

The First Critical Edition of the Writings of Hermann Cohen

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Although the modern study of Judaism has its roots in the German Jewish *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and few of the luminaries of this distinguished tradition are better known than Cohen, it may not be superfluous to introduce Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) to the readers of this Newsletter. Cohen, born in Coswig (Anhalt) to a cantor/*melamed* from Silesia and a local homemaker, went to school in Dessau and went on to acquire a rabbinic education at the newly founded Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary. He was a member of one of the first cohorts of students and maintained a life-long relationship with some of its most eminent graduates, among them Wilhelm Bacher, Moritz Güdemann, and Jacob Guttman. His first notable public act was his contribution to the defense of Zacharias Frankel, the founding director of the seminary, against a smear campaign launched by Samson Rafael Hirsch's journal *Jeschurun*. Frankel was attacked as someone whose modernist approach to the Mishnah was leading the young men with whose education he had been entrusted astray. Cohen apparently persuaded his fellow students to tone down their open letter to Hirsch, so as not to create any unnecessary rift between the denominations. Cohen subsequently encountered the great old men of Jewish liberalism, foremost among them Leopold Zunz, Berthold Auerbach, and Johann Jacoby, and at one point he corresponded with the great rabbi and indefatigable voice of the Jewish struggle for integration, Ludwig Philippson. But the quarrel over the provenance of Jewish law and the debate over the meaning of revelation seems to have propelled Cohen from a rabbinic career to the pursuit of an academic career. His first mentor on this path was Hermann Steinthal, a relative from Gröbzig (Anhalt) and the founder, with Moritz Lazarus, of the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* where Cohen and other budding intellectuals, among them Wilhelm Dilthey, published their first scholarly essays. Cohen had studied classical philology and philosophy in Breslau and Berlin. But he first achieved distinction by entering into yet another debate, this time on a fine point in the interpretation of Kant, over which his Berlin teacher Adolf Trendelenburg and the Southwest German historian of philosophy Kuno Fischer disagreed. Cohen's intervention was noted by the Kantian philosopher and socialist pedagogue Friedrich Albert Lange, who invited Cohen to Marburg where Cohen eventually became Lange's successor and literary executor. Cohen's ascent to a full professorship in philosophy was made possible by a temporary liberal spell in Prussian cultural politics. He was virtually the only non-baptized Jew to hold such a position during the entire Wilhelminian era.

Beginning in late 1879, only three years after Lange's death, winds of change were blowing from Berlin where the National-Liberal Treitschke single-handedly transformed anti-Semitism into an element of respectable political discourse. Treitschke's essays in the *Preußische Jahrbücher* touched off a storm of publications.¹ Most of the Jewish contributions to this debate were summary dismissals of Treitschke's views. Cohen, on the other hand, in keeping with attitude he had displayed in previous debates, sought to mediate between the conservative German/Christian concerns and the deeper claims of Judaism. Treitschke ignored Cohen's letters and belittled his subsequent publication. Cohen's attempt at building a bridge between Judaism and German culture only succeeded in alienating his old friends and supporters, foremost among them Hermann Steinthal. Following this experience, Cohen's writings became increasingly imbued with a political or public urgency. He was a widely visible Jew in a world dominated by anti-Semitic prejudice and suspicion on the one side, and apologetic rhetoric on the other side. The ensuing years of writing on behalf of Jews and Judaism took their toll. While Cohen succeeded in building his reputation as a philosopher and as the founder of a prominent school of philosophical thought, the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism, he never personally received a call to another university and his students were virtually unemployable until the liberalization of cultural politics after the First World War.

Cohen was a prophetic figure. From his elevated, yet isolated, position in the German academy, he developed the sense that Judaism was fighting a battle against the threat of its annihilation. To him, the appropriate weapon in this battle was education. He advocated a radical overhaul of the Jewish educational system, from the elementary to the post-graduate levels, a reform that involved a dual commitment, namely, to the literary sources of Judaism and to the philosophical and philological sources of humanist *Bildung*. In the spirit of this commitment, Cohen helped to inaugurate a number of educational institutions, ranging from a home for Jewish apprentices in Marburg to the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Cohen also lectured widely on Jewish topics. He was a regular speaker in communal settings and at regional and national meetings of German Jewish cultural and political associations, such as the *Verband der deutschen Juden* and the *Central Verein*. Cohen was also one of the most popular speakers against the nascent Zionist movement. With the majority of the German Jews, Cohen considered Judaism a religious world view rather than a political or national movement. Few were able to articulate this religious world view more enthusiastically or persuasively.

