

The Golden Age of Jewish/Christian Relations Revisited:

The Contribution of H.J. Schoeps to Interfaith Dialogue

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Oddly enough, the role of Bavarian historian Hans Joachim Schoeps in Jewish/Christian relations proved to be an exercise in idealism, doomed to be tarnished over the years; yet the ironic outcome of Schoeps' efforts was destined to be a perhaps unexpected one, viz., its contribution to a wider interfaith dialogue. It is surely no accident that the author of this paper would encounter Schoeps' work in a context removed from, although related to, strictly Jewish/Christian concerns. The intent of this paper, maybe daring though justified, is to locate Schoeps in the forum of an equally significant interfaith dialogue, which includes not only the Judaic and Christian faiths, but the parallel Islamic and Bahā'ī faiths as well.<sup>1</sup>

Born in Berlin on 30 January 1909, Schoeps would much later in life be honoured with the Bavarian Distinguished Service Cross.<sup>2</sup> But his youthful years were clouded ones. Schoeps' first book was Jüdischer Glaube in dieser Zeit (1932), in which he professed great admiration for Rosenzweig (d.1929), who had influenced much contemporary Jewish theology and who, with respect to Jewish/Christian dialogue, formulated a concept of a dual covenant (about which more will be said later).<sup>3</sup> Schoeps' second book was an astonishing one to find in pre-Nazi Germany. In Steit um Israel: Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch geführt mit Hans Blüher (1933), Schoeps had regretfully espoused an extreme German nationalism, with the conviction that it was then possible for "German Jews"--as distinct from Eastern European Jews and Zionists in Germany--to come to terms with the National Socialists.<sup>4</sup> The futility and absurdity of that position soon became obvious, as Schoeps in 1938 took refuge as a political emigre in Sweden, where he stayed until after World War II. During the holocaust, Schoeps had lost both his parents, who had perished in concentration camps.

Also before the war, Schoeps' first major publication had appeared: Jüdisch-christliches Religionsgespräch in 19 Jahrhunderten: Geschichte einer theologischen Auseinandersetzung (1937), later to be reprinted in 1949 and once again in 1961, this time under the title, Israel und Christenheit. An English edition was published in Canada two years later as The Jewish-Christian Argument: A History of Theologies in Conflict. The Forwards to each of the three German editions are revealing. The stated purpose of the first edition is to "set forth what questions have arisen in the course of centuries, and what answers have been essayed." Schoeps had discovered that his debates with Protestant nationalist theologian Hans Blüher reflected nothing other than the outworn, centuries-old struggle between the two faiths. Thus the new book at hand could serve to ensure that future exchanges might take place on fertile rather than arid territory.

In the Foreward to the second edition, we are informed that the book had made its first appearance "behind closed doors, as it were," for the authorities in power in 1937 allowed its sale only in Jewish bookstores for Jewish patrons only. Whereupon, when it was noticed as a "dangerous" work, it was prohibited completely. On the occasion of its 1949 reappearance, Schoeps wrote: "For the new edition, I have had to extend the dedication of this book. On December 27, 1942, my father died in the concentration camp Theresienstadt; and in June of 1944, my mother was gassed at Auschwitz. In view of this experience, I ask myself today whether the period of religious dialogue may not perhaps be past; whether, with these senseless exterminations, something quite different has begun. However the case may be, the questions discussed in this book will continue to exist and to be relevant until the end of the world."<sup>5</sup>

To the third edition Schoeps describes the book as a "mirror to reflect the inner relationship of tension between Judaism and Christianity", and how "the dominant theme of this controversy, begun by the Church Fathers and the Rabbis of the early Talmudic period, and coming down to Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, undergoes a development from conflict between dogmas to dialogue between two faiths."<sup>6</sup>

Ideologically, two of the most impressional influences on the intellectually and spiritually passionate Schoeps were Salomon Steinheim (1789-1866) and Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929). According to Steinheim, a struggle between two opposing principles in the religious thought of man could be discerned, viz., revelation versus mytho-philosophy. In Steinheim's critique of Christianity, a distinction obtains (as Lessing had drawn) between the "religion of Christ" and the "Christian religion". Thus, "true" Christianity is parallel to "true" Judaism in that both are based on the revelation from God vouchsafed to each; while the secularizing danger of paganism has ever threatened to transmogrify the Jewish religion "to a philosophical system" and Christianity likewise. In seeking to validate his thesis, Steinheim identified many of the "heretical" sects within Christendom as representing "Jewish" protests against the swerving of the Church away from her own revelatory origins. Among such "Jewish" Christian sects were the Ebionites, Arians, Pelagians, Molinists, Socinians, and so forth, down to the various kinds of modern Unitarianism. Schoeps states that Steinheim's theology "tended to seek a way of drawing the 'religion of Christ' into the realm of the Jewish faith."<sup>7</sup> Interestingly enough, a similar ecumenical urge is seen in the thought of Schoeps, according to the ambivalent entry on Schoeps in Encyclopaedia Judaica: "Schoeps' relationship to the Jewish community has been a clouded one. Beginning with his early publications in the 1930s, Schoeps, a prolific writer, adopted a radical dialectical Jewish theology which excluded all nomistic as well as national-cultural elements, bringing Judaism very close to Christianity but stopping short of baptism."<sup>8</sup>

In Rosenzweig, a breakthrough but non-concessionary recognition of Christianity provided a dialectical milestone noted by Schoeps:

Our recognition of Christianity rests, in fact, upon Christianity, namely upon the fact that Christianity recognizes us. It is the Torah, ultimately, which is spread abroad by Bible societies to the most distant islands. Any Jew would have to admit this. Of course, the Jewish consciousness does not base itself upon the relationship of the Christian Church to the world;.... Therefore, it needs no new revelation within history; the events of the first century have not changed its task, only its historical destiny.<sup>9</sup>

Rosenzweig's concept of a dual covenant, in which a special status for Christianity is "recognized", likens the people of Israel to the sun, and the Christian communion to the radiance of its Divine illumination, permeating with its rays the nations with the light of monotheism. Specific functions were covenanted by Providence for each community: the wisdom traditions within the cultures of Greece, India and China were destined to prepare the earth; the "meta-historical" people of Israel preserved the fire of Sinai; while the Christian outreach brings monotheism to the idolatrous. This concept clearly has its precedent in Halevi and Maimonides. Judah Halevi, the twelfth-century Jewish philosopher (c.1075-1141), compared Israel to a seed which loses its original shape when transformed into a great tree, whose branches included Christianity and Islām as well as Judaism, all the seeds of whose fruit prepare the nations of the world for the awaited Messiah. Maimonides (1135-1204) wrote (in a usually censored passage) in a similar vein: "He who considered himself the Messiah and was condemned to death by the word of the court is foretold in the prophecies of Daniel (11:35) and all suchlike doctrines of the Nazarene and of the Ishmaelite, who arose after him, only serve to prepare the way for the Messiah; the latter will bring the world to perfection, so that all serve God with one will. For the whole world is full of the words which tell of the Messiah".<sup>10</sup> Given this background, it is D. Novac's view that "Rosenzweig's too easy dismissal of Islam might well be the weakest point in his theology".<sup>11</sup>

In The Jewish-Christian Argument, the final excerpt from Rosenzweig which Schoeps selects to end that section of the book foreshadows, whether unconsciously or not, the direction in research Schoeps in the future would take: "The Jewish Christians have their justification, historically, in primitive Christianity, where they soon died out as the Gentile Church of Paul grew, and dogmatically, in Christian eschatology. In the meantime, in regard to the former, they present-day Jewish Christians are an anachronism; in regard to the latter, a paradox."<sup>12</sup> This brings us to Schoeps' work on Christianity.

Taking Rosenzweig's "Star of Redemption" motif a little farther, Schoeps' interest in Christianity will, over the war years and beyond, intensify. Yet in the background, from 1937 onward there has been in Schoeps a concern for Islām in relation to Judaism. It is with this interfaith orientation that Schoeps develops Rosenzweig's concept of a dual covenant into a theology of parallel covenants. This is first formulated in The Jewish-Christian Argument:

The recognition of other covenants outside of Israel (sc. the covenant of Christ, and, in principle, that of Mohammed) even fills a gap in Jewish knowledge, since, according to the Jewish belief, not only Israel but all mankind belongs to God. The truth of the covenant with Israel, which is properly called the Eternal Covenant, not the Old Covenant, is independent of human claims, and is not to be abrogated or revoked by God; for God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent (Num.23:19).<sup>13</sup>

While The Jewish-Christian Argument, for the most part, provided a chronicle of debate, it is clear that Schoeps was motivated to complete the picture in presenting historical occurrences (if any) of concord between Christianity and Judaism. It is unfortunate that neither Schoeps' earlier autobiography, Rückblicke (1956/1963), nor his later one, Ja--Nein--und Trotzdem (1974), really disclose to us how it was that Schoeps' focus would alight upon the mysterious and obscure Jewish Christians known historically as the Ebionites ("the poor" [in spirit]). All Schoeps seems to tell us is: "During the subsequent years, which I spent in exile, I have engaged in further work in this field."<sup>14</sup> In any event, Schoeps' researches into the theology of the Ebionites "eventually led him to envision new possibilities for a Judeo-Christian dialogue".<sup>15</sup> When Christianity had so often been a source for anti-Semitism, we find a rare reversal quite revolutionary: Ebionite theology could well represent what we might call "the Golden Age of Jewish/Christian relations".

