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## “Lifelong Learning” – A New Term for an Old Idea? The Search for Historical Roots

**Abstract:** The article seeks to correct the assumption that “lifelong learning” was only invented by educationists in the 1970s. In contrast to the numerous authors who regard E. Faure’s 1972 book “Learning to be” as the origin of “lifelong learning”, we refer back to Cyril O. Houle, and his remarkable publication of 1961, “The Inquiring Mind,” as the father of “lifelong learning” in a modern sense. Cyril O. Houle suggested that the roots of “lifelong learning” lay in ancient Judaism. The article follows this guideline and marks out the main stages of this genealogy: ancient Judaism as a learning community, lifelong learning in Torah and Talmud, the Haskala as the link with educational practice in Germany, and finally the function of the “houses of teaching” (Lehrhäuser) in the Weimar Republic (Buber, Rosenzweig, Simon) as places of lifelong learning in both its religious and its secular sense.

**Key words:** Cyril O. Houle, lifelong learning, Judaism.

The current attempts to distinguish between the terms “lifelong learning”, “lifelong education” and “permanent education”, and the rivalry for the *jus primae noctis* – who was the first to use them?<sup>2</sup> – put one in mind of the commonplace saying that “originality is often nothing more than as yet undiscovered plagiarism”. If this is applied to the present case<sup>3</sup>, it means that apparent modernity

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<sup>2</sup> The terms are sometimes identified almost schematically with particular international or supranational organisations – lifelong learning with the OECD and, since 2000, especially with the EU, lifelong education with UNESCO, and permanent education with the Council of Europe. However, the generally accepted terms “lifelong learning” and “adult learning” (for the adult education element within an overarching concept of lifelong learning) have now become standard.

<sup>3</sup> The newly established internet platform [www.elli.com](http://www.elli.com), which was initiated and is sponsored by the German Bertelsmann-Foundation, derives the term lifelong education from Jacques Delors’ writings and the publications of the Delors-Commission -, see: Joachim, H. K. (1996). *Internationale Weiterbildung und Erwachsenenbildung*, Darmstadt, p. 74 ff – and thereby is highlighting targets such as flexibility, mobility and employability.

and uniqueness are mere pretence and that the debt owed to longer-standing tradition is deliberately ignored through historical slovenliness. At long last, the custom of using lifelong education or lifelong learning rhetorically as an inaccurate synonym for adult education has vanished from educational discourse, and more particularly from the flowery language of formal speeches. Instead, lifelong learning now stands for “the totality of all formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout a person’s entire life cycle”, as just one of many definitions puts it.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, this does not remove all confusion, or answer such questions as who thought up the idea, whether there is a consensus as to the content and future nature of lifelong learning, and whether there is still some lingering scepticism over recent developments and the replacement of the term “education” by “learning”.

Two examples may be given of this relative lack of certainty. Paul Bélanger<sup>5</sup>, the former Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education and therefore very familiar with the recent origins of lifelong learning, particularly in the context of education policy, has made the following observation about the early stages of lifelong learning in the 1970s:<sup>6</sup> “The lifelong education in the early seventies was a euphoria built on the post-war belief in an endless prosperity. But the petrol crisis together with the decline of the welfare state brought rapidly the euphoria to an impasse.” There is an unmistakable note of scepticism here, which results perhaps from Bélanger’s identifying lifelong education too narrowly with the immediate time frame, thereby tying the concept and its achievability to economic conditions that were by their nature temporary and did not in the end have a lasting impact on education.

The essay by John Field entitled “Has ‘lifelong learning’ had its day?”<sup>7</sup> caused particular controversy in 1998 when he was the first to be appointed to a chair in lifelong learning at the University of Sterling in Scotland. But this nagging question was probably not intended to be quite so provocative, since it leads

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<sup>4</sup> Unabhängige Expertenkommission Finanzierung lebenslangen Lernens, in: *Der Weg in die Zukunft*, Berlin July 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Bélanger, P. (1997). *The Astonishing Return of Lifelong Learning*. In: National Institute for Educational Research/UNESCO Institute for Education (NIER; UIE) (eds.), *Comparative Studies on Lifelong Learning Policies*. Tokyo, p. ix.