¹ See Walter Boehlich (ed.), *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit*, Frankfurt 1965.

A thorough and profound Jewish commitment emerges even if we look at Cohen as an academic philosopher. Last year was the centenary of the publication of *Ethik des reinen Willens* (1904), a work which may be called the high water mark of German Jewish culture. In this work, Cohen aimed “to demonstrate the value of the idea of Judaism within a philosophical system.”² This he did, as he points out in an open letter to the Frankfurt Chapter of *B’nai B’riss*, not because of “having entrusted the guidance of his Jewish consciousness to the instinct of attachment to confession and tribe” but because he followed a “philosophical method” and was guided by “historical control.” To be sure, *Ethik des reinen Willens* functioned as the second part of a “system of philosophy.” But it is also a philosophical justification of the Jewish idea of God. In the above quote, Cohen rejects any notion of apologetics. His justification of the Jewish idea of God arises not out of apologetic or political concerns but out of philosophical deliberations informed by an informed historical consciousness. This is a profound claim, one which – if true – would set Cohen’s philosophical ethics apart from any Jewish philosophy that preceded it, with the exception perhaps of Philo of Alexandria’s works of commentary on the Pentateuch and unless one considers Spinoza’s *Ethics* a philosophical justification of the Jewish idea of God.

Even after Cohen, no Jewish philosopher has made a similar claim. For one, after the demise of neo-Kantianism (theatrically enacted in the famous 1929 debate between Heidegger and Cassirer in Davos), philosophical foundationalism, i. e., recourse to a universal measure of rationality as the foundation of all knowledge, has been generally abandoned by academic philosophers. For this reason, Rosenzweig’s *Star of Redemption*, a book which proceeds from the experience of a shattering of the rationalist universe into its three component parts (God, Man, World), eclipsed Cohen’s philosophy for later twentieth-century readers interested in Jewish philosophizing. Yet Rosenzweig never defends or justifies the Jewish idea of God in philosophical terms because the God of his philosophy is Jewish only to the Jews, whose answer to the experience of revelation is a Jewish one by default. The experience of revelation that is at the heart of Rosenzweig’s book is, accordingly, one that connects Jews and Christians. In contrast, the concept of religion in Cohen’s *Ethik des reinen Willens* is accompanied by a profound polemic against the trinitarian doctrine.

The difference between Cohen and Rosenzweig is characteristic of their respective position in the history of German Jewry. While religious knowledge

² This and the following quotes are from p. 333 of Bruno Strauß (ed.), *Hermann Cohens jüdische Schriften*, vol. 1: “Ethische und religiöse Grundfragen” [Veröffentlichungen der Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums], Berlin 1924.

and Jewish identity was on the decline among nineteenth-century German Jews in general, Cohen represents the phenomenon of a figure who was steeped in both traditional Jewish learning and mid-nineteenth-century academic humanism and science. In contrast, Rosenzweig was born into a community of Jews who, because of their infatuation with German high culture, were alienated from their own tradition and from religion in general. What he succeeded in absorbing of Jewish tradition he did by his own considerable talent and ambition. Yet he shared his dedication to religion with his Christian friends and relatives. This admittedly simplistic contrast nevertheless allows us to make a few important distinctions. For Cohen, the deep psychological and cultural value of Judaism was never in question, but the Jews lacked the ability to articulate this value in terms that spoke to their own modernized sensitivity and to the sensitivity of those who knew even less about Judaism and had no reason to look at it with interest or sympathy. If the aim for radical modernization of Jewish education was to be successful it was in need of philosophical guidance. To Cohen, transcendental idealism in a Kantian vein provided the key to the kind of communication on questions of truth, justice, and character formation that committed those who participated in it to a radical dedication to the ideal of progress toward the unity and dignity of all human beings.

