Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory/Revue canadienne de théorie politique et sociale, Volume XIII, no. 1-2 1989

NOTES TOWARD THE REVIVAL OF THE JEWISH LEFT

Norman Levine

The fact that Martin Buber's socialism differed so completely from Marxian socialism, testifies to the multiple intellectual currents which contributed to the shaping of nineteenth-century radicalism. Indeed, in his book *Paths to Utopia*, Buber not only criticized the ideology of Karl Marx, but also clearly identified the left-wing tradition from which he drew his inspiration. *Paths in Utopia* attacked Marxism as both authoritarian and statist.[1] Echoing Bakunin's criticism of Marx, Buber also felt that Marxist socialism must necessarily lead to the state capitalism of the Soviet Union under Stalin, state ownership by a minority class, which perpetuated the alienation and dehumanization of the laboring masses. Conversely, the radicalism which informed Buber's socialism came from Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Saint-Simon.[2] A member of the Jewish left, Buber represented the Utopian socialism which both Marx and Engels denounced in *The Communist Manifesto.*[3]

According to Marx and Engels, Utopian socialism was politically ineffectual because it did not understand the realities of class domination, class struggle, and revolution. The attempt to distinguish Marxian socialism from Utopianism, which Marx and Engels began in *The Communist Manifesto,* was continued by Engels in a work he published in 1880 called *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.*[4] In this work, Engels distinguished the anarcho-communism of the Utopians from the scientific socialism of Marx and himself. According to Engels, scientific socialism provided a clear understanding of the materialist forces that determined the movement of history, and therefore comprehended the structures of political power that existed at

a given historical moment, while Utopian socialism remained basically concerned with humanist-anthropological issues, such as personal autonomy and interpersonal harmony. Frankly acknowledging his anarcho-communist roots, asserting his derivation from Proudhon, Kropotkin, and Gustav Landauer, Buber met the Engelsian challenge directly by affirming that socialism must be predicated upon a Utopian humanist-anthropological core. Buber chose to be an advocate of communitarian socialism because it was only in the anarcho-socialist tradition that the commitment to personal authenticity and reciprocity, the ground of any I-Thou relationship, remained an inherent part.

Regardless of the separate intellectual traditions which flowed into the thought of Marx and Buber, both were social and political radicals. They differed and they were alike; both sought to transform and reconstruct society, although each had different models of a future society in mind. This essay is an attempt to uncover the ideational components of Buber's radicalism, and to isolate those ideas which formed the ground of Buber's anarcho-communism. This probe into Buber's left-wing politics will show that he and Marx shared a common belief in the historicity and transformative capacity of man. The ideological core of the radicalism of both Marx and Buber was their mutual commitment to the idea that human action helped create not only history, but man himself. In isolating those ideas which served as the ground of Buber's radicalism, this essay will also establish the intellectual prerequisites for any revival of Jewish leftist thought.

Buber rebelled, as Marx had rebelled, against bourgeois, liberal civilization. Nevertheless, when Marx turned to the Hegelian concepts of *praxis* and objectification in his rejection of bourgeois civilization, Buber turned to the reified, toward a mystical unity between the conditioned subjective and the unconditioned eternal. The tensions and the polarity between Marx and Buber represented the chasms and rifts that were tearing western society apart during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Marx, Marxists, and Buber rejected the liberal middle, the world of Adam Smith, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Jefferson, and John Stewart Mill. Marx furthered the tradition of the revolutionary left-wing Hegelians and hoped that through the overthrow of capitalism the social causes for the dehumanization and alienation of man would end. Buber extended the tradition of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson, for he hoped that through intuition, encounter, meeting and dialogue the communication of man with man, regardless of its social context, would be enhanced and thus the deformation and fragmentation of human experience in the contemporary would be overcome.

Buber began his intellectual quest in search of a philosophical anthropology. Throughout his lifetime, Buber was to consider many intellectual frameworks, but as a young man Buber was seeking unconditional and unlimited statements about the nature of the human species. As part of

his quest for an ontology of human nature, Buber was forced to redefine the nature and practice of philosophy in general.

For Buber, philosophy must depart from this fixation with problems of cognition. Being an anti-Kantian, Buber was well aware that for philosophy to be primarily concerned with the question, How do I Know? was to limit thought to analyzing the extent of the separation between subject and object and to perceive man as being involved in receiving sensation and in structuring those sensations in a rational order. Man was thereby truncated: he was halved. In the Kantian context, man was understood solely in his sensory and logical (that is, mental) components. Buber, however, preferred to begin philosophy with Feuerbach and Nietzsche. Speculation should not begin with the question How Does Man Know? but rather the question How Does Man Live? Buber was concerned with the whole man: not with the separation between subject and object but with the unity between man and man. Based upon an anthropology, philosophy must investigate how the experience of individual life could be heightened, how existence could be authenticated both for the self and for the entire community. The aim of philosophy was not analytics, but morality and humanism.[5]

Like many rebels against *fin de siècle* capitalist society, Buber saw the mass as the chief threat to authentic and creative human existence. The mass was the source of anonymity and of conformity, and the cause of the loss of self, of true decision, of creative anxiety. In the first half of the twentieth century, Buber was to witness the rise of a totalitarianism of the right in Germany and/or a totalitarianism of the left in Russia. In Buber's eyes, the coming into being of national socialist and communist authoritarianism was a direct outgrowth of the mass society created by the bourgeoisie at the end of the nineteenth century. Echoing Kierkegaard, Buber maintained that true meaning was only possible where there was a true and autonomous individual. Without the immediate, the subjective, the conditional there could be no unity and oneness with the unconditional, the eternal, or God as person.[6]