<sup>6</sup> The idea that the origins of lifelong learning can be seen as falling into two stages goes back to Kjell Rubenson: Rubenson, K., *Livslangt lärande*. In: Ellström P. et al. (eds.), *Livslangt lärande*. Lund 1996. According to Rubenson, the first decade may be named after Edgar Faure’s “Learning to be” (Paris 1972), and is associated primarily with the early UNESCO term “lifelong education”, while the second stage, led by the EU and the OECD in the 1990s, and now almost exclusively using the term “lifelong learning”, begins with EU documents such as the White Paper on Competition and Growth (1993) and the White Paper on Teaching and Learning (1995), is first set out prominently in print in J. Delors’ “Learning -The Treasure within” (1996), and is subsequently promulgated in forward-looking EU implementation models such as the “Memorandum” (2000) and the European Qualification Framework (EQF 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Field, J. (2006). *Has ‘lifelong learning’ had its day?* In: *Adults Learning*, p. 16

on to a clear, well thought-out plea for the concept of lifelong learning, in which he states at one point that lifelong learning has widespread support and is clearly in adults' own interest on economic and social grounds.

In the brief discussion that follows, we shall be guided by the notion that lifelong learning does embrace "the totality of all formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout a person's entire life cycle" and that accordingly, the content of learning should not be restricted to one segment of human development or education (such as religious education or vocational training).

In a recent paper on 'Cy' Houle's "The Inquiring Mind"<sup>8</sup> I have tried to demonstrate that the very date when his book appeared – 1961 – gives the lie to the over-hasty assumption that lifelong learning can be traced back to E. Faure and his 1972 publication "Learning to be". If we look at the way in which Houle sets out his argument, at his careful cultural analysis and his detailed answering of the empirical question of why adults continue learning, and at his consequent typology of human learning behaviour, it is undoubtedly right to regard Houle as the father of the present-day theory and practice of lifelong learning. His publication may indeed be an example of the principle that ideas must appear at the proper time if they are to be accepted and evoke an appropriate response. In Germany, 'Cy' Houle remains a largely unknown educationist, and his writings are not found on the shelves of academic libraries, while in America he is among the classics, and he is still read rather than just being quoted reverentially.

Why do I mention him at this point? Simply because instead of claiming to be original, he looks back to those predecessors with whom he finds common ground in the notion of lifelong learning and lifelong education. An awareness of history is present in all Houle's publications, including those on lifelong learning.

He makes clear that he is not alone in seeing a link between lifelong learning and "Judaism as a learning community"<sup>9</sup>, not least because learning does not relate solely to the religious dimension in that context but is invariably concerned also with how to shape and manage life in the here and now.

This Jewish origin of lifelong learning, in the "religion of education", has yet to be generally accepted. One reason why such a view is not shared by the majority of members of the "guild of educationists" relates undoubtedly to present-day methods of theory formation, which frequently ignore religious and

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<sup>8</sup> Cyril, O. H. (1961). *The Inquiring Mind, A Study of the adult who continues to learn*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

<sup>9</sup> This is the title of a paper by Ralf Koerrenz, *Das Judentum als Lerngemeinschaft. Die Konzeption einer pädagogischen Religion bei Leo Baeck*, Deutscher Studienverlag, Weinheim 1992

historical references.<sup>10</sup> In the context of adult education at least, it is evident that the rarity of historical cross-references scarcely encourages such a quest.

Where can we find the evidence to confirm this assertion of the Jewish origin of lifelong learning? In the first place, in the not inconsiderable number of Jewish adult educationists in our own time, among whom I shall only mention Eitan Israeli und Kalman Yaron because they are known here.<sup>11</sup> If we go back to the Weimar Republic, we may also think of figures such as Rosenzweig, Buber, Baeck and Simon, about whom we shall more to say later.