Cohen's philosophy attempted to provide the reasoned foundation for a society where Jews and non-Jews could confidently cooperate in what he called the "unity of the cultural consciousness." Trust in philosophy as the tool for building a society based on shared values arises from universal access to "facts of culture," foremost among them progress in the natural sciences. But how does scientific knowledge provide the condition for a coherent system in which science, law, and art coalesce in a unified "cultural consciousness"? Two forms of such an integration had been tried and failed and thus had to be avoided. The first half century after Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was dominated by an exuberantly speculative celebration of the powers of autonomous reason and its ability to integrate all fields of knowledge in a system of sciences. But philosophical speculation was eventually outpaced by scientific progress which in turn influenced the interpretation of transcendental philosophy itself, such as when the psychological movement reduced the judgments of reason to functions of the physiology of the brain. On the other hand, the attempt at establishing a "critique of historical reason" (Dilthey) independent of the natural sciences gave rise to fertile developments in historiography and hermeneutics but eventually became entangled in the problems of historical nihilism, i. e., the loss of certainty of traditional moral values. Cohen's contribution to the rise of a neo-Kantian approach to systematic philosophy was fuelled by the dual realization that a) scientific knowledge is not empirical but experimental and hence

founded on idealist assumptions, namely, on axioms represented in mathematical terms and hence expressions of pure thought; and that b) the Humanities had to be held accountable to the same standards of certainty or to standards that were at least analogous to, or otherwise correlative with, those constitutive of scientific knowledge. Ultimately, however, the sought-for agreement between nature and culture, mathematical rigor and lawful historical progress, is a matter of faith, even if a rational one. For Cohen, the Platonic Socrates pronounced this rational faith no less forcefully than the biblical prophets articulated the superiority of goodness over religious ritual. To Plato, the “hypothesis” is the sufficient ground of being. In contrast to Nietzsche who, in age, religious formation, and concern for a reexamination of the roots of rationalism in Greek philosophy and ancient religion, is closer to Cohen than any other thinker of the second half of the nineteenth century, Cohen affirms the sufficiency of reason to establish a steady progress not only in the sciences but also in the spheres of culture. In contrast to Kierkegaard and those close to Cohen who were influenced by Kierkegaardian faith beyond culture, Cohen affirmed the rationalism of religious faith.

From the above it should be clear that Cohen was not only a highly sophisticated and important philosopher but one whose effort at establishing a meaningful conversation between Judaism and general culture has much to teach us today. Cohen challenges the provinciality of many of our academic pursuits and reminds science and scholarship of their moral and political responsibility.

With few exceptions, however, standard encyclopedic expositions of Cohen’s philosophy, of his Jewish thought, and of his cultural and political stance in discussions on the relation between German and Jewish culture are misleading, one-sided, or simply useless. Since Cohen tried to do rather unusual things with words that are occasionally cryptic or idiosyncratic it is virtually impossible to understand what he says unless one delves rather deeply into his writings. This is a difficult and time consuming task, a labor of love, and not one that promises immediate gainful academic employment, tenure, or a Nobel prize in philosophy, if there were such a thing. Until recently it was also rather difficult to find copies of Cohen’s writings, most of which have been long out of print. It is therefore very good news that most of Cohen’s writings have now become available in a new edition.³

When Helmut Holzhey launched the *Werke* edition in 1977, this was an act of faith. While neo-Kantianism had survived the great academic purge of the

³ Hermann Cohen, *Werke*, published by Hermann-Cohen-Archiv am Philosophischen Seminar der Universität Zürich, Editor: Helmut Holzhey, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1977ff.

1930s within a few departments of philosophy and was briefly renewed after the war by the work of Hans Wagner⁴ and a few others,⁵ Helmut Holzhey began the work of reintroducing Hermann Cohen to the canon of philosophical studies almost single-handedly.⁶ The success of Holzhey's initiative is evident from the participation in the editorial work of the new edition of a number of international scholars whose dedication to the study of Cohen's philosophy is also manifest in a growing number of dissertations on Cohen, in several recent international conferences, in the publication of many essays and monographs on Cohen and neo-Kantianism, in the establishment of an International Cohen Society,⁷ and in translations of Cohen's works into Italian and French.⁸ This

⁴ *Philosophie und Reflexion*, München – Basel 1958 (second edition 1967), reviewed by Wolfgang Cramer in: *Philosophische Rundschau* 11 (1963), pp. 68–90.

⁵ Among the works that I, at least, would credit with restoring the plausibility of Cohenian philosophy after Heidegger are Manfred Brelage, *Studien zur Transzendentalphilosophie*, Berlin 1965, and Dieter Adelmann, *Einheit des Bewusstseins als Grundproblem der Philosophie Hermann Cohens*, Heidelberg 1968.