Man, for Buber, was a being who acted; and while God was the primary active agent in the universe, man was the secondary generative agent. Man was created with the capacity for decision.[7] Ironically, because man had the capacity for choice he was visited with the pains of anxiety, and as a consequence of his freedom he experienced guilt. Nevertheless, Buber's vision of man as active subjectivity, did not permit him to succumb to pessimism, and neither did Buber fall prey to any philosophy of irrationalism. Even though an admirer and student of the intuitionist philosophy of Dilthey and Bergson, Buber never surrendered the hope that the real world could be logically understood. Intuition, or *verstehen*, for Buber, meant the extension of our understanding to the minds and feelings of other men, not the denial of the powers of the human mind to rationally comprehend the social and physical universe. Buber's Existentialism did

not lead him to an acceptance of historical despair, or the concept of human powerlessness. Conversely, his Existential doctrine of active subjectivity and decision compelled him to accept possibility, to expect the future to witness productive human acts and choices.

Central to Buber's philosophical anthropology, was his belief that man was a subordinate active participant in the ongoing process of creation.[8] In fact, Buber took his idea of man's partial participation in creation as being one of the crucial concepts of the Hebrew religion.[9] Buber was able to inventively combine the Hassidic myth of *Shekinah* with his Judaic thesis of shared and mutual creation. According to Hassidic mysticism, sparks from God's soul were trapped or lost in the physical world, and the Hassidic believed that a good or just human act would free the *Shekinah* to return to God or else redeem its existence on earth.[10] Buber called this sacramental existence, which meant that a loving, confirming, or enhancing act was a sacrament because it glorified or redeemed God's spirit in this world. Whether in its Existential form of openness to the future, or in its supernatural form of redemption of the *Shekinah*, Buber's message was the same: the immediacy of the human action was a partial sharing in the process of creation. Genesis was the work of God, but it was also the intent of God that the continuing evolution of history be dependent upon human activity.

Buber's synthesis, of an existentialism which arose from the German philosophical tradition, with a religiosity, which was based primarily on Biblical Judaism, was a creative blending of intellectual originality. There were three levels to Buber's intellectual artifice: the Judaic, the Existential, and the mystical. The Hassidic gave to Buber's synthesis the passion, inspiration, and heat which were lacking in the other two elements. Mysticism supplied the Buber synthesis with ecstasy, with the supernatural assurance of final consummation. The German philosophical tradition, however, offered to Buber the necessary concepts for his theory of encounter, the dialogue of mutual revelation, the I-Thou drama. Relationship was primary for Buber, who depicted two kinds of primary relationships. First, the I-It, which involved the approach of the I to the non-personal inanimate world; second, the I-Thou, which involved the approach of the I to the interpersonal world. To Buber all authentic existence entailed meeting, encounter, dialogue. It was in the dialogic relationship between I and Thou that God existed.[11]

Buber first became aware of the I-Thou concept in the writing of Ludwig Feuerbach.[12] By means of the dialogical principle, Buber could overcome a traditional problem of philosophy, the subject-object dilemma, but more importantly, the dialogical principle served as a means by which Buber could interpret the Old Testament. Buber was a personalist, and in his biblical scholarship God was always seen in a discursive relationship with the Hebrews. God always talked to the Hebrews. The meeting between God and man was thus an I-Thou encounter, or since the primal

act of god was dialogical, then God could only be discovered in personalist dialogical meetings. For Buber, authentic existence was immediate existence, for life was authentic when the divine or the eternal were present in every moment. In "The Two Foci of the Jewish Soul," Buber wrote:

> One center of the Jewish soul is the primeval experience that God is wholly raised above man, that he is beyond the grasp of man, and yet that he is present in an immediate relationship with these human beings who are absolutely incommensurable with him, and that he faces them. To know both these things at the same time, so that they cannot be separated, constitutes the living core of every believing Jewish soul, to know both, "God in heaven," that is, in complete hiddenness, and man "on earth," that is, in the fragmentation of the world of his sense and his understanding; God in the perfection and incomprehensibility of his being, and man in the contradiction of this strange existence from birth to death — and between both, immediacy.[13]

There were two parts to Buber's philosophy of unity. First, the idea of presentness. Authentic existence required that God or the eternal be now, be existent in every lived moment. God could not be postponed for Buber, nor removed from the lived moment.[14] Second, the immediacy of God entailed the idea of unity between the particular and the divine.[15] If God were present in each moment, then conversely each moment participated in and was a reflection of the eternal.[16] The second part of Buber's doctrine of unity could be called the notion of simultaneity, the belief that each moment was simultaneously itself and a part of the spirit — nuine life is united life."[17] The fragmentation of the everyday, the loss of oneness between man and his environment was a product of the separation of the secular and religious in the contemporary world.[18]

Gershom Scholem has placed Buber within the Jewish messianic tradition.[19] Like many Jewish radicals of the twentieth century, such as Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Gustav Landauer, and George Lukacs, Buber has accentuated the themes of historicity, possibility, and human realization in time. The Jewish messianic tradition was based on the idea that the redemption of man would take place in time, and Buber perpetuated this tradition by stressing the importance of future, possibility, and history to human actions. Man must act so as to create his own redemption. If man was to participate in his own self-realization, he must be conceived as both a historical being, as well as a being of possibility. For Buber, as for all messianic thought, the future must exist as a realm of freedom, and history must exist as the temporal ground in which the possibilities of human fulfillment were brought into being by human deeds. In Buber, this messianic impulse was never de-transcendentalized. The Creation theme showed that God had produced a world of openness. The divine act of bringing the universe and man into existence showed that when human activity

itself brought forth actualization, such actions were based on a sacral communion: man was fulfilling the possibilities that the divine had implanted into Creation.[20]

Buber was careful to distinguish two kinds of messianic hope: the prophetic and the apocalyptic. Buber defined prophetic messianism as follows: "[that] which at any given moment sees every person addressed by it as endowed, in a degree not to be determined beforehand, with the power to participate by his decisions and deeds in the preparing of Redemption."[21] In his book, *The Prophetic Faith*, Buber also defined the prophetic tradition as devoted to the realization of Redemption through human action. Within Buber's theology, messianic propheticism related to human intervention and modification of the external world.

