimer argued, Jews have a unique national character like all other nations. However, the Jewish national character is like no other, because it undermines the ethos of all other nations it comes in contact with. Unlike other nations, Jews are supposedly incapable of forming states, but only a “state within a state.”<sup>95</sup> Oppenheimer targeted the antisemitic trope of Jewish capitalist spirit as an anomaly infiltrating and corrupting other nations. Jews were supposedly a nation among nations, making unique contributions to a European culture founded on liberalism and nationalism.

Oppenheimer took it upon himself to elucidate some of these contributions, which he believed were underestimated, and how they positively reflect on Jewish character. For example, he suggested that class interest forbade the translation of the Old Testament into modern vernaculars, due to the explosive potential of this antislavery epic of a once-proud desert people. Translations of the proph-

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**91** Cited in O.B., “Die Anfänge des Kapitalismus,” *Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 14 (1903): 103.

**92** Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus,” *Ost und West* 2 (1902): 393.

**93** Oppenheimer, “Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus,” 433.

**94** Oppenheimer, “Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus,” 327–328.

**95** Holz and Weyand, “Von der Judenfrage zur Antisemitenfrage,” 174–175.



ets' sermons of liberation in the early modern era contributed greatly to the spirit of the French Revolution and the downfall of the ancien régime. "It was the wind from the south, from the hot deserts of Sinai, that melted the ice and brought spring," Oppenheimer wrote, adding that Jews were despised because they were "children of freedom" and "born revolutionaries."<sup>96</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, it was not an inherent capitalist spirit but the Jews' free spiritedness that led them to become merchants. In a low mobility, slave-based society the courageous free-spirited had only one feasible prospect – to break free – and that meant becoming a merchant and daring the perils of primitive travel. Again, Oppenheimer protested against identifying this choice as inherently Jewish. He claimed that this was not only the case in Jewish society but in all societies of antiquity, which tended to be trading nations. Therefore, the Jews were not a distinct *Schacherer* [haggler] people among warrior and farming peoples, as Sombart claimed in 1903, quoting Karl Marx,<sup>97</sup> but were a *Schacherer* nation among *Schacherer* nations. According to Oppenheimer, competition among merchant people was the main source of animosity against Jews in antiquity, as well as of contemporary middle-class antisemitism.<sup>98</sup>

There was, however, one major difference in the development of a Jewish trade network to that of other Mediterranean people, Oppenheimer noted. Jews hardly founded their own colonies. They mostly settled as guests in their places of trade. The advantage of refraining from colonization was that their trade network was the largest, spanning the whole known world at the time.<sup>99</sup> The ethnic separation in their places of settlement, and not their supposedly incurable *Schacherer* spirit, enabled their network to survive into the Middle Ages, long after the Roman-Hellenistic world collapsed and Greek was forgotten. The Jewish diaspora thus endured, he concluded, and with it, Hebrew as the only lingua franca in trade, which, in comparison to English, was almost impossible for other Europeans to learn.<sup>100</sup> Since the term "Semite" was originally derived from the field of linguistics, it clearly set apart the Jews from Europeans. Yet difference in language was not difference in race, since any language could ultimately be learned. Oppenheimer even claimed that "it is becoming more and more questionable if the Jews were at all a Semitic people and not, on the contrary, an Aryan herdsman tribe forced to adopt a Semitic language, only to govern a peo-

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96 Oppenheimer, "Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus," 394.

97 Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 188–189.

98 Oppenheimer, "Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus," 400–401.

99 Oppenheimer, "Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus," 402.

100 Oppenheimer, "Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus," 437–439.

ple of this tongue who were far ahead of them in all cultural and linguistic development.”<sup>101</sup>

For Oppenheimer, it was clear that Jews belonged on equal footing with Aryans as a “master class.” He argued that Jewish uniqueness resulted from Jews being an urbanized upper class. City dwellers were supposedly more intellectual, rational, and lacking in tradition and, as a result, revolutionary in comparison with rural inhabitants. The reason that most Jews lived in urban areas was that the Jews of the diaspora were historically not the Semitic farmers of Judea but the upper classes, the former “Aryan herdsmen.” This is an assertion drawn from biblical sources depicting the destruction of the Temple and the ensuing diaspora that Sombart also made. According to Oppenheimer, there was a sociological law that an upper class could never entirely be demoted to serfdom. A class who has lived off governance and management could never, as a whole, turn to manual labor. And since Jews were cut off from rural landownership, he continued, they flocked into commercial or medical urban professions. This was how Jews evolved into a distinct – nonsemitic – race. It did not occur in the desert or in any other primordial condition, but only in the diaspora.<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, Jewish idiosyncrasy was not irreversible, according to Oppenheimer. “They have become a race through conditions that, in my opinion, we can completely identify, which is why it can be expected that the difference will disappear when Jews would be provided, for a long enough time, the same conditions as their host nations.”<sup>103</sup> This was completely contrary to the position Sombart expressed in *Die Zukunft der Juden* that, even if Jews were to try to give up their uniqueness and forget their glorious history, they would still be perceived as Jews.<sup>104</sup> As historian Christian Dietrich pointed out, Sombart’s concession of the possibility that Jews might give up their unique characteristics was merely a rhetorical argument, since, in Sombart’s essentialist view, Jews could not flee from the history that shaped them. Any attempt to do so would be bound to fail since they would still be recognized and labeled as Jews by outsiders.<sup>105</sup>

Assuming that Zionist readers of *Die Welt* might have been disappointed with his rebuttal of essential Jewish characteristics, Oppenheimer tried to soften the blow in the concluding remarks of his Sombart critic: “And even if the Jews have no reason to consider themselves as a primordial race of superior talent,

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101 Oppenheimer, “Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus,” 399.

102 Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die Welt*, 535–537.

103 Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die Welt*, 537.

104 Werner Sombart, *Die Zukunft der Juden* (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1912), 53.

105 Dietrich, *Verweigerte Anerkennung*, 91–92.

they can still boast with noble pride of their lofty ancestors who in the fields of economics, as well as science and art, marched everywhere at the head of the civilizing army band.”<sup>106</sup> For Oppenheimer, Jewish acknowledgement of their unique history did not have to be accompanied by any psychological, biological or racial trademarks to support a positive Jewish identity in a liberal society where differences between Jews and non-Jews were constructed.

Oppenheimer published a second review of Sombart’s book in *Die Neue Rundschau*, a literary journal associated with the naturalism movement for which he had been sporadically writing for approximately fifteen years. This article was much longer and targeted a non-Jewish audience. Oppenheimer’s affirmation of Sombart’s description of the Jewish mindset, while negating his conclusions on Jewish racial uniqueness and role in capitalism, were essentially the same. Oppenheimer clarified for a non-Jewish audience why it was important to counteract racial theories promoted both by “antisemitic and national Jewish racial chauvinists,” postulating a difference, in essence, between Jews and non-Jews.<sup>107</sup> Oppenheimer was perceptive in noticing that Sombart primarily referenced Jewish and Zionist writers when talking about race.<sup>108</sup> Whereas the conclusion of his review in *Die Welt* fostered Jewish pride, this review ended on a different note: “Therefore, the Jews have no reason to lapse into delusions of grandeur. They are also not creators but, rather, creations of their time.”<sup>109</sup> Jews were not an eternal Other but as historical as all other nations.

In this sense, Oppenheimer argued, the Jewish social situation as merchants and foreigners, together with their civic inequality, made them more susceptible to capitalism, even in places where Jews enjoyed full citizenship and were not totally restricted as “half citizens,” a differentiation made by Sombart to argue that Jews were not forced to work as money lenders due to legal restrictions, but tended to do so due to their nature. Oppenheimer claimed that in general, Jews tended towards gainful activity and preferred to stick together in ghettos with their coreligionists and fellow merchants because of the social conditions of the diaspora. Even if the term “ghetto” was a specific reference to Jewish quarters, the phenomena was not unique to the Jews but was common among merchants in foreign lands, including German merchants of the Hanseatic League. So, Oppenheimer concluded, it was in the merchant ghettos of the diaspora

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**106** Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die Welt*, 537.

**107** Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die neue Rundschau (Freie Bühne)* 22 (1911): 901.

**108** E. g., Adolf Jellinek, Ignaz Zolschan, Arthur Ruppın and Felix Rosenblüth; see Zimmerman, “Locating Jews in Capitalism,” 45.

**109** Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die neue Rundschau*, 904.

that Jews developed a capitalist mindset not unlike other merchant people in the Greco-Roman and even German world.<sup>110</sup> Oppenheimer's alternative genealogy of capitalism gave Sombart's claim, that it originated in the desert wanderings of antiquity, the appearance of a preamble for a fabulous metaphor for the supposedly irreconcilable contrast between German forest and Jewish desert.

As scholars have shown, Jewish religion in fact had very little to do with the biblical stories of nomads. Yet it shaped Sombart's view of the Jews.<sup>111</sup> This common misperception was based on Bible commentaries and Talmudic law, which reflected the social and economic predicament of Jewish life in the diaspora as an unequal minority. This was Oppenheimer's response to Sombart's claim that these commentaries contain nothing "that the modern businessman does not regard as right and proper, nothing that is not taken as a matter of course in every modern business."<sup>112</sup> Yet if religion was the expression of the *Volksseele*, as Sombart romantically claimed, the Jewish soul was not shaped in the desert but dynamically evolved in Europe to fill the space left for them by their host nations, and was shared by other European nations such as the Scottish Puritans.<sup>113</sup> Thus, Oppenheimer oscillated between attempting to positively reframe the desert metaphor and denying that Jewish character had anything to do with the desert. In a further review during the First World War, Oppenheimer quoted German economist and social reformer Lujo Brentano's criticism of Sombart's selective use of biblical sources, misunderstanding of religious thought, and misconceptions of what a desert character would be, granting the Jews ever really were a nomadic desert people.<sup>114</sup>

In his emphasis on the religious, and specifically origin of capitalism, instead of on racial aspects, Oppenheimer alluded to the social-religious approach of fellow sociologist Max Weber.<sup>115</sup> Oppenheimer, Sombart and Weber composed the "triumvirate of social sciences playing an important role in the founding

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110 Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 242.

111 In fact, even though Sombart dedicated over seventy pages of his book to Jewish religious principles, they played only a secondary role compared to racial aspects in his argumentation that Jews were the harbingers of capitalism; see Barkai, "Judentum, Juden und Kapitalismus," 29.

112 Cited in Loader, "Werner Sombart's," 74.

113 Oppenheimer, "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben," *Die neue Rundschau*, 894–896.

114 Franz Oppenheimer, "Soziologische Tagebüchblätter: 2," *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, October 25, 1916, 52–54.

115 Oppenheimer and Weber agreed with Weber's classification of other Jewish characteristics through a socioreligious analysis, such as voluntary, religiously motivated isolation and pariah social position. For more on Weber's analysis of Jews and capitalism, see Barkai, "Judentum, Juden und Kapitalismus," 28–30.

phase of the economic discipline ‘sociology.’ They were influenced, albeit differently, by the historical school of national economics.”<sup>116</sup> And, indeed, it was Weber’s criticism of *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* that prompted Sombart to reevaluate his position on the source of capitalism, leading to his claim in his book that Jews embodied the capitalist spirit long before the Puritans.<sup>117</sup> Although somewhat conceding to Weber, Sombart remained dissatisfied with religious-sociological explanations of capitalism, leading him to advance the argument of a Jewish idiosyncrasy founded on racial differences.<sup>118</sup>

In his rebuttal of Sombart, Oppenheimer played with Darwinist selection, suggesting that Sombart had neglected to consider the evolutionary effect of Jews leaving the fold through baptism. Taking a Zionist, antiassimilationist position, Oppenheimer regarded the assimilationists as weak and their departure from Judaism as strengthening the Jewish “species.”<sup>119</sup> Although Oppenheimer rejected baptism of his contemporaries, he had a positive opinion of baptism as a form of integration in the early nineteenth century. He viewed those early conversions as ensuing out of a magnetism to a Protestantism rooted in humanism and the early Christian ideals of human goodness and love, which appealed to Jews with German *Bildung*. They were an expression of noble religious tendencies and not an answer to exclusion. In contrast, conversions in his days were a “cowardly retreat from unjust arbitrariness,” which he considered a futile and vain attempt at integration.<sup>120</sup>

Sombart did, however, consider the question of baptism, as can be seen in his reply to an inquiry of journalist and novelist Artur Landsberger. Landsberger asked Sombart and other authors, including Oppenheimer, to share their opinions on three possible future scenarios: full Jewish assimilation, the founding of a Jewish state or prolongation of the current situation. The phrasing of the last option implied that a harmonious coexistence of Jews as a distinct group would be impossible.<sup>121</sup> The results were published in 1912 in a book called *Ju-*

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**116** Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 175.

**117** Bodemann, “Coldly Admiring the Jew,” 125; Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 190.

**118** Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 197.

**119** Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die neue Rundschau*, 897.

**120** Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 39–40.

**121** The third question was: “What would happen if neither 1 or 2 occur? Should we be concerned about conflicts and what would be the nature of these conflicts?” The questions Artur Landsberger raised here about the de-Judaization of Germany became the starting point for his dystopian novel *Berlin ohne Juden* [Berlin without Jews] published in 1925. However, in the novel Jewish life in Germany did not end as a result of assimilation or Zionism, but due to expulsion; see Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 212.

*Judentaufen* [Jewish baptisms]. Sombart maintained that Judaism and Jewish peculiarity could be eliminated through assimilation, but only on a hypothetical level since Jews cannot physically change, despite contrary claims by milieu theoreticians such as Oppenheimer. “You cannot ‘leave a race’ like you would a church,” Sombart argued. Full assimilation could only be brought about when the two main conditions upholding a people – religion and endogamy – would be eroded.<sup>122</sup> In his pamphlet *Die Zukunft der Juden* to which he referred the reader, he doubted that in the long run endogamy would ever cease. Sombart argued that due to the dominance of Jewish attributes in the heredity process, when Jews, baptized or not, marry non-Jews, the Jewish appearance persists over generations. These half-breeds would be easily recognizable to the prejudiced public, dooming the assimilation process. Shunned by majority society, many baptized Jews would ultimately end up marrying Jews.<sup>123</sup>

In Oppenheimer’s contribution to *Judentaufen* he argued that a total assimilation of Jews in Germany was not feasible in the next generations. And even if it were, it would make absolutely no difference to the future development of capitalism in Germany.<sup>124</sup> Hence even if Sombart’s description of the Jewish capitalist mindset was accurate, Oppenheimer argued, it was not the source of capitalism and, more certainly, did not pose a danger to Germanness. The idea that a Jewish capitalist spirit endangered its German antithesis spirit was an important staple of antisemitism since the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>125</sup> Oppenheimer acknowledged that Jews played an extremely important role in colonial expansion of global markets, and that both North and South America had become a “Jewish land.”<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, he did not see Jews as being omnipresent and thought this should not be used to explain capitalism’s global triumphant procession. For example, he argued, Japanese capitalism developed without any Jewish in-

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**122** Werner Sombart, ed., *Judentaufen*, with the assistance of Artur Landsberger (Munich: George Müller Verlag, 1912), 6–9.

**123** Sombart, *Die Zukunft der Juden*, 44–46.

**124** Sombart, *Judentaufen*, 115.

**125** For a genealogy of the concept of Judaization in German thought and especially of capitalism being a contagious “Jewish spirit,” see Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 45–68.

**126** Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die neue Rundschau*, 891. The view that Jews were central pillars of trade within Europe and to the Orient was widespread since the nineteenth century; see Barkai, “Judentum, Juden und Kapitalismus,” 27.

volvement.<sup>127</sup> Even Sombart called attempts to trace the Japanese back to the lost tribes of Israel “chimeric hypotheses.” Instead, Sombart turned to explanations of economic acculturation to explain Japanese capitalism, while admitting the shortcomings of purely racial explanations of world history.<sup>128</sup>

For Oppenheimer, understanding the expansion of capitalism required a different approach. He was not a supporter of the notion of a capitalist spirit: “Everywhere the capitalist spirit appears to be the primary, sole decisive moment ... Such ghosts lurk only where the torch of real critical science doesn’t illuminate.”<sup>129</sup> Unlike Sombart and Weber, who located the origin of capitalism in a historical context, Oppenheimer saw capitalism arising from universally applicable natural laws of human behavior. Capitalism still evolved historically according to Oppenheimer, who, after all, received his doctorate degree from Gustav Schmoller, founder of the historical school of national economics. He argued that capitalism began in the nomadic phases of human history and increased with the extent of land enclosure and the formation of class states, a process that repeated itself all over the world. Modern states were thus founded on capitalist relationships where one class was enslaved by another to work its ever-expanding dominions.<sup>130</sup> In his view, however, this was a general anthropological phenomenon not unique to any specific ethnic or religious groups. Furthermore, Oppenheimer criticized the historical school’s essentialist distortion of the *homo economicus* turning the human being into one who was “nothing but economic,” meaning that profit maximization permeated his spirit and all his action. By contrast, the liberal tradition limited profit maximization solely to the economic sphere of human behavior.<sup>131</sup>

With regards to its monocausal footing in land enclosure, Oppenheimer’s theory of the origin of capitalism mirrored antisemitic simplification, pinning capitalism solely on the Jews. However, its goals were exactly the opposite, placing class conflict and not racial conflict in the forefront. Oppenheimer strived to redeem all nations, including the Jews, from the negative aspects of capitalism, which he saw as resulting from sociopolitical transformations and not psychological shifts in values or the spreading of a spirit or mindset from one people

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127 In another place, Oppenheimer indeed claimed that Jews reached Thailand if not even Japan even before the Babylonian exile; see Oppenheimer, “Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus,” 402.

128 Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die neue Rundschau*, 903.

129 Cited in Kruse, *Soziologie und “Gegenwartskrise,”* 119.

130 Kruse, *Soziologie und “Gegenwartskrise,”* 124–125.

131 Oppenheimer, “Sombarts ‘moderner Kapitalismus,’” 1217–1219.

to another.<sup>132</sup> Hence, he concluded, a capitalist mindset among Jews was not a natural inclination but a result of their sociopolitical position of estrangement from European society. This manifested itself in negative economic relation to the nations among which Jews were living, as well as double morals. Double morals were, however, not specifically Jewish, according to Oppenheimer, but a universal characteristic of intergroup behavior. He even saw it as characteristic of the landed gentry.<sup>133</sup> Oppenheimer demonstrated that the double morals trope in antisemitic slander was a direct continuation of anti-Jewish resentment rooted in Christian tradition. For this purpose, he made reference to Max Weber's argument that the accusations of Jewish double morals in charging interest only to Christians were a method of legitimizing the occasional looting of Jewish possessions by the upper class. Oppenheimer argued that this continuity exposed the class interests underlying modern antisemitism.<sup>134</sup>

In his socioeconomic treatises, Oppenheimer differentiated between a positive and a negative form of capitalism. Positive capitalism was based on "economic means" meaning fair competition. Negative capitalism utilized "political means" based on violence, monopolies and coercion. In an attempt to counter antisemitic bias, Oppenheimer argued that in their dealings Jewish merchants utilized solely "economic means." Without state backing, they could hardly exercise forceful coercion in their business practices or exploit colonies. He explained that modern antisemitism was a reaction of old elites to successful Jewish integration and the gradual disappearance of ethnic differences. Furthermore, these elites were using well-tried exploitive "political means" to combat the free-market spirit Jews were bringing with them, the cooperative spirit of "economic means."<sup>135</sup>

With his defense of Jews, Oppenheimer was pursuing his declared mission to guard the threshold of the young science of sociology from fundamental corruption through racial theories. "The racial conception of history is not a science but a pseudoscience. It is the typical legitimating group ideology of the upper classes," Oppenheimer declared at the conclusion of his talk at the second Soziologentag. "It is a matter of nothing more than scientific mimicry; it is the

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**132** Oppenheimer, "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben," *Die neue Rundschau*, 902.

**133** Franz Oppenheimer, "Wir und die Anderen Gedanken Völkerpsychologie" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, *Politische Schriften*, ed. Julius H. Schoeps, Alphons Silbermann, and Hans Süsmuth (Berlin: De Gruyter Akademie Verlag, 1996), 437–438.

**134** Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 245–246.

**135** Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 241; Oppenheimer, "Wir und die Anderen," 437.



age-old neighborly hate, and the just as old class hate trying to smuggle itself into the halls of science with a stolen cloak.”<sup>136</sup>

Oppenheimer was not only speaking as a sociologist upholding *Werturteil-freiheit*, but as a social activist warning against the looming danger through scientific legitimization of race theories:

When even men of science and of such high esteem must pay tribute to such class-oriented suggestions, then it is no wonder that the large mass of *beati possidentes* absolutely luxuriate in it ... In its intensification and embitterment of social contrast, in its reinforcement of the propertied even against justified demands of the masses, in its legitimization of all absurdity of our order – therein lies the colossal danger of this theory and that is alone the reason why serious scientists must critically engage with it.<sup>137</sup>

Oppenheimer truly believed that the role of race should become a matter of sociological investigation, once the discipline would become strong enough in its theory and methodology to tackle the relationship between biology and society. He protested that in the discussion of his lecture he was accused of denying the historical influence of race.<sup>138</sup> What he perceived himself pursuing was distinguishing between subjective opinions and assumptions, on the one hand, and objective scientific knowledge, on the other:

I am personally not disinclined to assume that Negroes [sic] have a lower average cultural capacity than whites – but in order to grasp things scientifically, that is quantitatively, it is now necessary ... to totally ignore everything racial in the interim operations of science and to extrapolate things, as much as possible, from the objective composition of human groups.<sup>139</sup>

Sombart’s approach to the relationship between biology and sociology was diametrically opposed to Oppenheimer’s. Sombart asserted that social factors were subordinate and should only be considered where biological explanations fail.<sup>140</sup> Sombart subtly introduced into sociology a presumed polarity between German and Jewish mentalities metaphorically described as forest and desert. This paralleled the polarity between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the founding dichotomy of German sociology, insinuating that restoring the lost communal spirit

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**136** Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 135.

**137** Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 137.

**138** Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 98, footnote 1.

**139** Oppenheimer, “Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben,” *Die neue Rundschau*, 902.

**140** Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 199.

would necessitate warding off the Jewish spirit.<sup>141</sup> Further, as a renowned economic expert, Sombart's antisemitic claim that the Jewish spirit was the source of capitalist social estrangement, aimed to steer sociology away from Marxist materialist approaches to the social question and to distance the nascent academic field of sociology from the similarly sounding ideology of socialism.

Sombart admitted this intention in his response to Oppenheimer's talk at the second Soziologentag. Feigning scientific aloofness, Sombart often criticized the coarseness of racial theorists and claimed to use the word race "out of a lack of a better word for anthropologically uniform human groups."<sup>142</sup> Yet he argued that, although racial theories were far from perfect and tended to simplify, as overarching theories often do, "let us not underestimate the great merit of racial theory: that it has freed us from the domination of the materialist conception of history; that it has provided us with a new point of view."<sup>143</sup> In Sombart's opinion, a solution to the social question was synonymous with a solution to the "Jewish question," the most pertinent European racial question, which was the reason for his championing of Zionism. Although he emphasized that he was acting out of private conviction in this matter, and not out of his scientific observations,<sup>144</sup> it was certainly not perceived that way. And when Sombart in his personal manifesto argued out of personal experience, when it was impossible to bring empirical evidence for his claim of the futility of assimilation,<sup>145</sup> science and personal interest became inseparably intertwined.

## Reclaiming Intellectual Authority for the *Homo Mediterraneus*

Race was more important than class in the debate among early German sociologists. At the second Soziologentag there were no Marxist-oriented presentations.<sup>146</sup> Although Oppenheimer was not a Marxist, he certainly advocated a materialist conception of history. In his analysis of antisemitism he distinguished between race- and class-oriented arguments. "My sociological studies have convinced me that antisemitism is, essentially, social class struggle, not racial hate,"

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141 Paul Mendes-Flohr called attention to the similarities between Tönnies' *gesellschaftliche* man and Sombart's *homo Judaeus*; see Mendes-Flohr, "Werner Sombart's," 93.

142 Cited in Lenger, *Werner Sombart*, 199.

143 Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," 186; translation in Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 120.

144 Sombart, *Die Zukunft der Juden*, 8.

145 Sombart, *Die Zukunft der Juden*, 46–47.

146 Bodemann, "Coldly Admiring the Jew," 119–120.

Oppenheimer wrote in response to Artur Landsberger's third question about potential conflicts arising when Jews don't assimilate or emigrate to their own state.<sup>147</sup> It was to be observed in the context of other xenophobic world views: "Antisemitism represents a special case of an extremely common, primitive, group psychological fact: group hate."<sup>148</sup> Oppenheimer shared the deductive approach of social group theory with the other Jewish sociologists of the 1920s mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. They perceived it as a way to transcend their seemingly subjective involvement in the matter at hand.<sup>149</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, small differences were enough to spark tensions between social groups. The Jews, whom Oppenheimer considered to differ from their host nations in language, religion, social class and space, were therefore more susceptible to being hated. The dark-skinned complexion of what Oppenheimer called the *homo mediterraneus* caused them, he suggested, to stand out among the fair-skinned inhabitants in the northern lands.<sup>150</sup> Oppenheimer introduced the term *homo mediterraneus* to achieve two main goals. The first was to normalize Jewish history by advancing a historical narrative where Jewish uniqueness was blurred within the context of the Mediterranean merchant peoples of antiquity. The second was to place this history in a European narrative.

Oppenheimer's concept of the *homo mediterraneus* drew from Max Weber's reading of the religious and social life of ancient Israel in the context of their neighboring Mediterranean peoples.<sup>151</sup> Oppenheimer imagined Jews as a Mediterranean archetype, who even fully incorporated some of these merchant peoples, such as the Phoenicians, through mass conversions to Judaism.<sup>152</sup> He also argued that some blonde groups of the north, such the Khazars, assimilated into the Jewish people through conversion, further decreasing supposed Jewish homogeneity.<sup>153</sup> When referring to Germans or Czechs, Oppenheimer used the Latin term for north: *homo europaeus septentrionalis*.<sup>154</sup> He argued that, although the apparent physiognomic differences between Jews and Germans were real, it was questionable if they sufficed to exclude the Jewish *homo med-*

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147 Sombart, *Judentaufen*, 116.

148 Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 238.

149 Bodo Kahmann, "Norbert Elias' Soziologie," 388; Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 237–238.

150 Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 240–243.

151 Liebeschütz, "Max Weber's Historical Interpretation of Judaism," 42.

152 Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 243.

153 Oppenheimer, "Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus," 435.

154 Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus im Lichte der Soziologie," 240.

*itarraneus* from a European race which was divided into a northern and southern species:

It is certain that the white European represents a bodily and spiritually defined group within humanity of which, in turn, all members react uniformly to particular influences. That the Northern European is different in some things from the Southern European is also certain. The question is if these differences are based on race, i. e., a result of the original disposition of the elements entering cross-breeding – or if historical and climate influences produced different forms of humanity from primordial identical substrates.<sup>155</sup>

This excerpt was written by Oppenheimer at the beginning of the First World War, which he regarded as a prime example of how xenophobia was stirred up to counteract social integration of groups becoming increasingly similar. Towards the end of the war, Oppenheimer recalled the optimism with which Jews supported the war, believing in the emperor's *Burgfrieden* proclamation and the prospects of finally overcoming the last hurdles for full civil equality in Germany. According to Oppenheimer, they were wary that the upper classes, traditionally the bearers of anti-Jewish resentment, would be against it, due to their national chauvinism. After all, "antisemitism is only a kind of chauvinism directed inwards." Oppenheimer claimed the hate campaign was not racist since it did not target baptized Jews who, in his opinion, adopted upper-class consciousness in an exaggerated form that made them, for the time being, suitable for marriage and complete assimilation in their milieu.<sup>156</sup>

Oppenheimer's conclusion echoed some positive personal experiences with antisemitic intellectuals of the imperial era, such as with his habilitation advisor Adolph 15. In his memoirs, Oppenheimer recounted how, regardless of his anti-semitism, Wagner was a dear friend who "as a convinced Christian time after time expressed the wish that I traverse this last border separating me from his community. But he also understood that especially the elevated elements have the duty to remain loyal to their community."<sup>157</sup> According to Oppenheimer, the friendship was possible because of a shared educational formation and code of honor. Once, after reviewing Oppenheimer's habilitation paper, Wagner hesitantly complemented the analytical capabilities of his "Jewish head." Oppenheimer responded with laughter. Wagner laughed, too, patting Oppenheimer

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155 Oppenheimer, "Wir und die Anderen," 432.

156 Franz Oppenheimer, "Der Antisemitismus," *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, September 10, 1918, 527.

157 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 40.

on the back, while saying: “Look I am an antisemite and I also have a Jewish head.”<sup>158</sup>

Wagner and other social reformers associated with the antisemitic movement that began with the financial crisis of 1873 demonized Jewish capitalism. This capitalism of the Other was dangerous, they believed, because “the Jewish psyche” supposedly lacked the “anchor of brotherly love” that would make Christian capitalism receptive to the social reform Wagner and his fellow *Kathedersozialisten* were drafting.<sup>159</sup> This core theme continued to occupy early German sociology, as was demonstrated above in Oppenheimer’s debate with Sombart and indirectly with Weber.

According to Oppenheimer, the First World War debacle eroded the power of the upper classes who instigated the war. To deflect from their responsibility the ruling classes have unleashed a “new antisemitism” as a scapegoat for their war blunders. Nevertheless, aggressive national chauvinism, “which is nothing but the psychological reflex of the economic-political interests of the bourgeoisie,” was losing its sway as leftist parties representing the working class grew stronger. Similarly, class-based antisemitism seemed to be losing its influence as a dangerous political force and turning into a “harmless declaration of faith ... same as the real racial antisemitism, which also still rejects the baptized Jew and is mistakenly held for the ‘official’ [antisemitism] by the sociological layman.”<sup>160</sup>

For Oppenheimer, racial antisemitism was a mere declaration of faith because it was founded on irrational belief and lacked scientific support. Oppenheimer’s strategy to counter racial antisemitism was to expose its scientific shortcomings, as well as the motivations of its advocates. He strived to expose the subjectivity of racial theorists influenced by their respective milieus. He called

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**158** Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 205–206. At the end of the nineteenth century, racial anthropologists who advocated Lamarckian inheritance propagated the idea that the Jewish head or brain evolved to a bigger size and higher capacity because Jews were dependent on their intellectual capacities instead of than their muscles for survival. This also had negative connotations, as in Heinrich Graetz’s denigration of the Eastern European Talmud scholar developing only one single intellectual faculty, judgement, while oblivious to context; see Efron, “Scientific Racism,” 84–85. In his autobiography Oppenheimer subtly transvaluated the idea of the single intellectual faculty. Although he did not refer to it as specifically Jewish, Oppenheimer recounted a conversation with his mentor, the Jewish doctor and Noble laureate Paul Ehrlich, in which Ehrlich divided humanity into two types, “panoptic” and “monomaniacal.” According to Ehrlich, he and Oppenheimer belonged to the second group that can only focus on one thing, but very precisely; see Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 87–88.

**159** Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 77.

**160** Oppenheimer, “Der Antisemitismus,” 528.

the resulting bias “social-psychological determination” or in the words of Herbert Spencer “personal equation.”<sup>161</sup> While Jews were often considered too subjective to participate in the racial discourse, since they were the object of discussion, racial theorists were celebrated as objective sources of authority. Oppenheimer sought to turn the tables on antisemites by making them, instead of Jews, the object of academic scrutiny. This reversal aimed to undermine antisemites’ intellectual authority and wrest the imperious power of interpretation away from them.

With his involvement in racial and colonial discourses Oppenheimer targeted the scientific foundations of historical and mythological narratives at the core of German colonialism since the eighteenth century, as described by Zantop: “Since a colonial discourse could develop without being challenged by colonized subjects, or without being tested in a real colonial setting, it established itself not so much as ‘intellectual authority’ (Said) over distant terrains, rather than as mythological authority over the collective imagination.”<sup>162</sup> Jews were the first subject of German colonizing “intellectual authority,” as Susannah Heschel has demonstrated: “Part of the German orientalist project included the scholarly investigation of Judaism, whose political ramifications entailed not an overseas colonization, but a domestic one.”<sup>163</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, the common denominator of all racial theories was the goal of preserving oligarchical authority and repulsing democratic conceptions. Yet the individual theories were arbitrary and often contradictory. With a dash of humor, he demonstrated how sociological investigations successfully exposed the root of these contradictions in the subjective influence of the respective milieus of several racial theorists. While the aristocrat Gobineau envisioned the nobility as pure-blooded Germanics fighting the ignoble Romano Celts in the French Revolution, the socialist-inclined, bourgeois Ludwig Woltmann ascribed the same role to the revolutionaries. Oppenheimer’s main target, Chamberlain, emphasized the existence of dark-haired Germanic families, thus making it possible to surmise his own hair color. Oppenheimer added insult to injury by repeatedly implying that British-born Chamberlain was not a German.<sup>164</sup>

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161 E.g., Oppenheimer, “Physiologie und Pathologie,” 35.

162 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 7.

163 Susannah Heschel, “Revolt of the Colonized: Abraham Geiger’s *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as a Christian Hegemony in the Academy,” *New German Critique* 77 (1999): 62.

164 E.g., after discussing Chamberlain’s racial theory of world history Oppenheimer wrote that now “a German,” Albrecht Wirth, also advocated such a theory; see Oppenheimer, “Die Rassen-theorie der Weltgeschichte,” 999.

The intent here was not solely to aggravate his rivals. By arguing that Chamberlain was not German, Oppenheimer challenged Chamberlain's methodology. Chamberlain postulated that group insiders possessed an emotional capacity to recognize other insiders through the "sense of race in one's own bosom." Oppenheimer perceived this as an attempt to make up for lack of empirical evidence; as an admission that craniometry and physiometry failed at ascertaining hard-cut measurements to differentiate between races and especially between variations of supposedly white races. Therefore, Chamberlain had no objective principles for his definition of the Aryan, which included all Northern European groups such as the Celts, Slavs and Germans but excluded supposed Semites living in Europe and other Southern European groups. These were the *homo mediterraneus* that Oppenheimer viewed as a distinct white race.<sup>165</sup> By casting a doubt on Chamberlain's Germanness, Oppenheimer questioned his insider ability to recognize a real German and his constructed boundaries of the Aryan.

Diverging opinions on religion also shaped the positions of racial theorists, although the negative opinion of Jews remained constant. For the pious Protestant Chamberlain, Jesus could not have been Jewish. He must have descended from the "predominantly blonde" Amorites of European origin. By contrast, Eugen Dühring, who regraded Christianity as a destructive influence on Aryan culture, declared Jesus a pure Semite. Lastly, Gobineau, a Catholic, viewed Catholicism as the epitome of Germanness, which he saw, however, as having been corrupted by the non-German Reformation.<sup>166</sup> In his criticism of the arbitrariness in imagining the racial belonging of Jesus, Oppenheimer was continuing "the subversive quality of the WJ [*Wissenschaft des Judentums*], directed as it was at undermining the configurations that mark the history of the Christian West – the values that govern it, the powers that shape it, the judgment of its significance."<sup>167</sup> According to Oppenheimer, racial theories only came into existence to counteract Christ's teaching that all men should enjoy the same natural rights. His assertion that racial theories were corrupting Christianity served yet again as a reversal of intellectual authority. Oppenheimer was claiming intellectual authority not only over Jewish self-definition, but also to determine what constituted Christianity.

Oppenheimer thematized the correlation between pseudoscientific antisemitism and Jewish emancipation, and between racism and the enlightened recognition of a larger humanity. Ideological constructs such as racism and "Germa-

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165 Oppenheimer, "Rassentheoretisches," 2.

166 Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," 137–138.

167 Heschel, "Revolt of the Colonized," 70.

nomania” attempted to rationally and ethically legitimize and justify the continued violence, repression, robbery, exploitation and control of the hated and envied neighbor whose claim for human rights could no longer be ignored.<sup>168</sup> Oppenheimer’s representation of society’s outcasts and the materialistic scientific approach aggravated Sombart and other supporters of racial theories at the second Soziologentag. Sombart retorted with a conscious attempt to reclaim intellectual authority by pillorying Oppenheimer’s position as tainted by his Jewish perspective, and thus subjectively unsubstantiated and unscientific. There were ideologies of rulers and ideologies of the oppressed, Sombart proclaimed, and Oppenheimer’s class analysis belonged to the latter. Hence it was just as unscientific as Oppenheimer claimed racial theories were.<sup>169</sup>

By using terms like “Germanomania,” Oppenheimer disclosed an at least unconscious connection to the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, which was formed as a reaction to the rejection of Jews by the German national movement. It strived to restore Jewish pride – the same injured pride which eventually brought Oppenheimer and other central-European Jews of his generation to Zionism.<sup>170</sup> From its conception, the core aspect of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was to assert Jewish presence in a hostile scientific environment, together with fighting the rise of scientific antisemitism. Jewish scholars, barred from holding academic office, replied to the antisemitic slurs of university professors by targeting their scientific arguments and methodology with meticulously formulated refutations. Indirectly, the scientific standards of their academic institutions were also being challenged. The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* aimed for a prejudice-free, scientific discourse about Jews and Judaism in which Jews also held intellectual authority, with the purpose of using the findings to dispel doubts of Jewish suitability for citizenship.<sup>171</sup>

The hostile academic environment in Oppenheimer’s time did not obviate the need for self-assertion. Shortly after the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, which ignited a process of renationalization, many German Jews, including Oppenheimer, experienced expulsion, rejection and overt antisemitism. Oppenheimer left his fraternity Hevella in protest when paragraphs were passed

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**168** Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 132–136.

**169** Oppenheimer, “Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie,” 133 and 185–186.

**170** Bein, “Franz Oppenheimer,” 8.

**171** Werner Treß, “Grundlegungen einer wissenschaftlichen Betrachtung der Judenfeindschaft im frühen 19. Jahrhundert bei Saul Ascher, Sigmund Zimmern, Michael Hess, Immanuel Wolf und Leopold Zunz,” in *Beschreibungsversuche der Judenfeindschaft: Zur Geschichte der Antisemitismusforschung vor 1944*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hahn and Olaf Kistenmacher (Berlin: de Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015), 83–84 and 95–96.



excluding Jewish admission to the fraternity.<sup>172</sup> He faced openly antisemitic professors, which might have given Oppenheimer special cause to cherish Wagner's recognition of his academic capabilities recounted above.<sup>173</sup> Hence Oppenheimer found himself in a similar situation and, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the tradition of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, using not only its vocabulary but also its methodology to counteract antisemites and racial theorists. When Oppenheimer presented the history of racial theory, he began with Gobineau who, in his opinion, was "the first victim of a mental illness that broke out in Germany ... during the enthusiasm of the Napoleonic era: Germanomania." Apparently, Oppenheimer thought he invented the word, that is, until he discovered it in the writing of Saul Ascher.<sup>174</sup>

Ascher coined the term to describe German hypernationalism in his manifest *Die Germanomania*, which was published in 1815. Antisemitic rejection of Jewish integration had its roots in a post-Napoleonic era characterized by strong resentment and accusations that Jews collaborated with the French invaders. In the name of German nationalism, universities turned into a bastion of resistance to Jewish integration. Professors and students called for the rescinding of Napoleonic-era laws granting Jews civil rights. Professors such as Friedrich Rühs and Jakob Friedrich Fries argued in the language of science that Jews were biologically different. They justified and even agitated for violence against Jews, arguably playing an important role in preparing the ground for the Hep-Hep Pogroms of 1819. Ascher's manifest was an energetic refutation of these allegations and other manifestations of hyper-Germanness.<sup>175</sup>

Oppenheimer referred to the 1819 Hep-Hep pogroms in a poem he wrote using the pseudonym Wehrmann Hirt originally called "*Siegheil!*" Oppenheimer often used pseudonyms for his nonacademic writings. Once the long exodus from Nazi Germany via Japan and Shanghai brought him close to his sister Elise Steindorff in Hollywood, he translated the poem into English using the title "Germanomaniacs":

What if some killing was involved?  
 The task of nording [sic] the world was solved!  
 Germanic heroes cleared the ground  
 To plant a culture true and sound.  
 We'll build it up in a little while,

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172 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 81.

173 In addition to Wagner's support for neo-Malthusianism, a doctrine which Oppenheimer challenged; see Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 202–206.

174 Oppenheimer, "Die rassentheoretische Geschichtsphilosophie," 100.

175 Treß, "Grundlegungen einer wissenschaftlichen Betrachtung," 69–72, 75–79 and 84–87.

By 'Fuehrerprinzip' and Nordic guile,  
 No longer will the Jew and knave  
 Defile the Gospel that Wotan gave.  
 We'll hang them all to the Holy Oak.  
 Wake up, Germany! Judah Croak!  
 The prediction comes true: The German nation  
 Will bring mankind its final salvation,  
 Through the new order of Blood and Steal.  
 Heil, Schickelgruber! Heil, heel! Heil, heel!<sup>176</sup>

In this last paragraph, Oppenheimer again assumed the role of an apostle of true Christianity, emphasizing in this poem its defilement by racial theorists and German nationalists for an alternative anti-Christian vision of redemption. Oppenheimer sensed the deep rootedness of the Nazi vision of “a world without Jews” including the wish to eliminate any Jewish influence on Christianity.<sup>177</sup>

By using the Hep-Hep pogrom's popular slogan “*Deutschland erwache! Juda verrecke!*” in his translation, “Wake up, Germany! Judah, croak,” Oppenheimer drew a line from 1819 to the violence of the Nazis. This was another example corroborating Werner Treß's observation that the German nationalism that Ascher described in 1815 – with its vehement hate of French and Jewish people, and oscillating antagonism to England and Russia – was an early representation of the archetype of German nationalism that culminated in the Second World War.<sup>178</sup> Oppenheimer extended the scope of his analysis and updated it to encompass racism's connection with colonial aspirations between the German Empire imagined in 1815 and founded in 1871. In the second paragraph of his poem “Germanomaniacs,” he explicitly criticized the colonial nature of the German imperial project along the imagined axis of north and south. The Jewish *homo mediterraneus* was a man of the colonized south:

Ex Oriente Lux? Marxist fabrication!  
 From the North Pole came all true civilization.  
 There the ice age forged, in privation and dearth  
 The race to conquer and rule the earth.  
 And when at last they decided to roam  
 South, to look for a pleasanter home,  
 They made “The White Man's Burden” their job  
 Ruling and teaching the negroid [sic] mob

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**176** Both German and English versions can be found in CZA A161–108.

**177** Alon Confino, *A World without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

**178** Treß, “Grundlegungen einer wissenschaftlichen Betrachtung,” 74.

To toil for their betters and know their station.  
 In short: They brought them civilization.<sup>179</sup>

The hybrid in-betweenness of German Jews, manifested in almost total acculturation and accompanied by painful rejection, defined Oppenheimer's path to medicine and permeated his work as a sociologist. The striving for social prestige stood at the core of his understanding of society and his challenges to racism and antisemitism in the scientific arena, an important element of his engagement in the founding years of the DGS. Oppenheimer utilized science as a tool for self-emancipation. He subverted the focus of sociological investigations into antisemitism from the Jews to the antisemites. He participated in racial and colonial discourses to reclaim intellectual authority over the Jewish historical narrative and place it within a European context of global mastery. Yet he also rejected the national chauvinist elements of this narrative, resulting in insoluble incoherencies. This was exemplified in his perception of Jews as rejected bastards and, concurrently, noble leaders spearheading the liberation of all subjected people.

While Oppenheimer's normalization of Jewish history caused him to believe that antisemitism does not have a different solution than other forms of racism and social discrimination, he did ascribe a special, almost messianic role to Jews in pioneering the solution, with Zionist colonization as the proposed vehicle. This will be discussed further in chapter 6, which deals with Oppenheimer's ideas about how Zionist colonization should treat "Others" in Palestine, considering Jewish marginalization in Europe.

Oppenheimer was hesitant about joining Zionism because of the racialist precepts prevalent in the movement. This tension remained even after he became a Zionist, finding its most vivid public expression in his conflict with Sombart, a figure perceived as a champion of Zionism in Germany, about the conjunction of racial theories with sociology. By the time Oppenheimer joined the Zionist movement he had already earned some renown for his academic and practical expertise on agricultural cooperative settlement. His endorsement of technocratic, social engineering to control migration and colonization appealed to Zionist leaders, and most importantly to Herzl, at the outset of the twentieth century when pressures to take an active role in directing Jewish emigration from Europe were rising. The next chapter traces Oppenheimer's steps into the movement, where he found new comrades not only for shaping Zionist settlement practice but also for attempting to assert intellectual authority within colonial discourse

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179 CZA A161–108.

in Germany on the racial aptitude of Jews, his purported *homo mediterraneus*, for colonization. Oppenheimer and German Zionism's entanglement with German colonial discourse is the main theme of the second part of this book starting in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

# Oppenheimer's Path to Zionism

With Franz Oppenheimer I was acquainted with a member of the Zionist Organization whom I could not fit in my preexisting concept of Zionism. He emphasized his Germanness, he wanted to have nothing to do with the Jewish national idea and was nevertheless the opposite of an assimilationist.<sup>1</sup>

This quote by Kurt Blumenfeld, who served for many years as secretary and president of the Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland [Zionist Federation of Germany] (Zvfd), as well as general secretary of the Zionist Organization between 1911 and 1914, demonstrates the difficulties Zionist contemporaries, especially of the younger generation, had in accepting Oppenheimer as one of their own. When Oppenheimer published his first article in a Zionist newspaper, in *Die Welt* in 1901, Martin Buber, its editor at the time, formulated a reserved welcome in an editorial article called “Wege zum Zionismus” [Paths to Zionism]:

There are some other paths to Zionism, bypaths so to speak. The most typical among them is maybe the path of the social theoretician who wants to implement his ideas on us. Zionism appears to him as the possibility for a huge social experiment. Men who come to us like that, usually without a proper understanding of the whole beauty of our national idea and incapable of penetrating it, are nevertheless a powerful stimulus. They bring new elements into our discussion that force us to find a positive stance towards the biggest movements of our time.<sup>2</sup>

Although Buber did not specifically name Oppenheimer, the placement of his editorial directly before the second instalment of Oppenheimer's article created the impression that Buber was commentating on Oppenheimer's debut in the movement – seeing in him a social theoretician lacking a Jewish nationalist conviction and acting out of ulterior motives.

Ignoring for a moment the question of how accurate Buber's assessment was, we can certainly understand it as an early manifestation of an intergenerational conflict within the Zvfd that was gaining momentum on the eve of the First World War. The main point of contention was the redefinition of Zionist ideology by the younger generation as a commitment to dissimulation from Ger-

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1 Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage: Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutscher Zionismus* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1962), 52.

2 Martin Buber, “Wege zum Zionismus,” *Die Welt*, December 20, 1901, 6.

many and, ultimately, emigration to Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Blumenfeld, who was catapulted to the head of the ZVfD by the revolt of the younger, more radical, generation, knew that Oppenheimer's opinion was not an anomaly.<sup>4</sup> The lasting impression Oppenheimer left on him indicated Oppenheimer's importance as an outspoken representative of first-generation German Zionists and their affirmation of the hybridity of their Jewishness and their Germanness. Oppenheimer's 1910 article "Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein" [Tribal and national consciousness], which exposed this intergenerational rift, was perceived by John Efron as an exemplary description of the first-generation's declaration of belonging to European culture.<sup>5</sup>

Blumenfeld recognized that Oppenheimer adhered to an alternative source of Jewish pride or nationalism in seeking to combat assimilation. This was an important objective of Zionism in Western and Central Europe, which can be perceived as varying forms of identity politics grappling with marginalization in German society.<sup>6</sup> Despite his post-assimilationist position and calls for a clear Jewish disintegration,<sup>7</sup> Blumenfeld was never really free of the tension between the Germanness and Jewishness of his identity. Many years after the generational schism, Blumenfeld lamented the lack of appreciation in the young state of Israel for the contribution of German Zionists. They were accused of clinging to their German identity and failing to integrate in Israel. Furthermore, he praised the "German-Jewish symbiosis" as the force behind the creative contribution of German Zionists which "was generated through the collision of German culture and Jewish essence."<sup>8</sup>

Hence it was not Germanness, which continued to play a role for German Zionists of both generations, that was at the core of the conflict, but rather how changing political attitudes – including the popularization of post-liberal

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the intergenerational conflict within German Zionism, see Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*, 25–31; Jehuda Reinharz, "Ideology and Structure in German Zionism: 1882–1933," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 42 (1980): 127–130.

<sup>4</sup> In a letter to Schalom Ben-Chorin dated December 12, 1954 Blumenfeld spoke of Bodenheimer, Friedemann, Klee and Oppenheimer as representatives of first-generation German Zionists who did not recognize that Jews can't be Germans and that there are major differences between them. Kurt Blumenfeld, *Im Kampf um den Zionismus: Briefe aus fünf Jahrzehnten* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1976), 260–261.

<sup>5</sup> Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 205, footnote 13.

<sup>6</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 35.

<sup>7</sup> Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage*, 43. For more on Blumenfeld and post-assimilationist Zionism, see Stephen M. Poppel, *Zionism in Germany, 1897–1933: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1977), 46–67.

<sup>8</sup> Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 261.

attitudes and the *völkisch* and racial discourse – should affect the constant reimagination of the relationship of Jews to Europe, and what positions should Jews occupy in these discourses. The wish to belong to European modernity required constant actualization, and Zionism was the latest form of this process, ultimately questioning Jewish existence in the diaspora altogether.<sup>9</sup>

The positions Zionists occupied in the racial discourse initially deterred Oppenheimer from joining the Zionist movement. Nevertheless, he joined the movement with the conviction that diversity of opinion was welcome, with the Basel Program forming the least common denominator. Oppenheimer's active Zionist engagement ultimately spanned almost two decades, with sporadic involvement even in the decade thereafter. Oppenheimer's familiarity with "the biggest movements of our times" to Zionism, to quote Buber again, placed him in the discursive interface between Zionism and communal socialism, colonialism, racial theory and nationalism at the end of the imperial era, which will be the focus of the following chapters.

## First Encounters with Zionism

In his memoirs, Oppenheimer recounted the origin of his Zionist engagement as a chance encounter with Oskar Marmorek and Johann Kremenetzky, members of the Zionist Executive, also known as the Inner Actions Committee, in an express train from Berlin to Vienna. Through their mediation, Oppenheimer came into contact with Theodor Herzl, founder and head of the Zionist movement.<sup>10</sup> Oppenheimer's retrospective portrayal of his Zionist engagement as unplanned and unintentional might have been related to his eventual disillusion with the movement. Nevertheless, we should not interpret it as a digression from his life mission, as many of his German biographers do.<sup>11</sup>

In his autobiography Oppenheimer described chance as possessing mystical power capable of fusing life with a superior, if not divine, mission. Despite being a rigid adherent of science, he described the pivotal moment in which he recognized the foundational principle of his utopian socioeconomic theory, namely, land enclosure and its dissolution through the settlement cooperative, as an almost religious experience: "And in an unforgettable night at the end of 1893 the

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<sup>9</sup> See also Stefan Vogt's observation on the participation of Jews in the colonial, oriental, anthropological and racial discourse in Germany; Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 115–118.

<sup>10</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 210.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 12 in the introduction.

lightning-like discovery, the moment of ‘grace’ so to speak, came to me that determined my life and aspiration. From that moment on I was literally ‘obsessed.’ A thought with tremendous implications possessed me; I did not belong to myself ... but from now on only to the *cause*.”<sup>12</sup>

But just how coincidental was Oppenheimer’s overture, in fact? Oppenheimer’s retrospective timeline was inaccurate and misleading in deflecting the initiative to join Zionism away from himself. Oppenheimer claimed that he had no concept of Zionism before this chance encounter in 1902. However, his first article in the Zionist newspaper *Die Welt* titled “Jüdische Siedlungen” [Jewish settlements] was published in four instalments, beginning with the issue on December 13, 1901. Immediately after the final instalment was published at the end of January 1902, Herzl commissioned Oppenheimer with the establishment of a Zionist settlement cooperative. However, this was not the first contact between Oppenheimer and Herzl. Herzl had previously conveyed his regards to Oppenheimer, perhaps wishing to signal his approval of Oppenheimer’s ideas about settlement. He may have even invited him to write about the settlement cooperative for *Die Welt* in the first place.<sup>13</sup> Regardless of the invitation’s origin – whether it came from Herzl directly or from Marmorek and Kremenetzky<sup>14</sup> – the aim of the top Zionist leadership was to get Oppenheimer to advise them on how to create a “province” based on his theories.<sup>15</sup> The province they originally had in mind was El-Arish in British Egypt.<sup>16</sup> However, the question remains: why did they think Oppenheimer would be willing to assist them?

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12 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 141–142.

13 Herzl’s first letter to Oppenheimer is not preserved. Nonetheless, Herzl mentioned it in his diary entry from January 25, 1902, where he also expressed his opinion on Oppenheimer’s article; see Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, vol. 3, *Zionistisches Tagebuch, 1899–1904*, ed. Alex Bein et al. (Berlin: Propyläen 1985), 336. In his reply from January 26, 1902, Oppenheimer apologized for belatedly reciprocating Herzl’s greetings, apparently because he did not have his address; see Alex Bein, “Briefwechsel zwischen Theodor Herzl und Franz Oppenheimer,” *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 7 (1964): 21 and 25–28.

14 In Derek Penslar’s opinion, Oppenheimer’s article was commissioned by Herzl; see Derek J. Penslar, “Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy: Otto Warburg and the Commission for the Exploration of Palestine 1903–7,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 25 (1990): 155. Alex Bein attributed the initiative to Marmorek and Kremenetzky; see Bein, “Franz Oppenheimer,” 7.

15 Franz Oppenheimer, “Jüdische Siedlungen,” *Die Welt*, December 13, 4.

16 In his first letter to Oppenheimer from January 25, 1902, Herzl spoke about the settlement of “Egypt Palestine beyond ‘Egypt’s stream,’ because there I am dealing with the English government, therefore have no difficulties,” meaning El-Arish; see Herzl, *Zionistisches Tagebuch*, 336. In January 1903, Oppenheimer was appointed as a candidate for an expedition to El-Arish, even though he already cancelled once; see Herzl, *Zionistisches Tagebuch*, 489. However, his name did not show up on later candidate lists; see Selig Soskin, *Franz Oppenheimer und die Pal-*



Oppenheimer's involvement with Zionism was strongly connected with his Jewishness in a more obvious way than his choice to study medicine and his position in the racial discourse. Prior to his Zionist engagement, Oppenheimer had already tried to utilize his land settlement concept for the betterment of Jews. Oppenheimer was on the board of the Verein zur Förderung der Bodenkultur unter den Juden Deutschlands [Association for the Promotion of Agriculture among Germany's Jews], also known as Bodenkulturverein, founded in Berlin on October 24, 1897. According to the association's report for the business year 1900–1901, its main objective was to “start a Jewish farmer colony that will prove how very well-suited German Jews are to pursuing agriculture activities on German land.”<sup>17</sup>

Although Oppenheimer regarded the social question as a universal question, he did regard the professional structure of Jewish society as an anomaly. In his debate with Sombart, Oppenheimer apologetically contextualized the concentration of Jews in commercial professions in historical dynamics. He was fully in agreement with the underlying assumption that the concentration of Jews in urban commercialism was negative and must be remedied. This explains why Oppenheimer thought that a special focus on an exclusively Jewish settlement plan was necessary, even though including Jews in general settlement cooperatives could theoretically achieve the same goal. The settlement cooperative aimed to make it possible for those who wished to abandon an urban lifestyle, yet were unexperienced in agriculture, to learn the necessary skills.

That Oppenheimer had a distinct approach concerning Jews beyond the scope of his universal social activity is an important point that has not been emphasized enough in narratives placing Oppenheimer's Zionist engagement in the context of his other settlement activity. Such narratives were, of course, beneficial when analyzing Oppenheimer's place in the history of cooperative settlement. They also correspond to Oppenheimer's own autobiographical accounts of his Zionist settlement Merhavia, together with his settlements in Germany, while recounting the rest of his Zionist activity in another chapter. His activity on behalf of the Bodenkulturverein was totally left out of his memoirs, along with many of the details and conflicts connected with his Zionist activity, except for the one around the issues of Jewish belonging to Germany and racial discrimination in Palestine.<sup>18</sup>

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*ästina Kommission. Erinnerungen eines Zeitgenossen und Mitarbeiters*, October 1953, CZA A161–78, 1.

<sup>17</sup> 3. Jahresbericht des Vereins zur Förderung der Bodenkultur unter den Juden Deutschlands, 1900/1901, CAHJP.

<sup>18</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 160–178 and 210–218.

Reading Oppenheimer's Zionist activity within the settlement cooperative narrative supports the position of skeptical contemporaries like Robert Weltsch, who considered Oppenheimer to be an opportunist: "What attracted him to Zionism was – apart from his passionate wish to help his less fortunate fellow Jews – mainly the prospect of applying his theory to a new and vast scheme of land settlement which, he insisted, should be free from the faults of those in older, long-established countries."<sup>19</sup> The timing of Oppenheimer's public support for Jewish settlements seems to support Weltsch's interpretation. Oppenheimer's first attempt at founding a settlement cooperative had just failed and in June 1901 the general assembly of the settlement cooperative Freiland decided to go into liquidation.<sup>20</sup> This failure probably contributed to Oppenheimer overcoming his inhibitions about Zionism in search of new patrons.

Oppenheimer's claim that, shortly before his death, Herzl agreed to create a training settlement specializing in horticulture, agriculture and manual skills for the preparation of Zionist pioneers, in Germany or in Galicia – and not in Palestine or anywhere else overseas – further spurred the accusations that he wanted to exploit Zionism for his own agenda.<sup>21</sup> Oppenheimer conceptualized his settlement cooperative within the framework of the reform-oriented ideology of "inner colonization" as a tool to reverse the social woes of urbanization by strengthening the peasantry and resettling the proletariat in the countryside as farmers. Yet "inner colonization" simultaneously served German efforts to nationalize provincial areas in the East and subordinate ethnic minorities, most prominently Poles.<sup>22</sup> Oppenheimer preferred "inner colonization" over overseas colonization, claiming that expeditions searching for virgin soil without land enclosure were superfluous and even counterproductive. Successful colonization depended on low market accessibility costs. Ideally, places of settlement should have some connection to Europe in the past or present.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Weltsch, introduction to *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 9* (1964): xxv.

<sup>20</sup> CZA A161–63.

<sup>21</sup> Oppenheimer's letter to Fritz Epstein from January 13, 1921, CZA A161–10.

<sup>22</sup> For more on the transmission of concepts from German "inner colonization" in conjunction with colonial aims into Zionist settlement practice, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 94–98.

<sup>23</sup> Oppenheimer, *Freiland in Deutschland*, 58–59. *Freiland in Deutschland* was written as a critique of Theodor Hertzka's utopian novel *Freiland*, published in 1890, and Hertzka's failed expedition to establish a Freiland settlement in Kenya, at the time under British colonial administration. By the time Oppenheimer published this book, he had some experience with the Eden agricultural settlement north of Berlin, which had roots in Berlin Freiland circles and the Friedrichshagener Dichterkreis. Oppenheimer was associated with both.