It is obvious that Schoeps undertook his initial research into Ebionism during the war years he had spent in Sweden, since it was from Uppsala that his first published work on the subject was to appear in 1942. A volume of three essays for the Coniectanea Neotestamentica Upsalienses contained as the last study, "Der Bibelübersetzer Symmachus als ebionitischer Theologe".<sup>16</sup> Thus we begin to witness how Schoeps was already furthering the field, as is clear from the fact that no one prior had thought of drawing upon the OT scriptural translations of the Ebionite scholar Symmachus as a source for the recovery of Ebionite Christian theology.<sup>17</sup>

Schoeps' work on Ebionism was still largely unknown until several years later, even after the publication of his second journal article in English, "Restitutio Principii as the Basis for the Nova Lex Jesu" (1947).<sup>18</sup> But Schoeps suddenly leapt into prominence once his massive and formidable Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums dawned on the horizon in 1949. T.W. Manson, one of its major reviewers, noted that it had been over forty years since the last effort toward a systematic exposition of Jewish Christianity had been made by G. Heonnicke.<sup>19</sup>

Following on the heels of Theologie a year later was the publication of Aus Fruchristlicher Zeit (1950). It was as if a whole wing of early Christianity had materialized full-blown out of nowhere, quite suddenly into a scholarly field lain fallow. Since considerable interest has been stimulated in Schoeps' work, the editor of the Journal of Theological Studies carried an English summary, titled, "Ebionite Christianity". Schoeps begins his introduction so:

Definite authorities, the pseudo-Clementine Romance (consisting of Homilies and Recognitions), Symmachus' translation of the Bible, remains of apocryphal gospels, patristic and rabbinic information, disclose to us the theology of Jewish-Christian communities of the middle and later part of the second century. Jewish Christianity obviously took many forms and varied in different districts. But the sources just mentioned are attached, almost without exception, to groups in Coele-Syria or Transjordan, composed of the descendants of the first Christians who left Jerusalem and probably also of others who moved from Palestine shortly before A.D. 70 and round A.D. 135.<sup>20</sup>

Some years later, Schoeps had written a small volume for the non-specialist on this subject. Das Judenchristentum (1964) came out in a popular paperback series in Germany. While presenting major conclusions from the earlier Theologie, the popular edition could lend itself to reading unencumbered by the massive documentation necessary and integral to Schoeps' prior investigations. For the English-oriented audience, a translation by D. Hare was published in 1969 by Fortress Press.<sup>21</sup> Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church went out of print, yet continues to be cited occasionally, but for the most part had been ignored. Its value, along with other work by Schoeps, has recently received a powerful endorsement by Hans Dieter Betz of the University of Chicago. The most notable major commentator of late on Galatians, Betz wrote: "The discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices has made it clear that the works of Hans Joachim Schoeps have not yet been given adequate consideration".<sup>22</sup> Even more startling is Betz's assessment of Schoeps' monograph on Paul (see the 1961 ET, Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History):<sup>23</sup>

Another challenge comes from Hans Joachim Schoeps' book on Paul. In this work, which may very well be the most important book on Paul in this century, Schoeps had come to the conclusion that the apostle himself had also completely, though ingeniously, misunderstood the very issues about which he was writing. It is important to note that Schoeps' judgment is that of a Jew about a fellow Jew. Substantiated by careful analyses of the texts and by arguments from the comparative study of religion, Schoeps' judgment basically reaffirms what the anti-Pauline opposition had contended in the first and second century, if not during the lifetime of the apostle himself.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, Jewish Christianity in its most distinct and well-attested form--as Ebionite Christianity--not only presents a much different portrayal of Jesus than does Paul, but likewise gives counterpoise to some of the anti-Jewish sentiments, overt and covert, to be found in the New Testament itself. Schoeps has thus thrown new light upon Christian origins, and upon Jewish/Christian relations as well.



Although our profile of Schoeps does not aspire at the same time to represent a formal introduction to Ebionite Christianity, yet a few remarks are in order. A post-apostolic phenomenon, Ebionism harks back (traditionally if not historically) to the Jerusalem community itself, part or most of which took refuge in the Transjordan region just prior to or during the initial stages of the first Jewish revolt. Thus Ebionism draws even more keenly our interest, since it very well might be regarded as a "fossil" (to hire Toynbee's controversial term) of what primitive Jewish Christianity had been like, albeit in a more developed form. From the results of scholarship after Schoeps, we can now be sure that Christianity both within and without Jerusalem did reflect the diversity which we find within the spectrum of Judaism itself, which at that time was by no means normative. The reflexive value of Ebionism is therefore problematic, but not without real possibility and value.

The contribution of Schoeps may partly be regarded and acknowledged in the weight it gives to extra-biblical sources for the recovery of nascent Christianity. Previously, the tendency had been to view the sources in the New Testament as representing the primary documents to the exclusion of other sources. The subsequent discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices has shown how incomplete our picture of early Christianity had been. Indirectly, Schoeps has, methodologically, been partly vindicated as a result of these manuscript treasures coming to light. In the case of Ebionism, no comparable find such as that in Egypt has so augmented the "rediscovery" of Jewish Christianity, which must in any event be considered as one of the three primary forms of the messianic movement nucleated around the teachings, mysticism, and person of Jesus. The other two forms which inchoate Christianity took were gnostic Christianity and so-called gentile or Pauline Christianity (destined obviously to emerge as dominant, mainstream Christianity).

Of various forms of Jewish Christianity, Ebionism is most distinct and well-known, as stated before. Along with Patristic and Rabbinic witnesses, Schoeps makes full use of the apocryphal gospels of both Nazarenes and Ebionites; yet special and exacting focus is given to the Ebionite scholar Symmachus, valuable traces of whose Greek targum (translation) of the Old Testament may be called Ebionite midrash. The source of greatest importance for Schoeps, however, is the lost Kerymata Petrou ("The Proclamations of Peter")--an Ebionite apology--which Schoeps believed to have been preserved extensively and intact in the older strata of the Pseudo-Clementine Romance. Extant in two major forms (the Greek Homilies and Latin Recognitions), the Pseudo-Clementine literature for Schoeps is like a literary archaeological site. The first great Christian historical novel with a didactic purpose, the Pseudo-Clementines are curious and unique in many ways. Schoeps' "campaign"--to use an archaeological expression--was painstaking source-criticism of the romance. What are his results? Christologically, "the Ebionite picture of Jesus was...the belief that he was the messianic prophet, the true prophet promised by Moses":

The Ebionite belief, that Jesus was 'the true prophet', that is to say, the messianic prophet promised by Moses, whom God would raise up 'like unto me' (Deut 18:15), led among them to a complete parallelism of the two personalities. Both were sent by God to make covenants with mankind. As Moses was the steward of the Jews (Luke 12:42), so was Jesus steward for the Gentiles (H 2:52). But since the teaching of both is the same, God accepts every man who believes one of them (H 8:6). Thus for the Ebionites conversion to Christ and conversion to the holy God and to the Jewish law (H 4:22) are one and the same.<sup>25</sup>

Many other fascinating reconstructions of Ebionite faith and praxis were proposed by Schoeps, to which the reader is encouraged to refer. Most relevant to our focus on Jewish/Christian relations, however, is the unity of Judaism and Christianity through the continuity of true prophecy which the Ebionites stressed. The Ebionites "associated the teaching of Moses and the teaching of Jesus by means of the idea of a primordial religion", Schoeps states. With respect to parallel of the two Prophets and the two Covenants, Schoeps writes:

As the prophesied True Prophet, however, Jesus had become the only one who could illuminate the souls of men. The Clementines present the striking image of the world as a house filled with the smoke of ignorance, error, and vice, a world which the True Prophet must enter in order to fling open the door so that the light of the sun may shine in it again (H 1:18f.; R 1:15f.)...

By developing the parallelism between these two soteriological figures [Moses and Jesus], the Ebionites were led to significant conclusions with respect to religious toleration in the post-classical era... This Ebionite federal theology... is a belief found only in Ebionitism. At an early date they evidently conducted a mission seeking converts to the Covenant of Sinai as it had been reformed by Christ, regarded as the basis for the salvation of the whole world. They must have propagated this religion, which existed independently of the religions of the church and the synagogue, before the middle of the second century...

This expectation of ancient Jewish Christianity that the two great religions from which it derived would be brought together in a morality of good works was not realized, since neither Judaism nor Christianity can be reduced to mere moralism, even if both agreed in affirming such a religious universalism... The belief of the primitive church in Palestine and of the Ebionites of Transjordan that Jesus Christ is the new Moses has been condemned to remain unproductive by the church throughout her history; yet the economy of salvation presupposed in this belief, namely that, expressed in modern terms, God established two covenants with mankind through the revelations on Sinai and Golgotha which in the last resort are nonetheless one-- this striking interpretation of the coexistence of Judaism and Christianity in world history represents a conviction of Ebionite Jewish Christianity which remains worthy of note even today.<sup>26</sup>

Shalom Ben-Chorin observes "there is an entire series of liberal Jewish nineteenth century theologians who here and there consider the figure and teachings of Jesus...in...a conscious or unconscious continuation of the Ebionite line...; in fact, since the nineteenth century one can almost speak of Neo-Ebionitism."<sup>27</sup>

This so-called "Neo-Ebionitism" can hardly be a pejorative once it is understood as a form of universalism. Nor are its exponents restricted to "liberal" Jewish theological circles. Unforeseen perhaps by him, Schoeps' work has won a significance within a wider interfaith ecumenism and dialogue. In this context, it is not the concept of parallel covenants per se that has attracted thinkers to Schoeps, but rather another outcome of his research which gives pause for thought:

Perhaps, however, it was really the Ebionites who preserved most faithfully...the heritage received from important circles in the primitive church in Jerusalem ... Were they not perhaps the real heirs, even if they became extinct? It is not the office of the historian ...to make such value-judgments,...instead of stating bare facts. In any event this must hold, viz., that the Ebionites, as the physical descendants of the first disciples--including Jesus' own relatives--were the bearers of a legitimate tradition inasmuch as theirs was clearly one of the many possible ways of development which were open to the early church...