We cannot here go into the various principles put forward in religion,<sup>12</sup> but will merely call attention to a few places in the Torah and the Talmud which may be regarded as pointing to both the religious and the everyday notion of lifelong learning. Among other places in the Torah, it is chiefly 5 Moses 6, 4-7; 5 Moses 11, 19; Sayings of the Fathers 4, 12; and Joshua 1, 8 which define learning as a religious duty, not only on holy days but as a continuous process that starts in early childhood (“Ye shall teach your sons”) and is not intended ever to end (“For as long as thou hast not attained wisdom and understanding thyself, seek out men of experience and do not be ashamed to learn and to ask”<sup>13</sup>). In the Talmud, which contains a set of practical religious rules for living in order to “anchor the Torah among the people by teaching ‘many pupils’, by providing Halakah judgments and rulings on everyday life, and by bringing the Torah up to date and providing a commentary,”<sup>14</sup> the general utterances in the Torah about learning are spelt out more fully in the context of the ways in which learning is transmitted

<sup>10</sup> I specifically exclude from this remark the Jena educationist Ralf Koerrenz, who has regularly examined in depth the educational dimension of Jewish religion and religiosity. A short paper entitled “Human being – learning being” (“Lebewesen Mensch – Lernwesen Mensch”) contains the almost apodictic statement in relation to Leo Baeck that: “the core of Jewish religion is concerned with the inescapable quest for one’s own meaning, with coming to see and to shape one’s life as an open-ended process of learning that can never be complete.” Ralf Koerrenz. *Lebewesen Mensch - Lernwesen Mensch. Perspektiven für den jüdisch-christlichen Dialog im Anschluss an Leo Baeck*, in: *Leo Baeck - Zwischen Geheimnis und Gebot, Auf dem Weg zu einem progressiven Judentum der Moderne. Beiträge von Tagungen der Bertelsmann Buch AG, der Evangelischen Akademie Baden und der Evangelischen Akademie Berlin-Brandenburg (=Herrenalber Forum, Band 19)*, Karlsruhe 1997, p.246 ff.

<sup>11</sup> See their several articles in the *International Yearbook of Adult Education (Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung)*, ed. J. H. Knoll, Cologne, 1967 ff

<sup>12</sup> See esp.: Volkhard Krech, *Wohin mit der Religionswissenschaft? Skizze zur Lage der Religionsforschung und zur Möglichkeit ihrer Entwicklung*, in: *ZRGG* 58, 2, 2006, p.97, and p. 100 on the relationship between the study of religion and that of culture and on the question whether the study of religion should be regarded as (a part of) the study of culture

<sup>13</sup> From: “Musar Haskel” by Gaon Hai ben Scherina – 939-1038, quoted in A. Pfaffenholz, *Was macht der Rabbi?*, *Das Judentum*, Munich 1995, p. 148

<sup>14</sup> Galley, S. (2006). *Das Judentum*. Frankfurt am Main, p. 61.

(“Schooling”<sup>15</sup>). In the introductory essay on the Talmud by Stemberger we read: “Every father had the personal duty to teach his sons the basic elements of religious education (Deut. 11, 19). Frequently, however, the father was not up to the task of being the teacher of his sons,... In Judaism, the religious nature of which depends so heavily on the Book, the Bible, and in which learning was a direct religious duty, there rapidly arose the need to establish a public education system.” Alongside such specific commands, which can be dated to the first century before Christ, there are also general injunctions, which have resulted in Judaism being depicted over the ages as a religion in which “intellectual questioning did not cease when faced with the religious.”<sup>16</sup> Hence, the general duty to learn is stated as follows in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbath 31 a, “Go and learn,” and elsewhere in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin, 40 b, thus: “Rabbi Tarphon and the Elders were once assembled in the balcony of the Nithza house in Lod, and the question was raised whether learning or doing were greater. Rabbi Tarphon said: ‘Doing is greater.’ And Rabbi Akiva answered: ‘Learning is greater.’ All agreed that learning was greater, for learning leads to doing.”