Oppenheimer claimed that the fate of Zionist settlement depended on successful integration and not on detachment from Europe. He believed that Zionist colonization had the potential to serve as an avant-garde for the utopian transformation of Europe. On the flip side, it could not escape Europe's demise if the woes of capitalism, communism and nationalist chauvinism could not be overcome.<sup>24</sup> Oppenheimer's skepticism of settlements prospering outside European trade networks was his main disagreement with Theodor Hertzka's *Freiland. Ein soziales Zukunftsbild* (*Freiland. A social Anticipation*) concept, which Oppenheimer formulated in his book *Freiland in Deutschland* [*Freiland in Germany*]. Nevertheless, in his first letter to Herzl he claimed that the settlement cooperative "can admirably exist in every place on this planet."<sup>25</sup>

Returning to the inconsistencies in Oppenheimer's autobiographical account, Oppenheimer was not first exposed to Zionist ideology through a coincidental encounter on a train but had already grappled with Zionist thought beforehand. In the course of 1901 Oppenheimer expressed his aversion to Zionism's racial viewpoint in two separate articles. In one it was explicit, stating that it is remarkable that Zionism endorsed the same racial theories as those put forward by Gobineau, Dühring, Paul de Lagarde, Friedrich Nietzsche and Chamberlain.<sup>26</sup> In the other, published in May 1901 in the popular *Jüdische Allgemeine Zeitung*, the criticism was indirectly expressed in a more appeasing statement that the focus on agricultural settlement formed "the legitimate core of the Zionist movement."<sup>27</sup> This demonstrated that Oppenheimer was aware of Zionism's agricultural focus. After all, the Bodenkulturverein had Zionist members too.<sup>28</sup>

Through the latter article Oppenheimer attempted to gain financial support from Jewish organizations, especially the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), for the Bodenkulturverein. Oppenheimer recounted his failure to realize the cooperative settlement in Germany and suggested that such a model could benefit

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24 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 217–218.

25 Bein, "Briefwechsel," 22.

26 Oppenheimer, "Die Rassentheorie der Weltgeschichte," 998.

27 Oppenheimer, "Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation," 258.

28 For example, Max Bodenheimer and David Wolffsohn, who together with Fabius Schach co-founded the ZVfD, also founded in 1894 the Verein behufs Förderung der jüdischen Ackerbaukolonien in Syrien und Palästina with the purpose of transforming Jewish occupational preferences through agricultural settlement; see Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*, 98–99. Gustav Tuch, who founded the Bodenkulturverein of which Oppenheimer was a board member, was a supporter of the Kolonisationsverein Esra, the largest Hovevei Zion group in Germany, and wished one day to become a farmer in Palestine; see Daniel Wildmann, *Der veränderbare Körper: Jüdische Turner, Männlichkeit und das Wiedergewinnen von Geschichte in Deutschland um 1900* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 100.

the JCA in several ways. First, it would supply colonies overseas, such as Canada and California, with exemplary colonists who could contribute to on-site training of agricultural workers. Second, the cooperative settlement would promote sustainability because it would create a corpus of workers imbued with solidarity through long term prospects and responsibility sharing, as well as social control.<sup>29</sup> Although his plea was not intended for the Zionist leadership, both benefits would have been attractive for their colonization and nation-building project. Oppenheimer's initiative in support of Jewish colonization schemes probably caught their attention and spurred their advance.<sup>30</sup>

Oppenheimer was motivated to implement his settlement cooperative with Jewish settlers as part of his aspirations to prove the dynamics of race and, more specifically, the ability of Jews to change thus dispelling antisemitic prejudice. An occupational shift among Jews towards farming would "disprove the old, foolish belief that Jews are too lazy and too clever to dedicate themselves to physical labor." Oppenheimer was well aware that there were already many Jewish farmers in Eastern Europe. But for the most part he considered the Ostjuden to be a "gaunt city proletariat that, in centuries of adaptation to city commerce, lost the musculature and strength ... Anemic and neurasthenic, as they mostly are due to the pressure of wicked laws, they lack the necessary stamina for the strenuous activity necessary for the farmer. It is not in the race; such a claim would be nonsense."

Oppenheimer appealed to Jewish philanthropists to show solidarity beyond merely providing for the bare necessities for emigration. He called on them to help "create for these people a livelihood, suitable not just for Jews but for the human being in general."<sup>31</sup> Oppenheimer maintained that the occupational transformation would be accompanied by the physical transformation of the Jew into a *Mensch*, a human being. As a personal bonus, succeeding in the implementation of his settlement cooperative with the helpless Ostjuden would prove its universal value.

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<sup>29</sup> Oppenheimer, "Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation," 257–261.

<sup>30</sup> This also corresponds to Soskin's approximation regarding when Herzl and his close circle became aware of Oppenheimer; see Soskin, *Franz Oppenheimer und die Palästina Kommission*, CZA A161–78, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Oppenheimer, "Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation," 258.

## Oppenheimer and Herzl

Zionists effectively followed the tradition of the Enlightenment and the educative efforts of the Maskilim in that they considered the commerce-oriented vocational and social structure of Jewish society unhealthy and in need of repair.<sup>32</sup> In his plaidoyer to Jewish philanthropists, Oppenheimer proudly presented the success of the Israelitische Erziehungsanstalt at Ahlem, which was supported by the Bodenkulturverein,<sup>33</sup> in altering the “Jewish” physique of Ostjuden:

When you visit the gardening school in Ahlem and see the young people there coming from the field with their tools on their shoulders, you are immediately confronted with a physiological puzzle. You see the large saucer eyes of the Galician Jews but, nevertheless, you miss something in the features ... Although Jewish, these Jews don't look “Jewish.” It is the agricultural worker type! This people with their calm, steady gaze, giving evidence to the absence of nervousness, with their long striding gait, have partially lost the so-called racial characteristic of the Jews.<sup>34</sup>

Oppenheimer urged Jewish philanthropists to abandon anachronistic approaches to philanthropy and adopt the more modern ones of the Verein für Sozialpolitik [German Economic Association] that aimed at integrating the lower classes into the existing system and battling revolutionary tendencies. This included a renunciation of alms and the striving for transformation of the physical body, resulting in the creation of a *homo hygenicus*.<sup>35</sup> This echoed in Oppenheimer's perception of agriculture being “ethically and hygienically the most noble occupation.”<sup>36</sup> In turn-of-the-century degeneration discourse, both among Zionists and in general, the return to nature and soil were perceived as natural rem-

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**32** E. G. Lowenthal, “The Ahlem Experiment,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 14 (1969): 165; Derek J. Penslar, “Philanthropy, the ‘Social Question’ and Jewish Identity in Imperial Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 38 (1993): 64.

**33** Gustav Tuch, deputy chair of the Bodenkulturverein, was coopted to the Board of the Ahlem school. The Bodenkulturverein also assisted Ahlem financially. Although not specifically intended for Ostjuden the school report for the year 1900 indicated a significant Eastern European presence. From forty-six apprentices above the age of fourteen, there were twenty-one foreigners from Eastern Europe. The largest group was from Austria and perhaps Galicia which is the province specifically named by Oppenheimer in his report; see Lowenthal, “The Ahlem Experiment,” 168–173; See also Penslar, “Philanthropy,” 65–66.

**34** Oppenheimer, “Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation,” 258.

**35** Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 2001), 187–191.

**36** Oppenheimer, “Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation,” 258.

edies for society.<sup>37</sup> Hence *Sozialpolitik* often focused on agriculture to strengthen the peasantry and secure national self-sustainability.<sup>38</sup>

The shift away from philanthropy was one of the first subjects in the letter exchange between Herzl and Oppenheimer.<sup>39</sup> Impressed by Oppenheimer's affinity for technological and social experiments, Herzl informed Oppenheimer of his determination to implement his settlement cooperative model for Zionist settlement. In his diary he noted:

The final appeal, the comparison of the experiment of Rahaline [a cooperative settlement established in Ireland during the 1840s] with the Berlin-Zossen electric experimental railroad struck me, and I immediately decided to carry out Oppenheimer's experiment. I wrote him so at once, but enjoined him to silence for the time being. First, I have to prepare the ground – the AC [Actions Committee, the Zionist executive] and the Bank [sic]; then too, the JCA with its greater resources would beat me to it. For they would not do it of their own accord, but they *would* do it in order to crush me and eliminate me from competition. As the scene of action I designated Egyptian Palestine to Oppenheimer, on the other side of the “Brook of Egypt,” because there I shall be dealing with the English government and thus have no difficulties ... I still haven't made up my mind whether I shall make the matter a national affair, i. e., use it for Zionist propaganda purposes – which should have the disadvantage of creating settlers for display, and the advantage *ut uliquid fecisse videamur* [that we would appear to have done something] – or whether I shall get it started in all secrecy.<sup>40</sup>

Herzl and Oppenheimer shared a common source of inspiration for their utopian constructs: Hertzka's *Freiland*. The book's widespread popularity in bourgeois circles emanated from its cooperative spirit, posing a third way between egoistic individualism and communist collectivism.<sup>41</sup> In the words of Israel Zangwill, founder of the Jewish Territorial Organization for the Settlement of the Jews within the British Empire (ITO): “without *Freiland* there would have been no *Judenstaat*.”<sup>42</sup> Yet Herzl shared with Oppenheimer not only admiration, but also cri-

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37 Vogt, “Between Decay and Doom,” 82.

38 Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 48–49.

39 Bein, “Briefwechsel,” 21–22.

40 Diary entry from January 25, 1902, in Herzl, *Zionistisches Tagebuch*, 336; translation, bracketed addendums and emphasis in Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 56.

41 Clemens Peck, *Im Labor der Utopie: Theodor Herzl und das “Altneuland”-Projekt* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 2012), 316.

42 Cited in Adam L. Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands Before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 49. Hertzka's *Freiland* might have also inspired Joseph Chamberlain, at the time colonial secretary, to offer Herzl British East Africa for Zionist settlement. The introduction to Chamberlain is partially indebted to Zangwill's efforts; see Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 52–53.

tique of Hertzka's colonization plans.<sup>43</sup> In the preamble to his manifesto *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*), Herzl carefully disassociated his vision from Freiland utopias,<sup>44</sup> which he considered to be “an ingenious bit of fantasy devised by a thoroughly modern mind schooled in the principles of political economy, but as remote from life as the equatorial mountain on which this dream state is located. And even seeing Freiland associations come into being, I should regard the whole thing as a joke.”<sup>45</sup> In Herzl's opinion, Freiland utopias were a fantasy because they lacked the most important motivation for their realization: social pressure. In contrast, the pressure of antisemitism made realizing a Zionist utopia possible.<sup>46</sup>

Herzl's ambivalence towards Hertzka's utopian notions prompted him to recruit Oppenheimer, a prominent figure in Berlin's Freiland circles. Oppenheimer also regarded social pressure as the driving force of history triggering mass migrations from places of higher social pressure to places of lower ones. And he saw the antisemitism driving the masses out of Eastern Europe as even stronger than the economic pressure on farmers leading to urbanization. In January 1902, Herzl sent Oppenheimer a manuscript of the chapter in his utopian novel *Altneuland*, which dealt with the new society at the village level, and informed him that he had decided to found a “Rahaline in Palestine.” Oppenheimer was glad to receive the manuscript, reminiscing about his adolescent literary attempts at utopian fiction, to which he would return thirty years later with his novel *Sprung über ein Jahrhundert* [Leap across a century]. He commented on their shared interest in utopian cooperatives and recommended one of his essays to Herzl.<sup>47</sup> The exposure to Oppenheimer's theories might have influenced the final draft of *Altneuland* and Herzl's economic approach.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> In fact, Moritz Guedemann, chief Rabbi of Vienna, suggested that Herzl write a novel like Hertzka to illustrate his idea. For a comparison between Herzl's *Altneuland* and Hertzka's *Freiland*, see Peck, *Im Labor der Utopie*, 316–327. Herzl initially refused to write a utopian novel. He thought that conveying his ideas in this form would be irresponsible in view of the seriousness of Jewish plight; see Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage* (Zurich: Manesse, 2006), 5–6.

<sup>44</sup> Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Cited in Ulrich E. Bach, “Seeking Emptiness: Theodor Hertzka's Colonial Utopia *Freiland* (1890),” *Utopian Studies* 22 (2011): 74–75.

<sup>46</sup> Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Bein, “Briefwechsel,” 21–22.

<sup>48</sup> Herzl had high regards for Oppenheimer's *Siedlungsgenossenschaft*; see Bein, “Briefwechsel,” 37. He also named Oppenheimer in a list of experts on the cooperative in *Altneuland*. According to Clemens Peck, Herzl was working on the details of the novel as he came into contact with Oppenheimer. Peck regarded the relationship with Oppenheimer as the missing link in the

Herzl's relationship with Oppenheimer was formed at a turning point for the young ZO. The Fifth Zionist Congress held in 1901 in Basel publicly exposed rifts in Herzl's authority over the organization. Whereas in prior congresses delegates were organized solely in *Landesmannschaften* according to their country of origin, at this congress an ideological opposition party emerged for the first time. The Demokratische Fraktion, as it was called, led by Martin Buber, Berthold Feiwel, Chaim Weizmann, Ephraim Moses Lilien and others, managed to introduce cultural Zionism into the agenda of the congress. Afraid to upset his Orthodox base of Eastern European Jews, Herzl successfully buried at prior congresses any significant advances at discussing and securing funds for cultural programs.

Thanks to the advocacy of cultural Zionists, especially Buber, who was appointed by Herzl to be chief editor of *Die Welt*, practical Zionism was also on the rise and initial opponents of settlement slowly became receptive to the idea. It was becoming clear that the colonization of Palestine would require more than just "loading a people onto a ship like a herd of cattle," as Buber put it.<sup>49</sup> The nation-building project should not be delayed until the arrival of the immigrants in Eretz Israel [The land of Israel]. Rather, it required preparation, *Gegenwartsarbeit* [present day work],<sup>50</sup> in the form of Jewish national education in Europe, as well as physical, economic and cultural amelioration. This Zionist program of preparing Jews to become citizens echoed conditions for Jewish emancipation set by Enlightenment-era Prussian policymakers, starting with Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, that were premised upon a transformation of Jewry. Orthodox Zionists were concerned because the process of cultural transformation accompanying Jewish emancipation resulted in the creation of liberal, conservative, secular and other modern forms of Judaism. They feared that including cultural transformation in Zionism would lead the masses astray.

Herzl was wary of the dangers that cultural Zionism posed to the unity of the movement. However, the strictly political character of Herzlian Zionism, which

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"Herzl paradox," the shift in Herzl's anthropological view from a *homo legalis* to a *homo oeconomicus*; see Peck, *Im Labor der Utopie*, 516–523. Others, like Alex Bein and Derek Penslar, downplayed Oppenheimer's influence on Herzl by emphasizing Herzl's interest in the social question and cooperative settlement long before his contact with Oppenheimer. They also emphasized that the correspondence between Herzl and Oppenheimer did not entail any exchange of ideas; see Bein, "Franz Oppenheimer," 5; Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 56.

<sup>49</sup> Cited in Gilya Gerda Schmidt, *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901: Heralds of a New Age* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Gegenwartsarbeit* became official Zionist policy only after Herzl's death, with a resolution of the Russian Zionist Conference held November 1906 in Helsinki; see Gur Alroey, "'Zionism without Zion'? Territorialist Ideology and the Zionist Movement, 1882–1956," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 18 (2011): 14.



was also a strategy of circumventing the potential conflict, was losing its appeal. At the Fifth Zionist Congress Herzl attempted a bold balancing act. He provided a stage for cultural Zionists, not only in the discussions, but also by allowing for the display of the first exhibit of national Jewish art at the congress. Furthermore, he included the issue of culture in his opening address. Yet in the final discussion about the Demokratische Fraktion's proposed cultural program, Herzl refused to allow sixty properly registered supporters to speak. Instead, he opened the stage for the objections of two Rabbis who did not duly register, resulting in thirty-seven delegates (13 percent of the delegates) leaving the hall in protest. Nevertheless, the cultural program was approved. The incorporation of cultural Zionism – with its portrayal of contemporary Jewish culture as sick and degenerate, and prejudice against traditional Judaism – combined with the fear that cultural Zionists were trying to promote a Jewish *Ersatz-Religion* inspired by German Romanticism, resulted in the founding of a “religious-national party,” the Mizrachi, the following year.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the tide shifting towards practical settlement, Eretz Israel still seemed unobtainable. Although the sultan signaled his willingness to discuss Jewish colonization in the Ottoman Empire, Palestine remained off limits.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, concerns were raised by Zangwill that the sultan had nothing to offer in Palestine, since his holdings were barren, and because what little fertile land there supposedly was in the region was in private Arab hands.<sup>53</sup> After the horrid pogrom in the Moldovan city of Kishinev, during the Russian Easter festival on April 6 and 7, 1903, a new sense of urgency swept over the Zionist movement. The extensive coverage, as well as the shocking visual portrayal of the pogrom in newspapers throughout the world, was unprecedented in the pre-Holocaust world. Jewish passivity was loudly condemned, most memorably by Haim Nahman Bialik in his poem “The City of Slaughter,”<sup>54</sup> but also by Oppenheimer in his speech *Alte und Neue Makkabäer* [Old and new Maccabees], held in January 1906 in commemoration of what would amount to over 3,000 murdered Jews in a ser-

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51 Schmidt, *Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress*, 1–11 and 96.

52 Isaiah Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism, 1897–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 100–102.

53 Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 65; Alroey, “Zionism without Zion?,” 15–16.

54 Todd S. Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (Oxon, UK and Abingdon, NY: Routledge, 2007), 194.

ies of 657 pogroms rolling over the Pale of Settlement in the years 1905 and 1906.<sup>55</sup>

In his speech, Oppenheimer contrasted the victims of this wave of pogrom who were the “true heirs of the Maccabees,” since they organized their own defense militias, with the victims in Kishinev who surrendered to mass slaughter without even attempting to resist, thus “poisoning our sorrow with contempt.”<sup>56</sup> Shortly after the Kishinev pogrom he urged Herzl to take action: “Kishinev drives my blood into my forehead twenty times a day. Allow me therefore to inquire into the results of your February expedition. It is time that something happens.”<sup>57</sup>

Time seemed to be running out for the Jews of the Russian Empire and Herzl wanted to quickly secure a charter with one of the great powers. He was wary of real-life settlers’ unpredictable behavior potentially jeopardizing future charter negotiations for Palestine.<sup>58</sup> Other Zionists like Ber Borchof were also wary of placing the future of Zionism, and even world Jewry, in the hands of immigrating Jewish masses: “The eyes of the entire world would look upon our actions in our ‘territory,’ and the smallest report, even if false, of unjust treatment of the locals” would intensify antisemitism, and unleash a wave of “horrifying propaganda against us.”<sup>59</sup> While Borchof, founder of the Poalei Zion party that synthesized Marxism with Zionism, believed that the awareness of the gravity of their action would deter the Jewish proletariat from mistreating indigenous peoples, Herzl and Oppenheimer had less faith in the settlers’ good will, preferring the promotion of rigid discipline, not only for the settlers but for the whole chain of command, including Oppenheimer’s relationship with Herzl which was becoming strained.

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55 Franz Oppenheimer, “Alte und Neue Makkabäer,” in *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes: Lebenserinnerungen*, ed. L. Y. Oppenheimer (Düsseldorf: Joseph Melzer, 1964). For more on the pogroms see Alroey, “Zionism without Zion?,” 9.

56 Cited in Adolph Lowe, “In Memoriam Franz Oppenheimer,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 10 (1965): 139.

57 Letter from Franz Oppenheimer to Theodor Herzl dated May 25, 1903, in Bein, “Briefwechsel,” 26. The February expedition explored the potential of settlement in El-Arish.

58 Entry from January 25, 1902, in Herzl, *Zionistisches Tagebuch*, 336; translation in Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 56.

59 Cited in Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion*, 62.

## Oppenheimer's Dissent from Political Zionism

Despite his dependency on Herzl within the movement, Oppenheimer was always a proponent of practical, not political, Zionism. In his memoirs, Oppenheimer extended his criticism of Hertzka to Herzl: "Herzl's ideas about the course of colonization were actually just as vague, since he was not at all an economist, and were even more confused than those that Theodor Hertzka had concerning the founding of his paradise in Kenya. He saw the goal but not the way to the goal."<sup>60</sup> In personal correspondence with Herzl, Oppenheimer disclosed his reservations about Herzl's plan for mass immigration to follow the sealing of a charter. He thought this would be reckless, ending not in the realization of utopia but in chaos and disastrous destitution. Oppenheimer believed, and the historian Gezel Kressel concurred, that he succeeded in convincing Herzl to start on a smaller scale with experiments in local conditions upon which a gradual economic build-up would commence, thus increasing absorption capacities for new immigrants.<sup>61</sup> By joining forces he and Herzl could complement each other, since they possessed different leadership skills necessary for the realization of utopia. In the language of Oppenheimer's leadership typology, Herzl was a visionary and an admonisher, setting the goal and urging the masses to start working towards achieving it. Oppenheimer, on the other hand, was a thinker and an organizer, in other words a technocrat, planning each step of the way to the goal and engineering the new society.<sup>62</sup>

Oppenheimer, a rookie to Zionism who was keen to begin settlement, unknowingly forged alliances with practical Zionists who were bitter enemies of Herzl and political Zionism's charter creed. While waiting for Herzl to make good on his word to found Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative in "Egyptian Palestine," Oppenheimer founded the Jüdische Orient Colonisations Gesellschaft [Jewish Orient Colonization Society] (JOCG),<sup>63</sup> together with Davis Trietsch, and

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<sup>60</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 212.

<sup>61</sup> Bein, "Briefwechsel," 32–33. According to Kressel, Herzl regarded Oppenheimer's colonization plan as a "substitute charter" an experiment to prepare ensuing large-scale colonization; see Gezel Kressel, "Ha-dilema bein ha-charter le-bein ha-zionim ha-maalim mekomo shel Oppenheimer be-dilema zot," in *Franz Oppenheimer vеха-kolonia ha-ko'operativit merchavia*, ed. Yehuda Don (Jerusalem: Academic Press, 1976), 11.

<sup>62</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, "Sprung über ein Jahrhundert," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, *Theoretische Grundlagen*, ed. Julius H. Schoeps, Alphons Silbermann, and Hans Süßmuth (Berlin: De Gruyter Akademie Verlag, 1995), 218.

<sup>63</sup> Officially spelled with a "K" as Jüdische Orient Kolonization Gesellschaft but in most correspondence with a "C" and abbreviated as JOCG, OCG, or JCG, e.g.; see Bein, "Briefwechsel," 28–36.

served as the chairman of its board of directors. The JOCG succeeded Sha'are Zion [The Gates of Zion], founded in 1898 by Trietsch and Leo Motzkin, among others, to promote settlement in countries adjacent to Palestine. It was Trietsch who coined the term "Egyptian Palestine" for the El-Arish area which fell under Egyptian, and indirectly, a more cooperative British rule in 1887. Since it lies to the east of the Brook of Egypt, the westernmost border of biblical Canaan, founding a settlement there could be considered settling Eretz Israel, according to Trietsch's exegesis.<sup>64</sup>

The JOCG intended to utilize a cooperative colonization scheme that had been successfully tried in California to settle "muscularly weak and unpracticed urban tradesman." Those planning to emigrate could purchase shares in advance and pay by instalments to make it more affordable. This initial capital would be used to hire experienced local workers for the strenuous work of preparing the fields and planting fruit trees. Immigration would only commence once the first phase had been completed, so that the inexperienced urban settlers would be left with the easier work of cultivation and harvest. The designated area for this settlement plan was "the Orient" which, with a footnote, was described as "Palestine and its adjacent countries." The JOCG gave the settlement of Palestine only a slight priority over the settlement of other territories in the vicinity: "By the decision where the beginning should be brought about, Palestine should be preferred by equal or even only almost equal conditions."<sup>65</sup>

Cooperative models were popular among German Zionists. Trietsch emphasized that his advocacy of the cooperative idea pre-dated the creation of the JOCG and his collaboration with the Oppenheimer. Yet the cofounders of Sha'are Zion felt that cooperative theory was not yet ripe enough for practical implementation.<sup>66</sup> Attitudes changed once the cooperative expert Oppenheimer came on board. Beyond the interest in cooperative settlement, Trietsch shared with Oppenheimer the reverence for land socialization advocate Henry George.<sup>67</sup> Trietsch

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<sup>64</sup> Olivier Baisez, "'Greater Palestine' as a German-Zionist Idea before the British Mandate Period," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 61 (2016): 15–18. It was, however, nominally still Ottoman territory. Objections by the sultan and the Egyptian government to the plan resulted in its ultimate withdrawal; see Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 104.

<sup>65</sup> Bein, "Briefwechsel," 28–31. The term "Palestine and the Orient" was in use until the First World War and in the ensuing creation of the British Mandate to refer to broader colonization schemes in neighboring countries not under the control of the Ottomans; see Baisez, "'Greater Palestine,'" 9–10.

<sup>66</sup> Davis Trietsch, "Die juedische Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft: Die Vorgeschichte und Entstehung," *Palästina* 2 (1903/1904), 49.

<sup>67</sup> Oppenheimer published two articles on Henry George, as his relationship with Trietsch began. The first was a book review published in 1901 called "Dührung und Henry George," in

translated George's lecture on the humanity of the Mosaic laws into German.<sup>68</sup> Oppenheimer was introduced to George's thought through the leader of the Berliner Freiland group, Hermann Krecke, with whom Oppenheimer drafted the statutes for the Eden fruit growing cooperative founded in 1893 north of Berlin.<sup>69</sup> The emphasis on fruticulture in the JOCG plan echoed the concept of Eden. Through Oppenheimer Trietsch became familiar with the garden city idea becoming its main proponent within the Zionist movement.<sup>70</sup>

Herzl, who was at odds with Trietsch since his motion at the First Zionist Congress to immediately begin Zionist colonization with the settling of Cyprus,<sup>71</sup> was aggravated by his protégé's collaboration with Trietsch. Although Herzl adopted Trietsch's concepts of "Egyptian Palestine" and the Brook of Egypt, he considered him a renegade.<sup>72</sup> Herzl's turn to practical settlement was partially motivated by his wish to prevent rogue settlement schemes. He recruited Oppenheimer not only due to their common interest in mutualism and the cooperative spirit, but also out of spite for the JCA to which Oppenheimer addressed his first

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*Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaften* 4 (1901): 799–804. The second was an article published in installments: "Henry George und sein Werk," *Neue Freie Presse*, Vienna, August 15, August 22 and August 28, 1902. In a letter to Herzl from May 25, 1902, Oppenheimer, seemingly anxious to know if his essay was accepted for print in the renowned Viennese newspaper, tried to get insider information from Herzl, who was the editor of the newspaper's arts section; see Bein, "Briefwechsel," 23. Herzl's reply is not preserved.

**68** Henry George, *Moses der Gesetzgeber*, translated by Davis Trietsch (Berlin: Welt-Verlag, 1920). The book was a translation of a lecture given many times by George. George presented it for the first time in 1878 before the Young Men's Hebrew Association of San Francisco under the title "Moses – Apostle of Freedom." George's observation that slavery and class division were caused by land monopoly, and his single remedy to the problem, i.e., replacing taxes with a single tax on land profit, were an enormous influence on Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer singled out land enclosure as the culprit and suggested his utopian solution of the settlement cooperative.

**69** Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 153–254. Oppenheimer led the agriculturally oriented wing of the Bund der Deutschen Bodenreformer, founded in 1898 by Adolf Damaschke, to implement land and land taxation reforms. For more on Oppenheimer's involvement in the founding of Eden, which successfully survived through the turbulent regime changes of twentieth century Germany; see Vogt, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 157–160.

**70** Ines Sonder, *Gartenstädte für Erez Israel: Zionistische Stadtplanungsvisionen von Theodor Herzl bis Richard Kauffmann* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2005), 46. Oppenheimer was ambivalent about introducing garden cities to Palestine because he feared allocated funds would come at the expense of his settlement cooperative; see Sonder, *Gartenstädte*, 86–94.

**71** Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 57–58.

**72** Herzl uses these terms in his entry from January 25, 1902; see Herzl, *Zionistisches Tagebuch*, 336.

appeal to Jewish philanthropists.<sup>73</sup> Herzl wanted to forestall a possible cooperation between Oppenheimer and the JCA by making him an offer first.<sup>74</sup>

On April 24, 1903, Sigmund Werner, who replaced Buber as editor of *Die Welt* after his falling out with Herzl, published a prospect of the JOCG in the paper at Oppenheimer's request. In an editorial comment, Werner emphasized that the JOCG was a private enterprise but, nevertheless, of "indisputable interest" for Zionists. Herzl was furious and accused Oppenheimer of splintering the movement. To further drive a wedge between Trietsch and Oppenheimer, Herzl disclosed to the latter an intrigue by Trietsch on behalf of the JOCG. During a meeting of the Zionist Prussian district committee Trietsch petitioned, supposedly in the name of the Breslau regional office, for the commissioning of the JOCG to implement settlement, instead of the "incompetent" Zionist Executive Committee. The reaction of the ZVfD headquarters was to publicly dissociate themselves in the *Die Welt* from the JOCG asking its members to do the same because the association violated Zionism's charter precept.<sup>75</sup>

Oppenheimer attempted, to no avail, to mediate between Herzl and Trietsch, while Herzl increased the pressure on Oppenheimer to dissociate himself from Trietsch.<sup>76</sup> In his defense, Oppenheimer claimed that he never understood the conflict between political and practical Zionism.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, he did not want to seem subservient to political maneuvering. He demanded an impartial explanation from Herzl as to why small-scale settlement experiments in Cyprus were harmful to Zionism. After all, British rule there would be beneficial to their success, which was in turn necessary for further fundraising, public relations, and providing experienced settlers for colonization in Palestine. To lure the reluctant Oppenheimer, Herzl disclosed to him that the ZO was considering acquir-

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73 Oppenheimer, "Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation," 261.

74 Herzl, *Zionistisches Tagebuch*, 336. Davis Trietsch had a similar interpretation for Herzl's preliminary interest in his Cyprus settlement plan. According to Trietsch, Herzl's interest lasted as long as he believed that Trietsch was in contact with the JCA or other financially endowed organizations; see *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses* (Vienna: Verlag des Vereines "Erez Israel," 1903), 38. Herzl vehemently denied this accusation. In a reversal of the argument, Herzl claimed that Trietsch was only willing to work with him because he believed Herzl had the necessary financial means for settlement. Herzl claimed to be more than willing to work together with the JCA, which he tried to win as a partner for the El-Arish plan; see *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 115–116. Herzl clearly tried to forestall the JCA approaching Oppenheimer, as his diary entry demonstrates.

75 Bein, "Briefwechsel," 26–32.

76 Bein, "Briefwechsel," 33–39.

77 *Die Welt*, "Bericht über die Sitzung des Grossen Aktions-Komitees: am Montag den 6. und Dienstag den 7. Januar 1908," January 10, 1908, 10.

ing a plot in Palestine on which Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative could be established. Further, he invited Oppenheimer to hold a lecture at the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basel scheduled for August of the same year, on the condition that Oppenheimer publicly pledge allegiance to Herzl and the Basel Program before the announcement of the congress program.<sup>78</sup>

Under time pressure Oppenheimer finally conceded. In July he stepped down from his position as chairman of the board of the JOCG, adding to the declaration dictated by Herzl that he maintained his prerogative to "promote with all my strength also other causes, be they Jewish or general humane ones, as long as they don't cause conflict with my Zionist credo." The JOCG was not implicitly mentioned in the statement and Oppenheimer remained torn about his resignation from the board. He disclosed to Herzl his sorrow about the damage that his resignation caused the JOCG and his disapproval of a charter as a prerequisite for settlement. After all, his utopian vision was grounded on the transformative powers emanating from small-scale settlement cooperatives, not on state intervention or large-scale reforms. Oppenheimer still remained an active member of the JOCG. His hopes rose again when Trietsch showed him an offer from British officials for the JOCG to purchase land in Cyprus. Only in January 1904, after the failure of Trietsch's Cyprus plan and the revelation of improper allocation of funds, did he finally resign his JOCG membership.<sup>79</sup>

Oppenheimer's loyalty pledge was published in *Die Welt* as an excerpt from the correspondence with Herzl. It also included the editor's endorsement of his Zionist convictions in conjunction with the agenda for the approaching Zionist congress, in which he was now announced as an expert speaker on "colonization."<sup>80</sup> Herzl requested that Oppenheimer's lecture not be specifically about Palestine. Rather it should make the case for any territory for which at the time being a charter could be acquired. Oppenheimer should consider the "general principles which ... naturally with due consideration for any prevailing circumstances, would have to be put into practice in our colonization."<sup>81</sup>

Herzl's request was convenient for Oppenheimer, who often struggled with the constraints of Zionist ideology. At the beginning of their relationship Herzl sent Oppenheimer diverse pieces of Zionist propaganda to shape his concep-

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<sup>78</sup> Bein, "Briefwechsel," 38–43.

<sup>79</sup> Bein, "Briefwechsel," 44–54, citation on p. 44.

<sup>80</sup> "Der Sechste Kongress: Die Tagesordnung des VI. Zionisten-Kongresses," *Die Welt*, July 17, 1903; "Ein Brief Dr. Franz Oppenheimers," *Die Welt*, July 17, 1903, 29.

<sup>81</sup> Herzl's letter to Oppenheimer from July 14, 1903, in Bein, "Briefwechsel," 45, translation in Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 57.

tion.<sup>82</sup> In early 1903, he was approached by the editorial staff of the *General-Anzeiger für die gesamten Interessen des Judentums* who according to their own statement sent letters to over a thousand renowned men and women with three questions on Zionism, hoping to thus assemble an extensive catalogue of pro and con arguments on this passionately debated issue.<sup>83</sup> Oppenheimer's reply was published on March 5, 1903, in the *General-Anzeiger* and the following day in *Die Welt*.<sup>84</sup> Unsure about his convictions, Oppenheimer sent Herzl the draft for preapproval to make sure it did not contain any "heresies" and to receive Herzl's affirmation that Oppenheimer was really a Zionist.<sup>85</sup> Oppenheimer described Zionism as a complex movement with various, sometimes contradictory, positions making it impossible for one person to identify with all of the movement's components. He, for example, was a "resolute opponent of the racial theory which was crucial for many Zionists."<sup>86</sup>

Oppenheimer expounded that antisemitism's racial component was merely a mask for economic-social issues that should be solved with the same methods as the social question at large, and specifically his settlement cooperative. This was, he thought, the natural solution to the "Jewish question" since it was in its core a Jewish solution. He elucidated that nationalized land had its roots in the Mosaic laws of the Jubilee. Additionally, the "many suffering people" that Zionism intended on resettling, "sigh more heavily under the triple scourge of absolutism, capitalism and antisemitism than ever any human race in all history." Due to their acute distress, he concluded, it was only natural that they served as trailblazers for the universal solution of the social question. The Zionist leadership's decision to adopt the necessary preconditions for Oppenheimer's social experiment in the form of nationalized land, as well as cooperative colonization, enabled Oppenheimer to call himself Zionist in his own sense: "I am a *Zionist* because, and insomuch as, I am a devout *Socialist*."<sup>87</sup>

Buber's hope that Oppenheimer would fuse Zionist aims within grander universal trends was fulfilled, according to Kressel, in respect to socialism. Kressel,

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**82** Oppenheimer's letter to Herzl from May 25, 1902, in Bein, "Briefwechsel," 23.

**83** *General-Anzeiger für die gesamten Interessen des Judentums*, February 5, 1903, 1. The forty-fourth, and last, contribution was published on May 11, 1903. I could not find a published reply by a woman.

**84** Bein, "Briefwechsel," 24–26.

**85** Letter from Franz Oppenheimer to Theodor Herzl from February 11, 1903, in Bein, "Briefwechsel," 23. Both in the letter and in the published statement Oppenheimer referred to himself as a "Zionist" using quotation marks.

**86** Bein, "Briefwechsel," 24.

**87** Bein, "Briefwechsel," 24–25, emphasis in the original.



who authored Oppenheimer's only Zionist biography, claimed that the infusion of practical settlement with universal socialist aims, together with his role in convincing Herzl to integrate practical agricultural settlement into political Zionism, were Oppenheimer's main contributions to the movement.<sup>88</sup>

## Oppenheimer's Debut at the "Uganda Congress"

In August 1903, while in Basel, Herzl presented the Sixth Zionist Congress a possible charter with the British government in East Africa, also referred to as Uganda, which would enable a foreseeable start to practical settlement. Herzl had reached a dead end in negotiations with the Ottoman sultan over Palestine. At the same time, he was deeply affected by the deteriorating circumstances of Russian Jewry after the Kishinev pogrom. Consequently, he decided to prioritize finding a refuge for the persecuted Eastern European masses over the settlement of Palestine.

Again, his first major opponent was Trietsch who dominated the first afternoon of the congress with accusations that Herzl had abandoned the Basel Program by pursuing a charter in a land that was not even adjacent to Palestine, and thus incapable of being incorporated into a future "Greater Palestine." A long and stormy debate followed. Max Bodenheimer, who presided over the proceedings, tried to restore order with an oversized gavel, which broke into fragments as accusations were hurled across the room. These included Trietsch's scandalous attempt to transfer responsibility for El-Arish settlement to the JOCG and the discovery of calculation errors in the JOCG brochure. Herzl was well prepared for the battle against Trietsch. He invited to the congress a woman from Galatz in Romania who had participated in a failed Cyprus settlement expedition organized by Trietsch. From the podium Herzl read her statement, noting her husband's death, the loss of her entire property and her resulting dependency on alms for her and her six children.<sup>89</sup> Herzl portrayed Trietsch as irresponsible in matters of settler welfare to discredit him and the JOCG.<sup>90</sup>

The next day the discord between the JOCG leadership and Herzl continued to permeate the discussion. In the morning Alfred Nossig reiterated Trietsch's disappointment with Herzl not first consulting the Zionist congress before turn-

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<sup>88</sup> Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 10.

<sup>89</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 34–60.

<sup>90</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 117–119. Israel Zangwill also repudiated the JOCG because of the fragmentation and division it was causing in his speech on the third day of the congress; see *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 129.

ing down the sultan's offer to settle Jews in other places of the Ottoman Empire. In Nossig's opinion, small, detached settlements in the vicinity of historic Palestine could, if carefully planned, ultimately lead to the formation of a large, connected settlement territory. Herzl's preference for a charter over settlement in the vicinity of Palestine without a charter was in his opinion the wrong approach. To demonstrate this point, he expounded on English colonization in Africa, which began with small, disconnected acquisitions by contract as well as by force. These were later connected by rail, extending English domination almost unnoticeably over the whole continent. There were many interjections that the ZO should not be compared with the British Empire since it did not have the same resources, especially military ones. Nossig replied: "We are not a great power such as England. Neither do we want to colonize the whole continent, nor are we conquerors. All we want is to get our small, ancient fatherland back and I believe we will fare well to obtain it with the same means, obviously with the exclusion of cannons and blood, with peaceful means, with the plow in the hand."<sup>91</sup>

In defense of the leadership, Alfred Klee dismissed the idea of small-scale colonization as "backward" and rendered obsolete by the efforts of political Zionism. Moreover, he argued, it would be unattainable without military backing. As he saw it, the Zionist movement's purpose was to attain recognition for the Jews as a nation through the acceptance of their demand for a publicly and legally assured homeland. And England's offer of colonization in British East Africa was in this respect a great success for Zionism.<sup>92</sup> Daniel Pasmanik suggested that a new commission should explore the feasibility of Palestine settlement in order to resolve conflicts over benefits of small-scale colonization and to stay focused on the ultimate objective while discussing the establishment of a "night asylum" in British East Africa for displaced Russian Jews.<sup>93</sup> This was not the first time that the foundation of a committee for the exploration of Palestine was suggested at a Zionist congress. In fact, an unprompted committee had already been formed in 1902 in Berlin by Nossig, Trietsch, Motzkin, Warburg and other practical Zionists.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 78–82, citation on p. 81.

<sup>92</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 84–85.

<sup>93</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 91–92. Nordau coined the term "Nachtasyl" in his speech in support of Zionist settlement of British East Africa; see *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 71.

<sup>94</sup> "Das Komitee zur wirtschaftlichen Erforschung Palaestinas," *Palästina* 1 (1902): 10. Pasmanik's suggestion to establish Palestine exploration committee at the Sixth Zionist Congress was prompted by the appearance of a donation in the balance sheets by Yehiel Tschlenow of

Oppenheimer's lecture was delivered on the morning of the fourth day after being postponed from the day before under the pretext that the lecture was not yet ready.<sup>95</sup> This gave Nossig cause to believe it might not happen at all.<sup>96</sup> Herzl, however, had a special interest in Oppenheimer's lecture, which he personally set in the agenda and apparently reviewed before its delivery.<sup>97</sup> Herzl deliberately chose Oppenheimer to "create an atmosphere receptive to the idea of Jewish settlement outside Palestine,"<sup>98</sup> and now intentionally placed his talk amid the debate about British East Africa. But the vote on whether to create a committee to study the suitability of Zionist settlement in British East Africa was adjourned due to Herzl's absence from the discussions' final stages.<sup>99</sup> The next morning, at the height of suspense, instead of holding a vote to form the East Africa Commission, Herzl asked the delegates to listen to Oppenheimer's lecture so that "some facts will be brought into the debate occupying us now and that we receive a proper conception of the sense and course of colonization."<sup>100</sup>

In his lecture Oppenheimer implored for urgent action by demonstrating that colonization is a lengthy, protracted process. Oppenheimer described his three principles: mutual aid, agricultural focus and national ownership of land. The aim was to accelerate natural national development, which usually takes generations, of a Jewish nation lacking in occupational variety. The first step would be to create a network of agricultural cooperatives, preferably utilizing experienced Jewish farmers from Galicia, Romania and Russia, until market conditions attracted big industry. The process could be expedited through the creation of purchasing cooperatives increasing the buying power of farmers by cutting out the middleman, and through economic incentives such as the distribution of all profits to the settlers. These tools, which were lacking in past philanthropic settlements, would lead to profitable farms. The colony would gradually become self-sufficient and could start taking loans to expand and enable new forms of business beyond agriculture. Although Oppenheimer presented his economic principals as universal, he did explicitly name Palestine at the beginning of his lecture. Later he remained obscure as to whether the fatherland he

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530 francs for the funding of a such a committee; see *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 110.

<sup>95</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 124.

<sup>96</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 140.

<sup>97</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 182.

<sup>98</sup> Herzl chose Oppenheimer over Hillel Joffe for the keynote talk on settlement. Joffe was already involved with settlement in Palestine; see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 57.

<sup>99</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 177.

<sup>100</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 182.

was talking about was the historical one or simply the fatherland of the second-generation born and raised in this new homeland. Additionally, Oppenheimer emphasized the important motivational power of the longing for Zion. Yet, he added, this was not the only power at work in the hearts of Jews. They have both their proletarian class consciousness, as well as a tribal consciousness of heritage from a superior people.<sup>101</sup>

Immediately after Oppenheimer's lecture, the discussion returned to the burning question at hand: the East Africa Commission. Oppenheimer's lecture was opened for discussion in a late-night supplementary meeting with exceptionally low attendance. Even Nossig, who repeatedly insisted that Oppenheimer's lecture be discussed,<sup>102</sup> was absent, as was Oppenheimer, who had already left Basel to the dismay of the delegates in attendance.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, a heated debate ensued. Trietsch, who emphasized his close relationship to Oppenheimer in the founding of the JOCG, criticized the inappropriateness of an agricultural focus for urban Jewish pioneers. Once he reverted to his El-Arish plan the sparse audience got even smaller. Pasmanik voiced his concerns that Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative had not yet been tried. While it was a worthy enterprise facilitating agricultural autarky, Pasmanik warned that Zionism should not lay all its eggs in one nest. Instead, it should also enable private enterprise in the style of English colonization. Others in the assembly advocated for Oppenheimer's plan. The chair, Bodenheimer, reminded Trietsch that Oppenheimer's speech was about universal – and not geographically specific – settlement.<sup>104</sup>

The congress ultimately decided to appoint a commission for the study of British East Africa and, due to increasing pressure, a commission for the exploration of Palestine as well. In the words of Heinrich Loewe: "The Palestine commission is a requirement for future activity in Palestine, and what we can spare for Uganda we want to also be able to do for Palestine."<sup>105</sup> In contrast to prior resolutions concerning the committee, the petition brought forward by the German delegation also provided a two-year budget, enabling the committee to begin exploring Palestine and adjacent countries, and to also publish a scientific journal. It also included further goals that were not yet budgeted: the establishment of a laboratory for agronomical and technical research; a laboratory for the study and control of endemic and contagious diseases; and an agricultural and

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**101** *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 182–195. For more on Oppenheimer's use of the term "consciousness" in his sociological model of identity, see chapter 6.

**102** *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 237 and 323–24.

**103** *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 307.

**104** *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 307–316.

**105** *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 274.

technical information office. Another far-reaching decision impacting Oppenheimer's plan was the creation of a cooperative trust within the Jewish National Fund (JNF), as well as the resolution to nationalize land ownership as a prerequisite for cooperative settlement.<sup>106</sup> As the Sixth Zionist Congress came to an end, the beginning of Zionist colonization seemed imminent. Oppenheimer, Warburg and Soskin were voted into the board of the newly founded Commission for the Exploration of Palestine. Oppenheimer and Warburg were also appointed to the East Africa Commission, a position Oppenheimer never filled.<sup>107</sup>

This chapter has traced Oppenheimer's path into the Zionist movement from his involvement with sociology and agricultural cooperative settlements. His coming on board was not coincidental, as he described it, but ensued from prior engagement to bring about an occupational shift of Eastern European Jews towards agriculture. Although his acceptance in the movement largely depended on Herzl's grace, Oppenheimer was not an advocate of political Zionism. His endorsement of immediate small-scale settlement and connections with other practical Zionists brought him in conflict with Herzl until he renounced these connections. This was accompanied by Herzl's backing of Zionist settlement according to Oppenheimer's agricultural cooperative model in the foreseeable future – an important victory for Oppenheimer and other practical Zionists – yet it remained to be seen where this colonization would begin.

The next two chapters will focus on the journal *Altneuland* that Oppenheimer, Warburg and Soskin edited in their capacity as board of the CEP. These chapters will analyze how *Altneuland* sought to prepare the road for Zionist settlement through a scientific examination of the geographical, cultural and political conditions of the region as well as the appropriate scope and method for colonization. The editors of *Altneuland* were proud of the roots of this approach in German colonial practice and viewed the journal as a part of a growing body of German colonial literature. As such the journal also contained many notions and ideas common in German colonial literature, such as colonial fantasies. Thus the German Zionists publishing in *Altneuland* can be viewed as German colonialists with a Jewish twist, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. *Altneuland* contributions by Jewish and non-Jewish colonization experts will be contextualized both within a Zionist and a German discourse on Jews and Palestine, creating a broader framework to understanding Oppenheimer's grappling with Jewish identity in the imperial era.

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106 *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 270–275.

107 *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 327–328.

## Chapter 4

# *Altneuland* – A German Colonial Journal

For will power to turn into redemptive, salvational action we must primarily use that which is our era's most powerful force: science.<sup>1</sup>

This is how Franz Oppenheimer described the mission of *Altneuland*, the monthly journal published by the Berlin-based CEP from January 1904 until the end of 1906.<sup>2</sup> Science was to pave the way for “action,” that is, practical settlement, by creating a comprehensive body of knowledge concerning climate, land, local culture and the legal system, as well as agriculture and the ongoing trade in Palestine and its adjacent countries. A further goal was to ascertain knowledge about the physical, moral and psychological capacities of the Jewish people destined to settle the land. In addition, the journal intended to critically review other colonial undertakings to select the best settlement methods matching the preconditions of Zionist settlement: nationalized land and cooperative settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Yet as the analysis of *Altneuland* in this section will show, beyond the journal's declared aims were further subtler goals wrapped up in issues of German colonization. Although *Altneuland* editors were Jewish, the journal served as a platform for both Jews and non-Jews to promote colonial enterprise in the Middle East. Additionally, its editors were involved in colonization projects in Germany or overseas as part of the expanding German Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. Hence, it should not be read within a Zionist narrative alone but within a German colonial context and as a German colonial text. Since *Altneuland* was a harbinger of yet unrealized Zionist settlement, the investigation will also draw on the growing number of studies on German colonial fantasies for interpretations and comparisons. Colonial fantasy served Germans in reimagining their place among the European nations, as it did in the preimperial era, when Germany still lacked unity, national territory and identity.<sup>4</sup> The sense of inadequacy and the in-between space Jews occupied in Germany – where emancipation had been nominally granted, yet discrimination was on the rise, and where traditional communal bonds were eroding while new forms of Jewish engagement were being created – positioned German Zionists

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1 Editorial, *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 1.

2 According to *Altneuland* coeditor Selig Soskin, the first editorial was formulated by Franz Oppenheimer; see Soskin, *Franz Oppenheimer und die Palästina Kommission*, CZA A161–78, 2–3.

3 Editorial, *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 1–2.

4 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 99–100.

at the forefront of the endeavor to reimagine their identity through colonial fantasy.

The focus of this analysis is not the contribution of *Altneuland* and German Zionists to Zionist nation-building and settlement. Instead, this chapter examines what the circle of contributors to *Altneuland* wanted to achieve as Jews, Germans and Europeans for their continued life in Germany. It also examines how, by creating their own German colonial journal, they attempted to intervene in a German colonial discourse – which was plagued by racism and antisemitism – to sketch an alternative, liberal and even utopian form of empire inclusive to Jews. The comparison with other colonial projects enabled Zionists to imagine themselves a part of a broader European family where the members were different and not yet equal, but nevertheless a family.

The next two chapters expand the scope of analysis from Oppenheimer to a broader alliance of Zionists actively writing for the CEP's journal *Altneuland*. In this analysis, Oppenheimer will no longer have a central role. Instead, the focus will be on understanding the mindset and goals of the Zionist network within which he was acting and its engagement within an even broader network of German colonial activists. Derek Penslar has pointed out that the CEP "implanted into the WZO German colonialism's celebrated commitment to scientific research and experimentation."<sup>5</sup> This scientific commitment that was a trademark of German colonialism played an important role, not only in the acceptance of this colonial late bloomer but also in Germany's nation-building project. Although individual Germans were a part of European colonial endeavors throughout,<sup>6</sup> the creation of German literature dealing with travels and scientific explorations of potential colonies only picked up in the eighteenth century, a period in which a longing for German unity, national territory and identity was becoming most salient.<sup>7</sup>

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5 Penslar, "Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy," 143.

6 This includes isolated colonial enterprises which were backed by principalities of the Holy Roman Empire or wealthy merchant houses, as well as individuals participating in colonial missions and settlements of other European nations; see Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 18–21.

7 Travel literature published in German increased fivefold in the second half of the eighteenth century compared to the first half. It was mostly translations of works by non-German authors or summaries, reflections and critiques thereof; see Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 34. One example of early scientific travel literature compiled by a German author is George Forster's account of his voyage with Captain James Cook in the 1770s, which was originally published in English. George's father, Johann Reinhold Forster, served the British crown on that voyage as the scientific expert; see Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 25. Another example was the five-man research expedition to the Near East initiated and directed by Johann David Michaelis on behalf of the Danish crown. The expedition set off in 1761 and included German, Danish and Swedish schol-

The shift towards travel literature that was “more diverse, more geared toward contemporary political developments, and more ‘scientific,’ that is, more focused on collecting information that could be integrated into global systems of knowledge,” corresponded to a general European trend beginning in the 1750s.<sup>8</sup> Yet German writers, translators, editors and others involved in the production of German colonial literature assumed within the European context the unique position of an observant outsider: someone whose lack of direct involvement – combined with a systematic, comparative approach – allowed for a supposedly objective criticism of the colonial enterprises of other nations, as well as the assumption of a superior, moral stance. Paradoxically, this detached, intellectual involvement in contemporary colonial dealings and controversies aroused in German readers a participatory feeling. Discussions on abolition, revolution and fissures in the traditional colonial order sparked identification with the colonized and their emancipatory struggles as a metaphor for their own struggles back home, as well as a sense of opportunity for gaining colonial possessions previously controlled by other countries.<sup>9</sup>

In this regard, the intellectual authority German writers were establishing dealt not only with global political events, but also with Germany’s inadequate political situation, as well as the absence of a German voice in colonial enterprise. Those involved in the production of colonial literature were shaping narrative, self-esteem and the collective imagination of Germany’s desired role in the world both in relation to other European nations, as well as in relation to future colonies in preparation of rectifying action. Underlying this literature – expressed in various genres ranging from children’s books and fictional novels to poetry and drama, as well as in the subtext of scientific, political and philosophical treatise – were colonial fantasies compensating for the absence of physical might:

They suggest “potency” in view of “impotence,” significance in view of insignificance. They transform need – economic need and hence forced emigration – into a mission, a special German ability for colonizing, a colonial calling. Indeed, the foreign soil onto which these fantasies are projected becomes the testing ground for the development of a distinct sense of national self and national destiny.<sup>10</sup>

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ars. Michaelis’s research questions were published first in German in 1762. The publishing of Carsten Niebuhr’s travelogues began in 1772; see Jonathan M. Hess, “Johann David Michaelis and the Colonial Imaginary: Orientalism and the Emergence of Racial Antisemitism in Eighteenth-Century Germany,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6 (2000): 75–78.

**8** Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 35.

**9** Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 35–42.

**10** Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 99.



By the 1880s, almost two decades before the journal *Altneuland* was published in Berlin, colonial fantasies “had become so firmly entrenched in Germany’s collective imagination that they formed a cultural residue of myths about self and other(s) that could be stirred up for particular political purposes – progressive as well as reactionary ones – whenever the need arose.”<sup>11</sup> And as Zantop also argues, the potential concealed in fantasy could be directed in different political directions. The thesis advanced in this chapter is that *Altneuland* was a strong proponent of a progressive line – at least in its aspirations – concerning both Jewish colonization of Palestine, as well as the ramifications of German colonialism for domestic policy.

Since the journal’s intended readership was primarily Jewish, it served as an intermediary and interpreter of German colonial fantasies and, by this point, also colonial practice to a general Jewish public. Its writers and editors were agents of transculturation, a term “ethnographers have used ... to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture.”<sup>12</sup> The journal simultaneously engaged prominent figures advocating for progressive German colonialism while criticizing reactionary ones. It thereby attempted to form a peripheral Jewish alliance with opinion-forming elites in order to engage and influence the colonial discourse and dominant culture. Although tempting, continuing the investigation into possible influences of such an alliance in other colonial journals would go beyond the constraints of this study and its focus on Oppenheimer and his German Zionist network. This should be the object of further studies.

The following two chapters explore the intended effects on Jewish readership of discussions in *Altneuland* concerning settlement in Palestine, as well as attitudes towards colonialism by Germany and other nations. This analysis of *Altneuland* can be read as a case study of “how travel books by Europeans about non-European parts of the world went (and go) about creating ‘domestic subjects’ of Euroimperialism; how they have engaged metropolitan reading publics with (or to) expansionist enterprises whose material benefits accrued mainly to the very few.”<sup>13</sup> *Altneuland* advocated small-scale settlements in preparation of subsequent mass immigration and Jewish bourgeoisie integration within a German and European colonial elite of a similar socioeconomic and academic background. The definition of “‘European’ in this instance refers, above all, to a network of literate Northern Europeans, mainly men from the lower levels of the

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11 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 3.

12 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6.

13 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 4.

aristocracy and the middle and upper levels of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>14</sup> Because the magazine’s declared purpose was to promote a shift towards practical settlement, it needed to change Jewish public opinion by reshaping the imagination and narrative on two main matters: the capabilities of Jews to colonize by founding agricultural settlements, and the fertility of Palestine, which was widely considered to be barren.

Yet *Altneuland* attempted an even bigger transformation. First, its writers established intellectual authority by using reports, statistics and reprints, as well as travel narratives and critiques of scientific articles, essays and books, to create a scientific knowledge base of both Jewish and non-Jewish colonial endeavors across the globe. Like the role played by authors of German colonial literature in the century-and-a-half beforehand, they then used their intellectual authority to imagine a new relationship between Jews – lacking a nation-state, let alone a centralized colonial policy – and Europe, as well as between Jews and the local inhabitants in the intended areas of Jewish colonization. By doing so, they began reconstructing splintered European Jewry as a national whole, and thereby attempted to unite and harmonize it through the nation-building project of an overseas settlement project whose sheer size required coordinated efforts of all strata of Jewish society.

## From *Palästina* to *Altneuland*

The CEP and its journal *Altneuland* evolved out of the Komitee zur wirtschaftlichen Erforschung Palästinas [Committee for the Economic Exploration of Palestine] (CEEP), which was founded in 1902. They did not emerge from prior Palestine commissions. The journal *Palästina*, which preceded and followed *Altneuland*, was the mouthpiece of this committee and a vessel for the publication of its research results. The journal’s editors, Alfred Nossig and Davis Trietsch, together with future editors of *Altneuland*, Otto Warburg and Selig Soskin, were among the founding members of the CEEP.<sup>15</sup> Oppenheimer was connected to Trietsch and Nossig through the JOCG, which was also founded in 1902. He served as head of the board of trustees and was one of its important propagandists.<sup>16</sup> After official endorsement and budget allotment at the Sixth Zionist Congress, the CEEP was replaced by the slightly renamed CEP, with a li-

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<sup>14</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 38.

<sup>15</sup> *Palästina* 1 (1902): 10.

<sup>16</sup> See chapter 3 for more on the JOCG.

able three-headed board to which Franz Oppenheimer was elected together with Warburg and Soskin.<sup>17</sup>

The CEP's journal, *Altneuland*, was incorporated into the official Zionist organ *Die Welt* as a supplement provided at a reduced price to subscribers. The 1906 edition was also translated into Russian and distributed as a supplement to a Russian monthly journal. In addition, the Kolonisationsverein Esra in Germany, in which Warburg's father-in-law Gustav Cohen played an important role, and the Jüdischer Kolonisationsverein in Vienna, accounted for a large number of subscriptions. Although Warburg bemoaned that very few subscribers of *Die Welt* opted for the supplement, he still considered it a success due to the journal's "scientific seriousness and objectivity," as well as the integration of non-Jewish scientists and the impact they had in gaining respect for Zionism in non-Zionist and non-Jewish circles.<sup>18</sup>

One of the reasons Oppenheimer was invited to join the Zionist movement on the eve of practical settlement was to boost its scientific reputation. His scientific renown and expertise on agricultural and cooperative settlement was conjoined in the CEP with Warburg's high repute as a botanical expert on tropical plants of the Middle and Far East.<sup>19</sup> Warburg's scientific endeavors were identified with advocacy of private investments in colonial entrepreneurship. He accused German scientists of excessive objectivity and insufficient support of Germany's global interests, when compared to the way English and French scientists supported their countries. Although Warburg observed an increase in German scientific expeditions at the end of the nineteenth century, they were dispatched by private entrepreneurs and their findings were kept secret. The Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee [Colonial Economic Committee], of which he was a founding member, was in his opinion the sole exception, publishing its data for the greater benefit of German imperial interests.<sup>20</sup>

The Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee was part of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft [German Colonial Society], a lobby group which "intended to influence the making of colonial policy, to carry out actual projects in the colonies, 'to

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17 *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 272–274 and 328.

18 Otto Warburg, "Bericht der Palaestinakommission," *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 221–222; *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des VIII. Zionisten-Congresses* (Cologne: Juedischer Verlag, 1907), 134.

19 Gaby Warburg, "Otto Warburg: Die Geschichte eines praktischen Zionisten," in *Zweimal Heimat: Die Jeckes zwischen Mitteleuropa und Nahost*, ed. Moshe Zimmermann and Yotam Hotam (Frankfurt a.M.: Beerenverlag 2005), 328.

20 Otto Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen im tuerkischen Orient," *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 276.

exert its influence on the emigration question in a ‘national’ sense, and to work against the increasingly dangerous strengthening of other nationalities in world trade at the cost of German capital and German labor.”<sup>21</sup> As opposed to other factions within the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft that focused on settlement colonialism and were “interested in colonialism as a rallying force for the political right,”<sup>22</sup> the Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee was geared towards agricultural development, as well as expansion of transport infrastructure and resource production in the colonies for German industry. It was extremely influential on German colonial administration.<sup>23</sup> Warburg was coeditor of the Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee’s main scientific journal, *Der Tropenpflanzer*, founded in 1897, and was involved in diverse colonial enterprises.

The cooperation between Warburg and Oppenheimer was not without tension. According to Warburg their shared goal was to support the Zionist movement in the turn from solely political activity to the preparation of practical settlement.<sup>24</sup> Both were *Agrarpolitiker*, administrative technocrats with an agricultural focus aimed at converging politics and technology into public policy.<sup>25</sup> However, the focus of Warburg’s prior settlement projects was on the production of raw materials abroad for German industry.<sup>26</sup> Oppenheimer, by contrast, was involved in creating agricultural cooperatives that included nonindustrial arts and crafts manufacturing within Germany. Autarky was important to both, but while Warburg promoted the independence of German industry from foreign raw material providers, Oppenheimer pursued a socialist utopian vision of counter urbanization and counter centralization averse to industrialism.