⁶ Cf. Helmut Holzhey, *Cohen und Natorp*, vol. 1 “Ursprung und Einheit. Die Geschichte der ‘Marburger Schule’ als Auseinandersetzung um die Logik des Denkens”, vol. 2 “Der Marburger Neukantianismus in Quellen. Zeugnisse kritischer Lektüre. Briefe der Marburger. Dokumente zur Philosophiepolitik der Schule”, Basel – Stuttgart 1986, and idem, “Das Hermann-Cohen-Archiv in Zürich”, in: *ZPhF* 31 (1977), pp. 443–452.

⁷ See (<http://www.hermann-cohen-gesellschaft.org>).

⁸ To list only the major publications that have appeared since 1989 (in reverse chronological order): *Man and God in Hermann Cohen's Philosophy*, ed. by Gianna Gigliotti, Irene Kajon, and Andrea Poma, Padova 2003; Ann-Kathrin Hake, *Vernunftreligion und historische Glaubenslehre. Immanuel Kant und Hermann Cohen*, Würzburg 2003; Francesca Albertini, *Das Verständnis des Seins bei Hermann Cohen*, Würzburg 2003; Gian Paolo Cammarota, *L'idealismo messianico di Hermann Cohen* [Pubblicazioni dell'università degli studi di salerno, Sezione di studi filosofici 7], Napoli 2002; Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky, *Der frühe Walter Benjamin und Hermann Cohen: Jüdische Werte, Kritische Philosophie, vergängliche Erfahrung*, Berlin 2000; Michael Zank, *The Idea of Atonement in the Philosophy of Hermann Cohen* [Brown Judaic Studies 324], Providence/RI 2000; Helmut Holzhey, Gabriel Motzkin, and Hartwig Wiedebach (eds.), “Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism.” *Tradition and the Concept of Origin in Hermann Cohen's Later Work*, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 2000; Stéphane Mosès and Hartwig Wiedebach (eds.), *Hermann Cohen's Philosophy of Religion. International Conference in Jerusalem 1996* [Publications of the Franz Rosenzweig Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History, Philosophische Texte und Studien 44], Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 1997; Hartwig Wiedebach, *Die Bedeutung der Nationalität für Hermann Cohen* [Europaea Memoria Reihe I: Studien, Band 6], Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 1997; Peter A. Schmid, *Ethik als Hermeneutik: systematische Untersuchungen zu Hermann Cohens Rechts- und Tugendlehre* [Studien und Materialien zum Neukantianismus 5], Würzburg 1995; Karl-Heinz Lembeck, *Platon in Marburg: Platon-Rezeption und Philosophiegeschichtsphilosophie bei Cohen und Natorp* [Studien und Materialien zum Neukantianismus 3], Würzburg 1994; Ulrich Sieg, *Aufstieg und Niedergang des Marburger Neukantianismus. Die Geschichte einer philosophischen Schulgemeinschaft*, Würzburg 1994; Reinhardt Brandt and Franz Orlik (eds.), *Philosophisches Denken – Politisches Wirken. Hermann-Cohen-Kolloquium Marburg 1992*, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 1993; Djeong-Uk

revival⁹ is fuelled partially by the academic philosophical realization that an accounting of the merits and limitations of Marburg neo-Kantianism was forestalled for cultural and political rather than philosophical reasons,¹⁰ and partially by the realization that the neat division between Cohen's Jewish thought and his philosophical idealism, established most influentially by Franz Rosenzweig's introduction to the 1924 edition of Cohen's *Jüdische Schriften*,¹¹ can no longer be maintained. One of the great merits of the *Werke* edition is its integration of Cohen's Jewish and his philosophical, political, and other writings in a single edition.¹²

The content of the edition is as follows: Volume 1 (1987; € 138.00) is dedicated to *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* (first published 1871) which established Cohen's reputation as a Kant scholar. It is divided into three sub-volumes, namely, vol. 1.1¹³ containing the text of the third edition, 1918, and an introduction by Geert Edel, vol. 1.2¹⁴ (critical apparatus and index) and vol. 1.3¹⁵, the text of the first edition of 1871. The latter is perhaps the most refreshing read of the entire edition in that it is written in the voice of a young man who is

