

The Bucerius Institute for Research of
Contemporary German History and Society

Research Seminar

Towards a theory of Jewish political practice

Prof. Danny Trom (EHESS, Paris)



It is generally admitted that the Jews have no political tradition although they have a long political experience. This gap has to be explored. Experience, *Erlebnis*, means etymologically the experience of surviving (*erleben*) a dramatic event, an existential treat, and the astonishment to be still alive. Political philosophy, classical and modern, from the Ancient Greece to Hegel, does not acknowledge this seemingly passive experience. The paradox of the Jew thus consists in articulating a dramatic lack of proper political agency with the facticity of an everlasting existence. Glory and eternity are antonymic to passivity. This is

why Jewish apologetics, from Krochmal and Gans to Rosenzweig and Arendt, apprehended the historical persistence of the Jews in Hegelian terms. The paradox, however, might be less profound as it seems: Jews had no political tradition, but they had a solid and stable political practice. This leads us directly to elaborate a structural theory of Jewish practical accommodation and survival in the ever-changing political configurations Jews are immersed.

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10:00 – 13:00

Education Building, Room 665, Floor 6th, University of Haifa

For further information: Amir Bar-On ambaron@univ.haifa.ac.il