Apocalyptic messianism was quite different: Buber defended it as "the redemptive process in all its details, its very hour and course, has been fixed from everlasting and for whose accomplishments human beings are only used as tools, though what is immutably fixed may yet be 'unveiled' to them, revealed, and they be assigned their function."[22] In short, prophetic messianism referred to a history and future produced as a result of human actions, while apocalyptic messianism referred to a history and future produced by an intervention of forces external to and beyond the control of man. Part of Buber's rejection of Marxism came from the fact that he identified it with apocalyptic messianism. In Marxism, human history was controlled by impersonal economic forces which operated beyond the control of human will. Condemning Marxism as a form of economic determinism, Buber's understanding of Marx was marred because he uncritically associated it with Stalinist Bolshevism. The Marxism of the Second International and of the Third International were both determinist ideologies, so Buber uncritically accepted economic determinism as representing the essence of the Marxist theory of history.

The major distinction between Buber and Marx is the separation between prophetic messianism and the philosophy of *praxis*. The Marxist philosophy of *praxis* was predicated upon the idea of immanence. Human actions, the agency of generation, were immanent in the world and so the historical process was an exemplification of the unity of subject and object. Marx believed in a philosophy of identity, in which the anthropological subject cast its own image upon the objective course of history.[23] The concept of historicity within the philosophy of *praxis* was composed of three constituent ideas: 1) that history was the predicate of the anthropological being of man; 2) that man himself was historicized because both his ideology and his psychology were constantly changing in terms of the sociological conditions in which they were embedded; and 3) that, both as the subject and product of history, the progress of man could only unfold in time. In prophetic messianism, human actions contributed toward the unfolding of history because they were revelatory and redemptive. Man fulfilled the design of God because his actions revealed the presence of

the transcendent in history and were themselves redemptive. They contributed to the realization of the possibilities that were latent in Creation. Buber did not believe in a philosophy of identity, for a separation existed between the I and Thou; in a dialogic relationship the subject was divorced from its respondent. The historical world, for Buber, was not a testament to the unity of subject and object; rather, the historical world only possessed symbolic significance. The material world was an allegory of God's intent, and in Buber's philosophy of non-identity the creation of design or order was a divine form of predication.

Even though Marx and Buber had major differences over the meaning of history, points of conjuncture existed as well. Buber shared with Marx some presuppositions regarding points 2 and 3 of Marx's definition of history (for clarification see the above paragraph). Within the transcendental framework of his thought, Buber shared with Marx the idea that man himself was process, that man was a journey through time (point 2). Buber, assuming the transcendental structure of his thought, also agreed with Marx that human fulfillment must take place in time (point 3). From this perspective, Buber was an expression of the Jewish messianic tradition. The Jewish messiah was an historical event, an entrance into the temporal-historical domain. On the basis of this Jewish messianic heritage, Buber could agree with Marx that human fulfillment was an event that could only take place in history.

Furthermore, Marx and Buber shared some common beliefs on the relationship between the human subject and the historical object. For both, the subject was an active force. For Buber, the obligation of the subject was to reveal the *Shekinah*, to discover the nature of the Creation that God had pre-determined in history. The Buberian subject, an active force, was not constitutive, but *uncovered* reality. Both Marx and Buber understood history as possibility and as openness.[24]

A revival of left-wing Judaism can only begin by making this concept of history an intellectual prerequisite.[25] The basis for a revival of left-wing Judaism must therefore be the acceptance of philosophical principles that open to, or project toward a political progressivism. Left-wing Judaism is based upon the assumption that culture must have an emancipatory function; the notion of history as possibility and openness is one element of an emancipatory culture.[26]

The work of Emil Fackenhein starkly contrasts to that of Buber, and represents the difference between Midrashic Judaism and prophetic messianism. While Buber was the seer of social Utopianism, Fackenheim is the spokesman of the post-Holocaust malaise. While Buber's philosophy was a strategy for the future and the yet-to-come, Fackenheim's philosophy is a tactic of confinement, for it prevents dreaming and over-reaching.[27] Fackenheim isolated himself from the emancipatory, both in the theological and political sense, when he rejected the left-wing Hegelian idea that history was the realm of potentiality and promise that was shared, although

in different ways, by both Marx and Buber.[28] In the post-Auschwitz age, Fackenheim expressed the survivors' revenge against history, the attempt on the part of twentieth century disillusionment to bury the sacralization of the political. By destroying the political transcendental, Fackenheim sought to retain the religious transcendental. As contrary to a "theology of hope,"[29] Fackenheim offered theological paradox.

In order to demonstrate the wide gulf between prophetic messianism and Fackenheims's Midrashic Judaism, and to show that Fackenheim's thought precludes emancipation and leads to the confinement of possibility, I will analyze his thought under four categories: 1) The preservation of religious transcendence; 2) the Holocaust interpretation of European intellectual history; 3) the preservation of the legitimacy of Jewish particularity; 4) the Holocaust interpretation of the European existentialist tradition from Kierkegaard to Heidiegger.

