

WAG Scholars' Working Group on German Rabbis after 1933 at LMU München

Personal Details

Raphael Thurm
Bar Ilan University
rthurm24@yahoo.com

Statement of Interest

I am currently researching the German Neo-Orthodox Jewish heritage of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's congregation in the Frankfurt and its legacy community in Washington Heights. The WAG Scholars' Working Group on German Rabbis after 1933 at LMU München offers me the unique opportunity to share my findings on this community with other scholars, as well as to meet and come into contact with other researchers who are investigating the German Jewish milieu.

Project Outline

My research concentrates on Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's socio-educational school of "Torah Im Derekh Eretz" and the construction of his bourgeois-style Neo-Orthodox Jewish congregation, which during the early Wilhelmine period served as an emulative model for Neo-Orthodox Jewish identity. My project analyzes how Hirsch's model was espoused by his spiritual successors and students in Germany, such as Rabbi Joseph Breuer, Dr. Markus Elias, and Jacob Rosenheim. After *Kristallnacht*, much of the Hirsch community fled to the United States, where they reestablished their congregation as the Khal Adath Jeshurun and continued to advocate their master's ideal. My findings uncover many nuances inherent in the "Torah Im Derekh Eretz" approaches of Hirsch and his students, some of which diverge, and all of which bear influence from dominant cultural currents. Ultimately, the story of Hirsch's community in both Germany and the United States represents a remarkable movement of continuity and change.

Presentation

A Neo-Orthodox Jewish Legacy: The Hirsch Community in Washington Heights (1939-1995)

Short Bio

Raphael Thurm is a PhD candidate at Bar Ilan University. He previously worked as a research fellow for the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and he was recently the recipient of Yad Vashem's Scholarship for Outstanding Holocaust Research.