Rabbinical stories assume that the ability to learn persists almost without limit even into old age. The notion that learning in adulthood plays a key role in the “Jewish paradigm of education” (R.Koerrenz) may therefore be demonstrated by one of the many variations on the story told about Rabbi Akiba, a 2nd century AD scholar, whose path through life and learning is summarised by S. Galley in the title: “From illiterate to exemplary scholar”<sup>17</sup>: “There are numerous overlapping stories told about the man. He is one of the few rabbinical scholars about whom the legends amount to an almost complete biography. For the first forty years of his life he was supposedly completely uneducated. It was his love for his wife Rachel that changed that. She demanded that he learn to read and write, which he finally did, together with his son. Rachel provided for the family so that Akiba could study. He strove for twelve years...”.

Such illustrations, which can only be mentioned in passing here, amount to a picture of Jewish learning that is not specific to class or social position and is seen as continuing throughout the whole of life, or life-long. It is therefore not unreasonable to describe learning in Judaism as the origin of the concept of life-long learning. There is no need to stress that this learning discourse did not have the distinct clarity of terminology associated today with lifelong learning, but the

<sup>15</sup> See “Das Schulwesen”, in: Günter Stemberger, *Der Talmud, Einführung –Texte - Erläuterungen*, Munich 1994, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> e.g. Religion als Arbeit am Text, Aharon Appelfeld über sein Herkommen, in *NZZ* 22/23. 4. 2006, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Galley, S. (2006). *Judentum*, op. cit., p. 67.

concept itself must be regarded as inherent to Judaism, and this relegates to the realm of legend present-day assumptions that lifelong learning is a modern trend.

The next question is obviously whether the evidence found in early Judaism leads on a consecutive genealogy. For a long time there was uncertainty over this, glossed over by recourse to claims that the bourgeois salon culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>18</sup> for example, must have contained essential elements of Jewish religion and must therefore have had a bridging function, passing on ideas about learning. Today, as awareness of the *Haskalah* spreads, there is no longer any need of such flimsy arguments. Along with many other detailed investigations of phenomena and individuals that illuminate for us Jewish learning and Jewish education, we now have a comprehensive and carefully edited overview which is helping to close the gaps in our previous knowledge of the history of Jewish learning and German-Jewish education during and since the Enlightenment: this is the series “History of Jewish Education in Germany” (“Jüdische Bildungsgeschichte in Deutschland”), edited by Ingrid Lohmann, Britta L. Behm and Uta Lohmann. The volumes that have appeared so far provide key insights into school education during the Enlightenment, show the connections with Campe and Basedow, with the educational and school reforms of the philanthropists, and with the school reforms of the pupils of M. Mendelssohn, clarify the tensions within Judaism between Talmudic learning and Hassidic piety, and generally promote an understanding of learning and education illuminated by both religious observance and emancipatory rationality. In the statement by the Berlin Old Testament scholar J. W. Wellhausen, mysticism and wisdom, Kabbala and Talmud go together: “Jewish wisdom, although thoroughly religious, contains within itself the universalist principle inherent in intellectual enquiry.”<sup>19</sup> This idea of the symbiosis between apparent contradictions is then taken up by the Orthodox Rabbi Nehemia A. Nobel in the claim that the “neo-Orthodox tradition [reinforces] the links between Torah and Derech Eretz” (the way of the land, secular culture).<sup>20</sup>

From the series “History of Jewish Education in Germany” I shall only mention here the following volumes on topics that are of especial relevance in our context:

<sup>18</sup> Hazel Rosenstrauch, *Varnhagen und die Kunst des geselligen Lebens, Eine Jugend um 1800*, Berlin 2003. See my commentary on this in *ZRGG* 58, 2, 2006, p. 183f; also: *Salons der Romantik. Beiträge eines Wiepersdorfer Colloquiums, Zur Theorie und Geschichte des Salons* ed. Hartwig Schultz, Berlin 1994, esp. Konrad Veilchenfeldt, *Rahel Varnhagens “Geselligkeit”*, p. 147 ff

<sup>19</sup> J. W. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte mit einem Vorwort von R. Smend*, Berlin 1894, photographic reproduction of the 10<sup>th</sup> edition, Berlin 2001, p. 210.