The Preservation of Religious Transcendence

Emil Fackenheim is one of the major voices of Holocaust theology. He looks upon Auschwitz as the most important event in Jewish history since the destruction of the Second Temple. Fackenheim conducts a rabbinic pre-emption of Auschwitz, and uses the genocidal act as an empirical fact by which to understand God and to judge human history. His is a clerical seizure of the genocidal act, an attempt to create a theology of Auschwitz as a means to better comprehend the nature of God as well as the nature of human action in time.

Like a wound that will never heal, Auschwitz drove a lesion between Man and God. If you attempt to save God, then the Holocaust will give you no answer. If you attempt to save history, then the Holocaust will give you all the answers. In other words, the genocidal act cannot be made to accord with the idea of a loving God, so that Auschwitz cannot teach us anything about why God abandoned the Jews in the death camps. The only thing that Auschwitz can teach us about God is that he is absent from history. The existence of incarnate evil is contradictory to the concept of a loving God who intervenes in time, and so the existence of incarnate evil means that God does not intervene in the realm of man. While the Holocaust is a testament to the absence of God, it is also a testament to the absolute truth of history. The truth of history as the site of the genocidal act becomes established as the consequence of a God who refuses to enter into human time.

Fackenheim's Midrashic Judaism proposed a vision of history in which the transcendental and the secular were severed. There is no divine-human dialogue in Fackenheim, rather a God who is not only inscrutable, but also absent. Fackenheim does not talk of a total withdrawal of God from man but does speak of a tension that exists between the transcendent and the secular. In his book *The Jewish Return Into History*, Fackenheim defines

Midrashi existence in the following terms: "Midrashic cannot embrace a 'progressive view' of history, for this would dispense with the need for the acting of God."[30] Not only did Midrashic Judaism uphold the categorical separation between history and the sacral, but it also denied the possibility that man can know the transcendental. In *The Jewish Return Into History*, Fackenheim characterizes the Midrash as teaching "life lived with problems"[31] and of the "inherent and inevitable tension between contingent historical present and absolute messianic future."[32]

Fackenheim's response to Aushwitz parallels Theodor Adorno's reaction, who in his *Negative Dialectic*, spoke of the collapse of the theory of identity.[33] Looking upon the beastiality of the Second World War, Adorno stated that there was no rational basis for assuming the identity between subject and object, and Fackenheim's Midrashic Judaism can be looked upon as the theological equivalent of the subject-object uncoupling. In the prophetic messianism, Buber upheld the belief in a divine-human unity, while in Midrashic Judaism Fackenheim uncouples this connection. Buber's prophetic messianism was a product of the *fin-de-siècle* romantic rebellion against capitalist society in which the pre-World War One generation of Ernst Bloch, George Lukács, and Walter Benjamin dreamt of the possibilities of human and societal transformation. Fackenheim's Midrashic Judaism is an outgrowth of Auschwitz and Stalin, the post-World War Two world that had to confront the cold light of disenchantment, not only the horrors of Hitlerism but also the failures of Marxism to transform society. There is a difference between absence and abandonment, so while Fackenheim's God does not reject mankind, he leaves humanity in existential puzzlement.

If one begins theology from the point of Auschwitz, and employs the genocidal act to help define the nature of god, then one is forced to conclude that God's presence is not manifest in history. This is precisely the strategy from which Fackenheim argues the priority of religious transcendence. Having broken the identity between the divine and the human, from a divine-human encounter to a divine-human estrangement, Fackenheim rejects history in favor of Deity. Claiming the impossibility of historical salvation, Fackenheim looks upon religious transcendence as the ontic datum of life and upon salvation as an act of this transcendental Grace.

The Holocaust Interpretation of European Intellectual History

Fackenheim's philosophy of non-identity led him to attack any form of political eschatology. When Fackenheim de-hyphenated the encounter between man and God, he did this to prevent any sacralization of the political. Because of the chiliastic claims of Hitlerism, and because of the failures of Stalinism which then served to impugn the entire history of socialism, Fackenheim attached all forms of political messianism (political messianism is synonymous with the apocalyptic messianism which Buber rejected). For Fackenheim, the sacred political was a form of idolatry, it was a

fetishism that drew attention away from religious transcendence and it was this idolatry of history which must be rebuked.

In his attempt to preserve the non-identity between history and the divine, his major enemy proved to be Hegel and the Left-Wing Hegelians.[34] Fackenheim attacked that part of Hegel and the Hegelian tradition which presumed that the perfection of man can be realized in time. He saw Hegel as a great watershed in the intellectual history of the West, and he viewed the western history of ideas as dividing into two great streams in the post-Hegelian world: the existential stream of Kierkegaard, and the tradition of political sacralization of the Left-Wing Hegelians and Karl Marx. Fackenheim used the Holocaust as a criteria by which to judge western cultural history. The Holocaust proved that the Hegelian identity between history and the divine was invalid, and therefore the entire Left-Wing Hegelian tradition, out of which Marx arose, was based upon an erroneous assumption. Additionally, those philosophies which were predicated upon the human estrangement form of transcendence, the religious existentialism of Kierkegaard, and the atheistic existentialism of Heideigger began on proper philosophic assumptions.

Fackenheim's Holocaust view of European Intellectual History was influenced by Karl Lowith's *From Hegel to Nietzsche*,[35] to whom Fackenheim acknowledged his indebtedness. Lowith also saw the cultural history of Europe dividing after the great Hegelian synthesis, but as a humanist with Leftist sympathies Lowith tended to uphold the Left-Wing Hegelian tradition. *From Hegel to Nietzsche* describes the Hegelian synthesis as continuing through Marx, predicated upon the subject-object identity, while beginning to dissolve in Nietzsche who detached man from history and looked upon redemption as a privative act. Fackenheim's Holocaust view of European Intellectual History was essentially a response of the Hegelian middle to Lowith.[36] Instead of seeing the philosophy of identity as a source of cultural renaissance, Fackenheim attacked the history-divine hyphenation, rejected the sacralization of politics embodied in Left-Wing Hegelianism, and found in existential privatism a sound basis on which to build an ethic of human salvation. What Lowith saw as a source of cultural decadence, the rise of existential individualism, Fackenheim experienced as a source of cultural rejuvenation.