Their mutual endorsement of nationalized land in Palestine had diverging underlying motivations. In general, Warburg favored coupling land speculation with colonization, since the former was a strong incentive for private investors.<sup>27</sup> His experience with German colonization companies made him wary of share-based financing. Due to their moderate resources, shareholders hoped for

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21 Woodruff Donald Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 41.

22 Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 41.

23 Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 40–42.

24 Otto Warburg, “Oppenheimer und Palästina,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, March 28, 1934, 18.

25 Penslar, “Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy,” 151–152; Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 68–69.

26 Penslar, “Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy,” 147.

27 Otto Warburg, “Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien auf Grundlage der Baumwollkultur im Gebiete der Bagdad-Bahn,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 235.

short-term returns, which agricultural settlements would be unable to provide. He preferred securing funding from large private investors who could generally show more patience. In sharp contrast to Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative and other agricultural enterprises offering discounted loans for farmers, Warburg did not endorse leaseholders or laborers becoming permanent, let alone independent farmers.<sup>28</sup> Since recruiting large-scale investors seemed unfeasible, Warburg accepted investment by public funds, hoping that it would spur private investment. In the case of Palestine, he suggested this private investment could then be used for establishing cultivation of cash crops such as wine and olives, both of which required a long-term investment approach. Warburg also suggested using global finance to increase Ottoman public debt to gradually gain financial and administrative influence over the whole empire. He thereby suggested further investment opportunities for large investors, especially German banks.<sup>29</sup>

By contrast, the land reformer Oppenheimer regarded nationalized land as the single most important lever to break up the global capitalist order founded on land enclosure, thus imbuing Zionist settlement with a universal utopian horizon. One of the main arguments for his cooperative agricultural model was that it could counteract land speculation. This was important because of apprehensions that successful small-scale settlement would, in the long run, fuel rising land prices and jeopardize future purchases. The cooperative model envisioned a gradual progression for the farmers advancing from workers, to lease holders and, finally, to "colonists"<sup>30</sup> through merit and experience, as well as the ability to pay off their loans. This process was a recurring theme in *Altneuland* and the key value of Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative for nation-building. It was an instrument for transforming perceived degenerate urban dwellers into "muscular Jews" and future citizens of the democracy that would eventually supersede the interim technocracy. The latter was, however, not Warburg's aim. He preferred nationalized land remain under rigid administration.<sup>31</sup> The internal disagreements on the role of capitalism and the embedding of Zionism in German impe-

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**28** Yosef Kats, *The "Business" of Settlement: Private Entrepreneurship in the Jewish Settlement of Palestine, 1900–1914* (Jerusalem, Ramat-Gan: Magnes Press Hebrew University, Bar-Ilan University Press, 1994), 250–251.

**29** Otto Warburg, "Syrien als Wirtschafts- und Kolonisationsgebiet," *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 114. The same issue of *Altneuland* also included a report on Ottoman public debt; see *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 120–123.

**30** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 124. The term "colonist" was in common use in Prussian settlement and "inner colonization" jargon for centuries in an agricultural context. The colonist had an indefinite entitlement to the land he cultivated even if he did not directly own the land.

**31** Penslar, "Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy," 153.

rial aspirations were clearly expressed in Oppenheimer's lack of involvement in the business ventures of the CEP, which aimed to increase trade between Germany and the Middle East.

Oppenheimer's textual contribution to *Altneuland* was limited. He neither authored many articles nor adapted them to the theme of the journal: the scientific study of Palestine and the adjacent countries. Their main goal was imparting a theoretical understanding of the importance and potential of agricultural settlement cooperatives, both in the sense of sustainability,<sup>32</sup> as well as for nation-building through training independent yet socially responsible farmers, citizens and colonizers. "This is exactly the character of the Zionist colonization movement," wrote Oppenheimer, "it wants to make free self-conscious men out of semisubjugated slaves through profit sharing, in order to install them as owners of the soil they cultivate as soon as they are amply trained physically and technically."<sup>33</sup> Oppenheimer rarely addressed particularities of Palestine or the Jewish people in *Altneuland*, but rather placed Zionism in a general agricultural colonization, nation-building and utopian context. A context relevant to Palestine was, however, construed through careful placement of Oppenheimer's articles.

Creating cohesive and programmatic journal issues through careful placement of articles selected from an abundant and broad scope of material seems to be a general strength of *Altneuland*'s editorial team. Oppenheimer's editorial contribution to the journal is unclear and considered by some historians to be marginal.<sup>34</sup> According to his coeditor Soskin, Oppenheimer contributed through the formulation of CEP statements in the journal, such as the dramatic opening editorial. On occasion of the tenth anniversary of Oppenheimer's death, Soskin wrote that despite Oppenheimer's limited Zionist dedication, "we soon saw what a great force we gained with Oppenheimer. After all, his mastery of language was unmatched by other members of the commission who were mainly men of arid, practical life." Soskin concluded his remembrance with the following remark: "As long as Franz Oppenheimer was part of the commission, he shined in it, even if he was not totally absorbed by it. He was an intimately beloved, valuable colleague, who sadly in the later years of his life ... completely stayed away from the Zionist movement."<sup>35</sup>

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32 E. g., Franz Oppenheimer, "Harmonische und disharmonische Genossenschaften," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 202–208.

33 Franz Oppenheimer, "Die Gewinnbeteiligung im landwirtschaftlichen Betriebe," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 368.

34 E. g., Penslar, "Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy," 152.

35 Soskin, *Franz Oppenheimer und die Palästina Kommission*, CZA A161–78, 2–4, citations on pp. 2 and 4.

The reshuffling of the CEEP staff in the new CEP boosted its scientific esteem but also officially sanctioned Trietsch, Nossig and others considered oppositional to Herzl. Nevertheless, the CEP was still comprised of practical Zionists favorable to Trietsch and his broader settlement plan of “Greater Palestine,” thus fulfilling his appeal at the Sixth Zionist Congress: “Give me and my friends a part of the authority with which our current leadership achieved nothing, and I will find something better than East Africa closer to Palestine.”<sup>36</sup> Trietsch continued propagating his Cyprus settlement scheme in *Altneuland*. The paper also served as a platform for bundling together and promoting different colonization projects and plans in the Middle East, while presenting them with a sense of cohesion.

The renaming of the journal to *Altneuland* was announced in the closing editorial of *Palästina* demonstrating the cooperative transition between the editorial teams. Trietsch emphasized that the resistance he faced from the Zionist leadership was not personal, as many suspected, but was a result of political Zionism’s unwillingness “to allow the premature shattering of the power of fantasy to control the masses with the hard arguments of facts.”<sup>37</sup> What Trietsch meant was that the scientific approach of the *Palästina*kunde [Palestine studies] promoted in the journal, would do away with romantics by articulating the hardships of settlement and the necessary endurance, possibly disappointing those looking for *deus ex machina* redemption. Yet the scientific approach of *Palästina* “was able to show promising goals.”<sup>38</sup> The promise of a biblical and messianic fantasy was to be replaced by a technical roadmap.

Neither Trietsch nor the new editors of *Altneuland* initially explained the decision to change the name of the journal. Yet, while Palestine was the common term used in works on the region, the new name suggested the messianic fantasy that Trietsch had criticized the Zionist leadership of pursuing. With this in mind, Warburg asked Herzl’s permission to use the name with the intention of giving the ideas in the novel a scientific foundation.<sup>39</sup> Upon Herzl’s death in July of 1904 the editors articulated the association in their eulogy with a note of criti-

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36 *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 44–45.

37 Davis Trietsch, “Schlusswort des Herausgebers,” *Palästina* 2 (1903): 247.

38 Trietsch, “Schlusswort,” 247.

39 Letter from Warburg to Herzl dated November 25, 1903, in CZA Z1/351/2; Herzl’s approval can be found in a letter from Herzl to Warburg dated November 27, 1903; Theodor Herzl, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, vol. 7, *Briefe, 1903–Juli 1907*, ed. Alex Bein et al. (Berlin: Propyläen 1996), 456; see also Soskin, *Franz Oppenheimer und die Palästina Kommission*, CZA A161–78, 2.

cism for the utopian form of the novel deeming it as a “poetic idealization” of their shared goals.<sup>40</sup>

One of the goals of the CEEP was to promote publications based on scientific exploration instead of the subjective travelogue genre which, according to Nossig, had been the only one utilized by Jewish writers to prepare Jewish colonization. Trietsch criticized the genre, because it gave too much attention to people who only briefly sojourned in Palestine. In addition, travelogues did not contain any practical information for those wishing to immigrate or invest in Palestine.<sup>41</sup> This critique was continued in *Altneuland*, for example, in the unusually anonymous review of Adolf Friedeman and Hermann Struck’s illustrated travelogue. The reviewer was, on the one hand, glad to be able to present a work by Zionists praising the “hopeful, honestly Zionist aura” suffusing the travel account. On the other hand, he considered it sentimental and subjective for the very same reason. The book with its romantic illustrations by Struck was considered useful for propaganda but lacking in scientific and economic utility.<sup>42</sup>

Renaming the journal after Herzl’s utopian novel was also remarkable, considering the continuity in personal and content between *Palästina* and *Altneuland*, as well as the burdened relationship some of them had with Herzl. Although Herzl headed the movement, he was neither a scientific expert, nor had he spent considerable time in Palestine. In fact, one of the purposes of Warburg’s first trip to Palestine in 1899–1900 was to collect detailed information about plants, water and climate, not only for the sake of practical settlement but also for Herzl’s novel. It was on this trip that Warburg met his future protégés, Soskin and Aaron Aaronson, as well as the engineer Joseph Treidel, who provided irrigation plans and maps, as well as other measurement services for the CEP, which required that the measurer be European-trained and European-think-

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<sup>40</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904). The eulogy was published on the third page of issue 7 in the section dedicated to advertisements, so it is not included in the journal’s page count.

<sup>41</sup> Alfred Nossig, “Über die Notwendigkeit von Erforschungsarbeiten in Palästina und seinen Nachbarländern,” *Palästina* 1 (1902): 7.

<sup>42</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 344–346. Struck’s romantic etchings of “old” Israel were popular among Jewish fraternities in Germany. They sparked their imagination and created a feeling of intimacy with Zion; see Miriam Rürup, “Gefundene Heimat? Palästinafahrten national-jüdischer deutsche Studentenverbindungen 1913/1914,” in *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, vol. 2, ed. Dan Diner (Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2004), 170. For an analysis of Friedeman’s travelogue, see Wolf Kaiser, *Palästina – Erez Israel: Deutschsprachige Reisebeschreibungen jüdischer Autoren von der Jahrhundertwende bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1992), 115–120.



ing.<sup>43</sup> The measurement services were important for the CEP's aspired advisory function for JNF land purchases, as well as for the foundation of *Palästinkunde*.

The lack of open communication about the journal's paradoxical naming suggests that it was a declaration of loyalty and a symbolic distancing from the oppositional position of *Palästina*. This was what Herzl demanded of Oppenheimer before the Sixth Zionist Congress. The promotion of Oppenheimer to the board of the CEP and the removal of Trietsch and Nossig further reinforce this perspective. But an even more important explanation is that the short-lived name *Altneuland* captured the spirit of a brief period after the "Uganda Congress" when the endorsement of Zionist settlement outside of Palestine was not taboo. The CEP was founded as a parallel institution to the East Africa Commission. Both widened the scope of potential Zionist settlement, one in Africa and the other in the entire Middle East. The latter was reinforced by a resolution initiated by the JNF commission at the Sixth Zionist Congress enabling land acquisitions in countries bordering Palestine.<sup>44</sup>

The Seventh Zionist Congress refocused attention on Palestine. As a result, the vanquished territorialists founded the ITO in 1905. At the end of the following year the journal's name reverted to *Palästina* and the editorial team was changed once again. Oppenheimer lamented the ITO secession as a victory for national romantics of an Eastern European creed weakening the influence of Western Jews and Russian advocates of a social utopian ideal.<sup>45</sup> Oppenheimer considered himself a part of the territorialist camp, which did not oppose settlement in Palestine in its search for alternative regions for colonization. He regarded Palestine as the best place to begin settlement, due to its magnetic pull for Jews and because of its geographic location and economic potential. Yet in his opinion Jewish colonization should not be restricted to Palestine alone.<sup>46</sup>

## **"Greater Palestine" and the Creation of a New Diaspora**

The exact borders of Palestine and accordingly the boundaries of colonization were a matter of debate. For example, Trietsch, Nossig and Oppenheimer promoted the settlement of Cyprus with the JOCG. The Hebrew name of the association

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<sup>43</sup> Gaby Warburg, "Otto Warburg," 329; Warburg, "Bericht der Palaestinakommission," 225–226.

<sup>44</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 262–263 and 303–306.

<sup>45</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, "Der Zionismus," in *Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 2, *Soziologische Streifzüge* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1927), 220–221.

<sup>46</sup> Oppenheimer, "Der Zionismus." 228–229.

which preceded the JOCG was Sha'are Zion, meaning the Gates of Zion, which revealed the association's aim at settling, not in Palestine proper, but in its vicinity, or in what Trietsch called “Greater Palestine.” Sha'are Zion published a map of the Middle East in *Palästina* that illustrated many of the main arguments and tools used also in *Altneuland* for shaping the colonial imagination of the Jewish readership.<sup>47</sup>

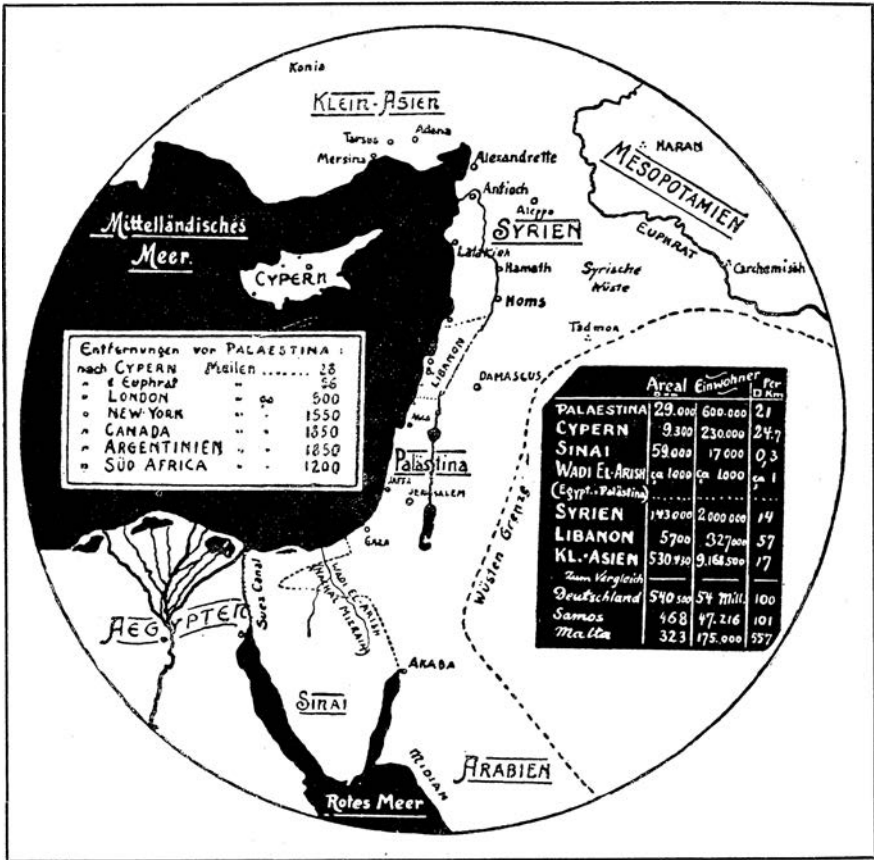


Fig. 1: Settlement potential of “Greater Palestine”

In the map Palestine was depicted without clear-cut borders. In the east the Arabian Desert formed a natural border. Additional borders were marked in the

47 Trietsch, “Die juedische Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft,” 49–50.

south at Wadi El-Arish and in the north by Lebanon, which was the only land on the map surrounded by a clear political border. Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Arabia were not clearly separated from each other. It could be argued that they were all a part of the Ottoman Empire and, as such, were not politically separate. However, the clear demarcation of Lebanon implied that the lack of separation emphasized and visualized settlement potential in the Middle East. What distinguished Lebanon from the other territories, according to Trietsch, was its status as a Christian autonomy upheld by European agreement. Hence existing European claims made it unsusceptible to Jewish colonization and ambitions for autonomy. Trietsch explained that Syria and Asia Minor were not relevant for Jewish colonization but were included for the sake of “scientific systematicity.”<sup>48</sup> Trietsch probably excluded them from colonization because their distance from Palestine would not enable a future Jewish autonomy. However, the visual lack of borders opened for the imagination the possibility of settling these areas too. This option was explored in several articles in *Altneuland*.

Two legends were provided in the map. The first had a black background and covered the Arabian Desert, which due to its hot, infertile climate, was considered irrelevant for settlement by Northern Europeans. The contrast also implied that Palestine and other areas not denoted as desert must then be fertile. The question of Palestine’s fertility was a major issue in *Altneuland*. Settlement potential was quantified in this legend by a listing of region sizes and their respective populations. Population density was listed in a third column. For the sake of comparison, Germany, Samos and Malta were also included in the legend. Germany was the index value, probably assuming that the reader had a sense of Germany’s population density. Additionally, the fact that Germany’s population density was listed as one hundred made it an ideal reference point.<sup>49</sup> Samos and Malta were probably included because they were both Mediterranean islands like Cyprus, which was the JOCG’s main candidate for Jewish settlement. With a population density of 557 Malta served as an extreme example

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<sup>48</sup> Trietsch, “Die juedische Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft,” 49–51.

<sup>49</sup> This statistic deviated from the official numbers suggesting its polemic nature. The population of Germany presented in *Palästina* was fifty-four million compared to a bit over fifty-six million, according to the 1900 census. The actual population density of Germany was 104.2, according to the 1900 census, and 112.1 in the 1905 census. It continuously rose between the founding of the German Empire and the First World War; see Kaiserliches Statistisches Amt, ed., *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* 23 (Berlin: von Putthammer & Mühlbrecht, 1902), 1; Kaiserliches Statistisches Amt, ed., *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* 28 (Berlin: von Putthammer & Mühlbrecht, 1907), 1.

of settlement potential.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, the population density of Palestine was 21 and Cyprus 24.7. The comparatively low population densities in the Middle East, except for in Lebanon, supported the proposition that the area had high settlement and development potential.<sup>51</sup>

Additionally, the case of Samos suggested the possibility of striking a deal with the Sublime Porte for Jewish autonomy. The Ottoman Empire had already conceded a certain autonomy to the island. According to Soskin, the autonomy that Samos enjoyed enabled it to reach a higher level of productivity and population density than neighboring islands with the same natural conditions.<sup>52</sup> Bruno Blau also contributed an article to *Altneuland* on the autonomy of Samos. Blau was born in Marienwerder in West Prussia in 1881 and studied law in Berlin and Leipzig. In 1908 he joined Arthur Ruppin as coeditor and in the following year replaced him as editor of the *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*. In his article Blau discussed possible forms of government within the Ottoman Empire that would fulfill the Basel Program’s prerequisite for a publicly and legally assured homeland for the Jewish people. He assumed that the Ottomans would not accept complete sovereignty or even “political autonomy.” However, they might allow for the creation of a Jewish “administrative autonomy” – that is, self-administration along the lines of the Samos precedent dating back to a concession letter of the sultan to Russia, England and France from 1834. This would include having a Jewish ruler in the same way a Christian one was appointed in Samos. The historical precedence of a religiously distinctive autonomy, together with the development potential arising from Jewish immigration, and the presumption that European powers would be keen to lend their agreement to a Samos-like autonomy – since “almost all countries are interested in being relieved of their Jews” – meant the Zionist vision was neither impossible nor unprecedented.<sup>53</sup>

Warburg was also a proponent of concepts for autonomy. He envisioned a decentralized Syria comprised of a Muslim region in the north, a Christian one in the center, and a Jewish one in the south, with possible Druse and other enclaves. He suggested the installation of a Jewish pasha selected from among the

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50 Trietsch, “Die juedische Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft,” 51.

51 For example, Warburg compared Syria with Italy, claiming that, although the former was more fertile, it only had a fraction of Italy’s population. Syria’s population density was eleven inhabitants per square kilometer compared to 115 in Italy; see Warburg, “Syrien als Wirtschafts- und Kolonisationsgebiet,” 34.

52 According to Soskin the population density of Samos was 117 inhabitants per square kilometer, *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 127.

53 Bruno Blau, “Die administrative Autonomie der Insel Samos,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 257–261.

Ottoman bureaucracy to head this autonomous state, as occurred with the Christian pasha in Lebanon. Warburg considered it unlikely that Syria would ever gain long-standing independence, due to its powerful neighbors, so that the autonomous form could be adjusted to political circumstances. He also envisioned the possibility of short-term European occupation and partition for a transitional period, thus anticipating the interwar mandate.<sup>54</sup>

According to Trietsch, the settlement of Cyprus, regions of Egypt bordering Palestine and other adjacent countries was not intended as a replacement of settlement in Palestine but to complement it as long as the Ottomans opposed Jewish settlement within its boundaries and even after:

Here, on land that used to be partially Jewish, unrestricted by legal limitations or military predominance of foreign national influences, and in constant nexus with the old and future homeland of our people, the settlers could reach not only economic independence, when possible with cooperative means, but also build *centers* [my emphasis] of Jewish life and culture.<sup>55</sup>

Trietsch favored cooperative settlements and especially garden cities. He believed that they could satisfy the supposed Jewish need for social cohesiveness, while enabling the agricultural self-sufficiency necessary for developing labor diversification and normalization.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, Trietsch argued that colonization should be centrally coordinated but decentrally distributed in the entire Middle East, where there were prospects for creating a local Jewish majority and extending territorial cohesion with Palestine in the future. According to Trietsch, this form of Jewish colonial empire was not a novum but had historical precedent; in antiquity, Jews living as far away as Bengazi used the geographical advantages of the narrow coast to create a colony with a Jewish majority. The Jews of Bengazi and other Jewish settlements in the eastern Mediterranean joined the great uprising against the Romans, demonstrating the “strong connection between such colonies and the motherland already in a time of poor transportation conditions.”<sup>57</sup> Modern transport made a Jewish colonial empire even more feasible.

The second legend in the map was white and covered large parts of the Mediterranean Sea. It listed a seemingly random list of places and their distance from Palestine. First were the two regions bordering Palestine whose colonization

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54 Warburg, “Syrien als Wirtschafts- und Kolonisationsgebiet,” 115–116.

55 Trietsch, “Die juedische Orient-Kolonisations-Gesellschaft,” 51.

56 Davis Trietsch, “Die Gartenstadt,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 351–359. For more on the inception of the garden city idea into Zionism by Trietsch, Oppenheimer and Soskin, see Sonder, *Gartenstädte*, 44–51 and 86–100.

57 Davis Trietsch, “Die Nachbarlaender,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 192.

Trietsch was promoting. Using Palestine as the focal point for calculating distance transmitted a feeling of proximity to Cyprus and Egypt. Additionally, instead of a biblical, mythical land in the distant past, Palestine was now within measurable grasp. The other places in the legend – London, New York, Canada, Argentina and South Africa – were popular destinations of Jewish emigration and settlement. The juxtaposition of the two places in close proximity with the much more distant destinations emphasized that – while settlement of British controlled Cyprus and Egypt was akin to settling Palestine and useful for future settlement and even expansion of “Greater Palestine” – the creation of Jewish diasporas further away dispersed potential settlers irrevocably. The bigger distant diasporic centers get, the stronger the effects would be of personal appeals by emigrants to family and friends to follow them, which would be more persuasive than Zionist appeals to come and build up Palestine from scratch.<sup>58</sup> For this reason, Jewish migration should preferably be directed to nearby lands like Egypt. Egypt and Cyprus were already undergoing an Americanization that made them more attractive for Jewish settlement.<sup>59</sup> The role that policy played in agricultural modernization in the United States, along with its subsequent economic ascension and international influence, was of extreme interest for some of the contributors to *Altneuland* and will be discussed later.<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, the distance of the new diasporas did not necessarily mean they could not facilitate settlement in Palestine. Trietsch demonstrated this by comparing the lack of attachment of Jewish emigrants in the United States to their homeland, meaning Palestine, with that of Arab emigrants from Syria and Beirut. The Arab emigrants, he argued, move back and forth between their quarters in downtown Manhattan and in Syria and Lebanon, investing their acquired capital and know-how in the industrialization and modernization of their native country. He saw American schools in Lebanon as facilitating this process. In contrast, the numerically superior Jewish diaspora in New York lacked attachment and contributed little to the development of their ancient homeland. According to Trietsch and others in *Altneuland*, the settlement and development of Palestine was not only a task for Zionists. The benefits and possibilities of investing in Palestine should be made clear and accessible to Jews

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<sup>58</sup> Davis Trietsch, “Palästina oder Autonomie,” *Palästina* 2 (1903): 118.

<sup>59</sup> *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 350–351.

<sup>60</sup> The most prominent expert on the matter was the Oldenburg agriculturist Friedrich Oetken; see Bernd Mütter, *Agrarmodernisierung als Lebenserfahrung: Friedrich Oetken (1850–1922), ein vergessener Pionier der oldenburgischen Landwirtschaft* (Oldenburg: Holzberg, 1990), 36–56.

around the globe to uphold a dynamic network of immigration and capital flow for the colonization of “Greater Palestine.”<sup>61</sup>

The importance of Zionist negation of diaspora or *Galut* [exile] is a consensus in Zionist historiography.<sup>62</sup> However, Trietsch’s conception of a “Greater Palestine,” as well as its propagation in *Altneuland* and adoption by the Zionist Congress, raises the following question: had diaspora as a form of life been principally negated or only its negative manifestation in Christian Europe since the Middle Ages? And when exactly did negation become Zionist dogma? In their attempts to mobilize the Jewish world for the creation of new diasporic Jewish networks in the Middle East, the *Altneuland* circle promoted a notion of Zionism favorable to a continued Jewish existence in the diaspora. The massive collaboration required for colonization provided a central project for European Jewry and Jewish settlers overseas, especially in the United States, strengthening national Jewish cohesiveness and transforming Jewish consciousness throughout the world – including of those remaining in the diaspora.

The mapping of Palestine and the surrounding territories – and their subsequent embeddedness in a global network of knowledge about migration and colonization – was a first step in the conquest of space and the creation of a scientific *Palästinakunde*. *Altneuland*’s contributors utilized key aspects of the colonial discourse, which were “implicated in some underlying epistemological questions relating to the construction of time and, especially, space, and these issues are prior to any specific or crude program of domination or ideologies of a civilizing mission.”<sup>63</sup> Simultaneously, mapping Palestine was a declaration of the beginning of the conquest of time by Jews. Jews prepared to return to their ancient homelands; to claim for themselves the intellectual authority to define where exactly these homelands were located; to become harbingers of progress and development to the Orient, and from there to the whole world.<sup>64</sup> From their inception, *Palästina* and *Altneuland* bought into “a progressive representation of colonialism” whose stages were described by Russel Berman in the following order: “travel through space, scientific exploration of the world, European expansion, the progress of humanity.”<sup>65</sup> The name *Altneuland* captured the way sci-

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61 Davis Trietsch, “Beirut,” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 306–307.

62 Dimitry Shumsky, *Zweitsprachigkeit und binationale Idee: Der Prager Zionismus 1900–1930* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 206–207.

63 Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 3.

64 In the introduction to *Palästina* the editors wrote that if only a fraction of the “poor and uncivilized” Jews heading to England and America were to head to the Levante it would blossom. *Palästina* 1 (1902): 3–4.

65 Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 3.



entific observation and rediscovery served the journal's contributors in reshaping myth into utopia, and in refashioning biblical accounts into historical and contemporary truths and territorial claims.

## Jewish-German Colonial Fantasies

In the very first issue of *Palästina*, allusions were made to a prevalent trope in German colonial fantasy of a “second discovery” legitimatizing German colonial interests in lands already discovered by others.<sup>66</sup> “A German traveler who just traveled the Orient to see it with German eyes” was quoted in the introduction to *Palästina*:

Each morning when I see the sun rise it appears to me as though I were on a journey of exploration and discovery into an unknown land that no one else saw the way I see it – with the eyes of a man who had gone off to foreign parts looking for bread for his own and has now found the place where the earth hides a nourishing a blessing just waiting for the hands that will reveal it.

The editor commented on this report:

This is approximately our situation. Except that we have incomparably more reasons to lovingly behold these lands that are, furthermore, the only motherland of our people. The German for whom the author of this quote wants to make lands and people useful has after all enough land and bread ... Goods which the vast majority of the Jewish people bitterly lack. For this reason, Palestine and its neighboring countries are more than just a very distant granary.<sup>67</sup>

It was not only the plight of the Jews that legitimized the colonization of Palestine, this perspective claimed, but the ability to reveal its nourishing secrets. This was epitomized in the single most important scientific accomplishment of *Altneuland* and the CEP: Aaron Aaronson's discovery of wild emmer wheat at the foot of Mt. Hermon. The botanist and explorer of Africa Georg Schweinfurth praised this as a significant scientific contribution to the genealogy of wheat and knowledge of antique cultivation methods. It also demonstrated, Schwein-

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<sup>66</sup> Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 171–172.

<sup>67</sup> *Palästina* 1 (1902): 4–5.



furth wrote, the possibilities for new discoveries in this “supposedly thoroughly researched area.”<sup>68</sup>

Aaronson portrayed the natives, who were naturally aware of the existence of this grain, were portrayed as oblivious to its significance. He demonstrated this in a conversation he had with local farmers upon discovering the grain. To test the extent of their knowledge, Aaronson feigned surprise that the farmers were growing this brittle grain. The farmers replied by dismissing the grain as unworthy of cultivation.<sup>69</sup> The subtext of Aaronson’s report is that neither locals nor prior European explorers had made this discovery, even though emmer was plentiful in the region. The discovery heralded in *Altneuland* imparted great scientific significance to the journal, lending force to the CEP’s demand for the establishment of an agricultural research station in Palestine, which was ultimately founded in Atlit under Aaronson’s management. In an article in the *Vossische Zeitung*, Schweinfurth emphasized that Aaronson’s research was commissioned by the CEP and enjoyed the collaboration of the expert geologist Max Blanckenhorn, thus contributing to the journal’s appreciation in popular media.<sup>70</sup>

At the Eighth Zionist Congress, Warburg presented Aaronson’s “perpetually acknowledged discovery in the history of culture” as a legacy of Zionism.<sup>71</sup> The discovery endowed Aaronson with the aura of being a “second discoverer” of the likes of Alexander von Humboldt after which the trope was modeled: “In the German imagination, Humboldt metamorphosed into a German Columbus, an explorer who by conquering South America intellectually took on the legacy of the conquista, changed its nature, and opened up the continent for renewed exploration and colonization.”<sup>72</sup> In a similar manner, *Altneuland* intended to open Palestine for colonization through preliminary intellectual conquest.

The fact that Aaronson was not German was not a hindrance to presenting him in the image of German colonial fantasy in a German language journal. In fact, being German or even being Jewish was not a precondition to contribute to *Altneuland*. Scientific expertise, especially when acquired in Germany or

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68 Aaron Aaronson, “Die Auffindung des wilden Emmers (*Triticum Dicoccum*) in Nordpalästina,” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 216; Georg Schweinfurth, “Die Entdeckung des wilden Urweizens in Palästina,” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 267.

69 Aaronson, “Die Auffindung des wilden Emmers,” 214.

70 Schweinfurth, “Die Entdeckung des wilden Urweizens,” 267 and 274. This was a reprint of the article in the *Vossische Zeitung*.

71 *Verhandlungen des VIII. Zionisten-Congresses*, 132.

72 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 168.

gained firsthand in Palestine,<sup>73</sup> was a more critical factor. Aaronson had been born in Romania. When he was six years old, his parents immigrated to Palestine to help establish the agricultural settlement of Zichron Ya'akov, where he lived for most of his life. Nor did Soskin originally come from Germany. Born and raised in the Crimea, Soskin studied agronomy in Berlin and Rostock. His travels through Africa and South America made him an expert on diverse colonial practices, including German colonization. Soskin advocated their implementation in Palestine in the form of an agricultural experiment station that was in fact established in 1894. Additionally, he had years of practical experience in administering agricultural settlements in Palestine. In 1906, Soskin traveled to West Africa, where he worked as an agricultural advisor in German colonies.<sup>74</sup>

Being German was also not a prerequisite to participate in German culture, which Berman describes as “a term that ought to be comparable to Hispanic culture – suggesting a network of references, meanings, and values that stretch across national boundaries.”<sup>75</sup> German was used by Jews in Central and Eastern Europe as a cultural and scientific language, but not necessarily in their daily lives. German was even considered a Jewish language in the nineteenth century, without making those who used it German in a narrower sense of identity and belonging. Analyzing this historical situation, Dan Diner thus distinguishes between two roles of German as a language of culture and cosmopolitanism and as a language determining national belonging.<sup>76</sup>

The relationship between *Altneuland* and German colonial fantasy was not restricted to the journal's language and the fact that it was published in Berlin. Underlying the scientific accounts and travelogues in *Altneuland* were colonial fantasies born out of a lack of unity, national territory and identity, as well as a wish to belong to the European community that could be compared to the German situation in the nineteenth century. This comparison between Zionist and German colonial fantasies and desires of belonging might seem boggling at first, since by the beginning of the twentieth century Germany was already united and pursuing its colonial ambition, whereas existence as a minority characterized Jewish life in Europe. And, indeed, the comparison in the present book

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<sup>73</sup> Warburg lauded the potential that many Russian Jews with German technical education bore for the economic development of the Orient; see Warburg, “Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen,” 233.

<sup>74</sup> For biographies of Soskin and Aaronson, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 66–67.

<sup>75</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 222.

<sup>76</sup> Dan Diner, “Jeckes: Ursprung und Wandel einer Zuschreibung,” in *Zweimal Heimat: Die Jeckes zwischen Mitteleuropa und Nahost*, ed. Moshe Zimmermann and Yotam Hotam (Frankfurt am Main: Beerenverlag 2005), 101–102.

is mainly focused on the precolonial history of Germany and the precolonial history of Zionism that occur in a time lapse of a few decades. Yet the issues they were dealing with were similar.

Due to social and economic pressure resulting from shifts in the rural economy, uncontrolled emigration from Germany was rampant in the mid-nineteenth century. Hence, the German colonial debate on the usefulness of colonies in solving problems related to emigration contained themes to which Zionism could relate: gaining control over population politics; effecting changes in the (rural) economy; preserving German culture among the immigrants and their ongoing contribution to the German economy.<sup>77</sup> The turn of the twentieth century saw large waves of Jewish emigration, which *Altneuland* contributors attempted to steer and harness. In this task they were inspired by the works of German colonial thinkers.

Even after unification, Germany did not stand on equal ground with other colonial powers, such as England, which it mimicked until the First World War.<sup>78</sup> In fact, Germany of the colonial era, and arguably long after, was in the words of Berman in a “liminal situation – never quite a full-fledged European nation-state, never indisputably part of the modern West.”<sup>79</sup> Germany’s in-betweenness was not lost on German Jews. For Oppenheimer, antisemitism formed an observable measure for the intermediate state of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the adoption of liberal values and break with feudal class privilege. England, America and, on a slightly lower grade, France, were on one pole of the liberal progress scale, and Russia and Romania on the other. Oppenheimer considered the national sentiment of the Jew to his fatherland, “step-fatherland” or persecutor, as an indicator that decreased going eastwards, together with what he considered to be a decline in culture, which he saw as a decisive element for belonging.<sup>80</sup>

The term “culture” has been predominant in the German discourse on nationalism since, “given its particular history, German nationhood has rested more strongly on cultural identifications than has been the case in England or France, where the self-evidence of national power came earlier and became more firmly established.”<sup>81</sup> Culture and especially literature also played an im-

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<sup>77</sup> For more on the preindustrial versions of German emigrationist colonialism, see Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 3–11.

<sup>78</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 67.

<sup>79</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 135.

<sup>80</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” *Die Welt*, February 18, 1910, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 135.

portant role for (cultural) Zionist nation-building. Vienna, Cologne and Berlin were the official headquarters of the Zionist movement before the First World. As a result, a vast amount of Zionist literature was written in German, can be regarded as a part of German literature, and drew on contemporaneous themes and trends in German nationalism. Mark Gelber showed the importance of considering “the process and impact of the intellectual construction of a Jewish national identity within the specific German-speaking cultural environment in which modern Zionism coalesced.”<sup>82</sup> Since colonial fantasies were one of the themes and trends in German literature, an inquiry into the extent of their transmittal and adaptation into Zionism is overdue.

Nevertheless, the power gap between the Zionist movement and Imperial Germany was self-evident. In reaction to the Uganda proposition, Phillip Menczel, a delegate to the Sixth Zionist Congress, remarked in irritation that “we want to make colonial politics before we have the land.”<sup>83</sup> Zionist contributors to *Altneuland* understood that Jews lacked the necessary state power for colonization. Menczel was, however, not far off the mark considering how some Zionists, such as Trietsch, used colonial jargon. For example, Trietsch suggested the creation of “spheres of interest” in lucrative territories on the border of “Greater Palestine” for possible future annexation or expansion.<sup>84</sup> These spheres would be charted out by the “Jewish colonial politician” monitoring Jewish plight in Eastern Europe and political events in the Middle East, seeking to maximize colonization potential.<sup>85</sup> Referring to Herzl’s futile negotiations with the Ottoman Empire over a charter agreement, Oppenheimer quoted a remark that Otto von Bismarck supposedly made to Ferdinand Lasalle, cofounder of German social democracy, whose personality reminded him of Herzl, in one of their secret meetings: “Become a power and then come back.” Oppenheimer interpreted this to mean colonize first and negotiate second.<sup>86</sup>

While Menczel and Trietsch referred to colonial politics as international diplomacy, Soskin used the term “Kolonialpolitik” in a technocratic manner as colonial policy: “What we demand is rational, forward-looking colonial policy of the Zionist party and, by it, of the Jewish people!”<sup>87</sup> As Penslar demonstrated, technocratic thinking was important for the Zionist settlement and nation-build-

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<sup>82</sup> Mark H. Gelber, *Melancholy Pride: Nation, Race, and Gender in the German Literature of Cultural Zionism* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2000), 1–16, citation on p. 11.

<sup>83</sup> *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 106.

<sup>84</sup> Trietsch, “Die Nachbarlaender,” 194.

<sup>85</sup> Trietsch, “Die Nachbarlaender,” 198.

<sup>86</sup> Oppenheimer, “Der Zionismus,” 222–224.

<sup>87</sup> Selig Soskin, “‘Gross’ und ‘Klein’-Kolonisation,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 181.

ing project. It included critical adaptation of German technocratic settlement and population policy, both in Eastern Europe as well as overseas. The term often used for this sort of agricultural administrator was *Agrarpolitiker*.<sup>88</sup> The readers and writers of *Altneuland* were being educated to become these colonial policymakers and not future colonists. However, the ambivalence of the term “Kolonialpolitik” – which did not clearly delineate the technical from the political – flowed into the role of new Jewish colonial policymakers. They were expected to look beyond the horizon at other colonial endeavors, not only for the sake of comparing colonial practice but also for the development of their self-consciousness as colonial participants awaiting opportune moments for the realization of Jewish colonization.

The cultivation of a colonial mindset through emotion and fantasy was an important prerequisite for colonization. Zionist adaptation of German colonial fantasy was thus as important as that of colonial practice, even when it was not deliberately pursued or discussed. Colonial fantasies were a subtext that was deeply, but often subconsciously, entrenched in the collective imagination. The potential fruitfulness of comparing German and Zionist colonial fantasy is evident despite the time lapse between their peaks and is in that sense no different than comparing German and Zionists conceptions of nationalism. The scientific turn at the foundation of Zionist colonization echoed the turn in German colonial literature twenty years beforehand from theory to practice, that is, from commentary to involvement. Yet despite its newfound unity and might, Germany remained under the spell of its self-perception during the preimperial era as a cultural, and not a military, powerhouse distinguishing it from other colonial powers. Similarly, the *Altneuland* circle regarded Zionism not as lacking in potency, but as possessing a unique Jewish colonizing aptitude. Thus, the words of Zantop on the role of colonial fantasy for Germans could also describe its role for Jews: “The ‘colony’ thus became the blank space for a new beginning, for the creation of an imaginary national self freed from history and convention – a self that would prove to the world what ‘he’ could do.”<sup>89</sup>

## Competing for Intellectual Authority

As participants in the colonial discourse, the writers of *Altneuland* integrated various sources produced by agents of German and other European colonialism –

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<sup>88</sup> Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 68.

<sup>89</sup> Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 7.

such as scientists, theologians and diplomats – and produced knowledge for these very same agents. In the process they adapted elements of German orientalism and colonial fantasy. In his comprehensive criticism of European orientalism Edward Said focused on English and French literature, while neglecting German entanglement due to Germany's lack of colonial possessions in the Middle East. "His failure to consider German orientalist scholarship, among the most sophisticated in Europe," especially astounded his critics according to Susannah Heschel. However, the bulk of German orientalism in the nineteenth century was focused inwards, towards defining Germany's role within Europe, as well as towards establishing intellectual authority over Jews by linking biblical scholarship with contemporary political issues of Jewish emancipation.<sup>90</sup>

The main German scientific institutions studying the Orient were not anthropological in focus, as in France and England, where they were concerned with colonial policy, but rather theological and philological.<sup>91</sup> A considerable proportion of the members of the *Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas* [German Society for the Exploration of Palestine] also known as *Deutscher Palästina-Verein* [German Palestine Association] (DPV), founded in 1877 with patriotic fervor for the recently founded German Empire, were professors of theology and orientalism as well as Protestant clergymen. While Protestants dominated membership, there were Catholic and Jewish members, too, including Rabbis. Among the institutional members were rabbinical, Zionist and German-Jewish philanthropical institutions.<sup>92</sup> The organs and publications of the DPV were fundamental for the dissemination and popularization of scientific knowledge about Palestine.<sup>93</sup> The journal of the DPV also published a few articles and book reviews of *Altneuland* authors.<sup>94</sup>

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**90** Heschel, "Revolt of the Colonized," 62–63, citation on p. 62. For a discussion of the usage of the term "intellectual authority" in this book, see chapter 2.

**91** Thomas Philipp, "Deutsche Forschung zum zeitgenössischen Palästina vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Palaestina exploranda: Studien zur Erforschung Palästinas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert anlässlich des 125jährigen Bestehens des Deutschen Vereins zur Erforschung Palästinas*, ed. Ulrich Hübner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 217–219.

**92** Ulrich Hübner, "Der Deutsche Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas: seine Vorgeschichte, Gründung und Entwicklung bis in die Weimarer Zeit," in *Palaestina exploranda: Studien zur Erforschung Palästinas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert anlässlich des 125jährigen Bestehens des Deutschen Vereins zur Erforschung Palästinas*, ed. Ulrich Hübner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 4–16.

**93** Hübner, "Der Deutsche Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas," 18–24.

**94** In the years *Altneuland* existed, there was a review in the DPV journal by Ignaz Goldziher of Grünhut, Lazar und Adler, Markus N., "Die Reisebeschreibungen des R. Benjamin von Tuleda," in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 28 (1905): 151–154. The journal also published one

To facilitate on-site scientific studies of Palestine, the DPV assisted in founding Das deutsche evangelische Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes [German Protestant Institute of Archeology] in 1902.<sup>95</sup> The Berlin-based institute maintained a library and other research institutions in Jerusalem and provided research grants enabling a permanent presence of German and German-speaking scientists and theologians in Jerusalem. The results of these studies were published in the journal of the DPV. The purpose of the institute, according to its first director, Gustaf Dalman, was to draw comparisons between antiquity and the present.<sup>96</sup> Interlinking science, contemporary politics and the Bible was an important staple of German colonial ambitions in the Orient. This approach was also compatible with Zionist perspectives.

Dozens of DPV members lived in Palestine, providing information for the association's journal. It was the most important source of information on Palestine until the founding of the Palästinaamt [Palestine Office], which started operating in 1908 with Arthur Rupp in at its head and Jakob Thon as deputy.<sup>97</sup> The supplantation of a Christian intellectual authority over Palestine by a Zionist one began with journals such as *Palästina*, *Altneuland* and the *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*, which was edited by Rupp and was the organ of the *Bureau für Statistik der Juden* founded by Nossig in October 1904 after handing over the reins of *Palästina* to the CEP. These journals presented an alternative source of information in German about Palestine and its potential Jewish settlers. They integrated DPV research, while criticizing the biblical approach and intervening against the proliferation of antisemitism in *Palästinakunde* and the colonial discourse. The ranks of the DPV provided them with valuable allies for combating antisemitism and presenting an alternative colonial vision where Jews and non-Jews would work together to expand the German Empire into the Orient.<sup>98</sup>

Another source of information for *Altneuland* were trade reports, mostly from German newspapers or diplomats in Jaffa, Haifa, Lebanon and Cairo, as well as

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article by an *Altneuland* contributor: Sandler, Aron, "Medizinische Bibliographie für Syrien, Palästina und Cypern," in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 28 (1905): 131–146.

<sup>95</sup> For more on the relationship between the German Protest Institute of Archeology and the DPV in its early years, see Julia Männchen, "Gustaf Dalman und der Deutsche Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas," in *Palaestina exploranda: Studien zur Erforschung Palästinas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert anlässlich des 125jährigen Bestehens des Deutschen Vereins zur Erforschung Palästinas*, ed. Ulrich Hübner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 227–234.

<sup>96</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 31 and 379. For more on Dalman's comparison between biblical and contemporary life in Palestine, see Philipp, "Deutsche Forschung," 221–222.

<sup>97</sup> Philipp, "Deutsche Forschung," 219.

<sup>98</sup> E. g., Gustaf Dalman, Männchen, "Gustaf Dalman," 227.



market reports and other economic statistics. These were reprinted in the journal to provide a sense of reliable data for business investment. The world view of the authors, including various prejudices and Germanocentric approaches, were thus transmitted to the Jewish reader.<sup>99</sup> Some were also very favorable to Jewish settlements, praising their contribution to economic upswing.<sup>100</sup> However, the reports were not simply reproduced in a newspaper that claimed to adhere to critical scientific analysis. Occasionally, German sources were corroborated, supplemented or corrected by reports of foreign diplomats. English reports were considered especially thorough and elaborate.<sup>101</sup>

Many of the economic development plans of the CEP were reiterated and amplified through these reports. Some contextualized CEP recommendations in global market demands for resources such as cotton, eggs, poultry, pasta and canned foods. Others recommended that businessmen import local products such as wine or export products such as ironware or agricultural machines. Not only did they spotlight enticing business opportunities, they also conveyed to *Altneuland* readers, through non-Jewish sources, the feeling that a normalized vocational pyramid had already been created in Palestine with Jewish farmers, craftsmen, traders, etc. Some even captivated entrepreneurial imagination by advancing spectacular new infrastructure schemes, such as operating steamboats on the Dead Sea to increase Jerusalem's regional trade potential.<sup>102</sup> To establish scientific authority on matters of Palestine, *Altneuland* editors occasionally commented on or disagreed with reports, especially, but not only when, it concerned Jewish settlements or market segments.<sup>103</sup>

The references to the extension of railway lines from Damascus to the Hijaz, as well as in Anatolia, in almost every issue of *Altneuland*, conveyed a feeling of progress and business potential in an emerging market connected by modern transport means. Additionally, the railway reports demonstrated that substantial

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**99** Some examples of *Altneuland*'s Germanocentric coverage: the focus on success stories in the Haifa region by local entrepreneurs; the growth of German trade due to rail construction; the flourishing of European and especially German settlements utilizing modern cultivation methods, juxtaposed by emigration and abandonment of the indigenous population; see *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 308–314.

**100** *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 365–366.

**101** *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 205–206.

**102** *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 206–216.

**103** Some examples are articles on the superiority of German motors compared to British ones, in *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 84; on criticism of the quality of wine produced in the Jewish settlement of Zichron Ya'akov, in *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 148; or on the supposed exaggeration by *Eisenhändler* – a German trade magazine – of the potential in the Palestinian ironworks market, in *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 215.



European investments were flowing into the region and that European powers, as well as the United States, were fiercely competing for economic influence. The construction of the Anatolian and later the Baghdad railway were important German imperialistic and economic projects in the Ottoman Empire. In a way, the central focus of Warburg's other German colonial journal, *Der Tropenpflanzer*, on the expansion of railways in the Orient conjoined with increasing their rate of return through agricultural colonization along the tracks, producing primarily cotton, was echoed in *Altneuland*.<sup>104</sup> The role of German engineers was emphasized in *Altneuland*, due to the reproduction of German reports on the matter, but also because of the fascination some *Altneuland*'s contributors had with German accomplishments in the region.

Germans were an important settler group in Palestine. German engineering and entrepreneurship were praised by Nahum Wilbuschewitch in his essays about the milling industry in Palestine. Wilbuschewitch was born 1879 to a wealthy family in Grodno in Russia. After studying industrial engineering, he traveled to Palestine to survey the land's potential for industrial development. After settling in Haifa in 1905 he founded the Atid factory, producing oil derivatives and, later, together with his older brother, the Shemen factory which was considered among the largest and most modern in the Middle East. Additionally, he was the only Jew on the three-man expedition dispatched by the ZO in 1905 to survey the territory in British East Africa proposed for Zionist settlement.<sup>105</sup> In *Altneuland* Wilbuschewitch recommended the installation of modern motor mills in Palestine, instead of the wooden turbine-driven ones used in the Arab mills, which he considered highly ineffective and of lower profitability. With the beginning of German colonization, modern steam mills were installed in Palestine. Wilbuschewitch recounted the experiences of the German millers whom he interviewed. He criticized Jewish settlers and administrators in general, whom he considered to be lacking in entrepreneurial spirit. In his opinion, not only were they too risk-averse – only willing to implement what had already been tested – they also tended to dismiss entire plans if a small part seemed uncertain or difficult.<sup>106</sup>

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**104** Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 61–64.

**105** Also referred to as Nahum Wilbush, Wilbusch or Wilbuschewitz. For more about Wilbuschewitch as an industrial pioneer, see Deborah Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 118. For more on the East Africa expedition and Wilbuschewitch's negative opinion towards Jewish settlement in British East Africa, see Gur Alroey, *Zionism without Zion: The Jewish Territorial Organization and its Conflict with the Zionist Organization* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016), 44–55.

**106** N. Wilbuschewitch, "Die Mühlenindustrie in Palästina," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 353–356.

Aaronson, who grew up in Palestine, took offence at Wilbuschewitch's supposed Germanophilia. He reproached Wilbuschewitch's alleged ignorance of the role of Jewish technicians, as well as his lack of technical education in the modernization of Palestine and its mills.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, he agreed with Wilbuschewitch's criticism of the Yishuv's lack of systematic experimentation and endurance when faced with failure.<sup>108</sup> This was most evident in calls to reduce the cultivation of wine, which was the backbone of early philanthropic agricultural settlements in Palestine. Aaronson and Soskin argued that cultivation problems originated in the absence of any studies of – and adaptation to – Palestine's climatic conditions, consumption habits and taxation regulation. This resulted in the introduction of European vines, instead of more suitable local varieties. Principally, they disputed a centralist approach to colonization that disregarded local expertise, not of indigenous populations, but of local colonial agents who were taken to have a European scientific approach. These would be less prone to stereotypical generalization due to their local vantage point. Wine cultivation was one example they saw of the faults of a remote approach. They argued that regional markets such as Egypt might import derivatives of wine cultivation such as raisins and grapes, even if the Muslim prohibition on alcohol meant they might not buy wine itself; but that these markets were being totally ignored.<sup>109</sup> *Altneuland* and the CEP advocated for giving control of economic development to a locally embedded scientific and academic Jewish colonial elite.

The admiration and mimicry of German colonial method was an explicit goal of the CEEP and its successor the CEP. Alfred Nossig praised the benefits reaped by Germans in America, Africa and the Orient, which he attributed to their "circumspect and precise exploration." The same methods should be applied to ease settlement of Jews "in their new homesteads."<sup>110</sup> He wrote:

Germany is a land from which we can learn much. If the Germans spread out so energetically today throughout the entire globe, if their agricultural settlements, as well as their commercial and industrial undertakings meet with success in all lands and climes, so do the Germans owe this to the fact that they sent out their economists, their professors as pio-

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**107** Aaron Aaronson, "Einige Bemerkungen zu dem Artikel 'Die Muehlenindustrie in Palaestina,'" *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 43–44. Wilbuschewitch countered criticism from Aaronson, who presented himself as a local expert, by portraying himself as a technical expert on milling; see N. Wilbuschewitsch, "Zur Frage der Muehlenindustrie in Palaestina," *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 142.

**108** Aaron Aaronson, "Die Einbuengerung der Smyrnafeigen in Kalifornien," *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 199–201.

**109** Aaron Aaronson and Selig Soskin, "Der palaestinsche Weinbau," *Altneuland* 2 (1905).

**110** Nossig, "Über die Notwendigkeit von Erforschungsarbeiten," 7.

neers. As in war, so too in the economic struggle, do the Germans win because of their teachers.<sup>111</sup>

During the Sixth Zionist Congress, Soskin explained the German delegation's motion for the budgeting of the CEP with the need to study and simulate German colonial practice: "We need only to refer to how the Aryan peoples colonize. I refer to the Germans in the African colonies, etc."<sup>112</sup> The fact that Zionism was adapting German colonial methods and, more precisely, German "inner colonization" – of which Oppenheimer was an active proponent – has not escaped the historian's eye.<sup>113</sup> According to Nossig, the "inner colonization" of Palestine could be improved by utilizing Jews already living in the Orient.<sup>114</sup> The adaptation of German colonial methods was accompanied by a revision of narrative. German and European thought were being portrayed as originating from Jewish history. To counter a widespread contemporary antisemitic trope that Jews were not capable of originality, but only of mimicry, Nossig emphasized that in their exploration of Palestine Jews should surpass the Germans in their rational approach and attention to detail.<sup>115</sup> With a touch of romantically imbued Orientalism, Nossig argued that applying a scientific approach to nation-building was a trademark of the founders of the great cultures of the ancient Orient, with Moses foremost among them.<sup>116</sup> What elevated Moses above the rest was that he imbued Jewish ritual law with concepts of social hygiene, bacteriology, social Darwinism and racial anthropology, a discovery Occidental science only began revealing in the mid-nineteenth century. Hence, these were originally Jewish discoveries.<sup>117</sup>

The endorsement of social hygiene and the eugenic discourse of the day, albeit with a rejection of its antisemitic elements, formed a common thread between Nossig and Oppenheimer. It is an example of methods employed by the *Altneuland* circle, that go back to the tradition of the *Wissenschaft des Juden-*

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111 Alfred Nossig, "Über den Nutzen einer theoretischen Vorbereitung der Palästina-Kolonisation," *Palästina* 1 (1902): 106; translation in Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 68.

112 *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 272; translation in Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 68.

113 E. g., Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 94–98; Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: 1882–1914*, reprint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 148–165.

114 Nossig, "Über die Notwendigkeit von Erforschungsarbeiten," 6.

115 Nossig, "Über den Nutzen einer theoretischen Vorbereitung," 107.

116 Mitchell Hart, "Moses the Microbiologist: Judaism and Social Hygiene in the Work of Alfred Nossig," *Jewish Social Studies* 2 (1995): 77.

117 Hart, "Moses the Microbiologist," 73.

tums, to challenge hegemonic discourses and establish an independent intellectual authority by developing a counternarrative based on transvaluation and re-interpretation of Jewish heritage in correspondence with the dynamics of German culture and discourses. The *Altneuland* circle emphasized the Jewish capacity to participate in German scientific exploration and European colonization on an equal – and sometimes superior – footing.

## Widening the Circle: Entrepreneurs and Administrators

The technocratic approach of *Altneuland* was evident in the fact that it printed only one article with practical information for those wishing to immigrate to Palestine.<sup>118</sup> Potential immigrants were apparently not the intended primary audience of the journal. In the CEP's systematic approach, there were many more roles to fill in practical colonization. Before convincing Eastern European emigrants to make the journey to Palestine, a broader spectrum of Jewish society in Germany and Western Europe had to be mobilized to create the support framework enabling the settlers' success. *Altneuland's* target audience were liberal, educated, middle-class Jews; a group especially susceptible to colonial thought, due to their political views and social situation.<sup>119</sup> This audience consisted of two main subgroups. The first was businessmen who were not necessarily Zionist but could appreciate business potential within an emerging German imperial context and, in particular, the booming German trade and commerce with Palestine.<sup>120</sup> The second subgroup *Altneuland* targeted were academics like themselves who would form the backbone of Zionist settlement technocracy.

The claiming of potential colonial domains through their “ideological reinvention” and the renegotiation of their relationship to Europe was a dual-tiered process of both colonizers and local governing elites. *Altneuland* perceived Jews to be on both sides of the process. On the one hand were “the elites of Northern Europe” to whom German Jews were aspiring to belong, and for whom “[ideological] reinvention [was] bound up with prospects of vast expansionist possibilities for European capital, technology, commodities, and systems of knowledge.” On the other hand were “the newly independent elites” German Jews were aspiring to be in Palestine and its vicinity, who “faced the necessity for *self*-invention in

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118 “Informationen ueber Palaestina: Für die Emigranten zusammengestellt vom Allgemeinen Informations-Bureau in Jaffa,” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 201–213.

119 Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 113–114.

120 E. g., *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 85.

relation to both Europe and the non-European masses they sought to govern.”<sup>121</sup> For the *Altneuland* circle, these non-European masses included not only indigenous populations but also Eastern European settlers.

After the Kishinev pogrom, the time seemed ripe for reaching out to potential non-Zionists sponsors. The antisemitic bloodshed raised awareness for the need of immediate action to alleviate the plight of Eastern European Jewry. The decision of the Sixth Zionist Congress to extend the settlement area to encompass the entire Palestine region and consider more business friendly territories safeguarded by English administration and law was a signal of possible cooperation with nonideological circles oriented towards return on investment, as well as others motivated by philanthropy.<sup>122</sup> Although Herzl asked Warburg to refrain from pursuing such an inclusive agenda in *Altneuland*,<sup>123</sup> his successor and ZVfD cofounder David Wolffsohn, who also headed the first Zionist bank, the Jewish Colonial Trust, endorsed this agenda.

First on the list of potential non-Zionist cooperation partners was the JCA, which had already invested in Warburg’s Jewish settlements in Anatolia, as well as in plots in Cyprus. The JCA had just taken over the Rothschild settlements in Palestine, thus incorporating the Middle East in their worldwide network of Jewish agricultural colonies. Reframing the colonization of Palestine in a general colonization scheme for the region was conducive for *Altneuland*’s overtures to the JCA to heed the CEP’s technocratic expertise in their expansion plans. *Altneuland* inclusion of surveys on Jewish agricultural settlements in areas far away from the Middle East, such as in Argentina and Brazil, emphasized the extent of their professional knowledge.

Reports by diplomats were usually taken face value with sporadic remarks in the introduction or in footnotes. In contrast, reports by the JCA, an established Jewish colonization institution, were widely interpreted and criticized to build intellectual authority within the Jewish world. In their evaluations, the CEP emphasized its divergent Zionist agenda but did not rule out possibilities for cooperation. Their goal was to persuade the JCA to continue supporting Jewish settlement in Palestine while gaining influence on the JCA through their criticism. They boasted that data already published in *Altneuland* about settlements in Palestine was newer than the data presented in JCA reports. This served as pretext for focusing on issues in JCA reports they wanted to promote for their

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<sup>121</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 112.

<sup>122</sup> Trietsch, “Die Nachbarlaender,” 184–186. One example was cooperation with the JCA settlement in Cyprus which Trietsch extensively studied; see Davis Trietsch, “Informationen über Cypern,” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 263–266.