<sup>20</sup> e.g. in the introduction by Evelyn Adunka and Albert Brandstätter (eds.), *Das jüdische Lehrhaus als Modell Lebensbegleitenden Lernens*, Vienna 1999

Mordechai Eliav, *Jewish Education in Germany in the Age of the Enlightenment and Emancipation (Jüdische Erziehung in Deutschland im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Emanzipation)*

Britta L. Behm, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Transformation of Jewish Education in Berlin (Moses Mendelssohn und die Transformation der jüdischen Erziehung in Berlin)* and

Ute Lohmann, Ingrid Lohmann (eds.), *Learn Reason..., Source Texts from the Age of the Haskalah (Lerne Vernunft..., Quellentexte aus der Zeit der Haskala)*.<sup>21</sup>

The source texts in particular highlight the consonant features of Jewish and Enlightenment education:

- the relationship between religion and reason,
- the teaching of morality, through “which those habits and ways of thinking that of themselves lead to actions for the public good are to be instilled into the people” (p. 18)
- and lastly, as a result of the Haskalah, education that is broad and embraces both common sense and academic learning, ethics and morality, and specifically fosters “the acquisition of reading and writing, fictional literature, and adoption of and dialogue with contemporary educational theory” (p. 18).

Unlike the previous volumes, that on M. Mendelssohn looks specifically at Mendelssohn’s relationship with the contemporary study of education, principally with Basedow, and at the lines connecting philanthropic educational theory and Jewish educational practice in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>22</sup>.

Mendelssohn, who was moved at an early age to study the Talmud (“at six years of age he was teaching the Talmud and the traditional commentaries using the pilpulistic method”<sup>23</sup>), taught his pupils, including the school reformer Naph-tali Herz Wessely, that the previous method of studying the Talmud needed to

<sup>21</sup> Modechai Eliav, ..., *Jüdische Bildungsgeschichte in Deutschland*, Vol. 2, Münster 2001; S. Behm, *Jüdische Bildungsgeschichte in Deutschland* Vol. 4, Münster 2002; U. Lohmann, I. Lohmann, ..., *Jüdische Bildungsgeschichte* Vol. 6, Münster 2005

<sup>22</sup> Recent publications detecting the ‘hidden relation’ between Humboldt and Mendelssohn: Hazel Rosenstrauch, *Wahlverwandt und ebenbürtig*, Caroline und Wilhelm von Humboldt, Frankfurt am Main 2009 and Manfred Geier: *Die Brüder Humboldt*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 2010; I am referring to Humboldts concept of Lifelong education (Litauischer Schulplan., Königsberger Schulplan, über „die innere und äussere Organisation..“) in : *Neue Wege der Humboldt-Forschung*, ZRGG 62, H 4, 2010 pp. 387. Forthcoming see: Julius H. Schoeps, David Friedländer, Freund und Schüler Mendelssohns, Hildesheim 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Günter Stemberger, op. cit., p. 311; pilpulistic (pilpul Hebr. pepper), originally a subtle method of Talmud teaching; in the figurative sense, hair-splitting.

be adapted to contemporary circumstances, chiefly by looking afresh at the text, incorporating the natural sciences and using the local language. Wessely offered a school timetable arranged according to age group and stage of development, listing new secular teaching content and allowing for the need to progress from what we would call “school to world of work” or “school to university” in accordance with differing ability and inclination. Wessely saw school, in the sense of a house of teaching and therefore close to the synagogue, as being open for further learning in adulthood, so that school and adult education formed a continuous, closely connected process of education. This is a totally modern approach, which we only rediscovered in lifelong learning in the 1990s, during its second stage.

At this point, we shall jump ahead, and emphasise once again that we are today encouraged, particularly by the EU and the OECD, to regard adult education as an element of lifelong learning, as a process that continues throughout individual lives and learning biographies. And this perception should rid us of the misunderstanding whereby adult education is thought of as something Other and pedagogy is said to differ from “andragogy”<sup>24</sup> on account of the distinct nature of the addressees, methodology and teaching methods.

