**University of Siegen, June 6-9, 2018**

**International Hans Jonas Conference**

The Jewish School System in Palestine/ Das jüdische Schulwesen in Palästina

Lecture by Petr Frantik

**Abstract**

In his 1923 published paper Hans Jonas deals with the development of a Jewish school system in Palestine, which was under British Mandate at that time. His article begins with a brief overview of the origins of Jewish schools in Palestine. After that, he describes different types of schools and discusses various good approaches as well as challenges and problems.

On the one hand, according to Jonas, many traditional schools were too religiously oriented and would disregard current socially relevant topics. On the other hand, from the late 19th century, some modern schools emerged through the support of foreign Jewish associations and organizations from many different countries. But these organizations were strongly oriented towards the school system in the respective country of origin and also ignored the contemporary living conditions in Palestine. In addition, this led to inconsistent education structures, different languages of instruction and, subsequently, to the emigration of many students after graduation. Jonas therefore criticizes both directions for the establishment of a school system.

In addition, however, a third form of schooling emerged that was influenced and supported by Zionist ideas and movements. These schools strove for Hebrew as the standard language of instruction, a common school curriculum, uniform structures in the education of teachers and educators, and promoting Jewish culture.

Jonas supports these aspirations and considers the following aspects as important for the further development of the Jewish school system in Palestine: action-oriented learning, playful learning, orientation to living conditions, product orientation and a balanced proportion of scientific, humanistic, aesthetic content.

The end of the text shows that Jonas sees a lack of financial investment as an obstacle to the further development of the Jewish school system in Palestine. Therefore, the text also provides detailed figures on schools, teachers and costs within each description of a particular type of school.

**Discussion**

From today's perspective, there are some interesting points of discussion regarding this early work by Jonas. Of course, from a historical perspective, the text can serve as a document describing the development of the Jewish school system in Palestine in 1923. In this regard, the article can be very fruitful for the understanding of Israel´s educational system today. However, it is particularly interesting in the course of this conference to gain insights into Jonas' thinking from this early work. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss with you the following questions:

1. What does the text tell us about Jonas´s pedagogical thinking?
2. What does the text tell us about Jonas´s attitude to Zionist movements?
3. What does the text tell us about Jonas´s concept of culture?