

Hermann-Cohen-Academy for Religion, Science and Art

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DRAFT PROPOSAL

RAKIA (hebr. Horizon)

International Graduate Program and Task Force

**HUMAN VALUES AND PUBLIC POLICY
IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION**

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**HUMAN VALUES AND PUBLIC POLICY
IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION****Introduction:**

The twentieth century in Europe was marked by Fascism and Communism. These ideologies caused wars, destruction of countries, of peoples, cultures and traditions, and led to the killing of millions of innocent people. Their impact was so deep, that despite the very decline of these poisonous ideologies, the European continent has since experienced a spiritual and political hollowness. Even the implementation of the modern credos, democracy, capitalism and the politics of unification, could not relieve this sense of moral void.

Thus, between the current lack of a consented moral code and the uncomfortable relation to the past, the global world has to redefine the role of history tradition and its place within modernity and politics. It is necessary to understand the need for moral guidelines, based on accumulated knowledge throughout time. This approach would allow dealing with the crisis politics and the institutionalisation of memory (the political role of history).

In the search of a heuristic approach, the Jewish tradition can serve as a paradigm as its culture has survived in spite of the deprivation of a common land and language. It is due to the constant search for Jewish identity, which lies at the root of Jewish existence, that this cultural tradition was kept alive. Values, traditions and practices were always questioned and scrutinised by Jews and non-Jewish societies in the light of contemporary times and envioning cultures. The history of the Jewish people is characterised by its interaction with foreign cultures. In a dialogue with itself and its neighbours, a thought-pattern developed over the course of centuries, which created a mutual history of interaction between Judaism and the different cultures it came into contact with. Jewish tradition was thus influenced by other cultures, in as much as the Jewish thought got absorbed into western thought in all eras. Nonetheless, besides the mingling of the Jewish culture with European cultures and the mutual shaping of one another, a Jewish identity crystallised over time, one that allowed for exclusiveness *and* inclusiveness, as well as for particularity and universality.

In this respect, Judaism represents a unique phenomenon in European intellectual history: despite many discontinuities and amalgamations, a continuum can be observed, which has constantly functioned as a *mediator* between cultures. Due to this mediating position, the question of translating religious values into universally valid premises became a crucial and essential challenge. Thus Judaism has significantly impregnated the European patrimony and the European traditions. Yet, this contribution was brought to an end with the destruction of European Jewry in the Shoah. Only the establishment of the State of Israel revitalised the

Jewish spirit and allowed for *Tekumah*, when the Jewish vision was again translated into political reality.

When looking at the most basic Jewish value: the responsibility for the 'other' and the 'Other', the value that has most deeply influenced the western world (in example: this idea is clearly visible in the U.N. Charter of Human Rights), the symbiosis between Judaism and Western tradition of European Humanism is most successful. The central importance of *ethics*, as expressed in science, philosophy and art, is very often derived from Jewish thought; even though this very culture was often not acknowledged as a result of Christian prejudice and bias through the ages. Since Judaism is so richly present in the shaping of the western civilisation, it becomes crucial to engage further with Europe's Jewish legacy; not only to commemorate the destruction and the loss of a vibrant tradition, but also to seek a new ethos for a unifying Europe. Instead of perpetuating the paradigm of 'victim-perpetrator', in terms of what anti-Semitism did to the lost Jewish tradition, it would be all the more enriching to re-endow the Jewish contribution to western tradition with the dignity that it deserves within European intellectual history and culture. The study of the Jewish contribution should be taken beyond academic discussions, societies should cease to build a consciousness of 'guilt' and 'duty'. The lessons of history should be the source of renewal. It would mean to build a bridge between theory and practice, an exercise that has allowed Judaism to move from a religious tradition to a modern way of thinking.

Premise:

This premise offers an opportunity to study and research the tradition-founding elements of the various traditions, which have shaped European identity and their connection with Judaism. It is crucial to understand that the variety of historical experiences and the way in which they are remembered is a political agenda in itself.

Human Values and Public Policy

Every culture is shaped by its own traditions. The sense of tradition is often used to find answers on how to 'regulate' modernity – the ethics of medicine and life sciences, the organisation of economy, of politics, the "allowed" influence and usage of the media, the attitude towards ecology, etc. Traditions are also a means to uphold a cultural perception of morality and collective ethics, they principally provide us with a value-guideline on how to behave and live. Our political contribution to society should be the connection between history, tradition and the shaping of public policy.

In an international community, different traditional systems should be able to coexist whilst respecting a certain core of common human values; values which protect human lives, which teach respect and tolerance, equality and justice. It is because all nations are threatened by terrorism and fundamentalism, because all nations are bearing witness to genocides, protracted geopolitical, religious and ethnic conflicts, that it is crucial to establish a common ethos, whereby every people strives for a just world order and the prevention of the repetition of history.

The Age of Globalisation

In a day and age where the very concept of *Identity* is constantly being redefined, the treatment of identity and culture becomes a political issue. How should immigration be tackled: by demanding "assimilation" (for example French Republicanism) or by implementing "integration" (for example the Anglo-Saxon model of the "melting pot")? Are

the modern means of trade and communication (international media, the internet, multinational companies) leading to a standardised world, or are they promoting a multicultural global identity?

The threat of terrorism is a facilitator *and* an obstacle to the harmonisation of the 'international community'. While it sets a common ground and offers a common cause to all nations, it also spreads fear within all cultural groups and creates a xenophobic atmosphere. However a 'truly open society' should be able to remedy to this ambiguity by its very nature: maintaining differences, enhancing intercultural exchange within a general framework of common values- human values.