If I am right, the Jewish understanding of education does not distinguish in this way between pedagogy and andragogy, stressing contrast and difference rather than the continuum. This was certainly the view taken in “houses of teaching” in the Weimar Republic, in which particular emphasis was placed on delivering “adult education with a Jewish spirit”.

During and after the Enlightenment, changes took place in education, in the context of which adult education established itself as an increasingly independent part of the education system, albeit at first solely through voluntary bodies and not yet being seen as a phase of continuing learning and education that followed on from school.

Here begins a part of its history which may be encapsulated in the terms *national education – popular education – adult education – continuing education*<sup>25</sup> and ultimately leads to the concept of lifelong learning. This history has been described competently on a number of occasions in recent years.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>I observe that the term “andragogy” is gradually disappearing from educational discourse even in SEE countries (e.g. the draft for an Adult Education Act in Macedonia), and only occurs today in Holland, Slovenia and parts of Catholic adult education, while the study of adult education is called “andragology” by ten Haave. In America, M. Knowles tried to propagate the term years ago, but without much success.

<sup>25</sup>I have described this development in an early collection of documents: *Von der Nationalerziehung zur Weiterbildung*, Cologne-Vienna 1980.

<sup>26</sup>For an essential history of adult education see: Josef Olbrich, *Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildung in Deutschland*, Opladen 2001, and his bibliographical references; Wolfgang Seitter, *Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildung*, Bielefeld 2000, offers a phenomenological anti-chronological description of LL, but refers nonetheless to scarcely relevant international literature on the subject, p. 138f.



In the all but 200-year history of institutionalised adult education there has been no shortage of attempts to bind school education more closely to adult education, and adult education to the state, thereby removing the division of the education system into “pillars”. It is questionable whether this can be interpreted as a move towards the principle of lifelong learning, however, despite rhetorical statements to that effect. I regard Bonstetten, Tschokke and Scherr in 19<sup>th</sup> century Switzerland as genuine examples of such a “spirit” of lifelong education: building on the ideas on school education put forward by Pestalozzi, Fellenberg and Stapfer, they voiced the question of what should be done for the education of adults, since education could never be complete and necessarily continued until the end of people’s lives; “for as long as there is life and feeling”, as Bonstetten put it in 1802.<sup>27</sup>

Such statements were made similarly in the context of German “popular education” (Volksbildung) and demonstrated the growing attention given to adult education in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, prejudices and divisions continued, particularly the separation between adult education, the state and the public education system.

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, and in the Weimar Republic, democratic thinking helped to break down the barriers between the sectors of education and the state. By way of example, we may point to two indicators of the shift in priorities. On the one hand, a constitution, that of the Weimar Republic, provided for the first time that: “Support shall be given to the national system of education, including adult education centres (Volkshochschulen).”<sup>28</sup> The national education conference of 1920<sup>29</sup> then revealed the independent thinking and self-perception of adult education, and highlighted the differences between “independent” and “tied” adult education,<sup>30</sup> calling for professionalisation and acknowledgement of the particular peculiarities of adult education.

In the Weimar Republic, in the spirit of Rosenzweig and Buber, the notion of lifelong learning was further strengthened by the “houses of teaching”; this is not to suggest that this development was unique in history, it has happened on

<sup>27</sup> Covered thoroughly by Philipp Gonon, *Lifelong Learning in the Mirror of Educational History*, in: Klaus Harney et al., *Lifelong Learning, One Focus, Different Systems*, Frankfurt 2002, p. 45 ff

<sup>28</sup> Constitution of the Weimar Republic, 1919, Article 148. W. Lande, *die Schule in der Reichsverfassung*, Berlin 1929, examines in depth whether this requirement implies an option or an obligation to support adult education, thereby defining adult education at that early stage as a “public task”. On the deliberations on the constitution see also Knoll, J. H. *Von der Nationalerziehung zur Weiterbildung*, op. cit., p. 123 ff

<sup>29</sup> *Die Reichsschulkonferenz in ihren Ergebnissen*, ed. Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht, Leipzig n.d. (1921), p. 87 ff

<sup>30</sup> The misleading terms “independent” and “tied” were discontinued in the report “Zur Situation und Aufgabe der deutschen Erwachsenenbildung” by the German Education Committee in 1960, and the wording used thenceforth, reflecting the legal status of sponsors and institutions, is public and non-public adult education.

many occasions and in many places,<sup>31</sup> but it should be recognised that the spirit of Jewish education helped to foster the concept of adult education.