Nonetheless, Fackenheim also attacked the Left-Wing Hegelians because of their supposed anti-Semitism, and echoed the sentiments of Edmund Silberner, who accused the entire European left of anti-Semitism. The underlying political factor in the anti-Semitism issue was the hostility between nationalism and socialist internationalism, and Fackenheim clearly aligned himself with Zionist nationalism when he found the universalism of the Left-Wing Hegelian a threat to Jewish identity. In his *Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy*, Fackenheim looked upon Marx's "On The Jewish Question" as an expression of anti-Semitic stereotypes.[37] Without getting into the issue of "On the Jewish Question," the fact that

Fackenheim branded a large part of the Left as anti-Semitic placed him in the camp of those Jews who rejected the Labor Zionist synthesis of Socialism and nationalism and embraced the nationalist right against Marxism.[38]

Fackenheim's conservatism, the tactics of confinement which he pursued, were not only manifest in relation to Lowith and the issue of Socialist anti-Semitism, but also in relation to Hegel. His book, *The Religious Dimensions in Hegel's Thought*, sought to establish a Hegelian Middle. Fackenheim had clearly separated himself from the Hegelian Left, and he sought to avoid the Hegelian Right with its glorification of the State, and hoped to establish a Hegelian Middle, which was believed to be the central pillar of Hegel's thought in his religious speculations. Basing itself for the most part on Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion*, the Hegelian Middle wished to show that the "Hegelian philosophy as a whole — reconciles the content of the true religious faith with the remainder of man's *Weltanschauung*."[39] Seeking to protect the priority of the transcendental, the Hegelian Middle found the Hegelian project encapsulated in the idea that "philosophy cannot exist without religion — [and how it came to] encompass religion in its own being."[40] Fackenheim wrote his Hegel book in 1967 as a defense of Hegelian religiosity, but the book must also be seen as a rejoinder against the contemporary renewal of a Left-Wing interpretation of Hegel. Fackenheim did not mention, or even consider in his text, the early economic writing of Hegel which was published in 1967 and acted as a starting-point for the contemporary left-wing interpretation of Hegel. He did allude to the *Early Theological Writings*, but was silent about Hegel's *System der Sittlichkeit* and the *Jeneser Realphilosophie I and II* in which Hegel speculated about human economic labor and the human constitution of the world.[41] A student of Hegel must take the *System der Sittlichkeit* and the *Jenenser Realphilosophie I and II* into account because Hegel cannot be judged solely in terms of his religious thought, but also as someone who speculated on the powers of man to construct his own social universe. Fackenheim chose to ignore these documents, as well as Georg Lukács' *Die Junge Hegel*, Manfed Reidel's *Burgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat*, and Jean Hyppolite's *Genèse et Structure de la Phenomenologie de l'esprit de Hegel*, three books which re-introduced a radical vision of Hegel.[42] Fackenheim decided not to inform himself concerning a major school of Hegel scholarship which presented a re-statement of the Left-Wing tradition of the 1840s, a Hegel concerned with alienation, estrangement, dehumanization, while aware of man's economic life as solely a product of human activity. When one places Fackenheim's book *The Religious Dimension of Hegel's Thought* into the context of contemporary neo-Left Wing interpretations of Hegel, his tactics of confinement are uncovered. The cultural strategy of Fackenheim's book was to block a revival of the history-divine unity which characterized the 1840 Left-Wing Hegelians. Fackenheim wished to ensure that Hegel was not again co-opted by the radicals, rather that Hegel was con-

fined within the religio-transcendental cosmos. In this way, history would not again be viewed as a sacralized process.

The Preservation of the Legitimacy of Jewish Particularity

Among the many ideas which the Enlightenment bequeathed to contemporary society, two have particular relevance to our discussion of Fackenheim. One of these ideas concerns freedom and self-determination, an idea developed by Spinoza and fulfilled by Hegel, and which was the basis of the Hegelian notion of the human-divine conjuncture. Fackenheim's attack upon the Enlightenment was supported by his Midrashic philosophy of non-identity and non-immanence. The Enlightenment notion of the universality of man is the second of these ideas. Beginning with a cosmopolitan basis, proponents of the Enlightenment assumed that all men shared a wide range of anthropological characteristics, that a common naturalistic humanity pulled them together, and that humans particularly tended to disappear in the universal claim of a common species being.

Not only did Fackenheim seek to make Auschwitz the *ontic datum* from which to begin theology, but he also sought to make Jewish particularity one of the criteria by which to judge western thought. Fackenheim's nationalism made him an opponent to Enlightenment universalism, because Fackenheim saw a threat to the preservation of Hebraic uniqueness in that cosmopolitan urge. Cosmopolitanism carried to its ultimate end would produce the same result as Auschwitz: it would end in Hebraic extinction. Since the survival of Jewish particularity was based on the unimpeachable beginnings of Fackenheim's Midrashic Judaism, Fackenheim was an advocate of nationalism in opposition to the universalistic claims of the eighteenth century. On this issue as well, Fackenheim emerged an exponent of bourgeois nationalism as opposed to a progressive internationalism.