The Ebionites finally disappeared in the fifth century in eastern Syria. Many of their central doctrines, however, appear to have survived...and then...entered Arabia by means of the Nestorians. That is to say, the Arabian Christianity which Mohammed found...was...characterized by Ebionite and Monophysite views. From this religion many beliefs flowed in an unbroken stream of tradition into the proclamation of Mohammed...

To be sure, a full demonstration of the relationship between Mohammed and the Ebionites is not possible, but the line of tradition has been established. And thus we have a paradox of world-historical proportions, viz., the fact that Jewish Christianity indeed disappeared within the Christian church, but was preserved in Islam and thereby extended some of its basic ideas even to our own day. According to Islamic doctrine, the Ebionite combination of Moses and Jesus found its fulfillment in Mohammed; the two elements, through the agency of Jewish Christianity, were, in Hegelian terms, "taken up" in Islam.<sup>28</sup>

I will offer three of the more illustrious examples of those who may be said to have "taken up" Schoeps in this regard. The first is the famed Islamicist Henry Corbin, who developed the paradigm of Harmonia Abrahamica.<sup>29</sup> Corbin notes:

In general the historians and theologians who have dealt with the Christianity of the Ebionites have suggested at greater or lesser length the idea that it was extended or amplified in Islam; what they had in mind was essentially the conception of the prophetic mission, the Islamic prophetology as such... Perhaps this thesis might be illustrated on the basis of the idea of the "True Prophet" in Ebionism and of the Ebionite doctrine in regard to Adam, the essential features of which recur in the Ismailian Adamology... Like all such formulas, this one...has the drawback of embodying the type of causal reduction peculiar to historicism.<sup>30</sup>

Corbin observes that the "Clementine Homilies never speak of the passion:...Jesus, the prophet of the Truth, is essentially an Illuminator, not a Redeemer in the Pauline sense." Corbin also finds similar correspondences between Ebionite and "Twelver" Imāmī Shī'ism.<sup>31</sup> The writings of Corbin provide a different approach in that any notion of historical determinism is avoided. Rather, harmonics between Ebionite and Islamic prophetologies are drawn upon for heuristic value and, as such, is ahistorically descriptive as an archetypal approach.

The next example will be that of Norman O. Brown, whose essay, "The Prophetic Tradition",<sup>32</sup> advances a way of viewing the origins of Islam which might be considered a breakthrough for its balanced sense of dynamic between "revelation" and precedent tradition:

In effect,...we are moving out from under the schema of Christocentric world history, stamped on the minds of orthodox Westerners including Hegel, into ampler, and more Islamic, air... In the prophetic tradition, properly understood, Islam must be perceived as a

legitimate dialectical response to the failure of orthodox Christianity... Taking an oecumenical view, ...we begin to see Arabia and Mecca in the 7th century C.E. as the dynamic frontier and link between, and refuge from, two superannuated empires, Roman and Sasanian. We begin to see the Transjordanian cultural matrix in which Islam was born as a refuge for the preservation of a variety of saving remnants from the Judeo-Christian tradition. There were on the one hand Jewish (including Samaritan) and Jewish Christian (Ebionite) refugees from the destruction of Jerusalem and later persecutions; on the other hand "heretical" Christian deviations from conciliar orthodoxy and the Constantinian compromise: Monophysites, Nestorians, Jacobites; and more elusive, perhaps more pervasive, remnants of "Gnostic" Christianity. In the Transjordanian alembic these saving remnants of the Judeo-Christian tradition interacted with Bedouin resistance to imperialism to produce Islam.<sup>33</sup>

Brown then points to a striking and dramatic coincidence in history. When the emperor Justinian in the year 529 closed the philosophical schools over anxiety for Christian doctrine, philosophy was compelled to emigrate toward the Orient. The death of Justinian occurred the very same year as the birth of Muhammad (c.570 A.D.). In Christian terms, Brown visualizes Islam so:

In Islam is fulfilled the prophecy of Matthew 21:42-3: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; this was from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." At this point a necessary and wonderful guide appears, to purify and elevate our understanding of the relation between Islam and Christianity, and to break through the wall of orthodox prejudice that has blocked our understanding of the middle term, Gnostic Judeo-Christian heresy, the stone which the builders rejected. Henri Corbin picks up Harnack's proposed definition of Islam as "a transformation on Arab soil of a Jewish religion that had itself been transformed by Gnostic Judaeo-Christianity".<sup>34</sup>

Almost exuberant in tone, Brown then invokes Schoeps in a quote, but without note that Schoeps did not hold the Ebionites to have been gnostic. On the contrary, such were vigorously anti-Marcionite and thus antignostic, according to Schoeps. Corbin had committed the same imprecision, which cannot but weaken the appeal to Schoeps along with the argument itself. Certainly the whole question starves for further documentation. The Ebionitic/Quranic relation has an attractive obviousness that can neither be fully demonstrated nor easily discredited. Wansbrough and others argue for its plausibility as a working hypothesis, whereby Ebionitic motifs provide "schemata of revelation" or a kind of ideological language in which the Qur'ān had expressed itself.<sup>35</sup>

The last of our examples in which Schoeps is brought into the context of an even broader interfaith relationship is that of Bahā'ī writer and thinker, Dr. Udo Schaefer. Although a prosecuting attorney by profession, Schaefer has kept abreast of an impressive breadth of scholarship in several fields, and integrates this information with a gifted synthetic power. One of his recent books which appeared in English translation was The Light Shineth in Darkness: Five Studies in Revelation after Christ (1977). This volume was chosen by Choice (a professional journal for librarians) as one of its top 250 titles as recommended academic works for acquisition by university libraries. One of the studies, "Answer to a Theologian", is a critical rejoinder to a critical evaluation of the Bahā'ī Faith by Dr. Kurt Hutten, who for many years was the director for the Evangelische Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen in Stuttgart. Respecting the researches of Hans Joachim Schoeps, Dr. Schaefer states:

Years ago, when I became acquainted with the founder of the Christian religion in the faith of the original community through H.J. Schoeps' Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums, the standard work on the subject, I was deeply impressed. Here Jesus was not the only-begotten Son of God come down from Heaven, crucified

and resurrected, nor the unique Saviour, but the messenger of God to whom the Qur'ān testifies and who is glorified by Bahā'u'llāh.

It is worthy of note that there were striking similarities between this Christianity and Islām. Above all in Christology: in the faith of the original community Jesus was the new Moses, the Son of God as 'testified' by the adoptive act of baptism. This Christology, which corresponds completely to that of the Qur'ān, was considered by the Pauline Church... as characteristic of the Ebionite heresy. These similarities discovered by research are ambiguous, of course... On the other hand, the Bahā'ī, oriented towards the doctrine of cyclically recurring revelation and convinced of the mission of Islām, finds these results of research--in the light of the unity of religions--extremely instructive, because they are a sufficient explanation for the discrepancy between orthodox Church doctrine and the doctrine of the post-Biblical religions, and because they show where the original truth was preserved: not in the pagan-Christian Greater Church based on Paul, but in the Jewish Christianity contemptuously branded as 'Ebionism'.<sup>36</sup>

The prosecuting attorney does not mince words! A friend of the present writer once remarked of Schaefer's defense: "Every sentence is written in the accusative!"<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that there was a correspondence between Hans Joachim Schoeps and Udo Schaefer, photocopies of which are appended to this paper. Schaefer had sent Professor Schoeps the German edition of "Answer to a Theologian" (then titled, "Religion nach Mass?" [1970]) but, according to Schaefer, "He did not react at all."<sup>38</sup>

Hans Joachim Schoeps passed away on 8 July 1980 in Erlangen. The powered absence of a great and versatile scholar and pioneer in Jewish/Christian relations is felt by those who, from four monotheistic worlds, have found themselves moved by the spiritual as well as intellectual force behind the rediscovery of a lost religious world. The cryptic title of this paper should fall into focus once the following passage from an Ebionite Christian source is read--a selection which had deeply stirred Professor Schoeps:



Since, therefore, both to the Hebrews and to those who are called from the Gentiles, believing in the teachers of truth is of God, while excellent actions are left to every one to do by his own judgment....Neither is there salvation in believing in teachers and calling them lords.

For on this account Jesus is concealed from the Jews, who have Moses as their teacher, and Moses is hidden from those who have believed Jesus. For, there being one teaching by both, God accepts him who has believed either of these...

Neither, therefore, are the Hebrews condemned on account of their ignorance of Jesus...if, doing the things commanded by Moses, they do not hate Him whom they do not know. Neither are those from among the Gentiles condemned, who do not know Moses...provided that these also, doing the things spoken by Jesus, do not hate him whom they do not know... Moreover, if any one has been thought worthy to recognise both as preaching one doctrine, that man has been counted rich in God (H 8:5-7).