Ernst Akiba Simon,<sup>32</sup> an associate of Rosenzweig and Buber and a commentator on the political watershed of 1933, continued their perception of lifelong learning in the Jewish spirit. The paper “Development in Decline” (“Aufbau im Untergang”),<sup>33</sup> which made the widely respected lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem known far beyond adult education circles, refers to the function of adult education in creating political solidarity in the Jewish spirit, and in his ground-breaking publication “Our European and Jewish Asset of Education” he links the tradition of lifelong learning to the political and social situation of the present age. To begin with he makes a confession of faith in the words: “the Jewish way of living is in the end a way of living that has obligations,” and he continues elsewhere: “If Torah means shaping all of life, both that of the individual and that of the community, from a position of belief, it must give us pause for thought that it has increasingly retreated in the course of Jewish history into at most three areas: the home, the school and the synagogue, and that everything that used to be, commerce, politics and general culture, has remained outside. The attempt that we are making in Israel,..., culminates in drawing these areas back in. That is hard.”

The question may therefore be asked whether Simon would have agreed with the technical and organisational meaning ascribed to lifelong learning; he would probably have aligned himself with the resistance expressed as follows in an EKD publication: “If lifelong learning is restricted to the requirement to adapt throughout life to constantly changing commercial demands and goals, we must resist.”<sup>34</sup> Elsewhere, Simon’s biographer sums up as follows: “Jewish life is marked by a holistic multidimensionality, since it embraces in equal measure both cognitive and pragmatic learning processes, which are permanently intertwined one with the other. The cognitive dimension of traditional learning lies in the continuing discussion of religious texts... By combining the cognitive and pragmatic

<sup>31</sup> e.g. in Adunka, E. and Brandstätter, A. (eds.) *Das jüdische Lehrhaus als Modell lebenslangen Lernens*, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Jan Woppowa, *Widerstand und Toleranz, Grundlinien jüdischer Erwachsenenbildung bei Ernst Akiba Simon (1999-1988)*, Stuttgart 2005. W. provides an exceptionally perceptive account, in which knowledge of theological and intellectual history are compellingly combined. Profiles of Simon, Rosenzweig and Buber are given by the same author elsewhere: Jan Woppowa, *Zwischen Integration und Widerstand. Produktive Spannungen im Bildungsdenken Ernst Simons vor dem Hintergrund jüdischer Erwachsenenbildung nach 1933*, in: *Gespräch*, No. 10/2005, [www.buber-gesellschaft.deders.de](http://www.buber-gesellschaft.deders.de); Jan Woppowa, Ernst Simon, *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Vol. XXI, Cols. 1439-1446

<sup>33</sup> Ernst Simon, *Aufbau im Untergang, Jüdische Erwachsenenbildung im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland als geistiger Widerstand*, Tübingen 1959

<sup>34</sup> J. Woppowa, J. (2005). *Widerstand und Toleranz*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, op. cit., p. 261. I discuss W’s work in ZRGG 2006, No. 4, “Lebenslanges Lernen –am Ursprung aufgesucht”.

dimensions of learning, the concept of continuing learning leads to the everyday practice of religious living on the one hand, and on the other, it is needed to bring up to date the inherited rules of Halakah so that they respond to present-day challenges.”<sup>35</sup>

We can conclude in summary that the content of lifelong learning must relate to current challenges, among which we may undoubtedly count suitability for employment in the sense of *employability*. At the same time, however, lifelong learning in the Jewish spirit also looks invariably to the social and sociocultural dimension, and to religious behaviours and attitudes. In other words, it combines formal, non-formal and informal learning content and skills.