Seo, *Logik und Metaphysik der Erkenntnis: kritischer Vergleich von Hermann Cohens und Nicolai Hartmanns philosophischen Grundpositionen*, Frankfurt am Main 1993; Pierfrancesco Fiorato, *Geschichtliche Ewigkeit: Ursprung und Zeitlichkeit in der Philosophie Hermann Cohens*, Würzburg 1993; Joachim Hubbert, *Transzendente und empirische Subjektivität in der Erfahrung bei Kant, Cohen, Natorp und Cassirer* [Europäische Hochschulschriften], Frankfurt am Main 1993; Almut Bruckstein, *Hermann Cohen's "Charakteristik der Ethik Maimunis": A Reconstructive Reading of Maimonides' Ethics*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, Philadelphia/PA 1992; Manfred Pascher, *Hermann Cohens Ethik als Gegenentwurf zur Rechtsphilosophie Hegels* [Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft/Sonderheft 83], Innsbruck 1992; *il cannocchiale. rivista di studi filosofici* 1–2 (1991) (a book-length journal issue with distinguished contributions to the study of Cohen); Peter Giesecke, *Kant und der Sozialismus: Studien zum Marburger Neukantianismus, philosophischen Kritizismus und kritischen Rationalismus*, Univ. Diss., München 1991; Gianna Gigliotti, "Avventure e disavventure del trascendentale." *Studio su Cohen e Natorp*, Napoli 1989; Irene Kajon, *Ebraismo e sistema di filosofia in Hermann Cohen*, Padova 1989.

⁹ Cf. Werner Flach, "Eine Renaissance in der Philosophie? Zur Neuausgabe der Werke Hermann Cohens", in: *NZZ* Nr. 243, Sat/Sun 18/19 Oct. 1980, p. 70.

¹⁰ See the opening chapter of Adelman, *Einheit des Bewusstseins*, and cf. Julius Ebbinghaus, "Hermann Cohen als Philosoph und Publizist", in: *Aph* 6 (1956), pp. 109–122.

¹¹ Franz Rosenzweig, "Einleitung in die Akademieausgabe der Jüdischen Schriften Hermann Cohens", in: *Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften*, vol. 1, ed. by Bruno Strauß, Berlin 1924, pp. XIII–LXIV.

¹² This is true for the new edition of his "minor writings" (*Kleinere Schriften*, vols. 12–17 of the *Werke*) as well as *Religion der Vernunft* (planned as vol. 11) which originally appeared in a different series (*Grundriss der Gesamtwissenschaft des Judentums*) than Cohen's philosophical system (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer).

¹³ 59* + xxv + 797 pp., ISBN 3-487-07876-7.

¹⁴ 255 pp., ISBN 3-487-07877-5.

¹⁵ viii + 271pp., ISBN 3-487-07878-3.

teaching the establishment of academic philosophy a lesson, who shows great wit and erudition, and who is unencumbered by the crypticism and weight of the later systematic works that commence with *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* (1902).

Volume 2 (2001)¹⁶ contains the text of the second edition (1910) of *Kants Begründung der Ethik (KBE)* with an introduction by Peter Müller und Peter A. Schmid, and an appendix (edited by W. Lüssi, H.-U. Thalmann, and S. Zurbuchen) of almost 150 pages comparing editions, indexing citations from the works of Kant and references to other authors. While Cohen regarded the first edition of *KBE* (1877) as the first full articulation of his attempt to reestablish Kantian transcendental philosophy, the second edition (prepared after the publication of *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* and of the second edition of his systematic ethics, *Ethik des reinen Willens*, 1907) extends the original essay by trying to show how Kantian ethics provide a tenable foundation for a philosophy of culture, which is here represented by the fields of law, religion, and history. This second part of the volume can therefore be enjoyed even by readers who might be unfamiliar with Kantian philosophy or who have little patience for theoretical philosophy, epistemology, or philosophy of science. In any case, *KBE* should be considered a classic of philosophical modernism after Hegel.

Volume 4 (1978, reprint edition 1989)¹⁷ gives the text of the second edition of Cohen's commentary on Kant's First Critique (*Kommentar zu Immanuel Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 2. Aufl., Leipzig 1917). To enjoy this book one needs to be a true Cohen aficionado or a dedicated Kant scholar. It illustrates what the poet and former Marburg student Boris Pasternak recorded in his memoir as Cohen's method of philosophical exposition, at least, as it could be experienced in the last seminars Cohen held in Marburg during World War I where he substituted for those of his students who had been drafted into the army. According to Pasternak, Cohen's method consisted in reading the Kantian text aloud, or having it read aloud, and punctuating it with emphatic exclamations.