<sup>123</sup> Letter from Herzl to Warburg from January 11, 1904, in Herzl, *Briefe, 1903–Juli 1907*, 508.

own development plans – such as cotton-growing or the synergistic use of the CEP's newly founded trade company in Hamburg for export to Europe.<sup>124</sup>

To step up the criticism on the JCA, the editors of *Altneuland* printed a travel report by Adolf Friedeman and Hermann Struck in which they report firsthand accounts of shortcomings of JCA settlements. They emphasized negative aspects of incorporating Palestine settlements in the JCA global settlement network, such as compelling well-trained farmers to emigrate to other distant JCA settlements. Yet there was also praise for the JCA administration for gradually shifting from a philanthropic outlook to one fostering mutual aid. Friedeman and Struck also made a direct comparison, between the role played here by the JCA as “protectors” against local authorities, on the one hand, and the colonial approach taken by German diplomats to support German settlers in Palestine, such as the Templers, on the other. They praised the freedom granted to the colonists which led to a successful integration of underprivileged groups and strangers in the labor force, be it women or Russian converts to Judaism. Their conclusion was that colonization has been a success story that the JCA must continue promoting and Zionism should now join. The selected excerpt also conveyed to *Altneuland* readers the potential of colonial engagement for the advancement of a liberal agenda of social integration.<sup>125</sup>

The CEP created business ventures that enabled individuals to invest jointly in Palestine. German institutional and private investors were lured by depictions of the JCA or the ZO as major Jewish colonial players. Investing in Palestine was portrayed as an investment in the future of the Jewish people and simultaneously in the future of the German Empire. The Jewish readership of *Altneuland* was exposed to the broader enterprise of German colonialism through reproductions from German colonial journals and authors. Vice versa, Warburg published articles of his protégés Soskin and Aaronson in *Der Tropenpflanzer*, crosslinking the journals through references and reprints.<sup>126</sup> In this way, works by Jews on colonial issues and *Altneuland*'s focus on Jewish settlement in Palestine were integrated into German production of colonial knowledge.

*Altneuland* also commissioned articles from German colonial experts such as Ludwig Sander. Sander was a staff surgeon in the German navy sent in 1883 by the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft to German South West Africa (today's Nami-

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**124** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 338–341.

**125** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 345–346.

**126** Warburg referenced Soskin and Aaronson's article in Otto Warburg, “Die juedische Kolonisation Palaestinas,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 101. Soskin's article about rat control in German Samoa was reprinted in conjunction with rat assaults in Palestine; see *Altneuland* 2 (1905), 123–128.

bia) to investigate an outbreak of cattle disease. Sander earned a reputation as an expert on veterinary and settlement issues in the German colonies. He returned over a decade later to German South West Africa as manager of the Siedlungsgesellschaft. The editors of *Altneuland* recommended Sander's book *Die Wanderheuschrecke und ihre Bekämpfung in unseren afrikanischen Kolonien* [The migratory locust and methods to combat it in our African colonies] for further reading.<sup>127</sup> The title induced the Jewish reader to participate in the joint possession of *our* German colonies. Citations of articles from German papers on Middle East issues – relating to German colonial expansion and competition for resource and markets – helped imbue a sense of belonging to German imperial aspirations.<sup>128</sup> It is, then, no surprise that the pages of *Altneuland* called upon the German authorities and financial institutions to extend their protection and capital to Zionist enterprises in the Orient.<sup>129</sup> This was indirectly a call for German Jews to invest in Zionist settlement, too.

To facilitate commercial development and expansion of trade between Germany and Palestine, Soskin and Warburg, but not Oppenheimer, together with local Jewish businessmen in Palestine, created a Hamburg-based company in joint venture with the Jewish Colonial Trust. By statute at least four out of the seven members of the advisory council had to be German citizens. Agricultural produce from Palestine was to be exclusively traded in Hamburg via this company. This initiative aimed to increase profit margins of Jewish farmers and liberate them from Arab middlemen, who allegedly were abusing their brokerage monopoly or lacked business management skills. German investors – and by extension the German Empire, which was otherwise late in colonial expansion – now had a second chance to benefit by early entrance into this supposedly virgin market.<sup>130</sup>

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127 L. Sander, "Die Wanderheuschrecke und deren Vernichtung," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 301. Ludwig was sometimes referred to as Louis.

128 E. g., an article from *Die Post*, which was cited as having good relations to the government, demanded that the German Bank support German enterprises in the Middle East by founding a branch in Constantinople "to finally end current dependency on foreign banking companies"; see *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 383–384. Other articles from the *Kölnische Zeitung* and *Der Parlamentär* from Vienna discussed the claims of the German-sponsored Bagdad railway to petroleum discovered during construction and their political implications on Germany. Important aspects were gaining independence from Russian oil and influence in the Orient; see *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 21–24.

129 E. g., Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 233–235.

130 A fusion with a Lodz-based company was originally planned but did not materialize; see *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 122–123 and 220–221.



The plan was that later industrial goods would also be traded by the Hamburg-based company. The CEP promoted the expansion of industry in Palestine. They planned an industrial syndicate for surveying the profitability of various mining, transport and industrial branches, and founding respective companies.<sup>131</sup> They provided specific investment suggestions in *Altneuland*, such as the production of canned foods, with Egypt being a huge potential market,<sup>132</sup> as well as the production of pasta, instead of exporting the flour.<sup>133</sup> Cotton cultivation, which was the main agenda of the Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee creating raw material for German industry, had already succeeded in attracting some business interest.<sup>134</sup> Warburg, who was a member of the Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, recounted such schemes with Jewish planters in *Altneuland*, perhaps hoping to see similar success.

Other non-Zionist German-Jewish organizations were also investing in education in Palestine and were potential cooperation partners. The arts and crafts school Bezalel in Jerusalem, as well as the agricultural research station in Atlit, were founded in cooperation with the Kolonisationsverein Esra and the Hilfsverein. The CEP initiated a philanthropic fund for planting JNF-owned land with olive groves known as the Olive Tree Fund. The goal was to provide secure work for Jewish settlers and develop a Jewish olive industry in Palestine. The CEP offered investors to act as trustees in supervising the initial planting phases. The CEP recommended that the proceeds go to finance and maintain colleges in Palestine.<sup>135</sup> On a symbolic level, the longeval olive tree represented the long-term character of nationalized land. On a juridical level, the olive groves served in circumventing Ottoman law, which stipulated that uncultivated land designated as *mirie* fall back to the state. It also sought to avoid the risk of utilizing Arab labor on the JNF's *Volksdomäne* [national domains]. After cultivating the land for three or more consecutive years, the Arab farmers would earn rights to the land.<sup>136</sup>

A similar initiative was the planting association Palästina. The idea was to enable Jews in the diaspora to donate for the creation of fruit gardens to provide work and nourishment for at least one million Jewish settlers. As a token of appreciation, the donors were promised regular shipments of fruit packages from

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131 Warburg, "Bericht der Palaestinakommission," 232.

132 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 156–158.

133 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 189–190.

134 Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 120 and 129.

135 Kommission zur Erforschung Palästinas, "Volksdomänen in Palästina," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 65–66.

136 Selig Soskin, "Zur Begründung des Kommissionsvorschlages," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 67–71.



Palestine. In addition, first subscribers would also receive original etchings by Hermann Struck.<sup>137</sup> Oppenheimer perceived Palästina as an opportunity to create a broad nondenominational platform, a “cooperative” or “brotherhood,” for the sake of nation-building, in which all Jewish men and “the intelligent Jewish womenfolk” interested in affirming Jewishness, and still devoted to their Jewish “consciousness,” could participate.<sup>138</sup> The Jews cultivating the gardens would be the first step towards reconnecting to nature and farming and, ultimately, becoming a people with a homeland. These settlers would form the model center of a new world-wide Jewish network based on solidarity and labor. Like other Zionists, Oppenheimer romantically embodied nature with healing powers. He imbued Zionist colonization with the emancipatory fantasy that once Jews would become farmers the regeneration of the Jewish people and reincorporation in the brotherhood of nations on equal footing would ensue.<sup>139</sup>

Jakob Thon shifted the character-building nature of the Palästina initiative from the core in Palestine to its effects on individuals in the diaspora. He regarded the planting association as an important step in the democratization of the Zionist movement. According to him, practical settlement should not be measured solely based on its contribution to the founding of a Jewish state, but rather on how it encourages individual engagement with the Zionist movement. For many second-generation German Zionists, Zionism was what Kurt Blumenfeld called post-assimilationist and Thon labeled as a “return to Judaism.” It was an individual search for identity through Jewish education and involvement in a national movement to counteract their acculturated upbringing. According to Thon, CEP initiatives allowed individuals to get directly involved in the “return to the land” – which until now had been completely in the hands of Herzl – without having to emigrate to Palestine to become farmers themselves. Messianic longing made the Holy Land into the realm of the dead awaiting messianic resurrection. Now, it would be prepared for life through Zionist mass action “which conquers this world.” Thon and the CEP claimed to be reestablishing a supposedly old Jewish tradition of planting trees as “surveillant territorial markers” to mark new stages in life.<sup>140</sup> This was a further example of the transvaluation and reinterpretation of Jewish heritage by the intellectual elite of *Altneuland*.

The CEP also initiated the planting of a forest in commemoration of Herzl with a memorial to him in its center. It was to serve as a pilgrimage destination

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<sup>137</sup> Warburg, “Bericht der Palaestinakommission,” 230–231.

<sup>138</sup> *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 380.

<sup>139</sup> Franz Oppenheimer, “Pflanzungsverein ‘Palaestina,’” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 353–354.

<sup>140</sup> Jakob Thon, “Pflanzungsverein ‘Palaestina,’” *Altneuland* 3 (1906), 275–279.

for Zionists.<sup>141</sup> Pilgrimage and tourism were an important economic theme in *Altneuland*. The emphasis was, however, on Christian pilgrims. Jerusalem and other biblical sites were not regarded as capable of filling that role for modernly oriented Zionists in search of a new Jewish ethos. Consequently, they were hardly mentioned in the memoirs of Zionists traveling to Palestine, who were more fascinated by achievements of the new Jewish farmers.<sup>142</sup>

Comparing Zionist settlement with German colonization outside of Palestine was a way of undermining the charter idea of political Zionism. Basing his argument on German settlements in Brazil, Soskin claimed that political sovereignty was neither requisite nor beneficial for settler colonization. It was only necessary for colonies rooted in the exploitation of a local work force. When faced with a choice between sovereignty and creating a settlement core, he considered the latter by far superior in attracting immigrants. This was demonstrated by the behavior of German emigrants who had the choice between Brazil and German South West Africa. In preferring the former they were influenced by the existence of a core of ethnic Germans in Brazil that acted as a magnet for new settlers. Preempting the argument that South America was more appealing than Africa, Soskin referred to the supposedly futile efforts of other South American countries offering countless incentives to attract European settlers. Hence, he argued, the goal should be to create a core of settlers through small-scale systematic settlement, with the good will – or at least toleration – of local government. This would be more efficient in directing the flow of Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe than obtaining political declarations of sovereignty.<sup>143</sup>

The prospects of gaining control over Jewish immigration and directing it to places assumed unsusceptible to antisemitism was an appealing argument for rallying support by broader segments of German Jewish society for Zionist settlement. This was of particular significance considering the perceived connection between the rise in antisemitism and the influx of Eastern European Jews into Germany. As a result, German Jews occupied an intermediary position between solidarity with the refugees and compliance with the authorities.<sup>144</sup> The fact that control over the direction of immigration could also support Germany's imperial aspirations was an added benefit. Considering the negative image of Eastern European immigrants, *Altneuland* attempted to shift the focus away from the character of the settlers towards the vision and tenacity of investors, the paper's

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141 Warburg, "Bericht der Palaestinakommission," 234.

142 Rürup, "Gefundene Heimat?," 176–177.

143 Soskin, "'Gross' und 'Klein'-Kolonisation," 131–132.

144 Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 35–36.

intended audience. *Altneuland*'s argument was that it was necessary to place bourgeois German Jews in center stage. The success of the colonial endeavor depended more on their engagement than on the settlers themselves. After all, "private capital ... was a central component providing impetus to European settlement processes overseas."<sup>145</sup> *Altneuland* was an instrument in mobilizing this capital.

The Breslau Zionist Hugo Schachtel illustrated this with an example from the settlement of New South Wales in Australia. In his account, the settlers of New South Wales were, for the most part, convicts and their installment on the land did not have social utopian consequences. The convicts were not transformed into better people and the general atmosphere was supposedly one of a general aversion to honest labor. Nevertheless, he continued, despite the grotesque conditions, the colony grew and flourished because persistent investors created suitable conditions for natural economic and political development. That was an important message for the readers of *Altneuland*.<sup>146</sup>

To awaken a colonial spirit, especially among the more well-situated German Jewish public, *Altneuland* appealed to them both as Germans and Jews. The young Zionist journalist Julius Becker, who at the time was on the editorial staff of Heinrich Loewe's German Zionist newspaper *Die jüdische Rundschau*, and subsequently replaced him as editor in chief in 1908, postulated a general lack of interest for colonial issues among the educated strata of continental European society and especially Germany. The disinterest of German Jews for Jewish colonization was therefore self-explanatory. Becker's approach was to educate *Altneuland* readers about colonization, in general, while clearly contrasting settlement colonization, such as Zionism, to colonial "exploitation" and "conquest." That philanthropical "Jewish colonization" was not backed by any state, was not a deficit but proof of its altruistic character, according to Becker. "Zionist colonization," with its nation-building elements, was hence a colonial novum. With this transvaluation Becker portrayed Jews not as passive victims, but as an active and innovative force in world history.<sup>147</sup>

The fact that Jews were innovating in the colonial realm was not only in line with their historical role as peaceful colonialists, a main staple of German colonial fantasy. It also lent a positive connotation to the idea of diaspora as a positive experience fueled by colonization and an extended trade network. Becker argued that, since antiquity, colonization has been a considerably more effective

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<sup>145</sup> Kats, *The "Business" of Settlement*, 10.

<sup>146</sup> Schachtel initiated the reprint of an article on the matter from the *Preussische Jahresbücher*, *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 375–376.

<sup>147</sup> Julius Becker, "Kolonisation und Kolonisationspolitik," *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 20–23.

device for spreading culture than war. One of the first and, in his opinion, most significant, implementations of this peaceful device was the exodus from Egypt and Israelite colonization of Palestine. He considered the spreading of Hellenistic culture by the Greeks to be slightly less influential, and the subsequent conquest by the Romans considerably less influential to world history than the initial Jewish colonization of Palestine.<sup>148</sup>

This revisionist historical narrative emphasized Jewish contributions to European culture. The appeal to fantasy and pride conjoined *Altneuland*'s economic and scientific accounts to persuade prosperous, acculturated Jews to invest in settlement colonization. In order to steer Zionism from its solely political trajectory towards embracing practical settlement, *Altneuland* needed to stir the imagination of its readers with the potential payout of such investments, both ideally and materially. "Colonial fantasies provide access to the 'political unconscious' of a nation, to the desires, dreams, and myths that inform public discourse and (can) propel collective political action."<sup>149</sup> Lamentations over low German participation in the colonial project could also be interpreted as a means for convincing Jews that they still had the opportunity to join Germany's awakened role in Europe's colonizing mission.

Besides lobbying financial support for practical settlement, the CEP attempted to create a corps of technocrats for positions as colonial administrators and settlement directors. The German colonial service at the time of *Altneuland* was not of high repute. Universities educated a surplus of candidates for government positions, leading to lower-quality candidates.<sup>150</sup> Given the extremely low prospects for Jewish graduates seeking secure government positions, the CEP hoped to win some over for a colonial service in Palestine. They promoted the creation of a separate advisory scientific branch within the ZO to employ Jewish agronomists trained in European universities in Palestine.<sup>151</sup> Employment included devising and administrating settlement plans as well as research positions in addition to directors of agricultural settlements.

The CEP cooperated with the Friedrich Polytechnic in Köthen and its local Zionist student association, Tchioh, in creating a lecture program open to students from all universities. The goal was to attract new recruits and direct academic attention to issues revolving around "colonization methods, with special

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148 Becker, "Kolonisation und Kolonisationspolitik," 20–23.

149 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 4.

150 The German colonial service underwent reforms under Bernhard Dernburg, so that by 1910 it became "the envy of foreign colonial services"; see Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 134–135.

151 Soskin, "'Gross' und 'Klein'-Kolonisation," 139–140.

consideration of the Turkish Orient.” The intention was to prepare engineers, agronomists and administrators for colonial service. There were already such undertakings at other German universities, such as the Seminar for Oriental Languages at the University of Berlin founded in 1887.<sup>152</sup> Two conferences were organized during Easter break of 1905 and 1906. Lectures were held by members of the CEP, *Altneuland* contributors, faculty members of the Polytechnic, and guest lecturers from Berlin. Oppenheimer and his fellow land reformer Adolf von Damaschke, founder and chairman of the Bund Deutscher Bodenreformer [German Land Reform League], spoke about the relationship between land reform, cooperative settlement and colonization. Some of the lectures were published later in *Altneuland*.

Some 200 students, mostly from Köthen, registered for the first lecture series. About a quarter of the participants were Jewish. Only sixteen traveled to Köthen especially for the lectures. Aron Sandler was disappointed and blamed inadequate marketing in Zionist circles for what could otherwise be interpreted as a lack of interest.<sup>153</sup> In the 1906 lectures there were apparently even less participants from out of town. For this reason, the CEP considered holding them in Berlin in the future, where Soskin’s weekly seminar on Palestine successfully attracted Jewish fraternity students.<sup>154</sup>

The Köthen seminar was an attempt to develop a cohesive discipline of *Palästinakunde*, based on economics and natural sciences, in contrast to prior archeological or religious approaches.<sup>155</sup> Lectures dealt with German colonization in general, compared conditions in the German colonies in Africa with Palestine, or focused solely on the colonization of Palestine. This variety enabled the integration of the study of the colonization of Palestine within the broader context of German colonialism, as well as German colonial fantasy. In this new field Zionists, together with German professors, claimed ownership over Palestine through a new organization of knowledge leading to new perceptions. The journal *Altneuland* was a focal point for this network of Jewish and non-Jewish Palestine scholars and a springboard for their joint colonial enterprise.

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152 Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 135.

153 *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 41; Aron Sandler, “Die Coethener Kurse für koloniale Technik,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 97–98.

154 Warburg, “Bericht der Palaestinakommission,” 222–223. The seminar had a regular attendance of twenty-five students; see *Verhandlungen des VIII. Zionisten-Congresses*, 133.

155 Sandler, “Die Coethener Kurse für koloniale Technik,” 97–98 and 106.

## A German-Jewish Joint Venture in the Scramble for Palestine

The contributors to *Altneuland* were aware that Jewish interests in Palestine were to be viewed within a broader context of European powers competing for influence on Palestine and other territories of the Ottoman Empire. Stefan Vogt listed four main arguments used by German Zionists to portray the convergence of Zionist and German interests. First, Jewish settlement would strengthen the economic and political stability of the Ottoman Empire, which was allied with Germany. Second, it would create a pro-German ethnic group within the Ottoman Empire with a cultural affinity to Germany – expressed in the Yiddish language – through which Germany could widen its foothold. Third, due to their vast economic connections to Germany, Jews could act as a bridgehead for German economic interests in the Ottoman Empire. Fourth, support of Zionist settlement would improve Germany’s standing with Jews around the world and especially the United States.<sup>156</sup> During the First World War German Zionists used similar arguments, pushing for the utilization of local Jewish populations for extending German imperial control into Eastern Europe, as will be demonstrated in the final chapter. This chapter argues that in actively lobbying for German support, Zionists used tropes out of German colonial fantasy to appeal to advocates of German colonialism and emphasize the deep common bond between them.

Protection of non-Muslim populations, including Jews, was a tool for European meddling since the sixteenth century “capitulation” agreements with the Sublime Porte. The relationship between European powers and their Jewish protégés was far from hierarchical. The initiative for obtaining European protection often came from Jews for their own diverse purposes. “The protection of a European power could provide individuals and families a means of confronting, resisting, or strategically manipulating the colonial order,” expounded historian Sarah Stein.<sup>157</sup> In the case of *Altneuland*, it was not local Jews seeking protection of a European power, but their German brethren on their behalf and on behalf of future settlers.

*Altneuland* contributors like Sandler and Warburg understood that, while Zionists had much interest in colonizing “Asian Turkey,” Germany’s interest was flimsy.<sup>158</sup> Jews needed to actively lobby for Middle East colonization to

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<sup>156</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 172–173.

<sup>157</sup> For a brief history of the changes in the capitulatory regime over the centuries, focusing on the Jewish reaction to these changes, see Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 10–23, citation on p. 11.

<sup>158</sup> Sandler, “Die Coethener Kurse für koloniale Technik,” 104.

spur a reluctant Germany. According to Warburg, Germany had little interest in colonizing the Middle East due to its lack of direct access and naval bases in the Mediterranean. A settler colony would therefore be difficult to defend.<sup>159</sup> Yet Germany's reluctance seemed advantageous for Zionism, making it a natural ally. The division of labor would be clear and there would be almost no competition with other German settlers in what could be called the scramble for Palestine. Soskin described this scramble in context of an alleged European civilizing mission in which Zionism could participate:

There is no land now that can surround itself with a Chinese wall against culture. China's walls did not even help it. European culture forced itself through, nonetheless. And so, we observe the permeation of European culture into all corners of the Ottoman Empire and especially Palestine. Let us be the cultural bearers of our land! Otherwise, it will be others!<sup>160</sup>

Soskin's sense of urgency was also reverberated in Sandler's account of the lecture by the Berliner history professor Richard Schmitt in Köthen about the history of German colonial aspirations since the sixteenth century. At the core of the lecture was a counterhistorical narrative of how, instead of England, Prussia could have become the leading colonial power. Schmitt suggested that this would have been preferable from a humane perspective. He claimed that Prussia's conquest would have cost less human life and encountered less resistance. According to Schmitt, historically, Prussia was not obstructed by interventions of other European powers, but primarily by Prussian leadership's hesitation and failures in seizing opportunities.

Schmitt's account was the flip side of the opening lecture by the Köthen Polytechnic director, a social Darwinist whose exposition viewed successful colonization as proof of the colonizer's assertiveness and "master consciousness."<sup>161</sup> Schmitt's melancholic, pseudohistorical tale of unrealized potential – of unjustly being the underdog and therefore, hypothetically, the morally superior colonist – was an important staple of German colonial fantasy and a recurring theme in the presentation of other colonial ventures:

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**159** Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 176–177 and 268. Bismarck did, however, send warships to defend Templar settlements during the Russian Ottoman war; see Haim Goren, "Debating the Jews of Palestine: German Discourses of Colonization, 1840–1883," in *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, vol. 1, ed. Dan Diner (Munich: Saur K. G. Verlag, 2003), 233.

**160** Soskin, "'Gross' und 'Klein'-Kolonisation," 179.

**161** Sandler, "Die Coethener Kurse für koloniale Technik," 99–100.

The re-presentation of past heroic ventures and the critique of the “excesses” committed by others provided Germans with a space for the inscription of their own identities as “different” (=better) colonists, anticipatory identities into which they could slip once the economic and political conditions permitted state-sponsored colonial activity or imperialist expansion on a grand scale.<sup>162</sup>

In their colonial fantasy Germans were fascinated with South America “as a missed opportunity, as the recollection of colonial failure, as a lost object to be regained through renewed effort.”<sup>163</sup> The old-new land of *Altneuland* was also a lost object waiting to be reclaimed. On the eve of practical settlement in Palestine, Schmitt’s “re-presentation” of German history struck a nerve with Sandler. He identified with the ostensible colonial underdog, while wishing to become the assertive colonizer. By sharing his reflections with the reader of *Altneuland*, Sandler used this trope to stir up fear of inaction – as well as repulsion to alleged historical Jewish passivity – to facilitate the creation of an “anticipatory colonial identity.” Hesitation and impotence would lead to Jews repeating the failures of German colonial history, thus allowing “more vigorous nations” to beat them to the chase.<sup>164</sup> Apparently, Sandler could sympathize and associate with the fantasy of overcoming impotence more easily than with the triumphant colonial history of the English or French. Through this sympathy German and Jewish fates were narratively linked in turning historical impotency into future potency.

The scope of Zionist colonization in *Altneuland* was not limited to Palestine, but rather was part of a broader push into the Ottoman Empire. Trietsch was not alone in devising plans for settlement outside Palestine. Warburg justified broadening the scope of settlement, not with the lack of ample land in Palestine, but with the time-consuming task of preparing this supposedly barren land. As he described it, the dire situation of Eastern European Jewry did allow any delay. Nor did Warburg consider settling British East Africa as an adequate alternative, because it would also take decades to develop. Yet he coordinated the East Africa expedition, leading some to believe that he intentionally sabotaged the plan.<sup>165</sup>

In 1904, Warburg published a plan in *Altneuland* to settle Eastern European Jews in Anatolia along the rail line financed by Deutsche Bank to connect Baghdad and Berlin. For him it was an example of how Jewish colonization could fur-

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162 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 7.

163 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 12.

164 Sandler, “Die Coethener Kurse für koloniale Technik,” 100.

165 Gur Alroey, “Journey to New Palestine: The Zionist Expedition to East Africa and the Aftermath of the Uganda Debate,” *Jewish Culture and History* 10 (2008): 45.



ther German economic expansion into the Orient. Mirroring Trietsch's biblical exegesis justifying the southward expansion of Palestine to the Brook of Egypt, Warburg made a paltry half-hearted attempt at legitimizing the expansion of the settlement sphere to the north by arguing that Syria was Abraham's homeland before he wandered into Canaan.<sup>166</sup> In another article, Warburg quoted the *Budapesti Hírlap*, which linked "Greater Palestine" not only with the Bible but also with South America, the region of German colonial fascination. It referred to the entire region as "the land of biblical promise, Canaan, the *Eldorado* [my emphasis] stretching between the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris where once – according to the Bible – a dove [sic] weighed 50 oka [ca. 64 kg] and was, and today still is, the richest land in the world."<sup>167</sup> Although *Altneuland* was committed to disassociating itself from the theological approach, the reclamation of an old-new land was entangled with biblical references.<sup>168</sup>

According to Warburg, adoption of his Anatolian settlement plan would be beneficial for Ottomans, Germans and Jews. The cotton-growing settlements would introduce a new economic branch into the Ottoman Empire. Beyond the prospects of economic improvement, the rail line would facilitate political stability by strengthening Ottoman control of the Arabian Peninsula through speedy deployment of soldiers. Germany would gain a new source of cotton for its expanding textile industry, reducing its dependency on the USA and British-controlled Egypt. Additionally, the construction of the line would open a new route for German trade, bypassing the British channel and the west coast of Africa. Settlements along the line would improve Deutsche Bank's returns providing potential passengers and eventually cotton freight. Lastly, for the Jews there would be a new asylum with all the expected benefits of the agricultural transformation.<sup>169</sup>

In the following year Warburg presented the plan, originally propagated in *Altneuland*, in a pamphlet of the Deutsch-Asiatische Gesellschaft. His plans for

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**166** Warburg, "Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien," 234.

**167** The German word for dove is *Taube*. It seems to be a spelling mistake for *Traube*, meaning grape, connecting it to biblical metaphors of abundance as well as the cover illustration of *Altneuland*; see Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 164.

**168** Another example for the adjunction of new territories to Palestine could be found in a reprint of an article from the *Kölnische Zeitung* supposedly written by a missionary in Gaza. In his account, the missionary explained that, historically, the Gaza area was not a part of the Holy Land. Nevertheless, he incorporated Gaza by saying that not only had the name Palestine originated from there but, more importantly, the designation land of milk and honey primarily signified Gaza. In his genealogy of the area's inhabitants, he omitted Jews but included Christian crusaders; see *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 117–119.

**169** Warburg, "Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien," 162.

Jewish settlement in the Ottoman Empire belonged in both Zionist and German colonial journals due to potential synergy arising from Germany taking Jewish colonization under its wing.<sup>170</sup> For a non-Jewish public interested in colonial matters, Warburg argued that although Palestine was small and agriculture still underdeveloped, it already exported more than all German colonies in Africa combined. These were fifty times the size of Palestine and had sixteen times its population.<sup>171</sup>

Making use of colonial fantasy, Warburg also propagated Germany's self-image as a benevolent colonialist showing solidarity for other underdogs of colonialism. Ironically, the underdog Warburg referred to was another lagging empire, the Ottomans, which the German Empire supported in resistance to other European powers trying to dismember it. Thus, the bond between Germans, Jews and Ottomans could be understood as a triumvirate of colonial underdogs. Foreign papers, and especially France, were accused of trying to foil the special relationship between Turkey and Germany by disseminating rumors of a "German invasion of Turkey." Allegedly, Germany was mimicking the English colonial practice of "silent economic occupation" leading to "political occupation ripening by itself ... as a natural consequence of the current peaceful economic conquest without weapons, according to the known English recipe." In full approval, Warburg quoted the conservative *Kreuzzeitung's* response to these accusations: "The Germans were only making up for their previous neglect and gradually gaining a position in Turkey corresponding to the significance of their empire."<sup>172</sup> Warburg reproduced a common trope in German colonial fantasy, which Mary Louise Pratt called "anti-conquest," to define "strategies of representation, whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony."<sup>173</sup>

To maintain this self-image while justifying Jewish colonization Warburg warned against overextending settlement by Germans in the Middle East. According to him, the nineteenth century wave of mass emigration from Germany had come to an end, due to demographic and economic shifts, and owing to overemployment. As a result, Germany was now experiencing labor shortages and immigration of seasonal workers. The few German emigrants should be directed to sparsely populated regions of Brazil where they would better serve Ger-

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170 Penslar, "Zionism, Colonialism and Technocracy," 149–150.

171 Otto Warburg, "Palästina als Kolonisationsgebiet," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 12. From the economic perspective, Germany's colonies were generally unprofitable; see Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, ix.

172 Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 227–228.

173 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7.

many's colonial interests. According to Warburg, calls circulating in German media for mass colonization within the Ottoman Empire were disturbing the peace and upsetting German economic interests in the region. He argued that the territories in question were unfit for mass immigration and that the Sublime Porte would not allow large numbers of Christian settlers. This was attributed by "an expert on Turkey... to a row of inner psychological reasons emanating for the nature and mentality of the Oriental."<sup>174</sup>

To further reinforce his argument, Warburg cited the opposition to German settlement expressed by Deutsche Bank and the contractors constructing the Anatolian railway on its behalf. Travelers, he wrote, were already reporting the unsettling impact rumors were having on Ottoman authorities, who now suspected German visitors of being spies preparing an imminent invasion of 40,000 armed settlers supported by canons.<sup>175</sup> Such aggressive colonial rhetoric was undermining, he continued, the efforts of those promoting the success of Germany's liberal form of colonialism. According to Warburg, Germany's ambassador was the most influential ambassador in Constantinople, due to Germany's honorable and respectful practice of avoiding displays of military might, forceful annexations and threats like those made by England and France.<sup>176</sup>

According to Warburg, Germany's focus on the Ottoman Empire should be on trade, instead of mass colonization. He explained that due to stagnating population figures, export to the Ottoman Empire could not be increased without antagonizing other colonial powers, especially England. Owing to Germany's increasing population and buying power, the focus, according to Warburg, should be on increasing imports from the Ottoman Empire. He recommended the Hamburg-based Palestine trade company established by the CEP as an important commercial intermediary, aspiring to widen its range from Jewish products to those of the entire region.<sup>177</sup>

Nevertheless, select Jewish colonization could be beneficial for Germany. Tension with other colonial powers and the Sublime Porte would be avoided because Jews would supposedly fit naturally in the oriental surroundings. Jewish colonization in the Middle East would therefore be a crucial pillar of German colonial aspirations within the Ottoman Empire. At this point Jewish colonization in Anatolia was not just a matter of hypothetical discussion. Warburg had already

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174 Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 173–176 and 226–227, citation on p. 176.

175 Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 173–176 and 226–227.

176 Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 268–269.

177 Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 228–230.

founded two agricultural settlements for Romanian Jews in Anatolia.<sup>178</sup> They served German and Zionist interests, although they were not in Palestine proper. There was hope that their success in less controversial areas of the Ottoman Empire would potentially increase Ottoman acceptance for Jewish settlement in Palestine. According to Warburg, the Ottoman government did not discriminate between ethnic and religious groups the way the Russian and Romanian governments do.<sup>179</sup>

The contrast between the Ottoman Empire's pluralism and European prejudice was echoed in an article of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, which was reprinted in *Altneuland*. The article drew attention to the vast Sephardi diaspora in the Balkans and the Orient who, unlike their brethren in homogenic Western Europe, retained their Spanish dialect in the multiethnic setting of the Ottoman Empire. According to the paper, Spanish intellectuals and Sephardi Jews were rekindling the old bond with the prospects of returning Sephardim becoming subjects of the Spanish crown.<sup>180</sup> Of all nations, the article suggested, it was the primal colonial protagonist Spain – whose “postulated ... propensity for cruelty” Susanne Zantop identified as a lingering theme in German colonial fantasy<sup>181</sup> – that sparked a competition with other European nations for including Jews in their renewed colonial efforts.<sup>182</sup>

Portugal was quick to follow Spain's lead. In 1913, Zionist newspapers in Southeastern Europe applauded Portugal's decision to allow large-scale settlement of European and Ottoman Jews in Angola, claiming they would bring “colonial heroism and civilization to the entire Jewish nation.”<sup>183</sup> The *Berliner Tageblatt* regarded the Spanish example as a form of liberal imperialism. The hope was that Spain would inspire Germany to gain global influence in a seemingly benevolent manner by repatriating all those who speak and breathe its common language and culture. The reprinting of this article in *Altneuland* emphasized for its Jewish readers that they were desirable partners for European, and especially German, colonial expansion.

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178 Soskin, *Franz Oppenheimer und die Palästina Kommission*, CZA A161–78, 2.

179 Warburg, “Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien,” 234.

180 *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 30–32.

181 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 12.

182 In 1905 the Spanish senator Ángel Pulido Fernández launched a campaign to repatriate the Ladino-speaking diaspora. Fernández envisioned that embracing Jewish merchants crucial in the trade between Spain, Morocco and other parts of the Mediterranean would stimulate Spain's cultural and economic restoration after surrendering its last colony in 1898; see Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams*, 28–29.

183 Stein examines the competition between Spain and Portugal in Salonica as a case study, Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams*, 31–45, citation on p. 31.

The next chapter will continue with the analysis of *Altneuland*, focusing on the journal's intent to reshape the relationship between Jews and Christians by challenging racial and colonial discourses and pointing the way to an alternative Germany in which religious minorities, namely Jews and Catholics, would play an important role in the empire's colonial expansion. The premise for this vision would be an end to the discrimination against these minorities in Germany and their integration within the colonial apparatus. According to the *Altneuland* circle, Zionism could demonstrate the ideal majority-minority relationship through its treatment of Templers and other European settlers as well as the indigenous populations of Palestine. This circle hoped that Zionism would thus facilitate political and social reform within Germany, improving the lot of Jews in the diaspora.

## Chapter 5

# *Altneuland*'s Entanglement in German Racial and Colonial Discourses

The prime importance of the colonial empire to Germany lay neither with its negligible economic worth nor with its equally negligible strategic value, but with its role as a source of political controversy and a means of building support in German politics.<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter focused on the intended readership of *Altneuland* and the different ways in which German colonialism was mediated both for a Jewish and non-Jewish public. These discursive interventions aimed to promote involvement in colonial enterprises among Jews and make Zionist colonization palatable for non-Jews by integrating it into a broader German colonial movement. This chapter deals with other forms of discursive interventions meant to purge antisemitism, though not necessarily racism, out of the racial and colonial discourses. The aim was to strengthen liberal conceptions of imperialism and increase acceptance and social prestige for German Jewry. To this end, *Altneuland* fostered strong ties to liberal imperialists who demanded a careful approach to indigenous populations and connected colonial expansions with social and political reform of the motherland.<sup>2</sup> These ties outlived the First World War, resulting in the establishment of Pro-Palästina – Deutsches Komitee zur Förderung der jüdischen Palästinasiedlung [Pro-Palestine – German Committee for Promoting Jewish Settlement in Palestine] founded in 1918 to lobby for Zionism. Essays by *Altneuland* contributors such as Otto Eberhard, Max Blanckenhorn and Davis Trietsch were predominant in the publications of the short-lived Pro-Palästina-Komitee.<sup>3</sup>

The utter dissonance between colonial fantasies and colonial reality cannot be emphasized enough. While *Altneuland* was being published, German colonial

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1 Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, x. For more on Bismarck's "social imperialism," i.e., domestic political motives for engaging in colonial endeavors, see *ibid.*, 30–34 and 44–45. Other groups also used colonialism among other ideologies to mobilize support for their ideologies and interests; see *ibid.*, 120–121.

2 Vogt listed Franz Carl Endres, Paul Rohrbach and Ernst Jäckh as the main protagonists of a liberal imperialism with whom Zionists were in conversation; see Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 188.

3 There were two versions of the Pro-Palästina-Komitee, with the first established in 1918 and the second in 1926; see Joseph Walk, "Das 'Deutsche Komitee pro Palästina,' 1926–1933," *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 15 (1976): 162–163 and 168; Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 398–402.

forces were waging a genocide against the Herero and Nama in German South West Africa. The military and financial excesses of the German campaign caused public scandal in Germany about systematic mismanagement of the colonies and Germany's reputation as a civilized nation. Parliament's rejection of a supplementary budget for the war in German South West Africa resulted in it being ended in December 1906 by Kaiser Wilhelm II. In the aftermath of the First World War, Germany's ruthlessness against the Herero and Nama served the British as a justification for relieving Germany of its colonies.<sup>4</sup>

*Altneuland's* silence on the matter is jarring. Although its geographic scope was the Middle East, the journal published articles about technical aspects of colonial undertakings in other places including Africa. Both Soskin and Warburg were experts on German colonization in Africa. With their experience and networks, they were presumably aware of the racially rationalized military brutality and ongoing exploitation and expropriation of indigenous populations that formed the bedrock of expanding German colonial domination in Africa.<sup>5</sup> These very same colonies were claimed by *Altneuland* as "our" colonies.<sup>6</sup> Racist vindication of colonialism come to light in *Altneuland*, too, in the few places where contributors such as Warburg or Lazar Grünhut speak of Africans. *Altneuland's* entanglement with German colonial and racial discourses blotted out whatever undermined the positive German self-image maintained through colonial fantasy.

## Reimagining Relationships between Jewish and Christian Settlers

At the core of colonial fantasies stood the reimagination of relationships with other colonial European nations. *Altneuland* played with this in its coverage of the relationship between Jewish and Christian settlers on the ground. The most prominent group of Christian settlers in Palestine was the millennialist sect Die Tempelgesellschaft [Temple Society] also known as Templers, which had roots in the German province of Württemberg. The Templers established

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4 Dominik J. Schaller, "From Conquest to Genocide: Colonial Rule in German Southwest Africa and German East Africa," in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 296–297 and 317.

5 Schaller, "From Conquest to Genocide," 307–308.

6 See chapter 4.

their first settlement in Haifa in 1868. In total, the Templers established seven communities in Palestine during the Ottoman Era including four agricultural settlements. In the eyes of contemporaries such as Ruppin, the influence of their “agricultural colonies [was] far greater than the number of their inhabitants would lead one to suppose.”<sup>7</sup> The fact that Templer settlers were from Germany returns us to German colonial discourse in search of discussions about, and comparisons between, Templer and Zionist endeavors. The discourse also served as a projection surface for reimagining minority-majority relationships between Christians and Jews in Imperial Germany, as well as under a future Jewish sovereignty in Palestine.

In his analysis of German colonial discourse, Haim Goren concluded that, although there were times in the second half of the nineteenth century when “Jews were viewed as another but differing element,” it was nevertheless

an important part of what seemed to be the beginning of a new upsurge in European colonization of Palestine ... most German writers referred to the Jewish presence and establishments in Palestine only as long as they were complementary to their own arguments. Most never considered the Jews as serious candidates for inheriting the country at some future date.<sup>8</sup>

While Goren focused on Christian perception of actual and potential Jewish settlement, the focus here is on how this perception was interpreted by the *Altneuland* circle.

The reprinting of German travel reports strengthened *Altneuland*'s Germano-centric approach, as can be seen in the travel report of the Oldenburg agriculturist Friedrich Oetken. Oetken praised the settlements of his fellow Germans as a lighthouse in the darkness, an example of what could be achieved by fostering diligence. After all, he argued, the friendly, clean and flowering villages of the Templers stood on the same earth as the supposedly sad and dirty local villages. Reprints also created a space in which *Altneuland* countered prejudice against Jews while sometimes also endorsing and even spawned it. Oetken's praise for Jewish settlements was somewhat reserved, as he claimed Jews could have achieved more, considering the sums invested by philanthropists. He claimed that unlike the Templers, it was “only with toil” that the Jewish worker could “be educated for steadfast and systematic work for independence and resoluteness in the battle with difficulties and disagreeable circumstances.” However, Oetken ac-

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7 Seth J. Frantzman and Ruth Kark, “The Muslim Settlement of Late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine: Comparison with Jewish Settlement Patterns,” *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22 (2013): 82.

8 Goren, “Debating the Jews of Palestine,” 235 and 238.



knowledge that his criticism was not based on his own observation. His reiteration of Zionist stigmas and education paradigms suggested that his opinion was at least partially shaped by *Altneuland*, which he claimed to read. He certainly adopted criticism and suggestions in the journal against the JCA, and other philanthropic associations, while also reinforcing Zionist intellectual authority based on accumulated knowledge since, as he argued, “the past decades of work brought the leading men a large treasure, rich experience” which, properly implemented, would have the potential to bring great improvement.<sup>9</sup>

Criticism of the Yishuv's colonization methods based on comparison of Jewish and Templer settlements was a common thread throughout *Altneuland*. For example, the editors hoped that Petach-Tikva's vicinity to the Templer colonies Sarona and Wilhelmina, where the settlers supposedly “work[ed] better than in our colonies,” would be a good influence on the development of the Jewish worker.<sup>10</sup> Oetken's remarks echoed Aaronson's scorn of the administration of the JCA and Rothschild colonies for underachieving in comparison to the Templers, despite a higher financial investment. Aaronson claimed this was caused by neglect of infrastructure development of roads together with water and sewer systems.<sup>11</sup> Soskin repeated these accusations, while extending the scope of comparison to other settler groups, claiming that even the Circassians realized the value of road infrastructure. Although their infrastructure was comparatively primitive, he noted, it was still an improvement.<sup>12</sup> In his opinion, Jewish settlers tended not to take initiative but expected the administration to do so on their behalf. This he saw as not restricted to settlers but a general Jewish behavior pattern in relation to colonial entrepreneurship. European powers were bidding for concessions of large rail projects without any participation of Jewish capital, he pointed out. Yet without controlling transport infrastructure, he concluded, even if the pockets of settlement might be Jewish, as a whole Jews would remain dependent “guests” in Palestine. As an example of how private initiative facilitated German colonization, Soskin referenced the Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, of which Warburg was a member. The committee surveyed German colonies in Africa, suggested rail routes and arranged for companies to construct the lines.<sup>13</sup>

However, Warburg and others did not examine Templer settlement solely for the sake of learning colonial techniques. They also used the comparison between Jews and Templers as a perspective from which it was possible to aggrandize the

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<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Oetken, “Palaestinafahrt eines Landwirts,” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 170–173.

<sup>10</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 88–89.

<sup>11</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 125.

<sup>12</sup> Selig Soskin, “Zum neuen Jahr,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 2.

<sup>13</sup> Soskin, “‘Gross’ und ‘Klein’-Kolonisation,” 173–174.

accomplishments of Jewish colonization and to suggest a commonality between Jewish and German settlers. Warburg challenged the prevalent supposition in German colonial discourse, highlighted by Goren, that Jews were incompetent settlers. Warburg claimed the exact opposite: not only that Jews were viable candidates for inheriting Palestine from the indigenous population, but also that they had potential to replace even the most successful Christian settlers, the Templers. Accordingly, Warburg opened his chronology of agricultural colonization of Palestine with the arrival of the Templers, followed fourteen years later by Jewish settlements.<sup>14</sup> He concluded his positive depiction of Templar accomplishments and attempts to adapt to oriental conditions with the assessment that the Templers had filled their historical role and were ready to be superseded by Jewish settlers as the main European force in Palestine. In his opinion, in a Jewish-dominated Palestine the Templers and other Christian settlers would become a minority, engaged predominantly in commercial activity.<sup>15</sup> In Warburg's imagination, Zionist colonization would lead to a role reversal in Palestine of the historical relationship between Jews and Christians in Europe. Jewish Palestine would become Christian Europe's mirror image.

According to Warburg, the transformation was already observable: "The schnorrer farmers who flourished in the [eighteen-]nineties and provoked ridicule from the German colonists are becoming extinct."<sup>16</sup> Warburg reverted to a popular trope of 1860s racial and colonial discourse, denigrating the poor and reliant Jewish population of Palestine, while exulting the efforts and initiative of wealthy Jewish philanthropists for European colonization at large.<sup>17</sup> He bent this trope to illustrate the changes the Jewish population had undergone and its growing independence from philanthropy. The new generation born in the colonies were of a different streak: "It is a pleasure to see them romp on bare-back horses, the traces of the Ghetto-Judaism of earlier generations having disappeared in the youth growing up in the Palestinian colonies."<sup>18</sup>

In Warburg's view, out of various American, German, Swedish and other Christian colonization attempts in Palestine, the Templers were the only ones with viable success. Their religious motivation, which he believed they shared with Jewish settlers, was key to their success in the Orient where other Europeans have failed.<sup>19</sup> And motivation was not all he thought they shared. The Tem-

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14 Warburg, "Die juedische Kolonisation Palaestinas," 97.

15 Otto Warburg, "Die nichtjuedische Kolonisation Palaestinas," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 43–45.

16 Warburg, "Die juedische Kolonisation Palaestinas," 107.

17 Goren, "Debating the Jews of Palestine," 230.

18 Warburg, "Die juedische Kolonisation Palaestinas," 107.

19 Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 166.

plers “in their aspiration to come close to ancient Christianity ... now stand close to the Jewish religion, with the exception of the ceremonial acts.”<sup>20</sup> The transculturation process was apparently not perceived as a one-way street with Jews blindly imitating Germans. To successfully settle Palestine, the Templers allegedly needed to become more oriental; they needed to occupy a hybrid, in-between position like the Jews in the diaspora. This transculturation made them “the pioneers of western culture in the Orient” who “with real Swabian tenacity ... adjusted themselves to oriental living conditions without losing their German nationality in the process – both internally and externally.”<sup>21</sup>

Hence despite their religious “acclimatization,” Warburg concluded, the Templers could not compete with the oriental authenticity of Jewish settlers. Hence the future of neither Palestine nor of the Orient would lie in Templar colonization. Warburg dismissed the notion that the Templers were pioneers whose objective was gaining experience and preparing hordes of settlers for Germany’s invasion of the Orient.<sup>22</sup> Rather, he argued from both from a racial and economic perspective. From the racial perspective, he considered Germans to have evolved to fit a moderate Central European climate. This he saw demonstrated in their historical failures to settle even in Southern Europe along the Mediterranean. Palestine’s climate, he claimed, had such a degenerative effect on them that they supposedly became unfit for being drafted into the German military.<sup>23</sup> We can say that this was perhaps another aspect of their perceived Judaification, considering the popular stereotype of the incompatibility of Jews with military service.<sup>24</sup>

For Warburg, then, the Templers’ only chance to avoid further degeneration would be interbreeding with the natives to create a sturdier hybrid racial group. But since “their ethics are opposed to their racial instincts,” meaning that they prohibited intermarriage with local Arabs, their colonization would not endure.<sup>25</sup> Their only other chance of survival as Warburg saw it would be a permanent influx of settlers from Germany. Yet, according to Warburg, funds and reserves were lacking, despite the support from German colonial agencies leading to higher emigration than immigration rates in Templar colonies. In his opinion, the youth preferred returning to Europe or moving to the business centers of the Orient to take up lucrative positions. Warburg added that even though the

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20 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 41.

21 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 43.

22 Warburg, “Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen,” 165.

23 Warburg, “Die nichtjüdische Kolonisation Palästinas,” 43–44.

24 Gilman, Sander L., *The Jew's Body* (New York, London: Routledge, 1991), 53–40.

25 Warburg, “Die nichtjüdische Kolonisation Palästinas,” 44, footnote.

Templers were not economically dependent on Germany, the existence of their colonies was contingent upon backing from German foreign offices, as well as privileges resulting from the relationship between Germany and Turkey.<sup>26</sup>

Warburg considered the capability of the Templers for integration to be limited, requiring collaboration with Jews to survive. He argued that, without the tenacity of the English and Americans, the German character would not adapt to the Orient's *baksheesh* culture. As a solution he suggested "the connection of Jewish and Germanic characteristics, i. e., through the association of Jewish commercial and Germanic technical strengths." Again, negative stereotypes of Jews, in this case their business practices, are not denied but rather transvaluated. Warburg's juxtaposition of Jews with the colonially adept English and Americans actually suggested that precisely these characteristics made Jews superior colonizers to Germans. Yet this solution was restricted to the realms of fantasy, according to Warburg, since social separation in the Orient of Christians from Jews, and especially the encapsulation of the Templers, was too strong. Moreover, Warburg did not think it would change due to the regional tendency to clan formation.<sup>27</sup>

In Warburg's opinion, the Templers' best chance at survival was as a distinct minority within a Palestine in which Jews formed the majority. He believed the Templers would eventually be pushed out of the agricultural sector by competition from the growing number of Zionist farms, and that the same thing would happen in other sectors as well due to the expansion of Arab and Jewish economic activity. However, he thought the Templers would still retain important positions in the cities as hoteliers and, to some degree, also in tourism-based commerce and crafts. In this capacity, they would benefit from growth in trade and tourism, due to the progress and economic development accompanying Zionist settlement. Additionally, the Templers would enjoy a unique trade connection with Christian Europe, in general, and Germany in particular.<sup>28</sup> Jews would also benefit from the Templers' connections and efforts as already exhibited in the Templers' successful marketing of "made in Palestine" wine, thereby improving exports of Jewish wine, too.<sup>29</sup> In conclusion, in Warburg's fantasy German Templers under Jewish sovereignty would occupy a prosperous minority position in a diasporic mercantile network reminiscent of the one occupied at the time by Jews in Germany.

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<sup>26</sup> Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 168–169.

<sup>27</sup> Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 232–233 and 275.

<sup>28</sup> Warburg, "Die nichtjüdische Kolonisation Palästinas," 44–45; Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 169 and 232.

<sup>29</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 94.

The Templers were not the only borderline Christian-Jewish group welcomed to participate in the nation-building process in Palestine. Russian converts were first mentioned in *Altneuland* in the travelogue of Struck and Friedeman. In a subsequent issue, the little-known story of thousands of Russian farmers who converted to Judaism was told, drawing on a Russian missionary journal. Like the Templers, they were presented as stemming from Christian sects who had supposedly come closer to Judaism. The Russian journal claimed that with their conversion, the Russian farmers abandoned not only their Christianity but also their Russianness. Feeling that life in Russia was the *golus* [diaspora or exile], they supposedly emigrated to Palestine with messianic expectations. A third of the members of two agricultural settlements, the article claimed, was comprised of these “new Jews” or *geirim* [proselytes], as they were alternately referred to. Moreover they had, it noted, already adopted Hebrew as their spoken language.<sup>30</sup>

It was in this way that the integrative magnetism of agricultural settlements was allegedly proven. Future Jewish sovereignty was imagined as tolerant and open to integrating non-Jewish immigrants from overseas, including indigenous populations, as will be demonstrated later. It was imagined as an authentic vessel of European liberalism to the Orient freed of its prejudice and antisemitic strains. A liberal form of colonization, a Jewish colonial *Sonderweg*, was not to be dismissed as a theoretical utopia, but was presented as already taking form and shape in Palestine.

## Confronting Racial and Religious Misrepresentations

In attempting to remedy a German colonial discourse tainted by antisemitism, *Altneuland* served as what Pratt has called “autoethnographic expression,” meaning “instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer’s own terms.”<sup>31</sup> For this purpose, the journal utilized the following methods: increasing Jewish visibility; providing a positive reception of Jewish colonization efforts; and participation in the formation of domestic and foreign policy, which was for the most part driven by commercial interests and stakeholders.

One characteristic of German colonial discourse was that for the non-Jewish European traveler the Jewish native or settler was invisible. Travel reports by

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<sup>30</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 383.

<sup>31</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7.

Christian pilgrims scarcely paid attention to the growing Jewish presence in Palestine.<sup>32</sup> Soskin often criticized the blind eye turned towards, or even negative perception of, Jewish life in accounts by non-Jewish travelers on their visits to Palestine or European areas with a high Jewish population. Soskin named Rudolf Fitzner, the geographer and author of the *Deutsches Kolonial-Handbuch* [German colonial handbook], an example of the latter. Fitzner did not even mention Jews in his list of peoples living in Galicia and the Bukovina.<sup>33</sup> As an example of the former, Soskin bemoaned Valentin Schwöbel's survey of Galilee in which he ignored the bulk of Jewish settlement. Soskin attributed this to Schwöbel's lack of attention and understanding of local populations.<sup>34</sup>

In Soskin's review of *Auf heiligen Spuren* [Following holy trails] by the Zurich theology professor Arnold Rüegg, he added a reproach of the author's antisemitic undertones to the common criticism in *Altneuland* about the unscientific approach of theologians and their preference for questions dealing with Palestine's past, rather than its present. Upon encountering the settlement of Rosh Pina – which he perceived as an oasis with its modern streets and streetlights, advanced sewage, cleanliness and hygiene – the author was baffled. “The riddle was solved as we rode by a house from which an odd mumbling and horrid babble of voices came to our ears. It was a *Judenschule* [Synagogue] and we were in one of the Jewish colonies, Rosh Pina, which the Israelite financial barons breathed life into.”<sup>35</sup>

Soskin was outraged that, despite the authors' declared goal to correct misconceptions about the Holy Land, he still reproduced prejudice of the mumbling Ghetto Jew. Instead of observing the creative ability of Jewish labor in Palestine, Rüegg concluded that “with luck a Jew can also speculate on the charitable inclination of his brethren.”<sup>36</sup> Soskin criticized that the supposed expert was oblivious of the Zionist goal of creating a new Jew rooted in agriculture and free of economic dependency on philanthropy; of remedying exactly these prejudices of Jewish financial speculations and inadequate work morality. Soskin and other *Altneuland* authors felt that in ignoring Jewish agricultural prowess, Jewish claim to the land and even presence was rejected. According to Zantop, disacknowledging land cultivation was a typical manner of legitimizing the disenfranchisement of indigenous populations.<sup>37</sup>

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32 Kaiser, *Palästina – Erez Israel*, 359.

33 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 127.

34 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 154.

35 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 253.

36 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 253.

37 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 195.

Soskin was not alone in battling blemished travelogues. Heinrich Loewe published a furious review of a book written by the Berlin pastor and theology professor Hans Karl Hermann von Soden about Palestine and its history, *Palästina und seine Geschichte*. Loewe took offence at von Soden's ignorance and belittling of Jewish settlements and his attempt to redeem Christianity from its Jewish roots through dilettante anthropological typologies of Palestine's indigenous population. Von Soden claimed that the population of Bethlehem

have simply nothing in common with Arabs, absolutely nothing Semitic; rather they are similar to North Italians, large, broad, blooming figures, often bright eyes, thin hair [...] an exquisitely beautiful species ... etc. At that time this species surely did not live in Bethlehem, or else Jesus would not have been a Semite but rather an Indo-German.<sup>38</sup> (Bracketed ellipses added.)

Loewe retaliated by attacking the veracity of von Soden's observations, given his short Palestine visit. Asserting intellectual authority, he exposed flaws in von Soden's argumentation and, subtly, his inadequate proficiency in Christian scripture. Loewe talked about Nazareth, too, since von Soden drew conclusions about Jesus's descent based on the population of Bethlehem, where he was born, when Jesus was actually from Nazareth. Loewe had earlier taken aim at theorists of Aryan supremacy in his book *Die Juden als Rasse* [The Jews as a race] by claiming that Jews were a much purer race closer to its historical origins than the Aryans.<sup>39</sup> Here he made a similar claim about the relationship between supposedly endogamous Eastern European Jewry and the inhabitants of these two cities:

For anyone who is familiar with the Orient – not from a one-week layover – ... it is a known fact that the remarkable Jewish type [matches] precisely the inhabitants of Nazareth, Bethlehem and their vicinity. If anything, they are most similar to the numerous Polish Jews of the Palestinian ghetto. And whoever finds the Bethlehem type to be attractive must just as well praise the Polish Jew.<sup>40</sup>

Instead of offering praise, von Soden dismissed the value of Jewish colonization efforts for the European civilization mission: "Judging by past experience with Jewish settlements in the land even a strong Zionist immigration promises hardly any substantial contribution to cultural improvement. It will be the Christian people of Europe that will have to solve this cultural task."<sup>41</sup> Loewe replied po-

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<sup>38</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 317.

<sup>39</sup> Vogt, *Subalterne Positionierungen*, 121–122.

<sup>40</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 317.

<sup>41</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 317.

lemically by equating von Soden's conclusion with an attack on the very fabric of German colonialism, which he saw as consisting of Jewish and non-Jewish cooperation:

He [von Soden] should, however, take the following to heart: that namely the German colonies whose importance I unequivocally acknowledge are able to exist only because of German protection, i. e., the armed forces of the German Empire and, to an important degree, thanks to the large Jewish colonization. To oppose Zionist colonies in Palestine means to undermine the foundations of German colonization of which they are an important pillar.<sup>42</sup>

Loewe continued to chip away at the antisemitic strains of German colonial discourse and challenged Germany to become an empire by abandoning the narrow confines of the Christian nation-state, as well as its overreliance on military prowess. According to Loewe, von Soden erred in subordinating imperial aspirations to a cultural conception equating Germaneness with Christianity, while denying Judaism's role in the creation of a Christian and, consequently, German tradition and culture. The resulting exclusion of Jewish colonization from European and German colonization impeded, he argued, the creation of a forward-looking vision of what a German's revival of the Holy Land should look like.<sup>43</sup> By striving for inclusion within a German colonial discourse Loewe was reclaiming shared cultural and religious roots and ultimately belonging to Germany and Europe.

*Altneuland's* editors did not limit the journal's confrontations of prejudice against Jewish colonization efforts to German media alone. For example, Claudio Guastalla wrote with great interest about El-Arish and the Sixth Zionist Congress for the Italian journal *L'Italia Coloniale*. The article was reprinted in an Italian Zionist journal, thus making its way to *Altneuland*. Guastalla clearly supported Trietsch's El-Arish plan. He expressed his disappointment over its rejection by the congress on account of the negative assessment of settlement potential by the El-Arish expedition. He demanded that the results of the El-Arish expedition be disclosed to enable open scientific scrutiny. Although the editors of *Altneuland* never completely disassociated themselves from Trietsch, allowing him to publish in *Altneuland* and promoting the fundamental principles of his "Greater Palestine" plan, they stated clearly that they did not share Guastalla's optimism concerning El-Arish. Additionally, they wished to rebuff other "peculiarities" of his account. Namely, to elucidate the motives for British support for the founding of a Jewish autonomy within their colonial empire, Guastalla claimed that the

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<sup>42</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 317.

<sup>43</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 316–317.



British wanted to curb “the infiltration of wretched Hebrews” to New York and London. The successful resistance of religious parties to the Uganda plan was his proof that Zionism was driven by religious fanaticism – not by modern scientific, economic forces – in its mission “to unite the scattered parts of the Hebrew people in its old promised land under the reign of its old melancholic God: a pardonable religious striving for a race trod upon and ridiculed for centuries.”<sup>44</sup> *Altneuland's* editors chose to fully quote Guastalla’s account, engaging with and not removing “peculiarities,” hence not compromising its scientific value for the sake of an international exchange and promotion of Palestine studies.

