Ruppin’s Weltanschauung: lawyer to biologist

The man of Action

As opposed to “theory,” the concept of Weltanschauung had the meaning of “activation” (Einschaltung); a constant urge to influence reality. Ruppin’s need to define himself in terms of this concept must be understood also as part of his attempt to ‘feel’ the German habitus and to ‘correct’ in himself the prevailing stereotype of the Jew as a passive observer, detached from ‘real life.’ In one of his early reflections regarding the Jews, Ruppin imagined that:

> “The Jews of the ancient Jewish kingdom were religious through and through; they had courage and a deep sense of myth and the works of nature. That is, they were farmers. Since the Jews have stopped pushing the plough, they have become degenerate; they have for the most part lost a natural, human outlook and have become a reflective people [Reflexionisten]”

(Ruppin, [26 August 1898], CZA, A107/217).

The inferior man of Action

This admiration for his German friends and their families was in complete contrast to his attitude towards his Jewish-Berliner family, whom he visited occasionally on Sabbaths.

His worshipful descriptions of his friends are typical expressions of the outsider who sees the dominant group as perfect! In the same pattern described above, Ruppin’s admiration for his two German-Protestant student friends was paralleled by his belittling of himself

"eben habe ich Wynekens Sozialismus zum zweiten Male durchgelesen. Welcher Schwung in der Rede, welch’ hoher Flug von Gedenken, welch’ geniale Auffassung des Ganzen! Ich fühle mich dabei so unendlich klein und glaubte mich doch einst zum Höchsten berufen! Kann ich nicht den Besten ebenbürtig zur Seite stehen, so hat das ganze Leben und Streben keinen Reiz mehr für mich, dann mag man mich wie einen toten Hund verscharren!"

> "I have just read through Wyneken's socialism for the second time. What verve in the speech, what a high flight of remembrance, what ingenious conception of the whole! I feel so infinitely small and believed that I had once been called to

> the highest! I can't do the best stand by your side on an equal footing, the whole of life and striving has no charm more for me, then they may bury me like a dead dog!"

In his early university years, Ruppin internalized more and more stereotypes through his interaction with his friends. This set of stereotypes was prevalent at the time in the German universities; the Jewish students (especially those from East Europe) were considered to be lacking in any true inspiration, mere absorbers of knowledge with no inherent intelligence but only the ability to memorize and repeat, idiots savants (Gilman 1986, 215). These stereotypes suggested that the Jewish student could not “truly” comprehend the essence or nature of the German discourse, and especially of the language, in which the German soul reveals itself. The Jews were at best ‘smart’ and ‘prosaic’ while the Christians/Aryans had ‘genius’ and were ‘poetic.’ This was the difference between the merely smart and the truly creative (Gilman 1996, 110)

> “Ruppin’s friends presented him with a set of stereotypical models of perception, which he, in his hyper-correctional manner was inclined to adopt: “There are vague things in the soul of the German nation that we smart Jews for the most part cannot comprehend at all, or at least do not understand properly”

(Bein 1968, I, 198).

What may seem to us today as mere stereotypes were conceived by Ruppin and his friends as ‘scientific truths’, which meant, in their young, nineteenth century, positivistic minds, also ‘facts of life.’ The **racialization** of the stereotypes enabled them to discuss their superiority in a most explicit way:

> “Things that Fiedler told me [...] ‘do not think that I obtained my position due to my work and my strength, a poor human strength. Only by the mercy of the Lord did I achieve being preferred over you and I shaped for myself a special Weltanschauung’”

(Bein 1968, 164)

Ruppin internalized this set of stereotypes and beliefs, and as a ‘good’ and ‘honest’ Selbstkritik (Self-criticism) Jew accepted his position among them:

> "becomes more and more apparent to me with every new meeting with Fiedler, how great my inferiority is"

(Korolik 1981, 96).

At the end of the 1890s, Ruppin still perceived his cultural identity according to the emancipation model, and still believed his integration into German culture a possibility. Nevertheless, his

interpretation of this model would gradually move away from the Jewish-German perception of acculturation through enlightenment Bildung. In those years he began to define his cultural identity through the popular racial theories concerning the Jews, and even expressed in his diary some Rassekunde reflections on the “Jewish question":

> “Spiritual and physical regeneration can be achieved only through the end of inbreeding and the mixture with healthy, strong races like Germans and Slavs. Only then will there be a possible future for the Jewish spirit”

(Bein 1968, 164).

As we shall see, within a few years Ruppin would reject this particular idea, after becoming immersed in the **more up-to-date racial knowledge** prevailing at the turn of the century, and grasping the fundamental importance of **racial purity**.

The Krupp [Haeckel] Prize and Ruppin’s Breakthrough

Although Ruppin obtained a law degree and had a promising career in the field of law, and although he wrote a doctoral thesis in political economy

(Nationalökonomie),78 his real intellectual curiosity and his first academic success lay in the new interdisciplinary field which become known in the following years as “racial hygiene” (Rassenhygiene) or “eugenics.” One of the main initiators of this paradigm in Germany, as well as of its popular repertoire, was the blond, blue eyed biologist Ernst Haeckel, one of Ruppin’s academic patrons and a central father figure of his weltanschauung, who was depicted by him as a “prächtiger Germanentyp” (Korolik 1981, 95).

From lawyer to biologist!