Raising questions

Witnessing a change of chapter in history at this moment in time leaves us with serious and profound questions. What is the role of history? What lessons should be learned? How can these lessons best be implemented into future policy making? How can these lessons be standardised onto the entire world? Now that the world is globalising, that "nationalism, "nationality," and "national identity" become outdated, what role should we attribute to *tradition*? *Tradition* can be considered as all the accumulated wisdom throughout generations; however, it can also be considered as a very culture-specific, subjective and old-fashioned outlook onto the world. Nevertheless, in most cultures, it is *tradition*, which gives peoples a source of morality and ethics. If globalisation demands a loss of tradition, from what and where will morality be derived? And what would it mean to stress *differences* instead of *unity*?

Aim:

It is for this purpose that we propose the establishment of RAKIA- an international graduate program and Task Force. It will bring together students and scholars from different countries, universities and disciplines on the theme of HUMAN VALUES AND PUBLIC POLICY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION. The program aims to assist students at graduate and post-graduate levels to develop their ideas; not only based on current scholarship and method, but to develop *new strategies*, both in theory and practice. Thus the future intellectual generations can effectively respond to negative developments in current global politics and society.

Program:

The graduate program and task force will focus on the following main areas:

THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES
SHOAH AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY AND MEMORY
THE JEWISH HERITAGE OF EUROPE
ISRAEL
OCCIDENTALISM AND ORIENTALISM
LAW AND ETHICS
SCIENCE
GENDER
ECONOMY AND MEDIA

The main areas of the project will shape, and will be shaped by the students' specific fields of research. The program is geared towards confronting students and participating scholars from *different* disciplines, social and cultural contexts and backgrounds. Under the auspices of the task force, scholars and students will work in small groups on related projects, for example: nationalism and ethnicity; particularism, collectivism and pluralism; questions of identity in the age of globalisation; human rights and international law; the power and the role of the media; technology and ecology; medicine, genetics and bio-ethics: where lies our responsibility?; the global economy: benefits, problems and consequences; tradition in a secularised world; history and identity. A wide array of topics will be dealt with from different angles with new and hitherto unexplored questions and problems, in order to suggest innovative perspectives and solutions.

Pilot Project:

We hope to bring a group of 20 to 30 students, and 10 participating scholars together at the Rothberg International School at Hebrew University of Jerusalem (4th-8th September 2005). The participants will come from different national, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and will be selected from a variety of universities across Europe and Israel.

The academic year of 2005/6 will initiate the project. Up to six meetings will be held in different locations in Europe and Israel throughout the year.

If you wish to participate, please send your CV and a motivation letter (stating why you are interested in the project and how you think you can contribute) by the 11st of August to: rakia@hermann-cohen-akademie.de

Cooperation:

The *Hermann-Cohen-Academy for Religion Science and Art* is establishing this programme in cooperation with several institutions across the world, European Union of Jewish Students, International Rothberg School at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, and others. (Further affiliations are presently being negotiated). The participation of a great number of academics in the project will ensure the affiliation to their respective departments and universities. RAKIA will also cooperate with national and international political institutions and student unions, thus students will be able to find internship possibilities through the task force. The aim of the project is to reach out to as wide a public as possible, therefore the participating students will take on the role of 'ambassadors'.

Publication:

The students will be encouraged to write articles and policy papers on a regular basis, which will be published in the series *Jüdische Passagen – Jewish Passages – Passages Juifs*, editor Eveline Goodman- Thau in German, English and French by Passagen Verlag, Wien.

Participating Scholars

Prof. Dr. Eveline Goodman-Thau, Jerusalem/Kassel
Prof. Dr. Micha Brumlik, Frankfurt a. M.
Prof. Dr. Gabriel Motzkin, Jerusalem
Prof. Dr. Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik, Kassel
Prof. Dr. Karl Erich Grözinger, Potsdam
Prof. Dr. Shlomo Shoham, Tel Aviv
Dr. Dan Avnon, Jerusalem
Prof. Dr. Martin L. Davies, Leicester
Prof. Dr. Jürgen Wertheimer, Tübingen
Prof. Dr. Michael Krieger, Paris
Prof. Dr. Michael Schultz, Kassel
Prof. Dr. Peter Kampitz, Wien
Prof. Dr. Donatella Di Cesare, Rome
Prof. Dr. Dominique Bourel, Paris
Prof. Dr. Hans-Dieter Klein, Wien
Prof. Dr. Andrea Poma, Torino
Prof. Dr. Vivian Liska, Anvers
Prof. Dr. Michael Löwy, Paris
Prof. Dr. Yosef Schwartz, Tel Aviv
Prof. Dr. Agnes Heller, New York/ Budapest
Prof. Dr. Klaus Davidowicz, Wien
Prof. Dr. Antonia Grunenberg, Oldenburg
Prof. Dr. Dimitri Ginev, Sofia
Prof. Dr. Gert Mattenklott, FU Berlin
Prof. Dr. Hajo Funke, FU Berlin
Prof. Dr. Harald Wenzel, Essen
Prof. Dr. Axel Honneth, Frankfurt
Prof. Dr. Michael Daxner, Oldenburg
Prof. Dr. Yaron Ezrahi, Jerusalem
Prof. Dr. Hedva Ben Israel, Jerusalem
Prof. Dr. Israel Yuval, Jerusalem
Prof. Dr. Angelika Neuwirth, Berlin