### Domestic Social Integration through Colonial Policy

For Warburg, Zionism was not only a means to unify the Jewish people. It could also facilitate social integration within Germany, if integrated into a broader German colonial scheme. He believed one could observe success in colonial expansion in integrating minorities in the favorable reporting of Catholic newspapers in Germany. According to Warburg, German Catholic newspapers had ceased lamenting the demise of French influence in the Orient in contrast to their coreligionists in other countries. This was not only a result of self-censorship but also of their recognition of Germany’s patronage of all Christians in the Orient. Thus, he saw Germany’s reconciliatory colonial politics overseas as reverberating and facilitating ecumenic reconciliation back home and vice versa.<sup>45</sup>

To demonstrate this, an article from the influential Catholic newspaper the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* was reprinted in *Altneuland*. The article criticized France’s hypocritical sense of religious entitlement to the Orient, even as it pursued secularization back home. France’s attitude led, the article claimed, to neglect of Catholics in the Orient, with the consequence that the Pope and local Christians considered shifting their allegiance to Italy. The paper emphasized that this offered Germany the chance to extend its influence by taking domestic and diplomatic measures to dispel local apprehensions against its Protestant character. Such measures could include naming a first Catholic consul and other diplomats to Jerusalem who could then officially participate in Catholic rituals in the same way as the French diplomats. Another important measure would be to stop the discrimination against Catholic clergy within Germany, since domestic and for-

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<sup>44</sup> *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 50–51.

<sup>45</sup> Warburg, “Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen,” 162.

eign policy could not be hermetically separated from each other. How could the Christians of the Orient honestly believe that Germany would protect them, the article asked, when they hear that the loyalty of Catholic missionaries – who in their eyes admirably represented Germany – was being questioned because of their vow to the Vatican?

The article also raised the question of differentiation between religion and nationality. It claimed that nationality had come to play an increasingly important role in the extension of influence of European powers within Ottoman territories. Discrimination against German Catholic missionaries, who were first admitted into service of the German overseas empire in 1889, exposed the tension between nationality and religion experienced by local Christians. This weakened the sincerity of Germany's promised protection. The *Kölnische Volkszeitung* appealed to German imperial ambitions in its plea for unwavering tolerance within Germany: "Any confessional bias means, in foreign countries and especially in the Orient, the elimination of the German Empire, the German name and German influence from the competition among Christian nations for the promotion of civilization and Christianity."<sup>46</sup>

Warburg also interlinked domestic and foreign policy, arguing that the transformation of Germany into a colonial empire presupposed a recognition of and reconciliation with its own heterogeneity:

Because a pure nation-state can never become a world power. Considering Germany's rapid, current development into one, it is in its considerable interest not to impede this inevitable development through nation-state velleities. Especially since the main economic rivals of Germany – England and the United States – are undoubtedly willing to represent and protect the various population components in their empires in equal measure.<sup>47</sup>

Warburg endorsed not only the inclusion of Jews but also of polyglot indigenous elites in Germany's imperial expansion. He considered their recruitment for management and administrative positions in German companies in the Orient as essential. Such was the practice, he noted, of German railway companies in preferring French-speaking employees. Proficiency in French was also required from German employees. This was considered by some an admission of French cultural supremacy in the region and a concession to French educated indigenous populations.

It was incomprehensible for Warburg that segregation and racism from German national politics were being transmitted to imperial politics, which required

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<sup>46</sup> *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 29–32, citation on p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 233.

the inclusion and formation of hybrid elites. He demonstrated the paradox this caused by quoting the liberal *Kölnische Zeitung*: “The prissy people in Imperial Germany’s homeland who agitate against this [practice of hiring French speakers] and demand the introduction of German as the railway’s official language are strangely the same ones who would break a lance for the exclusion of indigenous children from German schools in Turkey.” In homage to the popular colonial underdog trope, the paper emphasized that using German instead of French would be of no further harm to Turkey than that already inflicted by the French.<sup>48</sup>

*Altneuland* brought to the attention of readers the discussion regarding the establishment of nonreligious schools aimed at spreading German language and culture to local populations who were not ethnic German. It invited readers to actively participate in the discussion and donate towards establishing such a school in Jerusalem. The editors emphasized to the Jewish readers that, although the school was designated as a German Protestant school, it was respectful of all religions and strived to treat all pupils equitably.<sup>49</sup> In a lecture Warburg held in Köthen before a mostly non-Jewish crowd interested in colonial issues, he suggested that the designation Protestant should be reconsidered. He also added that the Templers’ insistence on the segregation of German schools contradicted the desire of Jerusalem’s German Protestant community for inclusion. For him, it was an example of the harmful influence of oriental culture and the Ottoman Millet system favoring small capsulized religious groups on the Templers. He declared the openness of Jerusalem’s German Protestants to be the true uncorrupted German mindset.<sup>50</sup>

Despite his promotion of tolerant schools in German language, Warburg doubted that there would ever be chance of German surpassing the influence of French in the Ottoman Empire. He regarded the whole concept of linguistic conquest, which might work with “primitive” cultures, as irrelevant for the supposedly highly cultured and organized Ottoman Empire.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the editors of *Altneuland* remained optimistic of Germany’s potential role in the Orient; a role they were actively promoting. In a reprint supporting opening a branch of the newly founded Deutsche Orient-Bank in Beirut, a supposedly objective local, writing in French, claimed that, as a consequence of the good relationship be-

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48 Warburg, “Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen,” 237.

49 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 254.

50 Warburg, “Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen,” 273–275.

51 Warburg, “Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen,” 277.

tween Germany and the Ottomans, influence was slowly shifting from France to Germany.<sup>52</sup>

## Pilgrims and Missionaries for Germany's Glory

Religion – and especially the protection of religious minorities and holy sites – played an important role in legitimizing the permeation of the Ottoman Empire by European powers. The theme of a “peaceful crusade,” a Christian “Reconquista” of the Holy Land by means of missionary and philanthropical work, as well as European settlement, was an important staple of German colonial fantasy since the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV began promoting missionary work in Palestine in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>53</sup> Hence, *Altneuland* paid special attention to German pilgrimages and missionary work in Palestine which, on the one hand, poised a threat when it targeted Jews but, on the other hand, served as an example for peaceful colonization methods, especially when it involved educating the natives. German Zionists readily adopted the peaceful conquest theme and the discussion on education to further their efforts at a Jewish “Reconquista.”

Oppenheimer described the conquest of Palestine through small scale colonization without a charter as *infiltration* or *pénétration pacifique* [peaceful penetration].<sup>54</sup> His use of French was indicative. The prominent position and influence of France through its Catholic school network were a source of envy and inspiration for German newspaper articles cited in *Altneuland*. Russia was a model too due its capability of weakening France by establishing its own influence over Greek Orthodox communities. *Altneuland* identified the potential and emphasized that that the protection of minorities was not an exclusive right of France but of all European powers.<sup>55</sup>

Prussia wanted to counter Catholic influence in the Holy Land, and therefore it joined forces with England to establish an Anglican-Prussian bishopric in Jerusalem in 1841. Due to the lack of Protestant congregations and to avoid infringement accusations from the Orthodox church, the new bishopric turned to evangelizing among the Jews of the Orient. This seemed to be an uncontended

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<sup>52</sup> Reprint from *Kieler Zeitung*, *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 95.

<sup>53</sup> Goren, “Debating the Jews of Palestine,” 218–221.

<sup>54</sup> E. g., Oppenheimer, “Das zionistische Ansiedlungswerk und der Bezalel,” 7; Oppenheimer, “Der Zionismus,” 224.

<sup>55</sup> E. g., *Kölnische Volksblatt* and the Constantinople-based *Germania*; see *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 29–30.

approach because Catholics were considered reluctant towards Jewish conversion. Preserving and vilifying Jewish alterity served the Catholic church in creating the illusion of a united Christianity. Further, the bishopric believed that Catholic iconography was the main hindrance for Jewish proselytization. To these ends, it ordained and employed converted German Jews, including the bishopric's first bishop, Michael Solomon Alexander. Thus, the German mission, which primarily functioned as a link to diasporic German communities, now found a new purpose in the service of German imperialism:<sup>56</sup>

The conversion of the Jews represents an initial phase of cultural imperialism to the extent that Jewish communities were spread throughout the space of North Africa and the Middle East, precisely the same space into which European commercial and political networks of power were expanding ... The mission to the Jews turns out to be the precursor for the so-called civilizing mission that plays a central role in the imperialism of the later nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup>

Some of the missionaries suggested a “metonymic identity” between Jews and Muslims; an imagery that helped pave the way for a broader mission to the Orient. For example, the former Frankfurter Jew Henry Stern claimed that the Jews of Baghdad were “tinctured with all the vices of their Mahommedan oppressors, and the errors of their pharisaical forefathers.”<sup>58</sup> Warburg also equated Jews and Muslims when cautioning against evangelization due to the sensitivities of Orientals of all creeds to proselytization. He warned that there was more to lose than gain for German economic interests by pursuing conversions.<sup>59</sup>

*Altneuland* reprinted various excerpts about missionary activity from German newspapers. One was a notably dry report from the journal of the Order of Saint John including statistics about European missions to Jews compared to missions to Arabs without any editorial comment. German missionary work among Jews was not explicitly mentioned in the report. Rather, German missionaries were positively portrayed as establishing and running welfare institutions such as orphanages, schools and hospitals.<sup>60</sup> Another report underscored that German missionary work targeted Orthodox Arabs and other local Christians.<sup>61</sup> The blame for proselytization among Jews was laid at the feet of Germany's Eng-

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<sup>56</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 106–110.

<sup>57</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 111–112.

<sup>58</sup> Cited in Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 118–119.

<sup>59</sup> Warburg, “Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen,” 271.

<sup>60</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904), 287–288.

<sup>61</sup> *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 27–28.

lish partner in the bishopric for Jerusalem. The Kolonisationsverein Esra was founded in 1884 in Berlin to combat missionary activity, in particular that of the English, through financial support of Jewish colonization.<sup>62</sup>

An excerpt from a Stuttgart-based paper reported progress in the founding of a “Jew conversion colony.” However, the efforts were ascribed to a wealthy English lady, not to Germans. The paper expressed doubt on the prospects of proselytization among the Jews, due to the onset of economic prosperity. While philanthropy was supposedly futile in combating poverty, modern agricultural compounds were flourishing and rapidly expanding in defiance of Ottoman chicanery. Jewish wine production was especially praised, supposedly giving the Templers a run for their money. This recognition was of exceptional significance coming from a newspaper in Württemberg, the Templers’ province of origin. The claim that “these Palestinian Jews refute all those who declare Jews to be useless for peasantry” not only supported *Altneuland*’s attempt to dispel prejudice against Jewish agricultural prowess but also linked poverty with vulnerability for proselytization.<sup>63</sup>

To gain support for a mutual colonial enterprise, it was important to dispel fears that cooperation with a European colonial network might lead to Jewish assimilation in Palestine. *Altneuland* conveyed the message that economic improvement provided immunity from proselytization. Cooperation with European colonial powers and especially with Germany, which was supposedly inculpable in proselytization, could be beneficial, even if it meant accepting their missionary institutions. These were to be viewed as harmless tools to gain influence and, in the long run, would improve the economic situation in the country for all.

The pilgrimage of Germans to Jerusalem was another important issue in *Altneuland*. One article dated the beginning of Prussian or Hohenzollern pilgrimage to the Holy Land to Albrecht the Handsome, burgrave of Nuremberg, in 1340. It named and alluded to further pilgrims of the Hohenzollern dynasty over the centuries, establishing a seemingly long-lasting claim of the Prussian monarchy to Palestine.<sup>64</sup> Reports about increasing numbers of German pilgrims to Jerusalem and improvement in German boarding houses were enthusiastically supportive of German efforts. The editors of *Altneuland* also included a report from the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* listing Catholic pilgrim delegations from diverse countries.

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62 “Festschrift zum fünfundzwanzigjährigen Jubiläum des ‘Esra’: Verein zur Unterstützung ackerbaureisender Juden in Palästina und Syrien, nebst Bericht für die Jahre 1906, 1907, 1908 und 1909,” 2.

63 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 377.

64 *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 26.

The list ended with the mention of Jews organizing pilgrimages to the land of their fathers.<sup>65</sup> Besides their economic significance, pilgrimages were considered a display of dominance by European powers, and especially Russia, whose government presumably sponsored Easter pilgrimages for political reasons.<sup>66</sup>

Yet the main colonial adversary was clearly France and its protectorate over Catholics, which manifested itself in the cultural influence exerted through its school network. *Altneuland* quoted another newspaper from Württemberg, the province which was a source not only of Templar settlers but of many Pilgrims now flocking to Palestine, in which returning pilgrims articulated an inferiority complex: “The German in the Holy Land is worth so very little that, instead, everywhere you encounter Frenchness in language and outlook.” There was disappointment that the pilgrimage of Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1898 left no lasting impact. “In short: German influence is minimal,” yet the pilgrims have returned with a solution that “the Germans should ... all go on a pilgrimage to Palestine or at least help establish schools there so that the German name would be lifted high.”<sup>67</sup> The connection between schools and pilgrimages as instruments of gaining influence was also made at the inauguration of Das deutsche evangelische Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes. The initiative for the institute was attributed to the Kaiser’s pilgrimage. In his inauguration speech the German consul linked science and imperial aspirations, expressing joy over the expected contribution of the institution to the “growth of Germanness and especially German science in the Holy Land.”<sup>68</sup>

The role of religion in Germany’s imperial aspirations towards the Orient went hand in hand with its conservative domestic turn. The iconic pilgrimage of Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Bible lands was an example of this close relationship.<sup>69</sup> The emancipation of the Jews, by contrast, was accompanied by the distancing of the state from religious influence in the liberal age. Ironically, this enabled the church to focus on proselytizing Jews, paving the way to their inclusion first as citizens and later in the Christian civilizing mission, both as objects and subjects, proselytes and missionaries, colonized and colonizers. With the rise of antisemitism, Germanness and Christianity were increasingly portrayed as synonymous and racially determined, with emancipation ferociously questioned. Yet the contributors to *Altneuland* refused to be denied a role in the German civ-

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65 *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 89.

66 *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 29–30.

67 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 337–338.

68 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 31.

69 Philipp, “Deutsche Forschung zum zeitgenössischen Palästina,” 218; letter written by Conrad von Orelli, cited in Hübner, “Der Deutsche Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas,” 13.

ilizing mission, as well as in the German domestic sphere. Instead they served as a mouthpiece at this very link between domestic and colonial policy, between religion and nationality within the modern nation-state, where Jewish emancipation was being renegotiated.

## Relandscaping Palestine: From Theology to Geography

One of *Altneuland's* main strategies for influencing public opinion in favor of practical settlement was the use of scientific research and discoveries to disprove the widespread conception that Palestine was unfit for dense Jewish settlement.<sup>70</sup> *Altneuland* promulgated the belief that there was a growing international scientific consensus on the favorable potential of the Palestinian climate for settlement. The journal ridiculed as “ignorant and bigoted” those portraying Palestine as “a land of eternal infertility and un blessedness.”<sup>71</sup> The disagreement was, however, not about the current desolate situation of Palestine but about the cause and perpetuity of this situation. One proposition was that the land’s current barrenness was caused by neglect in utter contrast to the land’s natural abundance. This underscored the necessity of colonization and the potential of economic enterprise.

Similarities can be drawn to the reinvention of South America in the early nineteenth century to accommodate capitalist enterprise at a time when the Spanish hold on the continent was weakening. “Neglect became the touchstone of a negative aesthetic that legitimized European interventionism,” writes Pratt, quoting one British traveler’s observation of La Plata: “What a scene for an enterprising agriculturalist! At present all is neglected.”<sup>72</sup> Sensing the opportunity provided by the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the enterprising agriculturists of *Altneuland* highlighting the historic opportunity while reframing Palestine’s geography to promote Jewish and German investment.

Another striking similarity is found in travelogues by nineteenth-century explorers that refer to South America as the New Continent, thus reviving the term used by the discoverers three hundred years earlier to express the observation that time had elapsed while the nature of the land remained untouched.<sup>73</sup> Besides being a homage to Herzl, the title of the journal *Altneuland* expressed

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70 Warburg, “Bericht der Palaestinakommission,” 223.

71 As in a published correspondence between the German American geologist and agronomist Eugene Woldemar Hilgard and the agriculturist Friedrich Oetken in *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 372.

72 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 149.

73 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 126–127.



the same rediscovery of the unaltered fruitfulness of the new old land of the Bible. While the nature of the land was unchanged, how it was perceived had greatly altered. The land was omnipresent in the imagination of ordinary Christians and Jews, as well as in theological research. In order to enable new discoveries of an old land the CEP distinguished its modern scientific methodology from theology. In *Altneuland*, Palestine was being rediscovered, not just as a land of the Bible but also of natural history in the sense suggested by Pratt:

natural history asserted an urban, lettered, male authority over the whole of the planet; it elaborated a rationalizing, extractive, dissociative understanding which overlaid functional, experiential relations among people, plants, and animals. In these respects, it figures a certain kind of global hegemony, notably one based on possession of land and resources rather than control over routes.<sup>74</sup>

Palestine became a real existing land blessed with fertility and awakened by European colonization from millennia of stagnation. Comparing the settlements of enterprising European agriculturists such as Jews and Templers with their surroundings demonstrated that the resurrection of biblical conditions lay in the hands of Europeans and science.

Yet theology and geography were not completely detached on the descriptive layer. While accounts of South America and especially of Humboldt told a story of an overempowering nature in the religious language of the Romantic,<sup>75</sup> accounts of the nature of Palestine naturally included an extraordinary religious aspect. They were a testimony to the truthfulness of the Bible. Since building and monuments of old Israel had crumbled to dust over the millennia, nature was the only living memory to be rediscovered. “The pictures, made so familiar long ago by the poets, prophets, lawmakers and historians of their Holy Scripture, confront them [the Jewish immigrants] here with lively presence,” wrote clergyman Konrad Furrer, Bible science and religious history professor at the Zurich University and a DPV managing board member.<sup>76</sup>

Not only was the land of milk and honey – a metaphor used often in *Altneuland* by Jews and non-Jews alike – unwaveringly fertile, its climate and scenery were living proof of the connection between Palestine and the Jews. Despite the lack of cultural edifices, the Bible contained a natural scenery, a *Kulturlandschaft*, which made the land a home to which Jews could now return. The empha-

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<sup>74</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 38.

<sup>75</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 120–124.

<sup>76</sup> Konrad Furrer, “Prof Dr. K. Furrer vor 20 Jahren ueber die Besiedlung Palaestinas durch Juden,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 34.

sis on fertility corresponded to a general turn in colonial travel reports at the end of the nineteenth century in which explorations ceased to occur in a void like in the Enlightenment era, but in fertile regions where a colony could be transplanted to.<sup>77</sup> Attempts at resolving the contradiction between tales of historical abundance and perceived present desolation were, in themselves, not unique to *Altneuland* or Jewish scholarship, but a matter of discussion among advocates of German agricultural settlement in Palestine.<sup>78</sup>

*Altneuland* could draw upon these advocates for the formation of a collective front for the colonization of Palestine. The Bible and other antique sources formed a shared gateway. Especially the accounts of Josephus Flavius were readily utilized by both Jews and non-Jews alike in *Altneuland*. Flavius reported that the land, and especially Galilea, was densely populated before Roman occupation. Warburg recounted his imagery that a bird's eye view of Galilea would have revealed only rooftops. In contrast, the current population was sparse, due in his opinion to terrible neglect which turned it into a breeding ground for disease. Warburg was extremely generous in his calculation of population potential of Palestine and its neighboring countries, fixing it at a hundred million people, significantly larger than the five million immigrants potentially available from Eastern Europe's Jewish population.<sup>79</sup> Pastor Möller of Cassel also reiterated the number five million as Flavius's reported population of Galilea. Of all places in Palestine, Galilea was considered the least affected by climate changes. Hence, the editors of *Altneuland* felt vindicated in their optimism by Flavius's reports. Galilea alone could provide enough arable land to solve the plight of Eastern European Jewry.<sup>80</sup>

Geography and theology also converged in other articles of *Altneuland* advocating Palestine's fertility. One article questioned the supposed infertility of the Sinai Desert which according to the author, Emil Dagobert Schoenfeld, stretched into Palestine's southern parts. Based on a study of local vegetation and farming methods, the author argued that the desert could have provided enough sustenance for the forty-year-long desert wandering of the Israelites. He even claimed to have discovered the biblical manna.<sup>81</sup> A study comparing rainfall in the time of the *Mishna* with contemporary data supported *Altneuland*'s argument that the climate of Palestine had not changed much. It reinforced the conclusion that not

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<sup>77</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 145.

<sup>78</sup> Goren, "Debating the Jews of Palestine," 221–222.

<sup>79</sup> Warburg, "Palästina als Kolonisationsgebiet," 7–9.

<sup>80</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 375–376.

<sup>81</sup> E. D. Schoenfeld, "Die Halbinsel Sinai: Auf Grund eigener Forschung dargestellt," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 242–244.

natural but political conditions had led to Palestine's desolate situation.<sup>82</sup> Similar images of neglected Roman reservoirs that could easily be repaired, thus restoring the successful water management of antiquity, were included in reports on the progress of the Haifa rail line. They were juxtaposed to contemporary engineering-pertinent geographic and climatic details reprinted in *Altneuland* from the official administrative organ of the German government.<sup>83</sup>

Besides historical comparisons, *Altneuland* provided rainfall statistics for Palestine which helped create – through cooperation between the CEP and the DPV – a network of meteorological stations. The DPV was already operating meteorological stations in Templer settlements. At the bequest of Warburg and Soskin, Max Blanckenhorn, who was on the board of the DPV and had been appointed by Herzl the previous year as medical climate expert in the El-Arish commission after Oppenheimer declined,<sup>84</sup> agreed to supply five or six Jewish settlements with used measurement equipment. The equipment was to remain property of the DPV. The scientific results were to be published both in *Altneuland* and in the journal of the DPV for use of all German speaking inhabitants of Palestine. Aaronson's house in Zichron Ya'akov was to become the primary meteorological station in the Jewish settlements. Blanckenhorn suggested installing a weathervane on top of the adjacent water tower or synagogue. His motivation for the cooperation was his “wish for scientific exploration and economic development of Palestine with German and Jewish labor, science and wealth.”<sup>85</sup>

Meteorological measurement in Jewish settlements commenced at the beginning of 1905 in three stations. Additionally, Blanckenhorn published extensively in *Altneuland* on the geology of Palestine and the surrounding area and gave a lecture on the matter in the Köthen seminar organized by the CEP.<sup>86</sup> Besides forecasting rainfall and improving settlement planning and crop selection, the common effort of Templer and Jewish settlement seemed to prognosticate possible scientific cooperation for the benefit of both settler groups. However, the project did not necessitate direct cooperation between these two groups. The data collected by Aaronson was not directly shared with the Templers but sent for eval-

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<sup>82</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 29; *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 223.

<sup>83</sup> *Deutsche Reichsanzeiger, Altneuland* 1 (1904): 349.

<sup>84</sup> Herzl's letters to Otto Warburg from January 21 and 22, 1903, in Herzl, *Briefe, 1903–Juli 1907*, 35–36.

<sup>85</sup> Max Blanckenhorn, “Bericht ueber die Einrichtung meteorologischer Stationen auf juedischen Kolonien in Palaestina,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 226.

<sup>86</sup> Max Blanckenhorn, “Abriss der Geologie Syriens,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 289–301 and *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 129–135; Blanckenhorn's lecture was on *Physische Landeskunde von Palästina, Altneuland* 2 (1905): 42.

uation to Blanckenhorn in Berlin and the editor of the yearbook of the k.k. Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Erdmagnetismus in Vienna.<sup>87</sup>

Natural history's testimony surpassed the scriptural connection between the Jews and the land. It bore witness to a pretextual age unveiling Palestine's centrality in mankind's evolution towards farming. According to Warburg, Aaronson's discovery that "the cultivation of this oldest and most important of all grain sorts [wild emmer] has its origin in Palestine ... even if naturally long before the immigration of the Israelites," demonstrated that the land was the cradle of agriculture.<sup>88</sup> Georg Schweinfurth, whose endorsement of the finding served as a form of independent appraisal, was not as reserved as Warburg in linking this discovery with Jewish agricultural prowess. He interpreted Aaronson's phytogeographical discovery so close to the Jewish agricultural settlement of Rosh Pina as an omen for the success of the Zionist endeavor to "return the originally so completely agricultural people, the Israelites, to their primary calling again."<sup>89</sup> Additionally, Schweinfurth emphasized that Aaronson's discovery underscored the importance of Palestine and the Jews in antiquity as a cultural bridge between great empires such as Babylon and Egypt. This reflected the contemporary role *Altneuland* claimed for Zionism between the German and the Ottoman Empires. On a methodological level it demonstrated the superiority of scientific systematic and natural evidence over scriptures for solving long-standing and seemingly unsolvable riddles.<sup>90</sup> This was an endorsement of *Altneuland's* scientific mission to promote studies of the land and its climate.

Natural science also revealed another long-forgotten secret; namely that the connection between Jews and Europeans was deeper than shared religious roots. Palestine's geography and climate made it a part of the Mediterranean. It was like Southern Europe and therefore also familiar to Europeans who did not travel with the Bible in their hands.<sup>91</sup> To the discerning scientific colonial eye, the Southern European ambience fulfilled in *Altneuland* the function of what Berman called "the unifying power of metaphor,"<sup>92</sup> the exertion of ownership not merely through conquest but through the conveyance of a European-like intimacy. Oppenheimer's racially inclined concept of the *homo mediterraneus* was often used, although not by name, to establish the bridge function of Jews between Europe and the Middle East. This function also supported the argument that Jews

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87 Blanckenhorn, "Einrichtung meteorologischer Stationen," 230.

88 Warburg, "Bericht der Palaestinakommission," 221.

89 Schweinfurth, "Die Entdeckung des wilden Urweizens," 274.

90 Schweinfurth, "Die Entdeckung des wilden Urweizens," 271–275.

91 E. g., Oetken, "Palaestinafahrt eines Landwirts," 106; *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 202.

92 Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 2.

(and other Mediterranean people) possessed a superior capability as colonists in comparison to Northern Europeans.

Warburg referred to both the coastal regions of Palestine designated for colonization and potential Jewish settlers as remarkably Mediterranean.<sup>93</sup> Even Russian Jews, he argued, had an excellent capacity to readapt to warm climates due to their racial origin from the warmest regions of the Mediterranean. To support this argument, Warburg brought examples from the persistence of Jewish colonization in South America. He claimed that Jews comprised “the only remnant of early colonization by the white race, even in genuinely tropical Surinam,” and that expelled Sephardi Jews settled the Brazilian province.<sup>94</sup> Warburg also argued that Jews, with their supposed innate autonomous striving, would make better cotton producers than Africans, whom he stigmatized as innately lazy. He added that the Mediterranean, including Palestine, would be a better place for cotton plantations than the tropics.<sup>95</sup> Warburg gave an ironic Zionist twist here to the German “sugar island fantasy” of deporting Jews to slave away on tropical islands, allegedly more appropriate to their racial inclinations, thus promoting their “civic improvement” and German colonialism simultaneously.<sup>96</sup>

Axel Preyer was another proponent of the notion that the *homo mediterraneus* would make better settlers of tropical and subtropical areas than Germans. Axel's father, William Thierry Preyer, corresponded with Charles Darwin and was a friend of Ernst Haeckel, with whom Axel Preyer was also acquainted from research expeditions to Java. Like Warburg, Preyer was interested in useful plants. He published research on tropical plants, especially cocoa, which he studied on his travels in Southeast Asia, as well as on general colonization methods. An excerpt out of a book on the latter was cited in *Altneuland*: “In so many cases attempts at artificial settlement of emigrants of German blood in the tropics or subtropics have resulted in the direst outcomes that it even seems principally questionable if a repetition of such attempts is advisable in the interest of humanity.” That did not mean that individual Germans could not partake in settler

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<sup>93</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 223; Warburg also compared Syria to Italy when talking about size, climate and population; see Warburg, “Syrien als Wirtschafts-und Kolonisationsgebiet,” 33–35.

<sup>94</sup> Warburg, “Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien,” 234.

<sup>95</sup> Warburg, “Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien,” 237–238 and 275–276. A report written by the British consul in Jerusalem advocating Palestine's suitability for cotton cultivation was recapitulated in *Altneuland* to corroborate Warburg's plan; see *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 282.

<sup>96</sup> Hess, “Johann David Michaelis and the Colonial Imaginary,” 61–93. The term “civic improvement” was initially used by Christian Wilhelm von Dohm in his blueprint for Jewish emancipation in Germany, published in 1781.

colonization. But as a people, Jews and other *homo mediterraneus* would make for better settlers:

Without a doubt, there are many individuals of the German race who are completely capable of acclimatizing to the tropics and of reproducing there without miscegenation, but these are only individuals and not emigrant transports, and in percentile ratio their number out of all racial kinsmen is certainly very small. This ratio is substantially favorable to dark-haired Southern Europeans, especially the Romance people and the Jews.<sup>97</sup>

## Healing a Degenerate Land and Nation

Similar metaphors and images were used to describe the land of Palestine and the Jewish people. For example, the attribution of Jewish inferiority to social alienation and neglect of bodily cultivation was reflected in the argument about the bareness of Palestine resulting from lack of cultivation. Similarly, the imagery of sickness used to describe the Jewish diasporic predicament was also used to describe the malaria-ridden land. The juxtaposition implied that it was painful separation of the people from their land that brought about the dire condition of both. Accordingly, the replanting of Jews in their land would lead to mutual healing, transforming the Jews into a nation like other European nations in the process. It is in this sense that Sandra Sufian, a specialist on the history of medicine, has translated the Zionist term *havra'at hakarka ve'hayishuv* as “healing the land and the nation.”<sup>98</sup>

“Three themes held particular relevance with regard to Zionist health concerns (including malaria),” Sufian writes, “the transformation of the Jewish people, images of the land of Palestine, and the perceived political and developmental status of the indigenous Arab population.”<sup>99</sup> All three were at the essence of *Altneuland*'s gaze on Palestine. Describing malaria as a socially and environmentally determined disease formed a prism through which alleged Jewish racial inferiority could be challenged.<sup>100</sup> The topics of hygiene and disease, and of racial immunity and susceptibility, enabled contemplation on the in-betweenness of Jews between Europeans and indigenous populations. “As the discourse of hy-

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<sup>97</sup> Axel Preyer, “Explorierung und Verwertung von Laendereien: Meliorations- und Kolonisations-Gesellschaften,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 300–301.

<sup>98</sup> Sandra Marlene Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation: Malaria and the Zionist Project in Palestine, 1920–1947* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 14.

<sup>99</sup> Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation*, 13.

<sup>100</sup> Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation*, 23.

giene demonstrates,” Dafna Hirsch writes, “on the one hand, East European Jews, who were orientalized by West European Jews and Christians, could appear as immigrants from Europe or from the West who brought civilization from Occident to Orient.”<sup>101</sup> Additionally, by discussing successes in battling malaria and other local epidemics in Palestine, *Altneuland* advanced its practical Zionist agenda of small-scale settlement without a charter. It emphasized that colonization that did necessitate sovereignty or coordinated state intervention.

Some of the main contributions to *Altneuland* on nosological matters came from the feather of Aron Sandler. Sandler was born in 1879 in an Orthodox family in Posen. He studied medicine in Königsberg and was a supporter of the practical Zionists at the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903. He visited Palestine for the first time in 1907 and moved there in 1934 after many years of Zionist activity in Berlin.<sup>102</sup> With the support of other *Altneuland* protagonists, Sandler became a key figure in founding primary medical institutions in Palestine, such as the Pasteur Institute for Hygiene established in 1913. Despite the name’s reference, the institute was not strongly connected with the network of Pasteur institutes and the larger French medical colonial framework. Rather, it was part of a collaboration between German and Jewish scientists embodying the entanglement of German colonialism and Zionism in Palestine. Leo Böhm, the head of the institute, was trained both in the Pasteur institute in his hometown of Kharokov and the Institute for Tropical Medicine in Hamburg. He added the dedication to Pasteur, despite resistance from Warburg, then president of the ZO, and without permission from the Pasteur headquarters in Paris in 1916.<sup>103</sup>

Central in the founding of the institute was the Gesellschaft jüdischer Ärzte und Naturwissenschaftler für sanitäre Interessen in Palestine [Society of Jewish Physicians and Natural Scientists for Sanitary Interests in Palestine], which was headed by Sandler and included Warburg and Oppenheimer among its more than 140 members. They collaborated with the Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Malaria [German Society for the Struggle against Malaria] in Jerusalem and Nathan Strauss’s Jewish Health Bureau to establish the Misrad Kol Leumi le’Havra’at Yerhushala’yim [International Office for the Healing of Jerusalem]. The institute was comprised of four departments. The malaria department

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**101** Dafna Hirsch, “‘We Are Here to Bring the West, Not Only to Ourselves’: Zionist Occidentalism and the Discourse of Hygiene in Mandate Palestine,” *Intentional Journal of Middle East Studies* 41 (2009): 590.

**102** Harold M. Blumberg, “The First Scientific Medical Institute in Palestine: Extracts from the Unpublished Memoirs of Dr. Aron Sandler,” *Journal of Israeli History* 16 (1995): 209.

**103** Nadav Davidovitch and Rakefet Zalashik, “Pasteur in Palestine: The Politics of the Laboratory,” *Science in Context* 23 (2010): 403 and 411.



was commissioned by the Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Malaria headed by Peter Mühlens from the Institute for Tropical Medicine. Böhm headed the serums and rabies treatment department commissioned by Sandler's association. Another two departments were commissioned by the Strauss Foundation.

German influence within the new institution was heatedly debated, especially since it was founded during intense conflict around the intended use of German as the main language at the Technikum (later Technion) in Haifa, which was founded by the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden. Contributors to *Altneuland*, which strongly advocated for cooperation with German scientific associations such as the DPV, were now split on this issue. While Aaronson and Sandler considered German involvement as detrimental to the creation of independent Jewish institutions, Warburg defended it with arguments of financial expediency and scientific professionalism.<sup>104</sup> It is arguable whether this was the only reason for Warburg's support for German involvement. He most probably did not perceive a clear demarcation between "German" and "Jewish" when talking about some of the German institutions or in his own Zionist activity. This lack of clear boundaries was also demonstrated by others such as James Simon who headed the Hilfsverein and was treasurer of the Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Malaria.<sup>105</sup> It was precisely this desire for clear demarcation lines that fueled the generational conflict within German Zionism that will be discussed in the next chapter.

According to Sandler, Palestine and the Middle East were nosologically distinguishable from Northern Europe through four diseases: malaria, dysentery, trachoma and leprosy. Articles by Sandler and others deal with Malaria in Africa, but also in countries in Southern Europe such as in Italy,<sup>106</sup> thus embracing the affinity between Palestine and the European Mediterranean region and, by implication, between Jews and Southern Europeans – Oppenheimer's *homo mediterraneus*. Sandler did not share the optimism of *Altneuland*'s editors that swamp drainage, combined with yet unimplemented methods, had and could noticeably alleviate malaria within a short time span.<sup>107</sup> Warburg emphasized that malaria depended not only on climate but also on the level of culture: "Every cultural regression, collapse and pauperization increases the sickness ... new cultural advancement drives back Malaria everywhere, though unable

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**104** Davidovitsch and Zalashik, "Pasteur in Palestine," 408–409.

**105** Davidovitsch and Zalashik, "Pasteur in Palestine," 409.

**106** Aron Sandler, "Die Malaria in Jerusalem," *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 82; *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 318–319.

**107** The editorials based their argument on new developments in the battle against malaria in Palestine and around the globe, e.g., *Altneuland* 1 (1904), 190–191.



to totally eradicate it.”<sup>108</sup> Sandler considered the costs of progress to be too high for anything but long-term efforts. Only in Jerusalem did he advocate taking immediate action. There Jews made up the bulk of the population, he noted, and thus suffered the most from the disease. Additionally, he argued, the necessary hygienic measures and sewage investment could be completed with reasonable costs.<sup>109</sup>

Sandler preferred to focus on diseases such as trachoma and leprosy, posing questions typical of *Altneuland's* agenda of noncharter settlement: could prevention and treatment be effective without central state power? Could independent small colonies have the same effectiveness in treating eye infection through compulsory means that Germany and other European states had enjoyed? Sandler's answers were obviously affirmative. According to Sandler, through hygienic education and practice alone the number of infections in a Jewish settlement close to Jaffa measured one-half percent, while the Arab population was infected at a level of 60 percent. As a social disease there was a close relationship between poverty and contamination. The infection rates with leprosy were even more ethnically disparate. According to Sandler there were no cases of Europeans or Jews contracting the disease in Palestine, not even the staff at treatment and isolation centers. This raised the question of a possibility of racial immunity in which Jews and Europeans were placed together on one side of the racial demarcation line vis-à-vis Arabs. No matter what the source of the low infection rates was, the diseases were dismissed because they posed almost no threat for Jewish and European colonization. Yet Sandler cautioned against rash conclusions until the effects of hygiene and nonracial hereditary disposition had been sufficiently investigated. In both cases, Sandler derided the locals for their superstitious confidence in wandering healers and women, as well as their aversion to and doubt of European physicians. These were, in his opinion, major hindrances for progress.<sup>110</sup>

Sandler, who at this point had not yet visited Palestine, could be included in the “Zionist medical professionals,” who “persisted in their belief in human acclimatization, alongside a fastening of racial difference between Arab and Jewish populations.”<sup>111</sup> Yet the editors of *Altneuland* downplayed the constructed difference. They interceded in Sandler's narrative, claiming, without quoting supportive sources, that a radical change had recently occurred. The locals had over-

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108 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 223.

109 Sandler, “Die Malaria in Jerusalem,” 82–83.

110 Aron Sandler, “Das Trachom in Palaestina,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 162–170; Aron Sandler, “Die Lepra in Palaestina,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 73–79.

111 Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation*, 42.

come their prejudice of science. The acceptance of European doctors among the locals was supposedly on the rise, especially when it came to eye treatment.<sup>112</sup> The editors were trying to uphold the journal's optimism about the potential of European science to gain recognition by local populations as an improvement in their lives. This would be an important vehicle in deepening acceptance for Jewish colonization.

A further aspect of the colossal mission to transform Palestine's barren, swampy, disease-ridden land was that such an endeavor required massive public investment before becoming suitable for private investors. According to Warburg, private investors would, in the meantime, be better off investing capital in Jewish colonization schemes in Argentina, Canada or even Russia.<sup>113</sup> In his opinion, only European intervention in the form of transport infrastructure development and governmental pressure on the Ottoman administration to make reforms could prompt population growth, as had been the case in Lebanon, where he believed that European-induced reforms in the 1860s had rejuvenated a land ravaged by violent conflict between Druze and Christian Maronites.<sup>114</sup> By making use of the biased differentiation between an active West and passive East many Jewish and non-Jewish contributors to *Altneuland* argued that without active European – which included Jewish – intervention, local authorities would not awaken from their fatalistic passivity towards disease and poverty.<sup>115</sup>

The reference to other Jewish colonization schemes was also important in establishing precedence for Jewish agricultural prowess. Although *Altneuland* argued that land and nation were best healed together, it also saw the transformation of the Jewish people as already having begun outside of Palestine, wherever Jews became farmers. Coverage of Jewish agricultural settlements in *Altneuland* was broad and included all sorts of various climatic conditions such as North and South America, Russia, Palestine, Anatolia, Cyprus, etc. It included reproduced reports by the Russian administration, which were considered relatively objective since the regime was purportedly highly antisemitic. One was a report by seven Russian governors on experiments in deploying Jews as farmers. While the results were not unanimous, the emphasis was on the positive evaluation of a governor known for his antisemitism. The obvious conclusion was that Jews could become farmers.<sup>116</sup> A reprinted review by a member of the Russian state

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112 Sandler, "Das Trachom in Palaestina," 164.

113 Warburg, "Palästina als Kolonisationsgebiet," 3.

114 Warburg, "Syrien als Wirtschafts- und Kolonisationsgebiet," 40.

115 E. g., Sandler, "Die Malaria in Jerusalem," 81; Oetken, "Palaestinafahrt eines Landwirts," 99.

116 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 58.

council for the Russian agricultural ministry elevated the success of agricultural settlements of Russian Jews in Argentina and estimated its added value at nine million pounds sterling.<sup>117</sup>

Statistics and evaluation of the extent of Jewish agricultural efforts in Russia published by the Alliance Israélite Universelle were also reprinted in *Altneuland*. A total of 150,000 Jews in 289 settlements were sustaining themselves from agriculture. The vast majority of estate owners and leaseholders did the agricultural labor themselves.<sup>118</sup> According to Furrer, these Russian-Jewish farmers should easily be able to adapt to the climate of Palestine, not because of their Mediterranean racial composition but because they were used to the heat of the Southern Russian steppe. Eastern European Jews were consequently oriental due to their Russian origins and not necessarily their Jewish ones. Pastor Furrer supplemented his argument with a theological element; a part of the Jewish national myth, the story of the Exodus, was a voluntary transformation from slaves to farmers that would best serve the Jews in their current transformation.<sup>119</sup>

Russian colonization methods served as an example of Jewish potential but were not considered a model to be transplanted to Palestine. On the contrary, as Daniel Pasmanik argued in *Altneuland*, their flaws, and especially the unsustainability of private agricultural settlements, were expected to be remedied in Zionist settlement. Without constant land expansion farmers bequeathed increasingly smaller parcels to their children. This would lead to rural pauperization and impede future intensification of labor. For Pasmanik, the solution was not to say, “we should colonize the way the whole world colonizes,” but to adopt new and innovative techniques for the colonization of Palestine, such as Oppenheimer’s settlement cooperative.<sup>120</sup>

Innovative Jewish colonization was not limited to Palestine. A Brazilian German language newspaper was cited on the efforts to establish the first agricultural settlement of the JCA in Brazil in 1904, which was named after the organ-

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117 *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 151–153.

118 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 283–285.

119 Furrer, “Besiedlung Palaestinas durch Juden,” 35 and 39.

120 Daniel Pasmanik, “Juedische Privatwirtschaftliche Ackerbaukolonien,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 79–83, citation on p. 79. During the Sixth Zionist Congress, Pasmanik made a motion to establish the CEP together with Arthur Hantke. At the congress, Pasmanik was apprehensive of solely applying Oppenheimer’s cooperative model, because it was not yet adequately tested. As an admirer of English colonization methods, Pasmanik demanded that Oppenheimer allow for more private initiatives within the settlement cooperative. See *Verhandlungen des VI. Zionisten-Congresses*, 270 and 312–313. However, in *Altneuland* Pasmanik demonstrated a deeper appreciation for Oppenheimer’s liberal socialism and its potential to appeal to both capitalists and Marxists who recognized Marxism’s shortcomings regarding agricultural programs.

ization's director, Franz Philippson. The newspaper of the small ethnic German community awaited the result with suspense: "On the one hand, because this experiment will reveal whether the Jew, after a thousand-year-long withdrawal from farming activity, still possesses the necessary characteristics for it today. On the other hand, in case the latter was proved to be existent, the enterprise would contribute greatly to the heatedly disputed issue of enclosure colonization." Since enclosures were considered more expensive to cultivate than jungle lands, this first attempt at Jewish agricultural settlement in Brazil was a path-breaking and instructive experiment. This contribution to international scientific exchange on colonization issues was warmly endorsed by the editors of *Altneuland*. However, in a footnote they emphasized that the Jews' agricultural capability had already been proven without a doubt.<sup>121</sup>

Soskin was an advocate of adopting more systematic European and American colonization methods.<sup>122</sup> As an example, he quoted Karl Kaeger on the mistakes in the colonization of Chile, including the choice of lazy urbanized settlers.<sup>123</sup> This, he argued, could be interpreted as alluding to the deployment of urban Jewish populations for settlement. However, according to *Altneuland*, younger settlers – but also those advanced in years – showed determination and flexibility in their successful transformation into farmers, although it "seemed almost inconceivable" to experts.<sup>124</sup> Soskin's main message was that the challenge facing Zionist colonization were not specifically Jewish.<sup>125</sup>

The fact that there were similarities in the composition of settlers, among other things, between Zionist and other European settlement schemes enabled Zionist technocrats to use knowledge created in other colonization enterprises. The fact that Jewish settlement were discussed in the same breath as other European settlement projects created a place for Jews among the colonizing nations of Europe. Articles from non-Jewish papers praising the competence of Jewish agricultural pioneers and recognizing Jewish settlements as European penetration into the wilderness were gladly reprinted even when factually flawed.<sup>126</sup> Colonial methods were not unilaterally transmitted from Germany or Europe to Zionism. Jews were not merely consumers of a global corpus of colonial knowl-

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121 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 314–316.

122 Soskin, "'Gross' und 'Klein'-Kolonisation," 137.

123 Soskin, "'Gross' und 'Klein'-Kolonisation," 131–132.

124 Soskin referred not only to the capability to farm but also to dealing with systematic changes in farming methods; see Soskin, "Zum neuen Jahr," 3.

125 Soskin, "'Gross' und 'Klein'-Kolonisation," 131–132.

126 E.g., *Altneuland* 3 (1905): 85. The editors naturally commented on the flaws, as expected from a scientific journal.

edge but active contributors as well. *Altneuland* invited other European nations to learn from the alleged success of settling an urbanized Jewish population as farmers in different climatic conditions. Most notably, Zionism's agricultural settlement of Jewish urban proletariat could serve as a model for advocates of German "inner colonization" as a remedy for the universal social question.

## German Education for the Jewish Nation

The entanglement of Zionist and German imperial goals also impacted discussions on the orientation of Jewish schools in Palestine. The Jewish transformation and nation-building process required the establishment of a national education system. There were some attempts in *Altneuland* to sketch this system. Foreshadowing British educational policy towards Palestine's Arab population during the mandate,<sup>127</sup> these schemes aimed at curbing the creation of an intellectual, urban elite among the "natives," which in this case meant Jewish natives and settlers. The role ascribed in *Altneuland* to the Palestinian Jew was as a farmer or craftsman and not an agronomist or administrator. The administrative elite should come from Europe. *Altneuland* thus argued that Jewish settlers should not be sent for education abroad, where they would be exposed to the temptations of European cities from which they may not return. It was preferable to bring non-Jewish experts to provide training in Palestine. The infeasibility of recruiting such experts due to high costs and lack of motivation was largely ignored by the contributors to *Altneuland*. This critic was however articulated in reprints of reports by other organizations such as the Anglo-Palestine Company.<sup>128</sup>

The establishment of Jewish schools also provided a platform for cooperation between Zionists and non-Zionists, another goal of *Altneuland*. The CEP cooperated with the Bulgarian artist Boris Schatz, the Hilfsverein and other German Jewish organizations to found Bezalel in Jerusalem.<sup>129</sup> Influenced by the anti-industrial Arts and Crafts movement, the school taught handicrafts to low-income city dwellers dependent on philanthropy. The founders considered

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**127** Based on their experience in Egypt, India and West Africa, British colonial administrators feared that literary education would produce masses of unemployed clerks and trigger a rural exodus; see Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine, 1917–1948* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 156–157.

**128** *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 88.

**129** For a more comprehensive list of organizations including their contributions, see "Bericht des 'Bezalel': Verein zur Verbreitung von Kunstgewerbe und Hausindustrie in Palästina und den Nachbarländern," *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 310–311.

the prospects of a rapid industrialization of Palestine as extremely low. Additionally, they regarded the target group of intellectual religious Jews to be unsuitable for industrial labor.<sup>130</sup> According to Oppenheimer, who was a strong advocate of the Arts and Crafts movement, handicrafts were the next step after agriculture in intensifying labor in the settlement cooperative. It could also provide additional income during the winter months, especially for women and children.

Bezalel looked to connect to indigenous manufacturing fields with an oriental flair like carpet making. It also strived to develop economic sectors like tourism, which was growing and diversifying including low-budget Russian pilgrims and gradually also well-to-do German, English and American pilgrims. The new middle-class pilgrims supposedly had a more sophisticated taste, preferring more elaborate souvenirs and icons than the olive wood cuttings produced by the indigenous population. Thus, tourism, which was regarded as key to extending German influence in Palestine, would also serve Jewish economic growth. Schatz hoped that with increasing popularity, memorabilia might even grow to become an export branch providing ornaments for churches and synagogues throughout the world. For this purpose, Bezalel should “develop an artistic style appropriate to the country and its history. In the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, as well as in the wonderful motif that were discovered in recent excavations of synagogues, churches and mosques, we find inspiration and models in abundance that are only waiting to be researched and adopted to be used in arts and crafts.”<sup>131</sup> This new Palestinian style was not supposed to be rooted solely in Jewish tradition, but to reflect and incorporate ongoing scientific discoveries in the Middle East.

Schatz’s vision was supported by other founders of Bezalel, among them German modern Orthodox Zionists such as the artist Hermann Struck and Hirsch Hildesheimer, teacher at the Berlin Orthodox Rabbinerseminar and son of Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer, leader of the city’s Modern Orthodox community. They did not openly oppose the first institute of Jewish national art promoting a hybrid artistic style rooted in the multireligious history and geography of the Holy Land, and even creating idols for Christians.<sup>132</sup> Despite traditional Jewish anicon-

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**130** “Bericht des ‘Bezalel,’” 307–309.

**131** Boris Schatz et al., “‘Bezalel’: Gesellschaft zur Begründung jüdischer Hausindustrien und Kunstgewerbe in Palästina,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905), 12–13, translation in Inka Bertz, “Trouble at the Bezalel: Conflicting Visions of Zionism and Art,” in *Nationalism, Zionism and Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews in 1900 and Beyond*, ed. Michael Berkowitz (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), 263.

**132** Shortly after Bezalel’s founding, the Berlin-based administration withdrew their support for the promotion of a unique Oriental-Palestinian style due to changing tastes in Berlin towards functional and unobtrusive designs, and owing to the intended appeal to a non-Jewish clientele.

ism sculptors created human images at Bezalel, albeit not explicitly religious icons. Carpets produced in Bezalel were adorned with Hebrew calligraphy inspired from Arabic ornamentation.<sup>133</sup>

The interreligious hybridity of Schatz's vision was, however, missing from the eyewitness account of the Hungarian Orthodox Rabbi Lazar Grünhut, an advocate of professional education for Jerusalem's religious community. The carpets that he observed were supposedly designed with exclusively Jewish motifs.<sup>134</sup> What Grünhut did notice was a hybridity of Germanness and Jewishness. His description of his visit to Bezalel was saturated with the German cultural mission of education to ensure punctual and obedient work, "the national pedagogical task" which served to justify German colonization in Africa.<sup>135</sup> In fact, Grünhut made a reference to African laziness that could be understood as an allegorical reference to the black draped ultraorthodox community of Jerusalem. Upon passing the hostel for Ethiopian pilgrims, which was a part of the complex built by the Ethiopian emperor Menelik II for his third wife Empress Tayto in which Bezalel initially resided, he remarked: "There further the dwelling house of the 'blacks' who the whole day bravely withstand the scorching rays cowering silently on the terrace; further to the east – how the whole scenery changes with one strike!" The change occurred once the traveler entered Bezalel through the portal, which he described as having a dual inscription in Hebrew and in German. Inside he saw Orthodox Jews with side locks silently laboring and punctually following the instructions of the teacher. They adopted German discipline without having to change their religious convictions, thus dispelling a major fear among the Jerusalem Orthodox community of exposure to nonreligious education.<sup>136</sup>

The fact that the religious community and its leaders accepted Bezalel – not banning it like they did other nonreligious schools – was emphasized in *Altneuland*. All accounts repeated the story of how four hundred women competed for the forty-five available openings in the spinnery and the crying and disappointment of those that were refused. It seemed that the key was discovered to imbuing the Orthodox Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem with a German work ethos,

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The school's director, Boris Schatz, disdained this meddling in his art and aesthetic style. He felt that his mission to define Jewish national art from Jerusalem was foiled by subjecting it to German preferences and commercial considerations; see Bertz, "Trouble at the Bezalel," 267–278.

133 "Bericht des 'Bezalel,'" 315–317.

134 *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 184.

135 The German educational mission was formulated by Friedrich Farbi in his treatise *Koloniale Aufgaben* published in 1885; see Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 198.

136 *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 184–185.



thus rescuing talented Jews from “perishing unrecognized in the *yeshiva* like so many other talents.”<sup>137</sup>

Heinrich Loewe developed an education program for village schools rooted in the agricultural elements of biblical and Talmudic works, as well as pertinent material from natural science. Loewe was wary of repeating what he considered to be mistakes of oriental schools, meaning European-run schools focusing on a humanistic curriculum. He regarded humanistic education, especially in village schools, as counterproductive for an underdeveloped country like Palestine. For him, the only schools avoiding this mistake were the local religious Muslim schools. Loewe argued that the secondary school of Mikve Israel funded by the Alliance Israélite Universelle was already focusing on physical, instead of intellectual capabilities, in selecting its pupils for training as Jewish farmers. However, he disapproved of the instruction language being French.<sup>138</sup> Among German Zionists, Loewe was most fervent in his dedication to the Hebrew language, introducing it as spoken language in his Berlin home. Some contemporaries considered him the only Hebrew-speaking German Zionist of his generation.<sup>139</sup> Loewe advocated for the language of instruction in village schools to be Hebrew, as it already was in many of the Yishuv’s schools. In his opinion, the only foreign language taught at the village school should be Arabic to improve relationships with local business partners, workers and authorities. Loewe assumed that children growing up in the countryside already understood enough Arabic, so that learning the language would not strain them.<sup>140</sup>

Loewe also advanced an education plan for urban schools in which the question of language played an important role. The aim, in the context of building a European nation, was to create Hebrew-speaking citizens who are “on the same level as simple citizens of European states with the best public-school education as in Denmark, Saxony and Holland.”<sup>141</sup> He wanted urban schools to facilitate the creation of a Jewish middle class that could adjust to the dynamics of a developing economy. He also expected them to educate Hebrew citizens who would be, on the one hand, free individuals who act in full respect for the public interest and, on the other, were steeped in Hebrew literature, culture and ethics, but not religion. Loewe criticized the prevalent humanist-oriented schools for not imparting the necessary values for citizenship and being totally westernized.

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137 “Bericht des ‘Bezalel,’” 316–320.

138 *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 244–245.

139 Frank Schlöffel, *Heinrich Loewe: Zionistische Netzwerke und Räume* (Berlin: Neofelis Verlag, 2018), 278–279.

140 Heinrich Loewe, “Die Dorfschule in Palestina,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 72–73.

141 Heinrich Loewe, “Die Stadtschule in Palaestina,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 73.



Arabic and Turkish should also be taught in urban schools, he argued, to accommodate the needs of daily life and basic business. Only pupils from Arabic or Turkish speaking homes were to be giving a more advanced language education to groom them for occupying the few low-level government positions that might become available. European languages should be taught according to regional necessity. Loewe recommended German for Haifa, English for Jerusalem and all “three main European languages of commerce” for Jaffa. In accordance with contemporary trends, Loewe wanted the schools to be coed, except for gymnastics and arts and crafts. The pupils would be expected to learn business and trade tools, as well as technical drawing for a future fashion industry. Besides a commonplace colonial aversion against training elites, Loewe’s educational suggestions are steeped in the negative stereotypes of the Jew. He highlighted the need for – as well as fear of – aesthetic education involving music, playfulness, fantasy and fairy tales, as well as bodily training for a people who for two millennia forgot they had a body.<sup>142</sup>

*Altneuland* included not only descriptions of ideal schools, but also a somewhat sobering report by Rabbi Grünhut on the current situation of Jewish schools in Jerusalem. Grünhut moved to Jerusalem in 1892 to head the city’s Jewish orphanage which was supported by the Verein zur Erziehung jüdischer Weisen in Palästina [Association for the Education of Jewish Orphans in Palestine] and German Modern Orthodox circles with whom Grünhut had been associated since his studies in Berlin. Grünhut praised the progress in education facilities, one of which he directed, due to the efforts of German philanthropic organizations that already incorporated professional arts and crafts education in the curriculum. However, the local Jewish leadership charged with distributing the *haluka*, alms from Jews overseas, as well as with supporting Jewish educational institutes, resisted the new establishments and imposed a ban on them. Nevertheless, they flourished. The dire economic situation in Jerusalem exposed the dangers of relying on philanthropy. Grünhut credited German organizations with taking an emancipatory approach in their focus on professional training.<sup>143</sup>

Warburg saw another benefit in German-Jewish institutions, beyond their contribution to a sustainable economy. These institutions were embedded in a more comprehensive imperial network, enabling the aspiring colonial powers of Germany and Austria to officially back them. The presence of German diplomats at festive celebrations in the German-Jewish institutions awakened hope

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<sup>142</sup> Loewe, “Die Stadtschule in Palaestina,” 65–73.

<sup>143</sup> Lazar Grünhut, “Die juedischen Wohltaetigkeitsanstalten Jerusalems,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 135–141.

that Germany would extend its protections to the Jews in Palestine the way it already had for Catholics.<sup>144</sup> Especially the Hilfsverein regarded itself as advancing German economic and foreign policy interests, while helping modernize Eastern European Jewry.<sup>145</sup>

Both Loewe's and Grünhut's reports were corroborated through an "external" report by Otto Eberhard who was principal of the primary and vocational schools in Zarrentin in the German province of Mecklenburg. Eberhard was invited to deliver an expert talk on schools in Palestine at the Köthen lectures in 1906. He spent time researching the subject during his stay at Das deutsche evangelische Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes. Eberhard shared Zionism's agricultural emphasis and disdain for philanthropic undertakings. He urged Zionists to adopt agricultural education, even in city schools, since farming was the essence of Jewish pioneering in Palestine. He also praised the efforts to establish Hebrew as the language of instruction, thus ending the "language confusion of the Orient" which, according to him, was at its apex among the Jews. The resurrection of Hebrew as a spoken language created an opportunity for cooperation between Jewish and German institutions in Palestine. This was demonstrated by the cooperation between Gustaf Dalman, director of Das deutsche evangelische Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes, and the teachers' training seminar of the Hilfsverein in Jerusalem, which adapted Prussian teaching standards to teaching Hebrew and Arabic. With Dalman as an advisor, and at the initiative of David Yellin, the teachers' seminary was developing "a uniform pronunciation of Hebrew which corresponds to the character of Semitic languages, especially Arabic."<sup>146</sup> Together Zionist and German philologists and educators asserted their intellectual authority over the character of the Orient and the integration of Jews into it.

Eberhard recommended that at least Ashkenazi schools in Palestine should also provide German lessons. First, since their "jargon is a German dialect despite all mutilations," it would be easier to learn than English or French. Second, because Jewish literature of the nineteenth century was supposedly written predominantly in German. And third, since Germany's economic role in the Orient was growing, they would derive from it "next to the intellectual also an excellent practical profit." Eberhard did not consider Jews to be merely passive benefactors of German culture. The teachers' seminary of the Hilfsverein had an active role in "asserting the German language as the dominating European one in

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**144** Warburg, "Deutsche Kolonisations-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturbestrebungen," 269–275.

**145** Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 37–38.

**146** Otto Eberhard, "Jugendpflege: Schul- und Erziehungsverhältnisse in Jerusalem," *Altneu-land* 2 (1905): 329–342.

the Orient.” Eberhard wanted the school to provide teachers for the founding of further German-Jewish schools in the Middle East and North Africa to compete with the French speaking schools of the Alliance. In so doing German Jews would hopefully “pull themselves together, freeing themselves from the influence of foreign organizations and turning their love and support to German association work.” According to Eberhard, the cooperation could serve German imperial interests while simultaneously facilitating the parting of Jews and Germans, despite their affinity, by helping Jews find their own place in the world as Semites.<sup>147</sup>

Warburg also envisioned that graduates of Bezalel would teach arts and crafts in “various Jewish centers of the Orient,” albeit without explicitly imbuing them with a German imperial mission.<sup>148</sup> And, in fact, Bezalel did provide advanced training to teachers from all over Palestine and Syria.<sup>149</sup> In conclusion, *Altneuland's* educational schemes aimed to create the future citizens of a European nation of Hebrews in Palestine. This required a transformation of Eastern European immigrants as well as local religious Jews. In their plans, *Altneuland's* authors referred to European schools and methods. They adapted German concepts of educating citizens with ideals of “inner colonization,” i.e., alleviating the situation of the urban proletariat. The entanglement of Jewish educational plans with German ways of thinking also turned into an entanglement with German imperialism as a means win over support of German officials for Jewish colonization, as wells as to establish Jews as intermediaries to Europe above their former oriental kin.