Volume 5 (1984; € 62.00) contains two important articulations of Cohen's thought that were read and commented on widely at the time of their first publication. These are *Das Prinzip der Infinitesimal-Methode und seine Geschichte* (vol. 5.1)¹⁸ (*PIM*) with an introduction by P. Schulthess, and "Einleitung mit kritischem Nachtrag" (vol. 5.2)¹⁹ ("EmkN") with an introduction by

¹⁶ 35* + xx + 707 pp., ISBN 3-487-07879-1, € 88.00.

¹⁷ xxiii* + ix + 256 pp., ISBN 3-487-07881-3, € 44.80.

¹⁸ 46* + vii* + 206 pp., ISBN 3-487-06395-6.

¹⁹ Same ISBN as volume 5.1 (both are combined in one volume), 30* + 164 pp.

H. Holzhey. *PIM* is Cohen's major contribution to the philosophy of mathematics and was favorably received by such luminaries as B. Russell and W. Frege. "EmkN" was Cohen's companion piece to the popular *History of Materialism* by Friedrich Albert Lange. At the time of its first publication in 1896, Cohen's introduction was hailed as a new foundation of transcendental philosophy. Holzhey's edition gives the text of the third edition (1914) which is much revised and enlarged but also provides an appendix with the variant readings so that it is possible to determine how Cohen changed this important statement of his own philosophy over time.

Volumes 6 through 9 contain Cohen's system of philosophy, namely, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* (*LrE*, vol. 6, 1977)²⁰, *Ethik des reinen Willens* (*ErW*, vol. 7, 1981)²¹, and *Ästhetik des reinen Gefühls* (*ÄrG*, volumes 8²² and 9²³, 1982). The system is a torso in two respects. Like *ÄrG*, the other parts of the system were meant to be divided into a theoretical part and a second volume, demonstrating the fertility and wide-ranging applications of the systematic foundations. These important second volumes of *LrE* and *ErW* were never completed, although one might argue that Cassirer's 1910 book *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff. Untersuchungen über die Grundfragen der Erkenntniskritik* nicely augments Cohen's *Logic* from a historical perspective and Hans Kelsen's legal theory builds on the foundations of Cohen's *Ethics*. But the system is a torso also in another sense. Cohen had hoped to add a fourth part, on psychology, dealing with the "unity of the cultural consciousness" that prevails in and through the distinct directions of culture represented by the other parts of the system. No manuscript of this final systematic volume ever surfaced, as in general only few manuscripts survived Martha Cohen's deportation to Theresienstadt.

Volume 10 (second, revised reprint edition 2002)²⁴, edited by Andrea Poma, contains the text of the first and hitherto only edition of *Der Begriff der Religion im System der Philosophie* (Gießen 1915). When first published, this essay seemed to indicate a "turn to religion" of the aging philosopher, a turn that had already been signalled a year earlier when, in the third edition of "EmkN", Cohen changed a statement, first published in 1896, from calling for an *Auflösung* of religion into ethics ("religion ought to be dissolved into ethics") to

²⁰ xxv* + xviii + 722 pp., ISBN 3-487-06396-4, € 99.80.

²¹ xxxvii* + xxiii + 707 pp., ISBN 3-487-06397-2, € 99.80. The first edition (1981) included an introduction by Steven Schwarzschild. In the second edition (2002) this has been replaced by a new introduction by Peter Schmid.

²² xxii* + xxv + 401 pp., ISBN 3-487-06398-0, no price available (out of print).

²³ xv + 477 pp., ISBN 3-487-06399-9, € 74.00.