But he who is of the Gentiles, and has it of God to believe Jesus, ought also to have it of his own purpose to love Moses also. And again, the Hebrew, who has it of God to believe Moses, ought to have it also of his own purpose to believe in Jesus; so that each of them...may be perfect by both. For concerning such an one our Lord spoke, as of a rich man, 'Who brings forth from his treasures things new and old' (R 4:5).<sup>39</sup>

Such is the "Golden Age of Jewish/Christian relations" revisited. This Ebionite "Faith of Works" (R 1:26) deserves further research. Let us hope that the future of Jewish/Christian relations can embrace in its orbit the Islamic and Bahā'ī faiths as well. The persecutions of the Bahā'īs in ultra-Islamic Iran, done "in the name of Allāh", in addition to Arab/Arab and Arab/Israeli conflicts, intensify the urgency.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps a step in the right direction is instanced by the Jewish/Christian/Muslim "Triialogue" held during early September 1982 under the auspices of the Department of Theology at Birmingham University in England. The theme was "Revelation: Torah, Christ, Muhammad".<sup>41</sup> The time has come to recognize the historical fact and present, visible community of the fourth revelation: Bahā'u'llāh. Of any combination of the four, Jewish/Bahā'ī relations furnish the only untarnished example of brotherhood between two religions.<sup>42</sup>

Notes

- 1 The historical/phenomenological/typological parallelism between parent/daughter monotheisms was drawn by distinguished Orientalist Allesandro Bausani (Rome) in, "Can Monotheism be taught? (Further considerations on the typology of Monotheism", Numen 10 (1963) 167-201 (168). See also Udo Schaefer, Sekte oder Offenbarungsreligion? Zur religionswissenschaftlichen Einordnung des Bahā'ī-Glaubens (Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahā'ī-Verlag, 1982).
- 2 Brief entry on Schoeps in Contemporary Authors, Vol.106, p.441.
- 3 A. Altmann, Essays in Jewish Intellectual History (Brandeis University Press, 1981) 287-88.
- 4 Entry on Schoeps, Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol.14, p.991.
- 5 Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument: A History of Theologies in Conflict (Canada: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1963) xi.
- 6 Ibid., xiii.
- 7 Ibid., 116-23 (121).
- 8 Op. cit.
- 9 Jewish-Christian Argument, 141.
- 10 Ibid., 186-87.
- 11 D. Novak, "A Jewish Response to a New Christian Theology", Judaism 31 (1982) 112-20 (115).
- 12 Jewish-Christian Argument, 145.

- 13 Ibid., 166.
- 14 Ibid., xi. As to the exact number of years Schoeps had devoted to research on Ebionism, we are told: "My book Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums was published by J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, in 1949 after ten years of preliminary study."-- Schoeps, Jewish Christianity (1969) vii.
- 15 Walter Jacob, Christianity through Jewish Eyes: The Quest for Common Ground (Hebrew Union College Press, 1974), "Hans Joachim Schoeps: Dialogue in Europe Today" (ch.16, 187-200), 190. Reprinted: W. Jacob, "Dialogue in Europe Today", Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte 31/1 (1979) 48-60.
- 16 Schoeps, Coniectanea Neotestamentica Upsalienses VI (Uppsala: Verlag des Neutestamentlichen Seminars, 1942).
- 17 Schoeps' major studies of Symmachus were published in Aus frühchristlicher Zeit. Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1950).
- 18 Schoeps, "Restitutio Principii as the Basis for the Nova Lex Jesu", Journal of Biblical Literature 66 (1947) 453-64.
- 19 T. Manson, Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. 2 (1951) 96-99.
- 20 Schoeps, "Ebionite Christianity", JTS n.s. 4 (1953) 219-24 (219).
- 21 Schoeps, Jewish Christianity: Factional Disputes in the Early Church (tr. D. Hare; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).
- 22 H.D. Betz, Galatians (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 6 n.27.
- 23 Schoeps, Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History (tr. H. Knight; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961).

- 24 Betz, Preface, xiii-xiv. One reviewer of Betz wrote: "He has taken seriously sources too long neglected in the interpretation of Paul, the Kerygmata Petrou and Justin Martyr's work particularly. We agree with him that Schoeps' contributions on Jewish Christianity are far more significant than has been generally recognized. H.D. Betz's commentary is likely to have the beneficial effect of turning more and more attention to these." W.D. Davies, Religious Studies Review 7 (1981) 310-18; reprinted, Davies, Jewish and Pauline Studies (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 172-88 (182).
- 25 Schoeps, "Ebionite Christianity", 220-21.
- 26 Schoeps, Jewish Christianity, 66-8.
- 27 Shalom Ben-Chorin, "The Image of Jesus in Modern Judaism", Journal of Ecumenical Studies 11/3 (1974) 401-30 (405).
- 28 Schoeps, Jewish Christianity, 133-34; 136-37; 140 (conclusion).
- 29 L. Cirillo, M. Frémaux, H. Corbin, Évangile de Barnabé: Recherches sur la composition et l'origine (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1977) "Préface: Harmonia Abrahamica", 5-17.
- 30 H. Corbin, "Divine Epiphany and Spiritual Birth in Ismailian Gnosis" (esp. 2. "Ebionite and Ismailian Adamology"), Man and Transformation/Eranos Jahrbuch 23 (1954) 69-160 (75-6).
- 31 Ibid., 81. See also Corbin, "La prophétologie shī'ite duodécimaine", and L. Cirillo, "Verus Propheta", Henry Corbin: Cahiers de l'Herne 39 (1981) 127-37 and 240-55, respectively.
- 32 Norman O. Brown, "The Prophetic Tradition", Studies in Romanticism 21/3 (Fall 1982) 367-86. (My thanks to S. Scholl for the reference.)

33 Ibid., 368; 369.

34 Ibid., 370.

35 J. Wansbrough, Quranic Studies (Oxford University Press, 1977) x;  
Wansbrough, The Sectarian Milieu (Oxford, 1978) 51-2.

36 Udo Schaefer, The Light Shineth in Darkness: Five Studies in Revelation after Christ (Oxford: George Ronald, 1977/1980) 87; 83-4.

37 Karen (Kamprath) Holmes, Grand Island, Nebraska.

38 Letter to present writer dated 3/5/82.

39 Ante-Nicene Fathers VIII (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) 271; 136.

40 See now Douglas Martin, "The Baha'is of Iran Under The Islamic Republic, 1979-1983", Middle East Focus 6/4 (Nov 1983) 17-27, 30. (My thanks to Prof. Wm. Nicholls of University of British Columbia for furnishing this article.)

41 J. Hick, "Jewish-Christian-Muslim Conference", Journal of Ecumenical Studies 19/4 (Fall 1982) 864.

42 Obituaries for Schoeps are referenced in the Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 1982, entries 18599 (p.451) and 17306 (p.444).

Appendix

The Schaefer/Schoeps Correspondence  
1955-1970

new address from March 1st,  
1985:

Riedweg 7  
D-6945 Hirschberg 1 (Groß-  
sachsen)

Christopher Buck  
Religious Studies  
University of  
British Columbia

Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5

CANADA

Dear Bahá'í friend,

I received your express letter but I had to wait until the weekend for reviewing the translation of the correspondence. I hope that you can read my handwriting. Of course, I am not so familiar with the language that I am sure always to give the correct translation. Sometimes the text is not easy to be translated, especially the legal terms are the problem. Sometimes the translation was a distortion of the text. My proposals are only proposals, you are certainly free to put it in proper words. The main thing is that the sense of the text is correct.

The translator has also translated all the book-titles. I would not do this. Either one should give the original title, or, if the book has been edited in English, to give the title of the English edition. As far as I know some of the publications of Schoeps have been published under different titles. My letter of October 2nd, 1961, is not easy to translate into English.

My congratulation that you wrote a contribution on the Šābians in The Muslim World. I am very interested to read this article and I would be very grateful if you sent me a copy.

Now to your questions:

- 1) I am not informed about the final result of the appeal to the Turkish authorities. The best is to write to the World Centre in Haifa as I am not sure whether the German NSA would find the file.
- 2) Unfortunately I could not find any further letter from Schoeps.
- 3) When I mentioned in my letter of October 2nd, 1961 that Prof. Schoeps was very well-known to German Bahá'ís, this

was a little exaggerated. It was only a few Bahá'ís who were interested in scientific research and who knew Schoeps. Meanwhile to the new generation of Bahá'ís he is quite unknown. This is deploring but such is the situation.

4) I am quite sure that I was the only Bahá'í who was in correspondence with Prof. Schoeps.

5) As you can find from the letters of Prof. Schoeps, he was always very reluctant to the Bahá'í Faith. I don't think that he himself made any other utterances on the Faith beyond the correspondence. His opinion that the Bahá'í Faith represented a "philosophy (or way) of life" was never used.

Still another comment to the letter of the 25th of November 1955 p. 2: The "Paulinische Lehre von der Rechtfertigung": I don't know exactly the proper theologian concept in English. It is the idea that man is only rescued by faith and grace.

I hope you have some profit from this letter.

With warmest Bahá'í wishes

your

*U. Jucker*



Translation from German

Prof. Schoeps  
Erlangen

Oct. 2, 1961

Highly esteemed Mr. Professor,  
(Dear Professor,)

As you may recall, I approached you already with several questions in 1955, while I was working on my dissertation about the Bahai constitution. At that time, you were as kind as to supply me with valuable information, particularly referring to an essay by your colleague, Prof. Stauffer, about the "Caliphate of Jacobus" which appeared in the "Zeitschrift der Religions- und Geistesgeschichte" (Journal of History of Religions and Culture). My dissertation appeared 1957 in Heidelberg, unfortunately, only typewritten. To-day, I would like to ask you for the following favour:

During the last two years, the Bahai religion in Turkey was exposed to attacks which started during Naw Ruz (New Year 1959) with the imprisonment of a number of believers in Ankara when the police arrested members of the local Spiritual Council. It is true that the arrested Bahai followers were released within short order, due to a massive, mostly negative, response in the Turkish daily press; the Public Prosecutor, however, entered public legal action against the Bahai charging the Bahai religion to be a "Tarighat", i.e. one of the sects of Islam which are forbidden in Turkey. Although, according to Turkish law, religious freedom does exist, but is restricted to major religions as Christianity, Judaism etc. to enjoy it. Within the Islamic religion only four major orthodox law schools (firstly: Hanifites, secondly: Malekites, thirdly: Shafeites, fourthly: Hanbalites) are permitted, while, according to section 163 of the Turkish Penal Code, all

Islamic sectarian activities are punishable as "Tarighat".