## A Place among the Semites

“We are a factor with which the other inhabitants of the land have to reckon,” wrote Soskin in the opening of the second volume of *Altneuland*.<sup>150</sup> Well aware that Jewish settlement of Palestine was not happening in a vacuum and that Jews were still a minority in Palestine, just as they were in Europe, the writers of *Altneuland* imagined a place for themselves not only in Europe and among European settlers but also in the Orient among Druse, Bedouins, Circassians, Maronites, Kurds and others. According to Warburg, the physical and economic

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**147** Eberhard, “Jugendpflege,” 342; Otto Eberhard, “Nochmals Jugendpflege,” *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 130–132.

**148** Warburg, “Bericht der Palaestinakommission,” 227.

**149** “Bericht des ‘Bezalel,’” 318.

**150** Soskin, “Zum neuen Jahr,” 1.

study of colonization areas also encompassed “the depiction of the population in terms of their racial belonging, their religions, their history and their usability for colonial aims.”<sup>151</sup> This utilitarian focus was not a characteristic trait of the nascent German anthropology of Palestine. It was not directed at colonial administration, like its British and French counterparts, but at developing a nonscriptural “biblical archeology” based on contemporary observation of indigenous populations and their vernacular. These observations were tainted with European racial biases and romantic disregard for urban life and manifestations of modernity.<sup>152</sup>

Generally speaking, colonial discourse produced a “notion of absolute difference, which may be occasionally fascinating but more typically beneath contempt.”<sup>153</sup> For example, Charles Thomas Wilson, who was a missionary of the Church Missionary Society in British East Africa and Palestine for many years, and whose book *Peasant Life in the Holy Land* was uncritically quoted in *Altneuland*. Wilson’s book asserted that Jews were clearly different than the locals. They were “strangers in their own land, immigrants from Europe and other parts of the globe, who bring the language, garb and ideas of the lands in which they have lived so long.” Wilson and his *Altneuland* reviewer thereby placed the locals in a historical hierarchical relationship to the Jews returning to reclaim their land. In the words of the *Altneuland* reviewer of Wilson’s book, the local farmers were “former slaves of the Jews and other conquering races.”<sup>154</sup>

According to Wilson, indigenous groups were not the key to understanding biblical Jews, but rather to understanding the former inhabitants before the biblical conquest of the land. At most they represented aberrations of the Jewish people, as in the case of the Druse whose religion Wilson regarded as a remnant of the calf cult. Although local farmers did not all share the same religion, Reverend Wilson lumped them all together, including Christians, as superstitious and immoral, distrustful of their own family members. He ridiculed the practice of creating complex dependencies by sharing ownership of land and animals and its comparison by the locals to the trade in women as wives. He wrote: “This false kinship is very bothersome for a European, therefore as soon as possible I bought the rest of the shares.”<sup>155</sup> The reviewer’s choice to conclude with this quote insinuated an unbridgeable difference between the Jewish-European

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151 Sandler, “Die Coethener Kurse für koloniale Technik,” 104.

152 Philipp, “Deutsche Forschung zum zeitgenössischen Palästina,” 220–221.

153 Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 81.

154 *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 255.

155 *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 255–256.

colonizer and the Palestinian peasant. It expressed the wish for total possession of the land and renouncement of all fantasies of Semitic alliances.

Fantasies of total domination and lump generalizations of the local population were, however, not the general tendency of *Altneuland*. None of the local populations were considered innate enemies or allies of Jewish colonization. The accounts were predominantly descriptive. Indigenous populations were scrutinized with the lens of natural history and as an exotic object of observation.<sup>156</sup> In contrast to the typical disregard of locals in the German era of “second discovery,”<sup>157</sup> in Zionist studies locals were present from an early stage. The scientific conquest of Palestine, in contrast to the prior theological one, claimed to bestow great benefits both for colonizer and the local. There was awareness for contemporary colonization trends within the Ottoman Empire and especially in Palestine, where Germans were the majority of Christian-European settlers – some of which contributed greatly to a nascent *Palästinakunde*.<sup>158</sup>

Friedrich Oetken drew attention in *Altneuland* to the complexity of discerning between native and stranger in such a dynamic environment of migration. While he clearly considered Druse and Circassians to be strangers, he argued that Jews could be viewed as returning locals. Nevertheless, he clustered Templar and Jewish settlements together in his report on foreign colonies saying anything else about the Circassian and Druse settlements.<sup>159</sup> Although the concept of return was ideologically predominant, Jewish settlers were generally treated as distinct from local culture and an agent of its well-disposed transformation and eventual annihilation.<sup>160</sup>

In *Altneuland*, Jews had a special mission, not only when it came to the land of Palestine, but also to its inhabitants. Soskin quoted the conclusion of Valentin Schwöbel’s report to the DPV that Palestine could once again become “God’s garden” if the population were to be awakened from its slumber by Western culture. Soskin added to this conclusion that since there were not enough people to fully cultivate the land, the Jews can fill that gap as a “new vigorous cultural ele-

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156 Kaiser, *Palästina – Erez Israel*, 120.

157 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 171–172.

158 Haim Goren, “‘Undoubtedly, the Best Connoisseur of Jerusalem in Our Times’: Conrad Schick als ‘Palästina Wissenschaftler,’” in *Palaestina exploranda: Studien zur Erforschung Palästinas im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert anlässlich des 125jährigen Bestehens des Deutschen Vereins zur Erforschung Palästinas*, ed. Ulrich Hübner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 105.

159 Oetken, “Palaestinafahrt eines Landwirts,” 169–170.

160 By Gustaf Dalman for example; see Philipp, “Deutsche Forschung zum zeitgenössischen Palästina,” 222.

ment.”<sup>161</sup> There was a certain tension in *Altneuland* between the acknowledgement of the existence of a local population and the promulgation of the country’s emptiness. An edited review of Flinder Petrie’s history of the Sinai Peninsula focused on Petrie’s thesis that the ancient Israelites were much fewer in number than conventional interpretations claim. Yet, according to Petrie, they traveled through sparsely inhabited lands with Semitic traditions which facilitated the assimilation of the tribes they encountered into the Hebrew people. In Petrie’s eyes, Moses’s law was not exclusive to Jews but comprised pansemitic elements facilitating the assimilation process. This historical account was imbued with a contemporary relevance through the fossilization of the native into seven-thousand-year-old stone statues discovered by Petrie: “You can see how the king armed with a club beats a Bedouin chief who is ducking his head, and whose facial features ..., as Petrie observed, have great affinity with the current chiefs of the area.”<sup>162</sup>

In his sociological treatises, Oppenheimer observed the significance of travel for the “social process.” Quoting Alfred Vierkandt, an ethnologist and fellow cofounder of the DGS, Oppenheimer ascribed travel an important role for the “cross-fertilization of cultures” without which he believed cultures would stagnate and often even degenerate. The Orient and Occident had been in continuous cultural exchange, he argued, since the beginning of humankind. As he presented it, traders, missionaries, pilgrims, mercenaries and slaves played an important role in this not always peaceful process. Often, he noted, contact resulted in conquest and subjugation, and the exotic riches and weapons amassed by mercenaries, who unknowingly served as scouts, would be displayed upon their return. And this, according to Oppenheimer, often awakened greed in the motherland.<sup>163</sup> In order to avoid violent encounters and strengthen and raise travelers’ awareness for their mission of “spurring the peoples to better mutual understanding,” Oppenheimer suggested that travelers be prepared prior to their departure. Lectures given by experts untainted by nationalism should sensitize them to observe not only inanimate sites but, most importantly, “the *soul* of the people whose hospitality one set out searching for.”<sup>164</sup>

Oppenheimer’s comparison with scouts is revealing when associated with the cover page of *Altneuland*. This was an illustration by Ephraim Moses Lilien, an artist whose art nouveau style contributed greatly to the creation of Zionism

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**161** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 154–155.

**162** *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 342–344.

**163** Franz Oppenheimer, “Zur Soziologie des Fremdenverkehrs,” in *Schriften zur Soziologie*, ed. Klaus Lichtblau (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2015), 319–323.

**164** Oppenheimer, “Zur Soziologie des Fremdenverkehrs,” 324–325.



Fig. 2: *Altneuland* cover illustration

iconography by conveying a feeling of uniformity to the expanding number of Zionist publications.<sup>165</sup> Lilien depicted biblical scouts sent out by Moses returning with a massive cluster of grapes. Wine, grapes and grapevines were perceived by contemporaries as the main symbol of Jewish agricultural prowess, referenc-

<sup>165</sup> Schmidt, *Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress*, 152–158. Lilien also drew the cover for the issues of the journal *Palästina* that preceded *Altneuland* but not for the issues of *Palästina* after *Altneuland*.



ing the renown of early philanthropic vineyards and wineries in Palestine.<sup>166</sup> *Altneuland* reported that even though the illustration might be exaggerated, the grapes of Palestine were of such dimensions that one cluster was more than even the hungriest could eat in one meal. The grape symbolized the fertility of the land whose fruits sustained healthy locals, despite their otherwise dire circumstances.<sup>167</sup> Of course, in the biblical story the scouts also told horrifying stories of the locals' strength and how it was sustained by this tremendously fertile land. Were the modern-day scouts of *Altneuland* as fearful of local inhabitants as their biblical counterparts? How did they perceive the locals? And did they advocate coexistence or conquest?

In one travel report Soskin and Aaronson portrayed the local inhabitants as noble savages, who were almost the equals of the Jews. The authors tried to dispel the readers' misconceptions about the local population by explaining that not every Arab was a nomad, and that even the Bedouins, who were the true nomads, hardly strayed away from traditional places of seasonal grazing and housing. Nevertheless, they did make the general claim that the Arab was a deceitful liar, not shying away from fabricating geographic and historical details.<sup>168</sup> Soskin and Aaronson continued to assert the intellectual authority of the Jewish-European scientist-scout by claiming that, in contrast with their supposedly nomadic lifestyle, Arabs were only familiar with a restricted area not exceeding fifty kilometers.<sup>169</sup> Further, the inhabitants were allegedly incapable of scientific objectivity when it came to observing themselves. This was demonstrated by a seemingly unrelated remark about the inhabitants spotting agricultural diseases only in neighboring fields and not in their own fields.<sup>170</sup> The native's ignorance of his own land elevated the superior intellectual authority of the explorers.

Aaronson and Soskin's account of the *Hakautin* storytellers who functioned as bearers of news, while excitingly retelling known stories, is interesting considering the way Aaronson and Soskin wove biblical references into their own tale of the legendary city of Es-Salt, imbuing contemporary traveler accounts with myths of intimacy. From the tendency of the population to have red hair the travelers deduced that they must be related to "our uncle Esau," thereby establishing kinship with these strangers. The word for their favorite dish of dry figs was described as having similarities to the Hebrew word for the lentil stew with which

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166 Rürup, "Gefundene Heimat?," 171.

167 Oetken, "Palaestinafahrt eines Landwirts," 149–150.

168 Aaron Aaronson and Selig Soskin, "Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt: Reiseeindrücke," *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 14.

169 Aaronson and Soskin, "Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt," 14.

170 Aaronson and Soskin, "Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt," 18.



Esau sold the primogeniture to his younger brother Israel. Reverting to a biblical narrative, the travelers created a place for Jews in both the European family and the family of the Orient, which was also comprised of proud peoples who were capable of resisting conquest, like the people of Es-Salt, but nevertheless open for integration and intermarriage. Aaronson and Soskin “had a chance to marvel at beautiful, redheaded women with light-brown skin but blue eyes” among the Bedouin farmers, thus awaking the sexual fantasies of the reader. The nameless host of the travelers, who was also the president of the city council, had never traveled further than Jerusalem. Nevertheless, he was a man of science. He had taught himself French table manners and was able to deliver reliable statistical information regarding taxes, hinting at the possibility of introducing civilization to the region of noble savages.<sup>171</sup>

Aaronson and Soskin’s travel report concluded with an observation about the Circassian settlers in the area bought by the Turks to expand their authority. The settlers were waiting for their demands to receive the best lands to be granted. Soskin and Aaronson were confident that the locals would ultimately yield to this important instrument for the extension of Ottoman control into the provinces. Inspired by the Circassians, the authors then wondered if this could also be a place for Jewish settlement.<sup>172</sup> During his work in Anatolia, Warburg became familiar with Ottoman resettlement schemes of *Muhajirin*. This was a term originally referring to those accompanying Muhammed on his emigration from Mecca to Medina. It was also used for Muslim refugees from Balkan countries shaking off Ottoman rule and Circassians expelled from the homeland during the Russian conquest of the Caucasus. Warburg regarded the “Muslim remigration to Asia” to be successful in its implementation of advanced agricultural methods.<sup>173</sup>

Warburg was, however, more skeptical when it came to Circassian settlement in Palestine. Referring to Soskin and Aaronson’s optimism about Circassian settlements, Warburg emphasized that the subject was still under debate. He argued that Circassian settlement was an improvement compared to the settlement of Maronite Christians or other Bedouin, Druse or Muslim immigrants from sur-

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171 Aaronson and Soskin, “Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt,” 14–21.

172 Aaronson and Soskin, “Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt,” 21–22. Their observation about the importance of the settlement of Muslim refugees was corroborated by Frantzman’s and Kark’s research. Combating Bedouin influence through settlement of other Muslim groups was a personal interest of the sultan, who founded eight villages on his domains in Palestine before the Mandate period; see Frantzman and Kark, “Muslim Settlement,” 82.

173 Warburg, “Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien,” 195.

rounding countries,<sup>174</sup> which he presented as “the most primitive form of colonization in the Orient, though it has the benefit of being achievable with very little means.” However, Warburg argued that Circassians would prefer Asia Minor to Palestine where there were already more established Circassian communities.<sup>175</sup> This corresponded to his universal law that existing settlement hubs had a stronger pull than settlement policy, stated above in context of German and Jewish immigration,

The comparison of Jewish settlers with Muslim or Arab ones was sometimes used to accentuate condescension against Jewish settlers. For example, in their criticism of the JCA’s policy of distributing newly bought land among the settlers of Kastinia, the editors wrote that the settlers were less productive than Arabs, “and that says a lot.”<sup>176</sup> Their denigration of the locals was surpassed by their contempt for the settler lacking in scientific understanding of settlement and agricultural practice, as well as for the competing philanthropic organization settling them.<sup>177</sup> It was common in German colonial writings to depict the patronizing attitude of metropolitan Europeans towards the provinciality of the “primitive” settlers, thus exhibiting a sensibility towards the complex reality of colonial hierarchies.<sup>178</sup> The unpredictable behavior of settlers underlay Herzl’s hesitation of commencing with settlement before the successful negotiation of an irrevocable political framework.<sup>179</sup>

Druze were also discussed in *Altneuland* by the Islamic scholar Arthur Biram,<sup>180</sup> because they were an indigenous group in “our colonial territory.”<sup>181</sup>

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**174** For a survey of villages established by exiled Algerian anti-French rebels, as well as Circassian and Bosnian Muslim refugees, see Frantzman and Kark, “Muslim Settlement,” 83.

**175** Warburg, “Die nichtjüdische Kolonisation Palästinas,” 39–41.

**176** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 55.

**177** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 54–57.

**178** Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 13–14.

**179** Entry from January 25, 1902, in Herzl, *Zionistisches Tagebuch*, 336.

**180** Arthur Biram was born in 1878 in the town of Bischofswerda close to Dresden to an Orthodox family. At first, he studied Oriental philology at the Berlin university, obtaining a PhD with a dissertation written in Arabic about the philosophy of Abu-Rasid al-Nisburi. Later, he wrote a further dissertation in philosophy and economics and was certified as a gymnasium teacher. In addition, Biram was ordained as a liberal Rabbi from the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums where he even founded a Zionist student association despite liberal Judaism’s opposition to Zionism. During his studies in Berlin, Biram was one of the founding members of the Bar-Kochba sports club established in 1898. Sports remained important to Biram in his educational efforts in Palestine. With support of the Hilfsverein, he helped found the Hebrew Reali School in Haifa. However, his activity there was interrupted by his enlisting to fight for Germany in the First World War. In 1937, as a reaction to the Arab uprising, Biram made expanded physical education compulsory for girls in the upper grades of the school. The training was coed

Although they were small in number their “economic proficiency ... wide dispersion and unrestrainable fanaticism,” made them important for the economic development of the land.<sup>182</sup> There were already first encounters and conflicts with Druze populations and the editors of *Altneuland* were sure there would be more “in the course of colonization.”<sup>183</sup> Many of the settlements in Galilea neighbored Druze villages. Metula was established on land sold to Baron de Rothschild during the Druze Rebellion of 1895 by a Christian absentee landlord. Once the rebellion was quelled, violent conflict with the returning disenfranchised Druze tenant farmers erupted. The conflict of Metula was covered in the general Jewish press. The following derogatory description was reprinted in *Altneuland*:

In order to lend weight to their demands they raided the colony, carrying off cattle and shooting through the windows at night. All attempts at an amiable conflict with the Druze failed, due to the impudent demands of the latter ... The authorities refrained from getting involved in the conflict because they know from experience what horrible scoundrels the Druze are.<sup>184</sup>

Using various sources on Islamic and Druze religion, as well as Max von Oppenheim's travel reports, Biram expounded on Druze relationship to other religions. Due to their religion and exclusivity, Biram argued, the Druze, whom he regarded as an ethnic mix of Arabs and Kurds, were “also” a nation. For him, their shared roots with their Muslim neighbors made them innately complacent to Muslim rule, even though they fervently resisted Ottoman rule and drafts. Biram elucidated that according to Druze eschatology, a religious war against the rest of the world would be take place before the gates of Jerusalem, converting the rest of humanity to the Druze religion which, since the eleventh century, has closed its doors to proselytes. Biram viewed the Druze as a threat to Jewish settlement: “For centuries already, this mountain people with a passionate drive for independence, which is undisciplined but brave, fearless and strongly cohesive, is the eternal troublemaker of middle Syria.”<sup>185</sup>

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and the graduates joined the Haganah as a coed platoon, thus paving the way for women's participation in combat duty in the Israeli military; see Yuval Dror, “Erziehung bis zu unseren Tagen: Arthur Biram und die Reali-Schule,” in *Zweimal Heimat: Die Jeckes zwischen Mitteleuropa und Nahost*, ed. Moshe Zimmermann and Yotam Hotam (Frankfurt am Main: Beerenverlag 2005), 267–269.

**181** Arthur Biram, “Die Drusen,” *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 109.

**182** Biram, “Die Drusen,” 214.

**183** Editors' comment, *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 126.

**184** Reprint from the *Generalanzeiger für die gesamten Interessen des Judentums*, *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 343–344.

**185** Biram, “Die Drusen,” 109.

The violent conflicts between Druze and Christian Maronites in Lebanon were the pretext for French military intervention in the 1860s. The European descriptions of the Druze quoted by Biram were ambivalent. One example was their description of the position of women within Druze society. On the one hand, women were presented as equals within a marriage and could be initiated in religious secrets. They thus needed to acquire literacy, despite the supposed general disapproval of women's education in the Orient. On the other hand, it presented debauchery and what today would be referred to as honor killings as widespread.<sup>186</sup> Another example was the claim that Druze had double morals permitting lying and deceiving outsiders if this didn't harm their coreligionists. In contrast to other European interpretations that considered these double morals to be rooted in the scriptures, Biram regarded the behavior as a contradiction of original Druze religious commandments. On a positive note, hopeful of cooperation between Jews and Druze, he wrote that the Druze canon preserved stories of Caliph El-Hakim's change of attitude from persecuting Christians and Jews to favoring them over Muslims.<sup>187</sup> He emphasized that in the carnage of their wars against the Maronites the Druze spared women and children. It was officially forbidden for them to loot those of a different faith and, in contrast to the Bedouins, in times of peace they would in general abstain from robberies.<sup>188</sup>

While often Bedouins were regarded as ruthless bandits and invaders posing a danger to settlements, this was not the only tenor in *Altneuland*. As stated above, some articles tried to alter the perception of the Bedouins as nomads. This mirrored the settlement dynamics in Palestine of the late Ottoman Era.<sup>189</sup> The travelogue of theologian and pastor Emil Dagobert Schoenfeld, which was originally printed in the regional geography and ethnology journal *Globus*, conveyed a complex image of the Bedouins in the Sinai Peninsula as potential servants, allies and foes. During his expedition to Saint Catherine's monastery, he observed how thousands of Bedouins served thirty-two Greek monks. These servile Bedouin tribes were collectively referred to as the gatekeepers. To illustrate the dependency of these groveling tribes on these "bullying and avaricious" monks, Schoenfeld described how they were physically disciplined by the monks. To reward the tribes, the monks would throw sacks filled with small bread rolls from the fortifications of the monastery. While escorting Schoenfeld, the gatekeepers bore tobacco pipes instead of weapons in an image he consid-

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**186** Biram, "Die Drusen," 210–211.

**187** Biram, "Die Drusen," 113–116.

**188** Biram, "Die Drusen," 209–210.

**189** Frantzman and Kark, "Muslim Settlement," 75.

ered revealing of their character. In contrast, he observed, there were some wild and independent Bedouin tribes inhabiting the northern part of the peninsula. In his travel he was escorted by a tribe he described as strong and vigorous, as shying away from conflict but actively provoking one. He described them as men of honor outfitted with the finest European rifles who protected him from all danger, including another Bedouin tribe that he did not personally encounter but was described to him as thieves and murderers requiring extreme alertness from his party while traversing their territory. Consequently, his entourage did not even flinch from venturing with him into Ottoman territory, escorting him all the way to Beersheba.<sup>190</sup>

While traveling through the Sinai Peninsula, Schoenfeld was astounded by the sparsity of settlement, discerning a population ratio of one person per five to six square kilometers. He found the most fertile regions still largely uncultivated, contrasting the region with Belgium, which was half the size and had a population of almost seven million, compared to ten thousand in Sinai.<sup>191</sup> Schoenfeld made further comparisons with Europe in his travelogue. Arriving in Beersheba, Schoenfeld went as far as drawing a resemblance between the Bedouin farms in the vicinity and “German manors ... not merely because of their extent but also because of the carefulness of their cultivation ... in a manner I have not seen far and wide in the Orient. It was the work of Bedouins!”<sup>192</sup>

Schoenfeld’s travelogue was unique in portraying desert scenes, as opposed to mountainous regions, as familiar German scenery. His designation of “Bedouin manors” was reminiscent of oxymoronic designations such as a “German Kilimanjaro” in Africa travelogues. These were not depictions of conquest but of a “mulatto geography” of the sort described by Berman, whose work presents “the colonial site ... not as the location of Fanon’s imagined war-unto-death between different races and competing cultures, but rather as a location where, through perpetual acts of cross-cultural contact, transgressive change occurs precisely despite the efforts of colonial regimes to separate and control.”<sup>193</sup> Schoenfeld’s transformation of the desert into a familiar and homey “German” landscape stood in complete contrast to contemporary attempts such as Werner Sombart’s to draw clear boundaries between the rooted German people of the forest and Jews wandering amid sands of the desert.<sup>194</sup>

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**190** Schoenfeld, “Die Halbinsel Sinai,” 262–265.

**191** Schoenfeld, “Die Halbinsel Sinai,” 264–265.

**192** Schoenfeld, “Die Halbinsel Sinai,” 245.

**193** Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 5.

**194** See chapter 2 above.

There were further accounts in *Altneuland* altering the perception of the desert as infertile. Claudio Guastalla, the Italian author of *La colonizzazione d'El-Arish*, described El-Arish as a “paradise for botanists.” The greenery of the desert, he argued, enabled Bedouin herd cultivation, noting even that farming had been introduced to the area despite the aversion of local Bedouins to agriculture. Guastalla asserted a reciprocal influence between land and people. He quoted Edward Henry Palmer’s assertion that in as much as the Bedouin was a son of the desert, the desert’s bareness and emptiness were a result of Bedouins ousting diligent farmers.<sup>195</sup> These descriptions of the transformation of Bedouin nomads and the desert seem to act as a reassuring prelude, to the metamorphosis awaiting Palestine through the resettlement of another wandering people, the Jews, Europe’s *Ahasaverus*, to quote Oppenheimer’s wording in *Altneuland*’s opening editorial, in their original habitat.<sup>196</sup>

Even *Altneuland*’s dry technical accounts are able to support a new interpretive layer if read with an awareness for the power of metaphor. A report about a demonstration in the St. Louis World Expo of how methodical planting of sand dunes could inhibit their wandering was naturally of practical interest for coastal settlements in Palestine. This was also the express purpose of the article. Yet the editors conjure up the image of the desert, describing in their conclusion how the wandering of dunes in the internal regions of the United States cover train tracks, thus causing derailments.<sup>197</sup> Reading “trains” as a metaphor for progress and “desert” as Jewish life in the diaspora allows one to see the Zionist motive for making the desert bloom as conjoined with the prospect of ending Jewish wandering and enabling progress of both land and people.

In conclusion, *Altneuland* tapped into hybridizing metaphors of German colonial fantasy to counter constructed borders within German society between Jews and non-Jews. These borders also instilled a specific but not clearly defined Jewish place within the German colonial project between Occident and Orient. In his article, Schoenfeld gave practical tips regarding costs and organization of caravans. In addition, he provoked thirst for adventure, as well as greed and even urgency. He described how the Bedouins created such a prosperity that Hebrew merchants from Hebron trading with European manufactured goods were flocking to the area to settle and enjoy this “very lucrative” business.<sup>198</sup> It would be interesting to contemplate how the metaphors and colonial fantasy in Schoenfeld’s account might have affected Jewish readers of *Altneuland* differ-

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<sup>195</sup> *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 53–55.

<sup>196</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 1.

<sup>197</sup> *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 319–320.

<sup>198</sup> Schoenfeld, “Die Halbinsel Sinai,” 246.

ently than a non-Jewish German reading the original article. In the context of *Altneuland*, the description of Jews cashing in on trade with the locals implied a sense of urgency aimed at galvanizing participation in European economic expansion. It also imparted a progressive conception that colonial undertakings could benefit the empire, the settlers and indigenous populations together.

## Fantasies of Peaceful Colonization

In the course of the nineteenth century, colonial writings shifted from descriptive exploration to fostering a colonial mission. As a result, they prompted their readers to no longer perceive the world as empty space waiting to be charted but as territory waiting to be colonizing. A colonial self-image of a “people without space” emerged and indigenous populations came to be viewed as placeholders awaiting supplantation through European domination. According to Berman, the introduction of modern agricultural techniques, often symbolized by the image of the plow, usually included the idea of driving out the natives as the colonizer penetrated and fertilized the colony’s feminized terrain.<sup>199</sup> And plow imagery was utilized in different ways in early Zionist discourse, as well.

The plow could symbolize bilateral cultural insemination. For example, German agricultural experts such as Friedrich Oetken warned in *Altneuland* against a total replacement of the local Arabian plow with modern European ones that required caution in wielding. In untrained hands, he argued, modern plows could diminish a field’s fertility for years, and in his view, this had already happened to farmers in Germany, causing a return to tender plowing. Oetken suggested that learning from the millennia-old Arabian plow could benefit farming methods in the motherland.<sup>200</sup>

Yet the plow’s use as a means of extending ownership over land was ambivalent. Oppenheimer championed “conquest by the plow” as an antonym to the “conquest by the sword” or the club to emphasize that the object of colonization was land and not the natives.<sup>201</sup> On the one hand, he believed the natives could serve as partners in the colonization of the land. Technical progress and modern agricultural machines could be shared with indigenous populations, increasing per capita production and reducing conflict. However, Oppenheimer also consid-

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199 Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, 141–145.

200 Oetken, “Palaestinafahrt eines Landwirts,” 140–141.

201 E. g., Franz Oppenheimer, “Bodenbesitzordnung in Palästina,” *Der Jude* 3 (1918–1919): 506; *Franz Oppenheimer und der Zionismus*, 1944, CZA A161–78, 3.

ered the plow to be an important instrument of oppression and state-building: “The plow is always the mark of a higher economic condition which occurs only in a state; that is to say, in a system of plantation work carried on by subjugated servants.”<sup>202</sup> With the advent of the principal of Hebrew labor, the “conquest by the plow” became the battle cry of an exclusive nationalism analogous to Berman’s description.

Recent research comparing Muslim and Jewish settlement during the late Ottoman era claimed that the popular view of a constant competition for land and resources was lopsided. It has overlooked “how much Jewish and Muslim settlement patterns mirrored one another and how they were part of similar physical processes and complemented one another.”<sup>203</sup> The persisting orientalist view of a petrified Arab population in the biblical lands thus overshadows the dynamics of colonization by various groups on the outskirts of the West Bank, where the bulk of the indigenous population of Palestine lived. Through colonization, the Ottoman state was trying to extend its authority into the very same coastal regions that would later be designated as the state of Israel in the UN partition plan.<sup>204</sup> It was not the settlement itself that was causing tension, but the redemptive ideology of Zionism attributed to agricultural settlement and the counternarrative of disenfranchised peasants in an emerging Arab nationalist movement. In fact, symbiotic relationships between Jewish and Muslim settlers existed on the ground, and not only in the imagination of *Altneuland*.<sup>205</sup>

Although some areas still marked as unexplored in English maps left room for Zionists to play the classical colonial discoverer and explorer, Soskin understood that Palestine was populated terrain. To claim ownership of it, *Altneuland* would take recourse to “second discoveries” out of the lexicon of German colonial fantasies. These scientific discoveries, overlooked by previous explorers, helped unleash new potential. In contrast to Oetken, Soskin argued that the purpose of surveying the economy of Palestine was for Zionist settlements to avoid imitating the locals in their agricultural ways. Rather, he argued, they should discover where technological advancement could create surplus value to support Jewish colonization, without upsetting existing economic structures or creating hostile competition.<sup>206</sup> The olive groves planned by the CEP were an example of such an undertaking. According to their calculations, these were expected to lead to a fivefold increase in output compared to cereal production at the

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**202** Oppenheimer, *The State*, 29.

**203** Frantzman and Kark, “Muslim Settlement,” 74.

**204** Frantzman and Kark, “Muslim Settlement,” 74–77.

**205** Frantzman and Kark, “Muslim Settlement,” 82.

**206** *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 119.



time, thus supporting a higher Jewish population density.<sup>207</sup> The CEP hoped that tangible economic build-up would also help create a positive mindset in Ottoman authorities towards Jewish settlement. Accordingly, understanding Ottoman tax and custom law was an important concern of *Altneuland*.

Colonial fantasies of peaceful colonization diverted attention from the alternative scenario of indigenous resistance. This would inevitably lead to the radicalization of colonial methods out of fear that defeat by indigenous populations would be interpreted as weakness and degeneracy by European observers.<sup>208</sup> An inconspicuous statement in the *Deutsche Reichsanzeiger*, the official promulgation journal of the German state, revealed the implicit belief, shared and reproduced by the editors of *Altneuland*, that the “character” of the indigenous peoples of the region meant that even the few who defied progress would “soon yield to the power of economic interest.”<sup>209</sup>

Some authors in *Altneuland* called for selective interventions instead of a blind belief that general technological and economic progress and infrastructure projects such as building railways would better the lot of the natives. According to Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, the locals’ needs would be better served by introducing technology and agricultural machines that would help them intensify production on smaller plots. This would increase their readiness to sell land, which would thus become superfluous, to newcomers. Additionally, population growth through settlement and the creation of new, inclusive markets would facilitate an increase in production and export promoting peaceful coexistence. Warburg warned though, that increasing exports would shift tensions from the local level to the relationship between colonial powers.<sup>210</sup>

Fantasies of peaceful colonization were supported not only by economic arguments but also by racial ones. Going back to an overarching motive in this chapter, *Altneuland* depicted Jewish colonizers as a bridge between West and East because they were essentially occidentalized Orientals. For Warburg, the main function of being a bridge, the key to the success of Zionist colonization, was in adapting European ways to the Orient. According to him, religious differences were more significant in Syria than racial ones, since the people of Syria were all a part of one *Mischrasse* of mainly Hethitien, Semitic and Aryan components.<sup>211</sup>

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207 Soskin, “‘Gross’ und ‘Klein’-Kolonisation,” 136.

208 Schaller, “From Conquest to Genocide,” 311.

209 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 350.

210 J. Radler, “Vom amerikanischen Orient,” *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 293–298.

211 Warburg, “Syrien als Wirtschafts- und Kolonisationsgebiet,” 38.

Farther, the Swiss theologian Furrer claimed that even the religious differences between Jews and Muslims were not substantial. In a book about his Palestine tour in 1863, he claimed that local inhabitants shared language and customs with the Jews because Mohammed mostly adopted Jewish teachings and practices. For Furrer, the “metonymic identity” between Jews and Muslims was a source of peace. It also inversely condoned European antisemitism as natural hate for the intruders among them: “Where peoples are strangers in the innermost depth of their essence, a horrible racial hate can easily evolve. It is, however, a historical fact that Jews and Arabs in Spain and Arabia lived next to each other over centuries in friendly contact to the boon of the land.”<sup>212</sup> Despite this and further antisemitic prejudice, including that Jews were averse to manual labor, Furrer projected the ideal of the benevolent conquerer on Zionism. He counseled Jews to cultivate friendship with Arabs in their attempt to redeem themselves in the eyes of the European beholders: “The time has come for Israel to show the world once again that it possesses enough will power and idealism to develop full happiness of a homeland in the manner of the patriarchs through the sweat of one’s brow.”<sup>213</sup>

The flipside of Furrer’s argument that the affinity between Jews and Muslims was advantageous to Zionist settlement was that German settlers would not be able to overcome their innate foreignness. The advantage of Jewish over Christian European settlement was also emphasized in Soskin and Aaronson’s account of their travels to Es-Salt. They described the threat posed by missionary activity to the exemplary religious harmony between local Muslims and Christians. Evoking the physical resemblance of the locals to biblical Esau, Aaronson and Soskin constructed a kinship between Jews and the Muslim locals.<sup>214</sup> Yet this kinship did not negate the Jewish relationship to Europe but rather helped define it in a triangular identity framework.<sup>215</sup> Germans/Christians, Arabs/Muslims and Jews formed the vertices of this triangle. It is not clear if Aaronson and Soskin were familiar with traditional Talmudic association of Esau with Christians. If they were, choosing Esau as the link and associating him with Muslims blurred rigid identity borders and further emphasized the affinity between all three vertices of the triangle.

Brit Shalom cofounder Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, who was better known by his pen name Rabbi Binyamin, expounded in *Altneuland* on his pansemitic vision of a Zionism open to Arab integration and assimilation which he propagat-

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212 Furrer, “Besiedlung Palaestinas durch Juden,” 34.

213 Furrer, “Besiedlung Palaestinas durch Juden,” 38–40.

214 Aaronson and Soskin, “Die Rosinenstadt Es-Salt,” 16.

215 Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 82.

ed until his death in 1957. Born in 1880 in Galicia, Radler-Feldman arrived in Berlin in 1901 to study agriculture. Through his encounters with Hebrew writers in Berlin, he became involved with Zionism and Zionist journals. In 1907 he immigrated to Palestine where he worked with Ruppin in the Palestine Office. A unique aspect of Radler-Feldman's orientalism was that he did not perceive the encounter with Arabs and Islam as an encounter with biblical Judaism; rather, it evoked in him nostalgia for the Polish shtetl.<sup>216</sup> This was similar to Loewe seeing the physique of Polish Jews in the Arabs of Bethlehem.<sup>217</sup>

Radler-Feldman and Loewe were also in agreement on the importance of teaching Jews Arabic for the sake of peaceful coexistence. In contrast to Loewe, Radler-Feldman called for the opening of Jewish educational institutions for Arab students without reducing the Hebrew character of the schools. According to Radler-Feldman, Arab sheiks had already petitioned Jewish schools to take in their children. Drawing on the example of American schools in the Middle East, he regarded education as the best possible method of "peaceful conquest."<sup>218</sup> Radler-Feldman argued that by removing religion from American schools and branding them as expansive and exclusive, the schools attracted the children of local elites. The pupils were then educated by American teachers in the same manner of American children. As a result, the schools produced teachers, doctors, journalists and businessmen who were culturally American and were using American products, and thus "permanently shackled to American interests."<sup>219</sup>

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**216** Avi-ram Tzoref, "Shutfut yehudit-aravit keneged siach ha-chilon: Machshava datit, politica, ve-safrut be-chtivato shel Yehoshua Radler-Feldman" (PhD diss., Ben-Gurion University, 2018), 94.

**217** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 316–317.

**218** In his conceptions of "peaceful conquest," Radler-Feldman was inspired by Ludwig Bernhard, who was at the time a young professor in Posen and rising expert on the "national conflict" between Germans and Poles in Eastern Prussia. In his later writings, Bernhard raised awareness for the "national conflict" in the former Polish territories in Prussia's east and developed schemes to mitigate ethnic conflict while extending German imperial rule. He demonstrated how cooperatives contributed to the creation of national autonomy in ethnically divided regions such as Posen; see Kai Struve, "'Nationale Minderheit': Begriffsgeschichtliches zur Gleichheit und Differenz," in *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur*, vol. 2, ed. Dan Diner (Munich: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2004), 251; Torsten Lorenz and Uwe Müller, "National Segregation and Mass Mobilization: Polish Cooperatives in Poznan before the First World War," in *Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts: Eastern Europe in the 19th and early 20th century*, ed. Torsten Lorenz (Berlin: BWV Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006), 183. This is another example for the influence of Prussian settlement and Germanization politics in the East on German Zionists such as Oppenheimer and Ruppin; see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 94–98.

**219** Radler, "Vom amerikanischen Orient," 292.

To emphasize the importance of professional training as a tool for integration, Radler-Feldman evoked a historical narrative claiming that Jewish doctors were still sought after even in times of horrible persecutions.<sup>220</sup> Christianity, he noted, was also the source of increasing Arab hostility in Palestine; and in his view, European antisemitism was being disseminated through Christian schools and Arab graduates had begun spreading antisemitic propaganda in the Arabic newspapers they founded.<sup>221</sup> Radler-Feldman nevertheless asserted that the “tribal and character kinship between Arabs and Jews has the natural consequence that the former feels closer to the latter than even to the most tolerant Christian.” He claimed that the affiliation between Arabs and Christian, and their ensuing exposure to antisemitism, could be easily broken by including Arabs in the Jewish education system. Once Jewish settlers were to abandon policies of segregation and demonstrate their willingness to recognize their natural ethnic and racial bonds to the Arabs, Arabs would start to appreciate and support Zionism. This would hopefully lead to the founding of Arabic newspapers propagating the benefit of Zionism. And if not, Radler-Feldman suggested that Zionists create their own Arab language newspapers.<sup>222</sup>

The Western culture that Radler-Feldman wanted to convey to the Orient was American and not a variation of sinister European colonialism. Whereas in German colonial literature South America was the pivot point for comparative colonial criticism, aspirations and fantasies, North America inspired some of *Altneuland*'s contributors. Radler-Feldman wished to follow the American example of a liberal imperialism fostering cultural belonging, instead of religious divisions. This was the Zionist touchstone to determine “if we, like the Anglo-Saxons, are suited in a peaceful manner and through a consequently implemented liberal approach to adjust ourselves to a congenial multitude, which is still tabula rasa in relation to Western culture to such an extent that they become accustomed to beholding the promotion of their own interests in the prosperity of our works.”<sup>223</sup>

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**220** Radler, “Vom amerikanischen Orient,” 292.

**221** Adolf Friedeman also made this connection in his 1904 travel report, sarcastically referring to the appearance of familiar antisemitic slogans in Hebron as a “sign of culture in the Arabian semiwilderness”; see Kaiser, *Palästina – Erez Israel*, 120.

**222** Radler, “Vom amerikanischen Orient,” 297. Yitzhak Ben-Zvi published an article in 1911 advocating for the founding of a Zionist newspaper in Arabic to aggravate religious and class tension within Arab society and to win over allies in the fight against Zionism's opponents. Hugo Bergmann made a similar proposition, emphasizing that such a paper should not seek to trick Arab readers but promote dialogue; see Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee*, 257 and 267.

**223** Radler, “Vom amerikanischen Orient,” 298.

The editors of *Altneuland* and other experts on American agriculture recommended paying special attention to the American “methods of economic penetration.” They successfully circumvented local monopolies, an important concern in *Altneuland*. To free Jewish farmers from their dependency on local middlemen, Warburg, Soskin and Treidel helped create a Hamburg-based Jewish trade company to export wares from Palestine to Europe. In their public proclamation on the occasion of the company’s founding, they specifically deplored Arab monopolists underpaying for Jewish produce, either out of insufficient business skills or in exploitation of Jewish distress.<sup>224</sup> *Altneuland* thematized how “antisemitic Greeks” who formed a monopoly for the import of petroleum to Palestine charged Jews exorbitant prices.<sup>225</sup>

In an article conjoining economic and religious issues a resident of Jerusalem complained about Arab control of *etrog* [*citrus medica*] cultivation. The *etrog* is an important part of Jewish ritual during the holiday of Sukkot. The author was thrilled that there were now two large-scale orchards cultivated by Jewish farmers. Yet he was concerned that most of the production was still in Arab hands. According to the author, the “clever” Arab farmer negotiated with several Jewish merchants simultaneously to drive up the price. Arab farmers were not regarded as individual economic actors but as a part of a pernicious monopoly. In an adaption of European bias against trade in comparison to production, the article inverted the roles of Arab and Jew. It denied Arabs their productive role and treated them as retailers dealing with raw material. It portrayed Jewish merchants as the manufacturers due to their appreciation and refinement of the fruits for ritual use.<sup>226</sup> And it presented the American system as unique inasmuch as it supposedly did not depose local middlemen, but rather shaped them through education to their needs. Radler-Feldman suggested adopting this successful system for peaceful domination through education.<sup>227</sup>

The editors supported Radler-Feldman’s recommendation to establish schools in which “the Arabs learn to see in us friends and not foes.”<sup>228</sup> Their ad-

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224 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 123.

225 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 335. The report was originally published in the *Generalanzeiger für die gesamten Interessen des Judentums*.

226 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 374–375.

227 Radler, “Vom amerikanischen Orient,” 292–294.

228 To reinforce Radler-Feldman’s argument, the editors printed another review of Ludwig Bernhardt’s book on America and the Orient from the Hungarian *Pester Lloyd*; see *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 92–95. Friedrich Oetken, who published a book on American agriculture, perceived many similarities between the agricultural situation in California and in Palestine; see Oetken, “Palaestinafahrt eines Landwirts,” 150.

miration for American colonization methods extended to the economic benefits of systematic experimentation and rigid rationalization in agriculture, as well as the American spirit of entrepreneurship. The latter was considered unrelenting in the face of failure, just as its appeal to the desire for individual socioeconomic advancement was seen to make it universal and inclusive.<sup>229</sup> For Radler-Feldman this meant that even short-term economic drawbacks would not hinder the fledgling assimilation of Arabs in Jewish colonization:

It is also a common phenomenon in the colonies that Arabs that spent a few years there assimilated into the Jewish population to such an extent that they speak Hebrew and Yiddish. And even when they no longer have employment, they prefer to go hungry in the colonies, rather than return to the villages where they might own property, but the current Arabic life and lack of culture doesn't suit them anymore.<sup>230</sup>

Employment of local Arabs or Turks in Jewish businesses and agricultural settlements was hardly questioned in *Altneuland*. On the contrary, local workers were considered valuable in showing Jewish workers the ropes or in gaining access to certain markets.<sup>231</sup> In his very first essay in a Zionist paper, Oppenheimer had suggested employing non-Jews in his settlement cooperatives. Since he reckoned that this might be considered heresy by Zionist readers, he had limited employment of non-Jews to the settlement's initial phases to train the mostly non-experienced Jewish farmers.<sup>232</sup> This opinion was later echoed in the CEP's emphasis on imposing time limitations on the employment of European workers and farming experts and trainers.<sup>233</sup>

Cooperation with Arabs seemed self-evident for the industrial pioneer Nahum Wilbuschewitch. His description of the milling industry in Palestine, for instance, noted that Jewish millers obtained wheat from Arab farmers. He did not suggest that this situation be changed or label it as a dependency. He hoped that increasing milling capacities through modern technology would create a higher demand for grains, thus reducing competitive tensions between Jewish and Arab farmers. He thus considered surplus economic capacities to be the key to peaceful coexistence. Wilbuschewitch was optimistic in believing that

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**229** *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 60–61; Aaronson, “Die Einbuengerung der Smyrnafeigen,” 201–202.

**230** Radler, “Vom amerikanischen Orient,” 296–297.

**231** E.g., Warburg, “Die juedische Kolonisation in Nordsyrien,” 274; The annual report of the Anglo-Palestine Company for the year 1904 considered both Arabs and Jews as the bank's potential customer base because Christians would allegedly entrust only French and German institutions with their deposits; see *Altneuland* 2 (1905): 88.

**232** Oppenheimer, “Jüdische Siedlungen,” *Die Welt*, January 24, 1902, 5.

**233** *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 342.

business relations would be good and that all economic participants would act rationally, allowing Jewish millers to influence Arab farmers to change their consumption habits and start consuming barley flour and thereby further increasing the surplus of available grain – since in Palestine, the relatively inexpensive barley was only being used as animal fodder. By utilizing this crop for human sustenance, as well, he argued, the farmers would be able to save money and the millers to increase their sales.<sup>234</sup> In contrast to most industrial ventures in Palestine, Wilbuschewitch adhered to his inclusive principles in his factory Shemen, which purchased raw materials from Arab villages and sold its products both on local markets and in neighboring Arab countries.<sup>235</sup>

Stereotypes that vilified the indigenous populations were deliberately – or without reflection – conveyed in *Altneuland* through reproductions of other Jewish newspapers on agricultural and settlement issues in Palestine. Nevertheless, the recurring theme of surplus creation and harmonious cooperation or competition supported the utopian vision of a peaceful integration of local populations within a new economic system intent on preserving their existing economic spheres. The last issue of *Altneuland* included an extremely positive, even utopian report that contradicted the journal's usual complexity and gravity. The exaggeration was fueled by the wish to convey a positive climate for investment promising secure and high yields, along with a colonial fantasy of a peaceful, liberal colonization. The story included many of the tropes that have discussed here in the analysis of *Altneuland*. In the journal's usual manner of creating a historical narrative of European history inclusive of Jews, the story of Jewish settlement was depicted as the final stage in a series of American and German attempts at colonization. Together, these colonizers were presented as having built an incredible transport infrastructure network spurred by the visit of the German Kaiser to Palestine. And economic progress had supposedly established peace and harmony between settlers and locals: robberies and raids, the German article noted in English, had become “a thing of the past.” It continued in German: “The Fellaḥ became accustomed to his civilized neighbor and befriended him, because his neighbor provided him with income, and because he continued to learn better soil cultivation from the same.” Even the Ottoman authorities had supposedly started to appreciate the progress brought by European settlers. They entertained special sympathies, the article suggested, for Jewish settle-

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234 Wilbuschewitch, “Die Mühlenindustrie in Palästina,” 355–361.

235 Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 119–129.

ments because they refrained from meddling in international colonial intrigues.<sup>236</sup>

Yet, the article urged, Jews were still behind in recognizing the historic opportunity to benefit from colonization. While German colonists were supposedly buying up land before it became unaffordable, well-to-do Jews who had the financial capabilities to participate in European colonialism still needed to realize that this “Terra nova” [new land] was a “Terra aurea” [golden land].<sup>237</sup> Zantop’s observation about the necessity of exploring the colonial imagination “in order to understand the lure of the colonial ‘adventure,’ particularly for those who, like the Germans, had been excluded from it,”<sup>238</sup> is of paramount importance for comprehending *Altneuland*’s contribution to creating a Jewish “anticipatory colonial identity.” *Altneuland*’s task was to alter German Jewry’s perception and support of Zionist colonization.

Zantop’s observation received a special twist in *Altneuland*, which gave voice to one excluded group – German Jews – watching another group to which they felt a belonging – German (colonialists) – overcome their feeling of historical exclusion. On the one hand, then, Zionist colonial imagination fostered a feeling of distinction and provided a tool for confronting a racial-colonial discourse that asserted their inferiority. Yet on the other hand, this imagination aspired for inclusion in a German national movement that was now excluding Jews from its new colonial “adventure.” As far as the *Altneuland* circle was concerned, Zionism was not to be regarded as a contradiction and rejection of German nationalism. On the contrary, Zionism would enable German Jews to fully participate in German and European colonialism, reaping economic benefits, as well as social and political recognition for their racial parity. Further, through their participation in the colonial and racial discourses, the *Altneuland* circle hoped, together with like-minded non-Jewish allies, to shape the very fabric of German nationalism by transforming Germany from a parochial nation-state to a liberal, heterogeneous colonial empire.

It is, however, worth asking: What happened when the German Zionist colonial imagination was confronted with a reality shaped by Zionist settlers from other countries with a vastly different understanding of Zionism’s mission? The next chapter will provide a case study for this clash as it played out in the agricultural cooperative Merhavia masterminded by Oppenheimer. After Herzl’s death, Oppenheimer found support for his cooperative in the Austrian Poalei

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<sup>236</sup> *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 346–348.

<sup>237</sup> *Altneuland* 3 (1906): 350.

<sup>238</sup> Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 5.



Zion party, who shared his ideological mix of socialism and nationalism. Yet when it came to the concrete conflict around integrating Arab labor in Jewish agricultural settlements, differences between Oppenheimer and this party surfaced.

In the years leading up to the First World War, conflict also emerged within German Zionism. Oppenheimer and his generation were ousted by a younger generation who took a more radical stance on Zionist dogma, which included withdrawal of Zionists from the non-Jewish public sphere in Germany and ultimately emigration to Palestine. In this conflict Oppenheimer presented his sociological, modular model of identity most clearly. It found strong support within German Jewry outside Zionist circles. Once war broke out Oppenheimer and other first-generations Zionists allied with the non-Zionist Jewish establishment to extend aid to Eastern European Jews in areas conquered by Germany. In doing so they advanced the similar goal to the one pursued in *Altneuland*, tying German imperial ambitions with (German) Jewish interests. The next chapter will demonstrate this through an analysis of Oppenheimer's articles in the magazine *Neue jüdische Monatshefte*, which he coedited. Once the war ended and Germany's imperial ambitions had been curbed (for the time being), Oppenheimer aligned himself with a group of Zionist intellectuals led by Martin Buber for a final protest against the integration of Palestine in the British Empire, which marked an end to hopes of its affiliation with the German Empire.

## Chapter 6

# When Fantasies Meet Realities

A second, likewise holy law must be fulfilled, given to us and thereby to all other people of the earth by scripture ... “There should be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you!” No people in this world have suffered so terribly from the transgression of this high law than the people of Israel dispersed among all peoples. This tough lesson must not be forgotten! We should and must take into our heart the inhabitants of the Holy Land in full brotherhood. We should treat them as full citizens with all rights, without any exception. Otherwise, we prove all those right that in past, present and future will breach and have breached our full civil rights. Here, too, the pinnacle of science only just attained what the genius already realized three thousand years ago. Protection of national minorities is its last word. ... The Jew, the victim of all injustice, is designated through Jacob's blessing to realize justice. This conviction kept him upright through unspeakable torment, now the time of fulfillment has arrived.<sup>1</sup>

The final chapter of this book returns to trace Oppenheimer's biography more closely to shed new light on some more well-known aspects of his Zionist engagement. The tension between Oppenheimer's German and Jewish nationalism has always fascinated his biographers. Most emphasized the former while downplaying the latter as a brief chapter in Oppenheimer's life. A further biographical focal point often presented, but not resolved, was the tension between Oppenheimer's German and Jewish patriotic sentiments and his liberal universal approach. This chapter revisits these tensions drawing on the findings from the inquiry into Oppenheimer's Zionist network, the *Altneuland* circle, regarding the entanglement with German colonial and racial discourses and the alignment of the two nationalisms. It deals with these issues by examining Oppenheimer's ethnic conception of Judaism and the resulting political implications concerning minority rights of Jews vis a vis Arabs, as well as Poles and Germans.

Further, it places Oppenheimer in conversation and debate with other political and national camps within the Zionist movement at large and German Zionism in particular. After Herzl's death Oppenheimer needed to find new political allies. Most prominent were members of the Austrian Poalei Zion. His ideas are examined here in the context of other Zionist thinkers and parties with whom he interacted. With changing political tastes, the influence of a generation seeking to gain recognition for Jews as Germans dwindled. A young generation of German Zionists more in tune with changing political sentiments in Germany now strived for recognition by accentuating the differences between Jews and Ger-

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1 CZA A161–15.

mans, and by demanding a pronounced disassociation of Zionism from German politics. Finally, this chapter demonstrates how Oppenheimer and others, underterred by the new generation's ascent, transferred key concepts and attitudes developed by the *Altneuland* circle into new situations in which Jewish national interests and German imperial aspirations became entangled. It examines how the attempt to knit Zionism into a German imperial and colonial context was carried forward into the First World War, culminating in the collapse of that very empire.

## Oppenheimer and the Austrian Poalei Zion

Several factors brought Oppenheimer closer to the Austrian Poalei Zion. First, Oppenheimer's fusion of social utopia with national distinctions, while retaining a materialist focus on class issues, appealed to those holding an Austro-Marxist outlook "whose distinctiveness lay precisely in the recognition of national frameworks as legitimate vehicles for the advance toward socialism."<sup>2</sup> Oppenheimer's veneration for Austrian Social Democrats such as Karl Renner, father of the first Austrian republic, and his expert on citizenship issues Rudolf Laun brought him closer to the ideology of the Austrian Poalei Zion.<sup>3</sup> This outlook was shared by other branches of Poalei Zion. For example, American Poalei Zion emphasized that "progressive nationalism" and socialism can go hand in hand since "socialism is *international* and not *cosmopolitan*."<sup>4</sup> Unlike Oppenheimer they used the term "cosmopolitanism" as assimilation. Nevertheless, they shared with him the goal of preventing the loss of Jewish distinctiveness and self-respect.

Another important convergence was Oppenheimer's focus on rural reform and the creation of a Jewish farming class to counteract the degenerated socio-economic Jewish existence in the diaspora as an urban proletariat. In 1906 Shlomo Kaplansky, a key ideologist in the Austrian Poalei Zion, invited Oppenheimer, who already established himself as the leading Zionist land reform expert, to contribute to *Der jüdische Arbeiter*, the party newspaper which he edited. Kaplansky disapproved of the Russian revolution's land reforms and deemed them incompatible with the industrial focus of Marxist ideology. He preferred that Zionism adhere to a different socialist agenda.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2010), 190.

<sup>3</sup> Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 190.

<sup>4</sup> Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 192–193.

<sup>5</sup> Franz Oppenheimer und der Zionismus, 3.

Finally, Austrian Poalei Zion sought to promote practical Zionism through its cooperation with Oppenheimer. Although the Zionist Organization had already officially adopted a practical approach supplementing its political strivings, and more specifically Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative advanced by Herzl, the implementation was impeded under David Wolffsohn's leadership. It was only through the engagement of Poalei Zion, and especially of prominent Austrian Poalei Zion members such as Kaplansky and Nathan Gross, that Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative was finally established under a Zionist aegis.<sup>6</sup>

Oppenheimer expanded his propagandistic activity in Austria-Hungary. In 1907, near the end of his involvement in *Altneuland*, Oppenheimer delivered a lecture in Vienna at the Jüdischer Kolonisationsverein in which he displayed a deeper knowledge of Palestine's economy, agriculture and nosology than ever before. The Jüdischer Kolonisationsverein aimed to enlist broader support for Zionist settlement among the non-Zionist and acculturated strata of Viennese Jewish society. Oppenheimer utilized *Altneuland's* strategy of making colonization issues more appealing to a Jewish public by emphasizing the favorable economic prospects and promising returns on investment, as well as the prospects of Christian support. The goal was to encourage wealthier non-Zionist Jews to participate, not out of ideological but rather out of economic and even German patriotic inclinations.<sup>7</sup> Oppenheimer was a very active and successful Zionist fundraiser, with the exception of his activities in the United States, or as he humorously called himself, the "Schnorrer King."<sup>8</sup>

In 1907, at the Eighth Zionist Congress in The Hague, delegates of Poalei Zion returned Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative to the agenda. Gross and Kaplansky raised the question of the model of Jewish farmers that Zionism was then pursuing: Should Jews be installed as manor lords employing mostly cheap Arab laborers, or should the Jewish masses do the farming themselves

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6 Kressel, "Ha-dilema bein ha-charter le-bein ha-zionim," 11–12. For more on Kaplansky and Gross, their relationship to Oppenheimer, and the Russian Poalei Zion, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 111–116.

7 Oppenheimer, *Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation in Palästina*, 4–7. Perhaps influenced by *Altneuland's* statistical emphasis on the underpopulation of the Middle East and Palestine, especially in the articles of Trietsch, his close associate at the beginning of his Zionist involvement, Oppenheimer conveyed the impression that the land was "deserted." His statistics of the Arab population were higher and more exact after the war. The higher numbers did not deter Oppenheimer in his belief that Arabs could be integrated into a Jewish society; see Franz Oppenheimer, *Bericht an die zionistischen Behoerden ueber meine Reise als Gutachter nach Palaestina in Maerz-April 1926*, CZA A161–15, 4–5.

8 *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des IX. Zionisten-Kongresses* (Cologne and Leipzig: Jüdischer Verlag, 1910), 202.

in a cooperative form along the lines Oppenheimer suggested? Gross reminded the congress that Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative was embraced by Herzl and adopted by the Sixth Zionist Congress. With Warburg's support, Gross petitioned for the reinstatement of Oppenheimer's cooperative. Oppenheimer was not present at the congress, having been sidelined by illness. Adolf Böhm, another Austrian Poalei Zion delegate, gave a speech at the congress about the importance of creating a class of sedentary Jewish agricultural laborers for which Oppenheimer's cooperative was most suitable.<sup>9</sup> In his Zionist historiography Böhm ascribed to Oppenheimer authorship of the theory that the national character of a land is determined by its farmers and not the manor owners.<sup>10</sup>

Oppenheimer reached this conclusion during his experience as a young physician in the province of Poznan, which was annexed by Prussia during the eighteenth century. He regarded himself as a critic of Prussian settlement politics in Poland. In his opinion, the "conquest by the sword" through the forceful settlement of ethnic Germans as gentry and independent farmers led to displacement, oppression, mass poverty and moral decline among the local Polish population. Furthermore, he argued, this policy had proved counterproductive to the aim of national integration. Instead of Germanizing the local population, Germanic settlers, both farmers and gentry, had adopted a predominantly Polish identity within just two generations.<sup>11</sup> Hence, according to Oppenheimer, Zionist settlement politics should pursue the creation of a class of independent Jewish farmers using cooperative models since the "lower class in Palestine must be Jewish or else the land will never become Jewish."<sup>12</sup>

Gross and Kaplansky were also drawing on the experience of Germanic settlements in Central and Eastern Europe, and to some extent of Poles and Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia. In his speech at the Eighth Zionist Congress, Gross warned that "every hundred Jewish families attract six thousand Arabs; if this continues, we shall fall victim to the same fate as the Germans in certain Slavic

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<sup>9</sup> Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 48–51.

<sup>10</sup> In the first volume of his history of the Zionist movement Böhm defended the installation of a technocratic administration in the first phase of Oppenheimer's cooperative model. He described the *Moshav Ovdim* as resembling Oppenheimer's second phase of worker independence; see Adolf Böhm, *Die zionistische Bewegung bis zum Ende des Weltkrieges*, vol. 1, *Die zionistische Bewegung* (Tel-Aviv: Hozaa Ivrit, 1935), 236–237, 239 and 445. For a short biography of Adolf Böhm, who was the most profound disciple of Oppenheimer among Zionist settlement activists, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 118.