Basically the thesis author informs us that although Ruppin could have been a great legal professional, yet his foolish dream and passion was to be known as a renowned fake-biologist! Ruppin is flip flopping according to where and of what his profit and his ego is profited. All he is in one word: an Oppotunist. He has no Weltanschauung! He **conflates** seeking the admiration and approval of important people with struggling to find his Weltanschauung! As for proof ... the rest of his life as a Zionist.

> Haeckel is also considered an important figure in the shift from religious to biological, race-based anti-Semitism.

(Hutton 2005, 154).

Ernst Heinrich Philipp August Haeckel (/ˈhɛkəl/;[1] German: [ɛʁnst ˈhɛkl̩]; 16 February 1834 – 9 August 1919)[2] was a German zoologist, naturalist, eugenicist, philosopher, physician, professor,

marine biologist and artist.

Haeckel's affinity for the German Romantic movement, coupled with his acceptance of a form of Lamarckism, influenced his political beliefs. Rather than being a strict Darwinian, Haeckel believed that the characteristics of an organism were acquired through interactions with the environment and that ontogeny reflected phylogeny. He saw the social sciences as instances of "applied biology", and that phrase was picked up and used for Nazi propaganda.[15]

With the encouragement of his fellow student Gustav Wyneken and his Doktorvater professor Johannes Conrad, Ruppin entered a unique academic competition – known later as The Krupp Prize – which was formulated and supervised by Haeckel. This academic competition asked for ways of applying Darwinism to the organization of society and state, and **Ruppin**, **quite surprisingly, took second place**.

Enter the Eugenics

The Krupp Prize competition and its subsequent publications mark a turning point in the acceptance of eugenics in Germany by giving it scientific legitimization, public relations and a budget. It was, at the time, the most important academic prize to make a connection between science and society.

Two fundamental mistakes occurred which gave birth to Nazism and Zionism in Germany, and these two mistakes have already occurred in the USA at the time of this writing:

1. Unbridled applications of science and engineering to human affairs

2. Over monetization of sciences and the scientists

The thesis' author surprisingly recognizes them:

> Powerful capitalists, such as Krupp in the Ruhr and Karl Ferdinand von Stumm (1843-1925) in the Saar, hoped to implement the Darwinist theories in their factories as well as to instill them into the structure of the state. Their particular interest was in theories concerning the selection (Selektionstheorie) of the work force, which was regarded more and more in terms of "energy" and "Menschenmaterial" (Thomann and Kümmel 1995, 102). Haeckel and his group established a network of scientists, experts, journals and institutions which provided the economic powers with scientific legitimacy and methodological practices; they were "experts in legitimation" as Gramsci puts it, for monitoring labor relations in Germany.

> Haeckel and the Monist League which he established in Jena (1906) for disseminating "Darwinism as a weltanschauung" (Cassirer 1950, 161), were massively supported by the mega German factory owners, who increased their income significantly at the end of the 19th century and made Germany the most powerful industrial state in Europe. The

> anonymous sponsor of the high total of the prizes (**100,000 Marks for several years**), was the prominent industrialist Alfred Friedrich Krupp (1854-1902) who was also a passionate supporter of social Darwinism.

> It is quite clear that the members of the committee edited Ruppin's text and helped him shape his theory, as is evident from the correspondence he had with Ziegler, who was responsible for editing the texts according to Haeckel's lines.

Ruppin's profound attraction to Haeckel can be explained as **connected to his "belonging" difficulties,** which he believed he might solve by taking the "objective" position of the observer.

Clueless Ruppin as a tool of deception

Ruppin's winning essay Darwinismus und Socialwissenschaft (Darwinism and Social Science) analyzed **the applicability of Darwin's theory to organizing society and the state** and expressed enthusiastic belief in the power of social engineering to elevate man to a new level of morality and freedom. In presenting his euphemistic eugenics program, (which became much harsher later on when he applied it to the Jews), Ruppin acknowledged that he was demanding great sacrifices of human beings, but he believed people (i.e. Germans) would accept them if convinced of the social usefulness of their actions. Though he acknowledged the sacrifice his bio-medical vision inflicted upon the individual, he supported the state and its crucial function and gave it the decisive right to intervene in the life of the individual, promoting the idea that social welfare and education had to be combined with a program of eugenics, in which invalids and the mentally ill would be discouraged (Ruppin 1903a, 31, 36, 45-46, 64, 91-92, 123; Penslar 1991, 86-87).

"In an age of dwindling belief in the immortality of the soul, the individual will recognize, in his belonging to the state and his actions for the state, his share in eternity, in the history of the whole of mankind, and must look up to the state with genuine religious fervor. He must approach the state only as a wave in the ocean, which, barely arisen, quickly passes and sinks without a trace into the sea […] so for the peoples of old in honor of gods, so for the individual today may no sacrifice seem too great in honor of the state."

(Ruppin 1903a, 92, in: Penslar 1991, 86-87).

> Ruppin's putting the state in the place of God...

It was impossible for me (the thesis author), in the course of my research, to find the documents regarding the committee's reasons for giving the Prize to Ruppin; nevertheless, if I may speculate (just for a moment), **giving one of the prizes to a Jew could have legitimized the other winners** ... Since the competition and its agenda seem to have been a kind of "experimental balloon" for checking the reactions of academic and public opinion, it is quite possible that a "winning Jew" could have been a "life belt" should Heackel and his fellows be accused of being anti-Semitic.

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