The Court where the criminal proceedings were pending asked initially for expert opinions by three theologians concerning the question whether the Bahai religion should be considered as a sect of Islam or as an independent religion. Two of these professors (\*footnote: one of them was Prof. Rosenkranz, Tübingen) came to the conclusion that the Bahai religion is an independent, original religion, while one professor defended the view that it was a sect of Islam. Thereupon, a commission of experts, consisting of three further historians of religions, was appointed which submitted an expertise to the Courts on Jan. 17, 1961, expressing the unanimous conclusion that the Bahai religion is an independent religion and not a sect of Islam.

Contrary to expectations, the Court passed a verdict on July 15, 1961, ruling the Bahai religion to be, as a "Tarighat", a forbidden sect of Islam. Nevertheless, the criminal proceedings against the charged Bahai were dropped, because of a general amnesty which was applied. The above Bahai who were no longer subject to prosecution appealed against said verdict. The criminal proceedings are presently pending at a Higher Court. It will depend on the results of these proceedings whether the Turkish Bahai will enjoy religious freedom in future or whether they will have to put up with being treated as prohibited Islamic sect.

The Turkish National Spiritual Council, the highest judicial body of the Bahai in Turkey, approached, via the World Faith Centre in Haifa, amongst others, the National Spiritual Council of the Bahai in Germany with the request to attempt a meeting with the Turkish ambassador in Bonn with the aim of explaining

the independent status of the Bahai religion to him, and, further, to ask within this context for his intervention with the Turkish government. Because the Prosecutor's Office in charge of the proceedings answers to the government, the Turkish National Council considers apparently these steps as promising, although they might seem rather unusual for Western conditions. For the preparation of this step, the German National Spiritual Council regarded<sup>it</sup> as particularly favourable to obtain expert opinions drawn up by internationally known historians of religions which could be submitted to the Turkish ambassador, since mere statements of Bahai believers not to be sect members would have little bearing. For this very reason I was instructed to ask you, highly esteemed Professor, for such an expertise.

May I, therefore, respectfully convey this request to you to disclose your opinion concerning the above question in any manner whatsoever. You are known to many Bahai in Germany owing to your publications, particularly the Paulus book. I wish to assure you that the German Bahai would be greatly indebted to you, should you decide to express an opinion, regardless how brief it might be.

I am enclosing a pamphlet containing the correspondence with Prof. Rosenkranz which may be perhaps suitable to assist you in arriving at your opinion. (although I am uncertain whether the interpretation I gave to your publications which I quoted will meet with your approval).

Should you wish to read my dissertation sometimes in future, I shall gladly loan my only copy to you.

Please accept the expression of my sincere esteem.  
I remain,

most respectfully,  
yours

October 2nd, 1961.

Dear professor Schoeps:

In 1955 already, when I had been working upon my Dissertation about the Baha'i ~~right to constitution (organization of fundamental principles)~~, I turned to you with several questions, which you may not recall perhaps. You had done me then a great favour by giving me valuable hints and especially gave me the reference to an essay by your colleague professor Stauffer upon "The Jacob's Caliphate" which had appeared in the "Journal of the History of Religions and the History of Thought". My Dissertation appeared in 1957 in Heidelberg, unfortunately only in type-written form. Today, I am turning to you with the following request:

*Constitution Law*

*Germanic*

*leased*

*where*

During the last two years the Baha'i religion had been subjected to attacks in Turkey which had begun during the New Year (Naw Ruz) 1959 in Ankara with the arrests of a number of people when the police made arrests of the members of the local Spiritual Assembly. The arrested Baha'i devotees were soon relieved, it is true, and the incident has been met with a broad, mainly negative response. The public prosecutor's office had instituted legal proceedings against the Baha'i religion, however, making allegations that the Baha'i religion supposedly is the "Tarighat", that is a prohibited Islamic sect in Turkey. according to the Turkish law, the freedom of religion is observed and the most important religions : Christianity, Judaism, etc. enjoy freedom of religious practices. Of the Islamic religion, only the four great orthodox law schools are permitted : 1. Hanifites, 2. Malekites, 3. Shafeits and 4. Hanbalites, apart from which and according to the article 163 of the Turkish penal code every Islamic sectarian activity is regarded as "Tarighat" and penalized.

*religious iena*

The court of law carrying out the criminal procedure had asked then three scholars in divinity about their opinion upon the question whether the Baha'i religion should be regarded as an Islamic sect or, as independent religion. Two of these professors, one of which was professor doctor Rosenkranz of Tübingen, had come to the conclusion that the Baha'i religion is an independent original religion, while the third one took the view that it was an Islamic sect. On that, a ~~commission for understanding the matter~~ *of experts* has been formed, consisting of three other historians of religion which unanimously has come to the conclusion and pronounced its verdict on January 17th, 1961 with a testimonial stating that the Baha'i religion should be regarded as an independent religion and not as any Islamic sect.

*are*

Contrary to the expectations however, the court of justice ruled out in the verdict dated July 5th, 1961 that the Baha'i religion should be regarded as "Tarighat" the forbidden Islamic sect. The criminal procedure against the defendant Baha'i was being carried out but then a general amnesty has been announced. A ~~criminal appeal~~ *criminal* appeal against this verdict has been made by the Baha'i ~~remaining outside prosecution~~. The ~~criminal procedure~~ is now in the hands of the Supreme Court. It depends on the outcome of this appeal whether the Turkish Baha'i will succeed in achieving prospective freedom of religion or whether they will have to put up with the situation in which they are treated as a forbidden Islamic sect.

The Turkish National Spiritual Assembly, the highest judicial body of the Baha'i in the country, had sought at that time an audience with the Turkish ambassador in Bonn, through the World Center for Faith in Haifa among other, through the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i in Germany with a diplomatic appeal asking the

*x) has - via the World Centre of the Faith in Haifa - + Community*

*asked the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany to appeal to the*

Turkish ambassador in Bonn for an audience, to explain the independence of the Baha'i Faith and to ask the diplomats to inform his government of this fact. As the public

~~diplomat in the Exposé of Independence of the Baha'i Religion to appropriately represent the Baha'i cause before the Turkish government.~~

~~Then the public prosecutor's office carrying out the criminal procedure and representing the governmental enforcing law authority has committed the Turkish Spiritual Assembly to disclose something about these unusual measures for the Western World. In preparation for this action, the German National Spiritual Assembly has deliberated that it would have been very beneficial if one could provide the Turkish ambassador with expert statements of the internationally known historians of religion, because otherwise the mere protestations of the Baha'i devotees that they are not members of an Islamic sect would bear little fruit. For that reason I would like to entrust you, dear professor Schoeps, with such an expert opinion.~~

Hence, I would like to address you with my humble request for your view upon this problem in whatever form it be. You are known to many Baha'i in Germany through your publications and especially thanks to your St. Paul's Book and I dare to assure you that the German Baha'i would feel most obliged if you decided to give such an opinion whatever short it be.

Enclosed please find a pamphlet containing an exchange of letters with professor Rosenkranz which may prove suitable for forming of your judgment, whereby I am altogether uncertain whether the interpretation learned of by me from the quoted publications will meet with your approval.

In case, you would like to read my Dissertation ~~once more~~, I would be pleased to place on loan my only copy of it at your disposal.

With the expressions of my sincere esteem and deep respect, I remain faithfully yours,

Udo Schaffer

prose writer is subjected to the instructions of the government. The Turkish National Spiritual Assembly expects that this unusual step would be helpful.

Trasnlation from German

Copy

Seminar for  
History of Religions and of Thought  
of the University Erlaangen

Erlangen, Oct. 17, 1961  
Kochstr. 4

Dr. Udo Schaefer  
Neckargemünd  
Peter-Schnellbach-Str. 36

Dear Dr. Schäfer,

Your request concerning my opinion as to the classification of the Bahai puts me into a predicament, since, to-date, I did not study the original writings of the movement and, due to further commitments, I shall not be in a position to do so in near future. As far as I may be at liberty to pass an opinion based on the perusal of the papers which you forwarded to me, it appears to me, in essence, to be a question of terminology determined, no doubt, by mostly dogmatic points of departure whether one defines the Bahai as a sect, a religion or "Weltanschauung"\*-community. I, myself, would favour the usage of the latter description, while stressing that the Shiite Islam represents their spiritual<sup>+</sup> background. The idea of the succession of prophets (successio prophetica), i.e. of cyclic revelation representatives which was alive earlier with the Ebionites and Manichaens was retained in the Shia. The founding time of the Bahai in the 19th c. may have been the cause of influence of the Rationalism of Enlightenment on the content of the doctrine; whether one would evaluate this positively

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\* ) = philosophical survey of world as as whole: see Concise Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press, London, 1954 (translator's note).

+ ) possibly meaning "cultural" (translator's note).

or negatively, it again appears to be a question of the individual point of view. The right to their own affiliation and freedom to cultic practices are not less theirs <sup>than</sup> as those of Theosophists and Anthroposophists with whom I classified <sup>\*)</sup> them in my book "Religions, their <sup>+) Nature and History", p. 369. Though this may be viewed from an Enlightenment controlled European situation, yet, Turkey wishes, as far as I may judge, to be part of it, at least since Kemal Attatürk.</sup>

I hope that my statements will be of service to you. Regretably, I am not in a position to add anything further, however, my colleague, Mr. von Glasenapp, of Tübingen, might have a closer affinity to your movement than I and be better qualified to do so.

With kind regards,

sincerely yours,

signed: Hans-Joachim Schoeps

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\*) perhaps "compared" (translator's note).

+) "their" does not appear in the German original; it was added for better understanding of the English (translator's note).

Translation from German

Two excerpts from "Sekte oder Offenbarungsreligion" (= "Sect of Revelation Religion") by Udo Schaefer, p. 27 and 28, Bahai-Verlag, Hofheim-Langenhain, 1982

The evangelical\*) theologian and scholar of religious studies, Gerhard Rosenkranz, stressed in his book about the Bahai which appeared 1949 unambiguously, in spite of all the critical treatment of the subject, that Bahaism is "from the religious-historical point of view in its sudden appearance a true prophetic movement", a "new religion" which outgrew the Islam. Rosenkranz emphasizes that in Bahaism we are faced not with one of the, in the West fashionable, substitute and disguised religions, but with an original religious movement."