<sup>11</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 94–95.

<sup>12</sup> *Die Welt*, January 10, 1908, 10.

lands.”<sup>13</sup> The threat of assimilation through Jewish dispersion throughout the globe, expressed in *Altneuland*, also loomed over settlement in Palestine. Economic development was expected to improve the living standards of local populations and attract Arab immigrants unless prohibitive action was taken. The “conquest by the plow” aimed to counteract this process by normalizing the Jewish professional pyramid with a wide farming basis that extended deep into the countryside and away from metropolitan areas. Allegedly, this did not entail exclusion of local populations from integrating into the farming class. As will be shown in the next section, Oppenheimer believed that a strong basis of Jewish farmers would protect Jews from assimilation and perhaps facilitate Arab acculturation into the new Jewish culture.

The Eighth Zionist Congress paved the way for practical settlement and the establishment of Oppenheimer’s settlement cooperative by incorporating the CEP into the Inner Actions Committee as a distinct department called the Palästina Ressort, headed by Otto Warburg. This was followed by the opening of the Palestine Office in Jaffa, headed by Arthur Ruppin, and subsequently the Palestine Land Development Company funded by the JNF and private companies for purchasing and brokering land<sup>14</sup> and preparing cooperative settlement.<sup>15</sup> In 1907 Jakob Thon, secretary of the Palestine Office, became editor of *Altneuland*, which had reverted to its old-new name, *Palästina*.<sup>16</sup>

Even if Oppenheimer was not the sole proponent of the cooperative idea within the Zionist movement, he was certainly perceived as its instigator. According to Shafir, this was Oppenheimer’s “tremendous” Zionist legacy: “It was not the establishment of the Degania *kvutza* then that was epoch-making, notwithstanding such interpretations by historians, but the setting up of Oppenheimer’s settlement-cooperative.”<sup>17</sup> This was manifested in Ruppin’s promotion of different forms of collective and cooperative settlements on land acquired by the JNF for creating an independent farmer class.

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13 Cited in Shafir, *Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 153–154.

14 Private entrepreneurship played an important role in colonial enterprises including Germany’s. For the role of private capital in the early settlement of Palestine, see Kats, *The “Business” of Settlement*, 217–224.

15 Even if Oppenheimer’s cooperative model was ultimately not emulated, Shafir emphasized its importance for the masterminds of early Zionist settlement; see Shafir, *Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 158.

16 Interestingly, the 1907 volume of *Palästina* was listed as fourth. The editors either disregarded the years before *Palästina* was taken over by the CEP or considered the second volume of *Palästina* spanning the years 1902/1903 to be two volumes.

17 Shafir, *Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 151 and 178.

Like Oppenheimer, Ruppin was also influenced by the ethnic and class conflict in Poznan, where he spent his childhood. This had left the memory of “the permanent struggle between the Polish majority living on the land and the dominant, mainly urban, German population.”<sup>18</sup> In his memoirs Ruppin wrote: “when I established [!] the *kvutza* at Degania, I thought that in this fashion the idea of the *Siedlungsgenossenschaft*, which was advocated by Franz Oppenheimer in the 1903 Congress, was realized, though Degania might have diverged from Oppenheimer’s rules in a few particulars. For me, the cooperative side of this settlement was the essential aspect; the rest was incidental.”<sup>19</sup> According to Ruppin’s biographer Etan Bloom, Ruppin’s main divergence from Oppenheimer’s model was his hands-on management style of Degania. Ruppin sought direct contact with local workers, in contrast to Oppenheimer’s management from afar through a mediator. The comparison between Degania and Merhavia shaped the collective memory of the labor movement and the historical narrative of Zionist settlement. The competition between the two management styles probably led to the Palestine Office’s reluctance to support Merhavia.<sup>20</sup>

In 1909 the Austrian Poalei Zion nominated Oppenheimer as a delegate on their behalf to the Ninth Zionist Congress in Hamburg. According to Kaplansky, Oppenheimer was unable to secure a nomination in the German delegation.<sup>21</sup> Although Oppenheimer’s cooperative plan was frowned upon by the German Zionist leadership, a large portion of the money for the Erez Israel *Siedlungsgenossenschaft* Fund, created at Oppenheimer’s initiative at the Ninth Zionist Congress, came from the rows of German Zionists.<sup>22</sup> Also, farmers from Palestine, whose voice and Hebrew tongue were almost unheard at prior Zionist congresses, traveled to Hamburg to express their support for practical settlement and the implementation of Oppenheimer’s cooperative schemes. Of significant note was a speech by a female pioneer, another rare sight at the podium of the Zionist congresses thus far, which caused a great stir among the delegates.<sup>23</sup>

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18 Cited in Shafir, *Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 159.

19 Cited in Shafir, *Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 178. The exclamation mark in the brackets appears in the original.

20 Etan Bloom, *Arthur Ruppin and the Production of Pre-Israeli Culture* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 253–258.

21 Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 54. For more on the efforts of Kaplansky and Gross to advance Oppenheimer’s cooperative settlement within the ZO, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 116–118.

22 Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 119.

23 Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 56–57.

Oppenheimer agreed to the utilization of capital from the Erez Israel Siedlungsgenossenschaft fund for other communal settlement forms, such as the *kvutza* at Um Djumi, a communal experiment of a more communist streak. Oppenheimer regarded it with the openness of a scientist in search of a control group enabling comparison with his model.<sup>24</sup> He considered this *kvutza* – which later became Degania ultimately overshadowing Merhavia – too small and intimate to be considered a real alternative to his extendable cooperative settlement.<sup>25</sup> Hence, his support for Um Djumi, regardless of the warnings he expressed at the Hamburg congress about the problematic way communist-inclined workers view cooperative administrators as “capitalist exploiters.”<sup>26</sup> This issue, as well as the question of Arab labor, would be detrimental to Oppenheimer’s Zionist cooperative experiment Merhavia.

## Zionism and Cosmopolitanism

The threat of Jewish assimilation was a driving force for Oppenheimer and other German Zionists. This was a higher priority for them than mass emigration or the founding of a Jewish state.<sup>27</sup> Oppenheimer joined the Zionist movement out of desire to restore Jewish self-assurance and even “mastery” within a European order, as well as disdain for what he considered to be futile attempts at complete assimilation. He abhorred baptized Jews who adopted the cultural code of anti-semitism and pretended to be Aryan.<sup>28</sup> However, the threat of assimilation was not limited to Europe. During the Ninth Zionist Congress in Hamburg in 1909, Oppenheimer was commissioned to implement his cooperative model in Palestine, with Merhavia founded in the following year. In his speech at the congress, Oppenheimer reminded the delegates of Herzl’s endorsement of his cooperative model shortly before his death. He reiterated the benefit of his plan to what he understood as the purpose of Zionism: the transplantation of Eastern European Jews without them assimilating into the general population – which in the case of Palestine meant becoming Arabs or Turks – through agriculturally oriented cooperative settlement.<sup>29</sup>

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24 Shafir, *Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 179; Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 84.

25 Franz Oppenheimer, “Bericht über meine Studienreise in Palästina,” *Die Welt*, July 8, 1910, 656.

26 *Verhandlungen des IX. Zionisten-Kongresses*, 202.

27 Oppenheimer, “Zionismus und Kosmopolitismus,” 3.

28 Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” 139.

29 Franz Oppenheimer, “Ländliche Kolonisation in Palästina,” *Die Welt*, October 15, 1909, 914.



Oppenheimer was not condescending towards Arabs. Sometimes he regarded them romantically as noble nomads, possibly of a higher culture than the Ostjuden who were accordingly in danger of assimilating into Arab culture. When describing Herzl's appearance, he did not use the Moses imagery, as many in Eastern Europe did, but rather envisioned him as Harun al-Rashid.<sup>30</sup> Even when talking about Arabic "vengefulness," Oppenheimer did not seek to villainize Arabs but to romantically portray the bloodshed as a sort of evolutionary service. In his view, this provided pioneers with the experience of heroic sacrifices, improving the ability of the Jewish race to defend itself.<sup>31</sup>

To prevent assimilation, Oppenheimer planned to settle Eastern European Jews in the countryside, not as manor owners or agricultural laborers but as farmers. The settlement cooperative would create an environment in which they could learn the necessary farming skills together with values necessary for national cohesiveness and citizenship that Ostjuden allegedly lacked. Furthermore, his analysis of the emergence of the state demonstrated that with the merging of the gentry and the lower classes into one society the language of the gentry was more likely to disappear or at the very least become a hybrid of common peasant language.<sup>32</sup> Oppenheimer believed this would make the peasantry lack the backbone of national culture, leading him to conclude that long term nation-building could only be attained with the plow and not with the sword. Oppenheimer argued that Arabs should not be excluded from the farmer class, lest they fall into the hands of nationalist Arab bourgeois instigators. Hence, Oppenheimer was a rare Zionist promoting a plan not only for the integration – but ultimately for the assimilation – of Arabs into a future Jewish national culture. It was the duty of the Jew, due to past exclusion, to include others in their future society and prove to Europe that an inclusive nationalism was possible.<sup>33</sup> This good example would hopefully benefit Jews remaining in Europe by positively inspiring their host nations.

In contrast to Herzl, Oppenheimer did not envision a complete, albeit gradual, wave of Jewish migration beginning with the working classes of Eastern Europe and culminating with the wealthier Jewish classes of Western Europe, once the living standard in Palestine improved. Herzl asserted that only those migrating would be entitled to proudly continue calling themselves Jews. The "Israelites" remaining in Europe would be free to fully assimilate into their respective

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30 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 210.

31 Franz Oppenheimer, "Galiläa," *Jüdische Rundschau*, March 28, 1934, 19.

32 Oppenheimer, *The State*, 89.

33 Oppenheimer, "Bodenbesitzordnung in Palästina," 510–511.

nations. With their decision to stay they would have unquestionably proven their loyalty to their fatherlands. According to Herzl, the diversion of Jewish migration to a Jewish state would further benefit those wanting to assimilate, since the growing presence of Ostjuden in Western countries was perceived as fueling anti-semitism.<sup>34</sup> Oppenheimer, on the other hand, doubted that the bulk of German Jewry would ever emigrate, unless their situation dramatically deteriorated. Yet they should still be able to call themselves Jews and even consider themselves Zionists. Furthermore, “every Western Jew who still wants to be called Jewish” must become a Zionist to avoid assimilation while remaining in the diaspora.<sup>35</sup> The Zionist movement was “the master blood of our race, the pride in our past, the feeling of the holiness of our accomplishments and the defiance that stiffens our necks against unjust violence.”<sup>36</sup>

In his essay “Zionism and Cosmopolitanism,” Oppenheimer compared Zionism to the Maccabean uprising, a popular Zionist image, portraying it as a national uprising against an imperialism that strangled national distinctions under the bogus banner of world civilization. Oppenheimer did not oppose utopian hopes for world peace and social consolidation, or even of a global civilization. Zionism as a movement “striving to revive again all eternal human values that the past of our nation created” could not be opposed to this idea, as it was originally a Jewish one formulated by the prophets of Israel.<sup>37</sup> One of Oppenheimer’s main contributions to Zionism was fusing it with universal socialist ideals.<sup>38</sup>

Oppenheimer, who favored a synthesis of socialism and capitalism, also aimed at a synthesis of nationalism and humanism in his utopian vision to create the “cosmopolite.” Oppenheimer used cosmopolitanism as an almost messianic ideal despite contemporary society’s negative connotations of the term. To Oppenheimer it meant “what the old pious times called God’s realm on earth.”<sup>39</sup> He thought the way to achieve cosmopolitanism was through national differentiation. Oppenheimer expounded that philosophers had described this in different ways. For example, Hegel’s idea of thesis and antithesis required nations to clearly differentiate themselves before reaching the ultimate redemptive synthesis. Herbert Spencer’s idea of an organic process of differentiation and integration deeply influenced Oppenheimer’s conception of state formation, in

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34 Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, 18–23.

35 Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” 142.

36 Oppenheimer, “Zionismus und Kosmopolitismus,” 4.

37 Oppenheimer, “Zionismus und Kosmopolitismus,” 1.

38 Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 10.

39 Oppenheimer, “Zionismus und Kosmopolitismus,” 2.

which social groups metaphorically form different organs of society. On an international level the different nations were comparable with different organs of humanity,<sup>40</sup> or at least of Europe, inasmuch as Oppenheimer quoted Nietzsche's interpretation of "cosmopolite" as the "good European."<sup>41</sup>

For organic evolution into a tolerant world civilization, individual nations would have to retain national distinction for the purpose of cooperation: "Just like a socialist society is only imaginable ... as a '*Freibürgerschaft*,' i.e. as a self-governing and self-administering society of free people without absolutism, class and clerical hegemony, so is Zionism only imaginable ... as a national Jewish polity with Hebrew language and independently evolved Jewish culture!"<sup>42</sup> Therefore, Zionism's mission according to Oppenheimer was to resist a hierarchical imperialism founded on slavery and domination by trailblazing an alternative utopian union of equal and proud master nations. The Jews with their anti-slavery ethos and their gift of Monotheism to the world belonged, he argued, among the ranks of master nations. Zionism was to be the vehicle enabling the Jewish people to take a leading role once again. And a Zionist success in creating "colonies ... that will realize humanities' dream of fraternal equality in freedom and happiness, colonies that we hope will bear witness once again to the messianic mission of Judaism,"<sup>43</sup> could be the first step towards another Jewish gift to the world: a new world order of equal nations.<sup>44</sup> This cosmopolitan world would be rooted in national aspirations.

In equating Jewish uniqueness with a universal mission, Oppenheimer was drawing on modern Jewish thought associated with the struggle of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and other Maskilim to undermine European ghettoization of Judaism.<sup>45</sup> According to Oppenheimer, only territories in close vicinity to Europe were capable of cultural advancement and successful colonization. The effect would, however, not be unilateral. Turning Palestine into a "blooming center of free world commerce of the future" would act as an impetus to positive transformation in Europe. Thus, Zionism for Oppenheimer would be intricately linked

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40 Oppenheimer, "Zionismus und Kosmopolitismus," 2.

41 Oppenheimer, "Der Zionismus," 227–228.

42 Franz Oppenheimer, "Der Genossenschaftsfond," *Die Welt*, December 30, 1910, 1364.

43 Oppenheimer, "Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation," 261.

44 According to Oppenheimer, this would be the fourth gift after Judaism, Christianity and Islam; see Oppenheimer, "Zionismus und Kosmopolitismus," 5.

45 Heschel drew on Amos Funkenstein's differentiation between the notion of uniqueness as being different in premodern Jewish self-understanding and being universal in Jewish modernity; see Heschel, "Revolt of the Colonized," 66. Shimoni discussed the cultivation of "ethnicism" while striving for Jewish integration and a universal horizon of Judaism during the *Haskala* period; see Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 15–18.

to a utopian vision for Europe, even though its settlement scheme would unfold on the threshold of the continent.<sup>46</sup> There is a certain similarity here to the idea propagated in Sha'are Zion that the transformation of Palestine would begin at its threshold. It also corresponds to Oppenheimer's plan to transform Germany, not through revolution but through "inner colonization," a transformation of rural areas which would gradually transform life in urban areas as well.

For Oppenheimer, the messianic Jewish mission in the modern era was the same as in antiquity: utopian pioneering. Echoing Herzl and the Freiland ideal, Oppenheimer wrote: "If we only want, it could become reality – and an example for the world tattered and bleeding due to class and racial antagonism. Millennia ago, redemption was already prophesized to humanity for the time when God's people return to their land. Since this great moment finds not a small breed, let us now realize the old blissful prophecy."<sup>47</sup> Oppenheimer, whose Jewish name was David,<sup>48</sup> imagined that he was a descendent of the regal house of David.<sup>49</sup> Should Zionism succeed in creating a socially rehabilitated Jewish people, assisted by his settlement cooperative, "it will prove that a Messiah from the house of David will rise to realize God's realm on earth."<sup>50</sup>

Quotes from non-Jews in *Altneuland* such as Pastor Möller from Cassel lent weight to the argument of the Jews' historical role as world liberators: "Courage and bravery formed the most outstanding characteristics of the people that defended its freedom most persistently against violent Romanism. Galilea was also the origin of the most determined national party: the Zealots."<sup>51</sup> The same Galilea was now, in Oppenheimer's eyes, the birthplace of free and strong Jews that even the "proud Bedouins of the desert" consider their equals.<sup>52</sup>

Oppenheimer's numerous messianic references take the struggle one step further when linked with his opinion on the role of religion in state formation. During state formation, culture, language and religion were hybridized. The god of the master class was the most revered, with the gods of the subjugated either serving him in a pantheon or becoming his enemies.<sup>53</sup> Oppenheimer's emphasis on the Jewish people gifting the world three religions complemented his perspective on Jewish moral law and biblical land division becoming the foun-

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46 Oppenheimer, "Pflanzungsverein 'Palaestina,'" 353.

47 Cited in Sonder, *Gartenstädte*, 93–94.

48 Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 13–14.

49 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 36.

50 Bein, "Briefwechsel," 25.

51 *Altneuland* 1 (1904): 375.

52 Oppenheimer, "Galiläa," 19.

53 Oppenheimer, *The State*, 89–90.

dations of a future world unity. This, in turn, fulfilled the messianic faith and equated Jewish universality with obtaining a dominant position in the new world order, thus counteracting assimilation pressures.

However, in his focus on Jewish antiquity Oppenheimer was not trying to promote Jewish myth. Nor did he obtain his ideas from traditional interpretations of Mosaic Law. Oppenheimer was part of what Anthony D. Smith called the “messianic assimilationists” among nationalist intelligentsia who try to realize their “messianic-like faith in a common humanity” by fusing it with ethnic thought.<sup>54</sup> The messianic overtones of his colonial fantasies aimed to fight assimilation by cultivating pride in Jewish heritage. For Oppenheimer, Zionism was a vehicle of class struggle that aimed to redeem proletarian Jews from their horrid conditions and make them democratic subjects of a nation-state. Zionism’s goals were not unique, yet “it is of no small pride to us that our class interests here have fully parallel goals to those of mankind and humanity.”<sup>55</sup> The uniqueness that Oppenheimer ascribed to Zionism – and historically to Judaism – was radicalism in social issues. This made Jews an important agent of transformation. For this reason, he suggested that from the start Zionism adopt radical proposals benefiting workers such as exhaustive profit sharing and secure prospects for gaining full land ownership. Oppenheimer reinterpreted Mosaic Law as land reform, with class issues at its essence:

What the National Fund does today ... is in its spirit the exact implementation of the old regulations of biblical land law ... The purpose must be to permanently reestablish the old cooperative equality of the nation with which they immigrated to Palestine and preserved over the centuries. We do not want to introduce to the Holy Land the curse of capitalist corrosion and not class hatred. We have enough on our hands with the racial antagonism between ourselves and the Arabs and Turks.<sup>56</sup>

Oppenheimer’s exegesis is reminiscent of his *Altneuland* colleague Nossig, who reinterpreted Mosaic Law as trailblazing hygienic guidelines.<sup>57</sup> The common thread between Nossig and Oppenheimer was imbuing Jewish law and scripture with a modern, scientific air. According to Oppenheimer, the prophets of Israel were social innovators giving new inspiring interpretations to Mosaic law. In his account, one of these prophets, Jesus, ultimately introduced the Jewish spirit

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<sup>54</sup> Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 10–11.

<sup>55</sup> Oppenheimer, “Die Gewinnbeteiligung,” 368.

<sup>56</sup> Excerpt from the JNF/KKL pamphlet *Gemeineigentum und Privateigentum an Grund und Boden* published in 1913 and cited in *Franz Oppenheimer und der Zionismus*, 2–3.

<sup>57</sup> See chapter 4.

of freedom into the Greco-Roman world, which had already been prepared for it by Hellenistic cosmopolitanism.

Oppenheimer also gave empirical examples from colonial undertakings to reinforce his insight that the psychological mindset of a society founded on slavery was detrimental to the state. These included the situation in South and Central America, as well as a comparison with Queensland in which dark-skinned slaves toiled in sugar cane plantation and the other Australian provinces in which slavery was forbidden.<sup>58</sup> According to Oppenheimer, recent times had only seen one example for such a radical and innovative undertaking to restore cooperative, free spirit: Rahaline.<sup>59</sup> It was this utopian cooperative that inspired Herzl and Oppenheimer alike and kindled the bond between them. However, Rahaline ultimately failed. Oppenheimer warned that the Zionist endeavor could fail, too, if the cooperative cosmopolitan spirit were to fail to transcend national boundaries:

We must beware of praying to idols and dancing around the golden calf so that God's bane will not send us again on a desert wandering for an unforeseeable length of time. No one has suffered more from the spear's right of conquest than the Jewish people who were dispersed throughout the world by the Roman spear. Not the right of the spear would create his empire and land again, but only the peaceful, sweet and gentle right of the plow. We must not introduce authority into Palestine but rather its eternal historical counterpart the cooperative.<sup>60</sup>

## Merhavia and the Controversy over Arab Labor

In 1910 Oppenheimer traveled to Palestine for the first time to familiarize himself firsthand with the land and promote the cooperative idea among Jewish workers. Oppenheimer observed farming methods of Jews, Arabs, Templers and the Russian proselytes. He raved about the physical transformation of Jewish urban intelligentsia into muscular pioneers who could protect themselves from occasional Arab assaults. The children born in the land were to be its new masters, the core of a "future *Volkssiedlung*," according to Oppenheimer: "It is observable that they are the children of the highest race in the land. They 'stride' – to use a Freytagian expression – 'with master feet on their own ground and soil.'"<sup>61</sup> With the reference to Gustav Freytag, Oppenheimer placed Jewish set-

<sup>58</sup> Oppenheimer, "Die Anfänge des jüdischen Kapitalismus," 392–393.

<sup>59</sup> Oppenheimer, "Die Gewinnbeteiligung," 374.

<sup>60</sup> Franz Oppenheimer *und der Zionismus*, 3.

<sup>61</sup> Oppenheimer, "Bericht über meine Studienreise in Palästina," *Die Welt*, July 1, 1920, 621.

tlers in the context of Freytag's asserted racial and cultural superiority of German colonists in Eastern Europe.<sup>62</sup>

Oppenheimer used his travel report, printed in *Die Welt*, to promote his settlement cooperative, emphasizing the extensive freedom cooperative workers should have. Aware of potential conflict with the communist-inclined workers of the Second Aliyah, Oppenheimer wrote that workers could decide for themselves on their preferable administration. They should have the right to make any mistake they like except for privatizing communal lands.<sup>63</sup> Another potential issue of dispute Oppenheimer singled out was the role of women in the cooperatives. He recognized there were few Jewish women farmers, apart from Russian converts. Therefore, Oppenheimer preferred to start the cooperative experiment with bachelors. Once established the cooperative could be extended to include families with limited farming roles for women.<sup>64</sup>

Shortly after Oppenheimer's Palestine visit, the Palestine Land Development Company purchased a large plot of land in the Jezreel Valley close to the Afula train station. Ruppin allocated a third of it for Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative, which was founded the following year. The author and *Altneuland* contributor Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, who also worked at the Palestine Office, named the cooperative Merhavia to express its redemptive character for the distressed Eastern European Jews.<sup>65</sup> The name, literally meaning "God's expense," was taken from Psalms 118:5: "When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD; he brought me into a spacious place."<sup>66</sup> Oppenheimer fundraised for the cooperative and was involved in planning details. In September of 1910, he suggested that agronomist Salomon Dyk be appointed administrator of Merhavia. Even

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<sup>62</sup> Jürgen Lieskounig, "'Branntweintrinkende Wilde': Beyond Civilisation and Outside History, The Depiction of the Poles in Gustav Freytag's Novel 'Soll und Haben'" in *Germany and Eastern Europe: Cultural Identities and Cultural Differences*, ed. Keith Bullivant (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 134.

<sup>63</sup> Oppenheimer, "Bericht über meine Studienreise in Palästina," *Die Welt*, July 8, 1910, 655–658.

<sup>64</sup> Oppenheimer, "Bericht über meine Studienreise in Palästina," *Die Welt*, July 22, 701–703. The role of families and children was intensely disputed in the early days of collective settlement. Merhavia had a relatively high share of families among its labor force. However, it lacked privacy and capacities to support these families leading to tensions and strife within the cooperative. See Josef Rabinovitz, "ha-ko'aperatzia be-merchavia," in *Sefer Merhavia: ha-ko'aperatzia*, ed. Eliezer Lubrani (Tel-Aviv: Vatik ha-ko'aperatzia, 1961), 81–87. Oppenheimer also claimed that the difficulties in accommodating families was one of the reasons for the failure of the cooperative. However, with a note of male chauvinism he attributed the quarrels to the incorporation of women into the cooperative; see Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 168.

<sup>65</sup> Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 92.

<sup>66</sup> New International Version Translation.

though Dyk's tenure in Merhavia was short-lived and highly controversial, the relationship with Oppenheimer lasted until the final dissolution of the cooperative. After the First World War, Oppenheimer appointed Dyk as director of Bärenklau, the settlement cooperative that he founded in the Province of Brandenburg in 1920.

The socialist Jewish press in Palestine closely followed the developments around Merhavia. Prominent figures of the Yishuv such as David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, head of Palestine's Poalei Zion, and the agronomist Yitzhak Wilkanski contributed to the discussion.<sup>67</sup> Local leaders of Poalei Zion, whose Russian federation renounced official Zionism in 1909 due to its alleged capitalist and bourgeois agenda,<sup>68</sup> propagated the importance of Oppenheimer's cooperative model for the Jewish proletariat. Ben Gurion was less optimistic. He regarded Dyk's import of workers from Slobodka in Galicia, instead of recruiting or even consulting with local Jewish workers and their representatives, as a bad omen. Freedom and self-determination of the workers were at the center of discussion, an issue which Oppenheimer preemptively addressed in his Palestine travel report. Hardened agricultural laborers of the Yishuv now set on Merhavia to ensure Zionist enterprises would not follow in the footsteps of the allegedly authoritarian administrators of the Rothschild and JCA farms against whom they already led many strikes and conflicts.<sup>69</sup>

Yet conflict plagued the entirety of Merhavia's existence, from the initial occupation and the ensuing eviction of Arab tenants in 1910 – accompanied by violent disputes with Arab neighbors and arrests by Ottoman authorities – until the end of the First World War, when it was converted into a kibbutz due to its high debt levels. The workers from Slobodka shipped in and trained by Dyk were not immune to the predominant communist spirit among the workers of the Second Aliyah. They resisted differential pay according to individual productivity, a decisive element in distinguishing Oppenheimer's cooperative from other forms of communal settlement in Palestine. Dyk's authoritarian style and resentment of Marxist workers was a source of continual conflict, strikes and dismissals, ending with his replacement in 1914 by labor leader Josef Rabinovitz, who granted extensive independence to the workers. Despite their con-

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67 Yitzhak Wilkanski (later Elazar-Volkani), an agronomist who intricately studied Oppenheimer's cooperative plan, compiled a report on Merhavia for the Palestine Office in 1916. He wanted to translate some of Oppenheimer's writings into Hebrew to incorporate them in his Hebrew agricultural library project; see CZA A161–14. Wilkanski was instrumental in honoring Oppenheimer's contribution to Zionist settlement; see Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 145.

68 Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 113.

69 Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 70–84.



flict with Dyk, the workers' leadership kept consulting with Oppenheimer on the development of the cooperative. Oppenheimer used his personal connections with German military authorities to assist them during the First World War.<sup>70</sup>

Dyk's unadapted transplantation of German agricultural methods to Palestine might have played some role in the cooperative's failure.<sup>71</sup> However, this was conjoined with a number of debilitating conditions: infertile soil; an isolated and disease-infested location; lack of growth; inadequate provisions for families; Arab attacks; and a war economy that included the encampment of ten thousand Ottoman soldiers near the cooperative.<sup>72</sup> Not only Ottoman soldiers but also a Bavarian aviation unit was stationed in the vicinity of Merhavia. The Bavarians helped protect the cooperative from Arab attacks.<sup>73</sup>

This is not the place to continue recounting the full history of Merhavia and Oppenheimer's role in it,<sup>74</sup> because this is not a work on Zionist settlement history but on the discourse surrounding it and its significance for German-Jewish identity. Considering Oppenheimer's views on racial and colonial issues in Germany, however, it would be appropriate to expound on one aspect of the discourse around Merhavia, namely the question of including non-Jewish Arab workers. Oppenheimer's settlement cooperative, which aimed to promote Jewish labor and the creation of a Jewish farming class, became a physical and ideological battleground for the exclusivity of Jewish labor. It was here that the fantasy of being a benevolent and humane conqueror promoted in *Altneuland* crashed into a conflicting ideological reality. Yet the flattering self-image was not shattered by the encounter with indigenous people but by the encounter with the settlers.

The socialist-inclined pioneers of the Second Aliyah immigrated to Palestine from Eastern Europe hoping to find employment in agriculture. They were quickly confronted with an economic reality in which Jewish enterprises preferred to hire experienced Arab peasants who were also cheaper. The sensitivity of Merhavia's workers to a differential wage system was rooted in an ethnic conflict over

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70 CZA A161-17; CZA A161-18.

71 Dyk's nomination was already in dispute due to his dishonorable dismissal from the Jewish training farm at Steinhorst and alleged homosexuality; see CZA A161-13. According to Penslar, the fact that he was ultimately instated demonstrated the lack of educated administrators willing to take a position in Palestine; see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 121-122.

72 Ruppin officially requested the garrisoning of Ottoman units in Jewish hubs for their protection; see Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 196.

73 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 167.

74 For further reading on Merhavia, see Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 120-122; Caspari and Lichtblau, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 63-67; Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 85-149; Lubrani, *Sefer Merhavia*.

labor, not only in communist ideology. In this capitalist system Arab peasants seemed to have a natural advantage. The settlers expected Zionism's nation-building institutions to promote their cause on national domains by prohibiting Arab labor, putting long-term national goals above short-term economic ones.

Until the founding of Merhavia, the ZO and JNF did not pay much attention to practical issues such as Arab labor and evictions, given that their agricultural estates were still very small compared to private enterprises. Only in 1911 did the ZO begin instituting a consistent policy promoting Jewish labor at the expense of Arab labor. However, Ruppin, Bodenheimer and other leading members of the ZO still doubted the economic feasibility of an exclusively Jewish labor market. Ruppin was especially apprehensive when it came to evictions of Arab tenants. He was concerned that this would fuel popular Arab resistance to Zionism. The general attitude, exemplified by Kaplansky, was one of assurance that the life of Arabs – and especially Arab farmers – would generally improve due to Jewish economic activity and the introduction of modern agricultural technology, with Arab evictions greatly minimized.<sup>75</sup>

This corresponded to the optimism often expressed in *Altneuland*. Out of the *Altneuland* settlement experts, Aaronson and Oppenheimer were most outspoken in favor of utilizing Arab labor. In his agricultural research station at Atlit, Aaronson even refused to hire Jewish workers. He opposed the ideological-fueled agenda of creating a Jewish farming class. He opposed Jews performing such menial tasks, instead of focusing on agricultural administration. Similarly, he saw no need for economic segregation as long as Jewish predominance would be retained.<sup>76</sup>

Oppenheimer, who was a strong proponent of the Jewish farming class ideology, opposed racist inclinations within Zionism. He envisioned a “Levantine Switzerland” where Jews, Arabs and all other ethnic groups would coexist harmoniously and without bloodshed. As a sociologist focused on analyzing and combating antisemitism, he described the turn to national chauvinism within Zionism as a “photographic negative” of antisemitism, as “*imitation par opposition*.”<sup>77</sup> Yet Oppenheimer's position was an ambivalent balancing act. Oppenheimer was considered one of the main architects of the concept of nationalization through labor, as symbolized by the plow. For him, too, Jew-

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75 Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 129–130. For a detailed account of Ruppin's changing perception of the “Arab problem,” see Bloom, *Arthur Ruppin*, 300–310.

76 Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy*, 134–135.

77 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 214–216.

ish predominance within this farming class was a prerequisite. As late as 1916 he criticized philanthropic farms in Palestine for attracting too many non-Jewish laborers.<sup>78</sup> Nationalization through labor was incomprehensible without extensive exclusion of Arab workers, even if this came short of total exclusion.

In 1911, a bloody clash occurred in Merhavia, leading to the death of one Arab and the injury of another. In repercussion local Arabs instigated a series of thefts and infiltrations of the settlement.<sup>79</sup> In the spring of 1914, a full-fledged conflict over Arab labor erupted in Merhavia. This was not an isolated incident but one of several disputes between Second Aliyah pioneers and settlement administrations, of which the most notable was the strike at Sejera at the beginning of the same year.<sup>80</sup> The cooperative workers demanded that Dyk replace Arab laborers he hired for menial tasks such as weeding and hoeing with modern machines, claiming that this was more efficient.<sup>81</sup>

This was also the strategy pursued by Warburg for the sake of employing solely Jewish workers in Migdal, which was founded parallel to Merhavia on an estate bought from Catholic Germans who had abandoned their settlement plans on the site. To facilitate the expansion of Warburg's cotton plantations, Yehiel Tschlenow, who codirected the superordinate Ge'ulat ha'Aretz [land redemption] Company with Warburg, and the estate manager Moshe Glikin devised a plan to hire Yemenite Jewish laborers instead of Arab ones.<sup>82</sup>

In his report on the conflict in Merhavia, Ruppín, who acted as arbitrator, wrote that, according to Dyk, the workers' sole motivation was nationalistic. Since Dyk was the administrating agronomist, he accepted his judgement, allowing the hiring of Arab day laborers. The workers accepted Ruppín's decision for the time being while appealing to the board of the Erez Israel Siedlungsgenossenschaft and Kaplansky in particular. The workers accused Dyk of undermining not only the national task of the cooperative but also its educational purpose of training cooperative members to become independent farmers capable of managing their own affairs. They requested the immediate implementation of the second phase of the cooperative: self-administration by the workers. The board accepted their claims, endorsing their negative attitude towards Arab labor and

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**78** Franz Oppenheimer, "Soziologische Tagebuchblätter: 6," *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, January 10, 1917, 201–202.

**79** Bloom, *Arthur Ruppín*, 305–306.

**80** Kats, *The "Business" of Settlement*, 184–186.

**81** Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 127–128.

**82** Kats, *The "Business" of Settlement*, 247–270.

renewing their commitment to promoting independent Jewish farmers. Since Dyk apparently failed in the latter, he had to be replaced.<sup>83</sup>

As mastermind of Merhavia, Oppenheimer made his dissenting opinion on the incorporation of Arab laborers very clear to the Zionist leadership, now based in Berlin since the replacement of David Wolffsohn with Otto Warburg as head of the ZO. He continued to support Dyk at meetings of the Inner Actions Committee and Erez Israel Siedlungsgenossenschaft and ridiculed the policy of buying solely Jewish goods for having a negative overall outcome. The extra expenses of transporting them to Palestine came out of Jewish pockets and ended up in English, French and even Arab hands. Further, the Jewish workers hypocritically calling for a boycott of Arab labor ultimately spent their money on Arab products such as cigarettes and oranges.<sup>84</sup>

In January 1914, Tschlenow, who headed the Inner Actions Committee, rebuked Oppenheimer for supposedly saying in a lecture in Prague about Merhavia that “Berlin decided to sweep the Arabs out of the land, thus provoking an Arab pogrom in Palestine.” In the correspondence that followed, Tschlenow expressed his agreement with Oppenheimer’s position on the question of Arab labor. He stated that the land belonged to its two Semitic peoples who should entertain neighborly relations.<sup>85</sup> Oppenheimer argued that the Arabs are a “white race” whose language is related to Hebrew, and who had accepted Moses as a great prophet. It was “dumb,” he claimed, to treat them as an inferior race and behave like “victors in a conquered land,” thus importing the negative “European mentality.”<sup>86</sup> Oppenheimer also believed that the indigenous Muslim population was free from imported Christian-European antisemitism.<sup>87</sup> His equation of Semitic – Arabic or Jewish – with being white or Aryan was also reflected in his description of Herzl as “a handsome, tall man of the noblest type of pure Semite, as it is still realized today in the highest classes of noble Arabs unmixed with Negro [sic] blood, the type that even strongly *völkisch*-minded ‘Aryans’ of today have learnt to regard as a race closely related and almost equal to them.”<sup>88</sup>

Tschlenow replied that his reproach only concerned Oppenheimer’s claim that the Inner Actions Committee ordered the expulsion of Arabs. Oppenheimer should not have made such allegations in public before confronting the inner circles, especially considering his authority as a renowned settlement expert. Op-

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<sup>83</sup> Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 127–134.

<sup>84</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 167–168.

<sup>85</sup> CZA A161–10; CZA A161–14.

<sup>86</sup> CZA A161–16, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Oppenheimer, *Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation in Palästina*, 5.

<sup>88</sup> Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 210.

penheimer urged the Inner Actions Committee or the Palestine Office to publicly display their dismay at the exclusion of Arabs through action, and not in words alone.<sup>89</sup> In July of the same year Oppenheimer suggested the *Jüdischer Verlag* publish a book with his Zionist essays and lectures, such as *Zionismus und Cosmopolitismus* and *Stammesbewusstsein und Volkbewusstsein*. He suggested the title “On the Jewish Problem” but was turned down because it was “in sharp contrast” to their “national propaganda.” The publishing house promised that once the conflict with the “national rivals” quieted, they could once again publish works that go against the grain of “the present dominant views.”<sup>90</sup>

Preventing people from access to farmland ran against the basic tenant of Oppenheimer’s philosophy that the bane of capitalism lies in class-motivated land enclosure which the settlement cooperative was meant to break. He disapproved of the “conquest by the plow” becoming a new justification for land enclosure, which he associated with the “conquest by the sword.” Yet despite his attempts to curb the escalating ethnic conflict, Oppenheimer did not address the fact that exclusion was inevitable when his instrument of universal utopia was deployed in the service a national cause. The settlement cooperative was a means of establishing a firm and widespread grip of an ambiguous Jewish-European culture which, as a secondary but not essential goal, might result in a certain acculturation of other ethnic groups in its vicinity. Oppenheimer’s ambiguity might have also resulted from the fact that his main focus was sustaining the ethnic and cultural preservation of a Jewish minority in Europe.

Oppenheimer stood unwavering by his colonial fantasy of conquest without conflict, even as the realities of settlement began tearing all hopes of peaceful coexistence. As bloodshed continued, Oppenheimer doubled down on his faith in the universal messianic vision of class liberation, instead of subjection, steeped in the Jewish diasporic experience. He made this poignantly clear in a letter he sent to the *Jüdische Pressezentrale* in Zurich at the end of 1920, the year in which violent riots were setting the course of the conflict for years to come:

What matters to me most is the question of the Arabs. If the Jews are not capable, without hesitation, of treating the Arabs not only as equals but rather as brothers, that is incorporating them in all privileges and cooperatives, they justify retroactively all excesses of anti-semitism and destroy their own work economically and politically. Economically because the task lies in not tolerating a class of “free” workers in the land but equipping them all with means of production instead, and politically because otherwise there will never be peace and quiet in the land. When the pariah among the nations, the Jew, does not have the moral virtue to establish the perfect model of cohabitation of multiple nations,

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<sup>89</sup> CZA A161–10; CZA A161–14.

<sup>90</sup> CZA A161–14.

he deserves nothing better than the wreckage of all his hopes. May the great hour find a great race.<sup>91</sup>

## Oppenheimer's Break with German Zionism

Shortly after Oppenheimer's death, his son, Ludwig Yehuda Oppenheimer was in contact with Martin Buber about publishing the excerpt above together with an essay on his father's warnings about the Arab question in *Ba'ayot Hazman*. This was the organ of Agudat Ihud advocating a binationalist vision for Palestine in the 1940s to which many former Brit Shalom members of German Jewish heritage contributed.<sup>92</sup> Zionist historiography has struggled with this binationalist conception in its midst. Some historians denied Brit Shalom's link to Zionism and even portrayed it as anti-Zionist.<sup>93</sup> Others argued that Zionist historiography later appropriated Brit Shalom "in its desire to promote an image of the Zionist movement as seeking peace."<sup>94</sup>

Over the years, Buber published several of Oppenheimer's essays and books, most importantly his magnum opus *The State* in 1906 in a sociological series intended as popular science called *Die Gesellschaft* [Society]. Their paths crossed every now and then over several decades. However, in the years leading up to the First World War, they came into open strife over the aims of German Zionism despite their mutual passion for social utopias, cooperative lifestyles and binational conceptions of Zionism.

One of the essential principles of Zionism was that Jews were one nation and not merely coreligionists. The complex relationship between German and Eastern European Jews was a central issue for Oppenheimer and other German Zionists.<sup>95</sup> In Oppenheimer's recollection it was at the Zionist congresses that he en-

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91 CZA A161–8.

92 CZA A165–95. The text was ultimately not published in *Ba'ayot Hazman* because Ludwig Oppenheimer could not comply with the deadline. It was published in German on January 15, 1976, and included a manuscript from June 20, 1920, as well. According to Ludwig Oppenheimer the latter was his father's reaction to the San Remo conference, which foiled the Faisal-Weizmann agreement for Arab-Jewish cooperation. Oppenheimer therefore appealed to Zionists not to give up hope for cooperation between Jews and Arabs; see L. Y. Oppenheimer, *Aus der ersten Zeit des Zionismus. Die Warnungen Franz Oppenheimers*, January 15, 1976, JMB 2000/298/19.

93 Shumsky, *Ben Prag li-Yerushalayim*, 22.

94 Bloom, *Arthur Ruppin*, 314.

95 For a comprehensive overview of the East-West complex, see Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*. Aschheim discussed Oppenheimer's essay "Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein" on pp. 96–98.

countered for the first time Ostjuden who “were not beggars.” The congresses sensitized him for the enormous differences in the Jewish world. He considered the delegates he encountered as empirical evidence of the Jews’ extreme physical adaptation to their host nations and the gaps between their mentalities.<sup>96</sup> In great foresight, he remarked that the real challenge in uniting all these different groups would surface once they all lived together on one land.<sup>97</sup> According to Oppenheimer, the integration of East and West required recognition of the extreme differences between these two “organs” of the Jewish people and their differing Zionist approaches. While the Ostjuden sought in Zionism their redemption from physical annihilation, the Westjuden were looking for redemption from assimilation.<sup>98</sup>

Mutual respect for each other’s aims was crucial for successful cooperation. Oppenheimer implored Zionists of Eastern European creed to respect the wishes of German Zionists to engage in the movement without intending to immigrate to Palestine. Their contribution of capital and “intelligence” would be crucial not only for fulfilling the territorial purpose of Zionism but also for the required transformation of the Ostjude into a “human being,” Oppenheimer wrote condescendingly.<sup>99</sup> As a social engineer Oppenheimer did not believe that individual *Bildung* could succeed in educating the masses. Versed in a medical discourse connecting supposed Jewish ineptitude with alleged physical deformity, Oppenheimer concurred with Zionists such as Nordau promoting physical education as the key to creating “new muscle Jews.”<sup>100</sup> His unique addition to Jewish physical education was cooperative farming as another efficient tool in “creating citizens of the future community” and instilling the formerly oppressed with the necessary masculine “master virtues” for their self-liberation.<sup>101</sup> German Zionists could help the supposedly ill-bred Ostjuden, who were designated as the primary agents of Zionist colonization, by creating a system to cultivate these virtues. They would serve as technical managers, as “enlightened despots,” until their brethren were ready for self-administration.<sup>102</sup> Kurt Blumenfeld remembered Oppenheimer making this distinction between the roles in a conversation they had

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96 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebttes, Erreichtes*, 213–214.

97 Oppenheimer, “Der Zionismus,” 216.

98 The distinction between *materielle Judennot* and *geistige Judennot* was widespread among German Zionists. Oppenheimer was not alone in distinguishing between two different Zions; see Poppel, *Zionism in Germany*, 28–29.

99 Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” 142.

100 Gilman, “The Jew’s Body,” 53–54.

101 Oppenheimer, “Sport,” 342–343.

102 Oppenheimer, “Ländliche Kolonisation in Palästina,” 917.

at the Ninth Zionist Congress: "You must know that Zionism is a project in which we direct and the Ostjuden must be the actors."<sup>103</sup>

Oppenheimer's differentiation between West- and Ostjuden, as well as his modular understanding of identity, were best articulated in his essay "Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein," published in early 1910. The essay sparked a heated debate exposing a growing rift among German Zionists.<sup>104</sup> In the essay, Oppenheimer grappled with the concept of a Jewish national character, using terms he already started developing in his 1907 article "Der Zionismus."<sup>105</sup> He used the contemporary popular term *Stamm*,<sup>106</sup> meaning tribe or clan, to refer to what today could be described as ethnicity<sup>107</sup> and was at the time was increasingly denoted as race. In addition, he dealt with a younger Zionist generation's growing doubts about the benefits of emancipation and their drifting towards *völkish* ideas.

Hoping to counter radicalization tendencies, Oppenheimer asserted that, for the most part, German Jews could not become national Jews. For him, only Eastern European Jews could possess a Jewish *Volksbewusstsein*, or peoplehood, based on common language, shared customs, professions and a culture which could be transplanted to Palestine. In contrast, Westjuden could only possess a *Stammesbewusstsein*, a recollection of a magnificent past preserved due to it being a source of pride. The *Volksbewusstsein* of their host nations was thus, he believed, more dominant than a Jewish one, and these two types of consciousness were completely independent from each other. As Oppenheimer saw it, however, possessing *Stammesbewusstsein* was enough to be considered a non-assimilationist, and was even better than religious sentiments as a source of solidarity between German and Eastern European Jews.<sup>108</sup> Yet despite the various sociological categories of his modular identity structure, Oppenheimer stumbled in describing his immersion in German culture

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**103** Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage*, 52.

**104** For a list of many of the participants in this debate, see Kressel, *Franz Oppenheimer*, 60 – 62.

**105** Oppenheimer, "Der Zionismus," 218 – 219.

**106** The use of the term "Stamm" to describe Jewish affiliation was widespread during the German imperial era. See Yfaat Weiss, "'Wir Westjuden haben jüdisches Stammesbewußtsein, die Ostjuden jüdisches Volksbewußtsein': Der deutsch-jüdische Blick auf das polnische Judentum in den beiden ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 37 (1997): 159 – 160.

**107** Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 273.

**108** Oppenheimer, "Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein," 139.



without using the term “assimilation”: “I am not an assimilationist [*Assimilant*], but I am assimilated [*assimiliert*].”<sup>109</sup>

Although even completely assimilated Jews could still take pride in their Jewish heritage, as Oppenheimer’s examples below demonstrate, he admitted that it was the failure of emancipation in Western Europe, and especially Germany, that made assimilation more a result of antisemitism than a deliberate decision. In Oppenheimer’s opinion, as culturally advanced as Germany was, it still lagged behind America, England and France in its adherence to liberal values. To explain this, Oppenheimer divided the concept of *Volksbewusstsein* into the sub-categories *Kulturbewusstsein* [cultural consciousness] and *Nationalbewusstsein* [patriotic consciousness], thus creating a modular and graded model of identity that was open to further forms of consciousness, e. g., *Reichsbewusstsein* [imperial consciousness] or *märkisches Heimatbewusstsein* [Brandenburgian home consciousness] upon which, the future leader of the German revisionists, Richard Lichtheim taunted: “Why not [add] Berlin residential consciousness? and English parliamentary consciousness? and a feeling for French painting?”<sup>110</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, even though educated German Jews were Western European in their *Kulturbewusstsein*, Prussia was only a step-fatherland for them due to widespread antisemitism, limiting their *Nationalbewusstsein*, or patriotism. In Eastern Europe, he argued, extreme antisemitism also made it impossible to develop any *Nationalbewusstsein* besides a Jewish one. However, Eastern European Jews retained a Jewish *Kulturbewusstsein* too, since their Jewish culture was still more developed than the supposed barbarism, which Oppenheimer elsewhere called *asiatische Brutalität*,<sup>111</sup> or “euphemistically called Russian or Romanian ‘culture’”<sup>112</sup> of their immediate surroundings:

We cannot be Jewish by culture because the Jewish culture, as it has been preserved from the Middle Ages in the ghettos of the East, stands infinitely lower than modern culture which our [Western] nations bear. We can neither regress nor do want to. But it would be impossible for the Eastern Jews to be Russian or Romanian. ... They must be Jews by culture ... for the mediaeval Jewish culture stands exactly as far above East European barbarism as it is beneath the culture of Western Europe.<sup>113</sup>

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109 *Jüdische Rundschau*, June 19, 1914, 270.

110 Cited in Poppel, *Zionism in Germany*, 61. Oppenheimer introduced Ottoman *Reichsbewusstsein* in Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” 143, and *märkisches Heimatbewusstsein* in *jüdische Rundschau*, June 19, 1914, 270.

111 Oppenheimer, *Genossenschaftliche Kolonisation in Palästina*, 4.

112 Oppenheimer, “Der Zionismus,” 218.

113 Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” 140, translation in Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 97.

Prescient of the German-Jewish identity complex in the state of Israel, Oppenheimer argued that a German Jew living in a future Zionist society would adopt a Jewish *Volksbewusstsein* once this society had attained a higher cultural level, but will then possess a German, instead of a Jewish, *Stammesbewusstsein*.<sup>114</sup>

Discussions about Eastern European Jews were also a way for German Jews to deal with their own identity. According to Yfaat Weiss, German Zionists could not reach a consensus about their own national Jewish character, but they could define the Ostjuden by common accord.<sup>115</sup> Even though Oppenheimer argued that Western Zionists were acting altruistically towards their brethren in the East, he saw in Zionism an opportunity for German Jews, too. Zionism, he thought, could transform not only the Ostjuden but also German Jews into aristocrats who would be an active force in world history, superior both to the anti-semites slandering them and to the Jewish assimilationists mimicking them. He thus believed that the Zionist project should promote Jewish *Stammesbewusstsein* among German Jews without threatening their German *Volksbewusstsein*, since these were nonconflicting, independent feelings. According to Oppenheimer, Western Zionists were “thinking ... about the good name of the old tribe that is today defiled and should be restored to glory through a national creation that will irrefutably prove the high cultural value of its blood to all haters and envious.”<sup>116</sup>

We can thus conclude that the transformation of German Jews did not entail the adoption of the new Jewish culture they were helping to create, but the strengthening of their standing in their homelands in their own eyes and in the eyes of non-Jews. Bodenheimer expressed this in a letter to Wolffsohn asking him to openly endorse a protest resolution by Oppenheimer, Friedemann, Struck and other German Zionists against Zionist “hypernationalism.” He wrote: “The creation of a Hebrew language and unique culture hub in Palestine under no circumstance requires a national affirmation of Hebrew language and culture in the current countries of Jewish residency.”<sup>117</sup> We can thus say that these acculturated

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114 Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” 141.

115 Weiss, “Wir Westjuden haben jüdisches Stammesbewußtsein,” 159–160.

116 Oppenheimer, “Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein,” 142.

117 Letter from May 24, 1914, in Jehuda Reinharz, ed., *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus, 1882–1933* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1981), 129–130. Oppenheimer would have disapproved of Bodenheimer's designation of Germany as his current land of residency [*jetziges Wohnland*]. At the Delegiertentag in Leipzig the following month, Oppenheimer rejected Lichtheim's use of the term “Wohnland,” supposedly implying that his roots in Germany could easily be transplant-

first-generation German Zionists were mediating a self-determined space for the integration of Jews as a proud ethnic minority in Germany and Europe. As Solveig suggested, “hybrid agencies ... deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy.”<sup>118</sup> The hybrid identity of German Zionists, comprised of German *Volksbewusstsein* and Jewish *Stammesbewusstsein*, made them into Oppenheimer’s cast off “clan of bastards,” predestined to lead the revolution of all the oppressed starting with the Ostjuden.<sup>119</sup>

The following two examples best demonstrate Oppenheimer’s conception of hybridity or bastardness imbued in the universal mission of Zionism. First, Oppenheimer proclaimed that the best expression of *Stammesbewusstsein* was Benjamin Disraeli’s novel *Tancred*, a book which he designated as “the Song of Songs of Zionism, i. e., Palestine-Zionism, and of Semitism.” Oppenheimer was struck by the homage of the son of a baptized Jew who rose to become “England’s most influential and most successful prime minister,” impressing even the likes of Bismarck. Duke Tancred, “the highest offspring of the highest aristocracy of the world,” escaped from empty English civilization, only to rediscover on Mount Sinai in the desert the old-new mission of establishing human equality once proclaimed in God’s law “in Arabia and Palestine.” Quoting Disraeli’s description of Christianity as “the spiritual colony of Arabia” which has lost its primal quest, Oppenheimer cherished the “triumphal” transvaluation of metaphors such as desert and forest, as well as of Jewish influence, through “countless generations of cultural bearers ... high ancestors already at a time ... when Europe and especially England were still swamp and woodland inhabited by painted savages.”<sup>120</sup>

The second literary example of Oppenheimer’s *Stammesbewusstsein* stems from Oppenheimer’s own pen. In his novel *Sprung über ein Jahrhundert* published in Bern in 1934 under the pseudonym Francis D. Pelton, Engineer Hans Bachmueller finds H. G. Well’s time machine embedded in the stone hill behind

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ed in expectation of the moving’s truck impending arrival; see Reinharz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus*, 140; *jüdische Rundschau*, June 19, 1914, 270.

**118** Solveig Mill, “Transdifferenz und Hybridität: Überlegungen zur Abgrenzung zweier Konzepte,” in *Differenzen anders denken: Bausteine zu einer Kulturtheorie der Transdifferenz*, ed. Lars Allolio-Näcke, Britta Kalscheuer and Arne Manzeschke (Frankfurt a. M., New York: Campus, 2005), 435–436.

**119** See Oppenheimer’s conception of the Jews as a bastard race in chapter 2.

**120** Franz Oppenheimer, “Benjamin Disraelis ‘Tancred,’” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, January 25, 1918, 182–184.

his hermitage while building a wine cellar. Bachmueller travels a hundred years into the future. Among the people he encounters is an exemplary farmer who turns out to have Jewish as well as Spanish, Italian, Polish and Tartaric blood. He was a descendant of "Reb" Veitel Ephraim, the philanthropic minter who served the Prussian King Friedrich II. Oppenheimer described Ephraim's descendants as having so deeply assimilated that all had abandoned Judaism. Many of them even rose to nobility in various European nations. Nevertheless, they kept the memory of their Jewish blood alive through family gatherings in which they ceremonially forgave each other for their abandonment of Judaism. This was necessary to retain inheritance rights in the Ephraim line or, metaphorically speaking, to strengthen their bond in a common heritage.

Like in *Tancred*, the story described redemption of European culture through Judaism. One link in the chain between Ephraim and the farmer was plagued by his conscience causing him to display the socialist inclinations of prophetic Judaism by voluntarily giving up his estate for the establishment of a settlement cooperative. The transformation was, however, only complete when the farmer married into a peasant family and adopted the supposedly rough nature of peasants. By agreeing to the marriage with Ephraim's noble descendent, the farmers gave up their racial purity, thus transforming their lineage too and contributing to dismantling class divisions. Not the Jew but the farmer was portrayed by Oppenheimer as practicing endogamy, in line with *völkish* romantic idealization of the farmer. When talking about his heritage, the exemplary farmer lent "racial crossbreeding" authoritative endorsement by quoting Bismarck's alleged support of crossing an "Aryan stallion and a Semitic mare." He even quoted the popular nineteenth-century antisemitic writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain: "We are all *Mischlinge* [mixed breed], 'bastards of racial chaos.'" However, Oppenheimer gave a positive twist to the *Mischling* concept, contrary to Chamberlain's ideology.<sup>121</sup>

While many first-generation German Zionists who composed the leadership of the association supported Oppenheimer's distinction between German patriotism and Jewish pride, as opposed to nationalism, the majority of ZvFD members, many of them originating from Eastern Europe, did not. Buber and other young Zionists criticized Oppenheimer's "Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein" for what they understood as a passive conception of heritage, lacking in choice

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121 Franz Oppenheimer, "Sprung über ein Jahrhundert," 227–230. For more on the relationship between language and race in Oppenheimer's novel, see Peretz, "'Utopia as a Fact,'" 78–83.

and self-determination.<sup>122</sup> The dissidence was expressed by the ascending leadership of the second generation who called for clear boundaries between Jews and Germans as well as dissimulation.<sup>123</sup> The appointment of Blumenfeld as secretary of the ZVfD epitomized the generational change accompanied by a post-assimilationist radicalization of German Zionism. The young generation wanted Zionist propaganda to emphasize the movement's Jewish national character. At the Posen convention of 1912, members of this generation succeeded in passing a declaration that all Zionists must commit to personally immigrate to Palestine.<sup>124</sup>

Oppenheimer and Adolf Friedeman were especially vocal against what they considered to be a Zionist declaration of faith. They felt that the movement was deviating from the Herzlian Program that had been laid out in Basel and being transformed into a religious sect, in which they were becoming "second class Zionists." At the Leipzig ZVfD convention in 1914, Oppenheimer underscored that Herzl vindicated his views as Zionist-conform.<sup>125</sup> Yet the influence of Oppenheimer's generation within the ZVfD was diminishing. The movement's radicalization caused Oppenheimer to distance himself from the ZVfD – but not from Zionism as a whole. He was involved with Merhavia until it ceased to be a cooperative at the end of the First World War. He felt that the massacres of the 1920s in Palestine exposed the dangers of radical nationalism and caused the movement as a whole to strive towards reconciliation, inclusion of non-Zionists, and the realization of his utopian "Levantine Switzerland."<sup>126</sup> In 1926 he travelled to Palestine on behalf of the ZO to inspect and report on the conflict with the Arabs, as well as on the industrial and agricultural development of Palestine.<sup>127</sup>

## A German-Backed Jewish Autonomy in Poland

With the extension of German influence eastwards in the First World War, into areas with large Jewish populations, new opportunities arose for first-generation

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**122** *Die Welt*, April 1, 1910. Oppenheimer made this distinction also in other places, such as in Oppenheimer, "Der Genossenschaftsfond," 1364.

**123** Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*, 130–135.

**124** For more on the radicalization of German Zionism and the adaptation of palestinocentrism, see Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*, 144–170; Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe*, 25–45.

**125** *Jüdische Rundschau*, June 19, 1914, 268–270.

**126** Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 216.

**127** CZA A161–16; Warburg, "Oppenheimer und Palästina," 18.

Zionists to promote their conceptions of a hybrid German-Jewish identity and to communicate it to the general public. They found new allies in the German diplomatic service, as well as in liberal German Jewry. While their newfound allies in the German Jewish establishment helped propagate hybrid identity forms,<sup>128</sup> many German Jews resisted the ethnic and nationalist elements of this new identity, preferring to view the link between Eastern and Western Jews as one of co-religionists.<sup>129</sup>

During the war, both generations of German Zionism focused on the plight of their Eastern European brethren. The generations were, however, divided in their approach. Members of the first generation joined forces with liberal Jews for the incorporation of Polish Jewry into the German Empire. Once that possibility seemed less feasible, they opted for securing them minority rights. This approach was not a break with their prior Zionist undertaking, but a manifestation of “autonomist Zionism,” which sought to renew Jewish cultural-national autonomy in the diaspora within multinational federations or empires.<sup>130</sup> Representatives of the younger generation, with its romantic conceptions of the national vitality of the Ostjude, deplored attempts to subject Eastern European Jews’ nationalism to a German one.<sup>131</sup> They made public the utilization of Jews as slave laborers by the German authorities<sup>132</sup> and aspired to promote revolutionary spirit among Eastern European Jews, encouraging them to join Poles as an independent national party in case of an uprising against the Russians.<sup>133</sup>

On August 4, 1914, the day the German offensive on the western front began, ZVfD cofounder Max Bodenheimer contacted the Auswärtiges Amt [Foreign Office] with a suggestion to create an East European Federation composed of the different ethnic groups, including Jews as a buffer between Germany and Russia after victory. The suggestion was received enthusiastically, leading to personal discussions between Bodenheimer and experts on Polish affairs in the military and diplomatic service.<sup>134</sup> On August 17, the Deutsches Komitee zur Befreiung der Russische Juden [German Committee for the Liberation of Russian Jews]

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**128** E.g., the main journal of the Centralverein, as well as books such as Hermann Cohen’s *Deutschtum und Judentum* published in 1916; see Panter, *Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 273–274.