Since the defense of national particularity became a criteria for the evaluation of western culture, Fackenheim was led to denounce the universalizing elements in the thought of Spinoza and Hegel. Specifically, Spinoza was taken as an example of a thinker whose intellectual dedication to cosmopolitanism led him ultimately to renounce his Judaism. Fackenheim looked upon Spinoza as an irrefutable example of how a total commitment to universality would lead to religious apostasy.[43] The spirit of Spinoza, in fact, was taken by Fackenheim as representing the three major dangers of Midrashic Judaism: a call for a universal anthropology, the advocacy of a concept of absolute human self-determination, and the assault upon religious transcendentalism. Furthermore, Fackenheim also denounced Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* for its lack of understanding of Hebraic particularity.[44] The Hegelian claim that Christian Catholicism amounted to a transcendence of Judaic uniqueness, appeared to Fackenheim as a basic flaw in Hegel's philosophical reconstruction of religion.

The need to defend Jewish specificity led Fackenheim into a strategy of confinement. The requirements of advocating Jewish nationalism, forced Fackenheim's Midrashic Judaism to oppose the best Enlightenment traditions. Midrashic Judaism emerged as a tactic of limitation, because its need to maintain Jewish specificity prevented it from affirming progressive, universalistic tendencies. The intellectual requirements of Jewish specificity did not lead to historic openness or possibility, but reverted back to nineteenth century forces and nationalism by which the Jews indeed survived (Israel), but also by which they were nearly extinguished (Auschwitz). Judaism should not be called to the defense of outmoded historical forms of existence, and this is what a tactic of limitation achieves. Midrashic Judaism, as articulated by Fackenheim, has become allied with some to the most regressive aspects European culture: it has become associated with nationalism, it has assumed an anti-Enlightenment posture and when it was reflected in twentieth century thought its beginnings were found in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Midrashic Judaism has become joined to the darker side of nineteenth and twentieth century European cultures, and it is well to compare the prophetic messianism of Buber, who dreamt of a bi-national state in Israel, and although this dream collapsed, Buber still left us with a promising dream.

The Holocaust Interpretation of European Existentialism

Fackenheim's attempt to preserve existentialism and exclude Marxism was evident in his approach to Sartre. Just as Fackenheim presented a distorted view of Hegel, so, too, he put forth a distorted view of Sartre.[45] When Fackenheim wrote on Hegel, he deleted any mention of Hegel's *System der Sittlichkeit* and the *Jenenser Realphilosophie I and II*. When Fackenheim wrote on Sartre, he treated him solely in terms of *Being and Nothingness*, failing to mention Sartre's Marxist period and Sartre's Marxist work, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, which was a revision of his early *Being and Nothingness*. Fackenheim arbitrarily decided to overlook vital aspects of the work of Hegel and Sartre which tended to contradict his interpretation of these men, and presented a biased picture, ensuring a Hegel and a Sartre with which he could work.

For Fackenheim, Sartrean existentialism contained a Midrashic insight relating to the non-identity of man in history. Fackenheim wrote of Sartre:

> Condemned to be free, Sartrean man is condemned because situated by forces absolutely outside his control, and free because forced to choose absolutely inside the conditions of his situatedness — radical dualism thus manifests itself: for his situation a man is wholly nonresponsible, for he can neither alter it nor escape from it, for his own very being within the situation he is wholly responsible for what he is and well he is wholly his own 'project'.[46]

This passage, although not taken from *Being and Nothingness*, expressed the ahistorical, individualistic sentiments of that work, but Fackenheim refused to comment on Sartre's later historical engagement. Sartre was led to embrace historicity: he did enter the French Communist Party, and allied himself to the Third World Revolution through Castro and Fanon and Maoism, and wrote *A Critique of Dialectical Reason* in which he embraced Marxism. Sartre's existential description of historical anxiety and dread was basically a pre-World War Two phenomena, and Fackenheim totally failed to explain how existentialism (Sartre) and phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty) became linked with Marxism to produce a philosophy of historical engagement in the period after the Second World War. Sartre, comprehended in his entirety, was not a spokesman of Midrashic ahistoricality, but an exponent of the philosophy of the human constitution of the social.

Fackenheim also found relevance between Heidegger's metaphysics and Midrashic Judaism, although he obviously judged Heidegger's Nazi period as unforgivable. He wrote of Heidegger:

> Man's being in the world is said by Heidegger to consist of his inability to transcend his situatedness-in-the-world: in the final analysis this is his being-toward-death. However, this latter is 'unauthentic' when it is toward death-in-general, and 'authentic' only when it is each man's being-toward his-own-death.[47]

Fackenheim learned from Heidegger's metaphysics because it was grounded upon the assumption of the dysjuncture between the subject and the transcendental, but rejected a metaphysics of hope as articulated by Ernst Bloch. Fackenheim was extremely critical of Ernst Bloch[48], finding in him a form of political sacralization which he thought abhorrent. Fackenheim could learn from a metaphysics of non-identity, but he looked upon a metaphysics of messianic hope as entirely misdirected.

The revival of Left-Wing Judaism can only develop through a return of Jewish thought to the tradition of Buber's prophetic messianism and Marx's philosophy of *praxis*. Gerson Scholem in his essay, "Reflections of Jewish Theology," looked upon prophetic messianism as one of the most vital ideas in Judaic philosophy.[49] Despite the important differences between prophetic messianism and the philosophy of *praxis*, both share the assumption that history is to some degree a social production. A theology which takes its point of departure from the Holocaust, as Fackenheim's contemporary version of Midrashic thought does, can only lead to a closed view of history. Fackenheim's theologizing of the Holocaust did violence to the theme of Creation as Revelation. Following Buber in this regard, and dedicated to the Hassidic tradition, Scholem began his theology from the idea of Creation as Revelation, and thus committed himself to the idea of an ongoing creation in which man must contribute to the unfolding of the future.[50] Prophetic messianism and the theme of Creation as Revelation are connected, and both commit one to the concept that history is possi-

bility that can be actualized.