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\*) adjective used in German mostly for "Lutheran" (transl. note)

Note: Verb tenses are not coherent in the original, e.g.:  
"stressed" and "emphasizes", although referring to  
the same tense. (translator)

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In his expertise of Oct. 10, 1961, Gerhard Rosenkranz defines once again his opinion which he stressed earlier:  
"In Bahaism, the newer history of religion offers an example how a movement may develop from a world religion, in this case the Islam, which not only claims to be a world religion, but also exhibits religious-phenomenological characteristics of such religion... It was the work of Baha'u'llah to brake away the basic elements of an independent religion, which he found in Bab, from its ties to the Shiah and erect on it the structure of the Bahai religion which claims to be the fulfillment, even the surpassingness, of all religions. With this claim which does not exclude the other religions, but integrates them in itself, the Bahaism has to be recognized as independent religion."



Copy.

Seminary for the History of Religions and History of Thought  
of the Erlangen University.

To Doctor Udo Schaefer  
Neckargemünd  
Peter Schnellbach Street 36

Erlangen, October 17th, 1961  
Koch Street 4, Apt. 707  
Tel. 8771

Dear Doctor Schäfer:

Your request for a definition of the Baha'i character puts me in an embarrassing position because I haven't dealt with the original writings of this movement so far, and also on account of some other commitments I shan't be able to find the time in the nearest future to do so. As far as I am able to pronounce a judgment after an examination of the evidence available to me, the question seems to arise for me, whether, in essentials, one can describe the Baha'i as a sect, a religion or a community of a certain philosophy of life, speaking about terminology from the well defined dogmatic point of the departure.

As far as I am concerned, I would be inclined to adhere to the last term, indeed, under the impression that the Shi'i Islam represents its own spiritual background. In the Shi'a the concept of the prophetic chain (the prophetic succession) that is, of the cyclic bearer of revelation has been preserved, the concept that had been in existence with the Ebionites and the Manichees already. The date of rise of the Baha'i in the nineteenth century may have been brought about under the influence of the rationalism of the Enlightenment upon the content of teaching; and whether one would estimate it as something positive or negative will remain again a question of a specific standpoint.

The right to one's own integration and to the freedom of the cultic practices is as valid at least and, as accurate as, with the theosophists and anthroposophers which I have compared in my book "Religions, ~~existence~~ and history" on page 369. This has been examined and judged only, it is true, upon the clearly defined European situation of the Enlightenment, but in Turkey, however, as far as I can gather, one can talk about the Enlightenment only since the times of Kamal Attaturk who wished it to be brought in.

I hope that I have proved myself useful to you with my observations. Unfortunately, I couldn't say anything more upon the subject, provided it be my colleague Mr. von Glasenapp in Tübingen who should have a greater affinity than I myself have with your movement.

With best wishes  
yours truly

resp. Hans-Joachim Schoeps

x) Aman file!

69 Heidelberg, December 13th, 1970  
Roman Street 170

*was about to*

Dear Professor Schoeps:

*15 years ago when I elaborated my thesis on the constitutional law of the Bahai-Faith,*

~~During my fifteen year work upon my Dissertation about the Baha'i right to constitution (organization of fundamental principles) I have turned to you with several questions concerning the history of religions. To the reading of your works upon history of religions which, in part, are in my possession I owe the extraordinary hints and insights for which I am very grateful.~~

As I have learned, a booklet entitled "Baha'i - ~~a~~ religion made to <sup>measure</sup> order" will be sent to you shortly by the Verum Publishing House. I have contributed there ~~with my sum total and by that I have directed the reader repeatedly to my 1968 publication "The misunderstood religion" (The West and the post-biblical religions).~~

Enclosing this paper I would like to draw your attention once more to the Baha'i religion ~~since my publication has so far remained~~ almost unnoticed by the experts. When it had been dealt with by one or the other scientist, it has been misunderstood in its essence for the most part and, as I think, underestimated in its importance. It ought to be attributed to the fact that in Europe, where the scepticism against any kind of religion and the reluctance for any involvement is still very much pronounced, this religion has still found relatively few followers. With the passing time, however, on the Asian, African and South American Continents the Baha'i religion ~~in its concept is bound to become~~ a real mass movement.

*King catons*  
"The Islamic sect" or "syncretism" - such are the <sup>qualifiers</sup> that have been allotted to it, according to ~~the principles of the western scientists that had~~ dealt with it. The enclosed text strives to prove that the Baha'i religion, regardless of its history of origin, is as little an Islamic sect as the Christianity a special movement of Judaism. As far as the subject of the syncretism is concerned, I have subjected it to a thorough criticism with regard to the methods of ~~discussion~~ applied by the scientists, which resulted obviously, as you know, in the equally ~~thorough rep. roach on their part.~~ In a similar way, these statements are valid also as far as the Baha'i religion is concerned.

*and thus*  
I am a jurist, <sup>and thus</sup> in the field of the history of religion and thus only an interested layman and I hope therefore that my writing will deserve forgiveness in the eyes of such an expert as yourself.

I would be most grateful for your opinion, your time permitting.

With friendly greetings  
your very faithfully

*of German title!*

*\*) a main chapter in which I referred repeatedly to my book "Die....." published 1968.*

*\*) which has been almost*

Udo Schafer  
Junior Barrister at Court of Law

Neckargemünd, November 25th, 1955  
Peter Schnellbach Strasse 36

Dear Sir:

I beg your pardon most kindly for my turning to you so <sup>directly</sup> (unexpectedly) with the following request:

At the present time I am graduating under Dr. Reicke, a professor of canonical law at the Heidelberg University with the following topic:

"The administrative <sup>order</sup> (system) of the Baha'i religion".  
<sup>One main chapter</sup> (The overall topic) of my dissertation reads: "Religion and organization":

- a) the phenomenon of the organization of religion in the history of religion.
- b) <sup>of?</sup> (the) law as the basis for the administration of religion. <sup>of religious organization</sup>
- c) the necessity of an organization of religion.

I have occupied myself in detail with the problem of the law and religion, with the justification of the church law; Rudolph Sohm, Tolstoi etc., and how it presents itself within Christianity. At this moment, I would regard this as a specific broadening of my point of view if I could explore also the above problems from the point of view of the Jewish religion. Unfortunately, despite my great efforts, I was unable to find a single source in which I could find some answers to the questions so particularly interesting for me. Professor Reicke had suggested <sup>the</sup> the Old Testament. <sup>However prefer to</sup> Hence, I am turning <sup>to</sup> to you, Dear Sir, as <sup>to</sup> the most distinguished expert known to me from your writings upon the Mosaic religion with my kind request for your reading suggestions.

I am interested particularly in the following topics:

- a) The Israelitic theocracy; is it more related to the mediaeval <sup>Christian</sup> or, closer to the Islamic one? (Gustav Mensching doesn't <sup>mention it</sup> devote enough attention) to it in his Sociology of Religion.)
- b) Was there a religious institution side by side with the state which would be comparable to the Church? How the purity of the doctrine has been preserved? What (scholastic) authority was there..?
- c) Have ever the law and the religion in Judaism been regarded as heterogeneous powers eliminating one another reciprocally?

(Christian)  
\* to exp. <sup>historians</sup> of the Old Testament.

In my opinion, this is not quite possible, however. The Mosaic Revelation did have establish the law in a broader sense. The fact that the relation between the "law" and the "religion" has been regarded in the protestant Christianity as the source of tensions has originated, in my opinion, in the antinomistic dogmatics of St. Paul which resulted in alteration of the concept of religion. I wasn't able to find anywhere an utmost confirmation of such an opinion, however.)

d) Had the family of a prophet occupied any privileged position in Judaism? I know only that Messiah must have come from the David family. I find this question interesting for the reason that in the Baha'i religion the <sup>Guardianship</sup> herdmanship has been tied to the family of Baha'u'llah, and consequently also the principle of the <sup>branch</sup> Schi'a definition of Islam: the Book and the Family <sup>x)</sup>  
~~[as the heritage and testament of the revelationist will be verified here also as the guidance in dogma for the believers.]~~

It was exceedingly interesting for me to learn from your work "Theology and History of the Judaic Christianity" that this principle had been in existence in the early Christianity also, but had ceased later "at the graveyard of the sects", because the Great Church has gone in a different direction. Harnacks comparison is false to the utmost when he talks about "the idea of the Caliphate", <sup>as</sup> that exactly the Caliphate represented an usurpation against the Mohammed (Ali) family. Hence it ~~was supposed to~~ <sup>should have</sup> be <sup>an</sup> called "Imamat".

*Or: Hence Harnack should have called it "Imamat".*

I owe extraordinary amount of hints and perceptions to this work, as well as, to your "Discourse of the Chritian and Judaic religions". I feel compelled to thank you for it now, on this occassion. Above all, the Judaic statements concerning the Pauline doctrine of ~~making good (the right thing)~~ were spoken from the bottom of <sup>my</sup> heart for me, since my own stand is at the basis of the religion of laws.

Dear Sir, I beg you once more with <sup>sincerely</sup> all my devotion for your kind forbearance for my turning to you so unceremoniously and I am sending you my kindest regards,

Udo Schaefer

*x) as the spiritual heritage of the Prophet for the guidance of his people (the believers) has been confirmed.*

To Mr. Udo Schafer  
Junior Barrister at Court of Law  
Neckargemünd, Peter Schnellbach Strasse 36

Erlangen, November 30th, 1955.