**129** Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 160–63.

**130** Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und Binationale Idee*, 208–210.

**131** Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 163–65.

**132** Panter, *Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 270.

**133** Martin Buber established a separate committee called the Jüdische Nationalkomitee for this purpose; see Protokoll der Komittesitzung von 25.9.1914, LBI MF13 reel 1.

**134** Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 230–231.

was founded by a number of first-generation Zionists, including Bodenheimer, Oppenheimer, Klee, Friedemann and Struck – to the dismay of the Inner Actions Committee which pursued an agenda of neutrality. While Bodenheimer was supportive of the ZO precept of neutrality, with Oppenheimer’s election as committee chairman its pro-German stance was established. However, either in respect to ZO wishes, or due to a distancing of the German authorities from the federation plan, the committee was renamed Komitee für den Osten [Committee for the East] (KfdO) in November of the same year.<sup>135</sup> The committee was then opened to non-Zionist members, somewhat blurring its Zionist connection. Members included Eugen Fuchs, chairman of the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, Maximilian Horwitz, chairman of the Verband der Deutschen Juden, Berthold Timendorfer, president of the B’nai B’rith lodges, and Moritz Sobernheim, vice-chairman of the Deutsch-Israelitischer Gemeindebund. Oppenheimer’s distinction between an ancestry-based ethnic identity in the West and a national one in the East became the guiding principle of the KfdO. Eugen Fuchs utilized it in his own wartime expressions of Jewish identity between faith and homeland.<sup>136</sup>

The KfdO published the biweekly *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte* between the fall of 1916 and spring of 1920 as an “open floor for anyone,” emphasizing its supposed impartiality. It was edited by first-generation Zionists and leaders of the Liberal Jewish establishment: Oppenheimer, Friedemann, Fuchs, Alexander Eliasberg and the anti-Zionist philosopher Hermann Cohen. Although a full examination of the journal is long overdue, the focus in this segment is on Oppenheimer’s articles and his column called “Soziologische Tagebuchblätter” [Sociological diary pages] in which he addressed a lay audience in a concise and comprehensible manner. Oppenheimer dealt with Jewish themes that had interested him throughout his life, including race, antisemitism, Jewish capabilities to farm and the settlement of Palestine, as well as his sociological principles and their relevance in interpreting current events during the war. The thesis of this study is that there are continuities of strains of thought from *Altneuland* in *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, linking Jewish and German national interests within an imperial framework.

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**135** For more on the attempt of the Zionist executive to disassociate itself from the KfdO, see Reinharz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus*, 171–173; Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 234–236. Friedman suggested that the committee was renamed due to a shift in the military situation that caused the German authorities to prefer direct negotiations between Jews and Poles over unilateral declarations for Russian Jewish liberation; see Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 233.

**136** Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 157–158.



According to Oppenheimer, Jews living in multinational empires like Austria-Hungary – or other regions where national conflicts masqueraded as racial conflict such as Prussian-occupied Poland – portrayed themselves as a nationality for political expediency. This depiction was strengthened by their relative proximity to the large Jewish population of the Pale of Settlement.<sup>137</sup> In contrast, the Jews of Germany did not need to emphasize a univocal national belonging. Further, German and Jewish nationalisms were not exclusive or conflicting. On the contrary, the KfdO considered Jewish national interests to be congruent to German imperial interests.<sup>138</sup> This is comparable with *Altneuland*'s agenda equating Zionism with German patriotism by linking the movement's aims with those of German colonialism. In its numerous publications, the KfdO strove to prove the affinity of Jews and Germans. In the words of Steven Aschheim:

Eastern European Jews were portrayed as pioneers of German culture and commerce in the East, natural partners and allies in Germany's Polish policy. Propaganda arguing for the symbiosis of *Ostjudentum* und *Deutschtum* was so common that it became clichéd ... Yiddish suddenly became evidence of Jewish loyalty to German language and culture, rather than an example of linguistic "mongrelization."<sup>139</sup>

KfdO propaganda primarily targeted German military authorities on the Eastern Front, purporting to bestow them with necessary cultural skills for their new posts. However, the KfdO did not regard their activity as tactical manipulations on behalf of Jewish interests. They deeply believed that establishing a Jewish autonomy was "the best way to Germanize the East." This would accomplish the following two goals. First, it facilitated German imperial expansion. Second, it served to educate the Ostjuden by investing them with Prussian virtues and especially discipline.<sup>140</sup> The perception of the Ostjuden as filling the linguistic and demographic prerequisites to be a nation, while still needing an education to nationhood, was an important element and a further similarity to the *Altneuland* nation-building project in Palestine.

Another similarity was the attempt to engage the German colonial discourse and to forge alliances with German colonial and imperial figures. While *Altneuland* targeted scientists and colonial technocrats, the KfdO collaborated with the military occupation authorities, including the top brass. There was, however, some mutual support between proponents of German imperial expansion overseas and proponents of expansion in Central and Eastern Europe. Prominent ad-

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**137** Oppenheimer, "Der Zionismus," 219–220.

**138** Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 157.

**139** Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 158.

**140** Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 158–159.



vocates of the latter, such as Friedrich Naumann and Paul Rohrbach, lauded Zionism's potential for Germany's foreign policy as heralds of German culture and commerce in the Middle East. In an address to the Prussian Parliament, Rohrbach argued that Germany's support for Zionism would counterbalance British support for Arab nationalism as a vehicle to undermine the Ottoman Empire. Rohrbach's address opened a series of weekly lectures on the matter by guest speakers, including Martin Buber. Numerous publications and essays by Zionists such as Trietsch and Blumenfeld, as well as non-Jewish experts on Turkish affairs, attempted to shape public and policymaker opinion on the matter.<sup>141</sup>

Zionism was also perceived as a valuable asset in Eastern Europe, not only in the Middle East. Some advocates of imperial expansion in Europe advanced schemes similar to the KfdO's Eastern European Federation. They hoped to hasten the decomposition of the multinational Russian empire and thus facilitate German military conquest. One of them was Carl Heinrich Otto Sprenger. Sprenger edited the journal *Osteuropäische Zukunft*, organ of various German associations promoting national rights for different ethnic minorities in the Russian empire.<sup>142</sup> In a petition to the Auswärtiges Amt, Sprenger portrayed the Zionist movement as the most influential international movement in Eastern Europe. Sprenger suggested utilizing Zionism to Germany's advantage in espionage, trade, demoralization and sabotage. He highlighted that the organization's headquarters were in Berlin and its leadership pro-German, while the foot soldiers were scattered beyond enemy lines.<sup>143</sup>

The KfdO was wary that connecting them with sabotage and open insurrection would endanger Russian Jewry. Bodenheimer and Oppenheimer managed to gain an invitation to meet general Erich Ludendorff and Field-Marshal Paul von Hindenburg at Ober Ost [short for the Supreme Commander of All German Forces in the East]. They were initially favorable to the idea of an Eastern European Federation, which would include a Jewish autonomous region, preferring it to the establishment of a Polish state.<sup>144</sup> In his petition to Ludendorff, Oppenheimer implored him to assist in the advancement of the Jewish people for the sake of Germany's greatness, not only from the military but also from the humanistic per-

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**141** Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 253–255.

**142** The full name of the journal published between 1916 and 1918 was *Osteuropäische Zukunft: Zeitschrift für Deutschlands Aufgaben im Osten und Südosten*. It represented the following associations: Donau-, Balkan-, und Schwarzmeerländerverband (Dubvid) in which Sprenger was on the board, Verband deutscher Förderer der ukrainischen Freiheitsbestrebungen, Deutsch-Finnländischen Vereinigung, Deutsch-Georgische Gesellschaft, and Deutsch-Nordischer Verband.

**143** Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 200–201.

**144** Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 232–233.

spective.<sup>145</sup> KfdO efforts resulted in Ober Ost creating two positions for experts in Jewish affairs [Referat für jüdische Angelegenheiten] who were in contact with different levels of the administrations.<sup>146</sup>

Although in his memoirs Oppenheimer relished the relationship with top officers such as Hindenburg,<sup>147</sup> towards the end of the war he became increasingly critical. Oppenheimer held Hindenburg personally responsible for sabotaging the Kaiser's proclamation of a *Burgfrieden* out of class-based fear that the integration of broad layers of society, including Jews, would endanger the privileges of the nobility. The military's *Judenzählung* [Jewish census] greatly bolstered antisemitic campaigns. Practicing self-censorship amid war, Oppenheimer only alluded to the dreadful consequences of this unleashed antisemitism. Its result was a general loss of humanity, leading to the starvation and enslavement of occupied peoples in Eastern Europe and especially of Jews. Oppenheimer contrasted the rise of antisemitism in Germany with an apparently positive turn by Austrian authorities who were impressed by Jewish demonstrations of loyalty and military prowess. In an apologetic attempt to rationalize German moral deterioration, Oppenheimer emphasized the strangeness of Ostjuden and the necessities of a war economy. He claimed that hostilities were magnified by the intimate Jewish-German affiliation, since small dissimilarities spur more hate than large ones.<sup>148</sup> The linguistic and cultural affinity in which the KfdO invested its hopes were now portrayed as a bane underscoring the unbridgeable gap between Jews and Germans. Nevertheless, the KfdO did not abandon the wish for reconciliation.

In their correspondence with German officials, the KfdO emphasized the link between Jewish affairs, German imperial politics in the East and Germany's relationships with Western powers. For example, Oppenheimer wrote to State Secretary Paul von Hintze in the Auswärtiges Amt to explain how antisemitism in Germany – in the form of the *Judenzählung* and discrimination against Eastern European Jewish immigrants – was causing Jews in Eastern Europe to adopt anti-German sentiments. In contrast, the Allied support of Zionism, as well as appointment of Jews to diplomatic positions, was increasing their favor among Eastern European Jews. Oppenheimer suggested the German government actively

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145 Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, 159.

146 One of these positions was occupied by KfdO member Hermann Struck beginning in 1917; see Panter, *Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 285; Francis R. Nicosia, "Jewish Affairs and German Foreign Policy during the Weimar Republic: Moritz Sobornheim and the Referat für jüdische Angelegenheiten," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 33 (1988): 262.

147 Oppenheimer, *Erlebtes, Erstrebtes, Erreichtes*, 231–235.

148 Franz Oppenheimer, "Antisemitismus," *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, October 10, 1917, 4.

fight antisemitism and appoint Jews to government and diplomatic positions also in Western capitals, thus openly reaffirming German Jewry's patriotism and effectively counteracting this negative trend in Jewish support for Germany.<sup>149</sup>

At the suggestion of the KfdO, the Admiralty assigned two German Zionists to the Information Service in the United States, entrusting them with improving pro-German attitudes among American Jewry. Isaac Straus managed to win the confidence of German ambassador Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff and enlist Jews of German origin in his efforts to influence German officials. The most prominent recruit was Jacob Schiff, an influential banker and philanthropist who cofounded the American Jewish Committee, an organization concerned with pogroms against Russian Jews. In letters to the ambassador and the undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, Arthur Zimmermann, they demanded trust-building measures towards Jews in domestic policy, in Ober Ost and in Palestine. They argued that recognition of Jewish nationality would crown these efforts and create "a strong counterweight" of German affiliated culture in Poland and Palestine.<sup>150</sup> At the suggestion of the KfdO, Reichstag member Ludwig Haas was appointed as head of the Jewish Department in the German civil administration of Poland.<sup>151</sup>

The KfdO adopted strategies discussed in *Altneuland* in connection with German Catholics to secure their domestic position by underscoring the way persecution at home was perceived in the colonial periphery and other European powers including the United States.<sup>152</sup> From the other direction, imperial institutions also seemed to perceive utilitarian similarities between these two religious minorities. In correspondence between the Auswärtiges Amt and the German High Command, a supposedly rigid hierarchy within the Zionist movement – with the Berlin headquarters on top and Eastern European Zionists on the bottom – was portrayed as reminiscent of the absolute obedience within the Jesuit order.<sup>153</sup> The correspondents were apparently oblivious of the intense strife within the Zionist movement.

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**149** Francis R. Nicosia, "Jewish Affairs and German Foreign Policy," 264–265. One such example was the appointment of Henry Morgenthau by Woodrow Wilson as American ambassador in Constantinople. Wilson urged him to assist Jews to improve their perception of the United States of America; see Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 194.

**150** Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 204–207.

**151** Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 234.

**152** See chapter 5.

**153** Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 201.

Another achievement that outlived the First World War was the entrusting of KfdO member Moritz Sobernheim to the newly created Referat für jüdische Angelegenheiten in the Auswärtiges Amt. According to historian Francis R. Nicosia, it “began its existence more or less as an official German government version of the *Komitee für den Osten*, with aims and tasks that were generally similar, if somewhat broader, in scope.”<sup>154</sup> In the Auswärtiges Amt, Sobernheim propagated the KfdO precept that the relationship with Zionism was not only important for German imperial interests in Eastern Europe but also for Germany’s interests in the Middle East, where Zionist influence was growing.<sup>155</sup>

The small successes at advancing German Jewish interests within a German imperial complex exacted a high price from Polish Jewry. Russian authorities suspected Polish Jews of collaboration with the enemy, which they used as a pretext for mass deportations of Jews from the war-zone.<sup>156</sup> National Polish circles were also alarmed by the possibility of the creation of a German-backed Jewish autonomy, associating Jews with German imperial interests.<sup>157</sup> With the proclamation of a Polish kingdom by the Central Powers on November 5, 1916, Polish Jews were officially recognized as a religious minority, and in the eyes of the German military administration, as a nationality. The *Jüdische Rundschau* called on Polish authorities to demonstrate their national maturity by granting Jews equal rights and even cultural autonomy as a national minority.<sup>158</sup>

Oppenheimer rejected accusations in Polish papers that throughout history the settlement of Jews in Poland had been an instrument of German domination, and that the promotion of Jewish nationalism with an intent to establish autonomy in Poland was a new stage in this conquest. Yet his reproach was not addressed to Polish critics, but to German readers. Oppenheimer’s argument entailed a warning to German authorities that an attack on the Jewish minority by Polish nationalists was the first step in attacks on all minorities in Poland, including the German one. Additionally, it linked the fates of German and Jewish “colonists” in Poland in the same way those fates were linked together in *Altneuland*. In his rebuke Oppenheimer also engaged in historical revisionism. He focused on the colonial productivity motif, albeit not agriculturally, to legitimize both Jewish and German settlement in Poland, arguing that it was German

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154 Nicosia, “Jewish Affairs and German Foreign Policy,” 265.

155 Nicosia, “Jewish Affairs and German Foreign Policy,” 265–267.

156 Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 234–35.

157 Panter, *Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 271.

158 Panter, *Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 276. This proclamation was issued in the midst of deteriorating relations between the German administration and the Jews in the Ober Ost administrative area and an even worse one between Jews and Poles. See *ibid.* 269–271.

and Jewish artisans who in the Middle Ages developed trades and crafts in Poland, contributing to the flourishing of cities and the training of Polish craftsmen.<sup>159</sup> In a similar manner, he claimed, labor, economic and cultural progress legitimized settlement in Palestine of both Templers and Zionists.

Oppenheimer was optimistic about the integration of national minorities. After all, he was a social utopian who believed that solving the social problem through the elimination of land enclosure would ultimately solve the Jewish question and all other group conflicts. He agreed with Austrian Social Democrat Karl Renner that while special provisions for proportional political representation of minorities might be necessary at first, once cultural-linguistic autonomies were enacted the persuasiveness of national agitation would be reduced and economic and social issues would dominate the political discourse.<sup>160</sup> As head of the KfdO, Oppenheimer advanced an autonomy concept which was not territorial, but rather cultural-linguistic, within larger tolerant, liberal states or empires would not interfere in matters of society.<sup>161</sup> This was the tenor of his utopian novel *Sprung über ein Jahrhundert* as well as his conception of a “United States of Europe.”<sup>162</sup>

In the same manner, Oppenheimer demanded a cultural autonomy for Poles within the eastern provinces of the German Empire, quoting Hans Delbrück, whose tolerance was interlinked with the military expediency of generating recruits from Ober Ost and the new German backed Polish state.<sup>163</sup> Oppenheimer agreed that an official state language was important for military prowess, as well as for jurisprudence and other state functions. However, he adhered to a liberal conception of the state in which the concept of tolerance, originally emerging in a religious or better confessional context, would be extended to cultural-linguistic groups, i. e., ethnicities. Sociologically speaking, Oppenheimer regarded culture and language as “the inner consciousness of a shared identity” of modern human beings. These elements, he thought, played the role religion did, or still does in “primitive” societies, even replacing it.<sup>164</sup> In a sense this

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**159** Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Ideologie des polnischen Antisemitismus,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, June 25, 1917, 515–520.

**160** Franz Oppenheimer, “Nationale Autonomie für die Ostjuden,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, April 10, 1917, 370.

**161** Franz Oppenheimer, “Soziologische Tagebuchblätter: 7,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, Januar 25, 1917, 231–233.

**162** Vogt, “Die Utopie als Tatsache,” 123–124.

**163** Franz Oppenheimer, “Soziologische Tagebuchblätter: 8,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, February 10, 1917, 261–262.

**164** Oppenheimer, “Nationale Autonomie für die Ostjuden,” 366.

was the political ramification of Oppenheimer's modular identity concept that he expounded upon in "Stammesbewusstsein und Volksbewusstsein" and other essays.

Belonging to an ethnicity was a voluntary choice and not an ascription, according to Oppenheimer, since people living in heterogeneous territories were often multilingual with ties to various cultures. He thus felt it was the responsibility of the state to allow people to officially declare their ethnic belonging and to legally enable mobility between different ethnicities, as in religious conversions.<sup>165</sup> Such a step would also protect multilingualism, which in heterogeneous regions with ethnic conflicts like Bohemia, was regarded as a Jewish phenomenon, according to Shumsky. Shumsky argues that nationalists fueled antisemitism by associating Jews with the rival ethnicity, or by accusing them of "Judaizing" their ethnicity by contaminating it with cosmopolitanism.<sup>166</sup>

According to Oppenheimer, when it came to the Jews in Poland, whose greater part was residing in urban centers not connected by a noteworthy rural Jewish population, claims to a territorial autonomy were impertinent. Even a linguistic-cultural autonomy would be improbable, he argued, since Jews were always immersed in other cultures. He asserted that even in predominantly Jewish cities not a day passes without the Jew conversing in other languages in the market and in other daily routines. The focus of autonomous aspirations should thus be securing a low and mid-tier Jewish education system in Yiddish which would cultivate Jewish history, literature and art, as well as Hebrew. This would allow for a self-conscious Jewish acculturation into Polish culture and subsequently the attainment of Polish citizenship, along the model of Jewish emancipation in Germany.<sup>167</sup> Oppenheimer's emphasis on the importance of Jewish education was a revision of his earlier readiness to accept an exclusive Polish education system. His alleged neglect of even the most basic principles of Jewish autonomy almost led to Bodenheimer's resignation from the KfdO.<sup>168</sup>

Oppenheimer did not view Eastern European Jews as one people, but rather as less homogeneous than German Jewry due to a more radical division between the acculturated Jewish bourgeoisie, whose path to assimilation was barred, and religious Jews. Yet he saw the German authorities' plans of restructuring Jewish communal life hierarchically as potentially uniting Polish Jewry in a way German Jewry "has been for many years futilely pursuing," resulting in a fragmented rep-

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165 Oppenheimer, "Nationale Autonomie für die Ostjuden," 364.

166 Shumsky, *Ben Prag li-Yerushalayim*, 99–105.

167 Oppenheimer, "Nationale Autonomie für die Ostjuden," 367–372.

168 Reinharz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus*, 176.

resentation through private organizations.<sup>169</sup> This comparison belied that, in reality, efforts on behalf of Polish Jewry primarily served attempts at unifying German Jewry. In December 1917, with the conclusion of the armistice between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers, and the beginning of peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk, liberal German Jews and moderate Zionists formed the Vereinigung jüdischer Organisationen Deutschlands zur Wahrung der Rechten der Juden im Osten [Union of Jewish Organizations of Germany for the Protection of the Rights of the Jews in the East] to address Germany's apprehension to vouch for the rights of Jews in Eastern Europe. Oppenheimer took a leading position in this new coalition.<sup>170</sup>

## Enduring Entanglement in the Aftermath of the First World War

In November 1917 Great Britain issued the Balfour Declaration of support in creating a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. This required a complicated balancing act from German Zionists who wished to show their enthusiasm over the open recognition of their goals by a great power without being suspected of disloyalty to Germany. A counterdeclaration by the German government seemed to be the best solution to dilemma.<sup>171</sup> After all, during the war Germany had repeatedly supported Zionist activity and interceded on behalf of the Zionist cause with their Ottoman allies.<sup>172</sup>

Faced with a shift in Jewish public opinion, the Central Powers, in whose dominions more than half of world Jewry resided, took to the defensive. In an interview published in the *Vossische Zeitung* on December 31, 1917, more than three weeks after the British conquest of Jerusalem, the Ottoman grand vizier Talaat

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**169** Franz Oppenheimer, "Organisationsstatut der jüdischen Gemeinden in Polen," *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, November 25, 1916, 87. See also Oppenheimer's review of Max Rosenfeld's book *Polen und Juden* in Franz Oppenheimer, "Soziologische Tagebuchblätter: 9," *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, March 25, 1917, 354–356.

**170** Reinharz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus*, 204–206 and 217–222; Panter, *Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 283–284.

**171** Frank Dikötter, "The Racialization of the Globe: An Interactive Interpretation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (2008): 68–71.

**172** For example, the German government exempted Zionist representatives from military service. Zionist nationals of enemy countries were initially tolerated in Berlin. The German government allowed financial assistance to the Jews of Palestine and interceded with the Ottoman authorities for the reopening of Zionist financial institutions as well as the further immigration of Russian Jews; see Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 191–192 and 208–209.



Pasha repudiated the British declaration and presented the prospect of ending immigration restrictions to the parts of Palestine still under Ottoman control. It was important for him to convince German Jewry of his sincerity, and so about a week after the interview he spoke at a conference of German Jewish leaders. On that very same day, January 5, 1918, the undersecretary of state at the Auswärtiges Amt, Hilmar Freiherr von dem Bussche-Haddenhausen, declared Germany's support for the Ottoman declaration, as well as recognition and support for the civic and cultural aspirations of Jews as a minority in Eastern European countries.<sup>173</sup> Later that year the first Pro-Palästina-Komitee was created as an alliance to fight British expansion after the war.<sup>174</sup> Prominent advocates of German imperialism such as Paul Rohrbach and Bernhard Dernburg continued to support the Zionist cause during the Weimar Republic. Both joined the second Pro-Palästina-Komitee founded in 1926.<sup>175</sup>

Franz Oppenheimer, together with Adolf Friedemann and Moritz Sobernheim on behalf of the KfdO as well as Otto Warburg and Arthur Hantke on behalf of the ZvFD, were invited to the Auswärtiges Amt to receive the declaration.<sup>176</sup> The overlap between ZvFD and KfdO memberships made the distinction between the two organizations difficult, although the latter was officially a non-Zionist organization. The fact that most of Palestine's Jews possessed Russian citizenship added to this ambiguity.<sup>177</sup> Yet it was exactly Zionism's supposed international influence that made Zionists the Foreign Office's preferred Jewish advisors dur-

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173 Isaiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine: British-Jewish-Arab Relations, 1914–1918*, 2nd expanded ed. (New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 296–298.

174 Egmont Zechlin also demonstrated how Zionist positions were integrated into Germany's policies towards the Middle East even during the war; see Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 434–437.

175 Both Dernburg and Rohrbach gave lectures on behalf of the second Pro-Palestine Committee. While the members of the first Pro-Palestine Committee were predominantly non-Jewish, the distribution between Jewish and non-Jewish members was more equal in the second. It included many politicians from different parties including Konrad Adenauer who would later become the first chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. See Walk, "Das 'Deutsche Komitee pro Palästina,'" 162–163, 168 and 187. Blumenfeld recounted his hesitation to enlist Dernburg's support for the committee due to his Jewish father who converted to Lutheranism. Dernburg sensed this hesitation and told Blumenfeld to count him with the Jewish member of the committee since he felt that he was anyways perceived as a Jew. See Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage*, 173–175.

176 The declaration was printed in its entirety in the KfdO mouthpiece, *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, "Eine Erklärung der deutschen Regierung," January 10, 1918, 147.

177 At the very beginning of the war, Bodenheimer communicated with the Ottoman ambassador in Berlin on behalf of both the KfdO and the ZO; see the letter from August 27, 1914, Reinharz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus*, 153–154.



ing the First World War.<sup>178</sup> Oppenheimer tried to draw a clear line between the responsibilities of the ZVfD and the KfdO in a commentary to the declaration. He explained that the KfdO was the addressee of the part of the declaration that deals with the “protection of the Jewish minority in the Slavic East.” He cautioned against overestimating the declaration since Germany was not able to grant the Jews of Poland any rights. He was, however, interested in the significance the declaration had for Germany.<sup>179</sup>

In his opinion, the declaration revealed the changing mindset of German leaders who were now pursuing integration of groups of varying languages and ethnic origins without oppression instead of a parochial insistence on homogenous language and culture. He argued that this resulted from the realization that advocacy for minority rights was expedient for Germany’s own foreign policy interests in a post-war Europe. It provided leverage in territories with a German ethnic minority such as Belgium, Poland, Lithuania, as well as Alsace and Lorraine. The situation was even more extreme, he argued, for the Austrian-Hungarian empire, for whom promoting minority rights would be the only means of survival.<sup>180</sup> Oppenheimer emphasized the exemplary behavior of German minorities in Transylvania and in Bohemia in their relationship with majority culture.<sup>181</sup>

Oppenheimer thus reiterated Warburg’s hopes, expressed in *Altneuland*, that Germany’s imperial aspirations would eventually lead it to embrace plurality. According to Warburg, ruling foreign peoples required a deeper understanding of their cultures and the creation of an English-like colonial bureaucracy. In contrast, Oppenheimer emphasized the preservation of cultural influence where the “conquest by the sword” had failed. The imperial undertones of Oppenheimer’s essay were recognized by the Polish press, which repudiated Oppenheimer for allegedly claiming that Germany’s declaration aimed at establishing a Jewish cultural autonomy in Poland. In his defense Oppenheimer reinforced the sole right of the forthcoming Polish state to decide on minority rights. Yet he ex-

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**178** The Hilfsverein, which was active in disseminating German culture among the Jews of the Orient, vehemently fought Zionist encroachment on what until the First World War was their exclusive turf. In futile attempts to shake the foundation of the Zionist-German relationship, Hilfsverein representatives questioned the loyalty of such an international organization – much to the confusion of German diplomatic circles. See Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism*, 247–251.

**179** Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Erklärung der Reichsregierung,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, January 10, 1918, 148.

**180** Oppenheimer, “Die Erklärung der Reichsregierung,” 151–152.

**181** Oppenheimer, “Nationale Autonomie für die Ostjuden,” 366 and 369.

pressed his hopes that Poland would join the shifting trend towards recognition of minorities. This would be the new litmus test for belonging to the “civilized nations” of Europe.<sup>182</sup>

Oppenheimer also pleaded with the German government to intercede on behalf of the Romanian Jews. He claimed that if Germany failed to act, the United States, other Western nations and even the “new Russia,” would. According to Oppenheimer, although the emancipation of Romania’s Jews was inevitable, an intercession on their behalf would help restore the “dignity of the German Empire.” He claimed that Bismarck used this formulation during the negotiation of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin on the issue of granting full citizenship to the Jews of Romania. The essence of Oppenheimer’s argument was that if the government truly wished to return to the successful imperial politics of Bismarck, they should remember that support of Jewish emancipation on the fringes of Germany’s sphere of influence was an important element of it.<sup>183</sup> Interestingly enough, Oppenheimer was trying to reframe the acceptance of Woodrow Wilson’s principles of minority rights not as a symbol of Germany’s defeat but as a return to the values that led to the zenith of the German Empire and now to its salvation.

Oppenheimer suggested that by establishing itself as the protector of minority rights, Germany would gain influence among diverse minorities in Eastern Europe and improve its position in future peace negotiations. Instead of appearing as cowering before the demands of others, Germany could self-confidently make demands of other nations. To further contrive German intellectual ownership on the concept of minority rights, Oppenheimer referenced the German-Austrian international law expert Rudolf Laun’s statement that allegedly undemocratic Germans were the authors of the only two constitutions that guaranteed equality to national minorities: Austria and Switzerland. Although the German Empire was admittedly not on par with the other “Germanies,” making such reforms after the war would not be a concession of their defeat and betrayal of their Germanness but its natural expression.

Oppenheimer further suggested that a German fervor for minority rights would be a form of resistance. He again cited Laun’s description of German insistence on national differentiation as a cultural weapon in the propagandistic fight against Western “imperialism hypocritically masked as pacifism.”<sup>184</sup> With

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**182** Franz Oppenheimer, “Zur Regierungserklärung,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, March 10, 1918, 260–262.

**183** Franz Oppenheimer, “Die Judenfrage in Romanian,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, April 10, 1918, 293.

**184** Franz Oppenheimer, “Soziologische Tagebuchblätter: 12. Das Nationalitätsrecht als internationales Problem,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, March 25, 1918, 285–286.

this nationalistic fervor, Oppenheimer abandoned his prewar admiration for rational English colonization.<sup>185</sup> The underlying agenda in *Altneuland* for synchronizing Jewish and German patriotism in the context of a liberal German imperialism now resonated in the rallying cry of German-speaking Zionists against the incorporation of Palestine as a colony in the British Empire.

Accordingly, Oppenheimer tried to lower Zionist expectations from the British. Oppenheimer compared Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George to the Assyrian King Cyrus who, all for the sake of power politics and the creation of a “bridge-head” and “buffer-state” between the great powers, allowed the Jews to return from the Babylonian captivity and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. He warned that being a pawn in global politics would more likely lead to a renewed catastrophe than to a peaceful and long-lasting reunion of the Jews with their old homeland. In a mixture of historical materialism and prophetic lamentation over yet another imminent loss of Zion, Oppenheimer warned that it was only if the ruling class of the victorious nation, whose identity was now clear, were to suffer a fatal setback, that “the last aerial bomb of this world carnage would blow open the gate in the ancient wailing wall, sealed since millennia, so that the redeemer could joyfully enter the jubilate Jerusalem.”<sup>186</sup>

Other Central European Zionists shared Oppenheimer’s pessimism concerning Palestine’s future under English rule. In an effort to forge an intellectual alliance to combat “the infiltration of imperialism, mercantilism and other demons in Palestine,” Martin Buber invited Oppenheimer to contribute to an anthology he was preparing that “should draw attention to the imminent danger, but also paint a picture of the *Gemeinschaft* that we mean and want.”<sup>187</sup> Buber also approached Hugo Bergmann, Max Brod, Markus Reiner, Arthur Rupp and other Zionists who shared a community-oriented vision for Palestine. Ultimately, the essays were printed in Buber’s journal *Der Jude*, founded in 1916 in opposition to the Kfdo, and its journal *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*.<sup>188</sup> Oppenheimer’s cooperation, albeit indirect, with main protagonists of the Prager Bar

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**185** *Verhandlungen des IX. Zionisten-Kongresses*, 199.

**186** Franz Oppenheimer, “Soziologische Tagebuchblätter: 10,” *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, August 10, 1917, 625–627, citation on p. 627.

**187** Letter number 387 from February 4, 1918, in Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, vol. 1, 1897–1918, ed. Grete Schaeder (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1972).

**188** Eleonore Lappin, *Der Jude, 1916–1928: Jüdische Moderne zwischen Universalismus und Partikularismus* (Tübingen: M. Siebeck, 2000), 37–38. Oppenheimer complained to Buber, in his capacity as editor of *Der Jude*, about Julius Berger’s criticism of Oppenheimer’s article in *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, asking him for permission to reply in *Der Jude*. Letter from July 7, 1916, NLI Archives ARC. MS. Var 350 556.

Kochva association was not surprising. He shared their intellectual attempt to establish a bridge between ethnic-nationalism and liberal cosmopolitanism. The difficulty in comprehending this attempted reconciliation was demonstrated by historians of Zionism often dealing with only one of these aspects while ignoring the other.<sup>189</sup> Additionally, they shared an adherence to the political concept of ethnic-cultural autonomy, despite the collapse of the prewar imperial order, and interpreted the Balfour Declaration accordingly.<sup>190</sup>

Researchers agree that the multinational ambiance of the Habsburg empire, together with Central European liberalism, were the main sources of the binational conceptions of the Prager circle.<sup>191</sup> Yet their anti-British and anti-imperial posture exposed a further source of this world view beyond possible notions of loyalty to the German and Austrian empires. They shared with Oppenheimer and the *Altneuland* circle the main staple of German colonial fantasies: a depiction of themselves as a benevolent conqueror. These socialist-inclined Central European Zionists dreaded the incorporation of Palestine into the British empire. Although they were themselves colonizers in their ethos, they perceived themselves as protecting the land from colonialism.<sup>192</sup>

The Viennese trained civil engineer Markus Reiner wrote: “We will not tolerate the Holy Land being turned into a production place for ‘surplus value’ flowing to Europe.”<sup>193</sup> The aversion from the future role of Palestine as a colony supplying resources to the British empire and its role in power politics was reiterated by Hugo Bergmann’s comment: “The tune of a ‘buffer state’ tingles in our ears far too much. We do not want to make Palestine into a ‘bridge.’ We want to be spared from the strife of this capitalist world, from its quarrel over strategic safeguards, sales markets and trade routes.” This was, however, not a total rejection of the legitimizing colonial discourse on economic development and industrialization by the Prague Zionist Bergmann, who at the time was in London fundraising for the founding of a Jewish National Library in Jerusalem: “We don’t want to counteract the work methods of capitalism, but rather the capitalist mindset. Factories and machines do not make capitalism. Capitalist is the spirit.”<sup>194</sup>

The authors feared that economic upswing and increased immigration to Palestine would endanger their elitist conception of Zionist pioneers fulfilling

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**189** For a comprehensive review of Zionist historiography in this regard, see Shumsky, *Ben Prag li-Yerushalayim*, 21–22.

**190** Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee*, 247–248.

**191** Shumsky, *Ben Prag li-Yerushalayim*, 17–18.

**192** Lappin, *Jüdische Moderne*, 287.

**193** Markus Reiner, “Der Industrialismus,” *Der Jude* 3 (1918–19), 471–472.

**194** Hugo Bergmann, “Die wahre Autonomie,” *Der Jude* 3 (1918–19), 369–370.

the romantic, antibourgeois and anticapitalist German notion of *Gemeinschaft*. Oppenheimer shared this view of capitalism as a spirit of alienation from labor, as well as from other human beings, ruining any sense of *Gemeinschaft*. He emphasized that capital is not a thing but a relation between people that must be done away with: “Thereby we would achieve all that we wish, not only economically but also social-psychologically. What poisons and embitters our life is the kind of economic competition amid which we live. It incites man against man, class against class, people against people. It is the notorious villain that ignited this world war.”<sup>195</sup> According to Bergmann, a specific Zionist economic approach was crucial for the creation of a community of mutuality instead of opposition. He reminded the readers that “‘Palestine’s colonization’ is not the goal of Zionism; it is ... only a pretext. The goal is the creation of a new type of Jew! In place of the Jew who is addicted to things and prays to the dead should arise the Jew whose life is rooted in spirit, who is willing to make sacrifices, filled with love, enthusiastic.”<sup>196</sup>

Steeped in biblical precepts of social justice and a romantic ideal of old Israel’s communal life and law, the new Jew, as envisioned by this intellectual circle, should bring a new revelation to the world, or in the words of Buber: “True *Gemeinschaft* is the Sinai of the future.”<sup>197</sup> Oppenheimer was among his brethren in imagining Zionism as the beginning of a utopian realization for the whole world. Even though the utopian vision propagated in *Der Jude* rejected class struggle, an important motive in Oppenheimer’s utopian vision, the goal of reconciling a *Gemeinschaft*-oriented nationalism with a universal socialist outlook and biblical Judaism was shared nonetheless by Oppenheimer.<sup>198</sup>

Another Prague Zionist, Max Brod, known as the administrator of Kafka’s literary inheritance, expressed his hopes for overcoming all negative elements of nationalism through socialist Zionism: “I see the task and universal meaning of Jewish nationalism in giving ‘nationalism’ new meaning ... By eliminating social injustice and imperial-expansive volition in this community, a living example would be set that wrongs associated with and supposedly intrinsic to nation-

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195 Oppenheimer, “Bodenbesitzordnung in Palästina,” 504.

196 Bergmann, “Die wahre Autonomie,” 371.

197 Martin Buber, “Wege und der Weg,” *Der Jude* 3 (1918–19), 368.

198 Franz Oppenheimer wrote about biblical land reallocation; see Oppenheimer, “Bodenbesitzordnung in Palästina,” 500. Bergmann wrote about the equation of labor with religious worship; see Bergmann, “Die wahre Autonomie,” 371. Beyond the essays discussed here, biblical obligations of social justice were dealt with extensively in several issues of *Der Jude*. The journal attempted to create an intrinsic link between socialism and Judaism to counteract Karl Marx’s association of Judaism with capitalism; see Lappin, *Jüdische Moderne*, 274–276.

alism today – are nevertheless abatable and not intrinsically national.”<sup>199</sup> Despite the atrocities of the First World War, a war which Buber initially celebrated in patriotic fervor, Buber still advocated for nationalism without which the Zionist movement had no sway. His remedy for the faults of nationalism was the recognition of international frameworks:

Every nation ... is its own master and its own judge ... But on these most bloody of earthen days began already the demise of this dogma. Understand us correctly, the perception of the nation as a fundamental reality of human life cannot be deleted from human consciousness anymore and also should not be. But it must and will be supplemented by the recognition that no people on the earth is souverain. Souverain is only the spirit.<sup>200</sup>

Oppenheimer was not free of the paradoxes emanating from the attempted reconciliation of nationalism and universalism. His main credo of a peaceful “conquest by the plow” aimed at creating a Jewish farming class with a dominant Hebrew culture that would inevitably supplant indigenous farmers and their cultures. Yet, as the fulfillment of Zionist fantasies seemed within reach, Oppenheimer stood out by not sticking to amorphous terms of a brotherhood of nations and anti-imperialism, which was at its core oriented at other European nations.

Oppenheimer was one of the first contributors to *Der Jude*, together with his student Fritz Sternberg, to point clearly to the national conflict between Jews and Arabs that Zionism must transcend, a theme that the journal continued to address.<sup>201</sup> Evoking the Jewish experience of demanding recognition as “guests,” Oppenheimer called for adherence to the same principles as “hosts.” Oppenheimer drew on the demographic and geographic familiarity with Palestine he had developed in his work in *Altneuland*, his years of activity in Merhavia, and the journals overall optimistic belief in economic development as a mean to cooperation. He used this to criticize the ongoing exclusion of Arabs from the nascent Jewish community, which he had already experienced firsthand, in the attempt at implementing a national-universal utopia at Merhavia:

The reader who is not hopelessly prejudiced will recognize ... how wrong anti-Arab politics were also from a purely economic aspect, driven by the nationalistic sentiments of Palestine’s workforce. This policy was also most preposterous when considering aspects of social peace and political security, in addition to being ethically reprehensible. The Jewish country should be a place of justice and happiness for all, and there is truly enough space in the country to promote the prosperity of 600,000 Arabs as well, thus winning them over as de-

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**199** Max Brod, “Grenzen der Politik. Zur Prinzipienfrage,” *Der Jude* 3 (1918–19): 463.

**200** Buber, “Wege und der Weg,” 366.

**201** Arthur Ruppin was another early contributor on the matter; see Lappin, *Jüdische Moderne*, 254–255.

pendable friends ... These seem to me to be the principles of Jewish colonization ... The war has taught us what the united power of the people is capable of achieving – let us harness it for goals of peace and culture in the service of the Most High and the realization of the highest, ancient ideal of our people, that was always simultaneously national and universal.<sup>202</sup>

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202 Oppenheimer, “Bodenbesitzordnung in Palästina,” 510–511.

# Conclusion

How could Franz Oppenheimer simultaneously be an ardent German patriot and staunch Zionist, and what role did Zionism play for German-Jewish identity at the beginning of the twentieth century? These questions have served this book as a point of entry and guiding thread. Approaching history with our contemporary, and often dogmatic, conceptions of Zionism – seven decades after the founding of the state of Israel – it is sometimes surprising, and even somewhat misleading, to find biographies of German Jews referring to anarchist, socialist and other Jewish intellectuals with a strong universal and cosmopolitan leaning, such as Theodor Lessing, Gustav Landauer and Franz Oppenheimer, as Zionists without further explanation or contextualization.

This book set out to explain this connection by using Franz Oppenheimer as a case study. It explored Oppenheimer's conception of Jewish identity or better yet Jewishness – a term free of static religious, cultural or ethnic preconceptions, which allows a context-based approach – within the dynamics of German nationalism's transition from its mostly liberal foundations towards the blood and soil ideology of the Nazis. The book began by exploring Oppenheimer's position on race and antisemitism shaped by his personal experience, medical training, socialist inclinations and contemporary discourses. Oppenheimer expressed his views most vocally and influentially in his role as cofounder of academic sociology in Germany. The second part of the book focused on Oppenheimer's Zionist activity and how he and the various Zionist circles he affiliated with adapted Zionism to serve a (German) diasporic setting.

Even Oppenheimer's choice to pursue a career in medicine was an expression of his Jewishness on an empirical and subjective level. According to Oppenheimer, it was a result of his family's vocational tradition as well as liberal Judaism's interpretation of *tikkun olam*: repairing the world through positive action. During his university studies, Oppenheimer was confronted with rising antisemitism and the expulsion of Jews from student fraternities. His medical practice brought him in closer contact with Berlin's lower classes, causing him to take a special interest in the social question. Oppenheimer favored Rudolph Virchow's approach of social medicine and hygiene as treatment for many of society's woes. This was an important springboard for Oppenheimer's involvement with sociology. Around the same time, Oppenheimer began mixing with Berlin's bohemian, naturalist and Freeland circles, awakening his political awareness and scientific appetite. Consequently, he abandoned his medical practice to immerse himself in the study of socioeconomic matters, which ultimately led to his



appointment at the university of Frankfurt as Germany's first tenured professor for sociology.

In the transition period, Oppenheimer published a score of articles and essays dealing with important themes correlating with the racial discourse such as cultural pessimism, degeneration, Darwinism, racial anthropology, neurology, eugenics, public health, social-psychology and population policy. His medical training contributed to his authority on these matters. In order to participate in the discourse, Oppenheimer could not just dismiss its central suppositions, such as the existence of race, nor did he want to. Instead, he pursued discursive strategies utilized by generations of Jewish intellectuals since the dawn of the liberal age to carve a place for Jews in German civil society. These included claiming intellectual authority over the definition of Jewish, Christian and German practices, beliefs, history and by the late nineteenth century racial composition through direct confrontation in the scientific arena with opponents of emancipation. Oppenheimer did not hesitate to take off his gloves in these confrontations. He countered accusations of impartialness and lack of objectivity, often hurled at Jewish intellectuals dealing with Jewish issues on a scientific level, by exposing the impartialness and class interests of the antisemites making these accusations.

The discerning scientific eye was an important device for establishing authority over other peoples in German colonial discourse and Jews were its first victim. By making antisemites and their racial theories into an object of scientific study, Oppenheimer turned the table on their objectifying and Othering of Jews. It was an attempt to break down the German-Jewish dichotomy upheld through the arbitrary determination of Jews as test group and Germans as normative control group in their purportedly scientific research. Instead, Oppenheimer offered a subaltern, class-based analysis of society with the ruling upper classes and especially the landed Junker aristocracy as the source of society's woes. Accordingly, Oppenheimer held a typical socialist perspective on antisemitism, regarding it as another manifestation of the racism propagated by the upper classes to divide and rule. Nevertheless, his scientific approach – centered on antisemites and their theories – made him a pioneer in the study of antisemitism. His lecture on racial theories at the second convention of the German Society for Sociology, his public conflict with Werner Sombart and his position as professor for sociology lent him an influence not shared by other Jewish sociologists dealing with questions of race and antisemitism before and after the First World War.

Another strategy pursued by Oppenheimer was the transvaluation of the discourse's fundamental terms and concepts. For example, Oppenheimer claimed that Darwin's concept of struggle for existence was incorrectly translated into German and subsequently misappropriated in racial and colonial discourses.

He argued that it did not describe a conflict between different social or racial groups over a limited supply of resources but a mutual struggle of all humans against nature's harshness, spurring progress and innovation. Oppenheimer made similar arguments against the alleged misappropriation of Malthus's population theory by neo-Malthusians and Social Darwinists.

In discussions on racial anthropology, Oppenheimer rejected the existence of racial purity. He argued that migration was a key element in the historical formation of states and nations, whose purpose was to integrate diverse social and ethnic groups into one body with a hierarchy of classes that was not sexually impervious. Oppenheimer shared this opinion on the importance of miscegeny for social progress with founders of *Rassenhygiene*, the German word for eugenics, such as Alfred Ploetz and Wilhelm Schallmayer. This was not the only commonality between them. At the end of the nineteenth century, *Rassenhygiene* and socialism shared an anticapitalist disposition and the hope that social engineering in the form of scientifically founded social and legal reforms could facilitate the transformation and improvement of the people's moral and physical demeanor. Aesthetics and character were interlinked in the racial discourse and played an important role in Zionist discourse on the creation of "muscular Jews," too. Oppenheimer was a leading proponent of sports and agriculture as means for the physical and mental transformation of the Jewish people.

As a social utopian, Oppenheimer saw in the concept of race potential for expanding nationalism's drive for cohesiveness, solidarity and political unity. In his opinion, races were not primordial but a product of historical developments. The constant mixing between various ethnic groups created a European racial spectrum in which Jews were not more different from Aryans than other Mediterranean peoples such as Italians and French. Oppenheimer divided Europeans into two major subcategories, e.g., shades of white: a Northern European and a slightly darker Southern European that he called *homo mediterraneus*. Oppenheimer believed that a racial conception of the Aryan could serve as a surrogate for the European in a world shifting away from liberalism. If the concept of the Aryan or *homo europeus*, as Oppenheimer called it, were to encompass different European peoples and ethnicities including Jews, it could assist in transmitting liberal elements into increasingly popular *völkisch* conceptions of nationalism.

The most important instrument in creating Oppenheimer's utopian ideal of an overarching European federation of free and equal societies was the settlement cooperative. This notion was the product of his interest in social engineering and population policy as well as his conviction that mutuality was crucial for evolution and progress. Oppenheimer criticized Marx's focus on industrialization and urban proletariat. He asserted that socialist reform must start one step be-

forehand in the countryside to prevent further migration of impoverished peasants into the cities. Further, reform should encourage the urban proletariat to become farmers, thus reversing the flow of migration. He saw the main hindrance on this path as the forceful possession of all farmland by landed gentry. Oppenheimer called this monopoly land enclosure and regarded it as the foundation of the class state.

Oppenheimer did not call for a violent revolution to dispossess the gentry but for the establishment of agricultural settlement cooperatives to set a process of peaceful transformation in motion. According to Oppenheimer, the main advantages of his settlement cooperatives was the financial framework for eventual ownership by the cooperative's members of their house and produce, the shared risk, and the mutual aid in training urban proletariat in agriculture. He calculated that once a critical mass of cooperative settlements would be reached, it would trigger off an economic snowball that would force large manor holders to sell their lands to form new cooperatives. His theoretical and practical expertise in settlement practice, as well as his technocratic approach to implementing agricultural settlement policy, prepared the way for his invitation to join the Zionist movement as a colonization expert.

Parallel to his promotion of settlement cooperatives open to all, Oppenheimer was active in an association promoting agricultural training for Jews in Germany. This pre-dated his Zionist engagement. Oppenheimer praised the association's success at the physical almost racial transformation of Ostjuden into farmers emphasizing parallels to Zionism's agricultural vision. Despite his reservations about Zionism's endorsement of the wrong racial theories, and his preference for cooperation with the Jewish Colonization Association in oversee agricultural settlement, Oppenheimer signaled that he did not completely rule out collaborating in Zionist colonization. The leadership of the ZO and especially Herzl seized this opportunity to recruit the renowned colonization expert into their ranks at a time when many Jews in the Russian Empire increasingly yearned for a place of refuge from brutal pogroms. Expectations were rising that Zionism would commence with settlement in Palestine even without completing negotiations for a charter, an internationally recognized political framework which was a cornerstone of Herzl's political Zionism. Simultaneously, negotiations with the British government bore fruit in form of an extremely controversial charter for Zionist settlement in British East Africa.

Oppenheimer's debut into the Zionist movement required him to navigate a mesh of interests and conflicts between political and practical Zionists, territorialists and palestinocentricists, for which he was unprepared. Devoid of a political base, Oppenheimer's acceptance and rapid promotion within the movement completely depended on Herzl's goodwill. Yet he quickly found himself allied

with Davis Trietsch and other practical Zionists who were among Herzl's fiercest opponents within the movement. Trietsch tempted Oppenheimer with prospects of a speedy implementation of his settlement cooperative in Cyprus. Herzl lured Oppenheimer back into the fold by promising him the imminent implementation of his plans and an invitation to the Sixth Zionist Congress, also known as the "Uganda Congress," as a keynote speaker on issues of colonization. At the congress, Oppenheimer presented his settlement cooperative and was appointed to the board of the Commission for the Exploration of Palestine. In this capacity, he coedited the commission's journal *Altneuland*.

The founding of a Jewish homeland might have been the declared goal of Zionism. But Oppenheimer and many of his German Zionist contemporaries did not intend to make it their physical home. Rather it was to be a future home for the persecuted and disparaged Eastern European masses who were to be transformed in the process into an agriculturally grounded nation. Zionism's added benefit for German Zionists was as a form of identity politics to overcome marginalization in German society. *Altneuland* was a mouthpiece for internal identity politics within German Jewry and a medium to alter discursive assumptions about Jews in society at large. It strove to strengthen Jewish identity in the diaspora in an environment of increasing estrangement from institutionalized religion, assimilation and antisemitism by aligning Zionism with German colonialism. The argument was that if Zionist colonization would be perceived as an essential part of German colonialism, which was gaining popularity and acceptance, it could facilitate the reconciliation of Jewish and German national pride. Additionally, if supporting Zionism would no longer be perceived as questioning or rejecting Jewish integration in Germany but rather as an extension of German patriotism, the main obstacle for the financial and technical support of Zionism among Germany's Jews would be removed.

In this sense Oppenheimer and the *Altneuland* circle were another link in a long chain of Jewish modernizers since the beginning of the Enlightenment, who were paving the path to German citizenship while trying to retain and renew Jewish peoplehood. In this process they constantly created new cultural, secular and religious expressions of Jewishness. In their engagement with the racial and colonial discourses gaining on popularity at the turn of the twentieth century, they sought to dismantle new forms of Othering and provide new paths for acculturation. One of these new paths was participation in German colonial endeavors. *Altneuland* pursued a twofold strategy to inspire German Jewish participation. The first was to instill in their readership a colonial spirit. The second was to impart technical knowledge to Jewish and non-Jewish academics for possible employment in the emerging German and Zionist colonial services. By specializing in Palestine studies, these young academics would advance Jewish intellectual

authority over the Arab, German or Jewish inhabitants and ultimately over themselves. In doing so *Altneuland* adopted the scientificity of the German colonial approach, carrying Oppenheimer's struggle for interpretational sovereignty from the racial discourse into the colonial discourse.

This book's focus has not been colonization practice. Instead, it has tackled the entanglement of Oppenheimer and the *Altneuland* circle in the racial and colonial discourses in German, with its purpose of altering the perception and subsequently the standing of Jews in Germany. And it has traced how Oppenheimer and *Altneuland* revised Jewish history to depict Jews as apt colonizers from antiquity to the modern era. Jewish racial difference was depicted as an advantageous. This racial difference supposedly made Jews more suitable physically and morally as settlers in the Orient than Germans. *Altneuland* advanced the proposition that Zionist colonization would fare best as a German-Jewish joint venture optimizing the strengths and weakness of each race. Jewish presence in the Orient and their supposed racial kinship to local populations would be the foothold that Germany needed to increase its influence in the region. Furthermore, *Altneuland* argued, new German-oriented Jewish school system might be able to counter French influence in the region and especially among Jews exercised through the schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle.

Zionist settlement of Palestine was portrayed as a newer, better link in a chain of European colonizers of the region that would be inclusive to indigenous populations, as well as other European colonizers, once Jewish sovereignty was established. German Templers formed an important point of comparison and domination fantasy in *Altneuland*. In a sense, this was a fantasized inversion of the historical social exclusion of Jews in Europe. This was also a Jewish version of German self-portrayal as the morally superior colonizer prevalent in German colonial fantasy. *Altneuland's* adaptation of German colonial fantasies was yet another expression of Jewish acculturation in Germany. Colonial fantasies rooted in an inferiority complex of being a national and colonial latecomer were an important staple in the advocacy for German colonial expansion. German Zionists seemed to have a double share of this inferiority complex, being German and Jewish. These colonial fantasies enabled sympathy and a shared emotional language between Zionists and advocates of German colonialism, forming a common ground for cooperation, and arguably making German Zionists a unique subgroup of German colonialists.

It can be argued that advocates of German colonialism were more concerned with domestic political issues than with economic and foreign policy. By framing Zionism within a German colonial context, the *Altneuland* circle strove to forge an alliance of Jewish and non-Jewish advocates of colonialism united by the hope that overseas expansion would ultimately lead to the transformation of

Germany from a parochial state to a liberal, heterogenous colonial empire like Great Britain. In this process the very fabric of Germany and its concept of national belonging would change. They believed that German colonial expansion would require the country's leadership, civil service and general public to develop sensibilities to other cultures and ethnicities – that they would turn their sight inwards to the country's ostracized minorities in search of potential mediators in the contact with new peoples. Jews and Catholics were the obvious suspects when it came to spreading German influence to the Bible Lands. According to *Altneuland* this process of reconciliation and integration of Catholics into the colonial service was already in motion and can serve as a model for Jews.

It is important to emphasize that *Altneuland's* definition of Palestine, or better "Greater Palestine," included its neighboring countries too in the tradition of the theological approach to the study of the Bible Lands. This enabled the journal to find a compromise between territorialism and palestinocentrism. It also gave room for Zionists to develop a colonial sentiment by planning settlements in potential colonies first and the Palestinian homeland later when politically circumstances allowed. It also made it possible to integrate Palestine studies into an already existing body of science, and to modernize it by placing the focus on other disciplines such as geography and linguistics instead of theology. In this process, Zionists challenged the traditional authority of Lutheran clergy in this field and the antisemitic bias of some of them. The new approach also aimed at changing the perception of Palestine from a land of eternal bareness to a fruitful Mediterranean country with a moderate climate. In the colonial discourse, Palestine's alleged neglect justified its appropriation. The depiction of the land as Mediterranean strengthened its connection to the European cultural sphere. It made Palestine seem closer and the prospects of success of Jewish colonization higher.

Broadening the geographic scope of the discussion in *Altneuland* was also important given reservations in Germany about how German support for Jewish colonization might affect their diplomatic and business relationship with the Ottoman Porte, who was reluctant to allow Jewish settlement in Palestine proper. *Altneuland* tried to alleviate such concerns in its effort to lobby the German government to proclaim official support of Zionist colonization and recognize it as an important pillar of Germany's emerging colonial empire. For this purpose, the journal emphasized the potential economic benefits of cooperation held for both the German and Ottoman Empires and their shared lot as colonial underdogs. This also played on the colonial fantasy of German benevolence compared with the aggressiveness of the established colonial powers threatening to tear apart the Ottoman Empire.

Zionist agricultural settlement served as an arena to disprove antisemitic slander regarding Jews' suspect work ethic and physical incapacity, along with inferior masculinity and unsuitability to become citizens. The depiction of the agricultural cooperative Merhavia focused on Oppenheimer's work in the context of colonial and racial discourses. It expounded his contradictory position in the prolonged conflict over integrating Arab labor between the Eastern European workers and the administration appointed and supported by Oppenheimer. The outcome was of great significance for all parties because as the ZO's first planned, large-scale agricultural cooperative, Merhavia was perceived as setting the direction of Zionist agricultural settlement. This conflict best demonstrates the core issue of this book: the tension between Oppenheimer's nationalist inclinations and Zionist activity and his liberal humanism and cosmopolitan (but Eurocentric) social utopia.

Oppenheimer depicted Jews as a race of bastards living in sharp contrast between an illustrious past as a "master race" in Palestine and a dire present in Eastern Europe. The experience of rejection despite their monumental past made Jews, he argued, natural revolutionary leaders. In Oppenheimer's opinion, by implementing his settlement cooperative in the service of restoring Jews to their old glory, Zionism could turn the social transformation he originally contrived for German "inner colonization" into another global almost messianic Jewish revolution. He imagined, this revolutionary conquest as a triumph of harmony and cooperation symbolized by the plow and not of force and coercion symbolized by the sword. Fulfilling this tenet of Oppenheimer's philosophy meant that Zionism should strive to integrate Arabs in the settlement cooperative. This was an essential part of the universal socialist mission considered to be Oppenheimer's main contribution to Zionism. However, Oppenheimer also advanced the national goal of creating a Jewish farming class that would be intricately connected with extensive exclusion of non-Jews from the cooperative.

This internal tension of this utopian mission, together with early German Zionism's entanglement with German colonial and racial discourses, could have been a source for the inordinate endorsement of binationalism among German Jews. *Altneuland* was interwoven into a corpus of colonial writings articulating a fantasy of a colonization characterized by harmony between colonizers and local populations. The popularity of the binational idea among German Zionists was a criticism of their own discrimination and their wish that Zionism would lead the way to freedom and justice within Europe and Germany. For Oppenheimer, this was unmistakably Zionism's mission.

Shortly before the First World War, Oppenheimer's generation began to lose ground within German Zionism. Once the war began, their territorialist inclinations enabled Oppenheimer and other first-generation German Zionists to em-

brace new opportunities to tout the benefit of German-Jewish cooperation for imperial expansion – now into Eastern Europe – and to find new supporters for this goal within German Jewry. Together with leaders of the German Jewish establishment they formed the Komitee für den Osten to mediate between local Jewish populations and the German military authorities and promote the creation of a Jewish autonomy in Eastern Europe.

The KfdO continued the CEP's efforts to advocate for the integration of Jews into the German colonial service. They successfully lobbied for the installment of Jewish intermediaries in the military authorities of occupied Russia and in the foreign office. The latter continued to exist even after the war. *Altneuland's* discursive interventions were also emulated in KfdO mouthpiece *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte*, coedited by Oppenheimer. In his sociological essays, Oppenheimer emphasized the linguistic origins of the concept of race to weaken the argument of racial theories that race was static and inalterable. Commonalities in language and culture between Jews and Germans played an important role in the liberal concept of belonging propagated in the journal. For this reason, they attempted to revamp the image of Yiddish, transforming it from a disdained jargon to an expression of Jewish affinity to Germanness.

The methodology developed here in the analysis of *Altneuland* and *Neue Jüdische Monatshefte* will hopefully encourage research into the manifestation of colonial fantasies in other Zionist journals, memoirs, novels, travelogues and literary productions. This book provides an example of how focusing on links between Zionism and Jewish identity in the diaspora can enrich our understanding of significant historical phenomena concealed by a teleological narrative culminating in the foundation of the state of Israel. Finally, contemplating Zionism within the political and cultural context of its diasporic surroundings could clear the way to new historical findings as well as fruitful reflections on Zionism's changing dynamics in shaping Jewish identity in the diaspora today.



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Cover: Private collection Michael Oppenheimer

Fig 1: Settlement potential of “Greater Palestine,” 133, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main/Digitale Sammlungen Judaica/ <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/cm/periodical/pageview/2380798>

Fig 2: *Altneuland* cover illustration, 210, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main/Digitale Sammlungen Judaica/ <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/cm/periodical/pageview/2266145>

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