²⁴ 48* + viii + 164 pp., first published 1996, ISBN 3-487-06400-6, € 49.80.

calling for an integration of religion into ethics.²⁵ Much has been made, especially by Rosenzweig, of Cohen's turn to religion and of the departure of his late philosophy of religion from his system of critical idealism. But there have been persistent arguments against stylizing Cohen as a *ba'al teshuvah*, as Rosenzweig did who, to some extent, superimposed his own path to religion on Cohen's intellectual biography.²⁶ In his introduction to the new edition, Andrea Poma finds a Solomonic formulation: "Wer die These von einer Wende in der späten Religionsphilosophie Cohens im Blick auf sein System verfiicht, müßte u. a. den Widerspruch zwischen dieser These und der *BR* durchwegs bestimmenden Kontinuität erklären. Tatsächlich entwickelt Cohen in diesem Werk eine neue, weitergehende Auffassung, die allerdings im Verhältnis zu früheren Positionen weder die letzte noch eine besonders auffällige Stellungnahme ist."²⁷

Volumes 11 through 17 constitute one of the major achievements of this edition. Rather than mere reprints, these volumes of *Kleinere Schriften* are a critical edition by Hartwig Wiedebach, published in cooperation with the *Moses-Mendelssohn-Zentrum für europäisch-jüdische Studien*, Universität Potsdam, an institution represented by Julius H. Schoeps und Christoph Schulte who appear as co-editors for these volumes. Of these *Kleinere Schriften*, which are minor only in terms of size but not in content or significance to an understanding of Cohen or in terms of subject matter, only volumes 16 (1997)²⁸ and 17 (2002)²⁹ have hitherto appeared, covering the final years (1913–15 and 1916–18). These volumes include footnotes indicating the sources of citations and meticulously assembled indices of names and subjects that render these writings accessible for non-specialists. The next volume in line to appear (anticipated date of publication: 2006) is volume 14 (= *Kleinere Schriften IV*) which will include, among others, two seminal essays by Cohen on the medieval Jewish philosophers Bahyah Ibn Paquda and Moses Maimonides.

Two supplemental volumes have also appeared, edited by Helmut Holzhey and Hartwig Wiedebach. The first one of these (*Supplementa 1, Reflexionen und Notizen*, 2003)³⁰ contains the first complete edition of the small pieces of

²⁵ See *Werke*, vol. 5/II ("EmkN"), p. 106, and cf. *ibid.*, "Einführung des Herausgebers", p. 21*.

²⁶ The first who cautioned against Rosenzweig's interpretation of Cohen's philosophy of religion was Alexander Altmann, "Hermann Cohens Begriff der Korrelation", in: Tramer Hans (ed.), *Zwei Welten: Siegfried Moses zum Fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag*, Tel Aviv 1962, pp. 366–399. More extreme than Altmann, Steven Schwarzschild argued not just for continuity between Cohen's late works on religion and his systematic philosophy but for substantive identity of Cohen's position. See Schwarzschild's introduction to *Werke*, vol. 7 (*ErW*).

²⁷ *Werke*, vol. 10, p. 9*.

²⁸ *Kleinere Schriften V: 1913–1915*, xxxv + 671 pp., ISBN 3-487-10566-7, € 99.80.

²⁹ *Kleinere Schriften VI: 1916–1918*, xli + 766 pp., ISBN 3-487-11686-3, € 124.00.

³⁰ xviii + 206 pp., ISBN 3-487-11695-2, € 39.80.

paper on which Cohen scribbled notes on various topics related to his interest in the Jewish concept of atonement (*Versöhnung*) and that, for reasons that are not entirely clear, survived in the archives of Paul Natorp. Wiedebach does a splendid job deciphering and annotating these few remaining samples of Cohen's private workshop. The volume also contains a few facsimiles.

The second volume (*Supplementa 2, Die Hermann-Cohen-Bibliothek, 2000*)³¹ is a monograph by Hartwig Wiedebach that serves to open another window into Cohen's workshop by describing ca. 900 titles from Cohen's carefully selected and highly valuable personal library only part of which survived the several rounds of sales, dismantlings, and transportation it underwent after Cohen's death and that are now housed in the basement of the National and University Library at Givat Ram in Jerusalem. Wiedebach's selection is limited to volumes that can be identified as having actually been read and annotated by Cohen or that are otherwise of particular interest, such as volumes dedicated to Cohen.

Once the *Werkausgabe* will be complete, it will also include *Kants Begründung der Ästhetik* (vol. 3), *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (vol. 11), and reprints of the two *Festschriften* published in honor of Cohen's 70th birthday in 1912 (*Philosophische Abhandlungen* and *Judaica*) as *Supplementa* volumes 3 and 4.³²

³¹ vi + 255 pp., ISBN 3-487-11089-X, €44.80.

³² For an overview over the entire edition see *Werke*, vol. 17 (= *Kleinere Schriften VI*), pp. 765f.