Dear Mr. Schaefer:

This is my reply to your letter dated November 25th:

You shall find most of the points of view concerning your topic presented and discussed in Wach's Sociology of religion including the reading suggestions. I am enclosing also an essay of my colleague Mr. Stauffer who deals with your problem. It is true that Campenhausen had argued with him ~~about~~ <sup>C\*</sup> the ecclesiastical duties and the spiritual authority). You will find some useful points also in my books : From the early Christian era (1950)\* and The Judaic spiritual world\*(1954) which you can get from the University Library. The book of Kurt Schubert "The religion of the post-biblical Jewry"\* published at the same time by Herder in Freiburg in 1955 is also useful.

Here are some catchwords in reply to your questions:

- a) closer to the Islamic one.
- b) In the post-biblical Jewry, the church and the state concided with one another.
- c) I see it much the same.
- d) No. The knowledge about the Davidian descendance has gotten lost.

I would like to read your work when you have it completed for good and all.

With my best ~~wishes~~ and compliments,

very faithfully yours,

Hans Joachim Schoeps

\* This is the title of a book, take the German title if there is no English edition.

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor!

Ich bitte Sie höflichst, entschuldigen zu wollen, daß ich mich so unvermittelt mit folgender Bitte an Sie wende:

Ich promoviere z.Zt. bei Herrn Dr. Reicke, Professor des Kirchenrechts an der Universität Heidelberg über das Thema:

"Die administrative Ordnung der Bahá'í-Religion".

Ein allgemeines Kapitel meiner Arbeit lautet: "Religion und Organisation".

- a) Das Phänomen der Organisation der Religion in der Religionsgeschichte.
- b) Das Recht als Grundlage religiöser Administration.
- c) Die Notwendigkeit der Organisation der Religion.

Mit dem Problem Recht und Religion (Berechtigung des Kirchenrechts; Rud. Sohm, Tolstoi etc.), wie es sich sub specie des Christentums darstellt, habe ich mich eingehend beschäftigt. Ich würde es indessen als eine wesentliche Bereicherung meiner Gesichtspunkte ansehen, wenn ich über diese Fragen den Standpunkt der jüdischen Religion erfahren könnte. Leider konnte ich trotz lebhafter Bemühung kein Werk finden, in dem ich Antwort auf die mich besonders interessierenden Fragen finden konnte. Herr Prof. Reicke hat mich an den Herrn Professor für A.T. verwiesen. Da ich Sie, sehr geehrter Herr Professor, aus Ihrem Schrifttum als einen hervorragenden Kenner der mosaischen Religion kennengelernt habe, wende ich mich lieber an Sie mit der Bitte um Literaturhinweise.

Im besonderen interessieren mich folgende Themen:

- a) Die israelitische Theokratie; ist sie mehr der mittelalterlichen christlichen oder mehr der islamischen verwandt? (Gustav Mensching erwähnt sie in seiner Religionssoziologie seltsamerweise nicht.)
- b) Gab es neben dem Staat eine religiöse Institution, die der Kirche vergleichbar wäre? Wie wurde die Lehre rein gehalten? Lehrautorität etc. . .
- c) Wurden im Judentum jemals Recht und Religion als heterogene, sich gegenseitig ausschließende Größen angesehen?

(m.E. ist dies gar nicht möglich, da ja die mosaische Offenbarung in weitem Umfang Recht gesetzt hat. Daß das Verhältnis von "Recht" und "Religion" im protestantischen Christentum als Spannungsverhältnis angesehen wurde, hat m.E. seinen Ursprung in der antinomistischen Dogmatik des Paulus, die zu einer Veränderung des Religionsbegriffs geführt hat. Diese Meinung fand ich allerdings noch nirgends bestätigt.)

- d) Hat die "Familie" des Propheten im Judentum eine bevorzugte Stellung eingenommen? Mir ist nur soviel bekannt, daß der Messias aus der Familie Davids stammen muß. Die Frage ist für mich deshalb interessant, weil in der Bahá'í-Religion das "Hütertum" an die Familie Bahá'u'llás gebunden ist, und somit das Prinzip des Islams schi'itischer Prägung: das Buch und die Familie als Hinterlassenschaft des Offenbarers zur Rechtleitung der Gläubigen auch hier bestätigt wird.

Es war mir außerordentlich interessant, aus Ihrem Werk "Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums" zu erfahren, daß auch im frühen Christentum dieses Prinzip vorhanden war, dann aber "auf dem Sektenfriedhof" gestorben ist, weil die Großkirche andere Wege gegangen ist. Allerdings geht der Vergleich Harnacks fehl, der vom "Gedanken des Kalifats" spricht, da gerade das Kalifat eine Usurpation gegenüber der Familie Mohammeds (Ali) darstellt. Es hätte daher "Imamat" heißen sollen.

Diesem Werk, sowie Ihrem "Christlich-jüdisches Religionsgespräch" verdanke ich außerordentlich viele Anregungen und Erkenntnisse. Ich fühle mich gedrängt, Ihnen bei dieser Gelegenheit hierfür zu danken! Vor allem die jüdischen Äußerungen über die paulinische Lehre von der Rechtfertigung waren mir aus der Seele gesprochen, da ich selbst auf dem Boden der Gesetzesreligion stehe.

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor! Ich bitte Sie nochmals ergebenst um Ihre gütige Nachsicht, daß ich mich so unverblümt an Sie gewendet habe, und grüße Sie mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung

*Udo J. Schacht*

Prof. Dr. Schoeps

⑬ Erlangen, den 30.11.1955  
Ebrardstraße 11  
Telefon 3183

Sch/S.

Herrn  
Udo S c h a e f e r  
Gerichtsreferendar  
N e c k a r g e m ü n d  
=====  
Peter-Schnellbach-Str. 36

Sehr geehrter Herr Schaefer!

Auf Ihren Brief vom 25.11. antworte ich:

Die meisten Gesichtspunkte für Ihr Thema werden Sie in Wach's Religionssoziologie nebst vielen Literaturnachweisen finden. Ich schicke Ihnen mit gleicher Post einen Aufsatz meines Kollegen Staufer, der auf Ihre Frage eingeht. Campenhausen hat ihm freilich widersprochen (Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht). Einiges für Sie Verwertbare werden Sie auch in meinen Büchern "Aus frühchristlicher Zeit" (1950) und "Jüdische Geisteswelt" (1954) finden, die Sie in der UB wohl bekommen werden. Brauchbar ist auch das eben erschienene Buch von Kurt Schubert "Die Religion des nachbiblischen Judentums" (Herder Freiburg 1955).

Ihre Fragen beantworte ich in Stichworten:

- a) mehr des islamischen
- b) Im nachbiblischen Judentum fallen Kirche und Staat zusammen.
- c) Sehe ich genauso an.
- d) Nein. Wissen um davidische Abstammung ist verloren gegangen.

Gerne würde ich Ihre Arbeit, wenn Sie einmal damit fertig sind, lesen.

Mit besten Grüßen und Empfehlungen

Ihr sehr ergebener

Hausdruck im Schoeps



Prof. Schweg, Erlangen

den 2.10.1961

Sehr verehrter Herr Professor!

Bereits im Jahre 1955 habe ich mich - wie Sie sich vielleicht noch erinnern - mit einigen Fragen an Sie gewandt, als ich an meiner Dissertation über das Verfassungsrecht der Bahá'í arbeitete. Sie hatten damals die große Freundlichkeit, mir wertvolle Hinweise insbesondere auf einen in der ZRGG erschienenen Aufsatz Ihres Kollegen Prof. Stauffer über das "Kalifat des Jakobus" zu geben. Meine Dissertation ist - leider nur maschinenschriftlich - im Jahre 1957 in Heidelberg erschienen. Heute wende ich mich mit folgender Bitte an Sie:

Während der letzten zwei Jahre war die Bahá'í-Religion in der Türkei Angriffen ausgesetzt, die mit der Gefangennahme einer Anzahl von Gläubigen in Ankara während Naw Ruz (Neujahr) 1959 begannen, als die Polizei Mitglieder des örtlichen Geistigen Rates inhaftierte. Die inhaftierten Bahá'í-Gläubigen wurden zwar bald wieder auf freien Fuß gesetzt, nachdem dieser Vorfall in der türkischen Tagespresse ein breites, meist negatives Echo gefunden hatte, die Staatsanwaltschaft erhob jedoch gegen die Bahá'í die öffentliche Klage unter der Behauptung, die Bahá'í-Religion sei "Tarighat", d.h. eine der in der Türkei verbotenen Sekten des Islam. Zwar besteht nach dem türkischen Gesetz insofern Religionsfreiheit, als die großen Religionen - Christentum, Judentum usw. - freie Religionsausübung genießen. Von der islamischen Religion sind indessen nur die vier großen orthodoxen Rechtsschulen (1.Hanifiten, 2.Malekiten, 3.Schafeiten, 4.Hanbaliten) zugelassen, während gemäß Artikel 163 des türkischen Strafgesetzbuches jede islamische Sektentätigkeit als "Tarighat" unter Strafe gestellt ist.

Der Gerichtshof, bei dem das Strafverfahren anhängig war, holte zunächst bei drei Religionswissenschaftlern Gutachten über die

Frage ein, ob die Bahá'í-Religion als Sekte des Islam oder als unabhängige Religion anzusehen sei. Zwei dieser Professoren,<sup>+</sup> kamen zu dem Ergebnis, daß die Bahá'í-Religion eine unabhängige, urtümliche Religion sei, während einer die Auffassung vertrat, sie sei eine islamische Sekte. Daraufhin wurde eine aus drei weiteren Religionshistorikern bestehende Sachverständigenkommission ernannt, die in einem am 17.1.1961 dem Gericht erstatteten Gutachten einstimmig zu dem Ergebnis kam, die Bahá'í-Religion sei eine selbständige Religion und keine islamische Sekte.