A revival of Left-Wing Judaism through a return to prophetic messianism does not imply that the failures and excesses of Jewish political utopianism will be overlooked. In this regard the millenarian impulse of George Lukacs stands as testimony, for there is a bloody gulf between the chiliastic expectations of *History and Class Consciousness* and the Stalinist Gulag. *History and Class Consciousness* was a product of the apocalyptic dreams of the 1917 to 1921 period when it appeared likely that the Communist revolution would break out of Russia and spread to Hungary and Germany, the core of Central Europe; but these millenarian hopes were dashed when Communist expansionism was replaced by Stalin's socialism in one country. History did not turn out the way that Lukacs wanted, and Adorno was aware of this when he wrote of the de-hyphenation between the subject and history. Jurgen Habermas also criticized Lukacs for his belief in a philosophy of identity, and Habermas, like most of the Frankfurt School, presumed the separation between subject and object.[51] History is not merely the objectification of man, and this Luckacsian Left-Hegelian exaggeration must be put aside.

There is a distinction, however, between identity and constitution. Identity implies a human-historical union, while constitution refers to the subject as one generative agent in the shaping of the future. Identity implies a subject-object synthesis, while constitution refers to the social subject as one creative agent in the shaping of the future. Identity implies a subject-object fusion, while constitution entails that human actions are forces of intervention in history. Left-Wing Judaism does not attempt to revive the philosophy of identity or subject-object unity, but it does emphasize the role of human actions as interventionist forces in the making of history.

Judaism looks upon history from a Hegelian perspective, as the educative process of mankind. Human actions are constitutive of history, but human beings only learn about the efficacy of their actions after the fact. Like Hegel's Owl of Minerva, which only takes flight at evening, so human knowledge is reflexive. History is an educative process, in which one learns the effect of actions only after the fact.

Left-Wing Zionism must associate itself with the universalizing trends of the Enlightenment. This does not mean that Jewish particularism need be erased in a humanist cosmopolitanism. It means that proponents of Left-Wing Zionism must seek a reconciliation with the Enlightenment historiography of Condorcet and Turgot, and with the idea of progressive historical development. Left-Wing Zionism must also recover Spinoza's message that the subject is its own self-determination. The Spinozist concept of human self-determination is the prerequisite for the idea of historical progressivism.

Lastly, the failure of Labor Zionism, the dream of Aaron Liberman, Nachman Syrkin, and Ber Borochov, did not mean that the hope of uniting Jewish nationalism with a socialist society was merely an empty chimera. It

was a concept which essentially grew out of East European Jewry on the part of those few persons who wished to apply the Jewish messianic ideal to society and to the "subgroup" of dedicated followers who surrounded them. Labor Zionism never grew into a mass movement because the Jews in the period of the Russian Revolution had no nation-state, and when they gained a nation-state in Palestine the immediately pressing historical conditions called for the nationalist defense of the territory that they had conquered. In the history of the modern world since the French Revolution, no people have conducted a socialist revolution without first having won a nation-state, and no people inside a nation-state ever led a socialist revolution unless a significant portion of that people were proletarian. In Russia, in the time of the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Jews lacked both prerequisites, since they possessed no nation-state and their population was not significantly proletarian. Because of the larger Russian revolutionary forces, Jewish proletarian aspirations, the Bund, was co-opted by the momentum of the Russian (Bolshevik) proletarian overthrow of the Romanov Empire, and Jewish nationalist hopes in Russia were subordinated to the needs of the new Soviet state in order to achieve internal coherence through the suppression of nationalist demands, not only of Jews but of the plethora of minority groups in Russia. The most important Jewish social movement in Russia after the 1905 Revolution was emancipation through emigration. The Black Hundred programs created a Palestinianism, as well as an exodus mentality whose outlet was the United States. After 1905, with the passing of Borochov, the Jewish intelligentsia, namely Trotsky and Martov, abandoned the Jewish masses and committed themselves to the Russian proletarian struggle. The inability of Labor Zionism to become a powerful political force in Jewish statecraft does not give witness to the irreconcilability of nationalism and socialism. Where the Jews were socialist, their nationalist ambitions were defeated, and where they were nationalist their socialist hopes were thwarted. These paradoxes were due to the fact that the prevailing forces in their socialist phase were socialist internationalism, while the dominant forces in their nationalist phase were Arab anti-Zionism. Jewish socialism had to wait for the acquisition of a territorial base, and again must wait for the reconciliation between Hebrew and Moslem.[52] Buber saw this as well, and it was one of the reasons he so ardently desired an Arab-Israeli rapprochement. A settlement of the territorial problems in the Middle East is the prelude to our rebirth of Jewish humanism.

Freie Universitat
Berlin

Notes

1. Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, trans R.F.C. Hull (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958).

3. Karl Marx, "The Communist Manifesto," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & co., 1972), pp. 331-362.

4. Fredrick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," in *Marx-Engels Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), pp. 379-398.

5. Martin Buber, "What is Man?" in *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), pp. 118-205. Oriental philosophy was very appealing to Buber because of its accent on humanism and ethics. For the humanistic basis of Chinese philosophy see the following essays by Buber: "The Teaching of the Tao," in *Pointing the Way* pp. 31-35; "China and U.S.," (New York: Harper & Row, 1957). In addition see "The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism," in *On Judaism*, ed. Natuhum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), pp. 56-78.

6. Martin Buber, "The Question to the Single One," in *Between Man and Man*, pp. 40-82.

7. Martin Buber, *Moses* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958).

8. Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith* (New York: The MacMillan Co. 1949).

