

—, *Rose Cross Over the Baltic: The Influence of Joachite Sectarians in Northern Europe after 1586* (forthcoming).

The Place of Religious History in Intellectual History

David S. Katz

Department of History, Tel-Aviv University
(Israel)

I am speaking on behalf of four special interest groups.

The first consists of historians of English religion. In a sense it is ironic that I should try to represent them here, since during the past twenty years there has been a very sharp turn away from intellectual history, which is often regarded in this part of the historical woods as foreign and slightly frivolous. I do not mean to denigrate English religious history, despite its having become exceedingly empirical. Only by means of long and tedious research have we learned, for example, that most Englishmen did not want the Reformation and were unhappy with the changes once they came. Yet certainly it is true that this sort of work is not what intellectual historians do. The fact that I usually call myself an historian of religion is mostly the result of the structure of European universities, where historians of ideas have to travel under false passports issued by larger and more powerful academic governments.

In some ways I feel more comfortable representing my second group, researchers into Jewish studies, although I am using the term quite differently from the way it is understood in American universities and among their counterparts in Britain. Sadly, Jewish studies today is misorganized according to vertical rather than horizontal principles. University lecturers in this field are expected not only to teach, but worse, to be interested in anything related to Jews from Abraham to Zionism, with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 as the Whiggish and inevitable culmination of thousands of years of history. For example, historians of the Jews in eighteenth-century France shy away from meeting with scholars of France during the Enlightenment, and instead prefer to compare notes with historians of German Jewry, of Anglo Jewry, or even of Australian

We have come to realize that the revival of intellectual life during the Renaissance did not involve only the praise of Greece and Rome, but also of Israel and of Egypt as well.

Jewry, and thereby are largely spared penetrating criticism or debate. The result has been that the field of Jewish studies remains at a comparatively low level.

I would prefer instead to see Jewish studies as a sub-group of general history. In the past fifty years, we have come to realize that the revival of intellectual life during the Renaissance did not involve only the praise of Greece and Rome, but also of Israel and (even if in partly fictitious form) of Egypt as well. Gentile historians have largely failed to integrate Jewish studies into their work, not because of any sinister motive, but because Jewish scholars have kept to themselves, studying in separate departments, attending different conferences, and publishing in specialized Jewish journals often shelved in distant reading rooms. In my own recent book, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850*,¹ I try to remedy this defect at least for England, and try to integrate Jewish and general history.

The third group I represent can only be described as 'Popkin Studies'. By this I mean the work of the disciples and admirers of Professor Richard H. Popkin, those who believe that the history of philosophy and ideas can only be moved forward by the introduction of new material to the existing body of knowledge. A good example of this has been Dick Popkin's recent work on the connection between Spinoza and the English Quakers. His archival research in the Friends House Library in London uncovered documents which show a clear link between Quakers in the Netherlands and Spinoza, which make the Quaker biblical scholar Samuel Fisher somewhat more than a man who by chance had Spinozist ideas at exactly the same time.² Dick Popkin's organization of countless

¹ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

² R. H. Popkin, 'Spinoza, the Quakers and the Millenarians, 1565-1658', *Manuscripta*, 6 (1982): 113-33; idem, 'Spinoza's Relations with the Quakers in Amsterdam', *Quaker History*, 73 (1984): 14-28; idem, 'Spinoza and Samuel Fisher', *Philosophia*, 15 (1985): 219-36; idem and M. S. Singer, *Spinoza's Earliest Publication?* (Assen and Maastricht, 1987), with an introduction and commentary.

Those of us in small countries have no-one to meet in the common room, but lecturers in larger countries often fail to come into the university at all and make use of their opportunities. Our new society could fulfil this need, and benefit all of us.

seminars consisting of people from all over Europe and America working in related fields has immeasurably expanded our knowledge of numerous areas in intellectual history, and I hope that the new society which we are founding will carry on this tradition of such co-operation.

The final sector I claim to represent consists of scholars from small countries speaking strange tongues. Although we do publish in our own languages from time to time, even in our own countries this counts for very little, and indeed is usually not relevant for promotion. In my department of history in Tel-Aviv, many of the lecturers over the age of forty studied in England; those under forty took their doctorates in the United States. We recognize that our intellectual arenas are abroad, and that the languages of scholarship are English, French, and (to some extent) German. We lack the libraries in any case to pursue research in our own countries. A new society for intellectual history

could provide such an arena for scholarship. I think that even scholars from countries large enough to be a world unto themselves could also profit from a new arena. Universities in the West have largely ceased to be a centre of intellectual exchange, in large part because of the introduction of the personal computer. Professors prefer to work at home, away from the distractions of secretaries and students. Those of us in small countries may find that being the only expert, say, in early modern English history in a country of five million carries a certain benefit, but it is ultimately dispiriting. We have no-one to meet in the common room, but lecturers in larger countries often fail to come into the university at all and thus make use of such opportunities. Our new society could fulfil this need, and benefit all of us.

I should like to conclude with a practical suggestion. I think that rather than having only large conferences on general topics, which is often the case with societies of this kind, we should try to sponsor work groups on more specific subjects. The Foundation for Intellectual History, for example, organized a workshop on the Three Impostors at Leiden in 1991, for the purpose of bringing together scholars over the documents themselves to try to understand the problems involved. I think that the ISIH could play a key role in promoting this sort of activity, which hardly finds a place anywhere else.

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY IN DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

Art History and Intellectual History

*Thomas Frangenberg
Department of Art History,
University of Leicester
(England)*

In 'What is Happening to the History of Ideas?',¹ Donald R. Kelley makes a statement

¹ *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 51 (1990): 16 (reprinted in this issue, p. 44).

which could with little modification be applied to Intellectual History as well: 'The history of the arts maintains a modest place in the history of ideas . . .'. This statement is symptomatic of a lack of symmetry which a Society for Intellectual History might help to overcome: the history of art does not count for much in the context of the History of Ideas and of Intellectual History. On the other hand, the History of Ideas and Intellectual History certainly figure most prominently within the history of art.

Art history is an old discipline, to a significant extent inspired by classical precedents. Many of the characteristics of art history as it is