Wider Erwarten entschied das Gericht durch Urteil vom 15.7.1961, daß die Bahá'í-Religion eine als "Farighat" verbotene Sekte des Islam sei. Das Strafverfahren gegen die angeklagten Bahá'í wurde allerdings eingestellt, da eine Generalamnestie in Anwendung gebracht wurde. Gegen dieses Urteil wurde von Seiten der außer Verfolgung gesetzten Bahá'í Berufung eingelegt. Das Strafverfahren ist nun beim Obergericht anhängig. Von seinem Ausgang hängt es ab, ob die türkischen Bahá'í künftig Religionsfreiheit genießen oder es sich gefallen lassen müssen, als verbotene islamische Sekte behandelt zu werden.

Der türkische Nationale Geistige Rat, das oberste Jurisdiktionsorgan der Bahá'í in der Türkei, hat sich nun über das Weltzentrum des Glaubens in Haifa u.a. an den Nationalen Geistigen Rat der Bahá'í in Deutschland mit der Bitte gewandt, beim türkischen Botschafter in Bonn um eine Audienz nachzusuchen und ihn unter Darlegung der Unabhängigkeit der Bahá'í-Religion zu bitten, bei der türkischen Regierung in diesem Sinne vorstellig zu werden. Da die Staatsanwaltschaft, die das Strafverfahren betreibt, unter der Weisungsbefugnis der Regierung steht, verspricht sich der türkische Nationale Geistige Rat offenbar etwas von diesem für westliche Verhältnisse etwas ungewöhnlichen Schritt. Zur Vorbereitung dieses Schrittes hat der deutsche Nationale Geistige Rat erwogen, daß es von großem Nutzen wäre, wenn man dem türkischen Botschafter gutachtliche Äußerungen international bekannter Religionshistoriker vorweisen könnte, da die bloßen Beteuerungen der Bahá'í-Gläubigen, keine islami-

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<sup>+</sup> Einer davon war Prof. Dr. Rosenkranz, Tübingen

schen Sektenangehörigen zu sein, wenig fruchten würden. Aus diesem Grunde wurde ich beauftragt, Sie, verehrter Herr Professor, um eine solche gutachtliche Äußerung anzugehen.

Ich möchte daher an Sie die ergebene Bitte richten, in irgendeiner Form Ihre Auffassung über diese Frage kundzugeben. Durch Ihre Veröffentlichungen, insbesondere durch Ihr Paulusbuch, sind Sie vielen Bahá'í in Deutschland bekannt und ich darf Ihnen versichern, daß die deutschen Bahá'í Ihnen sehr zu Dank verbunden wären, wenn Sie sich zu einer - wenn auch nur kurzen - Äußerung entschließen würden.

Angeschlossen übersende ich Ihnen eine Broschüre, die einen Briefwechsel mit Herrn Professor Rosenkranz enthält, der vielleicht geeignet ist, zu Ihrer Urteilsbildung beizutragen (wobei ich allerdings nicht sicher bin, ob die Ausdeutung, die Ihre von mir zitierten Veröffentlichungen erfahren haben, Ihren Beifall finden werden).

Falls Sie meine Dissertation einmal lesen möchten, bin ich gern bereit, Ihnen mein einziges Exemplar einmal leihweise zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Mit dem Ausdruck aufrichtiger Wertschätzung und vorzüglicher Hochachtung grüße ich Sie ergebenst,

Ihr

Abschrift

Seminar für  
Religions- und Geistesgeschichte  
der Universität Erlangen

Erlangen, 17.10.1961  
Kochstr. 4  
Ruf.Nr. 8771 App. 707

Herrn

Dr. Udo Schaefer

Neckargemünd

Peter-Schnellbach-Str. 36

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Schäfer!

Ihre Bitte um eine Äußerung über den Charakter der Baha'i setzt mich in Verlegenheit, da ich nicht mit den Originalschriften dieser Bewegung bisher nicht beschäftigt habe und aus Gründen anderweitiger Beanspruchung vorläufig dazu auch nicht kommen werde. Soweit ich mir nach dem Studium der mir übersandten Unterlagen ein Urteil erlauben kann, scheint es mir im wesentlichen eine Frage der - von wohl meist dogmatischen Ausgangspunkten bestimmten - Terminologie zu sein, ob man die Baha'i als Sekte, Religion oder Weltanschauungsgemeinschaft bezeichnet. Ich selber würde zur letzteren Ausdrucksweise neigen, freilich unter der Betonung, daß der schi'itische Islam ihren geistigen Hintergrund darstellt. In der Schi'a ist der Gedanke der Prophetenkette (successio prophetica), d.h. der zyklischen Offenbarungsträger erhalten geblieben, die schon vorher bei Ebioniten und Manichäern lebendig war. Die Entstehungszeit der Baha'i im 19. Jahrh. dürfte den Einfluß des Aufklärungsrationalismus auf den Lehrgehalt verursacht haben; ob man das positiv oder negativ bewertet, ist wieder eine Frage des jeweiligen Standpunktes. Das Recht auf eigenen Zusammenschluß und die Freiheit der kultischen Ausübung steht ihnen mindestens genauso zu, wie Theosophen und Anthroposophen, mit denen ich sie auch in meinem Buch "Religionen, Wesen und Geschichte", S. 369 zusammengestellt habe. Das ist nun freilich von der durch die Aufklärung bestimmten europäischen Situation her geurteilt, in die aber die Türkei, soweit ich das übersehe, mindestens seit Kemal Attatürk einbezogen zu sein wünscht.

Ich hoffe, Ihnen mit diesen Äußerungen dienlich zu sein.  
Mehr kann ich leider dazu nicht sagen, eher wohl mein  
Kollege Herr von Glasenapp in Tübingen, der eine  
größere Affinität als ich selber zu ihrer Bewegung  
haben dürfte.

Mit besten Grüßen  
Ihr ergebener  
gez- Hans-Joachim Schoeps

# UNIVERSITÄT ERLANGEN-NÜRNBERG

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SEMINAR FÜR  
RELIGIONS- UND GEISTESGESCHICHTE

Vorstand: Prof. Dr. Schoeps

852 ERLANGEN, 22.12.1970  
Kochstraße 4 Sch/Ro  
Tel. \* 851  
Durchwahl 852344 u. 852901

Herrn  
Dr.jur.Udo S c h a e f e r

6900 H e i d e l b e r g  
Römerstraße 170

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr.Schaefer!

Erst Anfang dieses Monats wurde ich von Herrn Dipl.Ing.  
Huschmand Sabet, Stuttgart-N., Robert-Bosch-Str.47 wegen der  
"Baha'i Religion" angeschrieben. Ich antwortete ihm gemäß  
beiliegender Fotokopie.

In dem Herausgeberkreis unserer Zeitschrift ist Herr Prof.  
Benz, Marburg/Lahn, Lutherstr.7a zuständiger Referent für  
Literatur über die "Neuen Religionen". Vielleicht schreiben  
Sie ihm deswegen einmal.

Mit besten Grüßen

Ihr sehr ergebener

*Hans-Joachim Schoeps*

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69 Heidelberg, den 13.12.70  
Römerstr. 170

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor,

als ich vor etwa 15 Jahren an meiner Dissertation über das Verfassungsrecht der Bahá'í arbeitete, wandte ich mich an Sie wegen einer <sup>regel</sup> religionsgeschichtlicher Fragen, die Sie mir freundlicherweise beantworteten. Der Lektüre Ihrer religionsgeschichtlichen Werke, die ich zum Teil selbst besitze, verdanke ich außerordentliche Anregungen und Einsichten, für die ich sehr dankbar bin.

Wie ich erfahren habe, wurde Ihnen kürzlich vom Verum-Verlag eine Broschüre "Bahá'í - Religion nach Maß?" zugesandt. Ich habe darin den Hauptbeitrag geschrieben und dabei mehrfach auf meine 1968 erschienene Schrift "Die mißverstandene Religion" (Das Abendland und die nachbiblischen Religionen) verwiesen.

Mit dieser angeschlossenen Schrift möchte ich nochmals Ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf die Bahá'í-Religion lenken, von der bisher die Fachgelehrten kaum Notiz genommen haben. Wurde sie von dem einen oder anderen Forscher behandelt, so wurde sie zumeist in ihrem Wesen verkannt und, wie ich meine, in ihrer Bedeutung unterschätzt. Dies dürfte darauf zurückzuführen sein, daß sie in Europa, wo die Skepsis gegen jede Art von Religion und die Abneigung sich zu engagieren besonders ausgeprägt ist, noch verhältnismäßig wenig Anhänger gefunden hat. Auf dem asiatischen, afrikanischen und südamerikanischen Erdteil hingegen ist die Bahá'í-Religion im Begriff, zu einer echten Massenbewegung zu werden.

"Islamische Sekte" oder "Synkretismus", das sind die Qualifizierungen, die ihr in der Regel von den abendländischen Forschern, die sie behandelten, zuteil wurden. Die beiliegende Schrift bemüht sich um den Nachweis, daß die Bahá'í-Religion ungeachtet ihrer Entstehungsgeschichte so wenig eine islamische Sekte ist wie das Christentum eine Sonderrichtung des Judentums. Was den Vorwurf des Synkretismus anbelangt, habe ich im Hinblick auf den Islam, dem ja bekanntlich der gleiche Vorwurf gemacht wird, die von den Forschern angewandte Methode einer grundsätzlichen Kritik unterzogen. Diese Ausführungen gelten in gleicher Weise für die Bahá'í-Religion.

Ich bin Jurist, auf dem Gebiet der Religionsgeschichte also nur interessierter Laie und hoffe darum, daß meine Schrift in den Augen des Fachgelehrten Gnade finde.

Ich wäre Ihnen - sofern es Ihre Zeit erlaubt - für Ihr Urteil dankbar.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Ihr sehr ergebener