We could provide examples to demonstrate that traditional and present-day perceptions of lifelong learning are not so far removed one from the other. This refers primarily to the subject-matter and content of lifelong learning, and to the principle of never being complete. Earlier authors did not of course enjoy the “refined” definitions that offer a greater degree of abstraction and precision. The Federal-Laender Education Committee (BLK), for example, offers the following definition: “Lifelong learning embraces all formal, non-formal and informal learning in different places of learning from early childhood to the phase of retirement. In this context learning is taken to mean the constructive processing of information and experience into knowledge, insights and skills.”<sup>36</sup> In this, something of the tradition we have discussed still shines through.

The modern discussion of “lifelong learning” begins, and here we close the circle by returning to the starting point of our reflections, with Cyril O. Houle, who both defines and describes lifelong learning in precise language and provides empirical evidence that adults are ready and motivated “to continue to learn”, and not only for practical purposes.

This impetus is then taken up in the 1970s by international and supra-national organisations, and a sequence becomes recognisable in which lifelong education/lifelong learning appears initially as a synonym for adult education, and then adopts the concept of a continuum of all stages and types of education, visualised in the image of an educational chain.

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<sup>35</sup> Woppowa, J. (2005). *Zwischen Integration und Widerstand*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, op. cit., p. 27

<sup>36</sup> e.g. in: Strategie für Lebenslanges Lernen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Materialien zur Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung, No. 115, Bonn 2004. See also the additional material in: DIE, Barbara Dietsche, Heinz H. Meyer, Literaturlauswertung Lebenslanges Lernen, im Auftrage der BLK, Bonn August 2004

This series of developments has often been described and need not be expressly repeated here.<sup>37</sup>

Yet there is still no agreement among those concerned, or among decision-makers, notably the Land Ministers of Education, over how the continuum principle is to be applied in practice – in my view it is not so much a matter of building bridges between institutions as of being constantly aware of its many different aspects. As Fontane said, it is “a vast field”.

The purpose here has simply been to remind ourselves of a tradition which seems to have been forgotten and could have saved us many lengthy digressions if we had considered it more fully earlier. The words of Winston Churchill apply by analogy to education “Without tradition, art is like a flock of sheep without a shepherd.” Our act of remembrance is intended to be more than mere reverence.

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<sup>37</sup> I could list a number of descriptions, among which I shall mention only: J.H.Knoll, *Lebenslanges Lernen und internationale Bildungspolitik, Zur Genese eines Begriffs und dessen internationale Operationalisierungen*, in: Rainer Brödel (ed), *Lebenslanges Lernen – Lebensbegleitende Bildung*, Neuwied 1998, p. 35 – 51. I do not take into account there the development of the Jewish tradition which I discuss here.

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## „Celoživotno učenje“ – novi termin za staru ideju? Potraga za istorijskim korenima

**Apstrakt:** Ovaj članak teži ispravljanju pretpostavke da je „celoživotno učenje“ izmišljeno od strane ljudi koji su radili u obrazovanju sedamdesetih godina prošlog veka. Za razliku od većine autora koji knjigu E. Faure-a „Learning to be“ iz 1972. godine posmatraju kao početak „doživotnog učenja“, mi se vraćamo na Cyril O. Houle-a i njegovo imponantno delo iz 1961. godine. Delo „The Inquiring Mind“, je otac „celoživotnog učenja“ u modernom smislu. Cyril O. Houle je smatrao da koreni „celoživotnog učenja“ leže u drevnom judaizmu. Ovaj članak prati pravila i označava glavne faze ove genealogije: drevni judaizam kao zajednica koja uči, celoživotno učenje u Tori i Talmudu, Haskala kao veza sa obrazovnom praksom u Nemačkoj i na kraju, funkcija „kuća za podučavanje“ (Lehrhäuser) u Vajmarskoj Republici (Buber, Rosenzweig, Simon) kao mesta za celoživotno učenje u verskom i sekularnom smislu.

**Ključne reči:** Cyril O. Houle, celoživotno učenje, Judaizam.

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