9. Martin Buber, *Israel and the World* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963).

10. Martin Buber, *Mamre* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946). Also see Buber's *The Way of Man, According to the Teachings of Hasidism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950).

11. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1958).

12. Martin Buber, "The History of the Dialogical Principle," in *Between Man and Man*, pp. 209-224. Also *Moses*.

13. Martin Buber, "Two Foci of the Jewish Soul," in *Israel and the World*, pp. 30-31.

14. Martin Buber, "The Teaching of Tao," in *Pointing the Way*, p. 34.

15. Martin Buber, *The Eclipse of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952).

16. Martin Buber, *Good and Evil* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 130. For a further definition of evil see "The Faith of Judaism" in *Israel and the World*, p. 18.

17. Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 104. For additional comments on the problem of guilt, see "Healing Through Meeting," in *Pointing the Way*, p. 95.

18. Ibid.

19. Gershom Scholen, "Martin Buber's Conception of Judaism," in Jews and Judaism in Crisis, ed. Werner J. Dannhauser (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), pp. 160-163. For a more complete presentation of Scholem's thinking on messianism, see her definitive study *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

20. On the theme of divine-human co-authorship in history, see Buber's *The Kingship of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp.99-135. This book clearly presents Buber's ideas concerning the mutual participation of God and man in history.

21. Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, p. 10.

22. Ibid.

23. For an excellent discussion of the philosophy of *praxis* in Marx, see Nathan Rotenstreich, *Basic Problems of Marx's Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

24. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (New York; Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. 314.

25. Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, p. 56.

26. In other articles, I have touched upon the need for Jewish theology to reassociate itself with the messianic tradition. See the two following essays which I wrote: "The Jewish Revolution is Not Complete," *Judaism* (Spring, 1974), pp. 193-201; "On the Necessity of a Jewish Marxist Dialogue" *Judaism* (Winter, 1976), pp. 107-114.

27. On this point, see the work of Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984). The actual phrase which Jameson uses is "strategy of confinement, "and he means any theoretic order which does not carry with it an emancipatory possibility. The term emancipatory should be understood as the removal of any barriers toward the further advancement of human freedom. Although I use a different phrase, I am indebted to Fredric Jameson on this point, and I use the phrase emancipation to mean an additional step in the conquest of human freedom. The phrase tactic of confinement should take the place of a now outmoded basically nineteeth century term, "bourgeois thought."

28. I am aware that Fackenheim and I have different interpretations of Martin Buber's work. I see Buber as an expression of the Jewish messianic tradition, and I am supported in this view by Gerson Scholem. In Scholem's work, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, he distinguishes between prophetic and apocalyptic messianism and places Buber in the prophetic heritage. A different interpretation is offered by Fackenheim who emphasized Buber's Existentialism and his proto-Midrashism. At the end of his life, according to Fackenheim, Buber grew doubtful of the divine-human union and moved instead to the idea of a divine-human dysjuncture. For me, the Scholemian interpretation is the correct one.

29. Refer to the work of Jurgen Moltman, *A Theology of Hope*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). It is interesting that the experience of Hitlerism and the Holocaust have led to contradictory tendencies in contemporary Christian and Jewish theology. Anguished by their passivity as well as complicity in the horrors of the Third Reich, Christain theologians are moving toward history: attempting to understand history as the domain where some form of the divine must be realized. Following Dietrich Bonhoffer, and rejecting the Lutheran divorce between the divine and the secular, the theologians understand that holiness must also be found in history. On the other hand, some Jewish theologians, finding the Holocaust incomprehensible, are moving away from history. Since they feel that history has rejected them, they in turn now reject history.

30. Emil Fackenheim, *The Jewish Return Into History* (New York: Schoken Books, 1978), p. 263.

31. Ibid. p. 263.

32. Ibid. p. 276.

33. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966).

34. On this point, see the following books by Fackenheim: *Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy* (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), pp. 70-170; *To Mend the World* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), pp. 103-146.

35. Karl Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, trans.

36. On the question of the Hegelian Middle, see Fachenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana, University Press, 1967).

37. Fackenheim, *Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy*, pp. 146-148.

38. I have written on this point in my "Lenin on Jewish Nationalism," *Bulletin of the Wiener Library* (August, 1980), pp. 42-54. In that essay I show that Lenin, at least, was not anti-Semitic. Although my article concerns Lenin specifically, it was intended as a refutation of the whole Silberner school. The question of the relationship between Marx himself and Marxism in general and the Jews is a complex one, and I plan to write about that at a future date, but at the moment it is valid to say that the Zionist nationalist right attack on Marxism as generically anti-Semitic is not only simplistic but also smacks of a witch-hunt.

39. Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension of Hegel's Thought*, p. 116.

40. Ibid., p. 160.

41. These writings are to be found in J. Hoffmeister, *Hegel's Samtliche Werke* (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1932).

42. A full bibliographic reference to each of these books follows: George Lukacs *Die Junge Hegel* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1970); Manfred Reidel, *Burgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat* (Neuwied; Luchterhand, 1970); Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel* (Paris: J. Urin, 1947).

43. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World*, pp. 31-102.

44. Fackenheim, *Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy*, pp. 151-153.

45. Ibid. pp. 203-212.

46. Ibid, p. 206.

47. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World*, p. 153.

48. Fackenheim, *Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy*, pp. 151-153.

49. Gerson Scholem, "Reflections on Jewish Theology," in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), pp. 278-285.

50. Ibid. pp. 275-278.

51. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), pp. 339.

52. Frankel, Jonathan, *Prophecy and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 50.

53. For a fuller discussion of the matter of Jewish nationalism, see my essay "The Colonial Image and the Jew," *Bibliotechke Rosenthaliana* (University of Amsterdam: Winter, 1974).